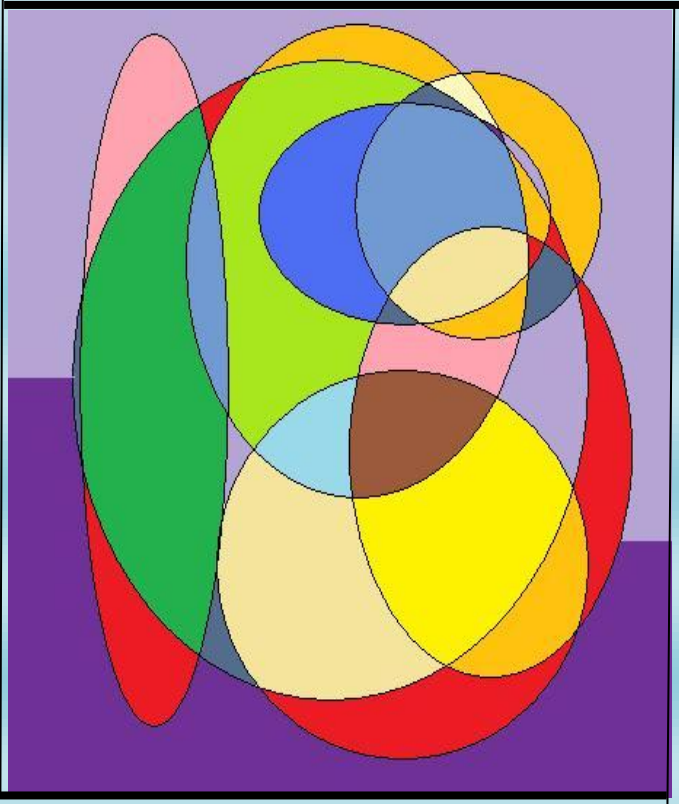
ISSN 2094-3938

TESOL Journal



Volume 2, June 2010

Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

Time Taylor International Education

TESOL Journal: Volume 2, June 2010
Published by the Asian EFL Journal Press
Asian EFL Journal Press
A Division of Time Taylor International Ltd
TTI College
Episode Building 68-2
Daen Dong, Pusan, Korea
http://www.tesol.journal.com

asianefl@gmail.com
Editors: Paul Robertson

The TESOL journal is refereed and indexed in the Asian Education Index, Social Science Research Network, Summons Serial Solution Index by Proquest, Open J-Gate, NewJour, Google Scholar, and Ulrich's web.

The TESOL journal (ISSN 2094-3938) is published biannually by Time Taylor International.

This journal is part of the Asian EFL journal services. Access to on-line table of contents and articles is available to all researchers at http://www.tesol.journal.com for details.

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TESOL JOURNAL
Volume 2, June 2010

Articles

Short Report

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This volume of the TESOL Journal was edited by Araine Macalinga Borlongan.

Time Taylor International Education

Foreword

Welcome to the June 2010, second issue of the TESOL Journal. We are happy to present a broad range of papers reflecting a wide variety of research and writing styles. Each year, we will present two editions, with June and December being the bi-annual frequency for the next two years. In this edition, we have articles coming from Australia, China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, and the United States – diverse locations showing the breadth to in which second language studies have broached the globe.

Unlike other journals that either charge substantial submission fees, or up to fifty dollars per page per published material, we at the Asian EFL Group keep our journal fee to view, free to submit and hence our vast daily audience which totals over 4,000 readers a day for our combined group of main journals. To help us keep the journals free, we do ask readers and authors to join the TESOL Asia organization which is the parent of the TESOL FM internet radio station which we believe will provide a major "positive step forward in EFL TESOL learning", the likes of which have not been since Professor Stephen Krashen made his famous announcement back in the late 1970s. We hope you will support these initiatives and thus help us grow our journal division and keep the resources free.

In this edition, we present ten articles for your reading and review. Levi McNeil from the Sookmyung University examines higher order questioning and student perceptions. Cody and Moore present data from a multi-year home-literacy initiative, *Libros de Familia*, in which university-level student volunteers read and are read to by Spanish-speaking migrant farmworker children.

Ruth Wong from Hong Kong adopts a modified version of the motivation framework proposed by Dörnyei (1998), and examines whether students from Hong Kong or Mainland China have different motivation patterns while learning English in Hong Kong. Al-Amri discusses issues related to the challenge of obtaining more valid and reliable assessment and positive backwash of direct spoken language performance. In a unique piece, Ivy and Al-Fattal investigate marketing activities of private EFL colleges in Damascus, Syria. The Al-Harbi study outlines the basic method and assumptions underlying mother tongue grammar transformation (MTGT) from the point of view of a practitioner and from that of a language learner.

Norman Fewell presents a study of language learning strategy (LLS) utilization by Japanese college EFL students. Wang Ping examines the Confusion heritage culture in the Chinese classroom and factors affecting learning. Shigeru Ozaki examines the possibility of the negative washback effect of Japanese university English entrance examinations and the study analyzed the National Center Tests—the highest-stakes form of university entrance examinations—from the viewpoint of education for international understanding since washback is generated by test content. Devrim and Bayyurt, looking at the role and place of culture in English language teaching in Turkey, found in their study that cultural elements from the target language culture and local culture are both wanted by students to be seen in EFL instruction.

Four articles comprise those coming from the Philippines: Valdez takes a critical applied linguistics approach to the marginalization issue in ELT in the Philippines, claiming that the ELT profession has been both a victim and perpetuator of political ideologies across time. Tan-de Ramos' paper discusses the use of discourse markers in a private university in Manila. She compares preferences between two types of rhetorical patterns and engineering and liberal arts students and says that preferences are highly affected by the type of rhetorical pattern used in a paper and the field the students belong to. Magno and Mojica focus on an emerging phenomenon in Philippine ELT – EFL students studying in the Philippines. Magno talks about the predictors of proficiency of Korean students in the Philippines, primarily language learning strategies and years of study devoted to English. Mojica then teases out the difficulties beginning EFL students in the Philippines encounter in their writing classes.

Borlongan also writes an instructive editorial commentary on the management of innovations in ELT in the Philippines.

We hope you find this edition valuable in your own research and writing pursuits and look forward to having you as a reader and especially we welcome first-time authors.

Z. N. Patil
Paul Robertson
Carlo Magno
Ariane Macalinga Borlongan
The Editors

On the Management of Innovations in English Language Teaching in the Philippines

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 1-3

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Keywords: Management of English language teaching, innovations in English language teaching, English language teaching in the Philippines

Filipinos have always concerned themselves with issues on languages – English, to be more specific; applied linguists, policy-makers, and educators and teachers in the country have always been talking about matters of language planning, English-medium education, and, more specifically and most importantly, English language teaching. However, one may notice that not much attention has been given on the what can undoubtedly be considered as among the most critical in the English language teaching enterprise – the management of English language teaching.

To augment this dearth in Philippine English language teaching enterprise and scholarship, Borlongan (2010) attempted at a description the various aspects of management in English language units in a public and a private high school and a public and a private university and a derivation of a model of the management of English language teaching in the Philippines out of the description made. He based his description and derived model on semi-structured interviews with unit heads and teachers or instructors from one public high school, one private high school, one public university, and one private university in Manila, the Philippines.

The interviews conducted by Borlongan (2010) reveal interesting insights on the management of English language teaching in the Philippines: Generally, the English language units interviewed are uniform in many aspects like structure, culture, management style, selection process, career planning and counseling, management of finances, and marketing strategies – and even the absence of a system for the management of innovation – to name a few. The units vary in no more than finer details of management though. The management of curriculum though is one major aspect of the management of English language teaching in the Philippines where the units also vary in practice. Borlongan also recognizes the fact that the units' autonomy versus dependence from higher administration seems to be generic, distinguishing variable that cuts across all aspects of management of English language teaching in the Philippines surveyed. He then uses this variable and its relative prevalence as fundamental characteristic and nature to be able to distinguish one aspect from another in his proposed conceptual framework or an illustrative model on how English language teaching is managed in the Philippines.

One point though worthy of further discussion among Borlongan's (2010) findings is the seemingly lack of innovation management in English language teaching units in the Philippines. The units he interviewed made mention of sessions wherein the teachers and instructors get to share their "best practices" inside the classroom. New strategies and approaches are shared among their colleagues during meetings and in-house workshops. Occasionally, they may be fortunate to be able to invite speakers from outside their institution, if finances may allow. For the public university, instructors who are pursuing more advanced degrees may be a resource of new ideas.

But aside from occasional sharing of ideas, there is no formal system set up to manage innovations in the English language units that Borlongan (2010) interviewed. The head of the unit from the private university gives a hint as to why it is difficult to introduce innovations:

> Introducing innovation? It is difficult. When we introduce an innovation, it is okay at the unit level since the faculty members of the unit are open-minded in general. But to inform the deans about the changes [is difficult]; some deans do not like the idea. So you are always put on spot. But for me, what I believe is that, if there is anyone who is in the best position to revise the curriculum, it is not the dean; it has to be the department chair.

This remark from Borlongan's interviewee identifies bureaucracy as a possible explanation as to why it may be difficult to introduce innovations in English language units in the Philippines.

But on further analysis, several explanations may be drawn to explain why the management of innovation appears to be absent in English language units in the Philippines. These explanations that are drawn below White, Martin, Stimson, and Hodge (1991) already hinted at also in their discussion of implementing innovations. And it appears that the data from the Philippines only substantiates what they wrote about the difficulties in implementing innovations.

White et al. (1991) cite Miles (1964) who distinguished innovation from change: Innovation is, unlike change which is involuntary, is deliberate and may, at times, be badly planned. This very nature of innovation is sometimes the problem in itself – it may be difficult for those who have become "too" familiar with older ways to be introduced to something new; hence, they react negatively. Particularly those who have also aged in the profession, the introduction of an innovation would be burdensome.

Quite expectedly, practices that one has come to adopt along maturing in the profession are difficult to deskill and unlearn. Particularly difficult to introduce are innovations that are highly original (cf. White et al., 1991). A teacher and/or instructor may have already adopted a practice all throughout his/her teaching career and loyalty may have been established in one's career-old practices. Any proposed deviation from these practices may no longer appeal, amidst the promise of a more successful delivery of English language instruction. It is definitely not easy to convince people in one side of the fence to join those in the other, most especially when it is a matter of giving up age-old beliefs.

And the universal human behavior of politicking also adds up to the complexity of innovation management in English language teaching in the Philippines. Every so often, the case may simply be that one is not really against the proposed change itself but simply an attack on the person proposing the change.

But sometimes, the fact is, actually, "an innovation is not necessarily any more complex than existing practice, but because it is *different*, it will be perceived as something more complex" [emphasis original] (White et al., 1991, p. 183).

The foregoing discussion simply points out that nuisance may always accompany managing innovations in English language teaching in the Philippines but this is not an excuse not to do so. In the Philippines, educational institutions may occasionally live on simply trying to solve problems that come along daily operations. Changes implemented may have always been simply a response to a problem. It is emphasized here that important that English language units in particular and educational institutions in general be always receptive to learning something new. It is always a better disposition to look forward to something better even if what is now is already good (cf. Senge [1990] on the "learning organization"). No definitive framework for innovation management is proposed here though. What is important is that English language units find it necessary to put up such.

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This editorial commentary is derivative of the Research Fellowship project completed by the author for the SEAMEO Regional Language Centre. The author would like to thank the Centre for the award of the Fellowship. A citation of the project appears in the reference list.

Students' Understandings and Preferences of the Role and Place of 'Culture' in English Language Teaching: A Focus in an EFL context

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 4-23

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

In this article, the authors investigate language learners' understandings of the role and place of 'culture' in foreign language classrooms, and non-native versus native English language teachers. The data collection procedures comprise the development and application of a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The participants of the study are three hundred and eighty five senior high school students from three provinces in Turkey. Both the quantitative and qualitative results of the study reveal that students want to see cultural elements from both target language culture and local culture in foreign language classrooms as well as in language learning materials. As a consequence, they almost equally value native and non-native English language teachers. These findings indicate that to fully understand and improve English as a foreign language and English as a second language curricula to its rightful place in today's world it is necessary to obtain students' opinions as well as the opinions of the decision makers (e.g., teachers, administrators) in relation to issues like what to teach in the English language classrooms, what the aims of learners and teachers for learning and teaching English are.

Keywords: Culture, student preferences, EFL context, teaching materials, NESTs and non-NESTs

Introduction

Today, it is an undeniable fact that English has become a global lingua franca. It is the most commonly spoken foreign language, language of media, language of technology, and language of science. In a review article on history of research on non-native English teachers Moussu and Llurda (2008) come across an abundance of studies on non-native English language teachers in which researchers investigate non-native English language teachers' opinions of various issues related to English language teaching (ELT hereafter) such as involvement of culture in the foreign language classrooms, language teaching materials. However, language learners' opinions of similar issues are not questioned as much as nonnative teachers' opinions. The majority of studies focus on students' opinions of and attitudes towards non-native English speaking teachers

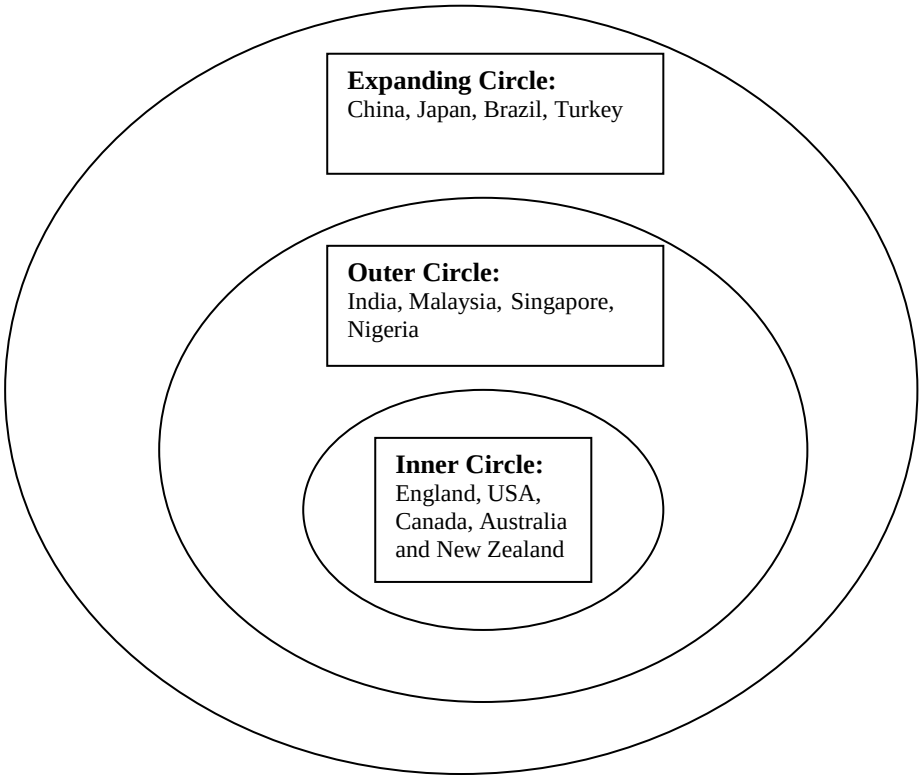
in both English as a foreign language (EFL hereafter) and English as a second language (ESL hereafter) contexts (Cheung, 2002; Cheung & Braine, 2007; Kelch & Santana-Williamson; 2002; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002, 2005; Liang, 2002; Mahboob, 2003; Moussu, 2002, 2006; Watson Todd & Pojanapunya, 2009). There is only a few studies questioning students' opinions of the role and place of 'culture' in language teaching methodologies and language teaching materials, and students' perceptions of their goals for learning English besides their opinions of native and non-native English language teachers (Fahmy & Bilton, 1992; Prodromou, 1992). In this respect, the present study is a contribution to the field in revealing students' understandings and preferences of the issues related not only to English language teachers but also to English language teaching (ELT hereafter) materials, content of English language instruction. However, since it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss all these issues, we will only concentrate on the results concerning students' understandings of the role of 'culture' in ELT as well as their opinions and preferences regarding characteristics of non-native and native English language teachers in relation to the concept of 'culture'.

The article is divided into three major sections. In the first section, the theoretical basis of the study is introduced. In the second section, participants of the study, data collection procedures, data analysis and results of the study are presented. In the last section of the paper, the findings of the study are discussed in the relation to the related literature.

Spread of English around the World

Starting with the colonization period and continuing with the economic and political power of the U.S.A., English has penetrated into the daily lives of people all over the world from an abundance of areas, ranging from politics to entertainment and has been used by many due to its spread and current situation. In 1985, Kachru presented the *Three Circles Model* of World Englishes – i.e. *inner*, *outer* and *expanding circles*. This model attempts to explain the use of English around the world in three concentric circles which represent the changing distribution and functions of the English language (See Figure 1).

Figure 1
Kachru's (1985, 1992) Three Circles Model



As can be seen in Figure 1, the *inner circle* includes the geographical location of the traditionally English speaking countries like England, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The *outer circle* encompasses countries with a colonial past where English is an institutional variety – i.e., India, Singapore, Nigeria, Malaysia. The *expanding circle* refers to the countries where English is mainly used for instrumental purposes – e.g., for international communication, and has no or limited official status. The countries that belong to *expanding circle* can be listed as Japan, China, Turkey, and Brazil. This model raises the awareness of scholars towards the wider use of English around the world in a more critical way. It also raises their awareness towards the fact that the use of English is not only confined to its native speakers. As Park and Wee (2009) state this critical model has brought about "...the ideological dimensions surrounding the global spread of English" (p. 1-2). Although this model is being questioned and criticized by scholars including Kachru himself in relation to the changing status of English in the world, the model serves as the theoretical basis for our study. We would like to state that Turkey falls in the *expanding circle* in the *Three Circles Model*, and English is taught as a foreign language in Turkey. As we will explain in the following section, English language does not solely belong to the *inner circle* countries anymore; therefore, they cannot be the only reference for learners of English while they are using English for communicative purposes with native and nonnative speakers of English.

Definition of 'Culture'

Before presenting information about the significance of 'culture' in ELT we need to clarify what we mean by 'culture' in this study. In her 2006 article on non-native English language teachers' opinions of 'culture', Bayyurt highlights the significance of the dynamic nature of 'culture' and how difficult it is to give a simple definition of the term. Therefore, to be more specific it is better to adhere to a definition of 'culture' which is valid in ELT circles. In this respect, we find Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi's (1990) characterization of 'culture' more applicable to our study. Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi (1990) define 'culture' as a multidimensional concept. According to their definition, the four senses of 'culture' can be listed as: : (i) the aesthetic sense (media, cinema, music and literature); (ii) the sociological sense (family, education, work and leisure, traditions); (iii) the semantic sense (conceptions and thought processes); (iv) the pragmatic (or sociolinguistic) sense ('appropriacy' in language use). Henceforth, when we refer to 'culture' we will be referring to four senses of 'culture' as defined by Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi.

The Involvement of 'Culture' in English Language Teaching

In an earlier study on non-native English language teachers' perspectives of 'culture' in EFL context Bayyurt (2006) classifies the involvement of 'culture' in the language classrooms into two major categories. The first category involves no explicit reference to *inner circle* varieties of English language in ELT, that means no *inner circle* 'culture' involvement in ELT and giving significance to the local 'cultures' of English language learners (Bhatt, 2005; Canagarajah, 2005, 2007; Kachru, 1985, 1992, 1996, 1997; Kachru & Nelson, 1996). This view presupposes that the interactions will take place between people from mostly *outer circle* countries as well as people from *inner* and *expanding circle*. Similarly, McKay (2003) acknowledges that English has become an international language and the content of language teaching materials, the selection of teaching methodology and the concept of the ideal teacher are not based on native speaker based models. Adopting a similar orientation, Kramsch and Sullivan (1996) highlight the significance of an appropriate pedagogy, involving the consideration of global and local needs in the teaching of English as an international language (See Kramsch and Thorne, 2002).

The second view that Bayyurt's (2006) categorization indicates is that language and 'culture' are interrelated so we should teach 'target language culture' together with the language we are teaching for a better understanding of the native speakers of the target language that we are teaching (Byram & Fleming, 1998). This view is applicable to *expanding circle – inner circle* interactions, *expanding circle – expanding circle* interactions as well as *expanding circle – outer circle* interactions.

In the present study, we question the influence of 'target language culture' in ELT and ELT materials from students' point of view in relation to the local context of the students. In the next section, we will give a brief summary of studies investigating language learners opinions of issues related to ELT such as attitudes towards nonnative English teachers, language teaching materials as well as the role of 'culture' in ELT.

A Brief History of Studies on English Language Learners/Students

As we already stated, there are a small number of studies carried out on the attitudes and opinions of English language learners in the field. Although majority of English language learners and English language teachers are in EFL contexts, most of the earlier studies on students attitudes and preferences towards native and non-native English language teachers at tertiary level are initiated in ESL contexts (Cheung, 2002; Cheung & Braine 2006; Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002; Liang, 2002; Mahboob, 2003; Moussu, 2002, 2006). However, there are also a number of studies in the EFL contexts like Spain, Turkey, Thailand (Bayyurt & Erçetin, 2009; Fahmy & Bilton, 1992; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002, 2005; Prodromou, 1992; Watson Todd & Pojanapunya, 2009). We will briefly summarize the methodology and findings of these studies in the following paragraphs.

In an earlier study, Prodromou's (1992) analyzed 300 young adult Greek language learners' preferences of British or American English as a model for English language learning. 75% of the students stated that they preferred to learn British English while 18% preferred American English. The results suggested that this preference was due to the overall popularity of British English in the world and students' negative attitudes towards American English due to their historical relations. As for the 'local culture', most of the students stated that language teachers teaching English in Greece should know Greek and be familiar with the Greek culture.

Another earlier study conducted by Fahmy and Bilton (1992) focuses on undergraduate TEFL students at Sultan Qaboos University in the Sultanate of Oman to gather information about their level of English, their reasons for studying English, their views about EFL language learning in Oman, and their perceptions about the miscellaneous issues in the TEFL program. The data were collected using a survey and a proficiency test. The results of the study revealed that most of the student teachers agreed on the advantages of learning and using English in Oman and did not seem to be afraid of becoming 'westernized'. In terms of the importance of various subjects in TEFL education, the student teachers further indicated that English language skills were the most important. However, 'target language culture' remained to be the least important factor. Thus, the researchers concluded the student teachers kept their cultural identity as Omani and they were not separated from their cultural heritage.

More recent studies by Moussu (2002), Liang (2002), and Mahboob (2003) investigate ESL students' reactions to non-native English speaking teachers at different university settings in the United States through the use of questionnaires. The findings of these studies show that the students usually have positive attitudes towards having non-native English language teachers in their ESL classrooms (Moussu, 2002), teachers level of professionalism is an important factor in determining the effectiveness of non-native English language teachers in ESL classrooms (Liang, 2002), both native and non-native English language teachers have their strengths and weaknesses in the eyes of the students (Mahboob, 2003). On the other hand, the results of Kelch and Santana-Williamson's study (2002) reveal that students' are able to detect native and non-native speakers of English easily, and that their perception towards the teachers' being a native or non-native speaker affect their attitudes towards the teachers. Although the students in Kelch and Santana-Williamson's study favor

native English speaker teachers for the development of their speaking/listening skills, they still mention the significance of having non-native English teachers as role models, source of motivation and previous language learners who could understand students' language learning difficulties.

The studies conducted in the Hong Kong context follow a similar pattern to the studies discussed previously in terms of their focus. Cheung's (2002) study includes the opinions of both the English language teachers and students towards non-native English language teachers at a university in Hong Kong. The findings of her study reveal that both teachers and students consider native English speaking teachers (NESTs hereafter) and non-native English speaking teachers (NON-NESTs hereafter) having their own strengths. Almost none of the participants think that there is discrimination against NON -NESTs in Hong Kong. In a follow up study, Cheung and Braine (2007) question the specific strengths and weaknesses of NON -NESTs in Hong Kong from the perspective of the students using a questionnaire and interviews. The overall results of the study show that in general the students have a positive attitude towards their NON -NESTs. However, the final year students seem to appreciate NON -NESTs more than the first year students. These findings are parallel to Moussu and Braine's (2006) study which is conducted in an intensive English program at a university in the USA – i.e., an ESL setting. Cheung & Braine (2007) conclude that many students who participate in their study become more conscious of their prejudices and they state that they are willing to discard these prejudices throughout their studies at the university.

In their study, Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002, 2005) give a questionnaire including both closed (5 point likert scale) and open questions, and asking seventy-six undergraduate university students' views about NESTs and NON -NESTs on rating scales relating to language skills, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, learning strategies, 'culture' and civilization, attitudes and assessment. In Lasagabaster & Sierra's study, different from the other studies, the students are asked to indicate their views in relation to primary, secondary and tertiary education. The results of the study indicate that the students' general preference is towards NESTs, or a combination of NESTs and NON -NESTs. The students' earlier experiences of NESTs do not seem to have any effect on their judgments. Just like the participants of Cheung and Braine's (2007) study the participants of Lasagabaster and Sierra's study are studying different subjects as their major at the university. Therefore, Lasagabaster & Sierra relate the variation in students' judgments of NESTs and NON -NESTs and their orientations to learning English to the students' subject specialism.

When we move to the studies conducted in EFL settings, Watson Todd and Pojanapunya's (2009) study is one of the most recent ones. They investigate the attitudes of Thai students towards native and non-native English speaking teachers through an *implicit association test* to discard prejudices as a confounding factor in their research. They compare the results of the test with explicit attitudes elicited through a questionnaire. The results of their study yield that the attitudes of the students towards NESTs and NON -NESTs are 'complex with an explicit preference for native speaker teachers, but no implicit preference and warmer explicit feelings towards non-native speaker teachers' (p.23).

In Bayyurt and Erçetin's study (2009), the English as an International language model offered by McKay (2003) is examined to find out whether the teaching of English as an international language is applicable to contexts where

English is taught as a second or foreign language. Interviews, questionnaires and observations are conducted to get the opinions teachers, students and teacher trainers on the involvement of 'culture' in English language classrooms, and ELT materials. Results of the study indicate that teachers and students who participated in the study still think that there should be an ideal native speaker of English who is modeled by the learners. This model should be based on either British English or American English.

Having provided summaries of the relevant research studies, now we would like to present the context in which we conducted our study as well as our findings. The current study is designed in order to explore the opinions of EFL learners on the role of 'culture' in ELT methods and materials, content of English language lessons, characteristics of NS and NNS teachers, their aim for learning English in Turkey. In this respect, the present study contributes to ELT practices by revealing the opinions of English language learners about their language learning experiences, their English language teachers in an EFL setting. The results of this particular study are believed to suggest important implications for ELT in Turkey as well as in different EFL and ESL settings in terms of development of language teaching materials, classroom practices, and language teacher hiring practices from students' perspectives.

Methodology

The present study was conducted in two phases, consisting of developing a questionnaire through semi-structured interviews and applying it to high school students. The questionnaire we have developed consisted of six sections and it was applied to senior students in five selective high schools in Turkey. The total number of students who took part in the study was three hundred and eighty five. The specific questions we aimed to answer were as the following:

1. What are students' opinions/understandings of the role of 'culture' in foreign language classrooms?
2. In what ways students' opinions of the characteristics of non-native and native English speaking teachers are similar and/or different?

Five Selective High Schools

We believe that providing detailed information regarding the characteristics of the research setting is of utmost importance before moving into the student characteristics who took part in the study. The study was conducted within the context of Anatolian high schools, which are considered as selective high schools due to the fact that admission to these schools depends on the high grades taken from a centralized test. The Ministry of Education prepares this test each year and the students take the test towards the end of the second semester in grade 8. The students enumerate the high schools of their choice in their application form. Based on their grades in the test, they are placed into these selective high schools by the Ministry of Education. Achievement in the test and admission to a selective high school is really important for the students and additionally for their parents. For the reason that the quality of education in these high schools is believed to be a determining factor in getting admitted to a better university.

Not only does the Ministry of Education prepare the content and administration of the selective high school entrance test, but also it determines the curricula in these high schools. The students are exposed to intensive English instruction during their first year, consisting of 24 hours of English language instruction per week. However, this number decreases in the following years as in the case of our subjects who were exposed to 4 hours of weekly English instruction. The textbooks that were used in the participating high schools were well-known series in the market written by British writers such as *Inside Out*, and *Opportunities*. The number of students in each high school was approximately seven hundred, and the maximum number of the students in each classroom was thirty. All the English language teachers in these high schools were non-native English speakers, except the Welsh teacher in High School A in Istanbul.

The high schools that were selected for the purposes of this study shared the same curriculum. They were selected from three different provinces, representing different 'cultures' in Turkey. One of the high schools is situated in Diyarbakir; the province is situated in the southeastern region in Turkey with a predominant Kurdish population. Other two high schools are located in the Edirne province. It is in northwestern Turkey, spreading along the borders with Greece and Bulgaria. Due to the province's position in Thrace, it is a multicultural area with different peoples from the Balkans such as Albanians, Greeks, Romanians, Bulgarians, Pomaks and Gypsies along with Turks. The remaining two high schools stand in Istanbul. The province is the largest in the country with a population of approximately thirteen million according to the 2008 census. Istanbul is considered a melting pot, being home to different cultures and peoples throughout the history. For research purposes, we agreed on naming Diyarbakir as the *East,* Edirne as the *West,* and Istanbul as the *Center* and investigate these provinces as *parts* in our analyses. However, due to space limitations we will not be able to present the findings regarding the comparison of these *parts* on different components (see Yilmaz, 2006). We will only compare the three provinces based on the responses to the open-ended question.

We determined the participating high schools through convenience sampling. The questionnaire was given to those students who were present during the phase of data collection, and participation was determined on a voluntary basis. The total number of the senior high school students in all the schools was around 700. As we aimed at reaching the highest number of participants we prepared a total of 475 copies of the questionnaire and collected 385 (81%) of them back.

Participants

We collected some demographic information regarding the students and their families, specifically about their gender, previous English learning practices, and mother tongues. Moreover, information related to the education level of parents as well as monthly income of families was accumulated to explore whether there were significant differences among the different *parts,* specifically, *East, West,* and *Center.*

There were a total of 197 (51.2%) female and 188 (48.8%) male students. Their ages ranged from 16 to 23 with a mean of 17.3. The number of years of English instruction they had been exposed to ranged from 4 to 13 years

with a mean of 8.4. 361 (93.7%) of the students stated that their mother tongue was Turkish and 24 (6.3%) indicated that their first/primary language was different from Turkish, i.e. Kurdish, Zazaish and Arabic.

As for the education level of the parents of the students, 2 (.5 %) of the fathers had no formal education, 47 (12.2%) of the fathers were primary school graduates, 30 (7.8%) of them were secondary school graduates, 124 (32.3%) of them were high school graduates, 161 (41.9%) of the fathers graduated from university and 20 (5.2%) of them held a Master's or a higher degree. A *chi-square analysis* suggests significant differences among the *parts*, $\chi^2 = 62.83$, $p < .001$; N=384. On the other hand, 23 (6 %) of the mothers had no formal education, 79 (20.5%) of the mothers were primary school graduates, 22 (5.7%) of them were secondary school graduates, 148 (38.4%) of them were high school graduates, 101 (26.2%) of the mothers graduated from university, and 12 (3.1%) of them were graduates of Master's or higher programs. The differences among the *parts* were significant according to the *chi-square analysis*: $\chi^2 = 76.20$, $p < .001$; N=385.

Finally, the questionnaire revealed information about the monthly income of the students' families. At the time of the data collection, 1 USD equaled 1.36 new Turkish Lira (Yeni Turk Lirasi-YTL) according to the rates of the Central Bank and the monthly tax inclusive minimum wage was 531 YTL, equaling 390 USD. According to the data we gathered, 1 (.3%) of the families had no regular income, 21 (5.5%) of the families had less than 500 YTL, 95 (24.7%) of the families earned between 500 and 1000 YTL, 73 (19%) of the families made between 1000-1500 YTL, 78 (20.3%) of the families earned between 1500-2000 YTL and 117 (30.4%) of the families earned more than 2000 YTL. A chi-square analysis again depicted significant differences among the *parts*, $\chi^2 = 111.61$, $p < .001$; N=385.

The differences among the three *parts* in terms of education level of the parents and monthly income of the families suggest that there are socio-cultural and economic differences among participants' families from three different *parts* on which we based our study.

Developing the Questionnaire and Analyzing the Data

In order to generate items for the questionnaire, we interviewed a group of students in Turkish based on semi-structured questions deducted from the related literature (McKay, 2003). The interviews were conducted with ten students from Anatolian High School A in Istanbul during May 2005 and ten students from Anatolian High School C in Edirne during July 2005. Seven students were in the foundation grade where they were exposed to intensive one-year English instruction, 6 students were in the ninth grade, 5 students were in the tenth grade and 2 students were senior students. Each interview took 30 minutes on average and was recorded via a digital sound recorder. Based on the responses from the students, five major categories appeared which formed the questionnaire sections.

Likert scale was used in the construction of the instrument. Eventually we sent the questionnaire to the experts on the field to obtain inter-rater reliability. The questionnaire was finalized according to the feedback received from the scholars and it consisted of six sections including the section on demographic information. Moreover, an open-ended question investigating students' opinions on whether 'target language culture' should be taught along

with English was also included. The questionnaire was in Turkish (See Appendix for questionnaire items in English). Following the consent of the head principals in each participating school, the questionnaires were applied to the students by the researchers.

We used SPSS version 11.5 to analyze the data and conducted four different statistical analyses to explore our research questions. The first one was a *frequency analysis* to obtain descriptive statistics to answer the first research question, specifically students' opinions/understanding of the role of 'culture'. The second was *principal component analyses* (PCA hereafter) in order to explore the internal structure of the instrument. Based on the interviews and expert opinions, we have decided on the sections in the questionnaire. However, we decided to reduce the data through PCA in order to keep our objectivity. Thus, we did not use the sections in the questionnaire as constructs to be analyzed rather we decided observe how constructs clustered together based on the analyses. We believe the application of this process help the research be free from bias on our part. Following PCAs, we conducted a *reliability analysis* to check the reliability of the reduced data before running the final analysis. Finally, to explore the differences across parts on each component factor scores were obtained and One-way mixed ANOVA using the General Linear Model was conducted using the factor scores. As for the open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire we conducted a content analysis to gather some qualitative data. However, we will not provide information about the differences among three provinces based on the ANOVA due to the purpose of this article (see Yilmaz, 2006).

Findings

The findings of the current study will be presented in relation to the research questions. To be able to provide an answer to the first research question regarding students' perspectives, we will refer to the last section in the questionnaire, which is related to students' perception of 'culture'. Following this, we will highlight what the participants think about the teaching of English along with its 'culture' by focusing on the open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire. As for the second research question, we will refer to the descriptive statistics run for the section regarding English language teachers. The two research questions will be discussed under two sub-headings and the means for questionnaire items will be provided in brackets. The means in brackets represent students' replies to questionnaire items which are designed in five-point Likert Scale (1= 'strongly disagree' ,,, 5='strongly agree').

The Role of 'Culture' in Foreign Language Classrooms

We analyzed students' replies to the last questionnaire section to see what they think about the role of 'culture' (reverse coding applied due to ranking). As for the origin of 'target language culture', the participants associate English with the British culture (M=1.44) the most followed by the American culture (M=2.19). Following the ranking section, they also indicate that learning about the similarities of and differences between English speaking countries and cultures in Turkey was the most interesting topic for the students (M=3.78). The responses reveal that the students need to get informed about the 'local culture' in relation to the 'target language culture'.

The participants were also asked to express their preferences on various topics to be included in English instruction. The participants were interested in learning about the similarities and differences between the 'cultures' of English speaking countries and cultures in Turkey (M=3.78), how the people behave in various circumstances in English speaking countries (M=3.70), learning the history of English speaking countries in relation to history of Turkey (M=3.62), and learning and understanding values of English speaking countries (M=3.59).

To collect more qualitative data on student' understandings and opinions on the issue, the participants were asked an open ended question at the end of the questionnaire. They were asked whether the 'target language culture' should be taught together with English. The students were to answer the question by justifying their reasons. The responses collected from the students will be given in relation to the *parts*. The participants agreed, disagreed, and partially agreed on the question. Table 1 provides the responses from the students in relation to their *parts.*

Table 1
Students' Responses to the Open-Ended Question

Parts	Agree		Disagree		Partially agree		No answer		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
East	37	50.7	10	13.7	3	4.1	23	31.5	73	100
Center	79	50.7	34	21.8	18	11.5	25	16	156	100
West	64	41	37	23.7	8	5.1	47	30.1	156	100
Total	180	46.8	81	21	29	7.5	95	24.7	385	100

Overall, the majority of the respondents showed agreement (46.8 %). However, more than a quarter of responses was either negative or partially positive (28.5 %).

The common reasons provided by the participants for their agreement on target language teaching along with English language teaching were as follows:

a. language and culture cannot be separated from each other,
b. learning about target language culture is essential to have enough information about native English speaking countries and compare it with cultures in Turkey, and
c. interest and motivation towards learning English might increase by learning about the target language culture.

Some of the participants wrote:

> Yes, language represents culture. (Informant 38)
> Learning a language means learning a culture. (Informant 95)
> Yes, to compare and contrast the cultures of native English speaking countries with ours. (Informant 262)

Complementarily, a closer look at Table 1 will disclose a difference based on percentages among *parts* on negative responses to the open ended question. Only 13.7% of the students from the East disagree with the teaching of 'target language culture' along with English and this is the lowest rate. To provide more

insights into why the least percentage of students disagree, we would like to share ideas of two students.

The two of the students, who wanted to be English language teachers and agreed with the idea of English language instruction along with the 'target language culture', wrote the following regarding the difficulties they are experiencing in their province:

> I know that I am luckier than other students in Diyarbakır, as I am a student in a Anatolian high school (selective high school). But I think we lack the opportunities that the students in other regions possess regarding foreign language. I suppose this place is a far corner in Turkey. Even if there are new developments in English language teaching and learning, Diyarbakir will remain passive and behind. (Informant 329)

The ideas of the second student are supporting the ideas of the first one:

> I would like to thank you because you are conducting the survey here. Because, I will have a chance to spread my thoughts by answering the questionnaire even if my chances are low. It is advantageous to get education in Diyarbakır Anatolian High School. But we live in Turkey and we will be competing against other students at the university entrance examination or other areas. Every student will teach in different parts of the country as English language teachers in the future. Isn't it true that educating our future students with our limited knowledge and cultural insights regarding English language teaching will lead to a lack of awareness among them? This situation is not true for some schools, but what about others? (Informant 330)

As for the reasons why the participants disagreed on the teaching of the 'target language culture', the students stated 'cultural imperialism' and the importance of preserving their own identity and 'culture' as the major reasons for their disagreement. Some of the students wrote the following:

> No. In order not to experience cultural corruption. (Informant 61)

> No to cultural imperialism! (Informant 72)

> No. They are corrupting our culture. (Informant 230)

Some of the participants partially agreed on the teaching of 'target language culture' along with English language teaching. Their common reasons were; 'target language culture' should be taught generally without going into details without imposing it and influencing the students' own cultural values. Some of the participants stated:

> Yes, but a little without imposing it. (Informant 5)

> Yes, but without making the youth in Turkey admirers of Americans and the British. (Informant 35)

> Yes, but without imposing it on us. Our identity is important. (Informant 148)

To sum up, majority of the students (46.8 %) state that they agree on the teaching of the 'target language culture' along with English, as they believe 'culture' and language complement each other. Moreover, *East* seems to be the strongest supporter of this particular idea due to some anticipated socio-cultural reasons. On the contrary, more than a quarter of the students disagree or partially agree with the idea of teaching 'target language culture' in English language classes (28.5 %), because they think that the direct teaching of 'culture' in English language classes could turn into cultural imposition and cause the loss of their own cultural identity.

English Language Instruction

In order to answer the second research question, we need to have a look at what the students think about NESTs and NON-NESTs. About the nationality of English language teachers, the participants agreed that they would prefer English language teachers from the U.K. (M=4.11) or the U.S.A. (M=3.81) the most. The participants were also asked to rank their preferences of English language teachers. Native English teachers who can speak Turkish were ranked in the first place (M=1.90) by the students, English language teachers from Turkey who lived in countries where English is the native language were regarded in the second place (M=2.69),

As for the students' opinions on the characteristics of English language teachers in general, the participants agreed that English language teachers should be able to speak Turkish (M=4.09), be familiar with cultures in Turkey (M=4.06), be familiar with 'target language culture' (M=4.23). When asked about the characteristics of English teachers from Turkey, the participants agreed that they understand the difficulties the students face while learning English better than foreign teachers (M=3.89). The students were also asked to rate their agreement on three statements about the characteristics of NESTs. The participants agreed that they inform the students about 'target language culture' (M=4.08), teach the 'target language culture' better than English language teachers from Turkey (M=3.95).

In conclusion, the participants agreed that native English teachers teach English better than English language teachers from Turkey while the latter understands the difficulties they face better. In addition, they also emphasized that English language teachers should be able to speak Turkish, and be familiar with the cultures in Turkey.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aims to investigate the understandings and preferences of high school students on the role of 'culture' in ELT. Most of the previous studies in the ELT field target English language teachers, and the voice of language learners remains to be weak in terms of their opinions and preferences

about 'culture' in English language learning/teaching as well as English language teachers. The purpose of this study was to listen to the voice of the language learners and amplify it by reporting in academia. In the following paragraphs, the findings of the study will be discussed in regard to the analyses conducted and the related literature.

The findings for the characteristics of English language teachers suggest that the participants prefer English language teachers from the U.K. in the first place followed by language teachers from the U.S.A. These findings were similar to the results of Prodromou's (1992) study, as the Greek English language learners prefer firstly British English followed by American English as a model for English. Moreover, the participants are asked to rank English language teachers according to their characteristics and nationality. NESTs who can also speak Turkish are ranked at the top, followed by English language teachers from Turkey who have lived in native English speaking countries. As for the characteristics of language teachers, the participants agree that English language teachers should be able to speak Turkish and be familiar with cultures in Turkey. These findings support the importance of the strengths possessed by non-native English speaking teachers (Moussu, 2002, 2006: Liang, 2002; Mahboob, 2003; Cheung, 2002; Cheung & Braine, 2007; Fahmy & Briton, 1992; Kelsh & Santana-Williamson, 2002) and the necessity of inclusion of the 'local culture' in English language learning process (Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; Kramsch & Thorne, 2002; McKay, 2003).

As for the participants' preferences on which 'culture' should be included in textbooks, British culture was in the first place, then American culture followed by cultures in Turkey. They further state that they would like to learn about the similarities and differences between the cultures of native English speaking countries and cultures in Turkey.

The responses given to the open-ended question complement the quantitative findings regarding the section about cultural elements. The majority of the students (46.8%) agree that 'target language culture' should be taught along with English. However, 28.5% of the participants disagree or partially agree with the idea. These students who partially agree or disagree with the idea of teaching 'target language culture' along with English are aware of the importance of the 'local culture', and these findings support the necessity of the inclusion of the 'local culture' in English language teaching/learning process (Bhatt, 2005; Canagarajah, 2005, 2007; Kachru, 1985, 1992, 1996, 1997; Kachru & Nelson, 1996; Kramsch, 2002; Kramsch & Sullivan, 1996; McKay, 2003). As for teaching the 'target language culture', the participants emphasize the necessity of 'target language culture', supporting the ideas of Byram and Flemming (1998) in terms of the inclusion of 'target language culture' in English language learning/teaching process. Furthermore, the finding regarding students' disagreement seem to reveal the socio-economic differences among the *parts* and an indicative of these students' eagerness towards language learning.

Pedagogical Implications

The current study suggests several implications for the field of ELT. The findings of the study underline the strengths possessed by NON-NESTs and the importance of the inclusion of 'local culture' in classroom activities. Thus, the implications are related to material development, classroom practices, and language teacher hiring practices.

The responses obtained from the participants suggest that elements or topics related to cultures in Turkey should be included in English language teaching/learning textbooks. In most of the educational institutions in Turkey, textbooks written by British writers are used. In other words, the English language teaching/learning materials are imported from the *inner circle*. The findings of the current study might suggest well-known textbook publishers to prepare textbooks related to the needs and demands of English language learners, and material development units of educational institutions to design 'local culture' related materials more frequently, which in turn will affect classroom practices to a great extent.

Furthermore, the findings of the present study might have two important implications for decision makers in language teaching institutions. The first one is related to the status of NON-NESTs. Administrators need to consider some significant characteristics possessed by NON-NESTs during teacher hiring process. The study reveals that NON-NESTs have several strengths such as familiarity with the 'local culture', knowledge about the native language as well as being familiar with the difficulties students are facing. These characteristics need to be taken into account prior to decision on hiring teachers. The second implication is pertaining to NESTs. Decision makers should aim to design short educational programs to raise NESTs' awareness towards languages and cultures of their students. In majority of language education institutions around the world, NESTs are preferred due to their powerful status over NON-NESTs. However, the participants of the study highlighted the ability to speak the native language of students and familiarity with their cultures as strengths of language teachers. Consequently, NESTs should be supported with some cultural insights, because being a native English speaking language teacher does not necessarily mean being an effective English language teacher.

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Appendix 1

The Questionnaire

Section I: Reasons for learning English

(Q1.1) Education in the U.K. or U.S.
(Q1.2) Education in other countries where English is the native language
(Q1.3) Education in countries where English is the official language
(Q1.4) Education in countries where English is a foreign language
(Q1.5) To communicate with Americans or the English
(Q1.6) To communicate with people from other countries where English is the native language
(Q1.7) To communicate with people from countries where English in the official language
(Q1.8) To communicate with people from countries where English in a foreign language
(Q1.9) To find work after graduation
(Q1.10) To use the internet
(Q1.11) To get informed about American or British culture
(Q1.12) To get informed about the culture of other countries where English is the native language
(Q1.13) To get informed about the culture of countries where English is the official language
(Q1.14) To get informed about the culture of countries where English is spoken as a foreign language
(Q1.15) To get informed about American or British literature
(Q1.16) To get informed about the literatures of other countries where English is the native language
(Q1.17) To get informed about the literatures of countries where English is the official language
(Q1.18) To get informed about the literatures of countries where English is spoken as a foreign language

Section 2: Content of English Language Lessons
Skills and aspects of language covered in English language classes

Items
(Q2.1) Grammar
(Q2.2) Reading
(Q2.3) Listening

(Q2.4) Writing
(Q2.5) Speaking
(Q2.6) Vocabulary
(Q2.7) Culture of the language

Suggestions for more effective English language learning classes

(Q3.1) Grammar
(Q3.2) Speaking activities
(Q3.3) Listening activities
(Q3.4) Reading
(Q3.5) Vocabulary exercises
(Q3.6) Writing activities
(Q3.7) Information about target language culture
(Q3.8) Pair or group work

Section 3: Characteristics of English Language Teachers

- Students' opinions about the nationality of English language teachers

(Q4.1) Turkey
(Q4.2) U.S.A.
(Q4.3) U.K.
(Q4.4) From other countries where English is the native language
(Q4.5) From countries where English is the official language
(Q4.6) From any foreign country
(Q4.7) From either Turkey or a foreign country

- Students' opinions about English language teachers

(Q5.1) To be able to speak Turkish
(Q5.2) To be familiar with cultures in Turkey
(Q5.3) To be familiar with target language culture
(Q5.4) To be a native speaker of English

- Students' opinions about English language teachers from Turkey

(Q6.1) They understand the difficulties we face while learning English better than native English teachers
(Q6.2) They teach English better than native English teachers
(Q6.3) They have enough information about target language culture
(Q6.4) They can teach target language culture with contrasting it with cultures in Turkey
(Q6.5) They inform us about target language culture

- Students' opinions about native English speaking language teachers

(Q7.1) They teach English better than English language teachers from Turkey
(Q7.2) They teach target language culture better than English language teachers from Turkey
(Q7.3) They inform us about their own culture

- Students' preferences about the nationality of English language teachers (Ranking)

(Q8.1) English language teachers whose native language is English
(Q8.2) English language teachers from Turkey
(Q8.3) English language teachers whose native language is English and who can speak Turkish
(Q8.4) English language teachers from Turkey who lived in countries where English is the

native language
(Q8.5) English language teachers who are the graduates of English language teaching departments

Section 4: Content of English Language Textbooks

(Q9.1) Life and culture in Turkey
(Q9.2) Life and culture in the U.S.A. and U.K.
(Q9.3) Life and culture in other countries where English is the native language
(Q9.4) Life and culture in countries where English is an official language
(Q9.5) Life and culture in countries where English is a foreign language
(Q9.6) Issues related to science
(Q9.7) Issues related to technology
(Q9.8) Issues related to societies
(Q9.9) Issues related to politics
(Q9.10) Issues related to world history
(Q9.11) American and British literature
(Q9.12) Literatures of other countries where English is the native language
(Q9.13) Literatures of countries where English is the official language
(Q9.14) Literatures of countries where English is spoken as a foreign language

Section 5: Cultural Elements

- Which culture the students associate English with (Ranking)

(Q10.1) American culture
(Q10.2) British culture
(Q10.3) Culture of countries where English is the native language
(Q10.4) Culture of countries where English is the official language
(Q10.5) Culture of countries where English is spoken as a foreign language
(Q10.6) No culture

- Students' opinions about various topics

(Q11.1) To be able get geographic information about places where English is spoken
(Q11.2) To be able get historical information about places where English is spoken
(Q11.3) To learn the history of the countries where English is spoken as compared to history of Turkey
(Q11.4) To learn about the similarities and differences between the cultures of countries where English is spoken and cultures in Turkey
(Q11.5) To learn and understand values of countries where English is spoken
(Q11.6) To learn about how the people behave in various circumstances in countries where English is spoken

Open-ended question

(Q12) Should target language culture be taught along with English? Please explain why/why not

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This study was conducted as part of a research project funded by TÜBİTAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey), Project Code: 104K085.

An Investigation on Self-Reported Writing Problems and Actual Writing Deficiencies of EFL Learners in the Beginners' Level

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 24-38

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

This study was informed by Flavell and Willman's (1977, in Hacker, Dunlosky, & Graesser, 1998) definitions of metacognition which include " knowledge of the task and one's own cognitive resources, and monitoring, or the ability to control and regulate one's thinking" (p. 94). Points investigated were the following: EFL learners' writing difficulties as reported by them and as identified by the teacher raters; if there is an agreement between self-assessment and raters' assessment of the students' output; aspects of process knowledge considered by the participants when they write; and activities which these students believe can help overcome their difficulties. Participants were twenty-six EFL students from the Center for Language Learning of De La Salle University in the beginners' level, and who belong to different nationalities. An instrument consisting of three parts was used: Part I asked for personal information. Part II required the students to write two or three paragraphs about their writing difficulties; and Part III asked how they thought their difficulties could be overcome. Final task was for the participants to rate their written output using a 0-5 rating scale. Two English professors were invited to interrate. Writing difficulties were categorized as they appeared, making the analysis data-driven. Students' report shows their deep involvement in thinking processes before writing, but it diminishes during the writing stage. Means are lowest in the post-writing stage, their concern being on grammar, vocabulary, and the final output. Students admit that consistently speaking and writing in English, and being given encouragements, as well as more opportunities to interact with foreign nationals, can help them overcome their writing problems.

Keywords: Writing instruction, writing problems and writing deficiencies, teaching English as a foreign language, self-reports in language learning

Introduction

That more learning takes place when students are trained to be autonomous and when they are given freedom to negotiate meaning (Altan & Trombly, 2001), and that "self-assessment accuracy is a condition of learner autonomy" (Blanche & Merino 1989, p.313) is upheld by modern educators and researchers. Research findings stress the usefulness of assessment tools which may come in different forms: dialogue journals, learning logs, diaries, standardized appraisal forms, including students' oral or written output. Not only do these tools enable the students to evaluate their own performance; learners' use of these self-evaluation devices provides educators insights both on these students' strengths and weaknesses, in addition to making known their linguistic abilities. As Shaaban (2001) notes, a student's writing ability, as well as their improvement over time can be gleaned from dialogue journals, as well as from learning logs which bear a "record of the students' experiences with the use of the English language outside the classroom" (p.20). In Venkatesh's (2003) study on the development of graduate learners' monitoring proficiencies and task understandings in the context of a complex writing task, the 17 students involved were found to have exhibited signs of a general monitoring ability across the six weekly learning logs, which they were asked to keep. These logs were based on the content being covered in one of their graduate courses. Learners' improvement on monitoring proficiencies was also noted as instruction progressed. No relationships, however, were found between the measure of task understanding and the learners' monitoring abilities. Even L_2 teachers have benefited from diary studies conducted lately. Zeyrec (2001) reports on the success she experienced when she did a diary study of 24 fourth year ELT students at Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. Findings reveal her students' personal views on professional growth, their openness to methodologies in class and innovative ideas on professional development (p.13), concretizing her ideas for these student teachers' professional development.

Any of the aforementioned tools can be possibly used for self-assessment with students being asked to write down how they have performed in their English language class or how they have used the English language during the day. These devices then become a good source of information about each learner's strengths and weaknesses and they can eventually prove useful not only for their teachers, but also for the learners themselves who are given the opportunity to show how they think and learn. This observation was pointed out too by Mok, Lung, Cheng, Cheung, and Ng (2006) in their study on the use of metacognitive approach for self-assessment of teacher education students.

The implications of self-rating for foreign language and teachers and researchers is one reason why Blanche and Merino (1989) summarized the literature from different parts of the world on self-evaluation of foreign language skills. Overall, they noted consistency in agreement between self-assessments and ratings using different criteria. Part of their summary reports the absence of significant relationships "between the accuracy of students' evaluations of their foreign language skills and their actual (classroom/test) performance" (p.324). Lower correlations were observed between "examination results not based on situational models, and global self-assessments of 'macroskills' like writing..."

(p.324). One positive observation is that learners appeared motivated as revealed by self-evaluation measures.

Chen's (2002) study, which attempted to investigate the problems of university EFL writing in Taiwan, was meant to obtain insights on how EFL writing instruction in Taiwan could be improved. As in the present study, Chen asked the student participants (28 sophomores) to write a self-reflective report on a given topic presenting their problems when writing in English. Results show similarities on the two analyses – one done by the researcher and the other by the research assistant. Following are the points showing commonalities between the students' self-appraised performance and their actual writing difficulties: (1) Word usage and English expressions, (2) confusion about the subtle differences among similar words due to insufficient cultural knowledge, (3) limited vocabulary, (4) grammatical errors, (5) organization, (6) errors on prepositions (idioms) or slang, (7) L_1 influence, and (8) independent thinking – ranging from lexical, syntactic levels to rhetorical and cultural levels.

Framework of the Study

This investigation is informed by Flavell and Wellman's definitions of metacognition (1977 in Hacker, Dunlosky, & Graesser, 1998) which include "knowledge of the task and one's own cognitive resources, and monitoring, or the ability to control and regulate one's thinking" (p. 94). The roles of two content areas of knowledge are cited by Hacker et al., namely process knowledge, which includes setting goals, evaluating goal progress, and making necessary adjustments, and product knowledge, which refers to awareness of text types, structures, and organization. Beliefs about one's competence, motivation, affect, and strategies form part of the process knowledge. Product knowledge, on the other hand, is said to embrace the function and purpose of a text in a "defined social context, written for a specific purpose and particular audience" (p. 94). Presented theories on metacognition correspond to those involved in the composing processes as revealed in Flower and Hayes' (1981, in Hacker, Dunlosky, & Graesser, 1998) study, who noted three major aspects involved: planning, translating, and reviewing (p. 95). Three sub processes in turn comprise the planning stage: establishing a purpose or goal setting, generation of ideas, and organization of ideas, at which time ideas or content are logically arranged to make them comprehensible. Translating can be regarded as the transformation or concretization of ideas into their written form. Another process reflecting metacognition is reviewing which enables the writers to re-see what they have composed and "compare" them to the internal representation of intended text" (p. 96).

Such processes came to be regarded as synonymous to "making meaning", "intervention", and "multiple drafts" (Emig, 1974; Zamel, 1976, in Raimes, 2000, p. 154). Such processes, too, provide learners the opportunity to self-regulate their learning. Butler and Winnie (1995, in Hacker, et al., 1998) report that "Theoreticians seem unanimous – the most effective learners are self-regulating" (p. 13) and that "accurate self-assessment of what is known or not known" leads to effective self-regulation (Schoenfeld, 1987, in Hacker, et al., p. 13).

Kamimura's (2000) attempt to investigate what processing tasks are considered by EFL writers before writing, during writing, and after writing, supports the roles played by the two content areas of knowledge discussed above. Such study tried to test if there is a close link between process and product approaches to EFL writing instruction, an integration that cannot be denied by those who have had exposures to these two approaches. Learners, too, can be led to develop awareness of their use of grammar, vocabulary, verb tenses, articles, determiners, prepositions, verb-subject agreement, correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation --- language points that are usually missed or misused by students – and which other scholars have noted, too: Chen (2002), when he looked at Taiwanese students' writing difficulties; and Ashwell (2000), when he studied his students' written work and the pattern of the teacher's response to it.

Conducting studies then, to investigate how closely students of EFL students assess their own learning as compared to the teachers' assessment, appears to be timely. As Nunan (1999) claims, "By having learners rate themselves against their learning goals, the teacher not only develops the learning self-critical faculties, but also serves to remind them of the goals of the instructional process" (pp. 192-193). Given options, individuals learn to make decisions and select what they think would be the best materials or strategies for their decisions.

Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to investigate EFL learners' writing difficulties as reported by them and as identified by the teacher-raters. Following are the specific points studied:

1) What are sampled EFL learners' self-reported writing difficulties?
2) What are sampled EFL learners' actual writing difficulties as identified by the teacher raters?
3) Is there an agreement between students' self-assessment and the raters' evaluation of the students' written output?
4) What aspects of process knowledge are considered by the participants before, during, and after writing?
5) What activities/strategies would sampled EFL learners hope to employ to overcome reported difficulties?

Methodology

Participants

A total of 26 EFL learners in the beginners' level -- 13 females and 13 males – participated in the study. These students are enrolled in the Center for Language Learning (CeLL) of De La Salle University, Manila, the Philippines and are taking up either one or more of the following courses for the month of February 2007: Writing Skills 2; Grammar 2 or 4; Reading 3 or 6; and Conversation 3, 4, or 6. Languages spoken as declared by the participants are found in Table1.

Table 1
Participants' Profile in Terms of Spoken Languages

L_1	f	%	L_2	f	%	FL	f	%
Korean	15	58	English	8	30.8	English	16	61.5
Turkish	2	7.60	Japanese	3	11.5	Spanish	1	3.8
Tagalog	2	7.60	Persian	1	3.8	No answer	9	34.6
Thai	1	3.8	No answer	14	53.8			
Chinese	1	3.8						
Mandarin	1	3.8						
Kordish	1	3.8						
No answer	3	11.5						

As can be seen, more than half of the participants sampled have Korean as their first language, and English is regarded as a foreign language by a little more than 60% of the participants. The no-answer results could probably be due to some participants' failure to understand fully what first or second language, or even foreign language (FL) means despite given explanations during the answering of the questionnaire. Others, however, seem smart enough to declare a second language as distinct from a language that is foreign to them. Although 8% of them claim English as their L2, they are considered part of the sampled EFL learners as their written and spoken English suggest so.

Instrument

The instrument used was a researcher-made questionnaire consisting of three parts: the first part sought to obtain personal information including the students' spoken languages. Part II consisted of a writing task which required them to write two or three paragraphs about their writing difficulties – with examples – and possible reasons for such difficulties; and the third part contained questions asking them how they think their difficulties could be overcome. As this type of instrument has been used, too, by other researchers (Chen, 2002) and is recognized as a "global" type of assessment (Blanche & Merino, 1989, p.324), no pilot testing was done to validate it. In Part II instrument, the students were also asked what exercises, activities, strategies taught in the Center where they were enrolled in they did find useful, and why they wanted to study English. Lastly, Kamimura's (2000) questionnaire concerning what the students thought and did before, during, and after writing, was used.

Data Collection

The instrument was administered after the 1:15-3:15 sessions on Friday afternoon during the month of February in one of the CELL classrooms. Invited were students from the afternoon classes who were willing to stay until 5:00 p.m. Students were asked to complete all parts before they left and to rate their written output in Part II using the following scale:

0 = Can't write anything intelligible; nothing can be understood

1 = Writing is *poor* – very little can be understood or considered clear
2 = Writing is *fair* – less than one-half of the paragraph can be understood or considered clear
3 = Writing is on the *average* – half of the whole paragraph can be understood or considered clear
4 = Writing is *good* – more than half of the paragraph can be understood or considered clear
5 = Writing is *very good* – all or almost all sentences can be understood or considered clear

Such descriptors were based on the quality of the students' written work in their grammar and writing classes. The rating scale was explained in simpler terms to the students whose level was very low.

Interrating

Two colleagues from the Department of English and Applied Linguistics – one a Ph.D. student who had taught English for more than 30 years, and the other, also a Ph.D. student who had taught for 13 years in the tertiary level -- were invited to interrate the students' essays. The three of us rated the students' papers independently at first; then we convened to decide what rating should be given to each paper.

Students' self-ratings were then compared with the raters' assessment per paper.

Data Analysis

Writing difficulties were coded and categorized as they appeared, the regularly recurring ones being similar to what Chen (2002) and Ashwell (2000) noted in their studies: word choice or vocabulary, articles/determiners, use of the plural/singular forms of nouns, spelling, prepositions, punctuation marks, agreement between the subject and the verb, and verb tense.

As the analysis was data-driven, additional errors were noted and coded by the raters. Such difficulties were partly reported, too, by the students in this study: use of the past participle, agreement between pronouns and antecedents, establishing cohesion, use of supporting details/organization of ideas, and addressing the prompt.

Findings and Discussion

EFL Learners' Writing Difficulties

Table 2 displays the summary of the participants' self-reported difficulties when they write. It can be noted that the sampled EFL learners consider vocabulary and grammar as their topmost writing difficulties, these two problems having been the concern of more than 60% of females and males combined. This finding is similar to that of Chen (2002) who investigated the writing problems of EFL students in a university in Taiwan. Among the difficulties reported by 28

Taiwanese freshmen and sophomore students, 60.7% were on vocabulary and 50% were on grammar. Topping their list was lexical choice which was not directly reported by the EFL learners from CELL and which was probably part of their report on vocabulary.

Table 2
EFL Learners' Writing Difficulties

	F		M		Total %
	f	%	f	%	
Vocabulary	8	30.7	8	30.7	61.4
Grammar	8	30.7	10	38.5	69.2
Spelling	3	11.5	1	3.8	15.3
Prepositions	1	3.8	2	7.7	11.5
Articles/ Determiners/ Number	1	3.8	-	-	3.8
Verb Tense	1	3.8	1	3.8	7.6
Word Order	1	3.8	1	3.8	7.6
Interference of L_1	1	3.8	1	3.8	7.6
L-R system of writing in L_1	-	-	2	7.7	7.7
Not good command of English	1	3.8	-	-	3.8
Punctuation	-	-	-	-	-

Others might have integrated in Grammar their reports on Articles/Determiners/Number, Verb tense, Prepositions, showing low results on these difficulties. While the participants' focus seem to have centered on vocabulary and grammar, the raters, on the other hand, observed several other problems, including organization, lack of sufficient supporting details, and failure to address the prompt. Students' lack of confidence was noticeable during the completion of the given writing task, a number of them attempting to submit their papers with nothing written in part II or with something written which was irrelevant to the prompt. Among the reasons they gave for non- or almost non-compliance to the task were the following: they "do not write," they " don't know what to write," their "English is not good," they are "worried." They had to be given some prodding, motivation, and guidance before they were able to write something acceptable for the purpose. A little less than 4% seem to be bothered by the difference in word order and in the system of writing between their L_1 and their FL, which is English, and one female confessed her not having a good command of the English language as a whole.

Sample difficulties noted by the raters in students' papers:

A. Vocabulary/ Word choice
   M8: ... very difficulties for me. [...very difficult for me].
   F2: ... I'm not customized to use those. [She probably means accustomed to using those].
   F4: ... I feel difficult that make me perfect sentence. [maybe she means "I find it difficult to write a perfect sentence].
   F11: ... I have another problem but I can't surface... [She probably means "I can't make that other problem surface or I can't identify that particular problem}.
B. Prepositions/Number (Plural or Singular)
   M4: ... We use different kind of grammar....
   M3: I enrolled ^ this university to enhance my knowledge...
   M8: I want some teacher ^ speak slowly...
   M11: I have a problem of vocabularies ...
   F2: When I speak to other they don't care...
C. Spelling
   M13: My problem is grammer...
   M6: I think English diffucult.
   M4: ... for example the stracher of sentences...
D. Articles
   M3: ... to develop a English language
   M4: ... If we have a time to visit a place....
   F1: I'm not a American...
E. Punctuation/Past participle
   M6: I need is Grammar, Because I don't have grammar Not use to grammar.
F. Agreement (v-subj; Pronoun-antecedent)
   M9: I don't studies Eng. in Korea.
   M3: ... I think the difficulties for me is my verb and preposition.
   F1: So every English academy teach them...
G. Verb tense
   M10: I study English from I was a Junior high school. [have studied English since].
   M2: Nevertheless, I'm think about that.
H. Use of Cohesive Devices
   F2: Because the articles don't exist in Korean, so I', not...
   When I speak to other they don't care whatever I'm right or wrong in articles, but writing in English is important.
I. Organization of ideas/Addressing the Prompt

   An example of a paper with some sense of organization and with a good attempt to address the prompt (given a rating of 4.0 – meaning GOOD --- by the raters):

   F9: I of course have some difficulties of writing in English as a foreign language learner.

   First, I don't have enough vocabularies to write something fluently. Even though I sometimes have enough vocabularies, I am confused

what usages I have to use. So I need to learn more vocabularies in specific sentence or text.

Second, my mother tongue or my thought in my first language interfere with my thought in English. That's why I make some mistakes while I'm writing in English. But I believe of a lot of input by reading English can be given, I can overcome that problem. Good materials will help me write well in English.

Actually, I'm taking only one course in CELL now. The class is related with conversation, so I wasn't able to write about the class' influences on writing.

Sample paper that almost disregards the prompt and contains insufficient details to support the opening sentences:

F10: I think writing is difficult because I didn't have a good practice. I didn't have a good grammar.

F12: My Problem is Grammar, fix up written, and mixing my head.

I want to common things, talk, and speak.

And diary is homework good for us.

Generally, the students' writing problems seem to have stemmed from their poor command of the English language and lack of facility in using English, it being a foreign language to most or all of them and they being in the beginners' level. One good sign, though, is their admission of possible reasons behind those difficulties – that they lack practice in speaking and writing English, that their L1 interferes with their use of a FL, that they are poor in grammar and spelling, and that did not know the right words or lexicon to use, among others.

Organization of their ideas seems to have been badly affected by the aforementioned shortcomings, such that although they have had attempts to give enough supporting details, they seem unsuccessful due to lack of vocabulary in their repertoire, and probably because of their fear to make mistakes, as revealed in the following samples:

M5: *... Some time I also worried my spelling was wrong...*

M2: *... I think it's shortage of my confidence speaking English ...*

F3: *I am really worried about "How to Speak English" like that.*

F8*: I think English is not hard. Compare then other things.*

The most important thing is the encourage.
Not just well known about English. But also grammer.
My opinion. Many people just afraid of how to talk to. or
how to write to English.
Because they are just worried about am I wrong or am I right? Like this. do not expectation of perfect.
Just encourage. Please.

It is not surprising for the EFL learner participants to seem unmindful of the content, organization of ideas, and manner of addressing the prompt. Their inadequate facility on the use of English tends to make them conscious of the basic tools that they need in order to write: grammar and vocabulary. Their main concern appears to be how to concretize in written form -- using correct English grammar and lexicon – their thoughts, their ideas.

Awareness of their writing deficiencies and the latter's underlying reasons can lead to the students' own monitoring and regulating "of the course of their own thinking", one of the two general attributes associated with activities regarded as 'metacognitive' (Kluwe, 1982, in Hacker, Dunlosky, & Graesser,1998, p.8). This awareness, coupled with the students' expressed motivation to learn English, namely: to satisfy job requirements, prepare for university life, prepare for planned migration, be more successful in business, enjoy life, be useful in the world, communicate with friends, and use the most important language in the world, to name some, can inspire them to overcome their language problems and achieve their goal.

Self-Assessment vs. Raters' Assessment

Results on the possible relation between students' self-assessment and that of the raters are categorized into three types: a) perfect agreement, meaning students and raters give each student's paper exactly the same rating; b) partial agreement, which means a difference of 1 exists between the two ratings; and c) no agreement, when a difference of two (2) exists between the student's and the raters' ratings. Table 3 presents the findings on assessment of student papers.

Table 3
Agreement Between Self-Assessment and Raters' Assessment

Perfect Agreement		Partial Agreement		No Agreement	
f	%	f	%	f	%
9	34.6	9	34.6	8	30.8

Findings imply that students have the tendency to overrate their written output, creating both small and big disparities when compared to the raters' evaluation. The No agreement and Partial Agreement results total more than 60%. Two students – one female, one male – however, underestimated their writing abilities, but generally, more females were observed to have overestimated the quality of their writing. The inconsistency noted between the two assessments somehow supports Blanche and Merino's (1989) report on self-evaluation of writing skills using a foreign language. Writing as a more encompassing type of assessment was found to have low correlations with the results of the examinations as found in their reviewed literature. This observation is perhaps not surprising. Assessing one's written work holistically such as through the use of a 0-5 rating scale, might not have been easy for individual students. With their low level in terms of language proficiency, combined with the absence of someone knowledgeable enough to deliberate with on their self-assigned score, plus the fact that it had to be done by the students alone, a high level of agreement may indeed be difficult to achieve. Blanche and Merino claim that "The self-test items that seem to have yielded the most accurate answers contain descriptions of concrete linguistic situations that the learner can size up in behavioral terms" (p.324). There seems to be a need to construct a more objective and specific self-assessment tool

that would yield closer, if not perfect, agreement between the two types of assessment.

Aspects of Process Knowledge Considered by EFL Learners

Table 4 shows the self-reported tasks done by the learners before, during, and after writing.

As can be seen, the students considered major processing strategies before writing, a little more than 80% paying attention to the content and almost 70% mindful of how to organize their ideas. Almost 60% admit having read the instructions repeatedly, a little more than 60% made an outline, and more than 50% jotted down words. Nearly 50% each claimed they listed down ideas and thought about their readers in preparation for their writing. Overall, the students seem highly involved in thinking processes during the pre-writing stage.

During the writing stage their processing appears to have diminished, probably because they did not want to waste time while writing. They seem conscious of their grammar – close to 70% claiming they paid attention to it – and almost 60% having tried to write as much as possible using English while being mindful of the content. Close to 40% avoided writing whatever idea came to mind, implying that they took care not to commit errors. Close to 20 or 30% considered other strategies like organization -- which anyway they considered during the pre-writing stage -- vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation. They admit not stopping often in the middle of their writing, and half of them claimed they were conscious of their reader or audience as they wrote. The lowest mean among all the thinking processes in the three stages can be noted in the post-writing stage when a little over 65% said they paid attention to grammar, and very close to 60% showed concern for vocabulary. One possible reason why the means of the students' thinking processes gradually diminished as they advanced to the next writing stage is their desire to finish the given task early enough. Another reason could be their being too engrossed in their writing. They might have wanted to preserve the ideas that were flowing in.

Means are lowest during the post-writing stage, but the students were highly concerned about grammar and vocabulary. They seemed to be too concerned about the output, hoping it would be presentable enough to be read by their audience. This concern tends to form part of their product knowledge, which, as defined earlier, is said to embrace the function and purpose of a text in a "defined social context, written for a specific purpose and particular audience" (Flavell & Wellman, 1977, in Hacker, et al., 1998, p. 94).

Table 4
Processing Tasks Considered by EFL Writers

	Pre-Writing	Yes	%	No	%
A.	1. Thought about the content	21	80.7	5	19.2
	2. Thought about the organization of ideas	18	69.2	8	30.7
	3. Thought about my reader or audience	12	46.1	14	53.8
B.	4. Read the instructions many times	15	57.7	11	42.3
	5. Made an outline	16	61.5	15	57.6
	6. Listed ideas	12	46.1	14	53.8
	7. Jotted down words	14	53.8	12	46.1
		Mean = 59.3		Mean = 43.4	
While Writing					
	8. Thought and wrote in English from the beginning	15	57.5	11	42.3
	9. Avoided writing whatever idea came to mind	11	42.3	15	57.6
	10. Tried to write as much as possible	15	57.7	11	42.3
	11. Seldom stopped in the middle	7	26.9	19	73
		Mean = 46.15		Mean = 53.79	
	12. Paid attention to:				
	Content	15	57.7	6	23.1
	Reader or Audience	13	50	4	15.4
	Organization	5	19.2	9	34.6
	Vocabulary	8	30.7	9	34.6
	Grammar	17	65.4	.	.
	Spelling/Punctuation	6	23.1	2	7.69
Post Writing		Mean = 41.01		Mean = 23.1	
	After writing, reread and tried revising it, paying attention to:				
	Content	8	30.7	6	23.1
	Audience	4	15.4	9	34.6
	Organization	6	23.1	9	34.6
	Vocabulary	15	57.7	2	7.7
	Grammar	17	65.4	2	7.7
	Spelling/Punctuation	12	46.1	4	15.4
		Mean = 39.7		Mean = 20.5	

Note. Adapted from "Integration of Process and Product Orientation in EFL Writing Instruction" by T. Kamimura, 2000, *RELC Journal*, 31 (2) p.1-27.

Suggested Ways to Overcome Self-Reported Difficulties

Participants sampled admit that they can overcome their writing problems by consistently speaking and writing in English. One of them even cautioned against meeting students from the same country. Her idea is to speak English with other nationals using English, instead of using their L1. Most of them believe that practice will help them master their FL. Other tasks believed to be useful in enhancing their mastery of the English language are the following: jotting down new words, memorizing words (and probably their meanings too), keeping a diary, reading good materials, getting more input from teachers, being given encouragements, studying grammar, practicing, talking to other foreign students, and consistently speaking and writing English, the last four having been regarded as helpful activities being done in their CeLL classes. Using an electronic dictionary and traveling have been suggested as well. Students' having minimal errors in spelling was probably due to their use of an electronic dictionary. This had probably helped maintain part of their self-confidence.

Conclusion

The absence of a higher category of agreement between EFL learners' self-assessment and the raters' rating implies the need to help students "internalize criteria for quality writing" (Thome, 2001, Abstract), as this can train students to assess their own writing in and out of school. Involving students in classroom-based assessment using rubrics on students writing, as suggested by Thome, can help students assess their own writing skills more accurately. Literature says learners' monitoring proficiencies improve as instruction progresses (Venkatesh, 2003). Instruction then, plays a significant role in training students to do a more accurate self-evaluation. Providing instruction in evaluation criteria, emphasizing "content/organization, mechanics and usage" (Marteski, 1998, Abstract), is favorable to the development of students' ability to self-assess. It seems imperative that the students be trained to become independent learners and skillful in evaluating their own performances (Ferris, 1982; Oskarson, 1980; in Blanche & Merino, 1989,), preferably following teacher-training sessions to develop students' self-assessment capabilities.

The students' consideration of high-order processing skills during the three stages in writing, particularly during the pre-writing part, is a positive sign. Such skills need to be honed further, as their development can make them better composers, better writers. It must be remembered that helping students to become more aware of their processing strategies means helping them develop their metacognitive skills – which should be every serious and dedicated educator's concern for the students under their charge.

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Korean Students' Language Learning Strategies and Years of Studying English as Predictors of Proficiency in English

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 39-61

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

This study predicted the English proficiency of Korean students using the components of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and number of months spent in the formal study of English. There were 302 Korean students, ages 14-18, who were requested to answer the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and an English ability test. The SILL includes strategies on memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies. An English Ability Test was used to measure skills on using grammar, increasing vocabulary, detecting grammatical errors, and reading comprehension. The multiple regression was used to analyze whether the SILL subscales and months spent in the formal study of English can significantly predict English proficiency. Only the compensation strategy and months spent in the formal study of English significantly predicted English ability. There was an increase in R (.35) when the months spent in the formal study of English were added with the SILL as predictors of English proficiency.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies, English proficiency

Introduction

English has become a principal asset in our world today. A study conducted by Pew Research Center showed that 66,000 people from 50 countries have said there is now a global consensus on the need to learn English (Mujica, 2003). According to Power (2005), "there are 350 million people in Asia alone who speak English as a foreign language. This figure is continuously increasing to the point that the ratio of non-native speakers of English as compared to the native speakers is three to one—clearly, the native speakers are being outnumbered by learners of English today" (p. 46). In a report by the South Korea tourist destination (2008), "there are not enough schools to meet the rising demand of middle class families for this English instruction" (p. 1). As a result, 29,511 children had left South Korea to study abroad in their elementary and high school days.

Learning a foreign language effectively means using adequate learning strategies (Meschyan & Hernandez, 2002). These language learning strategies are used in order to gain proficiency in English specifically among English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) learners. Proficiency is the ultimate goal of all language learning efforts (Nisbet, Tindall, & Arroyo, 2005). There are several studies that have been

consistent in their claims that language learning strategy and English proficiency are related (Liu, 2004). The pattern of strategy use has been significantly related to English proficiency (Nisbet, Tindall, & Arroyo, 2005). Studies show that more strategies are used; the more likely English proficiency will increase. This indicates that learners with low proficiency use insufficient strategies (Liu, 2004). Oxford (1990) and McLauglin (1987) emphasized that language performance was measured in many different ways: self-ratings of proficiency (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989), language proficiency and achievement tests (Lett & O'Mara, 1990; Oxford, Park-Oh, Ito, & Sumrall, 1993; Phillips, 1991; Wen & Johnson, 1991), entrance and placement examinations (Mullins, 1992), language course grades (Mullins, 1992), years of language study (Watanabe, 1990), and career status reflecting expertise in language learning (Ehrman & Oxford, 1989). Generally, language performance also refers to language proficiency (performance related to general standard of competence but not related to a specific curriculum), language achievement (performance linked to a specific curriculum), and language task behaviors (performance on specific language tasks) (Lan & Oxford, 2003). In fact, the proportion of the variance of English proficiency was supported and explained by the use of SILL strategies – having 51%, 58%, 53% and 40%. These variances, when taken together, show that there is a consistent positive relationship, from moderate to strong, between SILL and English proficiency. In most of these studies, although not in every circumstance, the relationship is linear (Oxford, 1996). It only shows that more advanced or more proficient students use strategies with increased frequency. With this rationale, the present study tested whether or not the use of language learning strategies predict English ability.

However, in learning EFL, strategies are not the only consideration in increasing proficiency. The time spent in studying formal English is a very important factor. However, the necessary length of time devoted to learning English has not been established yet based on studies. There is no specific number of months or years spent learning the English language to increase proficiency. Although some articles indicate that many people can already function well after studying English for a year or two, it does not mean that the learner has already acquired proficiency (Ward, 1998). Even though a learner may seem fluent in a language socially, he or she may experience difficulty with the language academically (Lake & Pappamihiel, 2003). Generally, it takes five to eight years of formal English studies to acquire proficiency (Lake & Pappamihiel, 2003). Research suggests that learners who speak English from scratch need about five to 10 years in school and how literate they are in their native language before they can do well in English (Ward, 1998). The present study used the months of formal study of English together with language learning strategies as predictors of English ability among Korean students studying English in the Philippines.

The present study used the factors of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social as language learning strategies (Oxford, 1990). These six strategies are important in language learning but the researchers have yet to identify which combinations are really critically important, effective and/or utilized by most of the Koreans in acquiring English proficiency. In addition, the structure of these factors is also investigated together with the number of months of learning formal English to predict English proficiency of Korean learners in the

Philippines. An English ability test and Oxford's SILL Korean version were used for this purpose.

English as a Foreign Language for Koreans

In a country like Korea, English programs are extremely expensive because there are few Koreans who speak English in the country. On one hand, most Korean children study English in public schools from third grade onwards, but English is taught by Korean-born instructors, and they mostly teach simple vocabularies only. If that is the case, there is little chance for the students to actually use English in conversations (Why would I want to teach in Korea, 2003). On the other hand, Filipinos started learning English as early as Kindergarten. This is the medium of instruction for almost 10 years and it results in nearly two generations of educated adolescents and young adults speaking fluent English (Randolph, 2007).

English for Koreans is learned as a foreign language (EFL) because they are learning English from a country whose L1 is not English but the teachers are definitely competitive and accurate with the English language. Here are some reasons why Koreans prefer learning EFL in the Philippines. First, English is widely spoken in the country as 93.5% of Filipinos can speak and understand the language very well because it is used as the business language and a medium of instruction in schools. Second, the Philippines offer the same quality of English education (when compared to other English speaking countries) at a lower cost. Lastly, the rich natural and cultural resources of the country attract visitors (Philippines ESL Tour Program, 2008).

In addition, the high school and college entrance exams which measure (among other things) English proficiency is one of the reasons why Koreans study English. It was reported that a student who does poorly in the high school test given will never be able to get into a top university for graduating Koreans (Why would I want to teach in Korea, 2003).

Oxford's Framework

The researcher chose to focus on Oxford's framework because according to Jones (1998) Oxford's framework has developed a system of language learning strategies which is more comprehensive and detailed compared to other models—where most of the factors are overlapping. In fact Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was used to determine the learning strategies of more than 8,000 students all over the world now. It is the "most comprehensive classification of learning strategies" according to Ellis (1994, p.539). SILL is a list of strategies according to Oxford's six categories and it is the most widely used inventory because it allows comparison for the study (Bremner, 1999).

In Oxford's framework, she divided her six factors into two. The two sets of taxonomy on language learning strategies are classified as direct and indirect learning strategies.

Direct learning strategies entail a mental process of receiving, retaining, storing, and retrieving the words or other aspects of the target language. Whereas in

indirect learning strategies, it is more on organization of learning through activities that facilitate the learner in regulating thoughts and feelings (Rausch, 2000).

The first type of taxonomy, the direct learning strategies emphasizes memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. It "involves direct learning and use of the subject matter, in this case a new language" (Oxford, 1990, pg. 11-12). The memory strategies are more focused on the memorization of words or word recall while the cognitive strategy are the mental strategy learners use to make sense of their learning. Memory strategies are those used for storage of information (Hismanoglu, 2000). It is said that insensitive use of memory strategies by EFL learners may indicate that it is a cultural habit because just like the Australian students, they revealed that remembering difficult words was not effective as opposed to Indonesians who confessed that they have a habit of rote learning behavior (Lengkanawati, 2004). This specific strategy is useful for quickly learning vocabularies—which is important especially in the beginning and intermediate stages of language learning but not necessarily later (Oxford, Cho, Leung, & Kim, 2004). Compensation strategies help learners to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication by switching to the mother tongue, using other clues, getting help and using a synonym (Hismanoglu, 2000; Shamis, 2002). It deals with the mind or the cognitive aspect of the individual. Cognitive strategies are more direct in manipulation of the learning material. Repetition is the key to achieve successes in learning a language and actions such as translation, note taking, key words and the like are encouraged in order to achieve this factor (O'Malley, Stewner-Manzanares, Russo, & Küpper, 1985). Compensation strategies include behaviors such as guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing (Hismanoglu, 2000). Yang's study (2007) stated that compensation strategies are the most frequent strategies Chinese learners use because they allow a great opportunity to guess the meaning despite of having limited grammatical and vocabulary knowledge.

The second type of taxonomy is the indirect learning strategies which include metacognitive, affective and social strategies (Hismanaoglu, 2000). Indirect strategies "contribute indirectly but powerfully to learning" (Oxford, 1990, pg. 11-12). The metacognitive strategy is applying skills in organizing plans, monitoring one's production or simply self-monitoring (O'Malley et al., 1985). Metacognitive strategies analyze one's mistake and not trying to make the same mistake again in the future that's why metacognitive strategies are developmental in nature. The findings of Liu's study (2004) revealed that when metacognition is highly used, it can provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process by planning, constant monitoring and evaluating (Oxford 1990, p.136). It implies that seeking opportunities keeps the EFL learners on track of their learning which is considered crucial given the poor environment such as the Philippines (Liu, 2004). Next would be the affective strategy. Affective strategies are concerned with the learner's emotional requirements such as confidence. Stern (1992) stated in his study that "good language learners are more or less conscious of these emotional problems" (pg. 266). In this case, it is believed that emotions can affect one's learning too (Hismanoglu, 2000). In learning a foreign language there are some instances whereby a learner may feel negative emotions along the way. A study revealed that the affect part of a learner can hinder or slow down learning process, for instance

anxiety (Ariza, 2002). This emotion creates discomfort and fear—fear of committing mistakes or fear of socializing with others is one of the examples of anxiety. In addition, Oxford (1990) emphasized that it is possible that learners are not familiar with paying attention to their own feeling. But it is noteworthy that this strategy is helpful when learners are anxious or is in need for a motivational boost therefore, high-proficiency learners may not require these strategies very much (Oxford, Cho, Leung, & Kim, 2004). The last factor for the indirect strategies would be the social strategies. As the word implies, social strategies deal with the people surrounding the learner and the environment as well. Social strategies lead to increased interaction with the target language (Hismanoglu, 2000). Social strategies are "activities which give them opportunities to be exposed to and practice their knowledge" as described by Wenden and Rubin's study (1987, p. 23-27).

For the past years, there had been numerous research studies regarding the relationship of language learning strategies and proficiency. Proficiency is pertaining to an individual's competency or ability in using a specific language, regardless of the situation in which it has been acquired (Bachman, 1990). In unfolding the description of language learning strategies, it can be known as a set of strategies, approaches, and behaviors or for its objective in acquisition of knowledge, production of effective learning, regulation of learning. Descriptions may vary but to put it in simpler terms, it can be clearly defined as what individuals do to aid them in their learning process (Bremner, 1999).

Since the 1970s, there have been several research investigation on language learning strategies. With this, it helped in understanding how a learner uses the skills in acquiring foreign languages (Ok, 2003). According to Reiss (1985), the trend in language learning strategies shifted from teachers to learners because educational researchers realized that what's more important is to understand the learner rather than the teacher. Learning a foreign language involves different learning strategies that are needed in order to master the language and eventually benefit from it. However, teaching a foreign language still faces so many problems and challenges specifically in terms of the learning methods (Lengkanawati, 2004).

Various researchers have agreed that the effective language learners have conscious usage of language learning strategies (Naiman, Frohlich & Todesco, 1975; Oxford, 1985; Wenden, 1985). In Liu's (2004) study, it revealed that the higher a learner's English proficiency, the more they use different combinations of learning strategies. On the other hand, the lower the learner's English proficiency, the lesser they use a strategy. The findings were consistent with other Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) researches such as Yu (2003) and Dreyer and Oxford (1996). In addition, in most of the findings of other researchers, they have found out that a successful language learner in general use more and better language learning strategies than those who are poor learners (Oxford, 1989; 1993). Some studies mentioned that the reason behind this is because of factors like age, gender, personality, motivation, self-concept, life-experience, learning style, excitement, and anxiety—all of these affect the way in which language learners learn a specific language (Hismanoglu, 2000).

Age as a factor was shown by several studies which claimed that young learners tend to use social strategies like discussing and asking help from others (Lee & Oxford, 2008). In contrast, an adult learner uses metacognition strategies

such as planning, organizing, and evaluating one's own learning (Lee & Oxford, 2008). Moreover, motivation influences the choice of strategies because according to Oxford (1990), more motivated students tend to use more strategies than less motivated students. In acquiring EFL, the learner's belief, which is defined as "psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true" (Richardson, 1996, p.102), greatly influences the learner's attitudes and his/her level of motivation in the acquisition of an EFL. Accordingly, they affect the progress of language acquisition and lessen the time spent devoted to language learning (Bernat, 2006). Finally, the cultural background on the other hand is influential too because rote memorization and other forms of memorization were found to be more prevalent to Asian students as compared to other cultural backgrounds. This is just one aspect that can affect the kind of strategy used when cultural background is considered.

Oxford (1990) emphasized that "Nationality or ethnicity influences strategy use" (1990, p.13). The importance of further research in different learning environments is to search for more consistent information within and across group of learners (Oxford, 1993, pg. 183). Although China already started exploring the topic in the mid 1980s and the rest of the world in the mid 1990s, there is still a need to further explore because the findings make it difficult to apply and understand for every context or learning environment (Liu, 2004). With this finding, one may say that for every culture, there is an effective way of learning a foreign language specifically for them alone (or it may be shared by other cultures as well).

Here are some findings from various research investigations that explored language learning from different context and then related it to English proficiency. In Bremner's (1999) study he included participants from Hong Kong who are English majors. He used SILL to explore the strategies that Chinese students utilized, and used self-report of students' English speaking and listening tests scores to measure their English proficiency. He revealed that out of the 50 specific strategies, 11 were significantly correlated to proficiency while Hoang (1999) found more proficient learners if these learners use more strategies effectively. The implications of not using all kinds of strategies in acquiring English is because as said in the study of Green and Oxford (1997) and Bremner (1999), only eight of the various strategies had a significant association to proficiency level in both of their studies. In this study, only six of the eight most common strategies were widely used among Korean students, specifically memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognition, affective and social strategies.

On the other hand, Halbach's study (2000) revealed that learners who got higher scores in their final exam frequently use different strategies. This was verified by analyzing 12 diaries of the participants which included their use of learning strategies and their high scores in exams. In the study of Shmais (2003), English majors in a Palestine University had significant memory strategy use in order to learn a foreign language. Various studies showed the preferred usage of compensation strategies among Korean students learning the English language, such as in Kim's study (1995), Lee's study (2002) and Grainger's study (1997). The preference of Korean EFL learners of using compensation strategies may be due to their need of coping with the diverse situations of communication and interaction

with their classmates and teachers in class. Applying compensation strategies in their language learning enables them to make up for their missing knowledge in the English language. It also reveals the effort exerted by learners in overcoming the limitations they encounter in speaking and writing (Ok, 2003).

In contrast, the compensation strategy is the lowest because it is said that some individual strategies could be attributed to culture and educational system (Shamis, 2002). In Palestine, the students have limited opportunities to use functional practice strategies especially in large classes because they are more concerned with passing exams and answering questions that are directly related to their prescribed textbooks (Shamis, 2002). As a result, the students were reluctant to use compensation strategies because they did not use gestures when they had difficulty producing the language and did not make up new words when they do not know the right ones (Shamis, 2002). In spite of these diverse studies, there are still several research findings that establish a different assumption on the relationship of learning strategies and language proficiency (Liu, 2004).

The major findings for Asian learners in Oh's study (1992) on Korean students, Yang's study (1993) on Chinese students and Yang's study (2007) on Taiwanese junior college students, used SILL which revealed that memory is the least used strategy in acquiring proficiency for L2 which was measured using the mid-term exam scores in English reading and listening of the students (Yang, 2007). The reason explained by Lee and Oxford (2008) about the major findings for Asian learners is that the items for memory strategy in the SILL are focused on vocabulary, without inclusion of rote memory and repetition, which are the basic foundation of successful memorization of Asian students. The construction of memory items in the SILL includes a range of memory strategies based on visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities alone and this might not be applicable to Korean students or other learners in Asia (Lee & Oxford, 2008).

In language learning one might observe that studies have different results, however, researchers in this field are unanimous in identifying the distinction between poor learners and learners who excel in learning EFL. To support this notion, a study by Ok (2003) pointed out three reasons: First, learners cannot really describe or know their strategies. Second, some learners use fewer strategies than more successful learners, and these strategies are less effective—usually involve non-communicative strategies like translation, rote memorization, and repetition (Nyikos 1987). Lastly, there are many ineffective language learners even though they are aware of their strategies and use most of it simply because these learners lack the skill to apply the strategies and they are not so careful in executing them (Vann & Abraham 1990). But according to Lee (2002), the reason why there are poor learners and high achievers is because students who held the highest regard for education as an essential for social mobility resulted in superior academic achievement as compared to students who did not take school as the key to success.

Whereas, Rubin (1975) suggested that a good language learner is willing to guess intelligently, willing to communicate with others, takes advantage of any opportunities, monitors his or her performance and most of all, pays attention to the meanings. For Naiman et al. (1975), a good language learner should be able to identify the language situation, be able to participate well, use the language to

communicate and be able to address the demands when it comes to the affective aspects of it.

Learning the distinctions between poor and excellent learners leads us to question what the specific strategies really mean because language strategies are broadly defined by many researchers across time. Furthermore, it is evident that there are differences in terms of preference of language learning strategy. Palestinian EFL learners used the memory strategy the most. However in other Asian studies, it revealed that memory strategy is the least used strategy among the SILL factors. Korean EFL learners are found to utilize compensation strategy the most compared to the other five strategies. The variation of strategy use is not solely based on learner's preference but also the age, gender, educational system found in a specific context, kinds of tests or probably a cultural habit can influence the strategy use as well. There are numerous EFL variables that are not constant but one factor that is not divergent across learners is the time spent in studying English, which will be further investigated in the current study.

In Oxford's framework, she was able to distinguish one factor from another but the time spent in learning the English language is not included. This is the reason why the researchers included the number of months or years in learning English in a formal education as a factor for this study. Because acquiring a new language may vary depending on the exposure to formal education. In this study, the number of months or years will also serve as predictor for English proficiency.

The Number of Months Spent in Studying Formal English

There are now over 200 different Korean businesses around the metro, among these establishments include language training centers, on-line gaming firms, supermarkets and restaurants (Vargas, 2007). But the majority of it is the language training centers where Koreans enroll in short term programs or schools that accept international students where they undergo formal schooling.

Formal study of English is defined as structured educational system by the government for individuals. It is also a system that trains and develops individuals' knowledge, abilities, intellect and character (What is formal education, 1996). Formal study involves students in a classroom with proper guidance by trained teachers or educators (Enhancing Education, 2002). Enrolling in a formal education is very important in learning EFL especially in the Philippines because this country is not an English speaking country. The interaction is not sufficient in order to acquire proficiency. It needs some input by English teachers to know the different rules in grammar and even the pronunciation.

Now, the debate on how long an EFL learner may take in acquiring proficiency is still on. Many people still believe that there is no specific parameter in learning a new language because it will solely depend on the person (Shoebottom, 1996).

Learners should have at least three years of time in speaking English as their foreign language to develop their oral skills in the English language (McLaughlin, 1992). However, having three years of spending time in speaking English as foreign language (EFL), does not necessarily mean that the student will be as skilled as the people who use the English language as their mother tongue (Shoebottom, 1996).

Other people have these misconceptions that after six years of English language instruction; Korean students should be able to communicate orally at a basic phase using English as a medium (Kim & Margolis, 2003). Researchers in foreign language projected that it will take as long as five to seven years time for a learner to acquire the level of proficiency in understanding the second language in its instructional uses (Collier, 1989; Cummins, 1981). Some learners may learn faster, while some a bit slower.

In addition, the academic-related aspect in developing EFL takes five years to develop while the communication skills can be developed first and rapidly. Similarly, according to Collier (1989) and Cummins (1981) said that it takes about two years to acquire conversational skills and four to nine years to acquire the academic language skills.

The attention of human is limited, thus, no one can acquire knowledge for hours or weeks but some people learn quickly than others—this is because language learning is a serious commitment as McLaughlin (1992) have described. Researchers said that one may expect that the more learners hear and use the language, the quicker their English language skills develop, however evidence indicate that this is not always the case (McLaughlin, 1992).

The study of Kim and Margolis (2003) showed that the average Korean students receive an average of 80 hours of English listening and speaking instruction. The authors also concluded that Korean students have approximately 210 hours of English listening and speaking instruction in their own lifetime. Furthermore, the 210 lifetime hours is divided into the processing of the language reception and production. The result showed that each student could afford at least five to three hours of opportunity for English speech production on a one on one basis with their respective English instructors.

In relation to this, the development of one's native language indicates that the students can transfer their native language and literacy skills in acquiring EFL—thus it will help shortening the amount of time needed to obtain the level of proficiency (Baker & de Kanter, 1981; Cummins, 1994). Lastly, studies show that students develop social language known as basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) through interaction with peers (either in formal or informal setting) is important for academic success but it is acquired over a period of one or two years. While the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) can take five to eight years to fully acquire, this is the type of proficiency that the current study aims to explore (Lake & Pappamihiel, 2003).

Language Acquisition, Formal Education, and Learning Strategy

There are five main hypotheses on Krashen's theory of foreign language acquisition. In the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, language acquisition is defined as a subconscious process similar to what learners go through in their first language acquisition. Learners focus on the usage of the target language and not on the grammatical and vocabulary rules of the language. Language learning involves learner's conscious awareness on the foreign language, thus, being familiar with language rules. In the Natural Order hypothesis, EFL/E2L learners are aware of the grammatical structures of the new language since they have been exposed to these

structures in learning their L1. In the Monitor hypothesis, the learner has a "conscious editor" called monitor which enables them to concentrate on the rules and form of the target language (i.e. during grammar test, essay composition). In the Input hypothesis, it discusses how learners acquire and develop language competency over time. A formula of "i+1" is used to represent this hypothesis. The "i" refers to the stage where the learner is and "i+1" refers to the level of acquisition that occurs (Schütz, 2007). In the Affective Filter hypothesis, emotions (motivated, confident, anxious) play a vital role in language acquisition and in promoting or demoting comprehension of input.

In terms of the relationship between language acquisition and formal English education, classroom learning is important since it enables EFL learners to communicate with language teachers who provide them comprehensible input from the target language. It also engages them in communicating and learning with individuals who are more knowledgeable in their target language. Several studies have been investigating on a learner's language competence and exposure to classroom teaching, age of learner, and language acquisition. The results of the said studies were found to be consistent with the five language acquisition hypothesis. Various studies on language learning strongly recommend learners to use a variety of learning strategies since these strategies facilitate language acquisition (Rigney 1978). Good language learners and their learning strategies can be considered to be potentially beneficial in the enhancement of their language acquisition skills (O'Malley, 1985).

In this study, the researchers want to assess Korean students' foreign language learning strategies and their English proficiency with the use of Rebecca Oxford's Language Learning Strategies as a framework. This will determine what specific learning strategies would be effective and are commonly used by Korean students—hoping to help the Korean community in the Philippines in learning EFL. Lastly, the researchers opted to include the number of months spent in learning formal English as a predictor of English proficiency as well.

With this is mind the current study would like to answer these research questions:

1. Will the language learning strategies significantly contribute in increasing Korean students' English proficiency?
2. Does number of months learning formal English increase the English proficiency of Korean students?
3. Will the overall relationship of the language learning strategies and English proficiency increase when length of formal study of English is added as a predictor of English proficiency?

The researcher hypothesized that the language learning strategies can increase Korean students' English Proficiency. Next, the number of months learning formal English increases as the English proficiency of Korean students also increases. Also, the more predictors of SILL and the longer a student learns English in a formal education increases English proficiency. Finally, the overall relationship of the language learning strategies and English proficiency will increase if the length of formal English study will be added as a predictor of English proficiency.

Method

Participants

The participants in the study were composed of 302 Korean students studying in the Philippines from ages 14 to 18 years old and they should be either in Grade six, High School or in College level of education. The nature of the test and its difficulty level are more appropriate with the specified age group. The participants were from schools in Metro Manila such as Marymount School, Southville International School and colleges, namely, International Christian Academy, Far Eastern University-Fern College, and De La Salle University.

The study used purposive sampling technique because the schools are not exclusive for Korean students. Most of the participants that were chosen by an English Language Coordinator were already part of the school's English Language Learning (ELL) program. Their mother tongue (L1) is Korean and their foreign language (L2) is English. The selected participants have agreed to participate in the study. By confirming if the participant's L1 and L2 can be considered as a participant for the current study, the researchers included this question in the demographics part of the questionnaire. Lastly, the participants should have studied or is currently studying English in a formal education setting—it can be in an English language center or in schools as long as the medium of instruction is in English. These criteria were determined through preliminary questions in the instruments.

Instruments

The study used two instruments, the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) by Oxford and the English Ability Test. Since the SILL is an existing test that is most commonly used by researchers, the current study also used the test to determine the language learning of Korean students. It has been used worldwide for students of second and foreign languages in settings such as university, school, and government. The factors are memory, compensation, metacognitve, cognitive, affective, and social strategies. The reliability of the SILL version 7.0 is .99 based on independent raters (Oxford, 1986; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). The internal consistency reliability of the SILL is .94 based on a 505-person sample (Yang, 1992) and .92 based on a 315 Chinese participants (Watanabe, 1990). But the Chronbach's alpha of the SILL as reported by Green and Oxford (1995) is .93 to .98 depending whether the SILL is in the learner's own language or in L2. Oxford (1990) reported high validity of the instrument based on numerous studies which the SILL has found to have a significant relationship with language performance as indicated by grades, scores on other tests, self-ratings and teacher ratings (Nisbet, Tindall, & Arroyo, 2005).

In addition, the study used the SILL Korean version prepared by Park Bun-Seon, Kwon Mi-Jeong, & Hwang Jung-Hwa (1998) so that the Koreans will fully understand the statements in their own context. The validity and reliability of this measure was computed using the Chronbach's alpha. The content of the SILL Korean version was back translated by a Korean who is fluent in both Korean and English in their study. This is to validate if the items have the same meaning

compared to the English version of the SILL—where the researchers used as the reference for analysis. The internal consistency of the SILL Korean version using Cronbach's Alpha is .90, indicating a high reliability because it is almost close to 1. The Cronbach's alpha of the SILL subscales are .71, .64, .68, .83, .63, and .76 respectively.

The English subtest of the Assessment of School Potential (ASP) was used to measure English ability. The test was developed by the Asian Psychological Services and Assessment Corporation. The subtest on English is composed of grammar usage (14 items), vocabulary (9 items), detecting grammatical errors (8 items), and reading comprehension (19 items). The skills in the English subtest were confirmed in a measurement model with adequate fit (ASP Manual, 2007). The English subtest is significantly related with the vocabulary and English subtests of the Otis Lennon School Ability Test (OLSAT), Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT), and Slosson Full-Range Intelligence Test (S-FRIT) which indicates the test equally measuring the same English abilities. Two forms of the test were developed and the two forms were highly correlated with evidence of parallel form reliability (r=.97). High internal consistencies were also established using Cronbach's alpha for each forms (.91 and .89). The items upon selected were calibrated with person ability and item difficulty using the Rasch IRT technique. All items in the two forms have adequate fit using the Rasch model where items of considerable difficulty were answered by the respondents with high ability and easy items have high percentage of correct responses. The form A of the English test was used in the present study and the internal consistency of the English Ability test is .61, indicating a moderate reliability.

Procedure

The researchers first made arrangements and asked permission to the different schools for the administration of the SILL and English test. Since not all schools are exclusive for Korean students, the English Language Coordinator or the School Counselor (For grade school to high school) either pulled out Korean students from different sections or will only include Koreans enrolled in their special programs (if ever they have such offerings) like the English Language Learning (ELL). These students range from grade six to College students ages 14-18 years old. Most importantly, the participants should agree to participate in the study because this study was done in a voluntary basis. There were no incentives given to the participants.

During the testing date, the participants were asked to stay in a quiet and conducive classroom to avoid distractions and other extraneous variables that might affect the test results. Since the participants should have an L1 of Korean and L2 of English, this was confirmed through a set of preliminary questions included in the questionnaire. The necessary instructions were given to the participants by reading a script and then the test questionnaires and answer sheets were distributed.

After explaining the instructions, the answer sheets were distributed followed by the English Proficiency test. Part one consisted of the 50 items in the English Proficiency Test which was administered for one hour. After finishing the test, the participants proceeded to the next part which is the Korean version of the

Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL) with 50 items as well. This test was administered for 15 minutes.

After completing the tests, the researchers debriefed and thanked the participants for their time. Then after completing the data gathered, the two tests were checked and analyzed by the researchers.

Results

The means and the standard deviation of all factors were determined. The scores for the subscales of the SILL (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective and social), months spent in the formal study of English, and English ability test were tested for significant relationship. Table 1 shows the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum months and scores and Cronbach's alpha.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for SILL, Months Spent Studying Formal English and English Ability Test

Factor	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Cronbach's Alpha
Months Studying Formal English	302	36.45	30.91	
English Ability	302	18.48	5.33	0.61
SILL				0.90
Memory	302	2.05	0.59	0.71
Cognitive	302	2.05	0.38	0.64
Compensation	302	3.48	0.71	0.68
Metacognitive	302	3.34	0.72	0.83
Affective	302	3.14	0.74	0.63
Social	302	3.51	0.81	0.76

Note. The total score for the English ability test is 50. The SILL has a 5-point scale.

Means scores of Korean EFL learners in the SILL factors ranged from 2.05 to 3.51. The means for the SILL subscales showed a large spread as indicated by the standard deviations especially for Social and Affective strategies. The mean of the English Ability Test is 18.48 indicating that there is low proficiency because the middle score is 25. Means of the months in studying formal English is 36.45 with a very large spread. Furthermore, the distribution of scores was determined as show in Table 2.

Table 2
Range and Score Distribution for SILL, Months Spent Studying Formal English and English Ability Test

Factor	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Months Studying Formal English	1	144	1.23	1.08
English Ability	5	35	0.69	0.30
SILL				
Memory	0.56	3.89	0.69	0.30
Cognitive	0.79	3	-0.29	0.47
Compensation	1	5	-0.41	0.55
Metacognitive	1.22	5	0.04	-0.06
Affective	1	5	-0.00	0.12
Social	1	5	-0.28	-0.10

The minimum months of studying formal English is one month and the maximum is 144 months (12 years), the large range of months resulted to a large standard deviation (30.91). For the English Ability Test, the minimum score is 5 and the maximum score is 35. The subscales of the SILL ranges around 0.56 to five and all factors are skewed to the left making the scores normally distributed. This is also true for the English Ability test, where the skweness is 0.69 and the kurtosis is 0.30. On the contrary, the skweness for the months studying formal English is 1.23 which is skewed to the right and the kurtosis is 1.08, that's why the researchers transformed the value to log functions to make the distribution normal. Furthermore, the Pearson r was used to establish the correlations of the subscales of the SILL and the English Ability Test scores. The relationship of the factors was determined using multivariate correlation as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Correlation Matrix of the SILL, Months Spent in Studying Formal English, and English Ability Test

		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1)	Months Studying (months)	---							
(2)	English ability	.27**	---						
(3)	Memory	.15**	.24**	---					
(4)	Cognitive	.21**	.27**	.63**	---				
(5)	compensation	.13*	.26**	.49**	.51**	---			
(6)	metacognitive	.17**	.26**	.56**	.72**	.50**	---		
(7)	affective	.03	.13*	.40**	.52**	.41**	.53**	---	
(8)	social	.19**	.19**	.44**	.56**	.47**	.60**	.51**	---

*$p<.05$
**$p<.01$

The findings showed that the subscales of the SILL (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive and social) are all significantly related to the subtests of English proficiency, p<.05. Months of studying formal English is also significantly related to English ability and SILL subscales except for affective strategy. The magnitudes of all the correlation coefficients are all positive. This shows that as the subscales of SILL increases (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and social), the subtests of the English proficiency also increases. The correlation values indicate moderate to weak strengths.

The data was analyzed using multiple regression, this analysis was used to determine sets of independent variables (SILL) and clarifies a part of the variance in a dependent variable (English proficiency) in a significant level. It also provides the predictive significance of the independent variables. This technique assumes that there is a linear relationship of the factors of the Language Learning Strategies and English Proficiency. The predictors included the six factors in the SILL by Oxford (1990) and the number of months spent in a formal English education. The English proficiency test served as the criterion.

Scores with high residuals were removed during data mining to ensure the linearity of the variables to English proficiency. The participants from 326 were reduced to 302 samples. In the regression analysis, the six SILL factors together with the months spent in studying formal English were entered as predictors where the influence of each predictor is assessed. The significance of the predictors was determined by checking if the p-value is less than any of the margin of error. The change in R was observed by adding the number of months in the formal study of English in the second regression analysis. Table 4 shows the individual contributions of each predictor of English proficiency in the SILL factors and the change in R when months are added with SILL predictors.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Model of SILL and Months Spent in Formal Study of English as Predictors of English Proficiency

	Beta	SE of Beta	B	t	p
compensation	3.28*	1.57	0.14*	2.10	0.04*
Cognitive	2.24	2.15	0.10	1.04	0.30
Memory	1.51	1.95	0.06	0.77	0.44
metacognitive	1.41	2.07	0.06	0.68	0.50
Social	0.05	1.44	0.00	0.04	0.97
Affective	-0.87	1.38	-0.04	-0.63	0.53
months of studying	0.83*	0.30	0.16*	2.75	0.01*

*p<.05

Note. Model 1 R= .32, R^2= .10, Adjusted R^2= .08, SE= .5.10

Model 2 R= .35, R^2= .12, Adjusted R^2= .10, SE= .5.04

In the regression model, compensation strategy and months studying English is found to be significant and the remaining predictors were not significant. The data do not fit the regression model and it accounts for R^2adj=10%, but the SILL explaining compensation strategy and months spent studying English significantly predicts English proficiency, $F(7, 302) = 5.94$, $p<0.05$. With other

variables held constant, compensation strategy and the months spent in formal study in English scores were positively related to English proficiency, increasing by 3.28 and 0.83 for every point in the English proficiency respectively. The effect of compensation and months spent in formal study of English to English proficiency was significant, $t(302)= 2.10$, $p<0.05$ and $t(302)= 2.75$, $p<0.05$ respectively.

Discussion

The major finding for this study showed that compensation strategy has a stronger effect in increasing English proficiency of the Korean students learning EFL based on the multiple regression model. Compensation strategies are needed to overcome any gaps in knowledge of the language (Oxford, 1990, p.71). Compensation strategies allow the learners to guess the meanings of the unfamiliar words they encounter (Yang, 2007). Through the collaboration of time spent studying English in a formal setting, it enables learners to be exposed to situations that will trigger their usage of language learning strategies that will eventually lead to increasing their proficiency in English.

Another finding is that the number of months learning formal English increases as the English proficiency of Korean students also increases. The time spent in studying English in the formal setting and the proper application of language learning strategies are essential in increasing one's proficiency. Research shows that it requires four to nine years to develop academic language skills and about two years to communicative skills using the target language (Cummins 1981; as cited in Vazquez, Vazquez, Lopes & Ward, 1997). The years spent in studying formal English is important because in a formal educational setting the Korean EFL learners communicate and interact with teachers and students who are more knowledgeable with the English language, thus, influencing them to the usage of language learning strategies. The longer the time spent learning the English language in a formal study, the stronger the skills become to succeed in acquiring the level of proficiency. As the months or years progress, the learner can evaluate his or her learning style to be able to select the best possible language strategies to use. In a formal educational setting, teachers can assess the performance of students in the target language being learned. Through teachers' evaluation, students become aware of their ability and proficiency in English, thus, it can lead them to explore more strategies that will help them in language learning. For instance, if teachers converse with the Korean EFL learners, they are then exposed to the target language. Korean learners may not comprehend every meaning of the words; therefore they will employ the use of language learning strategies, specifically compensation strategies.

There are several reasons why the individual SILL subscales failed to predict the English proficiency of Korean students. First, affective strategies can hinder or slow down the learning process due to anxiety especially among beginners EFL learners (Ariza, 2002; Tanveer, 2007). But, it is possible that learners are not familiar with paying attention to their own feeling (Oxford, 1990). In this case, the Koreans may not be skilled in identifying their own feeling while learning EFL. For memory strategies on the other hand, it was found out that Asian students tend to prefer rote memorization strategies and rule-oriented strategies, but

in this study it is otherwise (Nationality & language learning strategies of ELT-major university students, 2004). Possibly, rote learning is not utilized for Korean learners because this specific strategy is useful for quickly learning vocabularies—which is important especially in the beginning and intermediate stages of language learning but not necessarily later (Oxford, Cho, Leung, & Kim, 2004). Also, the use of memory strategies by EFL learners may indicate a cultural habit just like the Australian students, who revealed that remembering difficult words was not effective as opposed to Indonesians who confessed that they have a habit of rote learning behavior (Lengkanawati, 2004). Perhaps, Koreans does not use rote memorizations as a habit in learning. Furthermore, it is interesting to know that social strategies are not significant for Korean learners in predicting English proficiency because the growing number of Koreans in the Philippines may actually lessen their socialization among the natives especially when the EFL learners are always with a Korean companion.

The stage in learning a foreign language of the English learner explains why the individual SILL failed to predict English proficiency. Majority of the participants are just starting to study English and they are accustomed only to their L1. Children who already have solid literacy skills seem to be the best position to acquire a new language effectively (Why would I want to teach in Korea, 2003). It is assumed that the older the age, the more solid the literacy skills of the learners especially in their L1.

The majority of the participants in the study are young adolescents who are considered beginners in learning EFL—most of them are those who are not yet mainstreamed. As compared to other studies, the participants are composed of mostly college students majoring in English. In addition, age as a factor was shown by several studies that adolescents tend to use guessing and social strategies like discussing and asking help from others (Lee & Oxford, 2008). While an adult learner uses metacognition strategies such as planning, organizing, and evaluating one's learning (Lee & Oxford, 2008). It is worth mentioning that autonomy is important in acquiring a new language (Nisbet, Tindall, & Arroyo, 2005; Chamot, 1998). Adolescents may lack autonomy and it explains the results of this study—having only compensation strategy as significant. Autonomy perhaps is essential in comprehending the variations in language learning strategy usage and English proficiency (Nisbet, Tindall, & Arroyo, 2005). Also, it explains that lack of autonomy may not have awareness in one's own strategy which is closely related to metacognition (Chamot, 1998). Consequently, successful learners are those who are aware of their strategy; use more combinations of it, and carefully executing or applying the strategies (Ok, 2003). In Vann and Abraham's (1990) study, they stated that unsuccessful learners are actively using these strategies, however, in an uncoordinated manner. Accordingly, it can be reported that skillful usage of language learning strategies can heighten proficiency (Nisbet, Tindall, & Arroyo, 2005).

The individual SILL strategies failed to predict English proficiency is possibly because the learners in this study may need more guidance by teachers since in using the strategies. Chamot (1998) emphasized that learning strategies are teachable (see also Green & Oxford, 1995). It that way students can become more aware of strategies through strategy instruction until they become autonomous and

can be put to mainstream courses in English. Besides, according to Weden (1985), the autonomy of students and learners should be aligned with teacher's goal of facilitating self-directed learning by introducing and recommending strategies to encourage the learners to discover which strategy suits them better (Yang, 2007).

In the bivariate correlation, the SILL such as memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and social, together with months spent in studying English are significantly correlated to English proficiency. However the affective and the months spent in formal study of English showed no significant correlations. In contrast, the findings for the multiple regression showed that each of the language learning strategies did not significantly predict English proficiency except for compensation. The Koreans has limited knowledge in English (evident in their English ability mean scores) that is why it appears that the compensation strategies work best with the Korean EFL learners in the Philippines in learning English because they compensate to the missing information through guessing meanings from context, switching to the mother tongue, using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning (Ok, 2003). Another reason is because some strategies could be attributed to culture and educational system (Shamis, 2002). In the Philippines, the teachers and so as the natives when communicating often use gestures to convey meaning. This may be a reason on how Koreans have adopted the culture of Filipinos and thus they have used it to also communicate effectively.

Finally, the number of months in formal study of English showed positive magnitude with English proficiency indicating that as the number of months increase, the English proficiency of Korean students also increases. This is was consistent in the multiple regression where the number of months spent in formal study of English is significant in predicting English proficiency. Studying in a formal English setting enable EFL students to communicate and interact with their English instructors and classmates. Since through formal studying, learners get educated with the rules in grammar and pronunciation, resulting in increased proficiency in English. Krashen's theory of foreign language acquisition has five main hypotheses. Korean students are able to assess these hypotheses through being enrolled in a formal classroom studying English. In the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis and Natural Order hypothesis, it implies that, through language learning, students have increased awareness on the grammar and vocabulary rules of their foreign language. Teachers play an important role in the students' language acquisition because they educate and familiarize students' knowledge on language rules. In the Monitor hypothesis, it states that students have the ability to concentrate on forms and rules of the target language. This is assessed through essay compositions, grammar and vocabulary test given by teachers to the students in class. In the Input hypothesis, it emphasizes the importance of time in developing student's competency. Through a formal classroom setting, teachers and students can work hand in hand in monitoring their progress on the English language over time. Lastly with the Affective filter hypothesis, it discusses the significance of student's emotions during language acquisition. The role of teachers is vital since they are able to influence student's motivation through evaluations in their assessments of their proficiency and knowledge in the English language. Therefore, the longer the number of months spent in studying English, the better proficiency in English because of the longer exposure on the target language. The learners in this case can maximize the

use of language learning strategies due to the communicative demand from the environment (Lan & Oxford, 2003).

Generally the present reviews only indicates that the use of language learning strategies help increase language learners proficiency in English. The present study was able to find out that language learning strategies alone is not enough to help language learners acquire proficiency in English. The language learning strategies proposed by Oxford works best when taken together and its use is stronger in predicting English proficiency if the time spent in studying formal English is sufficient.

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Author Notes

Special thanks to Khristine Co, Mathilde Fajardo, and Cher Dy for synthesizing the reviews and helping me gather the data for this study.

A Comparative Study of the Discourse Marker Types in the *Body* Section of the Research Papers of DLSU Students

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 62-73
©2010
http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

The study examines the types of discourse markers adult second language (L2) learners in a research writing class most predominantly use given the types of research paper they are required to write. Two Englres (Basic Research) classes at De La Salle University - Manila, each composed of between forty and forty-three students who were assigned to worked in pairs, were selected. Classes were taken from two colleges. From the two research paper classes, thirty papers were collected. The papers were examined on the basis of what discourse markers types are predominantly used in the Body section of the students' research papers. This study used Hyland and Tse's Taxonomy of Textual and Interpersonal Metadiscourse (2004) and Halliday and Hasan's (1976) concept of cohesion. Results reveal that the students from the College of Engineering who are required to write a descriptive research paper use the logical connectives of addition and contrast more than they use the other types of discourse markers. This preference was used because the research paper they are expected to produce is descriptive in nature. Hence the data that the students are expected to come up with need to blend with the existing data that are already available concerning the topic. On the other hand, the students from the College of Liberal Arts, who are expected to turn in an argumentative research paper, show preference for the logical connectives of addition, contrast and consequence because the development of the ideas in the research paper needs to escalate into a level where they are supposed to present their contentions to the arguments that they are putting forth. This study has considerable implications in the kind of teaching materials that L2 learners need to be exposed into given their different fields of specialization.

Keywords: Discourse markers, academic writing, writing instruction

Introduction

Academic writing in the undergraduate level at De La Salle University (DLSU) in Manila, the Philippines aims at the mastery of English as a second language (ESL). Writing in this level usually yields two outputs. At the initial stage, awareness, development and mastery of various writing compositions focus on targeted rhetorical devices such as description, cause-effect, comparison- contrast, definition, classification, analysis and argumentation. At a higher phase, students are then taught to employ their awareness of the techniques in writing the different rhetorical devices by integrating these patterns into one written composition which

is the final research paper, also known as the academic paper. At DLSU, *English Research* (coded as *ENGLRES*) addresses the need of the different colleges to come up with a suitable written requirement useful in the students' respective fields. For instance, the topics for research in the College of Computer Science (CCS) class are only approved by the research teacher if these topics have bearing on their field. Thus, the research students may come up with research topics like database, operating system or graphics interface.

Second language (L2) academic research in the undergraduate level is a guided process that aims at the students developing their own writing styles and critical thinking skills. Precisely because these are the target areas of research writing, Mirador (2002) posits that students, who write based on their own pacing, are thus able to complete the sub-processes of research work in a manner different from the others in their class. For instance, because of the nature of the individual thesis statements set by students, they may move at a pace different from their classmates. Additionally, the students may be required to conform to the structure of academic writing patterned after Swales' moves (1990, 2001). This pattern, in fact, was applied several years back at DLSU when the College of Science (COS) students were required to write a paper similar in structure to Swales' introduction moves as well as the introduction-method-results-discussion pattern (IMRD) of journal article publications.

Recently, however, the research paper outputs at DLSU have been simplified into a descriptive extended essay paper for the students enrolled in the Colleges of Engineering, Science, Computer Science as well as Business and Economics. For their final paper, the College of Liberal Arts students are expected to turn in an argumentative extended essay paper. Both types of academic paper follow the basic structure of introduction, body, and conclusion. Additionally, to facilitate the brainstorming of ideas, the students enrolled in the ENGLRES class are allowed to work in pairs and to complete a pair research paper output.

Upon the writing of the three parts of the research paper, the students rely on discourse markers as linguistic units to link previously written sentences with new ones. Furthermore, the kind of discourse markers that students employ will reveal the logical link between the previous sentences and the new ones. To illustrate, consider the example below that uses the discourse marker of contrast to show how the second sentence opposes the idea held in the initial sentence:

> A community of barbarians will revel in the face of war, after a triumphant battle. *On the other hand,* a group of pacifists will shun the idea of war from their minds because it goes against the principles they believe in.

Of the structure of the research paper, the part that employs the most use of discourse markers is the body section of the paper since it is in this portion of the paper that the students discuss their major ideas and substantiate them with supporting evidence. It is therefore of interest to learners and teachers to examine what type of discourse marker is most frequently used by the students of specific fields of specialization. First, on the part of the students, awareness of what type of discourse markers they dominantly use will aid them in the kind of critical thinking that they should be developing given their chosen fields. Second, the teachers will

be more effective as facilitators since they will not only be providing more relevant materials but will also be asking important questions to guide the students to the kind of writing skills that they should be harnessing.

Previous studies have looked into the functions of discourse markers. One study for instance, classifies discourse markers as belonging to the coherence group. The main researchers who support this group like Schiffrin (1987), Fraser (1988, 1990), Redeker (1990, 1991), Zwichy (1985), and Giora (1997, 1998) believe that discourse markers play a major role in the interpretation of the text by signaling coherence relations. On the other hand, another group of researchers known as the relevance group argues that discourse markers are indicators or procedures that determine how the reader will interpret the written text or utterance. According to the advocates of the relevance group, discourse markers give cues to allow the reader to get the writer's meaning of a written text with minimum cognitive processing (Blakemore, 2000). Researchers of the relevance group include Blakemore (1987, 1992, 2002), Blass (1990), Iten (1998), and Wilson and Sperber (1993). In another study, Eslami and Rasekh (2007) investigated the use of discourse markers in three academic lectures. Their study strengthens the idea that discourse markers are important because they help the receivers (readers and listeners) understand the text better.

Other studies have investigated different linguistic units to determine how their employment in written texts helps achieve cohesion. In fact, Halliday and Hasan (1976) conducted a study on lexical cohesive devices that was supported by other researchers. For instance, Castro (2004) found out in her study that students use lexical cohesive devices to connect ideas together. Duterte-Angeles' (2005) study revealed similar findings. In Mojica's (2006) study, thirty graduate students enrolled in advanced academic writing courses in English at DLSU- Manila, coming from two groups – the first from different disciplines, the second from English - were compared in terms of what type of lexical cohesive device they prefer. Using the four types of content lexical ties proposed by Liu (2000), Mojica's study observed that the use of repetitions is the most frequent lexical cohesive device employed in the papers of the two groups. This repetition cohesive device, she further classifies into four according to their nature of occurrence – identical, inclusive, exclusive and unrelated. In a related study, Liu (2000) reported that ESL classrooms focus on the teaching of functional connectives instead of increasing students' vocabulary. Liu identified the problems that many ESOL students encounter in their writing classes. By looking at her sample students' writings, she examined the different levels of lack of content lexical ties. Central to these problems is the lack of cohesion brought about by misuse of content lexical ties as well as inappropriate logical connector that causes major breakdown in the comprehension of the written texts. She thus developed writing exercises that would address the lack of cohesive ties among ESOL students. Another researcher, Jonz (1987) concluded that the comprehension level of readers is greatly reduced once cohesive ties are removed from the text. In an experimental study involving native and non-native speakers of English, Jonz sought to measure the language – based comprehension of the two groups by requiring the participants to undergo the cloze procedure to restore deleted words to the text.

Although previous studies have focused on the use of lexical ties like repetition, synonyms or antonyms as important cohesive devices, there is scant study on what the use of specific discourse marker types say about the different fields of specialization that college students major in. The present study contributes to the body of literatures on discourse markers as its focus this time is on the use of the discourse marker types to the research papers of the two disciplines Engineering and Liberal Arts. The choice of the two disciplines is dictated by the fact that although both follow the same basic structure in the writing of the research paper, they use two different slants in their exposition. The Engineering students are supposed to come up with a descriptive extended essay paper while the Liberal Arts students need to establish strong arguments for their argumentative extended essay paper.

Research Questions

The present paper will answer the following questions:

1. What types of discourse markers are evident in the *Body* section of the research papers of DLSU undergraduate students?
2. Is there any difference between the discourse marker types used by the Engineering students from those used by the Liberal Arts students?
3. How do the discourse markers contribute to cohesion?

Method

Thirty research papers were collected. Of the thirty, fifteen came from fifteen pairs of freshman Engineering students. The other fifteen were written by fifteen pairs of Liberal Arts students. These students were enrolled in an ENGLRES class which had for their final requirements the research paper. The Liberal Arts students were required to complete an argumentative extended essay paper while the Engineering students were expected to turn in a descriptive extended essay paper. Their papers were submitted at the end of Term 2, School Year 2008-2009.

The papers were preselected on the basis of their availability as well as the applicability of the topics chosen by the students in their respective fields, Engineering and Liberal Arts. After all, ENGLRES is a research writing Course that is meant to be English for Specific Purposes-based. Also, as the course follows the process approach in the writing of the paper, the choice took into consideration those papers that underwent a suggested sequence. The papers with scores ranging between 85% and 94% were examined as these scores suggest based on the rubric set by the ENGLRES committee that the papers were considered satisfactory to very satisfactory. No paper, however, for the specific term covered by the study, was considered outstanding. Specifically, the body section of the paper, which consisted of approximately between thirty-six and fifty-four sentences or equivalent in pages to between three and four and a half, was examined for the presence of discourse markers. Discourse markers are written cues that facilitate movement of thought in communication from one sentence to the next. In this study, the body of the paper is referred to as the part of the paper that contains the students' discussion of the

insight that was earlier raised in the distinguishing feature of their thesis sentence. As is usual in an extended essay writing, the thesis sentence is the sentence that regulates or controls the discussion of points that will be raised in the essay. The thesis sentence is usually found in the *Introduction* part of the research paper. In ENGLRES, the Engineering students are required to write a thesis sentence that follows the pattern 'term is equal to general class + distinguishing feature'. This required format is similar to a formal definition construction. The difference, however, is the instruction of the ENGLRES teacher that the distinguishing feature also yields the students' insight. The students' insight is further explored using three points that they then discuss in the *Body* section of their paper.

For the first question, data were analyzed using Hyland and Tse's taxonomy (2004). The taxonomy was chosen since it offers a more comprehensive categorization of discourse markers suitable in examining the present study. Their taxonomy is discussed in the following section. This present study focuses only on the four categories of textual metadiscourse – the logical connectives, the frame markers, the evidentials, and the code glosses. To be concrete, a frequency count was done to determine the number of times a discourse marker appeared in the body section of the students' research papers. The discourse markers found were then classified according to the four categories of textual metadiscourse. Statistical treatment was done by determining the percentage a particular discourse marker belonging to a category appeared in relation to other examples of discourse marker of the same category.

For the second question, the discourse markers were analyzed according to the function that they employ in the given sentences where they were noted. Examination of the discourse marker functions was done on the basis of Hyland and Tse's (2004) taxonomy of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse.

For the third question, the present study uses Halliday and Hassan's (1976) notion of cohesion to analyze how appropriate the choice of discourse marker is in establishing cohesion. According to these authorities, cohesion occurs where the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another. For instance, two sentences are linked together by the presence of the full subject in the first sentence and a pronoun or determiner in another. To illustrate, examine the italicized words in the two sentences below:

> *Digital marketing* uses the power of the Internet and other interactive forms of media to circulate information. *It* is relatively cheaper than traditional marketing since *its* interactive forms are easy to replace.

Framework

This study draws from Hyland and Tse's (2004) taxonomy of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse as well as Halliday and Hasan's (1976) concept of cohesion. Table 1 below illustrates Hyland' and Tse's taxonomy:

Table 1
Functions of Metadiscourse in Academic Texts

Category	Function	Examples
Textual Metadiscourse		
Logical Connectives	Express semantic relation between main clauses	In addition. And, thus
Frame Markers	Explicitly refer to discourse acts/texts stages	Finally, to repeat, our aim here, we try
Endophoric Markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	Noted above, see Fig 1, table 2, below
Code Glosses	Help reader grasp meanings of ideational material	Namely, eg, in other words, such as
Evidentials	Refer to source information from other texts	According to X/Y, 1990, Z states
Interpersonal Metadiscourse		
Hedges	Withhold writer's full commitment to statements	Might, perhaps, it is possible, about
Emphatics	Emphasize force of writer's certainty in message	In fact, definitely, it is clear, it is obvious
Attiture Markers	Express writer's attitude to prepositional content	Surprisingly, I agree, X claims
Relational Markers	Explicitly refer to/build relationship with reader	Frankly, note that, you can see
Person Markers	Explicit reference to author/s	I, we, mine, my, your

Briefly, logical connectives show how the current sentence under consideration, that is, the sentence containing the connector, is linked with the initial sentence. Examples of this type fall under contrast, addition, consequence, and sequence connectors. Next, frame markers, by its very name, serve to keep the reader's focus on the sentence containing the discourse markers as they highlight the point being made in the initial sentences. In the table above, sequence connectors like *finally* function as frame markers because they highlight the attention of the reader on the current sentence containing the particular frame marker. In the frame marker *our aim here*, the reader's focus of attention is led towards the statement containing the given frame marker. Third, endophoric markers display the relationship of a paragraph for instance to other non prose forms in a given text. Fourth, codeglosses provide specific features or examples to the generalization in the initial clause or sentence. Lastly, evidentials provide the needed support from authorities of other texts.

Findings and Discussion

Table 2 lists the examples of discourse markers noted in the body section of the research papers of the Engineering and the Liberal Arts undergraduate students:

Table 2
Types of Discourse Markers in the Body Section of Engineering and Liberal Arts Research Papers

Types	Times Present		% of Signaled Relations	
	Engineering Texts	Liberal Arts Texts	Engineering Texts	Liberal Arts Texts
Logical Connectives				
also	34	13	38.2	13.13
too	0	1	0	1
therefore	3	2	3.37	2
and	5	12	5.61	12.12
thus	1	1	1.12	1
thereafter	1	0	1.12	0
moreover	10	0	11.23	0
another	8	5	8.98	5.05
so	4	1	4.49	1
along with	1	0	1.12	0
however	2	7	2.24	7.07
in contrast	1	0	1.12	0
because of	2	16	2.24	16.16
unlike	1	0	1.12	0
in addition	4	2	4.49	2.02
after all these	1	0	1.12	0
nonetheless	1	0	1.12	0
hence	1	0	1.12	0
but	2	16	2.27	16.16
consequently	1	0	1.12	0
further	1	3	1.12	3.03
on the other hand	1	1	1.12	1
as a result	1	1	1.12	1
after	1	0	1.12	0
despite	1	2	1.12	2.02
although	0	9	0	9.09
yet	0	3	0	3.03
since	0	3	0	3.03
	88		99	
Frame Markers				
lastly	9	3	23.07	17.65
today	1	2	2.56	11.76
then	0	2	0	0
to start with	1	0	2.56	0
now	0	3	0	17.65
the next	2	0	5.13	0
firstly	11	2	28.20	11.76
second	6	3	15.38	17.65
third	5	0	12.82	0
finally	1	2	2.56	11.76
as previously discussed	1	0	2.56	0
here	1	0	2.56	0
fourthly	1	0	2.56	0
	39		17	
Evidentials				
according to	11	16	37.93	45.71
Z States	14	15	48.27	42.86
1990	4	4	13.79	11.43
	29		35	
Code Glosses				
for Example	12	15	92.31	100
particularly	1	0	7.69	0
	13		15	

Of the sample logical connectives, results reveal that the *addition* category at 38.2% seems to take the priority among the Engineering students. Among the *addition* logical connectives, the discourse marker *also* is the most frequently used. This is followed by *moreover* at 11.23% The relatively large difference in terms of occurrence between the two discourse markers may be attributable to the fact that among college students, particularly those who are in their entry level, *also* is the most accessible and less formal compared to *moreover.* Despite the predominant use of the same discourse marker category among the Liberal Arts students, it is apparent that this group of students prefers the logical connectives of *consequence* and *contrast* which accounts for 16.16% yield. Of the choice of available discourse markers for *consequence* and *contrast* types, the Liberal Arts students appear to favor *because of* and *but* respectively. The reason for this may be due to the idea that the morphological units *because of* establishes quite directly the notion of substantiation by virtue of the cause-effect rhetorical pattern that the students may want to use in the nature of the arguments that are being presented. In terms of the morpheme *but* again the nature of accessibility and degree of formality are likely reasons for the students' preference.

> The broadband system emphasizes the role of the information technology *particularly* in the organization activities. Its functions include automated semi automatic business processes *and* the effectiveness of allowing quick access to vast amount of information worldwide. It provides fast, accurate, *and* inexpensive communication within *and* between organizations. It is *also* capable of storing huge amount of information in an easy to access *yet* small space.
>
> In human resources function (Van Horn, 2006), there are three types of labour forces: the attract, the develop and the maintain labour force. *Firstly*, the attract labour force is the one responsible for the hiring of potential applicants. It is *also* the one that analyzes the job suitable for the applicants. *Secondly*, the develop labour force is the one that evaluates the performance of the employees. It is *also* responsible for the career path and the management of labour relations so that the work in the company will be distributed evenly. This group *also* trains the employees through team building activities. *In addition*, this labour force forecasts the future needs of the company. *Lastly,* the maintain labour force provides the employees' benefits so that they will enjoy working for the company.

The first excerpt above makes use of two categories of discourse markers. These are the logical connectives and the code glosses. Of the two categories, the logical connectives are more widely used as is observed in other sample texts. In the first text alone, two types of logical connectives appear: the *addition* and, the *contrast.* The addition connectives *and*...as well as *also* function as indicators of the numerous benefits that broadband system brings to its users. The contrast connective *yet* serves not only to contrast the two opposing ideas in the *huge amount of information* and *small space* but more to highlight the additional benefit of broadband system. The use of the code gloss *particularly* functions to

substantiate the established idea covered in the general concept *the role of information technology*. This use of the code gloss is appropriate, although scantily used in the undergraduate Engineering research papers, since the main objective of descriptive writing is to make specific the writer's focus. This objective is targeted, in fact, with the pair's use of *particularly* followed by the specific point *in the organization activities*. In the second excerpt, the Engineering students use two types of discourse markers: the logical connective of *addition* and the *frame markers*. The use of *frame markers* serves not only to enumerate the types of labour force. In the text, the students are also able to show the progression of ideas and concepts using this discourse marker. After identifying the concepts '*the attract, the develop* and *the maintain force'*, the students employ the frame markers *first, second* and *lastly* to shift discussion from one concept before moving on to another concept. Within the frame markers, the students use connectives of *addition.* For instance, after naming one type of labor force, the students make use of *also* to maintain development of ideas on the same type. The ENGLRES pair in the College of Engineering also interchanges *also* with *in addition* to create variety and prevent overuse.

Table 3 below summarizes the sample discourse markers according to the categories set in Hyland and Tse's taxonomy (2004).

Table 3
Summary of Discourse Markers Categories among Engineering and Liberal Arts Research Papers

Types	Times Present	
	Engineering Texts	Liberal Arts Texts
Logical Connectives	89	99
Frame Markers	39	17
Evidentials	29	35
Code Glosses	13	15

The table shows that there is relatively insignificant difference in the predominant discourse marker preference of the undergraduate Engineering and Liberal Arts students. The difference though is more marked in the next category of discourse markers that is most frequently used in the academic papers of the Engineering and the Liberal Arts students. At 39 units, the frame markers are the second preferred discourse marker category of the Engineering undergraduate students while the evidentials carry the second spot in terms of discourse marker preference of the Liberal Arts students. This is probably due to the fact that, in a descriptive type of extended essay, topics in Engineering like *systems analyst*, the *Define-Measure-Analyze-Improve-Control (DMAIC) methodology* and *product development*, require descriptions of procedures in order for these topics to be understood fully, as in the excerpts below:

> Profit maximization and company advancement are the primary objectives of the (DMAIC) model. This is done step-by-step and part-by-part. *First*, the quality of products and services produced must be improved. *Second*, the employees of the company should be trained for further proficiency. *Lastly*,

> innovations must be capable of being practiced and applied within the company.
>
> Due to the widespread use of computer programming, society has benefited a lot from it. *One* benefit that can be derived from it is its creation of valuable programs that have solved computer-related problems. A *second* benefit is the fact that it provides a faster way of doing things. *Thirdly*, it provides knowledge and entertainment on the part of the user and the programmer. *Finally* and more importantly, it promotes product design and development.

For instance, in C, the research topic *DMAIC* is discussed by identifying its main objectives. The Engineering students, who worked on this topic, found it crucial to enumerate the guidelines through which these objectives will be met. Hence, the category of *frame markers* is used to move from one guideline to the next. This is also true in D where the students enumerated the benefits the user can get from computer programming using the category of frame markers 'one',' *second',' thirdly'* and *'finally'*.

In an argumentative essay paper, arguments in the Body section of the paper require support from authorities to highlight the idea that the students' papers are worth reading since the use of *evidentials* suggest thorough research has been undertaken by the researchers, as in the excerpts below:

> *Since* parody is part of the Filipino language, as *Denith (2000) said*, it is passed down through continuous chains which *now* evolves into not just mockery of language *but* also as an attack to the person's lifestyle which *then* leads to stereotyping.
>
> War has aided man to develop his technology. It was in 1946 when the microwave was invented. The microwave was developed from a military radar used in war (Ziemke, 2007). The ambulance is *also* a product of war. Its idea originally came from horse-drawn wagons used during Napoleon's time (Connell, 2007)

Within the category of logical connectives are three types: the *addition*, the *contrast*, the *consequence*. The findings reveal that there is an almost equal distribution among the logical connectives of *addition, contrast* and *consequence* present in the research papers of the Liberal Arts undergraduate students. For instance, in E, the students in the College of Liberal Arts use the logical connective of consequence *since* to show the relationship between *parody* and the *Filipino language*. Their relationship is one of *cause- effect* showing how parody, because it is part of the Filipino language, develops its meanings from *mockery* to *stereotyping.*

Although the major discourse marker type employed by the Liberal Arts students is logical connective, they also find it necessary to insert the discourse markers of *evidentials* and *frame markers.* The use of evidentials in the discourse marker *as Denith (2000) said* lends support to the contention of the pair that there is indeed development in the meaning of the term *parody*.

On the other hand, the next most frequently used discourse marker category among Liberal Arts students is *evidentials.* This may account for the fact that in an argumentative type of extended essay, the need for supporting authorities is a requirement to make the students' arguments more substantial, as in the excerpts below:

> *According to Gook* (2002), 'emo' is found to be the most emotionally inclined genre when it is performed.
>
> *According to T.B. Andres* (1997), Filipinos see education as their gateway to becoming rich.

If, as Halliday and Hassan (1976) maintain, cohesion is achieved because certain linguistic units are added to link either two sentences or ideas together, then the use of the discourse markers - connectives and frame markers for the Engineering texts and connectives and evidentials for the Liberal Arts texts – helps facilitate comprehension on the part of the readers and critical thinking on the part of the student-writers.

Conclusion

The preference for particular discourse marker types and categories suggests that, based on the kind of research paper required among the students and based on the discipline the students belong to, the written outputs usually indicate an inclination to a particular set of discourse marker choice. The priority therefore of the Engineering students to use the discourse marker categories of l*ogical connectives*, particularly addition, and of *frame markers* may most likely be due to the fact that the goal of the descriptive paper is to supply information that is either collected from previous research or to contribute support to the present discussion that yields the students' insights. There is little use of the *contrast* category of logical connectives probably because the students do not perceive much need to oppose an existing idea to achieve this goal. On the other hand, the observation that the Liberal Arts' research papers seems to prefer the categories of *logical connectives*, particularly addition and consequence and the *evidentials*, suggests that the students are aware of the nature of their discipline. According to Latham (n.d.), the pursuit of a Liberal Arts degree trains the students to examine life, engage in practical reasoning and develop aesthetic inquiry, expression and appreciation. These findings are significant in the field of language teaching especially in the area of writing since the language teachers can pay particular attention to the need of students in different disciplines and to address their needs based on their different requirements. One strategy that the teacher can choose to make sure that the students are prepared as well as properly trained to employ the appropriate discourse markers that they will use based on their disciplines is by providing them model texts and exercises that will force their awareness as to the functions of certain discourse markers categories. Through this, the students will begin to explore available examples of discourse marker types other than those they frequently use. Thus, not only is critical awareness activated among the students but also the need to create variety in their linguistic choices.

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Beyond the Products of Higher-Order Questioning: How do Teacher and English-Language Learner Perceptions Influence Practice?

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 74-90

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

First language (L1) and second language (L2) research shows that asking students higher-order questions benefits learning in many ways. While most research surrounding higher-order questioning (HOQ) has examined the products that these question types influence (e.g., test scores and amounts of language production), more recent research has begun to investigate the contexts in which successful HOQ occurs. In order to further characterize contextual factors impacting HOQ, this study examined: 1) the HOQ patterns of a mainstream elementary teacher; 2) her rationale for this pattern; and 3) English language learners (ELLs) perceptions of answering higher-order questions. After analyzing more than 400 questions, student surveys, and teacher and students interviews, this study found that teachers' HOQ patterns may be impacted more by general theories of learning than by perceptions of learners' abilities. Additionally, data from this study suggest that ELLs perceptions of their HOQ abilities is influenced by proficiency and group settings. These findings are discussed in light of extant literature and suggestions for practice and research are presented.

Keywords: discourse, process-product, higher-order questioning, student perceptions

Introduction

High-level or higher-order thinking involves the mental processes of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom, 1956). Educators should implement curricula targeting these thinking skills for *all* students (Zohar & Dori, 2003). While many educators would probably agree that thinking skills are important in education, research shows that English-language learners (ELLs) rarely receive higher-order thinking instruction (Au, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Dong, 2006; Gebhard, 2003). Among numerous reasons for a focus on higher-order thinking, ELLs need these skills to pass high-stakes tests (Raphael & Au, 2005), compete in a global job market (Au, 2006), and initiate social change (Freire, 2004).

One way to engage ELLs in thinking is to ask them higher-order questions (Nagappan, 2001). Higher-order questioning (HOQ) offers learners many benefits. For example, HOQ increases literacy levels (e.g., Taylor, Clark, Pearson, Walpole, 2000), develops thinking skills (Dontanio & Paradise, 1988), and leads to more target language production than lower-order questions (e.g., Brock, 1986; Farooq, 2007; Shomoossi, 2004). Although HOQ offers many benefits, teachers may not ask ELLs higher-order questions. First language (L1) research shows that among a number of factors, teachers consider students'

intellectual abilities before asking questions (Roth, 1996; Zohar, Degani, & Vaaknin, 2001). This point is important for language education because some educators confuse language proficiency with cognitive ability (Harklau, 1994, 2000) and hold erroneous notions that ELLs are not able to think deeply (Oakes & Guition, 1995).

While it is important for research to explore how teachers' perceptions impact HOQ, HOQ is co-constructed by teachers *and* students (Carlsen, 1991). To date, most research has focused primarily on the benefits of HOQ (e.g., Brock, 1986; Farooq, 2007; Shomoossi, 2004), with little regard to student roles in HOQ. The few studies that have examined student involvement beyond how much target language they produce (i.e., Farooq, 2007; Suk-a-nake et al, 2003; Wu, 1993) indicate that some ELLs cannot answer higher-order questions and that some students are reluctant to participate in HOQ. These few studies show that if educators are to engage ELLs in HOQ, they need more information regarding the contexts surrounding this practice. To investigate these issues, this study examined the HOQ patterns of a mainstream teacher and her rationale for asking these questions. Additionally, this study explored ELLs' perceived abilities to answer higher-order questions. Before describing the study, L1 and second language (L2) literature describing the benefits of HOQ and the contextual features that influence HOQ are discussed.

Literature Review

Benefits of Higher-Order Questioning

L1 Research. Studies from a number of fields demonstrate the power of HOQ. For example, in a 20-study meta-analysis combining data from varying grade levels and subjects, Redfield and Rousseau (1981) found that HOQ led to better student achievement. In addition to overall student achievement, HOQ is linked to literacy success. For instance, while attempting to uncover factors that lead to reading achievement with low-income, early elementary students by identifying the most effective schools and teachers, Taylor, Pearson, Clark, and Walpole (2000) found that the number of higher-order questions asked distinguished both accomplished teachers and highly effective schools. In a subsequent study examining teachers and low-income students in terms of cognitive engagement in literacy practices, Taylor, Pearson, Peterson, and Rodriguez (2003) found that the number of teachers' higher-order questions was the most consistent variable affecting student literacy achievement. By examining the relationship between HOQ and student achievement these studies show that HOQ impacts learning in general (i.e., Redfield & Rousseau, 1981) and literacy achievement in particular (i.e., Taylor et al, 2000; Taylor et al 2003).

L2 Research. Similar to research in other areas, HOQ in language-learning contexts has focused on the products of HOQ. However, the terminology used to discuss HOQ in language contexts differs from that in other areas. For example, L1 studies categorize questions as higher-order and lower-order (e.g., Redfield & Rousseau, 1981; Taylor et al, 2003), while second language studies examine questioning in terms of referential and display types (e.g., Brock, 1986; Farooq, 2007; Suk-a-nake et al, 2003). Although the terminology differs, referential and display questions can be categorized as higher-order and lower-order questions, respectively (Brock, 1986; Brown, 2001). Brown explains that referential questions include the

skills of application, analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. These skills mirror the concepts put forth in Bloom's (1956) cognitive hierarchy that deem lower-order items as those in which students do not produce information, but simply recall prescribed data from memory. Once learners move past rote memorization into the processes of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, higher-order actions take place. Throughout this paper, the term higher-order questions or HOQ refers to both higher-order and referential questions and the term lower-order questions is used in reference to lower-order and display questions.

A number of studies from language classrooms show that teachers ask higher-order questions sparingly and that HOQ leads to more learner output than lower-order questions (Brock, 1986; Farooq, 2007; Long & Sato, 1983; Shomoosi, 2004; Suk-a-nake et al, 2003). Shomoossi (2004), for example, examined the distribution of higher-order and lower-order questions in three university classes in Iran. He concluded that the instructors asked four times as many lower-order questions as higher-order questions, but when instructors asked higher-order questions, classroom interaction increased. Echoing Shomossi's findings, Long and Sato (1983) reported that the teachers in their study asked more lower-order questions than higher-order questions. Additionally, they found that when teachers asked higher-order questions, students gave longer answers than when asked lower-order questions. Furthermore, when investigating the relationship between teacher questions and speech modifications on verbal output with Japanese university students, Farooq (2007) noted that higher-order questions led to more words per response than lower-order questions. Similarly, HOQ has led to more words per response among Thai university students (Suk-a-nake et al, 2003). Not only did HOQ increase the quantity of students' verbal output compared to lower-order questions in Brock (1986), she also found that HOQ enhanced the syntactic complexity of verbal output. Aside from the findings reported in Wu (1993) -- that HOQ did not increase students' language output-- researchers generally report that HOQ increases language learners' verbal language production when compared to lower-order questions. In addition to the benefits for student literacy levels and general achievement, as discussed earlier, these findings matter because opportunities to produce the target language aids second language acquisition (SLA) (Swain, 1985).

Contextualizing Higher-order Questioning

HOQ research from L1 and L2 settings has focused primarily on the results that HOQ produces. Whether it was student achievement (i.e., Redfield & Rousseau, 1981), literacy achievement (e.g., Taylor et al, 2000), or language production (e.g., Brock, 1986), the studies reviewed above investigated how teacher behaviors impact student production. This type of research, studies that "strive to account for student outcomes as a function of teacher behaviors" (Carlsen, 1991, p. 157), is termed *process-product.* Process-product studies have demonstrated the influence of HOQ on learning, but the generalizability of these studies has been limited due to the lack of contextually-descriptive information provided by researchers (Carlsen, 1991). Carlsen argues that HOQ is co-constructed by teachers and students; the spaces where verbal exchanges take place are affected by all participants' perceptions, attitudes, and histories of past and present events. He continues by adding that researchers should consider the context, the content, and the responses of HOQ in order to provide important information that others will need to consider in order to implement HOQ successfully.

Keeping contextually-based features in mind, questions surface from the HOQ literature. For example, some researchers (i.e., Brock, 1986; Long & Sato, 1983; Shomoosi, 2004) found that teachers asked more lower-order questions than higher-order questions. However, what we do not know from these studies is how students reacted to these questions. Although the researchers looked at students' length of responses, they did not provide data regarding students' overall participation, attitudes, or perceptions of HOQ. Perhaps students were not active in responding to higher-order questions so the teacher asked less of these types of questions. This is possible considering that some evidence suggests that students are reluctant to respond to HOQ (Farooq, 2007; Suk a nake et al 2003). Students may, therefore, choose not to respond to certain questions based on their perceived abilities to answer those questions. Another context related issue stems from Wu's (1993) study. Wu found that student responses to HOQ were the same as lower-order questions but we are left asking why the responses were limited. Wu, for instance, did not note the proficiency levels of the students. Again, this may be explained in part by students' perceived abilities to answer HOQ or their inabilities to construct longer strings of output, but no data for this is provided. Although Wu did not seek information pertaining to students' perceptions or proficiencies, she did note that the teachers she observed were teaching classes to new students, students who were not their usual students. By adding information about the context, the limited responses by the learners could be explained partially by the unfamiliarity between teacher and student, considering that some higher-order questions require students to give personal responses (Brock, 1986; Taylor et al, 2003). Wu's study shows that even small amounts of contextual data strengthen the explanatory power of HOQ studies.

Important contextual information about HOQ has been provided by other studies. For instance, Suk-a-nake et al (2003) investigated the types of questions students could answer as well as the questions students found difficult to answer. After observing and interviewing Thai university students of varying English proficiency levels, the researchers found that only students at high English proficiency levels could answer all question types. Additionally, the researchers stated that students considered questions that require longer answers the most difficult to answer and that low-proficiency ELLs found HOQs difficult to answer. Data from this study is valuable in that it describes the environment in which HOQ happens most effectively. If teachers are to engage students in HOQ, they need to know how to apply this practice appropriately for all ELLs, especially low-proficiency learners. If teachers ask higher-order questions to ELLs in situations where these learners find this practice uncomfortable and threatening, this may negatively impact their affective variables and hinder language acquisition (Krashen, 1985).

In addition to the importance of student perceptions of HOQ, teacher perceptions play a critical role in the delivery of challenging questions. L2 studies investigating HOQ have mainly looked at the frequency and types of teacher questions (e.g., Brock, 1986; Long & Sato, 1983; Redfield & Rousseau, 1981). However, L1 research has begun to consider the factors that may affect teacher behaviors. For example, research addressing higher-order thinking has found that the way a teacher views student academic levels affects the way she will cognitively challenge her students (Zohar, Degani, & Vaaknin, 2001). Dealing with HOQ in particular, mixed perspectives exist about whether teachers' beliefs about students' abilities affect the way students are questioned. For example, when interviewing forty Israeli teachers, Zohar et al (2001) found that 70% of the teachers stated that they

would ask the same types of questions to all learners regardless of their abilities, although Zohar et al never actually observed the types of questions these teachers asked. Conversely, when Roth (1996) observed and interviewed an expert questioning teacher, he noted that this teacher considered students' abilities when posing questions and differentiated questions accordingly. If teachers' perceptions of learners' abilities influence the types of questions teachers pose, this could be problematic for language learners in mainstream classrooms (i.e., classrooms where ELLs study with native English speakers). For example, if teacher questioning is affected by their perceptions of students' abilities, ELLs may not be asked higher-order questions because they are perceived by some teachers as being intellectually deficient (Harklau, 1994, 2000; Oakes & Guition, 1995). Therefore, in addition to looking at teacher questions in terms of question type and question frequency, research should attempt to understand the reasons for teacher questions; probing a teacher's rationale for asking question types might provide insights into HOQ practices.

In the literature reviewed above, a number of studies demonstrate that HOQ positively impacts learning. However, many of these studies focused mainly on the products of HOQ rather than the contexts in which they occurred. In order to understand factors that underlie HOQ products, research needs to consider the reasons why teachers and students participate or fail to participate in HOQ. In order to understand these reasons, this study was driven by the following research questions:

1. To whom does a teacher ask higher-order and lower-order questions in a mainstream classroom?
2. What rationale does the teacher give for asking these types of questions?
3. How do ELLs in this classroom perceive their abilities to respond to higher-order questions?

Method

The Site and Participants

The elementary school where the study took place was in the southeast United States. The school had seen a steady influx of Hispanic migrants over the previous 14 years. At the time of the study, the enrollment of the school was approximately 500 students, 45% of whom were Hispanic, and 73% of whom qualified for free or reduced lunch. With high percentages of minority and low-income students, Carol, a pseudonym for the participating teacher, labeled the school as "inner-city."

Carol was a mainstream teacher with over 25 years of teaching experience. She had a master's degree in education and spoke German and Spanish as additional languages. Carol welcomed the idea of placing language learners into the same classroom as native speakers and felt that interactions between these groups would benefit all learners.

In addition to 19 native speakers, there were six ELLs in Carol's fifth grade classroom. All of the ELLs were Hispanic and five had been in the US public school system since kindergarten, with one beginning US schools in third grade. Based upon the results of a district-wide assessment at the end of each academic year, four of the six ELLs (i.e., Narita, Javier, Jose, and Edgar) were at the intermediate English proficiency level, and two (i.e., Jorge and Cesar) were beginning-level learners.

Data Collection and Analysis

After obtaining consent from participants and ensuring them that their real names would not be used when reporting the findings from this qualitative study, data were collected over five consecutive, full-day observations. Five days were observed to allow for consistent patterns in teacher and student behavior to develop. In addition to the observations, data sources for the study included a student survey and student and teacher interviews. Below, each data source and its analyses are described.

Classroom Questions

During the classroom observations, the teacher's questioning patterns were observed and video-taped. Following the observations, questions and responses were transcribed from the video and questions were coded into higher-order or lower-order categories. Procedural questions (e.g., Would you like to read page 12?) and rhetorical questions (e.g., That was interesting, wasn't it?) were not analyzed. The teacher's questions were coded as higher-order if the question called for the student to create new information (information not previously discussed). Although numerous coding schemes exist, the decision to code questions in this manner was based on recommendations in the literature. For example, Renaud and Murray (2007) note:

> Perhaps the clearest distinction between lower- and higher-order questions, as noted by Bloom, is that while lower-order questions are designed to elicit existing answers (e.g., from the textbook, directly from the lecture), higher-order questions require novel answers in that they cannot simply be recalled (p. 322).

Because asking for new information meant that students had not been exposed to an answer, they could not, therefore, have memorized answers. The following questions typify those coded as higher-order: Why do you think thoughts of Halloween made the character lonely? Why did Sam refer to nature as she? Examples of lower-order questions include: What was the Stamp Act? When was she born? Ultimately, if the question asked students to recite information available from text books, the teacher, or students, it was coded as lower-order. Transcriptions of the questions made it easy to determine which questions had been previously asked and discussed. For answers that may have been provided before data collection took place, the teacher was provided with transcripts and asked to identify if answers to these questions had been provided previously.

After confirming the level of teacher questions, questioning data were recorded onto a questioning chart (see Appendix A) regarding: 1) question types (higher-order or lower-order); 2) to whom the teacher asked the question (native speaker, ELL, or class); and 3) who answered the teacher's question (teacher, native speaker, ELL, no one). The chart was analyzed to answer research question 1 (i.e., To whom does a teacher ask higher-order and lower-order questions in a mainstream classroom?). Categories of data from the chart were summed. After each category was calculated, the total of number of question types (i.e., higher-order and lower-order) were divided by the number of questions the teacher aimed at each student type (i.e., native speaker, ELL, class). This information provided a percentage in order to present a holistic view of what types of questions the teacher asked to whom.

Student Survey and Interviews

After the first day of observation, a survey (Appendix B) was distributed to the ELLs. The seven-statement, Likert-based survey, written in both English and Spanish, sought to gain the students' perceptions of answering higher-order questions (survey questions 1-4). Additionally, because the aim of this study was to explore the contexts in which ELLs answer higher-order questions, statements calling for ELLs' perceptions of what classrooms settings (i.e., whole class, small group, or individual) they feel comfortable in answering HOQ were also provided (survey questions 5-7). The attempt to collect data on HOQ and classroom settings stemmed from Roth's (1996) observation that the girls in his study did not openly answer higher-order questions in whole class settings but did answer questions in small groups. Students were asked to respond to the survey statements by selecting *never, sometimes,* or *always*.

The surveys were first analyzed individually. Student responses that were marked as never or always were highlighted so that the researcher could follow up on these items during student interviews. After analyzing surveys individually, they were analyzed as a whole. When analyzing data across surveys, the researcher attempted to identify trends in the data-- responses that all or most participants answered similarly.

After the last day of observations and after analyzing the surveys, all ELLs were interviewed. The purpose of the interviews were to gain insights into two possible issues: 1) their reasons for answering questions on the survey the way they did; and 2) to provide data regarding any unclear issues resulting from the survey or observations. This data was analyzed by looking for responses that connected and provided explanations for classroom behaviors or survey responses.

Teacher Interview

Following the observation period, an extensive interview with the teacher was conducted. Questions during this semi-structured interview (see Appendix C) were asked with the intention of making transparent the factors that influenced the formation of the teacher's questions. Of particular importance was the teacher's perceptions of ELLs' abilities to engage in higher-order thinking, her perceptions of ELLs' abilities to answer higher-order questions, and her overall philosophy of teacher questioning.

Information from this interview was compared against the questioning practices evidenced by the questioning chart. Comparing the data from the teacher interview with the data from the questioning chart allowed the researcher to answer research question 2 (i.e., What rationale does the teacher give for asking these types of questions?). For example, if the teacher claimed in the interview that she believed ELLs could answer higher-order questions and that she often asked ELLs these types of questions, but the data from the questioning chart showed she did not ask ELLs higher-order questions, then the researcher would present this disconnect between HOQ philosophy and practice. In sum, the interview served as a possible link between the teacher's questioning perceptions and her questioning practice.

Findings and Discussion

The current study addressed three research questions. The overall aim of this study was to better understand HOQ contexts. The following discussion regarding

the teacher's questioning patterns, her rationale for these questions, and the perceptions of ELLs to answer higher-order questions provides insights into HOQ contexts.

Research Question 1- To whom does a teacher ask higher-order and lower-order questions in a mainstream classroom?

Research question 1 was answered by observing, transcribing, and coding the teacher's questions. Below, Table 1 shows data for the types of questions Carol asked and to whom she asked questions. From Table 1, one can see that of the 401 questions Carol asked, nearly 59% were higher-order. When compared to other studies, this percentage is at the higher end of the range (14% in Long & Sato, 1984; 18% in Shomoossi, 2004; 63% in Farooq, 2007; 70% in Wu 1993). Carol directed 30% of her higher-order questions to native-speakers, 16% to ELLs, and 53% to the class (i.e., open for anyone to answer). Upon first glance, it seems that Carol engages native-speakers in HOQ more often than ELLs. However, when considering these percentages it is important to keep in mind the demographics of the class: 19 mainstream students and 6 ELLs. In other words, native-speakers represented roughly 76% of the class. This should be noted because it is somewhat expected that a teacher would direct more of her questions to groups of students that comprise a higher percentage of the classroom's total population. Proportionately, the number of mainstream students was three times larger than the number of ELLs. Therefore, if Carol were to ask ELLs higher-order questions at the same rate, and if the class' ELL population were increased to equal the native-speaker population, she would have asked ELLs about 48% higher-order questions, a greater percentage of higher-order questions than native-speakers (i.e., 30%). While this is hypothetical, it may allow one to view the distribution of higher-order questions in a different light.

Table 1
A table of Carol's question types and to whom she directed the questions.

Teacher Question Type	Who the teacher asked
Lower-order- 165	Native Speaker- 8 ELL- 27 Class- 55
Higher-order- 236	Native Speaker- 72 ELL- 38 Class- 126

The percentages from the data suggest that the ELLs in this classroom were offered higher-order thinking instruction. While a number of researchers note that many ELLs are denied access to rigorous instruction (e.g., Au, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 1995; Dong, 2006), this does not seem to characterize the classroom observed. The purpose of this paper, though, was not to attempt to determine quality instruction of ELLs, which would require much more than an investigation of teacher question types. While the percentages of HOQ gives some indication of what is happening in the classroom, it is not enough to merely identify the types of questions teachers ask since HOQ involves student perceptions and the teacher's decisions.

Research question 2- What rationale does the teacher give for asking these types of questions?

Research (i.e., Roth, 1996; Zohar et al, 2001) leading up to this study suggested that teacher questioning is influenced by their perceptions of students abilities and that some teachers differentiate their questioning depending upon these perceptions. In order to understand Carol's perceptions of her ELLs, the researcher interviewed her. Similar to the Israeli teachers in Zohar et al (2001) that provided conflicting views about the appropriateness of higher-order thinking with certain types of students, Carol gave conflicting responses regarding her perceptions of HOQ with ELLs and their abilities to answer higher-order questions. For example, when asked different questions regarding how the abilities of ELLs to answer higher-order questions matched up with the native-speaking students, Carol noted that:

> It's the same—some can, some won't. I think with the exception of two of them (ELLs), they are all capable. Narita, she doesn't count. She just doesn't have it, God bless her. She doesn't have it, Cesar doesn't have it, and Jorge doesn't have it.

When probed what she meant by "having it" Carol stated she was talking about "brightness." Early in the interview when asked about the factors she considered when posing higher-order questions, Carol mentioned that brightness was one of the key factors. When asked how she defined brightness, she said that she talked with students and that being able to conceptualize "cause and effect" determined brightness. By stating that three of the six ELLs "didn't have it," Carol clearly questions their abilities to participate in HOQ. However, in other sections of the interview, when discussing if she ever asks ELLs higher-order questions and how effective she thinks it is, her answers seemed to suggest that she perceives ELLs competent in HOQ:

> Do I ask them (higher-order questions)? Absolutely, absolutely. I don't think that other teachers ask them; they put them in the back of the room and don't talk to them or expect anything from them. I ask them all the time and they excel at it.

This statement seems to sharply contrast the statement provided in the previous paragraph. In that first statement, Carol questions half of her ELLs' intellectual abilities while discussing their HOQ abilities, which presumably means she perceives them as lacking in that area. However, in the second statement, the teacher seems adamant about the ELLs abilities to answer higher-order questions. Carol underscores this possibility by noting that these students "excel at it."

In sum, Carol provided conflicting views regarding her perceptions about the ELLs abilities to answer higher-order questions. Throughout the interview, however, she repeatedly used the words "thinking" and "thinking teacher" to characterize her teaching. One exchange in particular embodies this notion, as Carol said:

> These days, kids aren't taught to think. Right now, most of these kids do no thinking! I want them to be able to think. Reading is thinking, math is thinking, writing is thinking, life is thinking. And I'm all about thinking.

While Carol gave contradicting views regarding HOQ with ELLs, it seems that her overarching teaching philosophy was aimed at thinking. Her teaching philosophy may have superseded her perceptions of ELLs' abilities to engage in HOQ and that may have governed her questioning behaviors. Zohar et al (2001) found that

teachers' general theories of teaching impact their questioning. In that study, teachers who held instruction as including thinking were more likely to engage all learners (i.e., low achiever and high achievers) in higher-order thinking activities. Perhaps even though Carol perceived the ELLs' abilities to answer higher-order questions as lacking at some levels, her main teaching philosophy dictated her questioning patterns.

Whether it was her overall teaching philosophy or not, some factor other than her perceptions of the ELLs HOQ ability influenced her behavior. This is supported by the fact the although on three occasions in the interview she states explicitly that Narita, Cesar, and Jorge lack ability, she asked a higher percentage of higher-order questions to these three (71%) than she did to the other ELLs she perceived as having higher abilities (29%). While the expert questioning teacher in Roth (1996) was able to distinguish question types among her learners based on student learning styles, abilities, and the difficulty of the content, that teacher was unable to, even after setting goals to ask more questions to girls than boys, change her questioning patterns. That finding, combined with data showing that some teachers do not differentiate questions types due to the perceived cognitive levels of learners (e.g., Carol in this study and the teachers in Zohar et al, 2001) and the suggestions that teachers' overall teaching philosophy may guide questioning patterns, demonstrate the complexity of factors affecting teacher questioning.

Research Question 3- How do ELLs in this classroom perceive their abilities to respond to higher-order questions?

Research question three was answered through data collected on the HOQ survey and student interviews. Data were gathered regarding ELLs' perceptions of answering higher-order questions in general, as well as the classroom settings where they felt comfortable in answering them. Students' general HOQ perceptions are discussed first before dealing with classroom settings.

Table 2 presents results of the HOQ survey. From this data, it appears that these ELLs were mixed in their perceptions of answering higher-order questions. For example, when responding to statements asking them if they were afraid or nervous to answer challenging questions in English, replies ranged from always (3 responses) to never (3 responses). This data is more meaningful considering the English proficiency levels of the students. Recall that Jorge and Cesar are low-level ELLs. Their responses regarding how afraid and nervous they are when answering higher-order questions corroborate to show that they feel apprehensive in answering challenging questions. This data supports the finding from Suk-a-nake et al (2003), in that low-proficiency students question their abilities to participate in HOQ. Jose, a student who Carol mentioned was the most advanced of the ELLs, is never nervous or afraid to answer challenging questions. This data further supports the notion that proficiency plays an important role in how ELLs might respond to HOQ.

Although English proficiency seems to play a role in the ELLs' perceived HOQ abilities, all respondents indicated that they have trouble articulating answers. This shows that even though students may be at higher English proficiencies (i.e., intermediate or advanced) they still may choose not to engage in HOQ. Information concerning how ELLs feel towards their abilities to answer HOQ helps explain why Carol, in the interview, noted that two ELLs (Jorge and Cesar) "won't do it (answer higher-order questions)." Perhaps these students do not do it

because they are nervous and afraid to answer these types of questions. Information such as this could help explain why the teachers in Long and Sato (1983) and Shomoosi (2004) asked less than 20% higher-order questions.

Table 2
Student perceptions of HOQ

	Jorge	Cesar	Edgar	Narita	Javier	Jose
I am afraid to answe challenging questions i English.	Always	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Never
When asked difficult questions, I can think of the answer but have trouble saying the answer in English.	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes
Answering challenging questions in English makes me nervous.	Always	Always	Never	Sometimes	Sometimes	Never
I answer only easy questions in English.	Always	Sometimes	Never	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes

Data from statements about classroom settings (i.e., whole class, small group, and one-on-one) and HOQ help to further contextualize these ELLs' HOQ perceptions (see Table 3 below). Unlike the responses above, this data shows a clear trend—students become increasingly comfortable answering challenging questions as group sizes become smaller. For example, only one ELL, Jose, the one with the highest English proficiency, always answers difficult questions in a whole class setting. However, three ELLs stated that they always answer challenging questions in small groups. This trend continues to include all six ELLs when the teacher asks them one-on-one. Students were asked to elaborate on this during the student interviews.

Table 3
Student responses to HOQ and Classroom Setting

	Jorge	Cesar	Edgar	Narita	Javier	Jose
I can answer difficult questions in English when the teacher asks the whole class.	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Sometimes	Always
I can answer challenging questions in English when the teacher asks me in small groups.	Always	Sometimes	Sometimes	Always	Sometimes	Always
I can answer difficult questions in English when the teacher asks only me.	Always	Always	Always	Always	Always	Always

Each of the ELLs was asked why they felt more comfortable responding to challenging questions in smaller groups. Responses to this question seemed to

indicate that the presence of other students was the cause. Narita, when asked to explain why she felt nervous when asked questions in front of the whole class, said:

> Because I don't know if I will get the answer wrong and it's a little embarrassing....I think I'm nervous because I'm going to get the answer wrong, and like, maybe it's gonna to be easy for those kids and kids are gonna be laughing at me.

These comments indicate that Narita is embarrassed to answer questions because of the presence of other classmates. An exchange between Cesar and the researcher explains further why these ELLs seem more confident in responding to HOQ in smaller groups and provides clues as to which students may affect their comfort levels.

> Researcher: So you feel better with just a few students?
> Cesar: Yeah, and I don't feel embarrassed.
> Researcher: Why?
> Cesar: Because the other students will not be around and you can say what you want.
> Researcher: Which other students?
> Cesar: The English people. Because the English people know more than me. So they know more than the Spanish.

Cesar's perspective seems similar to Narita's in that other students make ELLs more nervous to answer challenging questions. When asked which other students make them nervous, Cesar says that it is the native-speakers who make him nervous because the native-speakers seem to know more than him. While Suk-a-nake et al (2003) found that ELLs find it difficult to respond to higher-order questions, and others (i.e., Farooq, 2007; Wu, 1993) suggest that ELLs are hesitant to respond to HOQ, the current study extends this literature by showing that not only might students' perceived abilities impact their participation in HOQ, but that the classroom setting in which HOQ takes place also matters.

Conclusion

The findings from this study must be interpreted with caution as data came from one classroom involving one teacher and six ELLs. Additionally, different question coding schemes and different instruments, especially ones tapping student perspectives using terms other than "challenging" and "difficult" questions, may yield different results. The generalizability of these results is limited. However, this fact underscores the point of this study—higher-order questioning is more than the cognitive levels of teacher questions; HOQ takes place in a certain context and the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of the participants impact the products (Carlsen, 1991). Educators expecting that they will observe positive results by simply changing the questions they ask hold a view of HOQ that is too simplistic. While studies have documented the benefits of HOQ (e.g., Redfield & Rousseou, 1981; Taylor et al, 2003; Long & Sato, 1983), the findings here, and elsewhere (Roth, 1996), show that teachers need to be mindful of a number of factors in order to have learner participate in HOQ successfully.

In addition to asking higher-order questions, teachers might, for example, offer higher-order questions to students one-on-one, in pairs, or small groups first. After students build confidence and language proficiency, teachers might ask them higher-order questions in whole class settings. Moreover, teachers working in mainstream settings must be mindful of the situations in which they ask ELLs to

speak. The ELLs in this study showed apprehension about answering questions in setting where native-speakers were present.

Other than these suggestions for practice, future research will need to investigate the extent to which teachers can differentiate their questions, as well as explore the factors that impact questioning practices. This study found that although Carol questioned the HOQ abilities of some ELLs, she asked more higher-order question types to these students. This could be a result of her overarching teaching philosophy, as suggested by Zohar et al (2001).

Educators need to provide thinking skills to all students (Zohar & Dori, 2003), especially ELLs (Au, 2006; Dong, 2006). While asking higher-order questions is one way to engage ELLs in thinking skills (Nagappan, 2001), teachers need to be mindful of the contexts in which they ask them. Since HOQ benefits learning, research needs to continue to explore HOQ from teacher and student perspectives so that teachers can use HOQ to meet learning goals in diverse contexts.

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Appendix A
Higher Order Questioning Chart

Question:	
Type:	*Higher Order* *Lower Order*
Who teacher asked:	*Native Speaker* *ELL* *Class*
Who answered the question:	*Native Speaker* *ELL* *Teacher* *No One*
Question:	
Type:	*Higher Order* *Lower Order*
Who teacher asked:	*Native Speaker* *ELL* *Class*
Who answered the question:	*Native Speaker* *ELL* *Teacher* *No One*
Question:	
Type:	*Higher Order* *Lower Order*
Who teacher asked:	*Native Speaker* *ELL* *Class*
Who answered the question:	*Native Speaker* *ELL* *Teacher* *No One*

Appendix B
Student HOQ Perception Survey

Circle the answer which best represent how you feel about the statement.

1. I am afraid to answer challenging questions in English. **Always** **Sometimes** **Never**

   Me pongo nervioso/a al responder preguntas dificiles en Ingles. ***Siempre*** ***Algunas veces*** ***Nunca***

2. When asked difficult questions, I can think of the answer but have trouble saying the answer in English. **Always** **Sometimes** **Never**

   Cuando se hacen preguntas dificiles, puedo saber las respuestas pero tengo problema repondiendo en Ingles. ***Siempre*** ***Algunas veces*** ***Nunca***

3. Answering challenging questions in English makes me nervous. **Always** **Sometimes** **Never**

   Responder preguntas dificiles en Ingles me pone nervioso. ***Siempre*** ***Algunas veces*** ***Nunca***

4. I answer only easy questions in English. **Always** **Sometimes** **Never**

   Respondo en Ingles solamente preguntas faciles. ***Siempre*** ***Algunas veces*** ***Nunca***

5. I can answer difficult questions in English when the teacher asks the whole class. **Always** **Sometimes** **Never**

   Puedo responder preguntas en Ingles cuando el professor preguanta dificiles a toda la clase. ***Siempre*** ***Algunas veces*** ***Nunca***

6. I can answer challenging questions in English when the teacher asks me in small groups. **Always** **Sometimes** **Never**

   Puedo responder preguntas en Ingles cuando el profesor me pregunta dificiles en un grupo pequeno. ***Siempre*** ***Algunas veces*** ***Nunca***

7. I can answer difficult questions in English when the teacher asks only me. **Always** **Sometimes** **Never**

   Puedo responder preguantas en Ingles cuando el profesor me pregunta dificiles personalmente a mi. ***Siempre*** ***Algunas veces*** ***Nunca***

Appendix C
Teacher Interview Questions

1. When you form a question in your mind to ask students, what factors do you consider?

2. What factors might cause you to pose a "difficult" question for students? Is this different for ELLs? How?

3. What factors might cause you to pose an "easy" question for students? Is this different for ELLs? How?

4. In your class you have five ELL students; does their ELL background influence the types of questions you ask them?

5. In your class you have mainstreamed students; does this influence the types of questions you ask them?

6. Do you ever ask your ELL students higher order questions? How successful is this?

7. Do you have any special techniques for posing higher order questions for ELL students?

8. Are there specific students in your class for whom you are more likely to pose higher order questions?

9. How do you think the ability of your ELL students to answer higher order questions compares with that of your mainstream students?

10. How important do you think it is to pose higher order questions for ELL students?

Using *Libros*: The Emergent Bi-literacy Development of Spanish-speaking Children

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 91-108
©2010
http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

The recent educational climate in the United States created by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 emphasizes assessment and accountability of all children. However, despite almost a decade of federal policies and regulations, English Language Learners (ELLs) continue to be at a disadvantage when assessed on state and federal standardized tests, especially in the area of reading performance (US DOE, 2009). This paper presents data from a multi-year home-literacy initiative, *Libros de Familia*, in which university-level student volunteers read and are read to by Spanish-speaking migrant farmworker children. The children who participate in the project are in pre-kindergarten through 10th grades; however, this study focuses on one subset of children in pre-kindergarten through three. The data derive from a quantitative study of seven such children and from qualitative data describing the university-level student volunteers' perceptions and experiences of the project. We specifically sought to understand how the children became engaged in reading and how this appeared to impact their emergent literacy development. Findings show that the children demonstrate knowledge of the connection between their first (Spanish) and second (English) languages. Findings also reveal that, in addition to providing access to books and motivating children to read, literacy engagement for this population also entails relationship-building between the children and the project volunteers.

Introduction

Since the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, few can deny the current educational climate of assessment and accountability, which emphasizes performance outcomes in core educational areas such as mathematics and reading for children in the United States. The Act marks a departure from the 1980s' emphasis of equitable educational opportunities and an embrace of equal educational outcomes through assessments conducted via student testing (Moore, 2007). This shift has largely affected immigrant, language minority students who are expected to reach the same educational performance levels on standardized tests as native-English speakers. Thus, in educational terms, immigrant, non-native English-speaking children face the difficult task of attaining native-like educational outcomes in achievement on standardized tests under the pressures of time limits and educational accountability.

One subgroup of students vulnerable to these pressures include the children of migrant farmworkers who work in agriculture and related industries

(namely dairy and fishing) and follow seasonal harvests in pursuit of labor. While not all migrant workers are immigrants to the U.S., an estimated 78 percent are (NAWS, 2005). Moreover, of those who are migrant workers, 85 percent are Spanish-speakers and 75 percent are born in Mexico (NAWS, 2005). The work of migrants is labor-intensive, inconsistent (due to seasonality), and frequently hazardous. Furthermore, migrant workers earn poverty level wages with an estimated median income of less than $10,000 per year (NAWS, 2005). While several studies have been conducted with this population (e.g., Ezell et al., 2000; López, 1999), we know little about the reading performance and reading engagement of young children who are Spanish-speaking migrants.

The Florida Context

Florida is "home" to between 200,000 and 350,000 of the U.S.'s estimated 2.5 million migrant farmworkers (Riley, 2002), though exact data are difficult to obtain due to the nature of migrant work. Many of these workers harvest seasonal crops, such as oranges, in the southern region of the state. North Florida, where this study took place, is home to an increasing number of migrant farmworkers who work in the peanut, hay, dairy, and blueberry industries. The children of migrant workers qualify for federal supplemental educational assistance under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), provided they move across school district lines more frequently than every 36 months, while their parents follow seasonal, agricultural work (Pappamihiel, 2004). Overall, migrant children are frequently poor, come from Spanish-speaking homes, and experience high rates of mobility, all of which negatively impact their educational experiences and academic achievement. The ways in which schools outreach to families, including use of both linguistically and culturally appropriate programs and practices, affect the educational experiences of these non-native English-speaking migrant children.

In 2006-7 there were 38,047 students, from pre-kindergarten to grade 12, who qualified and received migrant education support under Title I in Florida. Because many of the migrant students are native-Spanish speakers, they simultaneously qualify for ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) services. In fact, in Florida, there are approximately 250,000 English language learners (ELLs) in public schools, about 75% of whom are Spanish-speakers (FL DOE, 2007; MacDonald, 2004).

Most of these students participate in mainstream English-only educational settings, as outlined under the Florida Consent Decree (FL DOE, 1990). The Decree was the 1990 result of a legal case brought by a coalition of Florida organizations that sued the state of Florida, arguing that the state's failure to provide adequately-trained teachers for ELLs resulted in those students' poor academic performance. The State agreed to mandate ESOL preparation for new and practicing teachers in a language program model referred to as "inclusion" (MacDonald, 2004). In that model, the most widely-spread and preferred program type in Florida, ELLs are placed in mainstream, "inclusive" classrooms with teachers who have met the minimum training requirements under the Decree (MacDonald, 2004). However, little is known about the effectiveness of the mainstream, inclusion model in terms of its

influence on the achievement of ELLs in the state of Florida. We also know little about the specific ways in which second language literacy develops for those children, though current studies are underway that investigate teacher preparation and the performance of ELLs in Florida (Author, 2008b).

Overview of the Study

The impetus for the current study came from a multi-year home-literacy initiative, *Libros de Familia,* in which university-level student volunteers ("student volunteers" or "volunteers") bring bilingual and monolingual (either Spanish or English) books to Spanish-speaking migrant children and provide literacy support (Author, 2008a) through reading to the children or being read to by the children. The student volunteers generally work in pairs, with at least one having Spanish-language competency. In a given academic year, there are about 15 migrant families (30-40 children) and about 30 student volunteers who are trained to work with them. All of the families in the home-literacy project qualify as migrant and most of them are also immigrant (Author, 2008a).

In the course of the project, student volunteers frequently request to continue across semesters and academic years to work with the same families and children. They report both the strength of the relationship that they build with the children as well as the ways in which they tap into the children's unique life experiences to engage them in literacy. As we continued the project and observed children and volunteers over a period of three years, we noted the ways in which the children were engaged in literacy development and book reading at home and we wanted to know more about how that occurred. Thus, the present study investigated the literacy engagement of Spanish-speaking, migrant farmworker children participating in the home-literacy initiative. In this paper we present findings from a study that investigated the children's literacy engagement who participated in the *Libros de Familia* project. The study was guided by two research questions: How does a home literacy initiative project, *Libros de Familia*, appear to affect children's emergent literacy development? And how are Spanish-speaking migrant children engaged in reading through the *Libros* project?

We used quantitative research methods through a holistic literacy rubric that measured the gains in literacy development in seven migrant children with whom student volunteers worked and qualitative research methods, (including interviews, a reading observation protocol, and document analysis. In this paper we review literature related to literacy engagement, present preliminary findings from the study, and offer suggestions for educators and stakeholders working with this population. We now turn to a review of literature that presents the theoretical framework that guided this work.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Various scholars have discussed the importance of literacy engagement as an aspect of literacy development. In this section, we discuss literacy engagement as the theoretical framework that guided this study. We define literacy in this study as the ability to read, specifically, using skills to interact with

and interpret print materials. Though we use this definition, we are keenly aware of nontraditional literacies (New London Group, 1996) as well as varied literacies, such as oral literacies and religious iconography that exist in migrant family homes (Author, 2008a). Literacy engagement, as we review it here, includes motivation, learning strategies, affirmation of students' identity, choice of text, and access to books.

Student Motivation

Literacy engagement entails the disposition "for thinking deeply and using strategies for learning from text," (Guthrie, 2004, p. 4). Synonymous with "engaged reading," literacy engagement requires students who are "active and energized in reading" (Guthrie, 2004, p. 4) and who read frequently in a focused manner. Unlike literacy development, literacy engagement is not necessarily centered on effort, hard work, or completing a routine task quickly. Moreover, students who demonstrate literacy engagement do not read for tangible rewards such as points or gold stars as do students who are extrinsically motivated to read. Instead, engaged readers are driven by "curiosity, involvement, preference for challenge, and a desire to read" (Guthrie, 2004, p. 4). These intrinsic motivators propel students to increase the amount of their reading and contribute to their ongoing literacy development and academic achievement.

Learning Strategies

While, as Guthrie points out, intrinsic motivation is key to literacy engagement, teachers can provide support to existing engaged readers and help cultivate new ones through adopting various strategies in their classrooms. Scholars from fields as varied as cognitive psychology, bilingualism, and semiotics have suggested that such support includes the activation of students' prior knowledge, scaffolding meaning to enhance comprehension and use of language, and extending their knowledge of language (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000; Cummins, 2000).

Triggering students' pre-existing knowledge is critical to their ongoing learning, according to Cummins. For example, if a teacher is unsure about students' pre-existing knowledge of a given topic, he/she can "brainstorm" about it. The teacher would announce the topic and have students, in a group discussion, volunteer what they know about it. The discussion would be captured either by the teacher or a student on a chalkboard, chart paper, or a transparency (Christen & Murphy, 1991).

Snow, Burns & Griffin (1998) underlined the importance of pre-existing knowledge by stating that

> Every opportunity should be taken to extend and enrich children's background knowledge and understanding in every way possible, for the ultimate significance and memorability of any word or text depends on whether children possess the background knowledge and conceptual sophistication to understand its meaning. (p. 219)

Pre-existing knowledge is particularly important for second language (L2) students because their first language (L1) acts as a support to learning the new language and content. Students "should be engaged to use their L1 [and] should be encouraged to use their L2 to activate and extend this knowledge (e.g., by brainstorming in groups or by carrying out internet research in the L1)" (Cummins, in print). In fact, research suggests that "encouraging students to use their L1 when necessary to complete a group task can result in higher quality of L2 output than when students are prohibited from L1 use" (Swain & Lapkin, 2005).

Equally important is scaffolding meaning. Educators use scaffolding to provide learners with temporary supports without which the learners could not perform tasks or achieve at academically higher levels. Typical supports are: (1) activating prior knowledge, discussed above; (2) modifying linguistic input in a form more comprehensible to students through visual aids, demonstrations, dramatization, acting out meanings, and explanation of words and linguistic structures; and (3) supporting students in the use of the L2 in both written and oral forms (Cummins, in press). Cummins suggests that teachers can support students' use of L2 through writing frames. Writing frames integrate content area reading with writing. They are characterized by a skeleton outline that scaffolds children's non-fiction or fiction writing. Struggling readers can benefit from writing frames because they provide a structure for students to organize their thoughts (Fowler 1982; Nichols 1980) as can English language learners. They allow students to learn the structure of various types of writing, for example, science reports and formal letters.

Extending students' awareness of language is another critical support. As students advance through school, they must read increasingly complex materials in content areas of the curriculum (e.g., science, social studies, mathematics, and literature). These materials have difficult concepts, technical vocabularies that use low frequency words with Greek and Latin origins, and sophisticated grammatical and syntactic constructions. Students who master these competencies acquire academic language, that is, text not used in common speech. In order to achieve this high level of competence, students must read prodigiously both in school and outside of it. L2 learners can especially benefit from extending their awareness of language because their L1, when tapped into as a resource, can act as a cognitive tool in acquiring the L2. Students extend their awareness of language and its mechanics by comparing and contrasting L1 and L2 (Cummins, in press). Students from Spanish-speaking backgrounds can use English and Spanish cognates as resources. Cognates are words related in origin. That is, certain Spanish and English words descend from the same ancestral root, usually Latin. Cognates are especially facilitative in expanding literacy through enlargement of vocabulary in the L2.

Another learning strategy involves social interaction among students. Social interaction includes sharing questions, opinions, and newly-gained information. It also involves group or pair work in researching information or team-writing a report (Guthrie, 2004, p. 13). Through collaboration and discourse around a diversity of text types, students may find that they are more motivated to use comprehension strategies and, accordingly, increase the amount of their reading.

Affirmation of Students' Identity

Literacy engagement involves affirmation of students' identity. When teachers affirm the identities of children in the classroom through positive and culturally sensitive interactions, students become engaged in their own learning (Cummins, in press). According to Auerbach, individual learners and their culture play a critical role in such acquisition. For their part, "learners bring their own knowledge to texts in order to make sense of them" (Auerbach, 1996, p. 10). Moreover, the learners' reading processes are molded by their cultural familiarity with content and forms of texts. Importantly, Auerbach (1996) notes further that "[l]earners become proficient to the extent that instruction is connected to their background knowledge, life experiences, and communicative purposes" (p. 10). Her view differs significantly from the idea that literacy acquisition involves a set of discrete, mechanical skills that connect sounds and symbols, a major thrust of literacy assessment under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and findings from the National Reading Panel (2000).

Educators can affirm the identities of L2 learners through examining their own interactions with students to reflect upon the technical efficacy of instruction. They can also affirm students by acknowledging the whole child in ways that relate to students' personal life experiences as well as their cultural, and linguistic identities. In contrast, non-affirmation of students' identities reinforces unequal relationships that ultimately harm students' spirit and, undoubtedly, interfere with learning (Cummins, 2001).

Choice of Text

In some classrooms, students make decisions about the texts used in learning. Such choices give students a degree of ownership over their literacy development. Consequently, students "dig deeper for meaning, monitor their understanding, and express their newfound knowledge more elaborately than do students without these choices and decisions about their learning" (Guthrie, 2004, p. 12). An example of choice is the free voluntary reading (FVR) programs in the US advocated by Krashen (2004). Students read books of interest to them during a designated time period in school. If they do not like the books they are reading, they set them aside and choose another book. They do not write reports or answer questions but rather discuss with the teacher and the other students what they have read (Krashen, 2004, pp. 1-2). Nor do they receive rewards such as points or gold stars as do students who are extrinsically motivated to read (Guthrie, 2004, p. 4). In contrast to FVR, Accelerated Reader (AR) programs allow students to (1) choose books from a list, (2) work at their own pace, (3) answer comprehension questions on a computer, and (4) qualify for rewards. In relation to rewards, Krashen notes that studies on the efficacy on rewards are few; he mentioned a study by McLoyd that suggests that rewards actually hinder reading (Krashen, 2004, pp. 119-122).

Access to Books

A final issue regarding ways to support literacy engagement is a practical one, that is, how to ensure that existing and potential engaged readers have

access to books. Krashen suggests several commonsense ways to ensure books are available. "A print-rich environment in the home is related to how much children read; children who read more have more books in the home" (Krashen, 2004, p. 57). Thus, efforts must be made to get books into homes, which is the core purpose of the *Libros de Familia* project, described below. Moreover, better class libraries as well as better school libraries result in more reading. Finally, access to public libraries increase reading (Krashen, 2004, pp. 58-60).

Importantly, families from non-mainstream cultural and linguistic backgrounds may not have access to books or home storytime reading practices. For example, one author (Author, 2008a) found that Mexican farmworking families had limited home reading materials in either the L1 (Spanish) or L2 (English). Those families did, however, have strong oral literacy traditions that were passed on through generations, as well as religious print and related icons that were referred to, read, and interpreted in the home.

The foregoing factors comprise what we refer to as literacy engagement. What the factors do not address specifically, but what we propose here, is the respective role of the student and the teacher in literacy engagement. Guthrie suggests that literacy engagement is an attitude possessed by a student and from his idea, we propose that for students from nontraditional backgrounds or with nontraditional literacies practiced in the home, literacy engagement includes a "human relationship" factor—that is, the interaction, care, and support that occurs between two people around literacy. For various reasons, a given student is an active and energized reader. This attitude lies within the student as an intrinsic motivator that draws him/her to read. External factors do not appear to act as a motivation (Guthrie, 2004, p. 4). Thus the student will be an engaged reader because of something within him/herself.

While the student assumes the role of engaged reader, the teacher can set the stage for literacy engagement by the other factors set out above. The teacher shows the student learning strategies, affirms the student's identity, and ensures the student has a choice of books and access to them. Under this framework, the teacher assumes the role of facilitator in helping students become engaged readers and may have the opportunity to help the student activate his/her engagement in reading. In this paper we will show how one home-literacy initiative has successfully helped students achieve higher literacy development and also helped propel them into the world of engaged readers. Thus, the dual goals of literacy development literacy engagement are enhanced by the initiative. The study provides empirical evidence, both quantitative and qualitative to support its findings.

Methods

Data Collection Methods

In order to answer the research questions regarding literacy engagement for the participating children in the *Libros de Familia* project, we used both qualitative and quantitative research methods and techniques. Collection of the quantitative data took place over one 15-week semester, in spring 2008. Although the *Libros* project was initiated in fall of 2005, this was the first quantitative study undertaken around the project.

The qualitative techniques included interviews with the children (both an intake interview by the project coordinator and note taking by the volunteers during their reading time with the children), and the collection of book logs by the volunteers to describe their reading time with the children. The initial intake interview consisted of information asked of the children participating in *Libros*. The *Libros* director arranged to have a coordinator collect those data via an intake protocol. The coordinator traveled to each child's home early in January, 2008, and obtained information from the children and parents. The coordinator asked specifically about the children's goals, favorite sports and hobbies, places, foods, etc. This information was compiled and was also used by volunteers to get to know the child/ren they read to. Moreover, the volunteers used the information to identify reading materials that related directly to the children's interests, hobbies, and life experiences.

In addition to the intake interview, weekly book logs detailed the books chosen by the volunteers and/or children and those books actually read with the children. The logs included space for observation notes, and the volunteers were instructed to document the types and genre of books that the children preferred. They were also instructed to observe how the children were engaged in reading during the weekly visits to the children's homes. For example, if the children wished to re-read the same book several times, this was noted. Also, books that were left in the home from week-to-week, as requested by the children to re-read on their own, were also noted on the book logs.

As a final qualitative data collection technique, we utilized volunteer course papers to understand the volunteers' experiences and interactions with the children around L2 literacy, that is, their perceptions and experiences of how the children were engaged in reading based on the goals of the *Libros* project and how the children were developing literacy in English and Spanish. About two-thirds of the volunteers working with the *Libros* project were enrolled in an education course on Cross Cultural Communication, which required a minimum 10-hour service learning commitment. The course paper was a critical reflection of working with this group of children and issues related to language and literacy development. The papers were gathered after the end of the semester and end of the *Libros* project.

In conjunction with the qualitative data collection, we also provided a three-hour workshop to train student volunteers. The focus of the training was threefold: (a) to provide a background on migrant farmworkers and their children and the unique educational challenges faced by migrant families; (b) to describe and organize the *Libros de Familia* project by pairing student volunteers and arranging for the first home visit; and (c) to train volunteers on L2 reading with bilingual children. In this last activity, the *Libros* director, with help from the coordinator and Migrant Education program staff, modeled reading strategies for volunteers using bilingual books. While this was only an initial training, it served to provide beginning strategies for new project volunteers who might not have had training in literacy development. Thirty-four participants attended the training workshop in January.

For the quantitative data collection we used a rubric to identify the children's emergent literacy development and any changes observed during the semester. The rubric was designed by the *Libros* director, in conjunction with the migrant education project coordinator. The assessment items on the rubric related to each child's Literacy Skill or Knowledge. Each item was scored from

one to four. One indicated no evidence; two indicated very limited evidence; three indicated some evidence; and four indicated apparent evidence or mastery of the item. The items included the following demonstrations of literacy:

1) Purpose for reading
2) Book directionality
3) Directionality of print
4) Sound-symbol correspondence
5) Sight words
6) Knowledge of main characters
7) Knowledge of setting
8) Comprehension of main ideas of story (plot)
9) Makes predictions based on pictures and/or title
10) Predicts outcome of story
11) Summarizes or recounts story accurately
12) Makes connections to his/her life
13) Makes connections to other text
14) Demonstrates knowledge of relationship between L1 and L2 (cognates or sound)

The rubric, designed for preschool and early elementary grade students, was utilized at the beginning of the semester (as a pre-test measure) and at the end of the semester (as a post-test); thus, there were two data points using the rubric. We used quantitative methods, namely descriptive statistics, to determine a pre-mean score and a post-mean score. We then compared the scores across the two data collection points.

Via the final data item of the rubric "Demonstrates knowledge of relationship between L1 and L2 (cognates or sound)," we sought to understand how the children used knowledge of their first language, Spanish, to understand and decode text in English. This included the children's recognition of cognates in English and Spanish and/or the different phonological systems of the two languages. We were informed of this by reviews of research that show a strong relationship between first language literacy and second language literacy (see Goldenberg, 2008; National Literacy Panel, 2006). Because all of the children were native Spanish speakers and were (or would be) attending monolingual, English-only schools with literacy instruction in English, we believed that ongoing first language development would help to support overall literacy development for the children.

Participant Selection and Identification

The children who participated in the *Libros de Familia* project were identified by the local Office of Migrant Education. All of the families were eligible for and receiving supplementary migrant education support services through Migrant Education. In order to qualify for migrant education services, the families had to have entered this school district within the prior 36 months. In addition, the parents had to be working in the agriculture, dairy, or fishing industries at the time of the study. Though not a migrant education requirement, all of the participants were native Spanish speakers and were identified as receiving ESOL (English to Speakers of Other Languages) services

by the district. For this study, we identified seven young children who ranged from pre-kindergarten through third grade. The ages of the children were from four to nine years old. As noted, all of the children were native Spanish speakers. In addition, they used Spanish as the primary language in the home for communication and were from low SES backgrounds.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, all of the documents (i.e., intake interview forms, book logs, field notes from volunteers, course papers, and rubric pre- and post-test data) were compiled. We first analyzed data from the rubric by noting demonstration of children's emergent literacy in January, 2008 and then comparing that with the post-test from the rubric in May, 2008 (after one semester). We compiled information by each child by using the intake interview information, book logs, and field notes. In our analysis of qualitative data, we identified patterns related to the construct of "literacy engagement" along the dimensions outlined by our literature review, namely Guthrie (2004) and Cummins (2000; 2001) (above). However, we also allowed for new patterns around literacy engagement to emerge. This occurred when we identified themes that either did not fit or refuted the existing categories of engagement.

By putting together this information, we learned about (a) the literacy engagement and practices around literacy used by each of the volunteers with a particular child and (b) the preferences and ways in which the child preferred to engage in reading. Upon analyzing the data, we noticed two main themes: first, that the children were developing knowledge of both Spanish and English (as emergent bilinguals); and secondly that the relationship between the volunteers and the children appeared to be a key factor in the literacy engagement in the homes of migrant Spanish-speaking children in the project. At the end of the semester, we asked the volunteers to speak about their work with *Libros* as well. All of the volunteers who read with these seven children in this study noted the relationship that emerged in their work with the children. This confirmed for us the key of developing a supportive and consistent relationship around literacy for children at risk of failing (or in the case of Florida, not passing the third grade Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test or FCAT) in school and advancing to fourth grade. Below we present findings from the data.

Findings

Libros and Bi-literacy Development

The first research question asked how the *Libros* project appeared to affect the emergent literacy development of the seven Spanish-speaking children. We understand that the children were enrolled in pre-kindergarten through grade three and that their overall literacy development was likely highly influenced by school instruction; however, this occurred only in English because of Florida's inclusion of ELLs in mainstream classrooms. In this study, we used the holistic literacy rubric and observations to learn about if and how the children were developing in two languages. All seven children who participated showed gains in literacy development from February through April of 2008.

Descriptive statistical data revealed by the pre-test rubric showed an average score of 10.8. The post test, using the same rubric and administered about 10 weeks later, indicated a mean score of 11.7. There were several areas in which students' scores increased.

One unexpected finding was that the most frequent area in which the children showed gains was in their knowledge of the relationship between the first language (Spanish) and the second language (English). The two areas in which the children demonstrated this relationship was with cognates (that is, words of similar linguistic origin that have similar meaning [e.g., education in English, education in Spanish]) and sounds (such as using knowledge of Spanish sounds to decode English). Because of the emphasis in the *Libros* project on the development of two languages (Spanish and English) among the children, it seems likely that those gains were largely attributable to the *Libros* bilingual student volunteers who provided both L1 and L2 literacy support. As stated earlier, at least one of the volunteers in the team was bilingual and biliterate in English and Spanish. As the volunteers read to the children, they made the children aware of the relationship between the two languages. The classrooms, on the other hand, were sites of monolingual, English-only instruction, and the students' first language was not used for literacy development purposes. Thus, the preliminary findings from this study reveal that bilingual reading is likely to contribute to students' awareness of the relationship between the first and second languages. This finding has implications for English language literacy development of ELLs, an important aspect of second language reading according to the National Literacy Panel report (2006).

In addition, data from the holistic literacy rubric revealed that the younger students showed greater overall gains in emergent literacy than did most of the older students; however, the areas in which those gains occurred were different. Miguel, for example, demonstrated knowledge of main characters, knowledge of setting, knowledge of plot, and story recount. Giovanna demonstrated gains in sound symbol correspondence and knowledge of sight words, story recount, demonstrating knowledge of the relationship between L1 and L2, and making connections between the story and her life.

As with one of the kindergartner children, three out of four of the older students in grades two and three (Lucas, Billy, and Linda) demonstrated knowledge of the relationship between the L1 and L2. Moreover, the older students demonstrated gains in the following areas: predicting the outcome of the story (Javier); and knowledge of the main characters and setting as well as making connections with other text and making life connections (Linda). These findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Student gain areas in L2 Reading (Names are pseudonyms)

	Lucas (G-3)	Javier (G-3)	Billy (G-2)	Linda (G-2)	Giovanna (K)	Miguel (K)	Joel (Pre-K)
Comprehension of Main Ideas (Plot)						■	
Connections with Life				■	■		
Connections with Other Text	■			■			
Directionality of Print							■
Knowledge of Main Characters				■		■	
Knowledge of Relationship Between L1 & L2	■		■	■	■		
Knowledge of Setting	■			■		■	
Knowledge of Sight Words					■		
Predicts Outcome		■					
Sound-Symbol Correspondence					■		
Summarizes Story					■	■	

Libros and Literacy Engagement

The second research question asked how Spanish-speaking migrant children are engaged in reading and in what ways while participating in the *Libros de Familia* project. As discussed earlier, there are several areas of "literacy engagement," including access to books, choice of text, identity affirmation of the students, learning strategies, and student motivation.

The logistical nature of the *Libros* project meant that children had increased access to books, as well as a range of texts from which to choose.

Volunteers made weekly visits and brought books to the homes of children. Before each visit, volunteers identified reading materials that reflected the interests of the children and brought a range of materials to the children's home at each meeting. The range of materials provided younger children with the opportunity to choose books based on their interests. For older children, the volunteers provided longer chapter books to read over the course of the semester; however, these also reflected the interests and background of the children. One volunteer, Sarah, noted, "during our eight weeks visiting the family, we brought over 60 library books into their home and took turns reading with each of the children one-on-one. We went for an hour each week and spent half the time reading and half the time doing post-reading activities." This number of books was not unusual, as volunteers were aware that, given the rural nature of the community and long work schedule of the parents, access to books was a challenge for the families.

In addition to access and choice, the *Libros* volunteers frequently noted how they engaged the children by identifying reading materials that related to the children's interests and background. At the initial first meeting volunteers met the children and interviewed them. Through the interviews, they identified the interests of the children and gained a sense of who the children were, their reading abilities, and their interests (hobbies, friends, home activities). This information was then used by the volunteers to choose materials that the children would like to read. One student volunteer described this process:

> One of the things that excited me most about this opportunity was going to the library to pick out appropriate books for the children... I looked forward to going to the library to choose books for the three children. It became easier to select books for each of them after spending time with them and becoming familiar with their reading abilities and interests.

A second volunteer noted, "[Giovanna] had stated when we first met that she liked scary movies and books. Therefore, I went out and bought two *Goosebumps* books to read with her throughout the semester and allowed her to keep the books at the end of the semester." The volunteers repeatedly underscored how they identified reading materials that reflected the children's interests or background as a way to engage them in reading. Using the children's interests and background was an important way in which their identities were affirmed.

In addition to reinforcing the interests of the children, the reading materials and language frequently reflected their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It is important to note here that bilingual (English-Spanish) books were available to the volunteers to sign out at the *Libros* director's office and that children also requested books that were in English only, as with books requested from their Accelerated Readers (AR) list, or books that they saw their peers reading at school, as with *Goosebumps*. Through a small grant through the state Department of Education, the *Libros* director acquired a number of bilingual and multicultural reading materials. Much of the material was bilingual, and the majority of books available were written by Latino authors. Some of the materials included *Chato's Kitchen* (Gary Soto), *La Casa en Mango Street / The House on Mango Street* (Sandra Cisneros), *En Mi Familia /*

In My Family (Carmen Lomas Garza), and *A Spoon for Every Bite / Cada Bocado con Nueva Cuchara* (Joe Hayes), as well as translations of books such as *Harry Potter y la Piedra Filosofal* (J. K. Rowling). Because the emphasis of the project was on literacy engagement, it was not a requirement that volunteers use only bilingual books; rather, volunteers were guided to make informed decisions about book materials based on the children's interests, as well as factors relating to their identity, such as linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Based on the findings from this exploratory study on literacy engagement, we believe that the children in the *Libros* program had the motivation to read due in part to the areas noted above. However, findings from the study also revealed a "human relationship" factor, that is, the volunteers and children formed mutually beneficial and affirming relationships. Social interaction via human engagement and relationships that were built during the semester were highly rewarding for the children, their parents, and the student volunteers alike. One volunteer described this relationship that was forged around reading:

> I found myself being grateful of [sic] the children's appreciation of us and excitement of reading. Every week they would run out to see us when we arrived. I have never seen children so excited about reading before! One of them would always grab our library bag and dump out the books to see which ones we brought.

She continued by discussing how she appreciated the children and began to question her own prior assumptions about migrant workers, noting:

> This project caused me to reflect on the stereotypes and generalizations that I have heard about migrant workers and their families and helped me to see the positive things that they bring to society. First of all, we never saw the father of the children because he works long hours. It is because of his hard work that I am able to eat. Before this project, I had never been around migrants, so I never knew what to expect. However, I have learned that they are wonderful and caring people and want what is best for their children in American schools.

Another volunteer similarly noted the relationship she formed with the family and then questioned existing stereotypes, noting, "[w]hen I was working with the family I did not once see a "drunk" or "lazy" person anywhere in the household. Instead, I saw a family who migrated to the United States in order to support a family and provide a decent education for their children."

Discussion

The *Libros* project demonstrates a variety of ways in which the children of Spanish-speaking migrant farmworking children are engaged in literacy. Literacy engagement is referred to in the literature as consisting of student motivation, learning strategies, affirmation of students' identity, choice of text, and access to books. Indeed, these areas appeared to be evident in the *Libros*

de Familia project. In the first area, student motivation, findings from this preliminary study showed that the children anticipated the weekly arrival of the *Libros* volunteer and willingly selected books, and made suggestions for future books. The second area, learning strategies, according to Cummins (in press), consists of scaffolding meaning and extending students' awareness of language and social interactions. This was evident in the *Libros* project with the children's recognition, as emergent bilinguals, of the relationship between the L1 and L2. The *Libros* project also built relationships between the children and the student volunteers. This was a crucial element to literacy engagement for this population.

Related to this was the third area of literacy engagement in which the children's identity was affirmed (Auerbach, 1996; Cummins, in press). In the *Libros* project, children's identities as Spanish-dominant, bilingual migrants in north Florida, were affirmed by the volunteers. The volunteers frequently selected books that reflected the life experiences and linguistic and cultural background of the children. Cummins notes that "through positive and culturally social interactions, students become engaged in their own learning" (p. xx). Auerbach (1996) further states that "learners become proficient to the extent that instruction is connected to their background knowledge, life experiences, and communicative purposes" (p. 10). Initial findings reveal that to be the case with the seven children in this study. For example, the effort made by the volunteers to connect reading materials with the children's background was evident by use of the interviews and the subsequent books that they selected. The volunteers connected reading material and new vocabulary to the language and cultural background of the children. This was a cornerstone of the *Libros* project and a strategy used by the volunteers.

The fourth area, choice of text, was addressed in this project. Volunteers brought a variety of materials to the home each week, and the children were able to make decisions about the text they wished to read. They had the opportunity to continue with the text or choose a different text. Moreover, they often asked the volunteers to allow them to keep the text over a period of weeks or to bring it back the following week if they were interested in re-reading it. Finally, the *Libros* project provided books for children who may typically have nontraditional or limited access to mainstream texts and reading materials (Author, 2008a). The logistics of the project consisted of identifying materials that would ultimately engage the children in reading and bringing those materials to the homes.

The volunteers' experiences presented briefly above underscore the ways in which this home-literacy project, *Libros de Familia*, engaged Spanish-speaking migrant children in reading. However, the findings show that one crucial component was the relationship built between the children and volunteers that essentially accomplished two important things: first, it contributed to the reading engagement as the *Libros* children and the student volunteers interacted in supportive and mutually-beneficial ways; secondly, it allowed prior assumptions about migrant workers and Latinos to be challenged, ruptured, and reformed to reveal a deeper understanding of a population largely voiceless. Ultimately, we believe that human relationship-building was at the heart of literacy engagement in this project and should be considered an additional component of the literacy engagement framework for children from nontraditional backgrounds and who may not have access to literacies

considered mainstream.

Conclusion

Literacy engagement, which consists of access to books, choice of text, teaching strategies, identity affirmation, and student motivation, considers how reading (and subsequently reading achievement) may be increased for students. In this paper we discuss literacy engagement in the context of a home literacy project, *Libros de Familia*, in which university volunteers provide reading materials and engage in reading with migrant, Spanish speaking children in the community. Findings from this study, which investigated the ways in which literacy engagement was enacted with seven bilingual children, reveal that the volunteers provided access, choice, strategies, and affirmation of students. However, two additional findings became salient: first, the younger children showed signs of emergent literacy development through the ability to compare and contrast across Spanish and English; secondly, a "human relationship" factor, in which volunteers and children built symbiotic relationships, emerged as being crucial to literacy engagement overall. Thus, literacy engagement for children from nontraditional backgrounds who may not have access to mainstream literacies should include this crucial element. Ultimately, we believe that affirming, human connections underlie educational success for nontraditional students and hold the potential for increased educational attainment.

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Mainland Students Learning English in Hong Kong: Does Place-of-origin Affect Motivation?

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 109-129

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

There have been a multiplicity of studies investigating motivation generally, but research has been MCant on how certain individual differences like place of birth impact the second language learning pattern. This study focuses on how place of birth can impact motivation to learn English. This subject is particularly important in the Hong Kong MChool context, as the main student population generally originates from only two places: Hong Kong and Mainland China. Indeed, the population of the latter is highly prominent in certain areas of Hong Kong. Thus, an investigation into the relationship between differing places of birth and motivation to learn English within this group may yield benefits for everyone. If so, the implication is that changes in current teaching and learning practices (based on the adopted motivational theory) could enhance Mainland students' motivation to learn English – while also helping them better adjust to, and integrate into, their new learning environment in Hong Kong. This study, which adopts a modified version of the motivation framework proposed by Dörnyei (1998), examines whether students from Hong Kong or Mainland China have different motivation patterns while learning English in Hong Kong. Both questionnaire and students interviews serve as main sources of data. The overarching result is that while studying English in Hong Kong, Hong Kong students have stronger motivation than Mainland China students. However, further statistical results show variations within this general result.

Key words/phrases: Motivation to learn, English, Chinese immigrants, Dörnyei, Hong Kong.

Introduction

Examinations of different individual demographic characteristics such as gender and age in motivation have long been investigating by researchers, spanning at least three decades (e.g. Dweck & Reppucci, 1973; Fyans & Maehr, 1979; Nicholls, 1975; Fuligni, 2001). However, most of this literature only looked at how age or gender differences impact motivation. For example, Rouse & Austin (2002) looked at the relationship of gender and academic performance to motivation *within-ethnic-group* variations – but this study did not consider how place of birth might affect motivation. (For other studies, see Boggiano, Main & Katz, 1991; Corpus & Lepper, 2007; Folmer, Cole, Sigal, Benbow, Satterwhite, Swygert, & Cisela, 2008.) The closest studies related to this present study are those investigating the impact of ethnicity. For example, Graham (1994) compared how ethnic minorities within the Euro-American

community differed in motivation. Whang and Hancock (1994) examined how Asian American and Non-Asian students differed in their motivations and mathematical achievements, while Fuligni (2001) compared how Asian, Latin American, and European students differed in academic motivation. Holloway, Kashiwagi, Hess & Azuma (1986) investigated how Japanese and American children performed in Mathematical causal attributions. Niles (1995) also compared how overseas and Australian students at an Australian university differed in culture, and the impact of different earning motivations and strategies.

With the substantial amount of research done in the past on motivation, the author was unable to find studies that examined intra-group differences on how birthplace might influence motivation. Overall, the purpose of the present research is to examine whether birthplace differences affect the motivation of Chinese immigrants in Hong Kong compared to local students, and whether the pattern of differences varies by birthplace with Mainland China. This represents an important step in motivational concepts and literature.

Table 1
Culture-specific and parent-specific motivational components within Dörnyei's conceptual framework

A. Language Level	Integrative motivational subsystem
	Instrumental motivational subsystem
B. Learner Level	Need for achievement
	Self-confidence
	* Language use anxiety
	*Perceived L2 competence
	*Casual attributions
	*Self-efficacy
C. Learning Situation Level	
a. Course-specific *motivational components*	Interest (in the course)
	Relevance (of the course to one's needs)
	Expectancy (of success)
	Satisfaction (one has with the outcome)
b. Teacher-Specific *motivational components*	Affiliative motive (to please the teacher)
	Authority type (autonomy-supporting)
	Direct socialisation of motivation
	*Modelling
	*Task presentation
	*Feedback
c. Group-Specific *motivational components*	Goal-orientations
	Norm & reward system
	Group cohesion
	Classroom goal structure
*d. *Parent-Specific motivational components*	Education background—English proficiency
	Financial support
	Affective encouragement
*e. *Culture-Specific motivational component*	Socio-cultural integration

Note. New motivation component added to Dörnyei's (1998) extended framework.

Conceptual Framework

Dörnyei's (1998) work has been considered one of the most influential contemporary motivational constructs in second language (L2) learning (see Table 1). He reviewed over 80 relevant L2 studies and combined most of the major motivational theories and constructs into his motivational framework (Wong, 2007). Dörnyei's model filled the gaps of Oxford and Shearin's (1994) and Williams and Burden's (1997) work. Wong (2007) also added two important motivational components that had not yet been considered: (1) the role of parents in students' L2 learning motivation; and (2) the role of culture in influencing L2 learning motivation. The addition of these two components will make Dörnyei's motivational framework more comprehensive for the investigation and evaluation of how to better motivate Chinese immigrant students to learn English.

Table 1 shows culture-specific and parent-specific motivational components now within Dörnyei's conceptual framework, the totality of which is now the conceptual framework of this study.

Methodology

Design

This study investigates how the motivation of Chinese students learn English as a second language was affected by their place of birth. A 55-item questionnaire based on a six-point rating MCale was set for Chinese immigrant students to elicit their responses (6 for strongly agree, 5 for agree, 4 for tend to agree, 3 for tend to disagree, 2 for disagree, 1 for strongly disagree). Mean MCores from 3.56—6.00 would be considered to indicate strong/positive motivation to learn English; mean MCores from 1.00—3.55 would be considered as holding weak/negative motivation.

The questionnaire included three items on different motivational constructs at different levels, based on the conceptual framework mentioned in the previous section. They were language level, learner level and learning situation level. Three statements were constructed for each sub-component under each motivational dimension. Items on parental education background and family income were also included in the questionnaire, which was administered to students were in Chinese language (see appendices 1 & 2 for both Chinese and English version), the language with which students were most familiar. This choice would avoid problems with language barrier and communication breakdown.

Face-to-face and semi-structured interviews were conducted after preliminary analysis of the statistical results. Interviews were conducted with the 10 randomly-chosen respondents to fill the gaps in areas requiring further clarifications.

Participants

The sample comprised 109 Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese secondary school students. Among them were 53 girls and 56 boys, all aged between 13 and 19 years inclusive. The Mainland Chinese immigrant students

heralded from the major province of origin, namely Guangdong. Sixty-nine students were born in Hong Kong and 40 in Mainland China. The immigrant students had lived in Hong Kong for less than 3 years and were invited to respond to the aforementioned questionnaire.

Place of birth

In this paper, place of birth can refer to the province in which the student had mainly lived and studied before arriving in Hong Kong. The questionnaire specifically asks for this data, as 'place of birth' may not be where a student lived and studied (see Appendices 1 and 2). However, according to information provided by the participants, the birthplace was always the same area in which they lived and studied.

Procedures

A pilot study was conducted in Chinese prior to setting the final questionnaire, and students were invited to comment on its language and content. A further test was also carried out to ensure the questionnaire's reliability. Several items were amended because respondents found them vague, while the reliability test found certain question items to be statistically unreliable.

For the main study, all students were gathered in the school hall and completed the approved questionnaire under the researcher's supervision and direction. Students were also assured that their information would only be used for the purposes of this study. Respondents were reminded that their participation was completely voluntary and that all data collected would remain confidential. Informed consent forms were also distributed. Thirty minutes were given to finish the questionnaire. Statistical analyses were carried out using Statistical Package for the Social sciences (SPSS).

Interviews with the respondents were conducted in their home schools, where counselling rooms provided a non-threatening environment to encourage respondents to express their feelings about English learning. The researcher first thanked students for participating in this study, then stated the purpose and manner of the interview to be conducted. Respondents were also reminded that the interview would be tape-recorded and their responses would remain confidential.

Data Analysis

Data collected from the questionnaire was analysed using SPSS. Descriptive analyses (mean and standard deviations) were mainly used to project participants' motivation and learning strategies for English learning.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with an attempt to understand student responses better in the context of how teaching and learning affect their motivation to learn English in Hong Kong. For comfort purposes, all interviews were conducted in their mother tongue, Cantonese. All interviews were audio-recorded, then transcribed into English. All analyses followed the thematic approach analysis in order to discover overarching themes that might emerge from data drawn from the individual participant teachers and across participant teachers (Daly, Kellehear & Gliksman, 1997). The process involves the

identification of themes through "careful reading and re-reading of the data" (Rice & Ezzy, 1999, p. 258). It is a form of pattern recognition within data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis.

Research Questions

This study set the following research questions for testing:

1. Do Chinese immigrant students have stronger motivation to learn English?
2. How does place of birth affect student motivation to learn English at different levels (language level, learner level and learning situation level)?
3. How do differences in place of birth affect Chinese student motivation to learn English under different motivational components (course-, teacher-, group-, parent- and culture-specific motivational components)?

Results

In this study, the variables of place of birth were classified into two categories. They are Hong Kong (HK hereafter) and Mainland China (MC hereafter). For all statistical results, please see Appendix 3.

Derived from the same testing procedure, overall descriptive statistics will be presented to see general patterns in how place of birth affected student motivation. Then data will be examined to determine if and how the birthplaces of the two student groups affected their motivation to learn English. Last, how place of birth may affect motivation at the level of situational related motivational will be investigated.

Table 2
Comparison of place of birth and overall motivation

	Mean			SD			*t*-test	
	All	HK	MC	All	HK	MC	df	*t*-vale
	N=109	n=69	n=40	N=109	n=69	n=40		
Average Mean	3.994	4.002	3.935	1.067	1.043	1.320	13.398	0.874

From Table 2, it is evident that students born in HK and MC have very similar motivation to learn English as their mean scores are very close, although students from HK still have slightly stronger motivation to learn English in Hong Kong. The *t*-test results show that students of different places of birth have no significant difference in their motivation to learn English in Hong Kong. However, their standard deviations have slight differences. HK students are believed to have a more homogeneous opinion (SD: 1.043) about learning English while students born in MC hold more diverse opinions (SD: 1.320).

During the student interviews, opinions expressed by the two groups of students were similar. Both the HK and MC students had fairly strong motivation to learn English.

"Yes, I would like to learn English well in Hong Kong because English is crucial to my career." (Alice, HK)

"Of course I would like to learn English. I don't think I will have problems in

other subjects because I did most of them in China but English…I didn't learn it for very long." (Ben, MC)

On the surface, students from HK seem to possess a stronger motivation because the average mean is higher than that of students from MC. However, it is still necessary to look more closely into whether students born in HK have stronger motivation to learn English at other motivational levels.

To further examine how a student's place of birth affects motivation to learn English, the motivation dimension will be the first level tested against this demographic factor to reveal differences from the aforementioned general result.

Table 3 shows that the descriptive data echoes the general result that students born in HK have stronger motivation, and there is no significant difference between their quality of learning motivations. Again, the mean scores of each level are close. The mean score differences are less than 0.200. The motivational level that receives the greatest mean score difference is language level, while learning situation level shares a very close mean score.

Table 3
Comparison of place of birth on all motivational dimensions

Motivation Dimension	Mean			SD			*t*-test	
	All N=109	HK n=69	MC n=40	All N=109	HK n=69	MC n=40	df	*t*-value
Language level	3.938	**4.004**	3.786	1.051	1.027	1.228	13.823	0.795
Learner level	4.162	**4.181**	4.022	1.123	1.055	1.625	13.521	0.733
Learning situation level	3.881	**3.844**	3.846	1.053	1.048	1.090	13.679	0.842

$^{*}p<.05$

The next motivational level to be scrutinised is learning situation level. Table 4 indicates that students born in MC have stronger motivation when the learning situations are related to the course and culture, while students born in HK possess stronger motivation when the learning situations are related to teacher, peers and parents.

Two interesting points emerge from Table 4: (1) Students from MC have stronger motivation when the learning situation is related to the course; and (2) this group of students also have a stronger motivation when the learning situation is related to culture. Responses from the student interviews also echoes the statistical results. One MC student explained why culture played an important role in her learning English.

"I know English has immense influence in Hong Kong and many idioms are derived from English. I know if I learn English well, I can understand the culture of Hong Kong a lot better." (May, MC)

Another MC students also revealed why course-specific motivation was strong.

"I was very nervous before I came to Hong Kong because the whole schooling system and examination system were very different. After I came to Hong Kong, I found that the English lessons were so much fun and the tasks were not as difficult as I expected, so I was relieved...I have to say, I am enjoying my English lessons very much." (Ken, MC)

HK students also explained why a teacher's influence was so crucial to learning English. A highly representative view was:

"The way the teachers teach in the classrooms and the ways they interact with me really touched me. They genuinely care for my needs and adjustment. I want to do well so that they won't be disappointed with me" (Jane, HK)

Peers were also an important motivator for HK students to learn English because friends represent social acceptance. One of the HK students said,

"Friends are the most important for me because I need their acceptance. Learning English well can be a way to earn friendship I believe...because no one would want to do group work with someone whose English is so poor, isn't it?" (Ricky, HK)

Last but not least, parents were also an important factor in motivating students to learn English. A student explained,

"My parents have been encouraging me to learn English well because they didn't have the chance to learn it when they were young, you know how poor HK was during the 40-60s... and they have great expectation on me too. My father works so hard to earn money for my English tutorial class. I will only allow myself to succeed." (Alice, HK)

Table 4

Comparison of place of birth and specific motivational components

Motivation Dimension	Mean			SD			*t*-test	
	All N=109	HK n=69	MC n=40	All N=109	HK n=69	MC n=40	df	*t*-vale
Course-specific motivational components	3.778	3.774	**3.808**	1.139	1.040	1.870	13.988	-0.178
Teacher-specific motivational components	4.174	**4.198**	3.997	0.947	0.899	1.301	13.274	0.851
Group-specific motivational components	4.098	**4.127**	3.884	0.961	0.928	1.205	13.773	1.072
Parent-specific motivational components	3.470	**3.507**	3.197	1.178	1.187	1.112	15.913	1.163
Culture-specific motivational components	3.885	3.824	**4.336**	1.040	0.938	1.793	15.617	0.730

* $p<.05$

Discussions

Although generally students born in either HK and MC have strong motivation to learn English, HK students have slightly strongly motivation to learn English. Opinions expressed by HK students were more homogenous,

while MC students had more diverse opinions. This can possibly be explained by the fact that demographic characteristics of HK students were more homogenous, which in turn led to similar responses to the questionnaire (see Table 5).

Table 5
Demographic characteristics of HK and MC students

Demographic characteristics		HK	MC
Gender	Male	39	25
	Female	30	15
Age	13	1	0
	14	14	7
	15	14	5
	16	18	4
	17	18	10
	18	16	12
	19	10	2
Total	Count	69	40

Students born in HK naturally have stronger motivation to learn English in general, as well as at different motivation levels, because English has long been a compulsory subject in HK so they learn it easily – not always so in Mainland China, where English is treated as any other foreign language subject, such as French or German.

HK student motivation orientation was found to be much stronger at language level. They believed that learning English can help them enter university, find a good job and have better career prospects. These results are supported by the findings of Peng (1993) and Bond (1996). Because of the familiarity HK students have with English learning in Hong Kong, they would naturally also feel more confident at learner level.

However, students from MC were found to have stronger motivation when specific learning situations are related to course and culture. Cultural differences serve as a motivator for MC students who are not familiar with Hong Kong culture. Also, students from outside HK are less familiar with Hong Kong culture (relative to HK students), and would enjoy better social integration by learning English. Similarly, MC students were found to have stronger course-specific motivation for the same reason – they would like to quickly settle into the new environment, a trait confirmed by Brooks (1997), who observed China's cultural system is based not on the strength of the individual, but on the pattern of relationships maintained by all people. Also, language is among the first key cultural elements to be encountered, and it is undoubtedly the key to social integration – therefore learning English is crucial to students first arriving in Hong Kong. Social integration has been proven a key motivator for Mainland students to learn English in Hong Kong, this research can be applied to other students from across China when English becomes a compulsory subject in their provinces to determine whether this study's conclusions are true for all cases.

For students from HK, parents, teachers and peers played a more influential role in English learning in comparison to MC students. In the past, researchers like Clark found that "effective family" is a key indicator of student academic achievement. He defined an "effective family" as excelling in certain characteristics: "family income, education and ethnic background" (cited in Wlodkoswki & Jayne, 1990: 38). Many researchers have come to the same conclusion—parental involvement has a significant positive impact on student language achievement, and there is a positive connection between parental involvement and improved student achievement (Eccles & Harold, 1993; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Ma, 1999; Shumow & Miller, 2001).

This study found that in HK, where the one child policy has been strictly enforced, students were more receptive to the parent-related motivational factor. Parents play a major role in influencing their children's education due to the well-known Chinese characteristic of intense family attachments (Bond, 1996). With the recent economic boom in Mainland China, parents tend to see their children as more important than ever. Demands and expectation from Chinese parents are also high, particularly in some major cities like Guangzhou and Shanghai.

Several researchers have also found that when children are reared by adults who engage them in frequent, caring conversations, the children demonstrate better cognitive, linguistic, social, and emotional development (Brooks, Bruno & Burns, 1997; Cotton & Wikelund, 2001; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Brown, Hammond & Onikama, 1997; Matinez, 1981; National Institutes of Health, 1997). Previous researches like Brophy (1987); Landgon (1997) cited in Nakagawa (2000) also remarked that parents appear to be the primary influence on a child's motivation to learn. Schumann (1998) stressed the importance of the effect in L2 learning situations and believed a learner's external behaviours are the responses of environmental and social stimuli.

A similar study by Fuligni (2001) examined ethnic variations in academic motivation among 1,000 adolescents from Asian, Latin American, and European backgrounds. He found that a sense of family obligation was associated with greater belief in the value of education and accounts for the tendency of Asian and Latin American adolescents to have greater academic motivation than their equally-achieving peers with European backgrounds.

Under parent-specific motivational component, there are three sub-motivational components, namely financial support, affective support and educational background. These are the core elements believed influential in enhancing their children's motivation to learn English in Hong Kong, if not decisive factors.

To understand how parental influence has positive impact on HK students' motivation to learn English, Table 6 shows the parental educational background of HK and MC students. Specifically, parents of HK students possess higher education than their peers from MC – thus it is very plausible that parental education level may positively contribute to better motivation to learn English, as claimed by Wlodkoswki & Jayne (1990).

Table 6
Parent education level of HK and MC students

	HK parents		MC parents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
University	3	4.3	0	0
Secondary	43	62.3	20	50
Primary	10	14.6	5	12.5
No formal education	3	4.3	2	5
Don't know	10	14.5	13	32.5
Total	69	100.0	40	100.0

As for financial support, Table 7 shows family income data for HK and MC students.

Table 7
Family income of HK and MC students in RMB

	HK parents		MC parents	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Below 5000	4	5.8	11	27.5
5001—10000	39	56.5	15	37.5
10000—15000	16	23.2	10	25
15001—20000	9	13.1	4	10
over 20000	1	1.4	0	0
Total	69	100	40	100.0

With a lower educational background, it seems that MC students' parents are from lower income social classes than those in HK. When comparing family income between HK and MC students, it explains why the wealthier HK students see parents as a more important factor in influencing their motivation to learn English. That is, the higher the family income, the more academic support they can get. This logic applies to the cases of HK and MC students, and it explains why HK students have stronger parent-specific motivation in relation to MC students.

Looking at Table 8, one can confirm the affective support the HK students' parents give their children is another main source of their motivation to learn English. The table shows that affective encouragement is another key factor positively influencing HK students' motivation to learn English in Hong Kong.

When comparing HK and MC students' parent affective encouragement, one may conclude that MC parents may be less vocal or expressive compared with HK parents because students of the two groups had different views about their parents' affective encouragement. This study confirms the importance of communicating with adolescents, and how affective encouragement can play a role in positively cultivating students' motivation to learn English.

Table 8
Mean and SD of HK and MC students in Parent-Specific Motivational Factors

Parent-specific motivational components	*Item*	Questionnaire question	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	df	*t*-vale
Affective encouragement	21	My parents always encourage me to improve my English.	4.380	0.852	4.09	0.954	12.452	1.204
Affective encouragement	5	Financial support and affective encouragement from my parents motivate me learn English in Hong Kong.	3.698	0.688	3.854	1.112	11.988	-0.158
Affective encouragement	13	My parents use different means to motivate me learn English.	3.203	1.011	3.188	0.966	10.425	0.844

$^{*}p<.05$

Teachers were found to play a more influential role in HK student motivation to learn English than they did for MC students. According to Bond (1996), Chinese students usually treat teachers with respect, silence and fear. Chinese students see their teachers as a role model. Previous studies have also found that teachers have direct influence on learners' motivation (Christophel 1990; Frymier 1993; Wentzel 1998).

To explore the reasons HK students see teachers as more important than MC students in English learning, Table 9 will be examine HK and MC student responses to the questionnaire.

Table 9
Mean and SD of HK and MC students' teacher-specific motivational components

Rank	Teacher-specific motivational components	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	df	*t*-vale
1	Direct socialisation of motivation	4.383	0.776	4.090	0.954	10.354	0.824
2	Authority type	4.090	1.027	3.854	1.112	10.768	-0.164
3	Affiliative motive (to please the teacher)	4.022	0.845	3.188	0.966	11.436	0.912
	Average	4.165	0.924	3.711	10.021	--	--

$^{*}p<.05$

HK students were found to have stronger teacher-specific motivation compared with MC students, which is likely explained by the fact that HK

students preferred teachers who were less controlling, while MC students did not find Hong Kong teachers particularly democratic. The two different views were expressed in the student interviews.

"I like my teachers because they care about me and the classroom atmosphere is encouraging. It's not just all about exams." (Jane, HK)

"My teachers in Mainland China were very committed and they always said positive things to us. Hong Kong teachers were also nice to me." (May, MC).

Previous studies showed that teachers can bring direct influence on student learning. In Winter's (1990) findings, students found that teachers were rather strict in maintaining control over the class, and that the rules to be followed were clearly laid down. Chinese students were also found to be more successful if they are taught by teachers reported as less controlling. Similar results were also found in Hong & Lee (1999), and Wang (1993), agreeing that teachers have a significant role in student achievement.

Direct socialisation, according to Dornyei (2001), means a "teacher can exert a direct systematic motivational influence by means of actively socialising the learners' motivation through modelling, task presentation and feedback." HK students also explained that affective reason – along with direct socialisation – was the reason for their preference for Hong Kong teachers. However MC students still drew a clear and respectable line between teachers and students.

"I have no communication barrier with my English teacher because she is always friendly with us, and in the classrooms her teaching is like talking to friends…very easy to absorb." (Ricky, HK)

"I think teachers are teachers, we need to respect them. I won't talk to my teachers like the way I talk to my friends. Just like she won't use the way she talks to her friends to us." (Ben, MC)

Not surprisingly, HK students see teachers as an important factor in influencing their students' motivation to learn English. According to Bond (1996), Chinese students usually treat teachers with respect, silence and fear. However, this is proved to be a de-motivator in English learning in the present study. HK students were more inclined to a democratic teaching style, and students were more motivated to learn English because of the openness in the classroom. Chan (1998) also believed that a friendly learning environment and good teachers are factors that help to learn a language (also see Dunn (1990) & Wong (1996)). Previous studies have also found that teachers have direct influence on learners' motivation (Christophel, 1990; Frymier, 1993; Wentzel, 1998).

Finally, peer influence was found to affect HK students' motivation to learn English more than it did the MC students. HK students revealed how they treasure social acceptance by their peers. Previous research also confirmed the importance of peers to the learner (Biggs (1995)). Peer group recognition was considered to be an important factor that helps students personal growth, with 'peer recognition' defined as a behaviour that creates social bonding. Through this connection, students cultivate adequate cultural values to establish their

social identity and roles, as well as learn social skills and knowledge, in order to function with others more closely. A personal image can then be established. Social systems link individuals with social structure and environment, and social networks link the individual and community. These two linkages connect individuals and create social integration.

However, MC students found it relatively more difficult to make friends when they first came to Hong Kong because their cultures, values and what defined as social etiquette were all different. Since it is more likely for students to seek help within their personal network rather than from external sources, teachers should initiate more opportunities for students to interact among each other. Social bonding helps students to adjust better to the new learning and social environment.

Conclusion

Motivation is always a complex construct. This study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods to discover the different patterns of Chinese student motivation to learn English in relation to their place of origin. These consequent statistical results will help educators better understand individual learners' different needs, even when they are of similar backgrounds.

Statistically, the present study found that HK students in general have stronger motivation to learn English compared to MC students. HK students were also more receptive to the influence of teachers, peers and parents. As for MC students, culture and the English course itself were the motivating factors having more significant influence.

Culture was found to be the third most influential factor affecting MC students' motivation to learn English, and it was believed that MC students are more receptive to culture-specific motivation factors. To successfully help MC students to have positive social acceptance among their peers, teachers can facilitate peer tutoring in class. Peer tutoring is highly recommended for teaching a combined class of Mainland and locally-born Hong Kong students, as it has proved its effectiveness in various studies (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Chun & Winter, 1999). According to Lai (1993), organised peer learning can work well in Hong Kong schools – and Hong Kong secondary school students would in fact prefer a more collaborative learning environment, as they feel it would promote the deeper, more achievement-oriented approach to learning that they prefer (Biggs, 1995).

Teachers should also introduce authentic materials which would promote more practical English usage in the Hong Kong context. Cultural lessons integrated with English learning can be an effective means to further help MC students adjust better in the English learning environment in Hong Kong. Teachers may consider guiding Mainland students around Hong Kong and teaching them the English names of famous city spots which often appear in English assessments, such as the HKCEE.

As MC students are more sensitive to course-related motivational factors, English teachers in Hong Kong should be reminded of the differences between the two student groups, and hence aim to create an environment conducive to English learning; select appropriate learning objectives; choose relevant authentic teaching and learning materials; design, structure and grade learning objectives; and provide constructive feedback to students in order to

meet their unique learning needs.

As for the HK students specifically, some needs are more of a concern, i.e. teachers, peers and parents, as these all have immediate effects on HK students' motivation to learn English. Culture is intangible and its effect comes slower than that of teachers and peers. That is, to enhance HK student motivation to learn English, teachers, parents and peers should be reminded of their roles in helping this group of newcomers.

It is suggested that any cultural tour be led by local Hong Kong students, as this would have a double benefit—acquiring English relevant to Hong Kong, and achieving deeper and better group interaction between the two groups of students, thus helping them to socialise and appreciate one another's cultures. Teachers may also develop better bonds with the Mainland students as they strive to socially integrate with mainstream society.

Parental education background, affective care, and financial support are always important for Mainland students in improving their English—no matter whether they have high or low income. Mainland parents are generally very hard-working and supportive to their children's studies wherever possible, even if parents are not well-educated, nor particularly good at expressing affection and love to their children. Thus Mainland students study hard because they do not want to disappoint their parents. This means parents can in fact have great impact on their children's English learning. These parents should also be encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings with their children more. Understanding parental expectations may indirectly boost children's motivation to learn English. Schools should also develop deeper collaboration with parents, like strengthening the role of parent-teacher associations, as well as organise more shared activities between parents, students and the school in order to cultivate a sense of mutual trust. Through participating in school activities, parents will be able to understand their children more and show them more affective care.

As many of this study's results are meaningful, it is hoped that implications drawn will guide future studies on how intra-ethnic group differences in motivation affect the way motivation to learn English is maintained and developed. Longitudinal studies could trace how the English quality among different groups of Chinese student are affected by factors listed in the modified version of Dorneyi's motivational framework – and to what extent each of those motivational factors affect learning attitude and behaviour. Further research could also be done annually and repeatedly to investigate whether the first year of arrival is the time of strongest motivation to learn English for Mainland Chinese students. If so, educators should seize this opportunity to help students maximise their English acquisition.

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Appendix 1–Questionnaire (English version)

Please **do not** write your name
on the papers.

Questionnaire on NAHK Students' Motivation to Learn English
(English Version)

Motives for Learning English

We would like to find out what motivates and influences your English learning. Please read each statement below, then, using a ball-pen or pencil, circle the number that corresponds to your opinion.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Tend to Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	I like what I am learning in my English lessons.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	If my English teacher assigns difficult English homework, I still try my best to finish it.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	I want to communicate well with foreigners like my English teacher does.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	I like English class activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Financial support and affective encouragement from my parents motivate me to learn English in Hong Kong.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	I want to speak better English so that I can integrate better with my friends in Hong Kong.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	I want to speak English well, like my English teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	No matter how hard English is, I will never give up learning.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	English is a foreign language that I like.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	I am not afraid of communicating in English with my Hong Kong classmates, although my accent is different from theirs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	My English teacher presents clearly when he/she asks us to perform a task.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	I prefer doing group/pair work more than individual work.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	My parents use different means to motivate me to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	If my friends are good at English, I want to be good at English too.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	I want to pass my English because I do not want to disappoint my teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6

16.	I don't mind putting extra effort into learning English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	I learn English because it helps me to understand Hong Kong culture better.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	The English I am learning in English lessons can be used in my daily life.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	I understand my English teacher's instructions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	Doing projects and group work help me integrate better with my classmates in Hong Kong.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	My parents always encourage me to improve my English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
22.	Learning English together with my friends is better than learning it by myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23.	I could learn better English if my English teacher controls me less.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24.	I have the ability to pass English tests/exams.	1	2	3	4	5	6
25.	I am very interested in what my English teacher is teaching me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
26.	What I am learning now is useful for my studies.	1	2	3	4	5	6
27.	The feedback my English teacher gives me on my progress helps me to learn better.	1	2	3	4	5	6
28.	My parents will teach me English when I need them to.	1	2	3	4	5	6
29.	My parents are willing to pay for the English reference books when I need them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
30.	The reward system in Hong Kong helps me integrate better with the new learning environment.	1	2	3	4	5	6
31.	Teachers who are more democratic can motivate me better to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
32.	My writing is up to my English teacher's expectation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
33.	I learn English because I want to get a good job.	1	2	3	4	5	6
34.	I believe I can pass my English tests/exams.	1	2	3	4	5	6
35.	Feedback from teachers encourages me to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
36.	My parents will point out my English mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
37.	My parents pay for English tutorial class for me to improve my English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
38.	A fair reward system motivates me to learn English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
39.	If I can master English well, my teacher will have a better impression of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
40.	I continue learning English so I can express myself without much difficulty.	1	2	3	4	5	6
41.	I learn English because I	1	2	3	4	5	6

	need English to adjust well in Hong Kong.						
42.	I believe I can learn English well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
43.	The way Hong Kong English teachers teach and interact with students helps me adapt to Hong Kong, and learn English better.	1	2	3	4	5	6
44.	I feel proud in class if my English teacher praises me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
45.	I have already adapted well and am feeling comfortable with the English curriculum, examinations and classroom teaching in Hong Kong.	1	2	3	4	5	6
46.	I am not afraid to make mistakes in English homework.	1	2	3	4	5	6
47.	I learn English because English is necessary for a good future.	1	2	3	4	5	6
48.	So far I am happy with my progress in learning English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
49.	I try my best to learn English because I know the benefits.	1	2	3	4	5	6
50.	I need English to study well in other subjects.	1	2	3	4	5	6
51.	I am happy with my English test results.	1	2	3	4	5	6
52.	I know I will have a hard time in the future if I don't learn English well.	1	2	3	4	5	6
53.	Rather different from Mainland China, having a good standard of English is a must to be successful in Hong Kong.	1	2	3	4	5	6
54.	Learning English is key to not letting people look down on me.	1	2	3	4	5	6
55.	I am not afraid to speak English in English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Personal particulars:

Gender: M / F
Age:_____
Date of birth:____/_____/_____
Place of birth: _____
Province where you mostly lived and studied before you came to HK:_____
MChool year attending: _____
Year arrived in Hong Kong*:_____ (if born outside Hong Kong)*
Parent's occupation(s): _____
Parents' education level (s):

University	
Secondary	
Primary	
Kindergarten	
Illiterate	
Unknown	

RUTH – need "unknown" box for income too – below? Or not, cuz not on origial Chinese version I guess, huh?

Family monthly income:

Under HK$5000	
HK$5,001–HK$10,000	
HK$10,001–HK$15,000	
HK$15,001–HK$20,000	

Thank you very much for your help

Marketing Private EFL Programs in Damascus

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 130-143

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

For many educational administrators marketing has tended to focus on advertising, the institute's prospectus and open days. This research investigates marketing activities of private English as a Foreign Language Colleges in Damascus, Syria. A quantitative survey of students in four different EFL colleges in Damascus were interviewed, the results of which are reported on in this paper. The increasingly competitive English as a Foreign Language market in Damascus, Syria shows that the promotions element of marketing armoury is considered the least important amongst students in their selection of an EFL institute at which to study. Of much greater importance to students enrolled at private EFL institute in Damascus is the marketing mix elements of programme (the course itself), place (institute location and times of classes). The aspects of physical facilities (teaching and learning equipment, institute appearance and décor) and pricing issues (fees and payment terms) were also more highly rated than the people and promotions element of the marketing mix.

Key words. Marketing, English language colleges, Damascus.

Introduction

For many years only eight English as a Foreign Language (EFL) institutes operated in Syria; in 2000 fifty three new EFL institutes were authorised and allowed to open in Damascus alone. This growth provided prospective students with a wider variety of EFL course providers from which to choose, and resulted in EFL institutes needing to compete more fiercely for the relatively small number of EFL students in the city.

The proliferation of EFL institutes in Syria is increasingly fragmenting this highly competitive market. As the registration of profit driven private institutes offering programmes in English as a foreign language grows, prospective students have a wider choice of institutes from which to choose; the need for these institutes to differentiate themselves from their competitors is self evident, resulting in the role of marketing in student recruitment increasing in importance (Ivy & Naude, 2005; Taylor & Darling, 1991; Canterbury, 1999: Nicholls et al, 1995; Coates, 1998).

The reliance on an institution's historical reputation and image to draw applications each year from prospective students may no longer have the same 'pulling power' it had in the past, particularly as choices in the Damascene market grow. The image the institute conveys plays a critical role in the

development of prospective student attitudes towards that institute (Ivy, 2001; Yava & Shemwell, 1996; Landrum, Turrisi, & Harless, 1998). Paramewaran and Glowacka (1995) in their study on universities found that higher educational institutions needed to maintain or develop a distinct image to create a competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive market. It is after all this image that will impact on a student's willingness to apply to that institute for enrolment.

Marketing in Education: Background to the Study

It is not an uncommon misconception that marketing is little more than advertising and selling. Press advertising, the prospectus and education fairs remain the focus of many educational institutions' marketing activities. This however, is but one small part of marketing and its role in an educational context.

To compound the challenges of marketing in education, there has tended to be a deep sense of suspicion and skepticism amongst educationalists' regarding marketing and its role in educational institutions. The commercialism and business principles commonly associated with marketing are felt by some as being inappropriate for a 'social good' such as education – even for those educational institutes that are in operation to make a profit. However, it is in the for-profit educational sector that a greater variety of marketing tools is being used as competition for students grows.

Marketing is a multi-faceted concept, that goes way beyond just selling and advertising, it is about satisfying needs: not just the needs of the learners in the institution, but also the numerous other stakeholders who have an interest in that institution. Parents, employers, the state, the business community and others are but a few of the stakeholders who are likely not only to have an interest in the institution, but also have needs that the institutions could potentially satisfy.

Davies and Ellison (1997a:2) maintain that it is important for educational institutions to realise that they do not exist on an educational 'desert island', that there is more to their role than merely determining 'what to do and how to do it', but that they are also accountable to their stakeholders. In a similar vein, Bagley, Woods and Glatter (1996) claim that the market has the force to improve education, since one of the intended benefits of increased competition and choice is to motivate schools to develop a closer relationship with 'customers' (students, parents, alumni, the government and the perspective student-employers). Davies and Ellison (1997a, p. 4) go on to argue that marketing is about 'identifying the nature of what is required by the clients and then ensuring that the school gives ultimate priority to supply that product and maintain its quality'. For Bagley, Woods and Glatter (1996), the nature of the process of marketing invites educational institutions to raise standards and to become more responsive to customers' needs.

Kotler and Fox (1995, p. 6) define marketing in an educational context as follows:

> Marketing is the analysis, planning, implementation, and control of carefully formulated programmes designed to bring about voluntary exchanges of value with target markets to achieve institutional objectives.

> Marketing involves designing the institution's offerings to meet the target market's needs and desires, using effective pricing, communication, and distribution to inform, motivate and service the markets.

Marketing therefore, requires advanced planning on the part of the institution, rather than *ad hoc* promotional activities for short term gain. This planning involves research and analysis of the environment external to the institution, in particular an understanding of what customers require and careful design of programmes to satisfy those requirements or needs. When a marketing plan, based on customer needs has been developed, it is implemented, managed and controlled to ensure that needs are satisfied by what customers receive from the institution for the tuition fee that they have paid.

A common feature of all marketing definitions is the investigation of customers' needs – requirements and desires – and the satisfying of those needs. The satisfying of customer needs is done through the marketing mix. The marketing mix represents the basic template for strategic marketing plans that must reflect customer needs, it also constitutes a number of controllable variables that an institution may use to produce the response it wants from its various target markets.

The marketing mix is a blend of tools that educational institutions can employ in order to satisfy customer needs and thereby influence demand for the services that its offers. Kotler and Fox (1995) suggest seven elements within an educational institution's marketing: programme, place, promotion, price, process, physical facilities and people.

1. The programme component is all the courses and services that the institution makes available. Kotler and Fox (1995) claim that programme is the most basic decision an educational institution makes as it (a) establishes the institution's identity, (b) positions the institution vis-à-vis other educational institutions in the minds of customers, and (c) determines how customers will respond.

2. The place element of the marketing mix refers to 'the system of programme delivery' (Kotler and Fox, 1995:335); that is, the making of education available and accessible in terms of time and physical-geographical distribution of the teaching/learning. The simple example of this component is providing students with choices such as full-time, part-time and distance learning tuition.

3. The promotional component of the marketing mix is all the methods that institutions use to 'speak' to their target markets so that they convey the intent, the educational activities and the benefits of their programmes. These methods include advertising, sales promotion, public relations, publicity and personal selling.

4. Price is a key factor in the private sector of education where students pay tuition fees that may vary not only amongst the programmes offered but also between competing institutions. An additional and important aspect of price, is that not only does pricing have a direct impact on revenues,

but it also affects perceptions of value and quality conveyed by the institution in the minds of prospective students.

5. By process Kotler and Fox (1995) mean the management of the procedures within the institution; these would include enrolment, recording of marks, examining and assessment, and of teaching and learning.

6. The physical facilities component is where the institution is physically located and what the institution looks like, for example the building's appearance, décor, and furnishings, the teaching and learning equipment provided, and other student/staff facilities (libraries, car parking, cafeterias, lunch and social areas.

7. Finally, the people element of the educational marketing mix are the staff (administration and teachers) of the institution through which the customer's association with the institution is managed, and the programme is delivered (Kotler and Fox, 1995). Davies and Ellison (1997b) and Kotler and Fox (1995) promote the importance of people and argue that quality and motivation of the staff are the most crucial factors for successful marketing. The importance of people ensue from the fact that the staff of an educational institution – to a great degree – determines the institution performance capacity (Drucker, 1990) and consequently builds the 'institutional cultural capital', the ability to attract applications through reputation (Foskett and Hemsley-Brown, 2001:10). Another 'people' element, which can be added here, is the other students in the institution. The importance of this factor is clear in the fact that the presence of students of (dis)similar ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds in the institution may affect the choice of prospective students.

Kotler and Fox (1995) conclude their 7Ps discussion by proposing that each P of the marketing mix plays a crucial role on its own in students' selection of institution; however, the importance of each P and the importance of different subcomponents within those Ps are varied between different educational settings.

This research measures the importance of each P of the educational marketing mix and the importance of different items that make up the mix to student recruitment in the Demascene EFL market.

Research objective

This study seeks an understanding of the private fee-paying EFL market in Damascus, through exploring the degree of importance of different tools of the marketing mix as seen by a sample of current EFL students in Damascus. The study will reveal the underlying framework that students used in the choice of EFL institutes at which they are now enrolled.

Research Methodology

A survey of EFL students in Damascus was undertaken utilizing a self-completion questionnaire (which had been drafted in Arabic). The questionnaire was non-purposively distributed to four private fee-paying EFL institutes located in four different areas of the city, Baramka, Shrebishat, Mazraa and Mazza. The questionnaire was distributed by the English teacher in the four different EFL institutes to adult EFL students in the classes in which they were learning. Adult students were specifically selected due to the fact that younger students are less likely to have chosen the institutes for themselves; parents may well have taken some responsibility for this decision.

In total 151 completed questionnaires were returned from the four institutes surveyed. As the questionnaire was distributed during one of the classes and all students completed the questionnaire and returned it prior to the end of the class, a 100% response rate was achieved. Almost three quarters (73%) of the respondents were enrolled on general English courses, 23% on intensive courses and 4% on what were described as 'slow courses'.

Table 1
The Number of Responses in the Four Institutes and the Response Percentage to total

Institute	Number of responses	Response percentage to total
A	75	49.6
B	41	27.2
C	21	13.9
D	14	9.3
Total	151	%

Note. Figures are rounded to one decimal.

The final questionnaire consisted of two pages. The first ten items were designed to determine motivation for registration on an English language course, the type of course, and past family interaction with the institute. The balance of the questionnaire measured the importance of some 29 marketing tools available in the 7P marketing mix. The items were shuffled so as to eliminate consistent response sets.

Reliability of the 5-point Likert scales was assessed using the Cronbach alpha test to determine the extent to which they produce consistent results, the overall score of 0.80 indicated satisfactory reliability.

Ethical Issues

A copy of the questionnaire and a cover letter explaining aims and providing details about the research was sent to the administrations of the four institutes. The questionnaires were distributed only after having received the administrations' commitment to the study. The questionnaire was anonymous and respondents were assured that no attempt to associate any specific student with any specific answer given in the questionnaire. The institutes themselves are also not specifically identified in the study, with responses from all four institutes being aggregated to determine over all attitude towards marketing activities.

Results and Discussions

Motivation for registration at an EFL institute

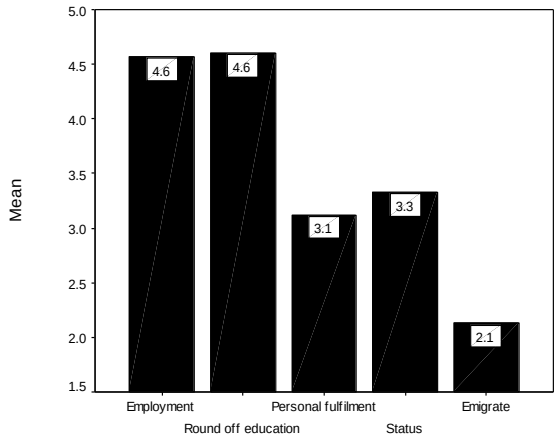
Students enrolled in English language courses in Damascus were strongly motivated by the impact that being able to speak English would have on their employment prospects. On a 5 point Likert scale (where 1 was Strongly disagree and 5 was Strongly agree) this item had a mean score of 4.6 (SD = 0.63). Similarly, Damascene students felt that the knowledge gained from an English course would round off their education (mean = 4.6, SD = 0.52). Motivation means scores are shown in Figure I.

Personal fulfillment has been seen in some educational contexts to be an important motivator for further study. In the case of EFL students in Damascus their attitudes were similar across all 5 response categories on the Likert scale, resulting in a final mean score of 3.1 (SD = 1.44). Similarly, attitudes towards the status that may be linked to being able to speak English were as varied, with a mean score of 3.3 (SD = 1.44).

It would appear that emigration is not an important motivator for EFL students in Damascus; students generally disagreed with the statement 'On completion of my course emigration is a distinct possibility' (mean = 2.1, SD = 1.38). Less than one in five (17%) of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

Figure 1

Students Attitudes and Goals of Learning English



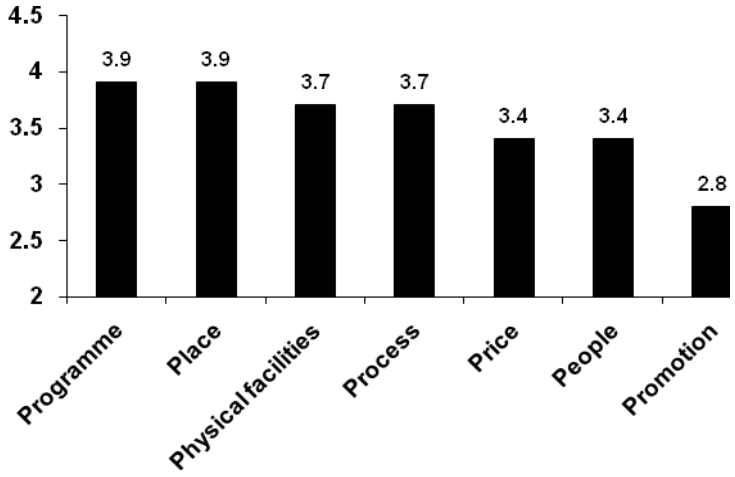
Note. The importance of marketing tools in EFL student recruitment

Table 2 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the 29 marketing tools measured in this study. Each of the items was again rated by respondents using a five point Likert scale, where 1 was 'strongly disagree' through to 5 which was 'strongly agree'.

Table 2
The Importance of the different 7Ps variables (Based on a 5-point Likert scale)

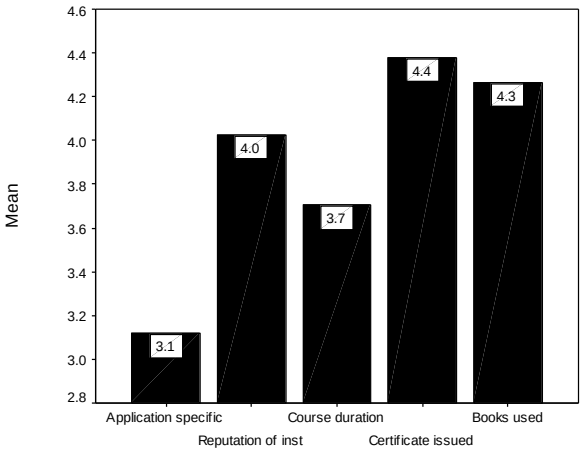
Mix element	Marketing tool	Importance	
		Mean score	SD
Programme	Specific course for my specific purposes	3.1	1.3
	The institute reputation for teaches conversational English	4.0	1.1
	The duration of the course	3.7	1.2
	The certificate I get issued at the end of the course	4.4	1.0
	The books taught in the institute (ie Headway)	4.3	1.0
Overall programme variables mean		**3.9**	
Place	Easy access to the institute via public transport	3.8	1.3
	Where the institute is geographically located	3.7	1.2
	The course is offered at times convenient to me	4.2	1.1
	The course is on suitable days of the week	3.9	1.1
Overall place variables mean		**3.9**	
Promotion	The institute's prospectus/brochure	3.1	1.2
	Outdoor advertising in city streets	2.9	1.2
	Advertising of the institute in the local press	3.4	1.3
	Radio or TV advertising I have seen or heard	2.2	1.3
	Institute staff have visited my school/place of work	2.7	1.4
	Free gifts for example; course books, bags, pens, diaries etc	2.8	1.5
Overall promotion variables mean		**2.8**	
Price	The tuition fees	3.5	1.2
	The flexibility of payment arrangements of tuition fees	3.6	1.2
	The discounts offered by the institute	3.3	1.4
Overall price variables mean		**3.4**	
Process	Social events the institute organises (exhibitions, plays etc)	3.3	1.3
	The method of teaching English at the institute	4.2	1.1
Overall process variables mean		**3.7**	
Physical facilities	Teaching and learning equipment at the institute.	3.8	1.3
	Student facilities (library, computer room, lunch room)	3.6	1.3
	The institute's physical appearance (Décor and furnishing)	3.7	1.3
Overall physical facilities mean		**3.7**	
People	Personal contact with other students enrolled at the institute	3.6	1.2
	Native English language teaching staff	3.2	1.6
	My friends are going to this institute	2.8	1.4
	Warmth, helpfulness and efficiency of administration staff	3.9	1.3
	The individual instructor's reputation for teaching English	4.5	1.0
	Other students' socio-economic backgrounds	2.9	1.3
Overall people variables mean		**3.4**	

Figure 2
Importance ratings of Marketing Mix elements



The programme element of the marketing mix was made up of five items and was overall the most important element of the marketing mix. All items had mean scores greater than three (the midpoint of a five point scale) indicating that these items were all important in the student's institute selection process. (See Figure 3 for the importance ratings of programme items measured).

Figure 3
Programme Importance

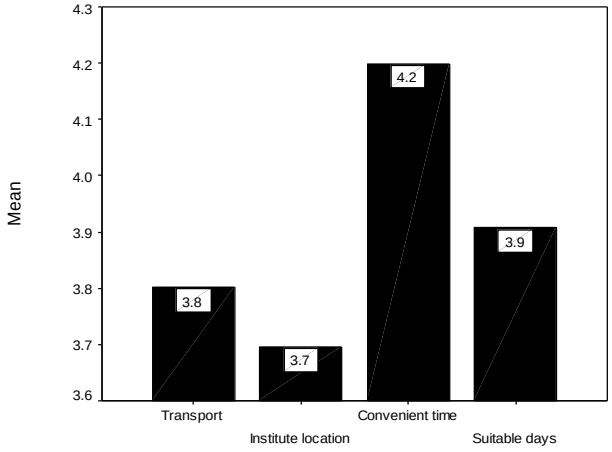


The most important programme item to Syrian EFL students was 'the certificate issued at the end of the course' (mean = 4.4, SD = 1.0). The second most important item in programme was 'the materials (or books) used in the institute'. It is possible that this was rated high due to the following: firstly, students enrol in EFL private institutes expect to study with more modern and effective books than those in the 'free' public sector; secondly, some EFL institutes in Damascus base their promotional activities on the materials they adopt. For example, a picture of the New Headway cover is on most of the

brochures and press advertisements of the largest institute represented in this sample. Seemingly, materials-related promotional activities have raised the Syrian EFL learner's awareness of the importance of 'good' books for learning English. A related and also highly rated item was 'the institute teaches conversational English' (mean = 4.0; SD = 1.1). Of some importance (mean = 3.7; SD = 1.2) was course duration. Somewhat surprising was the low level of importance for a 'course for specific area of study/work' (mean = 3.1; SD = 1.3).

Turning the discussion to the place element of the marketing mix, four variables were measured, all of which were rated very highly. (See figure 4)

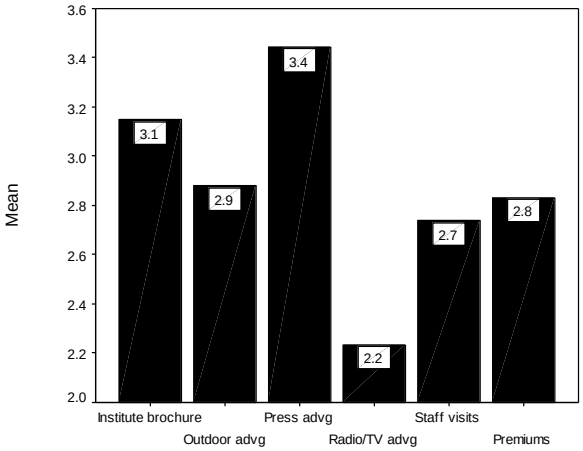
Figure 4
Place Importance



The most important item was 'providing courses at convenient times of the day' (mean = 4.2; SD = 1.1) followed by 'providing courses on suitable days of the week' (mean = 3.9; SD = 1.1). The other two variables that questioned the importance of 'the institute's accessibility via public transport' (mean = 3.9; SD = 1.3) and 'the institute location in the city' (mean = 3.7; SD = 1.2), equally highly rated.

The promotion element of the marketing mix appeared to be the least important factor in influencing student selection, when compared to other items on the education marketing mix. Only two items had a mean score greater than three. (See Figure V). The most important promotional tool was 'press advertising' (mean = 3.4; SD = 1.3). It is likely that the recent establishment of two free and to-door-delivered ad-newspapers in Syria, Al-Daleel and Al-Waseet, has attracted the interest of EFL advertisers in Damascus and may be used by prospective students in their selection processes. The institute prospectus/brochure appears to be of some value to some students (mean = 3.1, SD = 1.3). Other elements of the promotions mix (outdoor, radio or TV, and personal selling) are not considered important in EFL student decision making.

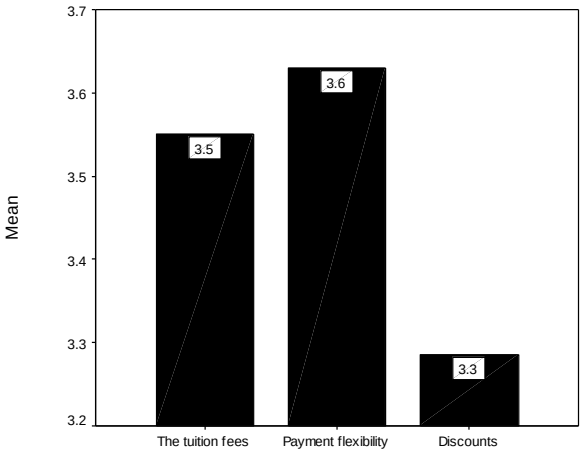
Figure *5*
Promotion Importance



'Flexible tuition payment (paying by installments)' was the most important *price* element followed by 'the amount of tuition fee' and finally 'the discount offered in the institute' (See figure 6).

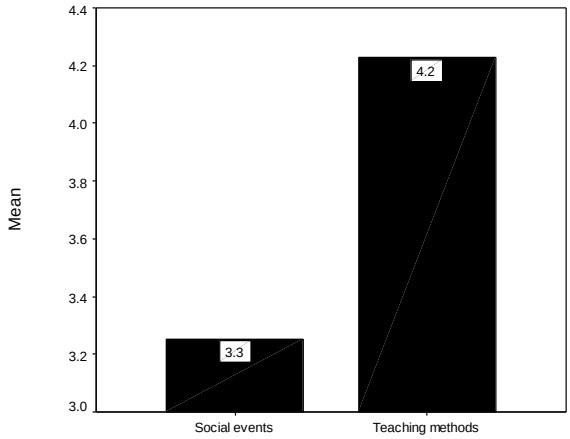
The fact that discounts were the least important might be caused by the lack of use of this tool in Damascus for marketing products in general and marketing EFL institutes in particular.

Figure 6
Price Importance



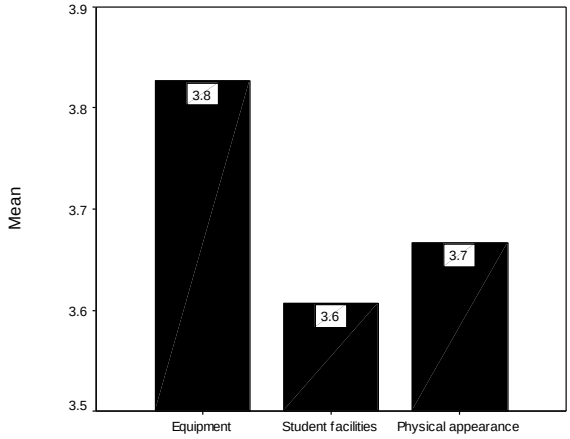
Turning the discussion to *process*, two items were evaluated, 'social events' (mean = 3.3, SD = 1.3) and 'the teaching methods adopted in the institute' (mean = 4.2, SD = 1.1). Both items had mean scores greater than three indicating that these items were important in the student's institute selection process (See Figure 7).

Figure 7
Process Importance



As far as *physical facilities* are concerned, three elements were measured all having similar importance ratings of more than three. The most important element here was 'the teaching and learning equipment provided in the institute' (mean = 3.8, SD = 1.3). (See figure VIII). Of similar importance to Damascene EFL students were the issues of 'the institute's physical appearance' (mean =3.7, SD = 1.3) and 'student facilities, such as a library, computer lab and lunch room' (mean = 3.6, SD = 1.3).

Figure 8
Physical facilities Importance

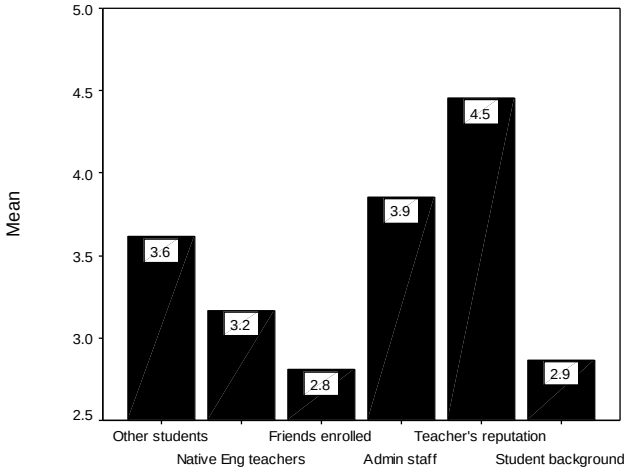


The item that had the highest rating of all 29 marketing tools measured was a people item – 'The individual instructor's reputation for teaching English' (Mean = 4.5, SD = 1.0). An interesting point was the lower importance of 'native English teaching staff' (mean = 3.2, SD = 1.6).

Although the presence of 'friends' (mean = 2.8, SD = 1.4) and student of 'similar socio-economic background' (mean = 2.9, SD = 1.3) in the institute were rated 'unimportant', it was important that the institute offered the chance to establish contact with 'the other students' in the institute (mean = 3.6, SD = 1.2). (See figure 9). Of equally high importance to Damascene EFL students was the 'warmth, helpfulness and efficiency of administrative staff' (mean = 3.9,

SD = 1.0).

Figure 9
People Importance



Concluding Remarks

It is not surprising that the elements of the 7Ps marketing mix vary in importance. Students use those mix elements to make their decision making process easier and better match the EFL institute with their own needs, given what can be both an expensive and life changing educational decision.

The findings of the study show what aspects of the educational marketing mix are important to students when selecting an EFL institute. Clearly, it is these elements that institutes need to ensure are effectively employed in the development of marketing plans for private fee-paying EFL institutes in Damascus.

The programme and place elements of the marketing mix are considered very important by EFL students in Damascus, with overall mean scores of 3.9. The product element does lend itself to change and modification based on needs of students. In the case of the place element, the two most highly rated elements can also be changed based on student demand, days and times that EFL classes are given. Clearly, the physical location of the institute itself and public transport access would require a longer-term strategy for any institute wishing to make changes in this regard.

Physical facilities was also highly rated. As with many services, the aspects that are easiest to assess and measure like the teaching and learning equipment, décor and facilities such as a library, can form a surrogate for a measure of the intangibles, such as the actual teaching. Like physical facilities, the educational process and specifically teaching methods were seen as very important by Damascene EFL students.

Of lesser importance were the issues of price and people. In the case of people however, instructor reputations had the highest importance of any of the marketing tools evaluated.

Perhaps the issue that needs to most taken note of, is the fact that the marketing mix element that educational administrators most link to student recruitment, that of promotion, is considered by Damascus EFL students as the

least important aspect in the selection of an English institute.

One qualification on the findings presented here is that the ratings are based on students' perception of marketing elements they feel are useful in making informed decisions regarding EFL institute selection: what the study did not ask was what students would think should a particular element of the marketing mix not be used. Given that students suggest that promotion is unimportant, how would students find out about the institute's offerings if promotion were not done at all?

Educational institutes in Damascus need to find the appropriate mix of marketing tools for their particular market segments. This paper highlights aspects that are deemed important by the students, those people consuming and paying for the services offered by the institute. Once enrolled, marketing activities still continue, the ongoing need to ensure that students are happy with the institute's offerings and that their needs are indeed being satisfied is critical in ensuring that positive word of mouth promotion takes place – and for business buyers of EFL programmes, that they send other members of their staff on the courses offered.

The market-based information in this study does provide a basis for strategy development. It enables marketers of EFL institutes in Damascus to better understand their customer needs and evaluate their own marketing strengths and weaknesses – resulting is strategies that will counteract the market expansion in an increasingly competitive environment.

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Mother Tongue Maintenance and Second Language Sustenance: A Two-Way Language Teaching Method

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 144-158

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

Language Class should invest in teaching not only the grammar of a second language but it should be concerned with preserving and refining the grammar of the mother tongue as well. Focusing on the different aspects of the second language may result in the students' losing interest in the mother tongue, having difficulty translating the meanings of L2 words into the mother tongue, and ignorance of the fact that similar language rules and aspects to accelerate the acquisition of the second language. This paper suggests a method to teach explicit grammar through mother tongue grammar transformation (MTGT). This study has outlined the basic method and assumptions underlying MTGT from the point of view of a practitioner and from that of a language learner. By means of comparison, a second language learner might be able to learn the grammar of the second language and continue to develop that of the mother tongue simultaneously. The idea for this research project stems from the researcher's observations that many times L2 learners do not seem to adequately learn the grammar taught in the second language class without comparing it to the grammar of their own mother tongue.

Keywords: Mother tongue, Second language, Adult Language learners, and Mother Tongue Grammar Transformation (MTGT).

Introduction

By definition, the mother tongue (L1) is learned first and a second language (L2) is learned later on in life. Research has shown that adult L2 learners do not acquire a new language as children usually do. Unlike young children who pick up their first language naturally in a cultural and linguistic environment, those who learn a second language after the critical period learn their second language at a later time and sometimes in isolation from the appropriate cultural-linguistic environment. Richard-Amato (1996) believes that learners "construct language from prior conceptual knowledge and develop language in predictable stages" (qtd. in Zhonggang Goa, 20001, p.1). Yet, she (1996) thinks that L2 learners are supposed to be more developed cognitively and linguistically, because of their prior knowledge, which enables them to use their analytical powers in learning a new language (qtd. in Zhonggang Goa, 20001, p. 27). Keeves and Darmawan (2007) think that it is "highly desirable that an adequate level of competence in the learning of the mother tongue (L1) is achieved before any formal learning of a second language takes place through classroom instruction" (p.20). Based on the developments in the field of second language acquisition, researches have refocused attention on the influence of L1. The purpose of the Gass and Selinker (1983) collection of papers was to disclose that "there is overwhelming evidence that language transfer is indeed a

real and central phenomenon that must be considered in any full account of the second language acquisition process." (p. 7). Based on the growing body of evidence, it is believed that learners "with a strong mother tongue, and those who continue to develop, are far more successful in learning and functioning in another target language" (ISPP, 2009). Research has proved that many skills acquired in the first language can be transferred to the second language. Thence, teachers for L2 learners should invest L2 learners' analytical abilities and the other skills of L1 to enable them to learn a new language easily.

The current study suggests a method to teach explicit grammar through using the mother tongue grammar transformation (MTGT) method. The paper outlines the basic method and assumptions underlying the MTGT. By means of comparison, a second language learner might be able to learn the grammar of the second language and further develop that of the mother tongue at the same time. Such maintenance helps to avoid language loss and the resultant negative feelings as well as minimize first language interference or negative transfer. The idea of this research project stemmed from the researcher's observations that many times L2 learners do not seem to adequately learn the grammar taught in class without comparing it to the grammar of their mother tongue which is, after all, their only point of reference.

First Language Role in Second Language Acquisition

The issue of first language interference has had a long history in second language acquisition studies. Endless amounts of extensive research have already been carried out to study first language interference and its effects on the process of learning a second language. It has been argued that "the transfer of patterns from the native language is undoubtedly one of the major sources of errors in learner language' (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 165). Such studies show that one of the factors influencing the learning process is first language interference or negative transfer, which may be defined as "the use of a negative language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language" (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1992, p. 205). Also, Dulay, Burt & Krashen (1982) define interference "as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language" (qtd. in Bhela, 1999, p. 22). In addition, Lott (1983) defines interference as "errors in the learner's use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue" (p. 256).

At the same time, Ellis (1997) refers to interference as 'transfer', which he defines as being "the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2" (p. 51). Yet, this transference is governed "by learners' perceptions about what is transferable and by their stage of development in L2 learning" (Bhela, 1999, p. 23). In the process of learning L2, learners are inclined to construct their own interim rules (Selinker, 1971, Seligar, 1988 and Ellis, 1997) using their L1 knowledge, when they know it will help them in the process of learning or "when they have become sufficiently proficient in the L2 for transfer to be possible" (Bhela, 1999, p.23).

Typically, an L2 learner understands a second language partly in terms of the kinds of knowledge already learned in the first language (Carroll, 1964; Albert & Obler, 1978 and Larson-Freeman & Long, 1991). Beebe (1988) claims that in the process of learning a second language, L1 knowledge is grafted on to

L2 knowledge, and together they will fuse into a common set of knowledge.

The relationship (i.e., the similarities and differences) between L1 and L2 must be taken into consideration. Albert and Obler (1978) clarify that L2 learners whose L1 is similar to the target language show more interference than those whose L1 has fewer similar features. Yet, when the possibilities of interference are low this means more learning difficulties, "as the learner would find it difficult to learn and understand a completely new and different usage" (Bhela, 1999, p. 23). Thus, mistakes and errors in performance will result as learners refer to L1 structures for help (Selinker, 1979; Dulay et al, 1982; Blum-Kulka & Levenston, 1983; Faerch & Kasper, 1983, Bialystok, 1990 and Dordick, 1996). Dechert (1983) shows that the more distinct the two languages are structurally, the more likely the instances of errors in L2 that bear traces of L1 structures.

The focus of this study is on specific instances of L1 interference on L2 in the grammatical rules of the second language learners' learning and acquisition. The present study also identifies the perspective of L2 learners regarding the differences and/or similarities between the grammar of L1 and L2 on the second language as well as the first language. The study concentrates on the assumption that most L2 learners rely on the grammar of L1 to understand that of L2. It also identifies the importance of the learner's knowledge of the grammar of L1, which may cause difficulty in L2. With this knowledge, L2 learners are made aware of the errors made (or they may make) and how they may be rectified.

Research Questions

The present study is designed to answer the following questions:

1. Do L2 learners compare the grammar of L1 and L2?
2. Is this method helpful for L2 learners to understand the new and similar patterns in L2 and form the new patterns?
3. Is this method helpful for L2 learners to maintain their understanding of L1?

The research scope of this paper is limited to outlining a method, i.e. assumptions and hypotheses, in which first language interference may be invested to explain the patterns of L2, maintain the grammar of L1, and minimize the negative interference of L1, with a focus on grammatical rules.

Mother Tongue Grammar Transformation (MTGT) Method

As it is mentioned above, the topic of "first language interference/transference" has had an unusual history in second language acquisition research and practice. For many years, it had been presumed that the only major source of syntactic errors in L2 learners' performance was learners' first language (Lado, 1957). Yet, subsequent extensive empirical studies of errors made by L2 learners led to the findings that many L2 learners' errors are not traceable to the interference of L1. These errors are common errors done by L2 learners of different linguistic backgrounds at different stages (e.g. Richards, 1971; Buteau, 1970). These studies were the reason to "question the value of contrastive analysis and to argue instead for error analysis" (Krashen, 1981, p. 64). The current study presents a method (MTGT) to support contrastive analysis as a means to teach

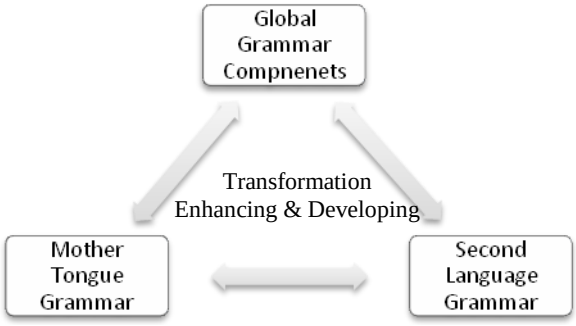
L2 in general and grammar in particular.

This method is different from the well-known grammar translation method in all its aspects. The only similarity is that the grammar is taught explicitly in the class. Unlike the grammar translation method, classes are taught in the second language, with little active use of the first language. Translation is not the basis of this method; it is comparison.

This method is designed for adult L1 beginner/intermediate learners. It is very important for teachers to have knowledge of the grammar of the L1 and the L2 in order to understand and guide first language interference. Teachers who have knowledge of the L1 and the L2 can predict areas and reasons of difficulties, confusion, and mistakes.

L2 learners should be introduced to the main idea of this method, i.e., global grammar (GG). GG is the main assumption which underlines the MTGT method. The basic components of grammar are globally shared among the world languages even if they are completely different (see Fig.1 below). For the purpose of this study, GG will be defined as being the essential grammatical and structural components all languages have in common. L2 learners should be able to identify the similar components for a better understanding of the grammar of L2 and the different meanings of different grammatical structures. The diagram below summarizes the bigger picture of GG illustrating how grammatical components of a language can be used to teach L2 learners those of a second language.

Figure 1
Basic Assumption of the MTGT



To begin with, the components of global grammar are identified below based on Mora's (2003) classification of grammar components with some modifications.

Table 1
Components of GG

Elements of the syntactic constructio n of the sentence	Elements of the sentence	Parts of speech	Types of sentences	Verb Tense	Moods of the sentence
• Clauses • Phrases	• Subject • Verb • Direct/indirect object • Complements • Modifiers	• Articles • Verbs • Nouns • Pronouns • Adjectives • Adverbs • Prepositions • Conjunctions • Interjections	• Nominal/ verbal • Simple • Compoun d • Complex	• Present • Past • Future	• Active v o i c e • Passiv e voice

Basically, languages share these components in general; yet, these components differ from one language to another. L2 learners should understand this and take it into consideration to avoid making mistakes. Moreover, explaining the rules of one language by using the rules of the other language work as a two way method of maintaining and sustaining both languages. It is very important to clarify that this study does not claim that listing the areas of differences between languages is listing all the linguistic difficulties that will occur. The kind of comparison in this study is done to achieve the following aims:

1. To maintain the first language so learners will understand and appreciate their first language and be able to translate as well.
2. To be able to explain the grammar of the second language and spot the reasons for the mistake when it is related to the first language interference.
3. To enhance L1 knowledge.
4. To achieve a better understanding of L2
5. To utilize the similarity in patterns between L1 and L2.
6. To allow teachers to take part in the process of comparison done by L2 students consciously and unconsciously.
7. To stop undesirable (negative) interference.
8. To focus on forming new patterns and practicing applying them to achieve fluency in the L2.

The table above might help L2 educators to conduct a linguistic review of both languages by using contrastive analysis, i.e., the first and the second language, to identify potential problematic areas and as well as similarities, which differ from one language to another. For example, it is predicted that using the third person singular pronouns 'he' and 'she' is one of the common sources of errors amongst Chinese learners because of their first language background. For the same reason, Arabic speakers usually have a problem forming sentences where 'verb to be' is the main verb. Predictable problems are not limited to grammar only, but speakers of Asian languages may have difficulties producing certain sounds such as "l" and "r" sounds; on the other hand, speakers of Spanish may have difficulties distinguishing between as well as producing "sh" and "ch" sounds. Understanding the differences between

languages may lead learners to a more accurate demonstration of the grammar of both languages. Hopefully, this will lead them to meet high standards and succeed in achieving fluency in their new language.

From the researcher's observations and they are not new concepts, L2 learners use their previous knowledge of L1 as a scale to measure, understand, and acquire L2 especially when they are learning grammar. When it comes to lexicons, some confusion occurs in particular when a word in L1 can be used in different ways while in L2 there are two different words to express the L1 single word; for example, in English we use the verb 'teach' and 'learn' to express two actions and two different agents. However, in some languages such as Arabic, there is only one word that can express these two actions. Speakers can add a prefix to show who does the action. Thus, in English, they are two separate actions; but on the other hand, in Arabic, it is one action. Accordingly, Arab learners often confuse between these two verbs. Also, the word "think" in English could mean 'believe' or 'the process of working the mind to recall knowledge or reason'. Yet, in Arabic, there are two different words to express these two different meanings. Thus, as it is expected, Arabic L2 students of English have some difficulties differentiating between the two different ways of using this word. Brown (2000) says that "in an ESL course for speakers of Arabic, overt attention to targeted syntactic contrasts between Arabic and English reduced error rates" (p. 213). Accordingly, such a difference should be highlighted in order to avoid confusion and mistakes. Usually, L2 learners who make this mistake are not aware of it. Yet, when the difference is explained, they start to correct themselves and monitor their uses of the two verbs in English.

On the mental stage of adult L2 learners, the process of learning is done consciously, unlike young children who learn their language naturally. At this stage, learners should be enforced and encouraged to create new mental patterns that their L1 lacks to enable them to acquire the L2 faster and more accurately. By fostering the process of creating new mental patterns of L2 by means of comparison, learners increase their awareness to achieve fluency faster.

Three main 'hypotheses' constitute the MTGT method based on the researcher's observations as both a practitioner and a language learner. These hypotheses are consistent with the findings from a number of studies on second language acquisition: (1) The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis claims that by contrasting different areas of two languages, the problems that a language learner might encounter can be predicted and avoided (Crystal, 2003; Fries, 1952), (2) cross-linguistic influence shows that prior language experiences always have an effect on the way a second language is learned (Brown, 2000; Wardhaugh, 1970), (3) L2 learners construct a linguistic system that draws, in part, on the learners L1 (Ellis, 1997, p.33).

The Conscious Mental Patterning-Fluency Hypothesis

L2 learners will be more fluent, when they are aware of the similarities and differences between L1 and L2, especially beginner and intermediate learners. If an L2 learner is aware of such aspects, he will work on creating a new mental pattern consciously in order to be able to speak fluently without monitoring their language any more. Adult L2 learners' creating mental patterns

of any language is the only way for them to learn to speak the language fluently, unlike children who do this mental process unconsciously. Thence, comparing L1 and L2 will show how the mental patterns which L1 learners already have are different from those of L2. Realizing how the new mental patterns should be, L2 learners will try to create a new pattern by modifying the one the learners already have. This being the case, it is noticed how it is difficult sometimes to create a completely new mental pattern which learners do not already have. For example, L2 learners whose mother tongue is Arabic often form nominal sentences deleting 'verb to be' when it is the main the verb in an English sentence. This mistake is a result of the nominal structure of Arabic which lacks the existence of a verb. However, when L2 learners are made aware that the English language is different in this aspect and English sentences are always verbal, they start creating and acquiring this new pattern easily, even if it takes a long time. On the other hand, when L2 learners whose L1 is Arabic are taught that the subject comes before the verb in English, which is the opposite of their L1, they learned this pattern very quickly and applied it correctly.

Comparison is only the first step by which L2 learners will understand the patterns they need to create in order to be fluent. The moment the patterns are created, L2 learners will stop comparing the two languages. At this stage, L2 learners will start acquiring the language naturally.

The Learning-Acquisition Process Hypothesis

According to Krashen's (1982) learning-acquisition hypothesis, there are two different ways of adult L2 learners to develop their knowledge of L2, namely acquisition and learning (qtd. in Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 38). However, taking the first hypothesis into consideration, literally there are two steps through which adult L2 learners develop and sustain their knowledge of L2, namely learning and then acquisition. For the sake of argument, Krashen (1982) claims that "we acquire as we are exposed to samples of the second language which we understand. This happens in much the same way that children pick up their first language- with no conscious attention to language form" (qtd. in Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 38). This researcher believes the result of such exposure is a pidgin language, a language which is based on the structure of another language and "shows only a very poor grammar and a sharply curtailed vocabulary" (Tichacek, 2003, p.6).The majority of L2 learners cannot acquire a second language just by being exposed to it without studying and learning L2. If acquisition happens, it is because of a learning process which took place first where the learner used L1 to understand L2.

Krashen (1982) argues that acquired language leads to fluent communication and learning cannot lead to acquisition (qtd. in Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 38). On the contrary, in a second language acquisition, learning happens first and then acquisition which leads to fluency.

Monitoring-Fluency Process Hypothesis

In order to achieve fluency, L2 learners should spend enough time monitoring their use of the second language, in particular the new mental patterns they have created. This monitoring stage may never end, yet it will be minimized greatly by the time L2 learners achieve fluency. Acquisition can only

be achieved after a profound understanding of the second language is reached and the new mental patterns are created. After creating the new patterns, L2 learners will be aware of them, yet mistakes occur because the new patterns are not as strong and influential as those of L1 in the mind of the adult second language learner. Thus, practicing and monitoring these new patterns is encouraged to achieve fluency. L2 learners who do not practice and focus on the new patterns may find using the second language very difficult; accordingly, achieving fluency may not occur even though they created the new patterns needed.

What may make this method attractive to practitioners is that it appears to have immediate implications for classroom practice. Teachers can understand why some learners make certain mistakes which they can minimize by highlighting the differences and similarities between L1 and L2 from the very beginning even before learners make the expected mistakes. Comparison will not prevent them from making such mistakes; yet, they will be able to identify and correct themselves when such errors occur.

Research Methodology

After outlining the proposed method clarifying its basic assumption as well as its hypotheses, this study has carried on a survey questionnaire to examine L2 learner's methods of learning L2 and the approaches they have developed to understand the similar and different patterns of L2. The questionnaire aimed to examine L2 learner's point of view regarding the comparison method between the grammar of L1 and that of L2 and their application of this method in the process of learning English. Then, the assumption and the hypotheses of this method are explained.

Participants

All the contributors to the corpus possess different English proficiency levels (ranging from beginner to advanced English learners) and are of about the same age (all in their twenties). There were sixty-four participants in the study – Saudi male and female students who started learning English in school when they were 13 years old. English is important for these learners as they are either studying English as a second language (which constitutes 90% of the data) or they are living in the second language speaking country (which constitutes 10% of the data).

Tool and Tasks

These L2 learners were given a 25 question survey (see appendix 1) on the comparison method they used to understand the grammatical rules of L2 in order to assist their use of contrastive analysis to understand the new different and similar patterns.

The first three questions are general, they are related to their second language level, their first language and to what extent it is similar/different when it is compared to the second language. The second three questions are related to the areas of difficulty in the second language and what aspects help to be fluent. The third set of three questions is about the acquisition and learning

process of the second language in general. The other fifteen questions are all about the comparison method and how helpful for both understanding the grammatical rules of the second language as well as the first language. The last question asks for further suggestions to foster the process of learning a second language.

Analysis Procedures

The analysis examines the answers of the different questions of the survey taking into consideration the point of view of the learners according to whether they consider their L1 and L2 completely/partially different and the learners' L2 proficiency levels. The questions which count in the analysis are those that are related to the new method introduced by this study.

Results

The L2 learners in this study were assessed before the survey, using a free TOEFL CBT. This test has four typical proficiency levels: advanced, high-intermediate, low-intermediate, and beginner.

Table 2
Proficiency levels of L2

Learners' Proficiency	Advanced	High-Intermediate	Low-Intermediate	Beginner
	6	36	10	6

The questionnaire has aimed to investigate how L2 learners looked at the second language (English) they are learning in comparison of their L1 (Arabic), in order to determine if this will affect the way they will judge the proposed method. Only 44% of the participants have considered their L1 is partially different from L2. Arabic and English are not too distinct, yet more than 55% of the students have regarded their L1 as being completely different from L2. However, their perception of the two languages being completely different has never stopped these students from relying on their L1 to understand L2. More than 79% of them have admitted that comparing the grammatical rules of their L1 helps them to understand the similar rules of the second language and almost 79% have agreed that they learn the grammatical rules faster that are similar to their L1 than the ones that are different. The first step to speak fluently, according to 68% of the participants, was to learn the rules first, acquire the language, and lastly speak it fluently.

The method of comparison which explains the differences between the L1 and the L2 helps to avoid confusion, based on the opinions of 78% of the students who took the survey, avoid making mistakes when the rules of L2 are different from those of L1, as 71% of the participants have stated, as well as help them to understand the grammatical rules of their L1 (which they could not understand) and that constitutes more than 70% of the participants. Almost more than 90% of the participants have considered the method of comparing the grammar of the L1 with the grammar of the L2 helpful for beginners and intermediate learners, whereas only 5% have suggested using this method only with advanced students. The other 5% of the students who took the survey believed that this method is useful with all the levels.

General discussion

This study has provided the main assumption as well as the hypotheses behind the GMGT method supporting it with a view of how second language learners regard this method of teaching. It has also supplied evidence of the conscious and unconscious practices of this method by L2 learners and evidence that this method has proved useful even with people who are advanced. This is clearly shown in the percentage of the participants who use their L1 to help them understand their L2, indicating a direct relationship between the L1 and the L2. In the same way, such language interference helps them to understand their own mother tongue.

The survey carried out by this study has brought enough support for the contention that contrastive analysis can help in sustaining the grammar of the L2 and maintaining that of the L1, through the high percentage of the participants who acknowledged practicing this method even on their own. Comparison seems to be inevitable for L2 learners regardless of their second language level. Each learner seems to have his own methods of teaching himself a second language. However, according to the survey, comparison seems to be a common method shared by most of the learners.

Such a method is a two-edged sword. Comparing the grammar of both languages could be considered interference or transference. Yet, teachers' utilization of interference may turn the negative first language interference into positive transference which learners can benefit from. Learners can use already learned and acquired patterns to help them learn the patterns of the second language.

Conclusion

The proposed method in this study has illustrated how to build language development into grammar lessons. L2 learners must receive the best content instruction possible while they are learning English in class in order to avoid mistakes, understand fully L2, learn how to invest their previous knowledge, and form new patterns to enable them to speak fluently. The proposed method aims at further developing L1 through teaching L2 as well.

In addition, language textbooks and teachers should incorporate L1 rules and patterns in their teaching materials while explaining the L2. Similarly, L2 teachers and educators need to conduct linguistic reviews of L1 and L2 items and identify problematic areas in order to highlight them in class before students make any mistakes as a result of similarities or differences in the two languages. Realizing the problematic areas for certain learners will help to make L2 classes be more rigorous which is vital to accelerate learners' English language development so they can master the required knowledge and fluency that will enable them to meet high standards in a shorter length of time. Furthermore, contrastive analysis may be worth exploring to uncover non-transference patterns which could then be discarded as irrelevant to avoid their application by L2 learners.

There are many challenges to teaching as well as learning a second language grammar; yet, it is a vital area to adult L2 learners' linguistic competence. This research has shed light on the importance of comparison as a

means of understanding the L2 as well as the L1. By incorporating the suggested method and its implications into teaching practice, teachers can help learners gain the skills they need for effective communication in L2.

Acknowledgement

Special thanks to Mrs. Ann Al-Ghoraibi, who provided feedback on an early version of this paper and the questionnaire carried out by this study as well.

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Appendices

Survey Questionnaire

Dear Participants,

I am a researcher working on a paper entitled *"Mother Tongue Maintenance and Second Language Sustenance: A Two Way Language Teaching Method"*. I am outlining a method of teaching English grammar by means of comparing the grammar of the first language to that of the second language in order to avoid first language negative interference, invest similar aspects, enhance the understanding of the grammar of the first language and accelerate acquiring the second language. If you do not mind would you please help me evaluate the proposed method in my paper to teach grammar? Your opinion and time are highly valued, and your help is greatly appreciated. Thank you!

1. How do you rate your second language?

- Advanced
- High-Intermediate
- Low-Intermediate
- beginner

2. My first language is different from the second language I am learning.

- Completely
- Partially

3. What is your first language? .....

4. Which of the following components of grammar is the most challenging in second language learning? ***(You may choose more than one)***

- Grammatical components that are similar to that of my language
- Grammatical components that are different from that of my language
- Both
- I has nothing to do with similarities and difference

5. On a scale where "10" means the most important and "1" means the least important, how would you rate the importance of the following aspects of the language that you should learn first in order to be able to speak fluently?

- Grammatical rules .....
- Vocabulary .....
- Pronunciation .....

6. Which aspect of the second language will make you speak fluently?

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Don't know

7. Do you think you will acquire the second language better only being exposed to it without formal education?

- Yes

- □ No
- □ Don't know

8. Did you try to learn a second language by speaking to the people without studying the rules of the language? If yes, was it helpful?

- □ Yes
- □ No
- □ I have not tried to do so

9. I need a formal education in order to speak a second language

- □ Yes
- □ No
- □ Don't know

10. Students whose first language is similar to the second language learn faster.

- □ Strongly agree
- □ Agree
- □ Disagree
- □ Strongly disagree

11. How much do you agree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. If do not compare the grammar of my mother tongue language with that of the second language, I will learn faster.	□	□	□	□
2. I learn faster when the grammatical rules are similar to my language.	□	□	□	□
3. I learn the rules first then I acquire the language to speak fluently.	□	□	□	□
4. Comparing the grammatical rules of my first language helps me understand the similar rules of the second language.	□	□	□	□
5. I make mistakes because the grammatical rules of the second language are different from that of my first language.	□	□	□	□

12. I think explaining the grammatical rules of my first language and then showing how the grammatical rules of the second language are different will help me to avoid getting confused.

- □ Strongly agree
- □ Agree
- □ Disagree

- Strongly disagree

13. What level does this method (comparing the two languages) suit? (You may choose more than one)

- Beginners
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- All
- No level

14. This method of comparison will not help me to avoid making mistakes when the rules of the second language are different from those of my first language.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

15. Comparing the first language and the second language grammar helps me to understand the grammatical rules of my first language (which I could not understand).

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

16. In any case, the first step in using teaching a second language is to examine the first language of the learners.

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

17. Grammatical rules of the second language should be explained in the same way to different learner regardless of the grammatical rules of their first language.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

18. If you (strongly) disagree, how should it be different?

- More detailed
- Accompanied with more examples
- Using the grammatical rule of the first language to show difference
- Other

19. Not mentioning the grammatical rules of the first language will be more helpful

- Always
- Sometimes
- Never

20. Put a check mark (√) next to the areas, where comparison will be helpful:

- Grammar
- Some lexical items
- Idioms
- Sounds

Suggestions to achieve a better method of teaching a second language, please arrange them in points: *(you can use your first language to express your ideas)*

.....
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Language learning strategies and English language proficiency: an investigation of Japanese EFL university students

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 159-174

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

This paper is a study of language learning strategy (LLS) utilization by Japanese college EFL students. A comparison of differences in LLS utilization and English language proficiency levels revealed that the selection of LLS chosen may have been a critical source in determining language learning success or failure.

Introduction

The complexity surrounding individual language learner differences continues to inspire scholarly discussion as to the source and significance attributed to a number of possible influential factors. Initial attempts to categorize characteristics of successful language learners (Rubin 1975; Stern 1975; Naiman et al. 1978) have generated interest to better understand individual differences and the numerous variables that exert influence in language learner outcome. Among a number of widely acknowledged internal and external influential factors in second language acquisition (SLA), many practitioners and scholars have embraced language learning strategies (LLS) as an effective and workable component of the language learning process. The ability to directly manipulate and manage this element for improved language learning efficiency distinguishes it from other uncontrollable variables that impact language learning process. Advocated as an important and teachable component for language learning (Oxford and Nyikos 1989; Chamot 2001), the enormous potential and practicability of LLS have eventually led to a number of language strategy training programs (Nunan 1996; Yang 1996; Cohen 1998; Sengupta 2000; Macaro 2001) encouraging further interest in this area. In addition, suggestions for an increase in learner autonomy have begun to emerge as the direction towards more individualized learning and responsibility is being sought as a viable alternative to total classroom dependency and LLS is seen as a key factor in accomplishing this goal (Wenden 1991; Brown 1994; Oxford 1996; Skehan 1998; Yang 1998).

The randomization of LLS adoption by both successful and unsuccessful learners has provided insight into understanding the influence and enormous potential of this key SLA variable. Similarities in patterns of LLS utilization among high proficiency learners and differences shared by low proficiency learners suggest this variable is a significant determinant of eventual success or failure in language learning. A discussion of relevant LLS research along with an examination of data collected from several sample groups shall be

presented in this paper.

A Developing Interest in LLS

As practitioners noted and scholars documented individual differences and began to discount theories too dependent on generalizations, research began focusing attention on the diversity and distinction of the individual language learner. Studies that once monopolized SLA research with an examination of language and methodology began to shift towards investigating learner characteristics. Once the research of Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975) established precedence for focus on good language learner characteristics, a new area of interest in SLA began to emerge. *The Good Language Learner* (Naiman et al. 1978) was soon published afterwards and the concept of investigating individual language learner characteristics would continue to be an integral part of SLA research. Among numerous individual language learner variables that have been studied quite extensively in SLA since the mid-70s, research contributing to an understanding of the impact of LLS has continued to increase in interest because of the success in identifying and linking effective LLS with language proficiency. Although the vast majority of early research has found a positive association between increased LSS utilization and increased second language (L2) proficiency, this equation is not as simple as it may initially seem. Reiss (1983 cited in Kaylani, 1996, 78) found that it was not merely the quantity but the quality of LLS used that was a recognizable element distinguishing successful from less successful learners. Similarly, other studies have suggested that although more successful learners tended to use more strategies, the number of strategies was less important than the relevance of strategy application to a given task (Rubin 1975, 1987; Naiman et al. 1978; Bialystok 1979; Oxford 1990, 1993; Chamot and Küpper 1989).

There are a number of factors that may ultimately influence the choice and degree of LLS utilization, including: cultural background, educational experiences, language learning goals, motivation, attitude, age, and gender variability (Cohen 1998; O'Malley et al. 1985a, 1985b; Oxford 1990; Politzer and McGroarty 1985). Additional factors, such as, stage of learning, task requirement involved, and individual learning styles can also influence selection and frequency of LLS (Oxford 1990; Reid 1987, 1995), not to mention factors relating to personality (Oxford and Cohen 1992) sensory preferences (Oxford et al. 1991; Reid 1987, 1995) and individual language learner beliefs (Horwitz 1987, 1999; Wenden 1987, 1999; Yang 1999). The only consistent factor that can be guaranteed is the fact that the background and experience of each learner is going to be different. In a sense, the criteria for conventional LLS research is based, in part, on the premise of 'all things being equal' to discount other known influential variables to some extent. Further limitations in LLS research may be attributed to the obvious problems encountered in the retrieval of information from external observations, such as, think aloud protocol, interviews, diary entries, questionnaires, or other participant conscious methods; certainly susceptible to falsification. Despite these noted limitations, shared LLS patterns within similar groups of learners have been largely consistent in a variety of studies. This could indicate that language learners were identifying and reporting their use of learning strategies accurately, as numerous researchers have continued to argue in support of self-report techniques in

investigating LLS (Chamot and Küpper 1989; Oxford and Crookall 1989; O'Malley et al. 1985a, 1985b; O'Malley and Chamot 1990). Understanding the functional role of LLS with its enormous potential for improving language learning is crucial for all those involved in language education and the current difficulties mentioned in its investigation should not discourage further research into this area.

Definition and Categorization of Language Learner Strategies

Language learner strategies are the actions learners employ to improve the development of their language learning skills (Oxford 1990). Classification of language learner strategies varies somewhat, depending on the definition of the researcher in question. Since this study has used the *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL) as an initial measuring instrument of LLS, the classification system advocated by Oxford (1990) was utilized. Oxford developed a system of classification organized around a division of two strategy groups, direct and indirect. Among these, six strategy groups exist in total. Those strategies that directly involve learning the target language (TL) include memory, cognitive, and compensation. Memory strategies concern the storage and retrieval of new language. Cognitive strategies are the mental processes associated with manipulating, transforming, and interacting with the target language (TL). Compensation strategies are utilized by learners to offset inadequate knowledge needed for understanding and production of the TL. The second set of strategies suggested by Oxford (1990) includes indirect strategies or those involving actions or processes which learners regulate, manage, and self-direct in learning. Indirect strategies are those strategies limited to a supportive role without being directly related to the interaction of the language itself. Strategies categorized within this group include metacognitive, affective, and social. Metacognitive strategies are aspects associated with planning, monitoring, and evaluating the TL. Affective strategies refer to strategies that learners employ to control emotions and attitudes about language learning. Finally, social strategies are characterized by facilitating engagement in the TL through interaction with others.

Assessment of LLS Utilization

Interest in LLS has been steadily growing since researchers began discussing and investigating its potential influence in language learning some thirty years ago. Creation of the SILL (Oxford 1990) has since benefited numerous researchers with its attempt to establish some standardization in gathering comparable data. Its popularity has yielded an enormous sum of research to date that has established the importance of LLS. Given the information concerning LLS that has been widely available for some time, the unquestionable importance of it to language learning, and the elapse of time since the conception of LLS research, periodic studies in this area are still needed to assess if the necessary measures are being initiated in language education to encourage learner use and awareness of LLS.

The majority of early LLS research is limited to observations of sample groups of unguided and unknowing language learners randomly adopting LLS by their own initiatives. During this period, researchers were only beginning to investigate LLS and practitioners have not yet integrated this concept into their

classes. As LLS was an unfamiliar concept to most learners, success or failure in a language was dependent, to an extent, on instinct and guesswork by the language learner in the selection of appropriate LLS. Eventually, researchers were able to identify more preferable LLS for learning efficiency. Since this data was initially retrieved from the miscalculations of less successful learners and the lucky guesswork of more successful learners in their unguided selection of LLS, one may assume that this method of inquiry was restricted to an era in history of less complete knowledge and that current circumstances reflect a completely different situation with the widespread availability of information concerning LLS. The current language learning environment with its evolved teaching methodologies and technological innovations is remarkably different from that of earlier observed LLS settings. The additional factor of the inclusion of LLS knowledge, in itself, presents a situation much different from that of earlier observations.

This study shall examine the relation between English proficiency level and the selection of LLS by two groups of learners. In addition, the recently added variable of LLS knowledge availability to language educators will be assessed as to whether students are being taught this important aspect of language learning. It should also be noted that this study has investigated language learners in an EFL environment, an undertaking quite rare in comparison to the abundance of available ESL research on the topic. This study will also offer a perspective uncharacteristic of the typical ESL environment in examining a homogenous sample group that will allow for less variable interference from differing ethnicities, language, and cultural backgrounds. Instead, this sample group will offer more uniformity with a number of shared characteristics, including similarities in educational backgrounds.

In addition, the location of the sample group is of particular importance. In comparison to the Japanese mainland, the language community of Okinawa is unique in many aspects. Remnants of its native languages barely survive in remote isolated areas of the islands with some lexical and phonological characteristics present elsewhere in a local blend with the dominant national language of Japanese. The Okinawan islands of Japan can also be described as a quasi-ESL/EFL language environment with a varying degree of language influence, depending on individual contact with the local English-speaking population. Foreign and second language learning situations are undoubtedly dependent on an individual learner's willingness to interact with the TL speakers, despite the composition of the language community (Cohen 1998), but the availability of this option alone is a distinguishing feature from that of mainland Japan. Diverse language communities exist on the island, with the proportion of English-speakers related to the proximity of the enclosed U.S. military bases. The overall English-speaker population on the islands fluctuates around 6% to 8% of the total island population. Former control of the islands by the United States military for a twenty-seven year period, ending in 1972, has certainly impacted all of the language communities in Okinawa to some extent. Mainland Japan SILL-based research revealing little or no social LLS use by its subjects (Noguchi 1991 cited in Oxford and Burry-Stock 1995, 13), a result of its nearly nonexistent foreign English-speaking population, exemplifies the extreme differences between these two distinct language environments. The abovementioned conditions allow for an interesting perspective in investigating a unique sample of learners.

Method and Sample Group

This study will evaluate a variety of data to determine patterns of LLS use among two groups of learners with the administration of a Japanese translated version of the SILL questionnaire (Oxford 1990), a computerized English proficiency test (Ohyagi and Kiggell 2003), and a brief background questionnaire. In addition, a comparison of LLS use on the basis of English proficiency scores and SILL results between the top 25% and bottom 25% learners was analyzed to establish a clearer distinction in identifying any emerging patterns. Furthermore, a selection of learners scoring at the top 25% and those scoring at the bottom 25% on an English proficiency test from two separate academic disciplines were individually interviewed twice, in-depth. The sample group was composed of first-year Japanese college students enrolled in an English course at a university in Okinawa, Japan. All of the participants completed six years of mandatory English education, as dictated by the national curriculum. The group consisted of 29 English majors (52%) and 27 Business majors (48%). The subjects in this study consisted of 56 participants in total with the proportion of gender at 62% (35) female and 38% (21) male.

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

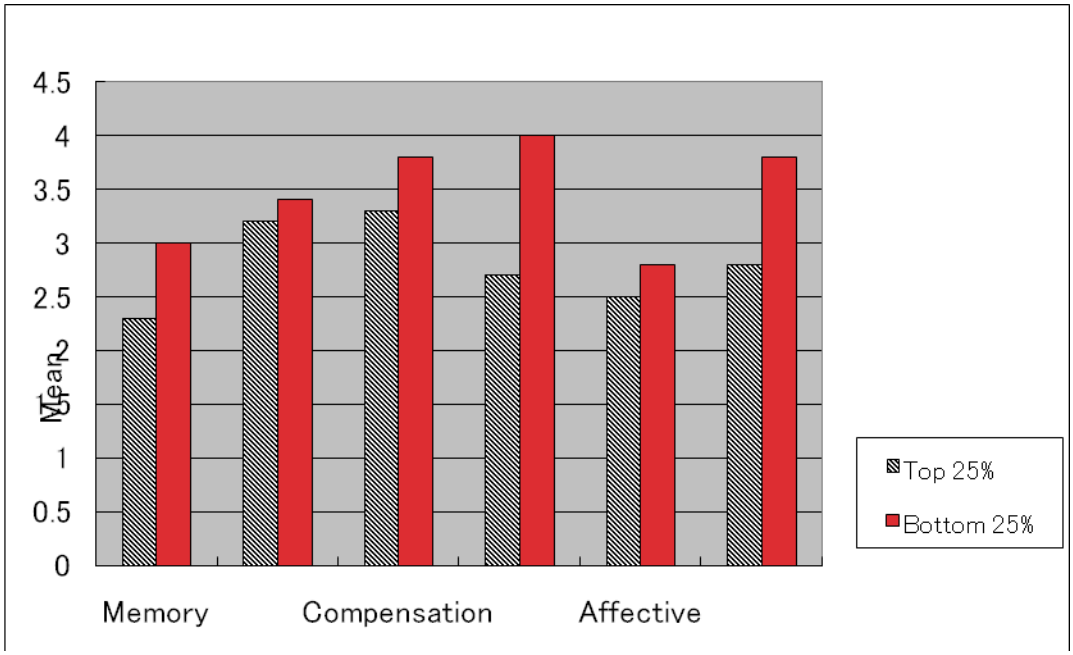
The SILL was developed by Oxford (1990) to access language learner selection and frequency of LLS and to fulfill a need for a standardized questionnaire that could be used in a variety of second and foreign language learning contexts. The questionnaire consists of a total of 50 items that participants rate on a five-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree on a number of strategy descriptions. SILL scores averaging 3.5 - 5.0 are designated as high; 2.5 - 3.4 are considered medium strategy utilization; and scores ranging from 1.0 - 2.4 are often labeled as low strategy use (Oxford and Burry-Stock 1995). A total of six sections, each measuring a specific type of LLS, correspond to the six strategy types as designated by Oxford's LLS categorization:

Section A: Memory (Remembering Effectively)
Section B: Cognitive (Using Mental Processes)
Section C: Compensation (Compensating for Missing Knowledge)
Section D: Metacognitive (Organizing and Evaluating)
Section E: Affective (Managing Emotions)
Section F: Social (Learning with Others)

The results of the SILL questionnaire were compared between two academic groups, English and Business majors, and subsets of learners within each of these groups were further sorted according to scores on an English proficiency test. In most studies comparing English proficiency and the SILL, a correlation has been found between increased English proficiency and increased LLS utilization. In this study, the English major group indicated just the opposite. As English proficiency level increased, LLS utilization decreased. The SILL results of the top 25% of English proficient learners had an average

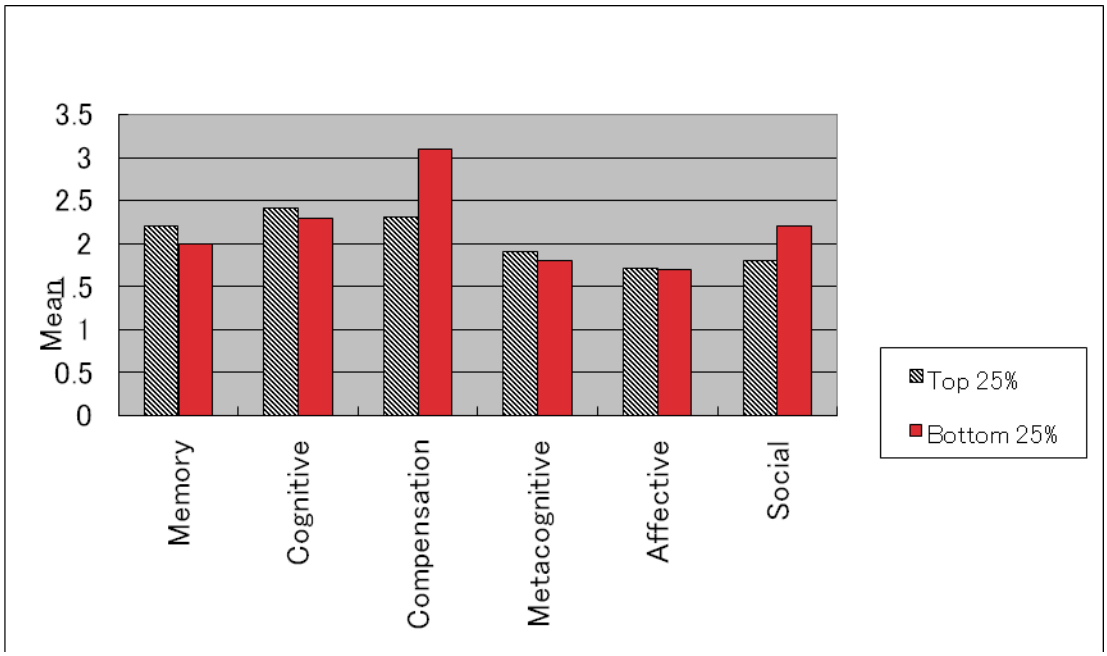
score of 2.9 while the bottom 25% had an average score of 3.5. In each separate category, the SILL score of the bottom group was higher than the top group (see figure 1).

Figure 1
English Major SILL Scores



A comparison of SILL results of Business majors in the top and bottom 25%, as sorted according to an English proficiency test, indicated nearly identical results on the SILL. The top group had an average score of 2.1 while the bottom group had an average score of 2.0. Although the overall average of the SILL scores were nearly even, an examination of individual categories revealed that compensational and social LLS were utilized at a higher degree by learners in the bottom proficiency group (see figure 2).

Figure 2
Business Major SILL Scores



Interviews

Interviews of a selected group of participants consisting of the top and bottom 25% proficient language learners from two academic disciplines, English and Business, were initially intended to inquire on language learning beliefs and other possible sources of influence for LLS preferences. As the questionnaire results alone remained puzzling with no explanation, these interviews soon took on an added critical role of extracting further information from the participants to assist in determining the rationale for the selection of items on the SILL and to verify and retest the credibility of the questionnaire results.

Interviews were conducted in either Japanese or English, an option dictated by the interviewee. Each participant was interviewed twice for approximately 20 minutes or more, depending on the course of conversation. The initial interview was based primarily on an open-ended format to allow the interviewee leeway in controlling the direction and the amount of content in response to questioning. Once the results were examined, and participants were given time to reflect on the topic, follow-up interviews were conducted one week later to allow opportunities for additional information recall and clarification of data.

The follow-up interviews were conducted primarily with the use of open-ended questioning, although specific inquiries into several key issues were undertaken. The first of these factors being investigated was the reasons or possible sources that may have influenced LLS selection. General questioning concerning motivation and attitude towards learning English was also undertaken. In addition, inquiries were made into individual language learning routines, beliefs, and advice one could offer to others studying English. Finally, areas concerning the source and beginning of interest in English, the amount of English exposure, and expectations concerning individual need of English in the future were investigated.

Sources of Rote Learning Dependency

All of the participants in the study, despite group categorization, received their initial exposure to LLS training, and in many cases their only exposure, in the form of rote learning vocabulary items. The interviews were able to reveal that each of these students were separately introduced to LLS by different junior high school (JHS) teachers and they were encouraged to utilize rote learning by repetitively writing vocabulary until memorized. The reasoning for its widespread application is unknown. Speculation can certainly point towards dependence on the use of standardized testing and entrance examinations and the resultant pressures for teachers to have their students succeed with high scores. Reliance on standardized testing tools to measure success or failure within the educational system has been a source of scrutiny for numerous years for a variety of reasons and the possibility of it exerting indirect influence on LLS could certainly be another of its undesirable side effects.

Another possible cause for the unusual amount of emphasis and dependence on rote learning may also be a direct result of learning strategy transfer from one academic discipline to another. The Japanese writing system, a mixture of four separate orthographical forms, *hiragana, katakana, romaji*, and most importantly *kanji* (Chinese characters), may offer a suitable explanation for the over-reliance on rote learning. In addition to the complexities involved among a number of possible phonological variations and interpretive meanings that may exist with each *kanji* character, the learner must memorize the correct method of direction in writing each line, or more commonly referred to as stroke order. As many of the *kanji* require at least a dozen or more strokes to complete each character, one can understand that to obtain efficiency in memorizing writing patterns within this complex orthographical system, utilization of rote learning is crucial. Throughout the duration of education, a high school graduate in Japan would have studied nearly two thousand basic *kanji* (Habein and Mathias 2000). Further education and specialization could easily double that number. Considerably more characters are used in the Chinese language on a daily basis, approximately ten to twelve thousand (Campbell 1991). Researchers have noted similarities in Asian learners adopting rote learning as a primary LLS (Politzer 1983; Politzer and McGroarty 1985; O'Malley 1987; O'Malley and Chamot 1990). Many studies (Cortazzi and Jin 1996; Huang and van Naerssen 1987; Oxford and Ehrman 1995; Song 1995) have accredited Confucius values as a source of influence in determining Asian learning behavior. Instead, learning strategy transfer from another academic discipline, orthographical mastery of *kanji*, may offer a more suitable explanation for rote learning tendencies in language study among Asian learners.

Learning strategy transfer across academic disciplines and institutional emphasis on test preparation are possible sources of influence for rote learning dependency, but teacher unawareness of LLS may also be a decisive factor for the continued promotion for this specific LLS. It is puzzling that most of the participants have indicated being taught only one LLS, repetitive writing of vocabulary. Any educator would certainly not purposefully ignore the advantages of informing their students of the numerous beneficial LLS. Further inquiry into this problem was conducted with an up-to-date source, recent graduates of a four-year university English teacher certification program.

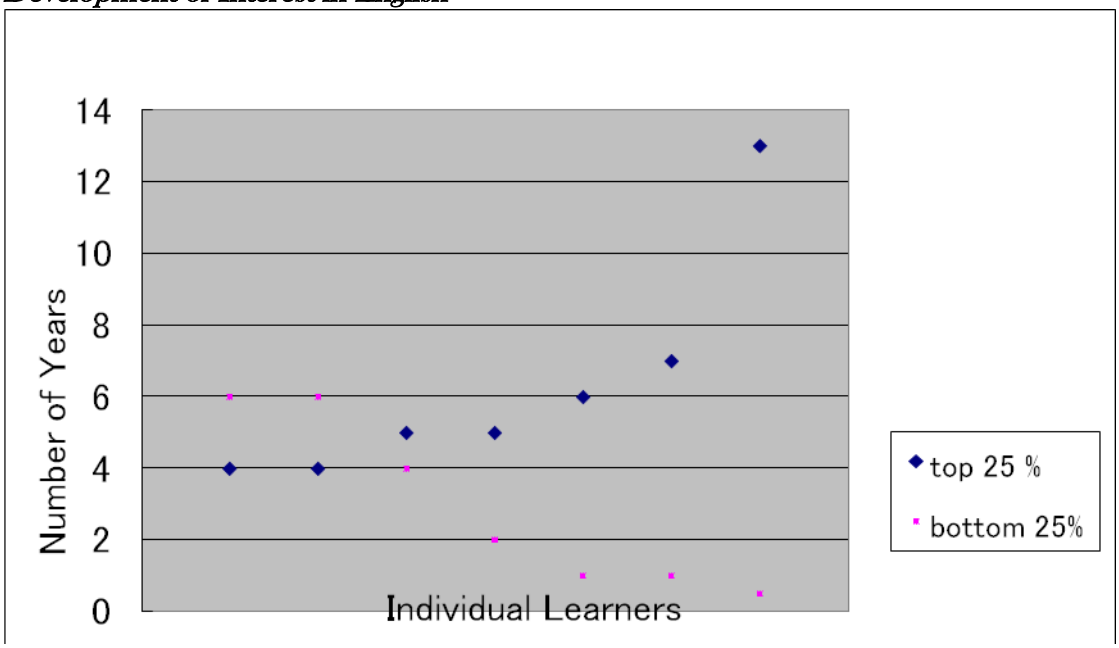
Offering advantages of insight into current teaching methodology and eliminating difficulties of recollection, three graduates were interviewed and specific inquiries were made concerning their awareness and understanding of LLS. Two of the interviewees indicated that they were not aware of its meaning while the third interviewee only recalled studying the technique of shadowing, quietly mimicking ongoing speech. She was unable to recall any other instruction of LLS throughout her teacher education program. Although this was a simple and brief inquiry with only a few participants, it is still surprising, nonetheless, that these recent graduates seemed oblivious to the concept of LLS.

Acceptance and Rejection of Rote Learning

As mentioned earlier, an analysis of English major SILL scores between the top 25% group (2.9) and the bottom 25% group (3.5) revealed somewhat less utilization of LLS with the more proficient learners. As a result, a compelling need for inquiry took precedence. The interviews revealed that although all of the participants were introduced to rote learning, the key difference that distinguishes the top group from all others in the study is the fact that all of these learners, with the exception of two, rejected the rote learning method advocated by their JHS teachers and began to search for alternative LLS on their own initiative. The reason for rejection of rote learning LLS by the participants was simple and direct, it was described as boring. Those few students, who took the initiative and disregarded their teacher's advice at an early stage of learning, eventually became highly successful learners.

There was a noticeable increase in the use of rote learning with the bottom 25% English major group, as 4 of 7 participants indicated a continued reliance on this particular LLS. Although indicating dependency on rote learning to some degree, it was only one of many LLS utilized by each of these participants. Another distinguishing feature between the top and bottom proficiency group was the fact that the top group of learners indicated a strong interest in English at an earlier stage of learning and, as a result, these learners began to seek out and adopt different LLS. The learners in the bottom group became interested in English at a later stage of learning, overall. While 5 of the 7 learners in the bottom group indicated being interested in English less than 4 years ago, all of the learners in the top group indicated being interested in English for a period exceeding 4 years or more (see figure 3).

Figure 3
Development of Interest in English



The advantages of additional time, allowing a longer period of refinement of LLS skills, may offer a feasible explanation as to the observed differences in LLS utilization and English proficiency levels between the top and bottom groups. As many of the top proficient English learners have dismissed rote learning as an ineffective LLS, and began searching for other more productive LLS at an earlier stage of language learning, in time these learners were more likely to find, adopt, and refine suitable LLS alternatives. As many of the less proficient learners have indicated a more recent interest in English, a possible explanation for their high LLS utilization levels, as measured by the SILL, may simply be the result of entry into the initial stages of adopting and developing a LLS approach. These learners are just beginning to take the initiative to seek out other LLS in a process involving trial and error. The later stages of refinement may not have been reached, and therefore a higher frequency and utilization of LLS, as indicated on the SILL, could be the result, thereby offering a possible explanation for the unconventional SILL scores by the lower proficiency group.

In contrast to the noted differences of English major learners, the overwhelming majority of Business majors in both high and low proficiency groups revealed not only a commonality of continued rote learning utilization but also a pattern of primary dependency on this one LLS. The similarity of responses led to an inquiry on frequency of its utilization and a majority of these respondents indicated only studying shortly before language tests. Certainly, some of the respondents did indicate using other LLS, such as viewing or listening to English multimedia outlets, emailing English native-speaker friends, etc., but the frequency of these LLS were inconsistent and unusually rare. Since both top and bottom proficiency learners within the Business major group indicated similar LLS utilization and frequency, an inquiry was made into other possible distinguishing factors contributing to English proficiency differences. The interviews were able to reveal one similarity among the majority of the top

proficiency learners, additional education. Nearly, all of the learners in the top proficiency group, 5 of 7, attended a specialized intensive test-taking preparatory school for an extended period of time, ranging from 1 to 2 ½ years. These schools prepare high school graduates for specific college entrance exams, often competitive and requiring exceptionally high scores acceptance. In contrast, none of the learners in the bottom group attended test-taking preparatory schooling. Differences in English proficiency test scores between these two groups seem to be based, to a substantial degree, on this single factor.

Instrumental and Integrative Orientation

Instrumental orientation is a concept initially defined by Gardner and Lambert (1972) to describe learners with purely goal driven reasons to pursue L2 study, such as, enhancing career advancement, fulfilling an educational requirement, or simply increasing one's prestige in the community. Another descriptive concept created by Gardener and Lambert, *integrative orientation*, refers to learners who are motivated to study a language with the purpose of meeting and communicating with members of the TL community. As motivation and attitude are certainly underlying variables relevant to language learning in general, its applicability in influencing LLS tendencies is an important element to consider as it directly affects the degree of effort a language learner undertakes in pursing the TL. Research investigating the impact of language learning motivation towards LLS use has found it to be one of the most significant influential factors (Oxford and Nyikos 1989; Oxford et al. 1993). Although this study did not specifically engage in investigating motivation and attitudes, the interviews revealed some distinguishing patterns between the different groups of learners in both instrumental and integrative inclinations that need further clarification. Classification of learner motivation as strictly instrumental or integrative was not clear in some cases, as these learners indicated attributes of both categories. Clement and Kruidenier (1983) described the definition of instrumental and integrative orientation as being too vague and therefore a source of problems encountered in discrepancies in a number of research results.

Nearly all participants in the study indicated some degree of instrumental orientation. A clear distinction existed between English and Business majors in this regard as to the type of instrumental orientation specified. The majority of English majors, 13 of 14, indicated a specific need for language study to fulfill English-related career goals. In contrast, participants in the Business major group, 13 of 14, were mainly interested in only successfully completing the course to fulfill academic requirements for graduation. Reflective of frequency of LLS utilization by the majority of Business majors, this type of instrumental orientation was parallel in form, in many respects, to these learners indicating utilizing LLS solely for test preparation.

Although the majority of learners in both groups of English and Business majors are technically classified in the same category of instrumental orientation, variability between these two forms of instrumental orientation can best be described as differences between short-term and long-term goals. The objective of successfully completing a four-month semester course is certainly different from that of entering a lifelong English related career. These differences have influenced, to some degree, LLS utilization and frequency, as

seen from distinctive patterns emerging in the two groups of English and Business majors. The short-term frequency and confinement to rote learning by the majority of Business majors seems to exemplify this fact.

A comparison of integrative orientation differences between the two groups was less difficult to assess because of its total absence from the Business major group. None of the Business majors have any current contact with native-speaker communities or native-speakers, outside of class. In sum, only 3 participants from a total of 14 have had any contact with native-speakers whatsoever. Two students attended an English language conversation school, one participant did so for a two-year period during JHS and another student attended a three-month session during elementary school. The third student was the only one in the Business major group to visit an English speaking country, a one-week trip to Australia. In contrast, the English major group indicated substantially more native-speaker and community contact with 6 of 14 participants indicating friendship with English native-speakers, 4 of 14 attending an English conversation school, and 9 of 14 residing in an English speaking country at some point of their life. Although, the degree of integrative orientation was not measured in detail, simply establishing the fact that increased outlets of native-speaker contact were available for a number of participants in the English major group suggests the likelihood that integrative influence has played some role in language learner motivation and subsequently LLS utilization.

Language Learner Beliefs

A brief inquiry was made into the influence and importance of individual beliefs in language learning. Although this study did not specifically attempt to measure this variable, its importance was too common to ignore. These learners have adopted their own set of beliefs and it is noticeable in the LLS they have chosen to utilize. Several of the students in the English major group believe it is best to practice English in as many ways as possible and, as a result, these learners utilize multimedia outlets and various opportunities to produce the language. One student, in particular, embraced very helpful advice from a former High School teacher who told her, 'teaching is learning' and following this advice she began working in a preparatory school tutoring children. Another student believes that learners should read a lot and look up the meaning of unknown words and similarly she utilizes a lexically based approach to learning. Finally, one learner described repetitive writing of vocabulary as an effective and enjoyable way of learning. Language learner's beliefs certainly have implications towards the selection of LLS (Horwitz 1987, 1999; Wenden 1987, 1999; Yang 1999), as demonstrated above, but other variables may interfere with this simple equation. For instance, one student stated that she believes talking to native-English speakers was one of the best means to improve language skills. Instead of following her belief, she did not utilize any social LLS and instead, depended on rote learning of vocabulary as her primary means of study. The variables that have prevented utilization of social LLS could involve any number of factors including the native-speaker composition of her local language community, or possible anxiety in speaking to TL speakers.

Additional variables to consider when examining language learner

beliefs should also include those of attitude and motivation. Although a clear correlation was seen with the sample of English majors in describing language learning beliefs and LLS utilization, these learners are atypical in the sense that attitudes and motivation are generally positive towards the TL for those majoring in English. In contrast, the Business majors are not highly motivated and some have even displayed a negative attitude towards English. The strength of these variables is seen in the dissimilarities in the Business majors stated beliefs and LLS utilization. Although these learners described beliefs for other LLS as being more beneficial for language learning, they were not motivated enough to take on the responsibility and effort needed for these additional tasks. It seems that minimal effort and familiarity with a workable LLS were all that these learners would exert to acquire short-term instrumental goals.

The differences between the Business and English major groups in motivation, attitude, and subsequently effort to utilize additional LLS can further be demonstrated in examining individual use of multimedia outlets. Although multimedia outlets are readily available for all learners, substantial differences were evident between the two groups. These outlets were utilized by only 3 of 14 learners in the Business major group while an overwhelming majority of participants in the English major group, 12 of 14, utilized these outlets for language learning. Although language learner beliefs may exert influence in dictating LLS selection and frequency within certain conditions, this variable has a secondary role of dependency to that of attitudes and motivation in many situations. As demonstrated with the widely available multimedia outlets and its benefits accorded by language learner beliefs, the discrepancies between beliefs and willingness to initiate action exemplifies the importance of attitude and motivation overall.

Conclusion

Noticeable similarities of patterns in the utilization of language learner strategies shared by high proficiency learners and the noted distinctions shared by low proficiency learners demonstrate the importance of LLS as an influential variable related in some degree to eventual success or failure in language learning. Guesswork and randomization of adopting suitable LLS should not continue to be a decisive factor in ultimately determining success or failure of the language learner. As numerous researchers focus their attention to language learner tendencies in adopting LLS, and continue to examine and debate the extent of influence from a number of internal and external variables, a direct and crucial factor may continue to be overlooked, the responsibility of those in providing the language learner with the knowledge to make informed choices. Despite the widespread availability of LLS literature and over a quarter century of research devoted to its understanding, deficiencies still remain in some EFL environments due to the lack of information made available to the language learner. The urgency of raising awareness of LLS for both learners and educators should be recognized. Dependency on rote learning may continue to persist due to institutional constraints in emphasizing standardized testing. Educators should avoid encouraging dependency on rote learning for its short-term effectiveness in test preparation. Instead, consideration for long-term goals of the language learner should be the primary objective and providing language learners with the information about the variety of helpful LLS is vital for fulfilling the ultimate

objective of improved TL proficiency.

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High-Stakes Tests and Educational Language Policy in Japan: An Analysis of the National Center English Test from the Viewpoint of Education for International Understanding

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 175-188

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

Deepening international understanding is one of the most important educational language policies for high schools in Japan. However, the possibility of the negative washback effect of university English entrance examinations on the implementation of the policy has been raised. Therefore, this study analyzed the National Center Tests—the highest-stakes form of university entrance examinations—from the viewpoint of education for international understanding since washback is generated by test content. A careful consideration was given to both interrater reliability and inner reliability throughout the analysis. The results of this study indicated that only a few particular topics and nations appeared in the tests. This result suggests that high school students might be able to develop only a part of their international understanding. However, those who attempt to go on to national or municipal universities need to take individual national/municipal university tests as well. Therefore, the content of these tests also has to be analyzed. Furthermore, the objectives of university English entrance examinations should be analyzed from the viewpoint of education for international understanding

Keywords: high stakes-tests, washback, entrance examinations, test content analysis, educational language policy, education for international understanding

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyze university English entrance examinations, which are the highest-stakes foreign language tests in Japan, in terms of topics related to education for international understanding, which is one of the most important educational language policies for secondary schools in Japan.

The possibility that negative washback from university entrance examinations is hindering such policy has been raised (refer to Hosoya, 1999; Kubota, 1996), although the deepening of high school students' international understanding is crucial for secondary school English language education. University entrance examinations in Japan are considered as achievement tests because both the Center for National University Entrance Examinations and individual universities announce that their tests cover some of the high school

English subjects listed in the Course of Study, which is a nationwide educational guideline for high schools. Therefore, international understanding should be one of the most important constructs of university English entrance examinations. This means that if entrance examinations do not measure applicants' international understanding, they lack content validity.

Concerning the importance of entrance examinations for the successful implementation of educational language policy, Kaplan and Baldauf (2003) and Gorsuch (1999) also pointed out such tests are one of the key issues in Japan. However, there has hardly been any content validity research on entrance examinations in terms of education for international understanding with an established analysis scheme. The result of this study will contribute to the improvement of the Center Test and consequently the successful implementation of education for international understanding.

In this study, Japanese terms, such as persons' names, place names, or book titles, are given in Roman letters, and the way of description follows how they are spelled in *Hiragana* (the Japanese cursive syllabary) so that readers will be able to find them easily when they need to refer to the original Japanese words that are mostly spelled in Chinese characters. However, when Japanese proper nouns are given in Roman letters in the original source, the spellings follow the original spellings.

Education for international understanding

Education for international understanding, which was originally advocated by UNESCO, was introduced into Japan in the 1950s under the name of *kokusai rikai kyouiku* in order to implement internationalization, and in 1989 the term *international understanding*, or *kokusai rikai* appeared for the first time in the Course of Study, which is a set of nationwide educational guidelines for both primary and secondary schools. Since then, cultivating and deepening students' international understanding has been one of the most crucial goals of foreign language education in Japan (refer to Monbushou, 1989, 1999; Mochidzuki, Kubota, Iwasaki & Ushiro, 2001; Muranoi, Chiba & Hatanaka, 2001; Niizato, 2000).

In this study, education for international understanding refers to *kokusai rikai kyouiku* rather than the original form of education for international understanding because it has developed in the Japanese context, and consequently it has become very different from the original form. Furthermore, although its definitions have been diverse and ambiguous (refer to Kosaka, 1999; Ozaki, 2009; Satou, 1995; Satou, 2001; Yoneda, Otsu, Tabushi, Fujiwara & Tanaka, 1997), the definition of education for international understanding in this study is simply to cultivate and deepen students' international understanding in order not to confuse readers.

University English entrance examinations in Japan

There are three major types of university in Japan: national, municipal (prefectural or city-run), and private universities. In 2005 there were 709 universities in total: 87 national (624,389 students), 80 municipal (122,864 students), and 542 private (2,062,042 students) universities (Monbukagakusyou, 2005).

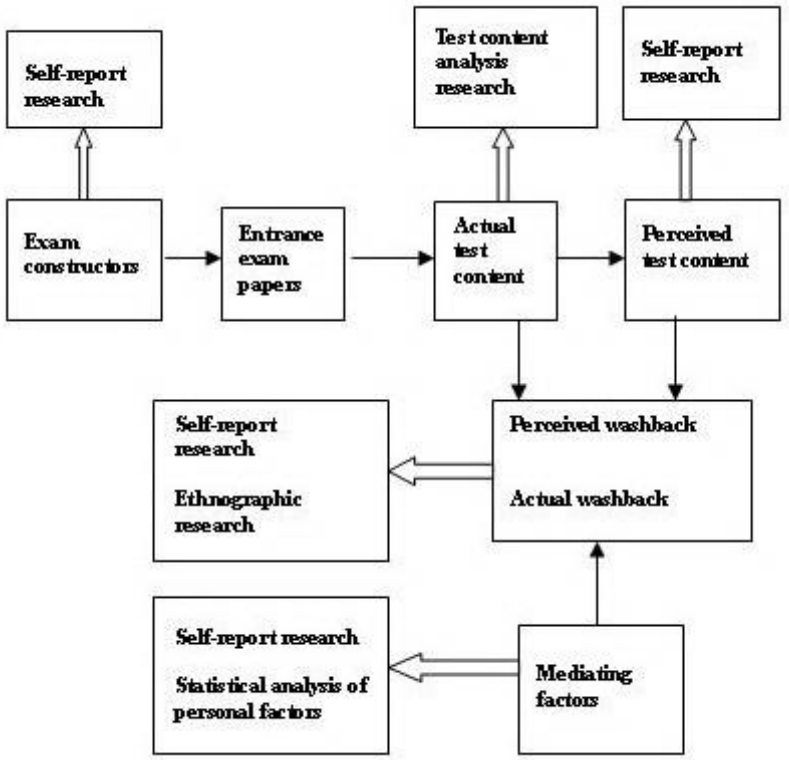
These universities offer different types of entrance examinations: conventional academic entrance examinations on various subjects, recommendation examinations, or admission office (AO) examinations. Recommendation examinations usually consist of essay writing tasks and/or interview tests together with recommendations from high schools. AO examinations have various forms; for example, some universities require their applicants to submit self-recommendation essays and evaluate their achievement in high school club activities and different types of qualifications. Additionally, AO and recommendation examinations are occasionally supplemented by tests in selected school subjects.

The most common entrance examinations can be classified into two types: the National Center Test and tests created by individual universities. The National Center Test is a type of standardized test developed by the National Center for University Entrance Examinations (NCUEE) and is used by national/municipal universities for their first-stage screening process as well as by some private universities. In general, applicants to national and municipal universities are required to take second-stage entrance examinations created and administered by each individual university.

Washback and test content analysis

Washback is defined as the influence of tests on education; when the result of a test is considered important, the test is likely to generate strong washback (Hughes, 2003). The original source of washback is test content (refer to Figure). For example, before Watanabe (1997) conducted ethnographical washback research in terms of translation tasks, he analyzed the content of Japanese university entrance examinations in order to confirm the tests included such tasks. It is essential to analyze the content of target tests before washback research is conducted especially when specific washback is investigated. Specific washback refers to "a type of washback that relates to only one specific aspect of a test or one specific test type" (Watanabe, 2004, p. 20).

Figure 1
Model of Washback Generation Process and Research (Ozaki, 2009, p. 141)



Research Questions

This study was designed to answer the following two research questions:

(1) To what extent does the content of the National Center Test provide a valid sample reflecting topics related to education for international understanding?
(2) To what extent does the Center Test cover various areas of the world?

The first question was formed because the Ministry of Education (Monbushou, 1989) emphasizes the importance of selecting appropriate topics for deepening students' international understanding. The second question was developed because some scholars claimed that regions or nations should also be investigated when a textbook (Hosoya, 1999; Kiryuu, Shibata, Tagatani & Wada, 1999) or test (Ozaki, 2009) content analysis is conducted from the viewpoint of education for international understanding.

Although washback is generated by both actual test content and the test content that teachers or students perceive (refer to Ozaki, 2009), this study investigated only the actual content of the National Center Test since the perceived test content is derived from the actual content.

Methodology

Materials for study

The National Center Tests for student intakes of 2002, 2003, and 2004 were selected for this study. The reason why the National Center Test was selected for the study material is that this test is a nationwide entrance examination for national, municipal, and various private universities, and it therefore attracts the largest number of applicants among the various forms of university entrance examination (refer to Section 7.). In other words, the Center Test is the most influential form of entrance examination in Japan, and therefore its content is likely to have a strong washback effect on both teachers and students who are involved in high school English language education. Furthermore, high school education based on the 1989 Course of Study started in 1995; the entrance examinations analyzed in this study were constructed several years after *international understanding* first appeared in the government guidelines. It is assumed that the concept of international understanding had permeated both the English entrance examination system and high school English education by that time.

Content analysts

Neuendorf (2002) stated that "at least two coders" should be used in order to obtain reliable analysis results. Therefore, two analysts were adopted for this study. Experts in the field of language testing who do not construct the target tests are ideal test content analysts for both objective and reliable analysis (Chapelle, 1999; Hughes, 2003; Ozaki, 2008; Ozaki, 2009). One of the analysts had experience in doing research and teaching both undergraduate and postgraduate courses on test construction theory and practice for over ten years. He had also developed various types of university entrance examinations. The other analyst was a PhD student from Japan, who was trained in test content analysis for this study.

Procedures

The development of a codebook and coder training for the establishment of both validity and intercoder reliability is essential (Neuendorf, 2002). Therefore, four people developed an analysis scheme and they participated in an intensive coder training for over three months. Based on the result of these procedures, two of these four people analyzed the 2001 National Center Test as a pilot study. During this pilot-study phase, special attention was paid to both inner reliability and interrater reliability following suggestions made by various scholars (e.g. Brindley, 2000; Clapham, 1996; Muijs, 2004; Neuendorf, 2002). After modifying the analysis scheme to solve problems found through the pilot study, the National Center Tests for the 2002, 2003, and 2004 intakes were analyzed independently by each analyst.

Data analysis

Unlike individual national and municipal university tests, which frequently have essay-writing and translation tasks, the National Center Test consists of only multiple-choice questions. Therefore, only reading passages and sentences for other tasks such as fill-in-the-blank and stress-pattern tasks were analyzed from the viewpoint of topics related to education for international understanding as well as regions and nations.

Test content validity should be examined based on test specifications (Hughes, 2003). However, unfortunately no specifications for the Center Test were available. Furthermore, neither the Course of Study nor its guidebook mentions detailed topics for deepening international understanding. Therefore, I decided to adopt a list of topics related to education for international understanding developed by Ozaki (2009). The final topic analysis criteria (refer to the Appendix) were developed through the results of the pilot study. There were 10 major topics; each of them had various subtopics. In order to make the results of analysis done by each analyst reliable, "the test retest method" (Muijs, 2004, p. 72) was adopted. Each analyst was required to analyze the same materials three times one week after each analysis. Furthermore, interrater agreement was calculated based on the percentage of agreed items between the two analysts and the total number of analyzed items (refer to Neuendorf, 2002).

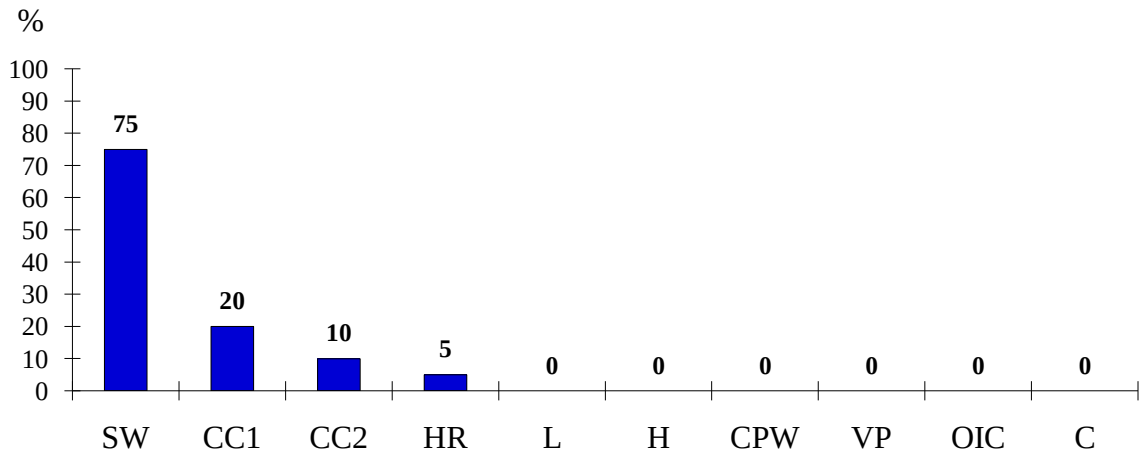
Finally, interrater agreement was calculated by the percentage of agreement, as suggested by Neuendorf (2002).

Results

Topics Related to Education for International Understanding

The results of the analysis of all the three test papers are presented together since all the three sets of tests had the same sections and tasks. The National Center Test had only multiple-choice questions and did not have any translation or writing tasks unlike individual university entrance examinations. Therefore, only passages and sentences for multiple-choice tasks related to reading, stress patterns, word usage, grammar, or conversational skills were analyzed. The sum of analysed passages or sentences was 80; 20 of them had (a) topic(s) related to education for international understanding. A breakdown of major topics is provided in Figure 2. The tests contained only three of the ten major topics (refer to the Appendix) related to education for international understanding, and topics related to *state of the world* (75%) appeared far more frequently than any other topic. Other than *state of the world*, 20% of the topics were classified into *concrete culture* and another 10% into *conceptual culture*. Among the 80 analyzed items, there was disagreement on two of them. Therefore, the agreement rate was 97.5%.

Figure 2
Percentage of Major Topics Included in the Center Tests (N: 20)



SW=State of the world, CC1=Concrete culture, CC2=Conceptual culture, HR=Human rights, L=Life, H=History, CPW=Common problems in the world, VP=Violence and Peace, OIC=Organizations for international cooperation, C=Communication

Furthermore, among the subtopics of *state of the world*, *science/technology* appeared far more frequently than any other topic (refer to Table 1); there were no significant differences among the other subtopics. It should be noted that the sum of topics or subtopics exceeded 20 since more than one topic was found in some passages.

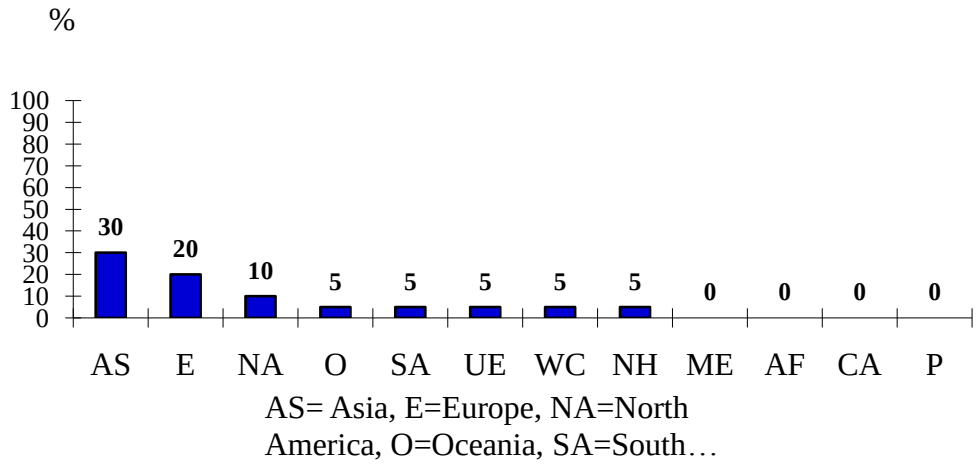
Table 1
Topics and Subtopics in the Center Tests

Topics	No. of Passages or Sentences (N: 20)
1. State of the world	**15 (75%)**
Economy	1 (5%)
Ecology	1 (5%)
Science/Technology	11 (55%)
Languages	1 (5%)
Laws	1 (5%)
2. Concrete culture	**4 (20%)**
Daily life (school life)	1 (5%))
Daily life (family life)	1 (5%)
Manners and Customs	2 (10%)
3. Conceptual culture	**2 (10%)**
Diversity of culture	2 (10%)
4. Human rights	**1 (5%)**
Racial discrimination	1 (5%)

Regions and nations

There were differences between the mention of particular regions (refer to Figure 2). Asia (30%) appeared more frequently than other regions. Following Asia, Europe (20%) and North America (10%) appeared more frequently than other regions, although the actual figures for these regions were not significantly large. On the other hand, the Middle East, Africa, Central America, and the South or North Pole did not appear at all.

Figure 2
Percentage of Regions Included in the Center Tests (N: 20)



There were also differences in the rate of mention of Japan (6 passages or 30%) (refer to Table 2). In Europe and North America, the UK (2 passages or 10%) and the U.S. (2 passages or 10%) appeared more frequently than other countries. There was no disagreement concerning regions or nations between the two analysts, and therefore the interrater agreement rate was 100%.

Table 2 Regions and Nations in the Center Tests

Regions and Nations	No. of Sentences/ Passages (N: 20)
1. Asia	6 (30.00%)
Japan	6 (30.00%)
2. Europe	4 (20.00%)
UK/Britain	2 (10.00%)
Germany	1 (5.00%)
France	1 (5.00%)
3. North America	2 (10.00%)
US	2 (10.00%)
4. South America	1 (5.00%)
Brazil	1 (5.00%)
5. Oceania	1 (5.00%)
Australia	1 (5.00%)
6. Northern Hemisphere	1 (5.00%)
7. English-Speaking Countries (unspecified)	1 (5.00%)

Discussion

The National Center Tests covered only a few of the ten major topics, and there was a significant preference for particular topics such as topics related to state of the world and its subtopic of science/technology. A possible reason for this phenomenon is that examination constructors felt that applicants should be able to comprehend passages about what is happening in the world because an important role of the English language is to collect updated information. Especially science and technology are significantly related to the progress of any society, and a large amount of information about these areas is provided in English. Furthermore, the survival of Japan heavily relies on these two fields. Thus, examination constructors might have believed that it was crucial for young Japanese people to be able to comprehend the information of science and technology in English. These may be the reasons why topics related to them were given a strong preference. Another possible reason is that only three test papers were analyzed, and therefore only limited kinds of topics could be found. If more test papers had been analyzed, more topics and subtopics might have been found.

There was also a clear preference for countries such as Japan, the U.S., and the UK, although various regions appeared in the National Center Tests. Especially Japan appeared far more frequently than any other nation. A possible reason for this phenomenon is that examination constructors believed that applicants should know about their own country, Japan, which would help them to not only express themselves to people from other countries but to also understand those people and their countries. Hashimoto (2000) claimed that internationalization in education means Japanization. Kobayashi (1995) and Tsuchida (2000) also pointed out the tendency to consider promoting international understanding and preserving Japanese tradition or culture to be seen as being identical due to too great an emphasis on the awareness of being a Japanese citizen. Consequently learning about Japanese tradition has come to mean education for internationalization (Tsuchida, 2000).

The U.S. also seemed to appear more frequently than other nations, although the frequency of its appearance is much less than that of the appearance of Japan, and therefore more National Center Test papers should be analyzed to see whether the U.S. really appears more frequently than other nations. A possible reason for the preference for the U.S. is that it has been influencing not only Japan but also the world as a whole in many ways, for example, militarily, economically, and politically. Therefore, it is essential to know what is happening in the U.S. or what that nation is doing with regards to other countries in order to grasp what is happening all over the world.

The frequency of the appearance of the UK was also much less than that of the appearance of Japan, and therefore more National Center Test papers should be analyzed to see whether the UK really appears more frequently than other nations. A possible reason for the preference of the UK over other English-speaking countries is that it is the birthplace of the English language.

The preference for the limited number of topics and nations might cause high school students and teachers to take notice of only those topics and nations, although education for international understanding is meant to include a much wider range of topics and nations. Consequently, students might be able

to deepen only a part of their international understanding. Therefore, both teachers and students need to be aware of the limitation of the Center Test in terms of topics related to education for international understanding and nations covered by the test. Based on such awareness, they should focus on a greater variety of topics and diverse nations when they teach or study English. However, those who attempt to go on to national or municipal universities need to take not only the National Center Test but also individual national/municipal university tests. Therefore, the content of these tests also has to be analyzed, and the results should be compared with the results of this study. The result of such a comparative study would indicate how both the Center Test and individual university entrance examinations should be improved.

It can be concluded that the results of this study are reliable since the interrater agreement rates for both topic and nation/region analysis were very high: 97.5% and 100% respectively. Frey, Botan, and Kreps (2000) stated that 70 % agreement is considered reliable. These high agreement rates were derived form an intensive rater training along with a solid content analysis scheme.

Conclusion

This study has revealed that there was a strong preference for limited types of topics related to education for international understanding and for particular nations in the National Center Tests administered between the years 2002 and 2004. It implies that both high school teachers and students might only take notice of topics and nations that appear in the National Center Test when they prepare for it. Consequently, students may deepen only a limited portion of their international understanding. Therefore, National Center Test constructors need to include a greater variety of topics and nations in order to have the test exercise a beneficial washback effect on high school English language education. Furthermore, an analysis of individual university tests should be conducted to get a fuller picture of the correct washback situation since applicants for national or municipal universities need to take such tests as well as the National Center Test. Objective analysis also needs to be conducted on both the Center Test and individual university tests since clear objectives are the key to the successful implementation of education for international understanding.

It is also crucial to investigate entrance examination content that teachers and/or students perceive since washback is generated by not only actual test content but also by perceived test content. If their perceptions of entrance examination content are different from the actual content, the tests cannot exercise their proper or intended washback effect.

Needless to say, entrance examination washback itself in terms of international understanding needs to be investigated: Washback on various educational aspects, such as classroom teaching, students' self-learning, teaching and learning materials, and curriculum, should be examined. Finally, in order to implement education for international understanding successfully, factors that can mediate the washback need to be specified.

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Appendix: Topics Related to Education for International Understanding for Examination Content Analysis

Major Topics	Subtopics
Life	Origin of human beings
	Birth and evolution of living creatures
	Living creatures and environments
	Structure of the Earth
Human Rights	Respect for others
	Gender equality/sexual discrimination
	Racial discrimination
	Child abuse, Social justice
	Problems of indigenous people
Concrete Culture	Daily life (e.g. food, clothing, shelter, school life, family life)
	Viewpoints and thinking patterns
	Behavioral patterns
	Manners and customs
	Stories (myths, folklores, legends)
Conceptual Culture	Relations between formation of Japanese culture and foreign culture
	Diversity and universality of culture
	Cultural relativism
	Culture shock, Identity
History	History of the Universe
	History of the Earth
	History of nations or regions
	Historical contacts between two or more nations/regions
Common Problems in the World	Poverty
	Hunger
	Diseases
	Energy
	Natural resources
	Expansion of interdependent relationships in the world /among peoples
	North-South problem
	Population
Violence and Peace	Wars
	Terrorism
	Violence
	Peace education
Organizations for International	UN (UNESCO, UNISEF)

Cooperation	NGOs
	NPOs
	ODA
State of the World	Nature
	Geography
	Economy
	Politics
	Ecology
	Technology
	Science
	Tourism/trips
	Religions
	Languages
	Flags
	Environment
	Races
	Laws
	Social structures
Communication	Verbal communication
	Non-verbal communication
	Written communication
	Intercultural communication
	Language learning/teaching

Congruity or Disparity: Teachers' Assessment of the New Palestinian English Language School Curriculum

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 189-206

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Abstract

Ongoing assessment of a language curriculum ensures its workability and sustainability and keeps the process of learning on the right track. This study aims at assessing the congruity of the new Palestinian English Language School Curriculum, which has been recently introduced, with the requirements and aspects of the most recent language teaching method i.e. the Communicative Approach. It aims at investigating the teachers' views of the various skills embodied in the contents of this curriculum, and attempts to find out whether the requirements and aspects of the communicative curriculum are taken into consideration. For this purpose a questionnaire was prepared, administered and distributed among hundred and twenty seven English language teachers representing the total population of teachers in Nablus district. The study reveals a number of encouraging results such as the reading materials in the new curriculum are interesting and appealing to the new generation and the reading component is relevant to the students' cultural background. It also revealed a big number of findings that need to be seriously looked into in the process of future evaluation and amendments of the curriculum. Finally, based on these results, a number of recommendations are provided.

Keywords: congruity, disparity, implementation, evaluation, training, communicative

Introduction and Theoretical Background

The New Palestinian English Language School Curriculum was first introduced in the year 2001. The previous English language curriculum was introduced during the Jordan era and continued to be used till the mid nineties when the Palestinian Authority came into power following the Oslo Agreement between the Palestinians and Israel. The Palestinian Authority decided to replace the old curriculum and introduce what is called now the (New Palestinian English Language School Curriculum) based on the latest language teaching and learning approach- the Communicative Approach, hence CA. The old curriculum continued to be used for over three decades. It was based on a conglomeration of old methods of teaching such as, the Direct Method, the Grammar Translation Method and the Audio-Lingual Method. A team of professionals was designated to take the responsibility in collaboration with Macmillan's. A major decision was taken to start teaching English at the government schools right from the first grade. Previously English was introduced only from the fifth grade till the high secondary which means that

the students studied English for only eight years while now they will be enjoying a privilege of four extra years.

The new curriculum has been in use now for almost eight years which means that it has been tried long enough by the teachers to be able to judge it and tell its advantages as well as the shortcomings.

Objectives of the Study

For many years the Palestinian educational system was a replica of its Jordanian counterpart. The English language school curriculum adopted what was called the Petra series for decades. When the Palestinian Authority introduced the new English curriculum, they claimed that it was entirely based on the Communicative Approach. Since then, school teachers have been complaining about a number of aspects embodied in the textbooks, indicating that these aspects are not congruent with the requirements of the so called Communicative Approach. So, the researcher decided to resort to the teachers to investigate the presence of these aspects and to pinpoint any discrepancy between what is stated as objectives for that curriculum and what is really embodied in the textbooks.

This study aims at investigating the Palestinian school teachers' attitude towards the New English Language Curriculum that has been introduced recently as a substitute to the old one. It aims to find out whether this curriculum complies with the requirements of the CA, as it was intended to be. It will also attempt to explore the feasibility of the implementation of this ambitious project in the Palestinian schools. Moreover, this study will look into all the aspects of the CA, and try to find out to what extent these aspects are present in the curriculum. Finally, this study will investigate whether all the prerequisites for the implementation of this curriculum were taken into account and whether any initial preparations necessary for that purpose were done before it was introduced.

Research Questions

This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. Does the New Palestinian English Language School Curriculum comply with the requirements of the CA?
2. Is there any significant difference in the teachers' attitude towards the compliance of the New Palestinian English Language School Curriculum with the requirements of the CA due to the qualification variable?
3. Is there any significant difference in the teachers' attitude towards the compliance of the New Palestinian English Language School Curriculum with the requirements of the CA due to the years of experience variable?
4. Is there any significant difference in the teachers' attitude towards the compliance of the New Palestinian English Language School Curriculum with the requirements of the CA due to the gender variable?

The New Palestinian English Curriculum has been recently introduced as a trial version of a Communicative Approach-based curriculum. One of the most important components of a curriculum is the teacher, and teachers' opinion in anything that concerns the process of teaching is very vital to the

success of this process. The teachers are constantly in direct contact with the textbooks, deal with the material, teach it to their students, use it for testing them, plan the lessons, evaluate their students' performance and supervise and monitor their progress. Thus, investigating their attitude towards the curriculum is a highly significant measure. It is important for forming a clear picture of the whole educational process. They are the most qualified people to judge and evaluate, to decide what is right and what is inappropriate, what is effective and what is irrelevant, what contributes to the success of the educational process and what debilitates them. Through their experience, they are capable of pinpointing the shortcomings of an educational program, evaluating its elements of strength and those of weaknesses. This research may prove significant in the sense that it will shed light on all these aspects and draw the attention of those in charge to any pitfalls in the curriculum so that they can decide whether to continue with it or terminate it, or amend and correct any defects in the system. Other non-English speaking countries and agencies, dealing with the same kind of educational venture, or intending to introduce any change into their programs, can benefit from the outcomes of such evaluation and investigation in their English language programs, especially those that deal with English as second or foreign language. Such a study is very essential to the evaluation of a curriculum that has just been introduced and it is part of the indispensable and necessary ongoing process of evaluation that should accompany any language program. The results of such an investigation can be used by the Ministry of Education as guidelines for any future amendments and for rectifying any mishaps or pitfalls in the curriculum as a whole. Textbook writers can benefit from the teachers' observations and take them into consideration in their future tasks and in the revision of the present ones.

Review of Literature

The whole issue here revolves around the congruity of the New Palestinian English School Curriculum with the requirements of the most recent and most popular and widely used method of teaching English as a foreign or second language, that is, the CA. It is worth discussing the various aspects of this approach and to try to clarify to what extent these aspects and characteristics are taken into account when this curriculum was planned, prepared and implemented.

The Communicative Approach

Galloway (1993) maintains that the CA could be the product of educators and linguists who had grown dissatisfied with the audio lingual and grammar-translation methods of foreign language instruction. They felt that students were not learning enough realistic, whole language. They did not know how to communicate using appropriate social language, gestures, or expressions; in brief they were at a loss to communicate in the culture of the language studied.

The basic principles underlying the CA are: first, it assumes that language acquisition depends not only on "exposure to environmental stimulation but also on specific innate propensities of the organism" (Hwang, 1970). Second, communicative competence, as spelt out by Widdowson (1984), implies knowledge of the grammatical system of the language as well as performance.

Third, it gives priority to the semantic content of language learning. Fourth, this approach provides communicative functions. These functions reflect more closely real life use of the language as they are connected with real situations and with students' needs and interests. Fifth, this approach shifts the focus from the teachers to the learner. (Al-Mutawa and Kailani, 1996, p. 7).

The CA has gained popularity because it is based on a continuous process of communication. In this approach, the communicative needs of the teachers are the basis on which various linguistic, thematic, or functional elements are selected. The role of the teacher here is a facilitator (Dubin and Olshtain, 1997, p. 31).

The CA aims at equipping the learner with communicative competence. For the learner, to acquire communicative competence in a second language means the acquisition of knowledge relating to linguistic form, to sociocultural appropriateness, and to native preferences for certain forms rather than others. Hamdallah (1999, p. 288) maintains that the CA emphasizes language learning through interaction, language use not usage, peer and group activities, and learning both the grammatical forms and their functions.

Littlewood (1981) states that one of the most prominent features of the communicative language teaching approach is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language. In reaction to the grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods, the communicative language teaching approach emphasizes the communicative activities that involve the real use of language in daily life situations.

Nunan (1993, p. 59) defines a communicative task as a "piece of a classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on meaning rather than form". Long and Crooks (1992:27-56) maintain that the idea is to get something done via the language, to read a text and do something with the information in conjunction with other skills: listening, speaking, or reading. Galloway (1993) maintains that the communicative language teaching makes use of real-life situations that necessitate communication. The real-life simulations change from day to day. Students' motivation to learn comes from their desire to communicate in meaningful ways about meaningful topics.

The emphasis on the importance of the communicative method in language teaching paved the way for communicative curriculum design. In spite of the differences of opinions in the definition of curriculum, there has been a consensus, among the advocates of the CA to curriculum design, about its characteristics. They all agree that the CA should embody a number of aspects which have to be taken into consideration, before, during and after the implementation of the curriculum.

Needs Analysis

Bloor (1984) maintains that a needs analysis may be "target-centered", which looks at the learners' future role and attempts to specify what language skills or linguistic knowledge the learner needs in order to perform the role adequately. It may, alternately, be "learner-centered", which examines what the learner can do at the commencement of the course, what problems s/he may have or what skills he may possess. He further points out that in order to specify an adequate teaching syllabus, it is almost certainly desirable to operate both

"target-centered" and "learner-centered" needs analysis.

An interest in learners' needs analysis and assessment reflects a participatory approach to education, "based on the belief that learners, their characteristics, backgrounds, and needs should be the center of instruction" (Fingeret and Jurmo, 1989, p. 5). Auerbach (1994) and Holt (1994) state that needs analysis and assessment for use with learners of English is a tool that specifically examines what kinds of English, native language, and literacy skills the learner already believes he or she has; the literacy contexts in which the learner lives or works; what the learner wants and needs to know to function in those contexts; what the learner expects to know from the program.

Needs assessment is a continual process and takes place throughout the instructional program (Savage, 1993), thus influencing student placement, materials selection, curriculum design, and teaching approaches (Wrigley and Guth, 1992).

At the beginning of the program, needs assessment might be used to determine appropriate program types and course content; during the program, it assures that learner and program goals are being met and allows for necessary program changing; at the end of the program, it can be used for planning the learner's and the program's future directions (Santopietro and Van Duzer, 1997). The needs analysis and assessment process can be used as the basis for developing curricula and classroom practice that are responsive to these needs (Grant and Shank, 1993).

Nunan (1994, p. 43) argues that needs analysis is a set of procedures for specifying the parameters of a course of study. Such parameters include the criteria and rationale for grouping learners, the selection and sequencing of course content, methodology, course length, and intensity and duration.

Goals and Objectives

Another important aspect of the communicative curriculum, which is closely related to needs analysis, is defining the goals and the objectives of the educational program. Almutawa and Kailani (1996, p. 5) specify a number of "general goals" and "specific objectives" that Arab students are expected to achieve after eight years of English schooling. They point out that these goals and objectives generally correspond to English language teaching aims in other Arab countries where English is also taught as a first foreign language. Cunningsworth (1984) calls for relating the teaching materials to the learners' goals and objectives. He suggests that the objectives should be decided first, in line with the overall aim of the teaching program, and then, materials should be sought which can be related to these objectives.

Suitable Methodology

The third aspect of the communicative curriculum is the choice of appropriate methodology. Stryker and Leaver (1997) maintain that instruction that emphasizes purposeful comprehension and communicative production yields superior receptive and expressive accuracy, complexity and fluency. Clipperton (1994, p. 736) argues that solution to the shortcomings in the students' productive skills seems to lie in the use of methodologies that apply techniques to practice language forms with a CA.

Richards (1987, p. 11) points out that the goal of many language teachers is to find the right method, and improvements in language teaching will come about as a result of improvements in the quality of methods and that, ultimately an effective language teaching method will be developed.

Ellis (1992) states that because "we do not have an adequate methodology for describing, analyzing or evaluating the interaction which takes place in the second language classroom, we are not able to make the second language learning and teaching processes transparent or demonstrate how second language learning takes place through the interaction." Seedhouse (1995, p. 1) argues that a unique methodology, which would be able to link pedagogical purposes to linguistic forms and patterns of interaction, needs to be developed. Such a methodology, he adds, should also be able to depict how pedagogical purposes and contexts vary between lessons and within lessons, and how varieties of communication are created as a result.

Proper Planning

The fourth aspect of communicative curriculum is curriculum planning. Hass (1980, p. 31) defines curriculum planning as "the process of gathering, sorting, balancing, and synthesizing relevant information from many sources in order to design those experiences that will assist learners in attaining the goals of the curriculum".

For Oliva (1982, p. 32), curriculum planning is the preliminary phase of curriculum development when the curriculum workers make decisions and take actions to establish the plan which teachers and students will carry out.

Beane, Toepfer, Jr. & Alessi, Jr., (1986, p. 56) state six general principles that curriculum planning involves: first, curriculum planning is concerned with the experiences of learners and its ultimate purpose is to describe or refine the learning opportunities available to students. Second, curriculum planning involves decisions about both content and process. The interrelationship between content and process accentuates the need to consider curriculum and instruction, not as distinct entities, but rather as interdependent concepts in the planning process. Third, curriculum planning involves decisions about a variety of issues and topics. It focuses on the various components of teaching-learning situations, including the selection of organizing centers or themes, and the identification of objectives, content, activities, resources, and measuring devices for teaching learning situations. In addition, curriculum planning involves decisions about some combinations of areas and issues since it is difficult to consider anyone in isolation. Fourth, curriculum planning involves many groups. It should be recognized that worthwhile contributions can be made by a number of groups and plans are often enriched as a result of varied participation. Participants in curriculum planning may include, teachers, students, administrators, coordinators, scholars, and state education personnel. It must be also recognized that the key participant in curriculum planning is the teacher who will ultimately be responsible for putting the plans into action. Fifth, curriculum planning takes place at many levels from the national to the classroom. Finally, curriculum planning is a continuous process. These include the identification of broad purposes, the definition of organizing centers, the selection of specific activities, and evaluation of programs, including recommendation for their improvement. They further maintain that planning a

curriculum without knowledge is likely to limit opportunities for learning. Without systematic curriculum planning, learning experiences may well be unconnected, disjointed, fragmented, and aimless. Careful curriculum planning is necessary to develop and maintain a continuous flow of educative experiences. It is an essential ingredient in the continuing search for excellence in education.

Implementation of the curriculum

Following the curriculum planning, the fifth aspect of the CA is the program implementation. Implementation is the employment of effective methods, techniques, and strategies to ensure the appropriate and practical use of the planned curriculum. Implementation involves the teacher, the student, and the administrator, each of them playing a role to ensure that what has been specified at the planning stage is achieved. Implementation is the monitoring of the process of program execution to ensure a full understanding and achievement of the goals and objectives set from the beginning. Cho (1998) argues that in order to ensure the appropriate implementation of a language program, there should be proper employment of effective methods and strategies.

It should be emphasized that the place where the implementation of an educational program happens is mainly in the classroom. It is the place where interaction occurs, where achievement can be felt, and where evaluation takes place. Thus, it is worthwhile to focus the attention on the three participants in the program implementation--the teacher, the student, and the administrator.

Brown (1995) emphasizes the central role the teachers and administrators played in the planning and implementation process. The administrators' role is often a political one. They are the policy makers and the program organizers. It is their responsibility to ensure the success of the educational program. Brindley (1997) says that teachers are finding themselves in the position of having to develop tools and procedures for monitoring, recording, and assessing learners' progress and achievement in the classroom. Harmer (1991, p. 235) states that the role of the teacher is a controller, assessor, organizer, prompter, participant, source, tutor, and investigator.

Dickinson (1993, p. 88) points out that "the teacher is not only involved in teaching but his work extends to more than that. He is often involved in pedagogical planning; that is, determining aims and objectives and selecting materials. He has several managerial and organizational responsibilities. In addition, the teacher has an important role in counseling and supporting the learner".

According to Ashworth (1992, p. 68) control over language teaching lies with those who have the power to decide *who* will teach *which* language to *whom, when, where,* and for *how long.* The three major components in any language-teaching classroom are students, teachers, and curriculum. Teachers and administrators are usually in control of the organization of classes and methods of instruction. She continues to say that certain students' characteristics can be changed for the better, some can be exploited for the students' advantage, some can be strengthened, but all must be taken into account remembering that students are more than the sum of their characteristics.

Program Resources

The sixth aspect of the communicative-approach-based curriculum is the program resources. In order to implement curriculum plans effectively, teachers and learners need to have a variety of resources available to them. Resources needed to support curriculum plans should be acquired when requested. In language teaching in general and in ESL/EFL teaching environment in particular, teaching resources such as media and materials are extremely necessary for facilitating effective language teaching. Ready-made teaching materials can be used as well, and if necessary, be made by the teachers and the students.

Teacher Preparation

The seventh aspect of the communicative-approach-based curriculum is the teacher training and development. The foreign language teaching profession today is faced with increasing demands and a shortage of qualified teachers. At the same time a rapidly increasing student population and the development of international standards for foreign language learning are placing a number of new demands on foreign language teachers. Curtain and Pesola (1994, p. 241) suggest that foreign language teachers today "require a combination of competencies and background that may be unprecedented in the preparation of language teachers" and that strong professional development is critical.

Thus a foreign language teacher requires, to comprehend contemporary media in the foreign language, the ability to use language in real-life context, a high level of language proficiency in all of the modalities of the target language--speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Phillips, 1991). According to Peyton (1997) foreign language teachers must maintain proficiency in the target language and stay up to date in current issues related to the target culture. Regardless of the skills and knowledge that foreign language teachers possess, maintenance and improvement must be an ongoing process.

Wang and Cheng (2005) state that teachers' involvement as well as change in teachers are both indispensable to the success of curriculum reform.

Brindley (1997) maintains that teachers are finding themselves in a position of having to develop tools and procedures for monitoring, recording, and assessing learners' progress and achievement in the classroom on a more systematic and formal basis. Brindley points out that language teachers need a wide range of skills which include: First, observing, interpreting, and documenting learners' use of language; second, designing classroom tests and tasks; third, analyzing results; fourth, providing diagnostic feedback to learners and finally, evaluate the quality of tests and the quality of learners' language performance. He continues to say that since teachers are the people who are responsible for such tasks, it is important to ensure that they have the opportunity to acquire the skills they need to conduct high quality assessment through appropriately-targeted professional development.

Kitao and Kitao (1997) state that the role of the language teacher is to help learners to learn and teachers should be trained to check to see whether all the elements of the learning process are working well for learners and to adapt them if they are not. Moreover, he has to follow the curriculum and provide, make, or choose materials, adapt them, monitor the progress and needs of the

students and finally evaluate them.

Dubin and Olshtain (1997, p. 31) state that the teacher population is the most significant factor in determining the success of a new syllabus or material. Therefore, the following factors need to be considered when evaluating teachers: First, the teacher's command of the target language; second, the teacher's training, background, level of higher education, exposure to ideas concerning the nature of language and language learning, teaching experience, and third, the teacher's attitude towards changes in the program. Dubin and Olshtain further argue that teachers who received traditional training and who have worked with rather conservative materials may not be equipped professionally or emotionally to handle modern teaching materials with a considerable amount of decision making to the teacher.

Doherty, Mangubhai, and Shearer (1996) point out that teachers should possess skills to observe, interpret, document, design, analyze, and evaluate the qualities of the tests and the learners' language performance.

Evaluation

The last and the most important aspect of the communicative-approach-based curriculum is evaluation. Brown (1989:223) defines evaluation as "the systematic collection and analysis of relevant information necessary to promote the improvement of the curriculum, and assess its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the participants' attitudes within a context of particular institutions involved".

> According to Weir and Roberts (1994, p. 4) the purpose of evaluation is to collect information systematically in order to indicate the worth or merit of a program or project. Beretta (1992, p. 144) states three reasons for evaluation; first to find whether the program was feasible; second whether the program was productive; and last whether the program was appealing.

Nunan (1994, p. 116) claims that no curriculum model would be complete without an evaluation component. While it is universally recognized as an essential part of any educational endeavor, it is the component about which most classroom practitioners generally claim the least knowledge, and is the one area of the curriculum about which many teachers express a lack of confidence. He continues to say that evaluation is not simply a process of obtaining information, but it is also a decision-making process. Furthermore, he says that any element of the curriculum process may be evaluated, as any may affect the learning progress. The principal purpose for evaluating the planned curriculum is to determine the efficacy of the planning procedures employed, and also to assess whether the content and objectives are appropriate.

For Lynch (1996, p. 9) "Program evaluation can play an essential role in the development of applied linguistics as a field of research".

Results and discussion of the Findings

Table 1
Sample distribution of the participants according to their qualifications, experience, and gender variables.

Percentage %	Frequency	Level	Variable
15.7	20	M.A and above	Qualification
37.2	93	B.A	
11.0	14	Diploma	
12.6	16	Below 5 years	Experience
41.7	53	5-10 years	
45.7	58	Above 10 years	
54.3	69	Male	Gender
45.7	58	Female	

The results presented in table no. 1 show that the number of teachers who participated in this study is 127 out of whom 20 are M.A holders, 93 B.A holders and 14 with two-year diploma degrees. Regarding their experience the majority have had above 10 years of experience. As far as their gender the table shows that 69 of them are males and 58 are females.

Table 2
Means, percentages and degrees of response to the items related to the emphasis on the oral skills.

Degree	Percentage %	Means	Item	No.
High	77.6	3.88	I feel that there is enough emphasis on the practice of the listening skill in the new English curriculum	1
High	74.0	3.70	I feel that there is enough emphasis on the practice of the speaking skill in the new English curriculum	2
High	73.2	3.66	I feel that the various skills are proportionately distributed	3
Moderate	68.8	3.44	I feel that the new curriculum contributes well to the students' knowledge, performance and standard in English	4
Moderate	69.6	3.48	I feel that the curriculum promotes the students' critical thinking skills	5
Moderate	64.2	3.21	The new curriculum encourages students to develop their own learning strategies and independence in learning	6
High	71.2	3.56	Total	

Note. Maximum response is (5) points

The results presented in table no. 2 reveal that there is enough emphasis

on the practice of both the listening as well as the speaking skills. The degree of response to items 4 and 5 is moderate. This implies that the participants feel that the new curriculum doesn't contribute well enough to the development of the students' knowledge, performance and standard in English; doesn't promote the students' critical thinking skills. Finally the degree of response to item no. 6 indicates the new curriculum doesn't encourage the students to develop their own learning strategies and independence in learning. Thus, it doesn't enhance their learning autonomy which is considered very effective in learning as stated by Sert (2006), who says that increased awareness of autonomous learning and its benefits will enhance the students' own self-governing capacity which may in turn, contribute to higher achievement and motivation. Defel (2007) says that autonomous leaning is more effective than non-autonomous learning. In other words, the development of autonomy implies better language learning.

Table 3
Means, percentages and degrees of response to the items related to the contents of the written skills.

Degree	Percentage %	Means	Item	No.
Moderate	61.6	3.08	The new English curriculum has enough reading material	7
High	79.4	3.97	I find the reading material in the new curriculum interesting and appealing to the new generation	8
High	74.4	3.72	I find the reading component relevant to the students cultural background	9
Moderate	69.6	3.48	The writing part is given enough attention in the curriculum	10
Low	55.4	2.77	The students find the material in the new curriculum easy to handle and understand	11
High	71.8	3.59	The material presented in the textbooks is authentic and related to the students' real life situations	12
Very High	81.6	4.08	I feel that the new curriculum is bulky and not easy to finish in the time allocated for that	13
High	73.4	3.67	Total	

The results presented in table no. 3 reveal that the reading material in the new curriculum is not adequate. On the other hand, the participants state that the reading material is interesting and appealing to the new generation. In addition, they feel that the reading component is relevant to the students' cultural background. In response to item no. 10, the participants reveal that the writing part is not given enough attention. Moreover the results show that the students do not find the material in the new curriculum easy to handle and understand, but it is authentic and related to the students' real life situations.
Pèrez (2004) claims that the opportunity for communication in authentic situations and settings is a major factor for language acquisition. In response to

item no. 13, the participants show that the new curriculum is bulky and not easy to complete in the time allocated for that.

Table 4
Means, percentages and degrees of response to the items related to the methodology.

Degree	Percentage %	Means	Item	No.
High	74.2	3.71	The textbooks have good grammar presentations and practice	14
Moderate	60.6	3.03	The textbooks have good vocabulary explanation and practice	15
High	72.4	3.62	The writing part is presented appropriately and gradually	16
High	78.6	3.93	The teachers' book clarifies thoroughly the methods to handle the material	17
Low	57.6	2.88	The school is equipped with enough and suitable audio-visual aids to teach the various skills	18
High	72.6	3.63	Total	

The results in this table indicate that the participants are, to a far extent, satisfied with the grammar, and writing presentations and practice in the textbooks. On the other hand, they feel that the textbooks don't have good vocabulary explanations and practice. The response to item no. 17 shows that the teacher's book clarifies thoroughly the methods to handle the material. Finally, the majority have indicated that the schools are not well equipped with suitable audio-visual teaching aids to help teach the various skills.

Table 5
Means, percentages and degrees of the response to the items related to the teacher training.

Degree	Percentage %	Means	Item	No.
Moderate	67.4	3.37	I feel that the teachers are capable of handling the writing part properly	19
Moderate	60.2	3.01	The teachers received enough training on how to handle the new English curriculum	20
High	76.6	3.83	I enjoy teaching the new English curriculum	21
Moderate	69.8	3.49	I feel that the teachers are qualified to handle the listening and reading parts properly	22
Moderate	68.6	3.43	Total	

In response to item no. 19 the participants indicate that they are not fully qualified and capable of handling the writing component properly. They also reveal that they didn't receive enough training on how to handle the

material in the new textbooks. In spite of that, their response to item no. 21 is highly positive and they indicate that they enjoy teaching the new curriculum.

Table 6
Means, percentages and degrees of response to the items related to planning and evaluation.

Degree	Percentage %	Means	Item	No.
High	75.0	3.75	The objectives of the curriculum are stated clearly and in advance	23
Moderate	67.4	3.37	I feel the curriculum is based on proper market needs analysis and assessment	24
Moderate	68.0	3.40	The new English curriculum has proper evaluation of the methods of teaching	25
Moderate	60.6	3.03	Since the introduction of the new curriculum evaluation of the textbooks is carried out regularly	26
Moderate	65.8	3.29	The curriculum provides proper methods to assess the students' performance and achievement	27
Moderate	67.4	3.37	Total	

In response to item no. 23, 75.0% of the participants indicated that the objectives of the curriculum are clearly stated and in advance. Stating the objectives in advance is one of the prerequisites and main aspects of a well-planned curriculum. The degree of response to item 24 is moderate where 67.4% of the participants feel that the curriculum was based on proper needs analysis and assessment of the market and real life demand. Responding to item 25, 68% of the participants stated that the new curriculum has proper evaluation of the methods of teaching and 66.6% only stated that evaluation of the textbooks is carried out regularly and 65.8 % only stated that the curriculum provides proper methods to assess the students' performance. Evaluation of the methodology, the textbook materials, the students' achievement and the teachers' performance is an inseparable and indispensable part of a successful curriculum.

Table 7
Ranking of domains contributing to the congruity or disparity between the contents of the curriculum and the requirements of the CA.

Degree	Percentage %	Means	Domain	Rank
High	71.2	3.56	Methodology	3
High	73.4	3.67	Emphasis on the oral skills	1
High	72.6	3.63	Contents of the written skills	2
Moderate	68.6	3.43	Teacher training	4
Moderate	67.4	3.37	Planning and evaluation	5
High	70.6	3.53	Total	

The results presented in the table above show that the degree of response to the

items in the various domains is high for domains 1, 2, and 3 but the degree is moderate for domains 4 and 5.

Table 8
Means of congruity or disparity between teachers' assessment of the new Palestinian English Curriculum and the requirements of the CA.

Std.	Means	Level	Variable
.53	3.37	M.A and above	Qualification
.49	3.56	B.A	
.44	3.60	Diploma	
.30	3.37	Less than 5 years	Experience
.46	3.51	5-10 years	
.56	3.59	More than 10 years	
.47	3.53	Male	Gender
.52	3.54	Female	

Table 9
Results of ANOVA according to the qualification and experience variables.

Sig.	Fr	Means	Df	Sum	Source	Variable
.255	1.38	0.33	2	0.67	Between groups	Qualification
		0.24	124	30.43	Within groups	
			126	31.10	Total	
0.28	1.26	0.31	2	0.622	Between groups	Experience
		0.24	124	30.48	Within groups	
			126	31.10	Total	
.940	.006	1.39	1	1.39	Between groups	Gender
		.249	125	31.10	Within groups	
			126	31.10	Total	

The results presented in table 9 show that there are no significant differences at $p = .05$ in relation to the congruity or disparity between the teachers' assessment of the contents of the new Palestinian English Curriculum and the requirements of the CA according to the qualification, experience and gender variables.

Conclusion

After this thorough discussion of the aspects underlying the CA and the discussion of the findings revealed as a result of the teachers' responses to the items on the questionnaire, it is obvious that the new English language curriculum conforms in principle to only some of the aspects of the CA. it is quite clear that the curriculum was introduced hastily without taking into consideration that such a curriculum needs a lot of preparation, appropriate equipment, proper and adequate teacher training to handle the various skills

and activities. Moreover, the results show that the new curriculum does not contribute much to the students' knowledge, performance and standard in English. The material is bulky and not easy to cover in the time allocated for that. In addition, the participants felt that the new curriculum does not promote the students' critical thinking skills nor does it encourage the students to develop their own learning strategies and independence in learning. On the other hand, there are some encouraging results, such as firstly, the teachers find the curriculum interesting and appealing to the new generation. Secondly, the reading component is relevant to the students' cultural background. Thirdly, the material presented in the new curriculum is authentic and related to the students' real life experience. Fourthly, it has good grammar exercises and the teachers expressed satisfaction with the writing component and they stated they enjoy teaching the new curriculum.

Recommendations

After this thorough discussion of the various aspects of the CA and the findings revealed in this study, the following recommendations can be provided:

1. Based on the results revealed in item no. 1 of the questionnaire, the participants stated that there is enough emphasis on the listening skill in the curriculum. On the other hand, the majority of the participants indicated that there are not enough audio-visual aids to teach the various skills, especially the listening. So, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education should have, from the beginning, taken this fact into account and tried to provide schools with enough necessary equipment to help make the educational process easier and to aspire for a better outcome in this respect.

2. If the Ministry of Education, in the first place, was aware of the fact that they cannot afford to provide all schools with such expensive audio-visual equipment, then they should have instructed the writers of the curriculum not to place so much emphasis on the listening activities and replace them with activities that do not require such equipment and at the same time, foster the listening through hand-made aids or simple cassette recorders, posters, stickers and so on.

3. It is recommended that, if any amendment is planned in the near future, activities and exercises that promote the students' critical thinking and creative thinking skills be embodied in the textbooks.

4. The curriculum should contain material, activities and tasks that enhance the students' independence and autonomy in learning and make them take more responsibility for their own learning activities.

5. The curriculum should embody more reading tasks and more material that fosters the reading habit.

6. There is not enough emphasis on the writing component. It is recommended that writing should be given more attention and be taught in a correct systematic way.

7. The curriculum, as stated by the participants is quite bulky and ambitious and not easy to cover in the allotted time. Thus, it is recommended that the curriculum be reviewed and certain activities which can be dispensed with should be removed from the syllabus.

8. It is recommended that less emphasis should be placed on teaching grammar in the explicit and conventional way. Instead, grammar should be taught implicitly and within contexts taken from real situations.

9. It is recommended that vocabulary exercises be directed towards teaching vocabulary for fluency and usage purposes and not in the conventional old translation method with lists of words and their meanings in Arabic given to the students to memorize.

10. Grammar and vocabulary exercises could be merged together for the maximum benefit of using words in grammatically sound sentences and contexts.

11. In response to item no. 11 in the questionnaire, only 55.6% of the participants indicated that the contents in the curriculum are easy for the students to handle and understand. When a revision is made of this curriculum, the committee and the curriculum writer should revise the areas of difficulties and try to find a solution for this issue if they find that it poses a problem for the students and affects their level of achievement and performance.

12. It is recommended that the teachers should be given enough training on how to handle the various skills and how to do the various activities to ensure maximum benefit and smooth teaching process.

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A Case Study of an In-class Silent Postgraduate Chinese Student in London Metropolitan University: a Journey of Learning

TESOL Journal
Vol. 2, pp. 207-214

http://www.tesol-journal.com

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Introduction

As headmaster of Tuha Petroleum Foreign Language School, Xinjiang, PR, China, I used to be engaged in the forms of inquiry that were to a large degree located within schools and classrooms. Most unforgettably, I constantly heard the complaints from the foreign teachers teaching Oral English in my school, regarding "the silent Chinese learners". This did not catch my attention until I was asked to reflect on what I had not noticed before by Fiona English, a lecturer of Intercultural Perspectives on Academic Writing and Research, as one of the research themes. In the process of conscious reflection I have come to realize that I was an in-class silent postgraduate student.

I was silent in the classroom, seldom asking questions or joining class discussion voluntarily. Unless called upon personally to respond to a question or required to do a presentation, I have done minimal class participation. However, such silence in class was far from what I had desired. In fact, I was often upset and frustrated by the fact that a range of negative feelings such as anxiety, depression, inferiority and loss of confidence associated with my low level of participation. I felt bad because I had the feeling that I was being left out of the class, and was not able to endure it, exposed completely to an English-speaking environment with one hundred percent of the students from outside the UK.

Given the differences in historical, geographical, linguistic, and cultural background of Chinese students and the international peers in the classroom teaching and learning settings in London Metropolitan University, the marked difference in these students' in-class behaviours has engaged my attention and that of another Chinese student, who shared her views on the University's WebCT at the beginning of the term. In the current learning environment, Chinese students have been largely depicted as passive recipients and quiet learners, appearing reluctant to adopt active roles in classroom discussions. Jan Bamford, Tim Marr, Gary Pheiffer and Inge Weber-Newth (2002) cited Woodrow & Sham (2001) stating, "Chinese students have displayed a preference for working alone rather than in groups; they tend not to like asking questions, and to set little value by peer-group discussion." This silent in-class behaviour is also interpreted as a barrier to the fostering of good learning practice, as participation is viewed as an activity that develops independent learning skills and the ability to apply knowledge (Sivan, Leung, Woon, &

Kember, 2000).

In the paper, through the narrative analysis of my personal experiences I have developed my view into: 1) 'waking up' those passive learners mainly from mainland China; and 2) equipping teaching staff with better information, and better skills to deal with, to match their teaching with those silent learners effectively.

In the paper, the word 'I' is used to mean a Chinese postgraduate student, studying International ELT & Sociolinguistics in London Metropolitan University, whose cultural background has firmly rooted in Confucianism. Believably the quoted examples of 'mine' are the ones existing largely in the Chinese students studying in the UK.

In the paper, the word "silent" is not merely defined as an individual decision not to speak. It is explained as classroom processes in which "my" own characteristics interacts with classroom contexts to bring about their reluctance to participate, despite opportunity to do so.

A Brief Review to the In-class Silence of Chinese Students

From the required readings of Intercultural Perspectives on Academic Writing and Research on the WebCT and from some of the books on the reading-list, I have known that the silent in-class behaviour of Chinese students is by no means new or limited to the UK classes.

Jackson (2002) found that Chinese students were commonly concerned about their ability to express their thought in English. Their low proficiency in English had been associated with reduced confidence in the ability to participate orally in classroom discussion. Liu and Littlewood (1997) found most Chinese students were accustomed to minimal speaking opportunities at school, where 'listen to teacher' had been their most frequent classroom experience. As well, these students' perceptions about acceptable behaviours in the classroom were influenced by the cultural meanings of appropriate participation.

Confusion heritage culture has been frequently cited by many researchers for explaining Chinese students' apparent passivity and reticence in the classroom (Spizzica, 1997). Influenced by the Confucian values, for instance, Chinese students were characterized as generally quiet in class and less likely to question or challenge their teachers. Educated by the Confucian pedagogies, Chinese students preferred didactic and teacher-centred style of teaching and would show great respect for the wisdom and knowledge of their teachers (Kirkbride & Tang 1999). Carson & Nelson (1996) found that Chinese international students engaged in extensive self-monitoring to avoid criticizing or disagreeing with the work and perspectives of their peers. Consistent with Confucian 'maxims of modesty', for instance, Chinese students prefer less frequent participation and brief responses in class so as to avoid dominating the discussion and to avoid being labelled as a 'show-off' by their Chinese peers (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). Remaining silent is one strategy used by Chinese students to avoid the awkwardness associated with disagreement and, thus, maintain harmonious relationships with others (Ho & Crookall, 1995; Jackson, 2002).

However, only placing emphasis on the English language barrier and cultural differences, without considering aspects of the UK educational contexts or the UK educational culture may simplify the underlying silence of the

students in their classrooms. Seen the increasing number of international students from Mainland China to the universities in the UK, it is important to understand how their differences in socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds interact with aspects of the UK educational contexts or culture to shape their learning experiences.

Watch me: Self-reported and Analysed Silence in the Classroom
Case one: language hurdles and their influence

My level of English proficiency was identified as a primary barrier to my classroom participation. For instance, in 1999, sponsored by the British Council and the IATEFL Headquarters, I was invited to attend the 33rd IATEFL Annual Conference held in the Heriot-watt University in Edinburgh. During the 4-day conference, I had great difficulty in understanding most of the presentations, and could not fully be involved in the plenary discussion and the SIG (the special interest group) discussion and it was very hard for me to take notes, respond to questions and so forth.

Specifically, feeling nervous for lack of language competence was my frequent experience. For instance, I sweated a lot when I was doing my presentation on *Linguistic Human Rights and English Teachers* written by Skutnabb-Kangas in the year of 2000 for the core course: Sociolinguistics, even if I thoroughly read the article and fully understood the article and did lots of research on the related readings in the British Library. But still my heart was beating rapidly in the presentation stage. I felt pressured by the possibility that my English might not be understood by others and felt awkward in understanding the English spoken by the group mates in the discussion of the questions raised at the end of my presentation.

Usually I hesitated to join class discussions, worrying that I would be unable to deal with the possible conflicts or misunderstandings occurring during conversations. The challenges of English communication confronting me were also accompanied by a sense of incompetence. I was concerned about how my lecturers would react to my English proficiency, and this appeared to influence my decision-making about classroom participation.

Brick and Louie (1994) viewed that Chinese students typically regarded correctness as a highly desirable quality. Hence, they feared appearing foolish by making mistakes as simple as grammar or pronunciation imperfections if they actively participated in class, as these could have significant consequences for them, such as being laughed at by friends and classmates. The difficulty in expressing oneself in another language seems common among Chinese students abroad, and is brought forward as a more likely cause of lack of participation relative to other 'external' factors. Lack of language competence may also negatively influence self-esteem, and hence limit in-class participation (Watkins, 1996). Impeded participation due to language difficulties also emerges from interviews with Chinese and other international students themselves in research directed towards relieving their problems while at university (Lee, 1997).

The above insights from the related literature briefly summarised give me a better understanding of the complexity surrounding a relatively simple behaviour self-observed in class (**silence!**).

Case two: lack of basic understanding of the UK educational context as well as

the UK educational culture and knowledge base

I had never been asked to do any presentation in my home country from my primary school till the completion of the BA study. Instead I have attended countless examinations or tests, which have been adopted as the unique super-powerful tool of evaluation and assessment in China for hundreds of years. I had difficulty in giving my first presentation (mentioned above), largely because I was not familiar with the presentational format and approach as well as the language barrier, and thus I did not know 'how to do it' or 'what is the appropriate way to do it'. Similarly, I found it difficult to discuss questions with my peer students, because I was not sure to what extent I should discuss the issue raised in the article, whether they would like to be questioned in that way, or whether they had time to discuss questions with me. The confusion caused by the lack of the background knowledge basis impeded my understanding of the criteria of a good presentation and limited my ability to respond to it properly.

Since I was a school pupil, I have been taught to take the classroom teachings very seriously and behaved formally and well. It was easy to see that the peers in my class seemed to participate causally in class. They looked relaxed, they cut in the discussions any time, and they said whatever they wanted to say and so on. In contrast, I tended to consider carefully my ideas or questions and the reactions each time before I raised my hand and got the lecturer' permission and spoke out. Lots of times, I thought that if I asked questions in the process of the lecturer's professing, I would bother others, and my questions could slow down the class schedule, or might not interest other students. In most of the schools in China, "four ups" (hand up, stand up, speak up, and shut up) has always been encouraged to be remembered by students. Simultaneously, when you answer questions in class, teachers would comment on your answers, like it is good or bad.... So, as students, you would evaluate your answers before you speak out. If you didn't answer correctly, you wouldn't be that confident later. However after my 2-month close observation of my peers and that of lecturers' response in the classroom, this turned out not to be a problem.

Sometimes I was afraid of losing face in front of others because of my confusions. 'Face or *mianzi'* (Mianzi Culture) the regard in which one is held by others or the light in which one appears, is vitally important to the Chinese student. Causing someone to lose face, publicly or in front of their classmates through criticizing, failing to treat with respect, a fit of anger, or other insulting behaviour results in a loss of cooperation and even, in extreme occasions, with subtle retaliation against the professor months after the original action transpired (Liu & Littlewood, 1997).

Chinese students are seen by many commentators to be governed by the fundamental rules of "respect for superiors" and "loyalty and filial piety", with Confucianism as the central element of Chinese identity. In Chinese culture the ideal educator is a benevolent autocrat, much like the father of a small child who may be kind but in the end "always knows best." Students expect to be told what to do, and it is not uncommon to have Chinese teachers lecture one hundred percent out of the book. This educational structure is reinforced by a deeply embedded cultural and historical emphasis on examinations as a prerequisite for promotion. The traditional response of Chinese students is to

concentrate only on memorizing the material -- without questions, speaking up, or discussion (Chan, 1999).

Influenced forcibly by the traditional Chinese culture, and the total lack of basic appreciation of the UK educational contexts as well as the UK educational culture and knowledge base, I seemed to be a clumsy oaf in the class. Moreover, my personal unfamiliarity with peer students in class was often identified as an important element that could inhibit me to be involved in the classroom participation. Sitting in a large class in which we did not know one another was thought of as cause of pressure, because I worried about how I would be perceived by my classmates, influencing my lack of classroom participation. I did believe that interacting with peer students outside the classrooms would enhance knowledge of one other's and increase comfort in communication, indirectly improving my performance in the classroom. Lots of times, I have failed to have a natural communication with them in the break time.

Case three: indigenous knowledge sharing in the classroom

Several times, I confronted 'no response' situations in class, feeling uncomfortable sharing my ideas related to China in class. Before my peers could really understand what I was saying, they just changed the topic. If this happened just once or twice, I would not give up. Since I figured out how many times and why my peers and sometimes lecturers had little interest in what I shared in class, I began to think and rethink of the value of Chinese knowledge and the relationship between different forms of knowledge in the UK educational contexts. Very often, I thought I was not understandable, since I felt that they were far more interested in Chinese life habits such as Chinese food than in my working experiences in China. It seemed that from the second week of this semester, I had nothing to talk about. Subconsciously I persisted in that because the backgrounds of the students were different, they could not follow my ideas, and follow my perspectives. If I were asked to talk about the indigenous knowledge, I could only talk about something very superficial.

Lack of recognition and familiarity from the lecturers or peer students for the distinctive knowledge and perspective made meaningful sharing and discussion of Chinese knowledge difficult (Deng & Liu 1999). Sometimes, I felt like cross talking. I knew what I was talking about, but they were talking about other things. The unfamiliarity of peer students or lecturers with Chinese society, knowledge and culture also limited their ability to respond to and engage in discussion and thus discouraged my attempt to exchange cross-cultural information of knowledge.

The existing stereotypes and misconception about China and Chinese society sometimes impeded the ability of the peer students and of lecturers respond to me in culturally sensitive ways. I was annoyed by fixed and homogenous of China and Chinese society from them. If I said something different from their expectations, it was kind of like very unhappy. My repeated experiences of failure in sharing indigenous knowledge contributed to my silence in the classroom.

Illustrating these experiences of my two-month journey of learning in the UK, I have come to recognize the differences among the international students in my class. Within the classroom settings, to some degree, the perceived

devaluation of Chinese knowledge from peer students resulted in or reinforced my continued silence in the classroom.

Despite various constraints, my critical thinking about the indigenous knowledge sharing experiences can also be understood as a resistance to the hegemonic knowledge systems and pedagogies in the classroom. The collaboration among the peer students are required within or without the classroom settings, not unilateral and unidirectional but multilateral and bidirectional process.

As a Chinese postgraduate student, I can self-identify the silent self, and I hope to provide such information that will enrich the notion of 'diversity' and move towards the co-construction of a more inclusive learning environment.

Sometimes I thought if I had just graduated from university and immediately come here, that would have been much easier.... But everything here has been like a new world. As an adult student with very-long-time working experience and a more fixed way of thinking, to survive in the new educational environment, therefore, I had to acquiesce to presenting mainstream in order to fulfill academic requirements. I was always joking with myself, saying I was being brainwashed now and then.

Challenges: Re-recognition of the Traditional Chinese Learning Way

Historically the traditional Chinese learning way can be traced to the Confucian concept of education - a process based on rote learning: memorizing endless books and taking examinations over the contents. This has created more passive Chinese students with an incredible mastery of the memorization process but without the richness of application, internalization, or in-class dialogue.

From a cultural point of view there are two major reasons that Chinese students do not engage in interactive learning. The primary reason is due to their high authority, hierarchical society in which lower status students are the passive recipients of one-way communication from higher status lecturers or professors. A closely related secondary reason is that in the Chinese culture, questions or challenges from students may possibly cause a loss of face, for instance, if the professor does not know the answer or else can appear too direct and confrontational, risking the harmony of the group (Deng & Liu, 1999).

"When in Rome, do as Romans do." This is a famous English proverb telling us the intercultural awareness is especially important. Lack of cultural knowledge affects one's comprehension negatively. In the accordance with the saying**,** instead of being told what to think, as a postgraduate student in the UK, I am ready to come up with my own solutions to large verities of problems unthought-of. The most important thing worth mentioning is that I have had the willingness to switch off the passive learning behaviour and to match my learning with that required in the UK educational contexts!

China is in a period of transition, with the previous system of management education gradually being replaced by a new one. The old system is dissolving, but has not disappeared. Replacing the traditional paradigm will be a lengthy and patient undertaking and painstaking. However, as headmaster of a leading school in Xinjiang, PR, China, I myself must be with the transition. As a result, when I complete my MA and return to my school, I will manage to change the teachers' classroom behaviour and reform the students' learning ways, developing their competence of critical thinking. "Five Changes" is to be

carried out:

1. Change the top-down communication into the side-by-side communication;
2. Change the covert student feedback into the overt student feedback;
3. Change the ascribed teacher status into the achieved teacher status;
4. Change the autocratic teaching style into the democratic teaching style;
5. Change the relationship oriented into the task oriented.

Hopeful Expectation

The main lesson from the two-month experiences studying in the London Metropolitan University is that my in-class silence does not signal a fault of a teacher, but a difference that may be dealt with ad hoc techniques. Deng & Liu (1999) stated, "Facing heterogeneous international students requires the lecturers to be more alert than in the case of a class that is uniform, culturally, ideologically or otherwise, but it does not automatically lead to a loss in teaching effectiveness. Teaching and learning objectives can be maintained but they might be achieved through a number (as opposed to a single) communication and interaction routes." Banner (2003) recommended the lecturers teaching the international students "...not to forget that the student, who is sitting quiet in your classroom, not making eye contact, not venturing opinions, might well be exhibiting the positive characteristics of an excellent student in his or her culture. Make sure in your teaching that you take into account the needs of the quiet students as well as the noisy, demanding, responsive one." This sounds challenging for lecturers. However, this is particularly true of lecturers to be aware of the fact that when tensions and confrontations arise in a multi-cultural environment due to assumptions as to what constitutes appropriate behaviour in a given context.

The above personal experience can directly inform those with stimulus, who have been silent in class of how invaluable the passive participation has served them in many ways in the past and now. To some extent, it can benefit the international students, as it might make them more aware of aspects of their own culture as well as the new culture that they have entered and merged into. I hope that it will benefit the international education as well.

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TESOL Journal Special Issue on *Globalization and TESOL in Asia*

Call for Papers

TESOL Journal invites academics, researchers, educators, and teachers to its special issue entitled *Globalization and TESOL in Asia* to be published in June 2011. With the emergence of critical theory and cultural studies in TESOL scholarship, the field has diversified and has started to consider the local and global forces and tensions that influence the practice of English language teaching in different parts of the world. This is greatly felt in Asia as there are cultural, social, and political influences that compel scholars to look into the intricacies and nuances that manifest in our language classrooms.

Given the diverse areas of TESOL such as methodology, technology, materials and test design and teacher training, language policy and planning, and psychology of language acquisition and learning and the goals of the Journal, submissions are welcome on the following areas:

1. The impact of globalization on the TESOL profession in Asia
2. The clash between global forces and local norms and its manifestations in TESOL-related practices
3. The search of Asian identity in TESOL
4. The impact of technology in English language instruction in Asian educational systems
5. The notion of Asian values and ideologies in English language teaching
6. The social, political, and cultural assumptions underlying TESOL practices in Asia

The deadline of submission is on October 25, 2010. Proposals, which should have not been submitted elsewhere, may be sent as e-mail attachments to the Guest Editor, Paolo Nino Valdez, paolo.valdez@dlsu.edu.ph. Attachments should include the following details:

Name Author/s
Position/Affiliation
E-mail Address
3-5 Key Words

Out of the proposals anonymously reviewed, a number shall be notified to submit full papers on December 31, 2010. Note that the selection at this stage does not guarantee publication. Authors shall be notified as regards results of the review on February 28, 2011. Full papers should be around 5,000-7,500 words in length and conform to the writing style prescribed in the latest edition of APA Publication Manual. The selected papers for publication incorporating suggestions made by the reviewers need to be submitted on April 1, 2011.

For questions, send inquiries to Paolo Valdez using the aforementioned e-mail address.