KOTESOL Proceedings 2018

Focus on Fluency

Proceedings of the
26th Korea TESOL International Conference
Seoul, Korea, October 13—14, 2018

Korea Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
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Published by Korea TESOL
KOTESOL Publications Committee Chair: James Kimball

◇◇

Layout/Design: Mijung Lee, Media Station **Printing**: Myeongjinsa

For information on this or other Korea TESOL publications, as well as inquiries on membership and advertising contact us at:

koreatesol.org or **publications@koreatesol.org**

ISSN: 1975-7220 (Online) Price: 10,000 KRW / 10 USD. (Free to Members)

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Foreword

Focus on Fluency: That was the theme of the 2018 KOTESOL International Conference, held on October 13–14, 2018, at Sookmyung University Seoul. In total, there were over 200 presentations and workshops given during the two-day conference, including notable plenary sessions by Stephen Krashen and Scott Thornbury. Also contributing to our lineup were six featured speakers and a panel discussion. And of course, hundreds of teachers and researchers gave presentations, workshops, and demonstrations. In sum, KOTESOL's lineup of presenters aimed to support KOTESOL's mission of improving ELT in Korea, many speaking to the elusive concept of fluency in its various forms and contexts. Here in this volume of *KOTESOL Proceedings 2018* are 38 papers written by our invited speakers and conference presenters from around the world.

Fluency is not that easy to define. Ask ten teachers or researchers, and you are likely to receive ten similar but not quite the same answers. Synonyms may come to mind: naturalness, effortlessness, eloquence, articulation, etc. But something is missing. Within these pages, conference presenters elaborate on some of the nuances that fill in the gaps to paint a more detailed and delicate picture of fluency. Stephen Krashen writes about the difference in rates of acquisition, outlining optimal conditions. In short, he champions the comprehension hypothesis and the benefits of reading for pleasure. Scott Thornbury focuses on seven key terms, all starting with the letter "A," and calls for the use of new metaphors for language development. Stephen Herder illustrates just how difficult it is to pin down the meaning of *fluency* and offers tips for integrating fluency as part of a balanced approach to skills development. Jennifer Book tackles pronunciation as a lingua franca and considers the intelligibility of interactions while calling for realistic goals and the acceptance of variations in pronunciation. In addition to papers from plenary and featured speakers, 34 conference presenters have contributed to this volume of papers, adding to the body of knowledge of ELT in the Korean context and beyond.

It is with great pleasure that we offer these conference papers in this volume of *KOTESOL Proceedings 2018*. We are grateful to all our contributors who have written summaries of their presentations collected in this volume. There is undoubtedly something here for everyone. We hope that you enjoy reading these papers, and moreover, that you find much that resonates with you in your teaching context.

Jake Kimball & David Shaffer
Editors-in-Chief

KOTESOL Proceedings 2018

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Proceedings of the 26th Korea TESOL International Conference

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Plenary Session Papers

Is There a "Fast Track" to Second Language Acquisition? Do Some People Have Special Talents for Language Acquisition?

Stephen Krashen
University of Southern California

> "The duration and intensity of activity in a language is what is crucial, not a mystic gift for languages." — Lomb Kato, polyglot (Lomb, 2016, p. 77)

INTRODUCTION

Many seem to accept the hypothesis that some people are gifted for language acquisition and acquire second languages more easily and rapidly than the rest of us. We often hear statements like "I'm no good at languages" among friends, and the idea of a special language talent is common even among professionals in language education.

I discovered this when I was in Hungary in 1996, teaching a short course at the university in Pecs. Thanks to one of my students, I met Dr. Lomb Kato, a famous polyglot who did not grow up bilingual, but eventually spoke 17 languages, acquired them all as an adult, and rarely traveled to countries where the languages were spoken. I visited her several times.

Eager to show off, I casually mentioned to my colleagues, professors at various Hungarian universities, that I had been hanging out with Lomb Kato, expecting them to be impressed. Not so. The universal reaction was dismissal: "Oh, she's just different, her brain is different ... there are people like that."

To my knowledge, none of them had met her or had read her book (Lomb, 2016), in which she describes the amazing amount of effort and time she put into language acquisition. And none of my colleagues provided any kind of description or explanation of super language acquirers. They were uninterested in even speculating as to what about their brains was different.

My goal in this paper is to begin discussion on how we can deal with this question of whether there is a difference in rate of attainment in second languages among people, whether some people have a "fast track" to language acquisition. A reasonable way of approaching this is to ask whether there is a difference if optimal conditions for language acquisition are present. Only then can we see our real potential for second language acquisition.

OPTIMAL CONDITIONS

I assume here that optimal conditions for second language acquisition include the presence of a great deal of highly comprehensible, compelling (extremely interesting), and rich input (Krashen, Lee, & Lao, 2017; Mason, 2018; Mason & Krashen, 2019).

One form of optimal input is self-selected reading. When reading is self-selected it has, of course, a very good chance of being comprehensible and interesting, and often contains a great deal of language. In voluntary, self-selected reading (Krashen, 2011), there is no obligation to finish the book or story, and there are no comprehension questions or book reports. The reader reads the text because the reader actually wants to.

An Opportunity to Study Individual Variation

In Mason and Krashen (2017), acquirers of English as a foreign language in Japan completed basic English classes with Dr. Beniko Mason. The classes consisted of story listening (Mason, 2019) and reading graded readers. At the end of the term, several of the students requested Dr. Mason's assistance in helping them continue to improve in English, and she agreed to help them find reading material. In return, they agreed to take alternate forms of the TOEIC test (a standardized test of English reading and writing) and record what and how much they read. No book reports of any kind were requested. The readers ranged in age from 21 to 78, and their logs described their reading over time periods from 22 to 162 weeks.

On the basis of an analysis of the student logs and TOEIC scores, Mason and Krashen (2017) reported that those who reported doing more self-selected reading made more progress on the TOEIC examination (r = .94 between gains and hours reported spent reading), consistent with the hypothesis that comprehensible input is the cause of language acquisition and literacy development. The average subject gained .6 points on the TOEIC examination for every hour of reading done (standard deviation = .20). This predicts that if a subject read two hours a day for one year, there would be a gain of over 200 points on the TOEIC.

The correlation between hours of reading and gains remained very high when pretest scores were controlled (r = .92). Some subjects engaged in other activities in addition to reading: test preparation, vocabulary study, and listening to the radio. None of these activities had any significant impact on TOEIC gains (Krashen & Mason, 2015). Also of interest is that age was not a predictor of efficiency; the correlation between age and gains per hour of reading was not significant and close to zero (r = .037). This agrees with the results of multivariate studies; when comprehensible input in the form of pleasure reading is included as a predictor of second language proficiency, other predictors typically have no effect (Gradman & Hanania, 1991; Lee, 2005; Stokes, Krashen, & Kartchner, 1998).

Of interest to us is that subjects did not read exactly the same books, as described in Table 1. There was some overlap, however, and all read primarily fiction.

Table 1. What They Read

Reader	Reading Materials
Shinjiro	Graded readers and books for young adults.
Okada	Books for young adults (e.g., books by Judy Blume) and easy best sellers.
Kenta	Graded readers and other books (e.g., *The Giver*, Harry Potter series, books by Judy Blume).
Kashihara	Graded readers and other books for young adults (e.g., Harry Potter series) and bestsellers.
Tanaka	Graded readers and books for young adults (e.g., Marvin Redpost series, books by Judy Blume and Louis Sachar) and young adult bestsellers (e.g., *Twilight*).
Adachi	Graded readers.
Fujita	Graded readers. Books for young adults (e.g., *The Book Thief, Twilight, Smart Women, You Belong to Me*).
Nakano	Graded readers and books for young adults (e.g., *Anne of Green Gables*, *Super Fudge* and other Judy Blume novels, *The Giver*, *Every Living Thing* by James Herriot).

From Mason & Krashen (2017).

How Much Individual Variation?

To study the degree of individual variation in the group, a 95% confidence interval of .46 to .74 was calculated. In other words, it was projected that 95% of readers similar to those Mason studied would gain between .46 and .74 points on the TOEIC for every hour of self-selected pleasure reading they did. (It should be pointed out that small samples, such as the one analyzed here, produce narrow confidence intervals.)

Over the short run (e.g., a month) even acquirers at the two extremes of the confidence internal won't show much difference, about a ten-point difference on a test with possible scores ranging from zero to nearly 1000. We would expect "talented" acquirers on a fast track to have a much larger lead after a month. Over the long term, however, the modest difference among readers, it could be argued, could lead to profound differences in attainment.

One hour a day of reading, over three years (about 1050 hours of reading) for a reader with a starting English level of TOEIC 250 (Basic Proficiency; i.e., "able to satisfy immediate survival needs) and the lowest rate of progress on the confidence interval, .46 pages per hour of reading, would result in a TOEIC score of 733, the Limited Working Proficiency level (i.e., "able to satisfy most social demands and limited work requirements"). [1050 hours * .46 points gain per hour = 483 points. 250 + 483 = 733]. (See Appendix for details on the TOEIC levels.)

At the top rate, .74 points per hour, three years of reading would result in a TOEIC score of 1027 [777 + 250], a score that goes over the top of their scale, beyond "International Professional Proficiency" (i.e., "able to communicate effectively in any situation").

Is the difference between the slowest and fastest acquirers evidence that some people are "gifted" for second language acquisition? The gap between the average acquirer and the most rapid acquirer is not that large, and certainly not insurmountable. A reader making average improvement per hour on the TOEIC would gain 733 points in three years, about 150 points less than the most rapid. One year of reading at one hour per day, a pleasant activity, would close the gap.

What is clear is that both the slowest and fastest gainers are predicted to make good progress in second language acquisition after three years of pleasure reading.

Summary

These results are consistent with the hypothesis that we are all similarly gifted for second language acquisition: Hours spent on self-selected reading correlated very highly with gains on the TOEIC. Other factors, including age of the reader, did not. This confirms the validity of the comprehension hypothesis and the impact of pleasure reading. For each hour read, the average subject gained a little more than ½ point on the TOEIC. Variation among subjects was not extraordinary.

Lacunae

Of course, the small sample size (N = 8) prevents confident generalizations. Much larger studies are needed to see the extent of agreement and variation among readers with different backgrounds; ours was a homogenous group of second language acquirers with similar backgrounds, and all were interested in improving their competence in a second language. But the data presented here provides a reasonable methodology that can be used to test the "fast track" hypothesis.

Research in other areas, such as music, chess, skating, and wrestling, has shown that time spent in dedicated practice is strongly related to achievement (e.g., Ericsson, 1996). But "practice" in these areas is typically hard work requiring a great deal of discipline. This is not the case for language and literacy development. Engagement with compelling reading material, which is what we do in self-selected reading, has even been described as a positive addiction (Nell, 1988). As parents and teachers know, hearing stories is also very pleasant (Lee, 2018).

A Counter-Claim

It has been claimed that some people are better at acquiring word meanings from context in reading. McQuillan (in press) notes, however, that studies claiming to show this do not control for the relative difficulty of texts and the reading ability of the readers: In these studies, all subjects are asked to read the same texts and derive meanings of the same unknown words, regardless of their previous reading experience. Self-selected reading controls for the difficulty of texts to a large extent: Recreational readers do not choose texts that are hard for them to understand. Studies of deriving words from texts do not use self-selected texts, and the sample texts are typically very short.

The Author

Stephen Krashen is Professor Emeritus, University of Southern California. His research interest is language and literacy development. He is the author of *The Power of Reading* (Libraries Unlimited) and a member of the Reading Hall of Fame. Many of his books and papers are available free of charge at sdkrashen.com.

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APPENDIX

TOEIC Scores and Real-World Competence

905-990	International Professional Proficiency (Able to communicate effectively in any situation.)
785-900	Working Proficiency Plus (Able to satisfy most work requirements with language that is often, but not always, acceptable and effective.)
605-780	Limited Working Proficiency (Able to satisfy most social demands and limited work requirements.)
405-600	Elementary Proficiency Plus (Can initiate and maintain predictable face-to-face conversations and satisfy social demands.)
255-400	Elementary Proficiency (Speaker has functional, but limited proficiency. Able to maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics.)
10-250	Basic Proficiency (Able to satisfy immediate survival needs.)

From the Waikato Institute of Education, http://wie.ac.nz/toeicconversion.htm, as cited in Mason & Krashen (2017).

Seven Things Beginning with "A": Towards an Alternative Metaphor for Language Learning

Scott Thornbury
The New School, New York, USA

Second language learning theory has experienced something of a paradigm shift in the last few years, moving from an almost exclusively cognitive focus to a more socially embedded one. Terminology has had to adjust accordingly, and some established labels – such as the word *acquisition* itself – have been problematized as scholars propose and explore new metaphors for language development. This paper surveys the changing landscape through the lens of seven key terms.

Introduction

One of the serendipitous effects of writing, and then subsequently revising, a dictionary-encyclopedia of ELT terminology (Thornbury, 2006, 2017) is the way that terms – by virtue of sharing the same initial letter – forge unexpected connections (John Cage, the contemporary American composer, found similar delight in the fact that his two big obsessions – music and mushrooms – "co-habited" in the dictionary). These random, but suggestive, juxtapositions have triggered at least three presentations of mine, the most recent being the talk "Seven Things Beginning with 'A'," presented at the 26th Annual Korea TESOL International Conference held in Seoul in October 2018, of which this paper is a summary.

My intention is to present an alternative "narrative" with regard to the view of second language acquisition theory that has dominated theory and research – and by extension, second language pedagogy – over the last three or four decades (and, coincidentally, energetically represented by another speaker at the KOTESOL conference, Professor Stephen Krashen). Accordingly, I will deal with each "A-term" in turn before attempting to synthesize a composite "alternative theory."

A is for Acquisition

For a long time now, the field has been dominated by a single metaphor: that of language *acquisition*. This has had a number of far-reaching effects. As Larsen-Freeman (2015, p. 493) argues, "The term *acquisition* implies that language is a commodity to be acquired; something that moves from the external to the internal, something that gets taken in." Making a similar point, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000, p. 155) note that "in SLA such an approach allows us to see language as a set of rules and facts to be acquired." This "commodification" mindset, with its associations of knowledge transfer and the "conduit metaphor" (Reddy, 1979), has dominated second language learning theory – and by extension, practice – since at least the 1980s, sitting comfortably with the then current models of information-processing, and in particular, with the prevailing metaphor of the "mind-as-computer," captured in such quotes as this one (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982):

> Research suggests that three internal processing factors play a substantial role in second language acquisition: the *filter*, the *organizer*, and the *monitor*. (p. 71)

Computational associations persist to this day in the use of terms like *input*, *output*, and *feedback*, reinforcing the view that, as Pinker (1997, p. 92) describes it, the mind is "the on-board computer of a robot made of tissue." Privileging the computer at the expense of the systems into which it is embedded has led to the narrow cognitivist position that has dominated SLA theorizing for several decades, one in which, as Long and Richards (2001, p. vi) insist, "second language acquisition is first and foremost a mental process."

With the advent of what Block (2003) called "the social turn" in SLA theory, the "acquisition metaphor" was contrasted with what Sfard (1998) called the "participation metaphor," which views learning as being a developmental process embedded in socially oriented activity: "the permanence of *having* gives way to the flux of *doing*" (p. 6). This was a distinction that had already been anticipated by Lave and Wenger (1991) and their notion of "situated learning," whereby the learner is progressively socialized into a community of practice: "In contrast with learning as internalization, learning as increasing participation in communities of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world" (p. 49).

The choice of metaphor has important implications on curriculum design, pedagogy, and assessment. As Donato (2000) observes,

> If one adopts as the dominant metaphor of acquisition – the "taking in" and possessing of knowledge – as indices of achievement, then failure to achieve may be explained away by reference to an individual's low aptitude, lack of motivation, or inappropriate learning strategies. If one adopts the participation metaphor, alternate reasons for an individual's failure to achieve could be posited, such as the individual's marginalization from a community of practice, insufficient mediation from an expert, or scant access to a learning community. (pp. 40–41)

Viewing learning as a participatory process has the effect of dissolving the distinction between learning, on the one hand, and using, on the other. As Brumfit (2001) argues,

> Developments in second language acquisition research make it difficult to see the learning even of foreign languages as distinct from the process of language use: learning is using and using is learning. ... Of course, there are also formal activities associated with the learning – people learn vocabulary lists off by heart more than is commonly acknowledged – but these activities are preliminary to the language learning process itself, for only when the language items are fused into active meaning systems by the process of use, is the language system developing for the learner's own purposes. We may learn the tokens of language formally, but we learn the system by using it through reading or writing, or conversing. (p. 12)

This view presaged what are now known as *usage-based* theories of SLA, a core tenet of which is summarized thus by Tyler and Ortega (2018, p. 10): “Since language is thought to be inseparable from the users and the usage events that bring it about, as long as there is use, there can be learning.” Such “usage events” inevitably involve interaction, as Atkinson (2011, p. 157) reminds us: “We learn languages through using them to act – to interact – with/in the world.”

This is not to deny that there is a cognitive component in (language) learning, nor that acquisition and participation are mutually exclusive. Indeed, as Watson-Gegeo and Nielsen (2003, p. 156) insist, “Cognition *originates* in social interaction. Constructing new knowledge is therefore *both* a cognitive *and* a social process.”

A is for Activity

Inherent in these social processes is the notion of *activity*: “One acquires a language in order to act, and by acting, in a world where language is performative” (Atkinson, 2002, p. 537). According to activity theory (Swain, Kinnear, & Steinman, 2011), activity is construed as an integrated and interactive goal-directed system involving agents, a social setting, the tools or artifacts (including language) that mediate the activity, and the “rules” or conventions that structure the activity. Such socially situated “activity systems” provide the framework for cognitive growth, including the development of language. As Atkinson (2011) elaborates,

> Many if not all cases of SLA involve participation in situated activity systems – activity systems that support language growth, even if their main purpose may be otherwise. Examples include, international business transactions; extended L2 involvement with friends, host families, or significant others; frequenting bars, clubs, and other social venues in L2 contexts; participation in foreign language clubs and competitions; electronic communication with L2 speakers; attending L2 religious services; and serving L2-speaking customers. (p. 151)

A vivid example of how situated activity supports the learning of language is Deb Roy’s account (Roy, 2011) of how his son learnt his first words, “The Birth of a Word.” The emergence of the word “water,” for example, is tracked over time through the activity of asking the nanny for water, typically in the setting of the kitchen.

“Activity-based learning,” like task-based and project-based learning, is one of a set of pedagogical applications of the experiential and holistic principles underpinning activity theory. “When we design our lessons using activity as the focal unit, language becomes a constituent alongside movement, gesture, experiment, manipulation, focusing, planning, judging, and so on” (van Lier 2002, p. 159). It is also consistent with the principles according to which the communicative approach to language teaching was originally conceptualized: in Wilkins’ (1976) words, “What people want to do through language is more important than the mastery of language as an unapplied system” (p. 42). “Doing things *with* language” – rather than learning *about* language – is the core principle that unifies a wide range of experiential, activity-based methodologies.

A IS FOR AFFORDANCE

The learning opportunities that are available to the learner/user when participating in activities involving language are called *affordances* – a term borrowed from ecological theory: “From an ecological perspective, the learner is immersed in an environment full of potential meanings” (van Lier, 2000, p. 246). In contrast to the computational notion of “input,” whereby the learner is construed as the passive recipient of language data, an ecological interpretation views the learner as a user engaged with making sense of the world and its meaning potential: that is to say, exploiting its affordances. “The affordance perspective assumes an active learner establishing relationships with and within the environment. In terms of language learning, affordances arise out of participation and use, and learning opportunities arise as a consequence of participation and use” (Auyang, 2000, as cited in van Lier, 2004, p. 92).

The affordances offered by an activity system will vary from individual to individual and “in order for resources to become affordances, they must be perceived and acted on by a person who is aware of the potential as resources for L2 learning” (Kashiwa & Benson, 2018, p. 728). Affordances are potentially present wherever language is being used. Arguably, though, they are optimal in conditions of real language use and in situations that, in van Lier’s (2004, p. 96) words, “[have] a rich semiotic budget, which may not be true of all classrooms, textbooks, or pedagogical interactions.”

In a recent study, Kashiwa and Benson (2018) contrast the affordances available to a group of Chinese learners of English in “at home” courses of study and in a “study abroad” (specifically Australian) context, a distinction nicely captured in this reflection by one of the subjects:

> In China, [studying English] was just a road. I don’t see what is in front of me or my friends. The teacher mentioned that direction of this road is very good, but I don’t know I’m not sure why she says it is good. But in Australia, it’s like a forest. So many people are in this forest and every green plant is English. See or not see, it’s up to you. And nobody give me the direction, I just walk around in this forest, explore everything, and I can ask others that sort of things. (p. 739)

In innovative realization of this ecological perspective is the “Language Learning in the Wild” project (Wagner, 2015), in which a number of Nordic countries are participating. As the website describes it, “Language Learning in the Wild” is “an experiential second language pedagogy that puts the user into the center of the learning process. The premise is that language as a phenomenon occurs in its use and is therefore learned in and through use” (“Language Learning in the Wild,” n.d.).

To these ends, the local community is enlisted to provide a supportive environment in which learners can “do their business in the local language,” and “where their co-participants are helpful and tolerant, and graciously allow the extra time” (Wagner, 2015, p. 80). At the same time, the classroom can provide a site where "activities in the wild can be harvested and reflected in order to strengthen language learning and to develop resources that become available for the newcomers" (p. 77). In this view, there is two-way traffic by which affordances "in the wild" are optimized: the classroom provides a "safe house" in which learners are equipped for the kinds of challenges that can be predicted on the basis of their experience and the experiences of their predecessors, while the classroom can also be a "pit stop" where learners report back on their experiences "in the wild" and receive appropriate support.

A IS FOR ASSISTED PERFORMANCE

Central to the way that activity-based affordances are exploited is the role of mediation, particularly the kinds of assistance provided by a "better other," whether peer, parent, sibling, or teacher – what is known as "other regulation" in Vygotskyan developmental psychology. Such assistance is optimal when it occurs at the point where the learner is not yet developmentally self-reliant, but is developmentally "ready" – the maturational space that Vygotsky termed the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). "Teaching consists in assisting performance through the ZPD. Teaching can be said to occur when assistance is offered at points in the ZPD at which performance requires assistance" (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988, p. 31).

Traditional means by which teachers assist performance, according to Tharp and Gallimore (1988), include modeling, questioning, providing feedback, explicit instruction, and "cognitive structuring" – what is now more generally known as "scaffolding" (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). The timing of instructional interventions has also been the focus of attention: Johnson (1996) argued that mistake correction is most effective when it occurs in "real operating conditions," that is to say, when the learner is engaged in authentic language use. More recently, Gee (2007), drawing on the way that players of video games seek "in flight" assistance, argues that such assistance is optimal when "the learner is given explicit information both on demand and just in time, [i.e.,] when the learner needs it or just at the point where the information can best be understood and used in practice" (p. 226).

A IS FOR ALIGNMENT

"Learning is a process of alignment – of continuously and progressively fitting oneself to one's environment, often with the help of guides" (Atkinson, 2010a, p. 611). This ecological perspective is consistent with the notions of activity, affordances, and assisted performance, already mentioned, and as explained in this more elaborated extract (from Atkinson, 2010b):

> Alignment ... is the means by which social actors participate in the ongoing construction of social meaning and action in public/sociocognitive space. In mutually attending, negotiating, sharing information and emotions, solving interactional/communicative problems, building participation frameworks,

> interacting with their extended cognitive surroundings, etc., social actors dynamically adapt to their environments, creating shared meaning in mind-body-world. (p. 29)

A good example of alignment at work (although not called as such) occurs in Wong Fillmore's (1979) pioneering study of the way immigrant children integrated with their English-speaking classmates on the playground. One strategy that was identified was:

> Join a group and act as if you understand, even if you don't. (p. 209)

Wong Fillmore comments:

> Because the friends believed that the learners could understand them, and that communication between them was possible, they included them in activities and conversations, and this allowed the learners to assume roles in social situations and activities that made sense to them, and gave them an opportunity to observe and acquire the kind of language children use in these activities. (pp. 209–210)

More recently, in a study of classroom group-work, Frazier (2007) shows how interlocutors orient to one another using gaze, proxemics, and gesture, and argues that transcriptions of spoken interaction miss important details as to the way interactants align both verbally and paralinguistically during collaborative tasks in order to co-construct meaning.

A is for Appropriation

It was the Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) who was one of the first to observe that language use is a form of "bricolage," whereby conventional forms and genres are borrowed and "customized" by their users.

> When we select words in the process of constructing an utterance, we by no means always take them from the system of language in their neutral, dictionary form. We usually take them from other utterances, and mainly from utterances that are kindred to ours in genre, that is, in theme, composition, or style. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 87)

As Hall, Vitanova, and Marchenkova (2013, p. 3) comment, "learning language, then, does not mean accumulating decontextualized forms or structures but rather entering into ways of communicating that are defined by specific economic, political, and historical forces." The idea that learners "appropriate" language and then – in Bakhtin's terms – "populate" it with their own intentions, is consistent both with the view that language learning is located in social interaction, and that this interaction is a resource for language learning affordances. Hence, "'becoming competent' is not a matter of learning to speak. It is, instead, a matter of developing a range of voices, of learning to ventriloquate, i.e., to (re)construct utterances for our own purposes from the resources available to us" (Hall 1995, p. 218).

A good example of how a teenage learner of English “appropriated” a range of voice is this account from the language learning memoir Lost In Translation, by Eva Hoffman (1989):

> Since I lack a voice of my own, the voices of others invade me [...] By assuming them, I gradually make them mine. I am being remade, fragment by fragment, like a patchwork quilt. (p. 220)

The notion of appropriation – of making language one’s own and populating it with one’s own meanings – is a more transformative metaphor than the somewhat clinical and impersonal input–output metaphor of “acquisition.” For a start, it suggests that language use is idiosyncratic and situated, and is neither enshrined in a grammar textbook nor genetically “hard-wired” into the mind. As Harris (1981, p. 167) notes, “language is continuously created by the interaction of individuals in specific communication situations.” By way of example, in a longitudinal micro-analysis of the way gesture and word learning (specifically prepositions) are interdependent and evolve over time, Eskildsen and Wagner (2015, p. 291) concluded that the “Bakhtinian notion of appropriation ... seems like an empirically valid construct for capturing the processes of learning to control new semiotic resources in an L2.”

Also in classroom contexts, Donato (1994) has shown how the learners themselves, during collaborative problem-solving tasks, can provide the necessary scaffolding whereby, through processes of appropriation, “[they] can expand their own L2 knowledge and extend the linguistic development of their peers” (p. 52).

A is for Agency

The model of language learning outlined thus far, i.e., one that is predicated on engagement in social interaction, assisted performance, alignment, and reciprocal appropriation, assumes a degree of *agency* on the part of the learner/user. That is to say, the learner is not the passive recipient of linguistic data, but is actively and collaboratively engaged in making meanings. As Barcelos and Kalaja (2011, as cited in Burns & Richards, 2018, p. 3) put it, “L2 learners are no longer viewed as individuals working on their own to construct the target language, but very much as social agents collaborating with other people and using the tools and resources available to them in their surrounding environment.” But agency is more than simply being proactive or taking initiative: as Lantolf and Thorne (2006, p. 143) point out, from a sociocultural perspective, “the concept [of agency] also entails the ability to assign relevance and significance to things and events.” In a similar vein, Hicks (2000, as cited in Vitanova, 2013, p. 154) argues that “agency entails the ability to take the words of others and accent them in one’s unique way.” The way that language is “signified” by the learner/user recalls the way that Stevick (1998) invokes a “world of meaningful action,” in which learners not only “strive to make a foreign language more meaningful to themselves, but what is also important is that they strive to make *themselves* more meaningful to others through using the language” (Arnold & Murphey, 2013, p. 2). As an example of “self-actualization” and identity formation through an L2, Lam (2000) reports how an otherwise failing Chinese immigrant teenager used social media to construct an online English-speaking identity and thereby "to develop a sense of belonging and connectedness to a global English-speaking community" (p. 476) who shared his musical interests.

Putting the learning at the active heart of the learning process may not seem to be a radical development, yet a long history of research and scholarship – in the name of second language *acquisition* – has effectively reduced learners to the status of ciphers: the faceless, nameless recipients of pedagogical "interventions."

Conclusion

Using words beginning with "A," I have attempted to trace the outline of an alternative view of second language development that (unashamedly) draws on an eclectic mix of usage-based, emergentist, ecological, sociocultural, and sociocognitive theories of SLA. It is my belief that, however diverse the theoretical roots, they all share similar pedagogical applications, which are in turn derived from a commonly held article of faith, captured here by Churchill, Okada, Nishino, and Atkinson (2010):

> If language is social action, then the consequences for language learning should be clear: We learn languages to use them, and the only way to do so is *by* doing so. ... If language is viewed as social action, then what you do with it is what matters. (p. 237)

Using language "as social action" does *not* mean that the learners are simply reproducing and manipulating pre-selected grammar structures or that they are performing rote-learned dialogues. Rather, as Käänta, Jauni, Leppänen, Peuronen, and Paakkinen (2013) eloquently put it,

> What matters in learning is the freedom to initiate, steer, and manage talk and interaction; the creativity to craft communication with the available resources present in the interactional situation; and the opportunity to learn together, in interaction with others. (p. 356)

Finally, in arguing for a new terminology, I am in fact arguing the case for new metaphors (for learning and for teaching), because it is only through changing metaphors that we can start to change the way we conceptualize our practices. In the words of Lakoff and Johnson (1980),

> New metaphors have the power to create a new reality. This can begin to happen when we start to comprehend our experience in terms of the metaphor, and it becomes a deeper reality when we begin to act in terms of it. (p. 145)

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Featured Session Papers

Understanding and Increasing the Role of Fluency in EFL

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INTRODUCTION

Complexity, Accuracy, and Fluency (CAF) were first introduced into the ELT literature by Peter Skehan (1996) as measurable constructs indicating linguistic gains. Today, researchers agree on definitions of accuracy and complexity, yet there are still many interpretations of fluency covering a wide range of approaches and nuances. As an author and one of the editors of *Exploring EFL Fluency in Asia* (Muller, Adamson, Brown, & Herder, 2014), we decided that each chapter author in our book should define fluency from their own perspective and appropriate for their own context. This paper will begin by introducing a range of fluency perspectives found in the book and then address the vital role that this author believes fluency plays in teaching and learning within the Japanese context.

In too many Asian classrooms, the Grammar–Translation approach focuses almost entirely on accuracy and complexity constructs at the expense of the equally vital fluency construct needed for language learning. Overall linguistic gains depend on improving all three CAF constructs, and therefore, I teach my students the concepts of a balanced approach to CAF, input/output, and the four skills. From my own experience with freshman university students and based on 20 years teaching elementary through high school English, an initial and strong focus on fluency offers the widest entry point for student engagement by the greatest number of students – every student has something to contribute (a) if they feel safe within the learning community and (b) if the teacher praises output efforts rather than perfect grammar. This paper will describe some ways to integrate a fluency approach within the four skills of English language lessons, focusing on a cycle of output, evidence, success, and the praising of efforts.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

In the mid-nineties, Peter Skehan introduced a proficiency model that brought the three dimensions together for the first time, i.e. fluency, accuracy, and complexity (Skehan, 1996, 1998). These concepts were described as constructs, things that could be counted or measured in order to show improvements in students' language ability. Now, teachers were able to not only assess student improvements but also show students their own improvements by measuring any or all of the factors seen in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Measurable Constructs Within CAF

Complexity	Accuracy	Fluency
Higher-level vocabulary use	Correct grammar usage	Spoken words per minute (WPM)
Higher-level grammar use	Self-correction by students	Written words per minute (WPM)
Written length of discourse	Appropriacy of language	Length of pauses
Spoken length of discourse	Spelling and punctuation	Frequency of pauses

While the meaning of complexity and accuracy appear to be black and white to most researchers, fluency means different things to different people, and these nuances within fluency can be seen in Table 2 in the ways various researchers focus on different elements of fluency that pertain to their own unique context, their students, or their research.

TABLE 2. Author Perspectives on Fluency in Exploring EFL Fluency in Asia
(Muller, Adamson, Brown, & Herder, 2014)

Author	Perspective on Fluency
Nation (p. 11)	"Fluency means making the best use of what is already known."
Nation (p. 11)	"Fluency is one of the four strands of a well-balanced language course."
Nation (p. 11)	"Fluency can be described as the ability to process language receptively and productively at a reasonable speed."
Herder & Sholdt (p. 26)	Fluency is the largest factor that differentiates EFL from ESL.
Finch (p. 60)	"...fluency was seen [simply] as the ability to express one's ideas."
Peppard (p. 80)	Develop fluency through lexicogrammatical accuracy.
Kirk (p. 101)	"Fluency is a complex phenomenon...[and when oversimplified]...results in confusion...discussing how to address fluency in the classroom."
Onoda (p. 120)	Empirical results from his research indicate that automatization leads to fluency development in oral production.
Fraser (p. 178)	"...being fluent entails...proficiency where communication is effective, efficient, and easy..."
Waring (p. 227)	There is a very strong case for why extensive reading should be a core component of language curriculums globally.
Waring (p. 227)	"[For] reading fluency to develop, teachers need to instruct learners to select the most appropriate texts."
Golfus (p. 277)	"Reading fluency [requires students] be able to extract information, analyze, and integrate the facts in order to comprehend connected text..."

Rather than forcing researchers and teachers to agree on one definition of fluency, it would seem to be more effective to have educators invest time in deciding what fluency means to them within their own context and for the benefit of their own students. Improving fluency is just as powerful an element of learning as is improving complexity or accuracy, especially because when students see themselves using the language, there is a palpable recognition of *this is what learning a language is all about*, perhaps more emotionally satisfying for some people than scoring well on a vocabulary or a grammar test. Awareness of this fact is the first step in seeing the vital role of fluency in language learning.

The Vital Role of Fluency in the EFL Classroom

The problem of the vicious cycle in English language classrooms in Japan is all too common and permeates English language studies at all levels of education. Students may make an effort in their early formal studies of English at the junior high school level, but by the third year, too many students have experienced more failures than successes at English and consequently grow to dislike studying English because of the focus on testing rather than any focus on successfully using English (Benesse, 2009, 2014).

As seen in Figure 1, failing at English leads to frustration, disappointment, and most often, a misdiagnosis by students that they simply have no aptitude for learning English. The destructiveness of the vicious cycle is further compounded by the fact that most students are neither embarrassed nor put out by the idea of failing at English. For the vast majority of students, their parents can't speak English, nor can their relatives or their friends – failing at being an English user does not present a challenge to be overcome but is simply the status quo.

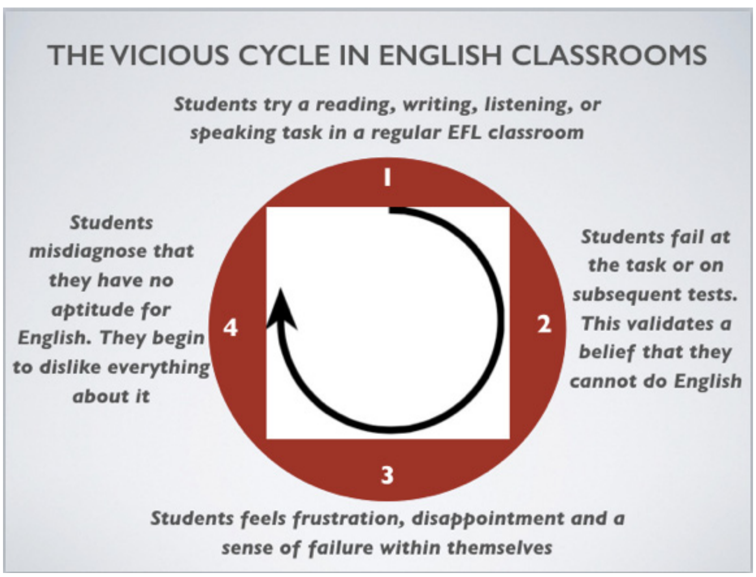

FIGURE 1. The Vicious Cycle in EFL Classrooms.

One solution to the vicious cycle in studying English is an awareness of fluency as an equal member within CAF, an understanding of how fluency can be measured, a focused routine of fluency practice, autonomous student documentation of fluency gains, and time for reflection on improvements. When these four elements can be implemented, the vicious cycle can be transformed into the virtuous cycle.

As seen in Figure 2, the teacher's role is two-fold: first, they are there to encourage and praise student efforts relating to output, and also engage students with the contents of their output. Second, teachers need to validate the students' success and continue to challenge them to take the next step in their learning. Once the virtuous cycle affects enough students in a learning community, critical mass has been attained, and the teacher realizes that their job just became much easier – the group is positive, empowered and autonomous – all that is needed for an excellent classroom experience for all. The important role of fluency is clear, but where does one begin to integrate fluency into a syllabus or curriculum?

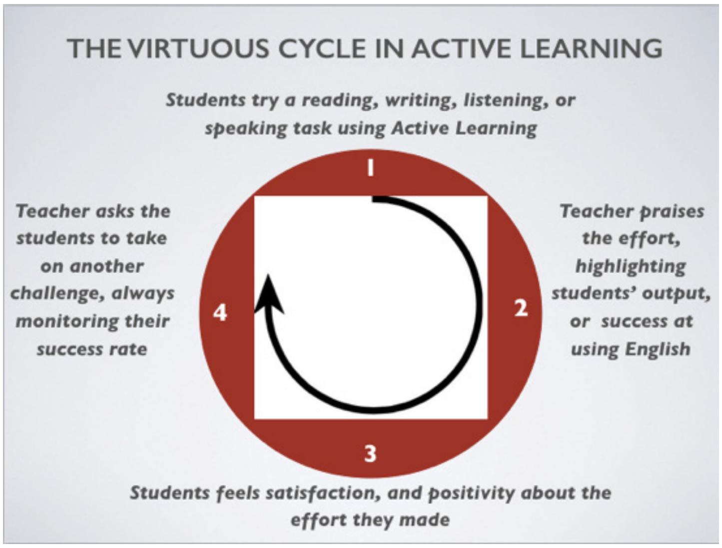

FIGURE 2. The Virtuous Cycle in Active Learning.

Co-constructed Definitions of Output and Input Fluency

Instead of simply telling students the definition of fluency, there is an opportunity to have students participate in creating a definition of fluency that you all agree upon and is meaningful to them. This approach is clearly an example of exploiting the *autonomy* factor in Pink's (2009) Motivation 3.0 model that, along with *mastery* and *purpose*, leads to greater performance and satisfaction. Table 3 shows actual output fluency (speaking and writing) and input fluency (reading and listening) definitions that were co-constructed between 2nd-year students and this author back in 2010. Students clearly felt more engagement and ownership of these definitions than had I handed out a print with them already written.

Starting with a discussion of the concept of fluency, contextualizing it within students' previous six years of English studies, leads to a very easy conclusion that one of the reasons most students were still struggling with English, especially output, was that they lacked fluency practice and experience using the language in any meaningful way. Based on this introduction to fluency, it is natural for students to be excited to begin measuring their output in various ways from typing and speed reading to speaking and writing words per minute (WPM).

TABLE 3. Definitions of Fluency Co-constructed with University Students

Speaking Fluency	Thinking and speaking at the same time in an average natural speed with not so many errors (students aiming for 100 wpm is a good initial goal).
Writing Fluency	Thinking and writing at the same time in an average natural speed, with an average number of corrections (students aiming for 15 wpm is a good initial goal).
Reading Fluency	Reading and understanding English at a speed closer to native speakers (students initially aiming for 175 words per minute and understanding 75% is a good first target).
Listening Fluency	Listening and understanding English as necessary in different situations. This means that listening to friends, a university lecturer, the police, or a YouTube video all require different levels.

Table 4 illustrates just one example of the efficacy of having students collect before/after data related to fluency activities undertaken in the language classroom. After an initial month at the beginning of the school year building trust and creating a safe learning environment for first-year students, they were told that their current speaking output was to be measured in the following way:

1. Record yourself on your smartphone speaking for one minute as quickly and clearly as you can about the topic "My friends." (All students record at the same time following the teachers "Start" and "Stop" commands.)
2. Listen to the recording and count the number of words produced (one word equals one point). Report your points to the teacher, who quickly calculates the class average and challenges the class to try to raise their average in a second round.
3. Record yourself again on your smartphone.
4. Listen again, count, and report your score.
5. In the last class of the year, have students do a similar post-test using the equivalent topic of "My Family." Show students their improvements and watch their self-satisfaction register on their faces.

TABLE 4. Student Speaking Fluency Levels Pre- and Post-test (2017 data)

Students by Class	Speaking Speed (May)	Speaking Speed (Jan)	Percentage Gain
A	100 wpm	130 wpm	+30%
B	76 wpm	114 wpm	+50%
C	60 wpm	93 wpm	+55%
D	55 wpm	116 wpm	+110%
E	56 wpm	104 wpm	+93%
F	54 wpm	103 wpm	+84%
G	50 wpm	73 wpm	+46%
H	46 wpm	83 wpm	+80%
Averages	**62 wpm**	**102 wpm**	**+64%**

Classroom Fluency Approach for Writing Fluency

In still too many high schools in Japan, writing class would more appropriately be called translation class because students rarely writing more than a sentence or two at a time and almost never write original thoughts or opinions. Almost all writing is a translation exercise being practiced for the university entrance exam system. Happily, this is changing incrementally, and in 2020, students will be required to write paragraphs or a short essay similar to other standardized tests such as IELTS or TOEFL iBT.

From my own experience, I was given free rein to teach a high school writing class as I saw fit. On the first day, I said “Good morning, ladies. Welcome to our writing class. Take out a pencil, we are going to write.” This was the start of a 10-minute, free-writing exercise at the start of every class, twice a week, for their final two years of high school. Students on average were able to double their writing output within six months (Herder, 2009) as well as significantly change their attitudes towards writing in general. After five years of experience teaching Japanese high school students to write, I realized that a writing fluency approach had a flow, and I was able to convey that flow as follows:

> Write often; Write about many topics; Focus on expressing ideas; Write individually, in pairs, and in groups; Share ideas with peers; Get used to writing; Improve naturally; Gain self-confidence; Begin taking risks; Enjoy reading stories, sharing memories, different points of view; Look forward to writing; THEN, at some magical, individual point in time, feeling satisfied with fluency, decide to focus more on your ACCURACY or COMPLEXITY.

Applying a Fluency First Approach in EFL Lessons

After more than a decade of integrating fluency into EFL lessons as a full and equal partner with accuracy and complexity, this focus on finding a balance has manifested itself in various ways: balancing input and output; balancing all four skills; balancing pair work, group work, and individual work; balancing teacher talk with student voices, etc. As a result of seeing the common theme of balance appear over and over again, as well as realizing that the merits of this balance were not immediately clear to students, I found myself repeating messages to the point of sounding like a mantra. These mantras were effective for both teacher and students, as they provided a useful reminder that language is a tool, not a source of academic study. Some of the most popular mantras were the following:

1. Mistakes are your friend. The more mistakes you make, the more you are learning.
2. Input and output are equally important. Push yourself to do both.
3. When you are reading a speech, the audience stops listening.
4. Look at your partner when you speak in English. Looking away (or at the ceiling) is rude in English.
5. Aim to master Chu 3 English. It is enough to do 90% of what you’ll do in a foreign country.

6. Move your mouth more in English than you do in Japanese.

These mantras were repeated often, so much so that they started coming back to me in essays, speeches, and dialogs between students. In the end, mantras were just one successful result of a focus on fluency. There were others as well.

In Table 5, we see 10 Basics of a Successful Lesson, which were written by this author and have all grown out of a concerted effort to explore the concepts of fluency and balance in teaching and learning.

Table 5. 10 Basics of a Successful Lesson

1.	Using a Four Skills approach is the most efficient way to learn.
2.	Knowing Fluency is as important as Accuracy and Complexity for learning.
3.	Motivating students by showing them data about their input and output.
4.	Believing that writing and speaking are both valid forms of output.
5.	Having a good class atmosphere is crucial to encouraging students to participate.
6.	Having various levels of difficulty in your activities engages students.
7.	Challenging students to stretch themselves little by little.
8.	Accepting that learning can be fun. Realizing all fun is not learning.
9.	Exploiting the fact that the brain loves novelty and humor.
10.	Standing up, stretching or moving around every 20 minutes or so.

One very simple activity that highlights both the merits of balance and a fluency first approach is the Monday Morning Story. In it you can practice one theme in four different ways. For example, tell a one-minute (JHS students) or a two-minute (HS students) story using the timer on your smartphone about something in your life. My most successful story was about my childhood dog, Boots:

1. Students (Ss) listen to the story and take notes in any way they can.
2. Ss tell a partner what they understood (in the 1st person or 3rd person depending on the level).
3. Ss write for 5 minutes (10 for higher level students) on the same topic.
4. Ss read their friend's story and write a comment.

Without boredom setting in at all, students have repeated the four skills a number of times: (a) listening and writing, (b) speaking and listening, (c) writing, (d) reading and writing as well as smiling, laughing, and spontaneously asking follow-up questions in whatever language comes out first.

Further Fluency Support in the EFL Context

Fluency practice is a natural, built-in part of an ESL experience. The minute you leave the classroom in Vancouver, Canada, or Sydney, Australia, you can be immersed in live opportunities to practice English you have been studying – on the bus, going shopping, in a bank, in restaurants, with a host family, with strangers at bus stops, standing in front of cashiers, etc. There can be endless chances to practice language you have studied. In Japan, however, we must create real fluency opportunities outside the classroom beyond watching YouTube videos online in English. The key to success of out-of-class activities on campus is that they are perceived to be both fun and useful. Fun activities attract students and get them through the door to your event. If these activities are perceived useful, then students will come back. This year, the Immersion Space on my university campus initiated two new "Fun & Useful" activities: weekly, 90-minute English Karaoke and 60-minute Yoga in English. Both provided genuine fluency practice in speaking (singing) and listening, and both were fun.

Conclusions

Finding a balance between fluency, accuracy, and complexity in the EFL classroom as an initial approach for Japanese learners is a meaningful way to boost their motivation and allow them to catch up to other learners around the world who benefit from a more natural balanced approach to learning to use a language. Finding a balance between initial in-class fluency activities, especially in the output skills of speaking and writing, and out-of-class opportunities for fluency practice offers a winning combination for language learners. Teachers and program leaders will find that if all stakeholders make a concerted effort with this approach, maximizing the tenets of collective teacher efficacy (Donohoo, Hattie, & Eells, 2018), success will follow. Students will relatively quickly gain some self-confidence with their own fluency and of their own volition, and through the power of the virtuous cycle, decide to refocus their efforts on a new challenge within the accuracy or complexity domain.

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Pronunciation as a Lingua Franca: What Are Our Goals?

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Pronunciation is still a neglected area in the classroom – why is this? As the trend for “English as a lingua franca” increases globally, the focus here will be on “pronunciation of English as a lingua franca.” I will discuss the pronunciation goals that we, as teachers, want our learners to aspire to, in terms of comprehensibility and intelligibility, and how our ideals are changing as we realize the need to be more realistic in what we expect our students to be able to achieve.

Introduction

In the UK, international students come to learn English at private language schools, colleges, and universities. They require the full range of class types from general English to Business English, EAP to IELTS, and everything in between. The specific needs of the students may be different, but what they all have in common is the need to communicate intelligibly with each other. Most classes in the UK have a range of nationalities and, therefore, different first languages (L1) – and this may be where everyone in the class has a different L1. Therefore, students are more likely to be communicating in English as a lingua franca (ELF) than the traditional English as a foreign language (EFL).

What We Know So Far

There are approximately 1.75 billion speakers of English as a second or foreign language (British Council, 2013). In terms of “pronunciation as a lingua franca,” we need to understand that these speakers are not necessarily communicating with English L1 speakers but are more likely to be using English in situations where no one shares an L1. Therefore, mutual intelligibility and comprehensibility are the main aim of most ELF speakers, meaning that a lot of non-native speakers of English tailor their pronunciation to what they believe their listeners’ needs are.

We know that poor pronunciation leads to poor fluency and poor listening skills. Pronunciation is still a neglected area in the classroom and is often called “the Cinderella of language teaching” (Underhill, 2005), as it appears to be low on teaching priorities and disconnected from other language learning activities (behind doors, out of sight). At times, it has been ignored in the ELT curriculum, as it is not considered a primary goal or because native-like pronunciation was not deemed as achievable or learnable as say grammar and vocabulary. The input that learners receive, whether from their teachers or coursebooks, is often unattainable and unrealistic for them. This could be a result of both native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) teachers feeling intimidated by teaching pronunciation and, therefore, not making it a priority in the classroom.

Achievable Goals

As teachers, we need to agree on what goals we want to achieve for our learners. Does it really matter if our students say /f/ or /v/ for /ð/? Is understanding always compromised if we do not use standard pronunciation? I hear a lot of varieties of "native-speaker" pronunciation in the southeast of England. For example "mother" /ˈmʌðə/ can be expressed as /ˈmʌvə/ or /ˈmʌfə/, "think" /θɪŋk/ can be pronounced as /fɪŋk/, and "water" /ˈwɔːtə/ can be glottalized as /ˈwɔːʔə/, just to name a few. None of these examples cause problems to the native ear but give information to the recipient about where the speaker might be from, and their social and educational background.

We need to be more accepting of the numerous, high occurrence, non-standard phonological features and not just teach to the coursebook. Many teachers themselves do not recognize or use some of the phonemes represented in the International Phonemic Alphabet used in the coursebooks but feel that they have to adapt the way they speak and pronounce certain words for the context that they may be teaching in. It is not unusual in some parts of the world for teachers to be asked to change their accent to sound "more American" or "more British," as this is what their students would like (and their parents who are paying for the courses).

In mixed L1 classes, learners are quickly exposed to different L1-influenced accents and so become skilled at understanding different accents or adjusting their own accent to make themselves more intelligible. We all use coursebooks and have banks of our own resources. However, as teachers, we need to filter and supplement these materials, and assess how appropriate these are for our students. We can prepare learners for a huge variety in accents. For example, in Korea, the U.S. accent is favored over other accents, but by focusing just on one accent, we are not providing our students with a true picture of what they will be exposed to, be it in a business context, traveling abroad, or exposure to social media. Drilling is also important – the physical aspect of language needs to be practiced so that it becomes a habit and natural for our students by developing their muscle memory.

What Do Teachers Think About Teaching Pronunciation?

I recently interviewed colleagues at the University of Sussex to find out what their views are on teaching pronunciation and what their goals are. Table 1 is a selection of their responses.

Table 1. Teacher Views on Teaching Pronunciation

Question	Teacher Response	Teacher Response
1. What is "good" pronunciation?	Any kind - as long as it is mutually comprehensible.	To be good, pronunciation should be clear, i.e., easy for the listener to understand.
2. What do you consider a priority for your students in terms of pronunciation?	For them to feel *confident* when they are speaking in English.	Helping them to think why they have some difficulty making themselves understood to other students from different language backgrounds to their own, i.e., what are the causes of these misunderstandings?
3. What goals do you hope to achieve?	Really, to raise students' awareness of the features of English; a stress-timed language and the related aspects of connected speech. Even if at first they cannot produce any of these, at least if they have an awareness of why English can be difficult to understand, (primarily when listening to native-speakers) then they are on the right track!	It is important at an early stage to focus on English as a common tool of communication rather than be unrealistic with dreams about meeting the perfect (mythical) native speaker!
4. How much time do you spend on pronunciation in the classroom?	Apart from having a designated pronunciation project, which I do with students regularly, I will "teach/highlight" relevant aspects of pronunciation probably in every lesson, irrespective of the language level of the class or the focus of the lesson.	I introduce the IPA chart (my own simplified version) to them by the end of the first week, i.e., as soon as possible, the whole thing, not just a few bits each week.
5. Do you like teaching it?	Yes, I love teaching it!	Yes, I have always loved it because it builds up the confidence of the shy students.
6. Do you focus on a particular accent?	I try as much as possible to give them exposure to a variety of accents, ideally by realia; TED talks (but this is limited to the level of the students), myself, watching TV programs, films.	Not deliberately.
7. Are native speakers always good models of pronunciation? Why/Why not?	They can provide a good model for the students, but non-native speakers probably produce the kind of language that our students actually interact with more, now in the classrooms and in the future.	No, definitely not always.

We Want Our Learners to Be Intelligible – But What Does This Actually Mean?

According to Munro and Derwing (1995, p. 76), *intelligible* is the "extent to which a speaker's message is actually understood by a listener." From this, we get the common core of phonological features "which provides a list of pronunciation teaching priorities for 'NNS' learners of English, and offer the learner a guarantee of intelligibility and acceptability anywhere in the world" (Jenner 1989, p. 2).

Jenkins (2002), who researched attitudes towards ELF communication and interaction, also proposed and developed the Lingua Franca Core (LFC) to highlight the "essential" phonological features and communicative intelligibility between NNSs and to suggest that the pronunciation norms of NSs are not the target of pronunciation instruction.

WHAT TEACHERS SHOULD TRY TO DO

As teachers, we need to look at examples of successful communication around the world and replicate this in the classrooms. Many learners get their *Englishes* from outside the classroom – by watching television, social media, gaming, etc. By exposing them to a range of non-standard and non-native-speaker dialogues, they will be armed with more relevant and meaningful ways of communicating. We also need to reconsider our perceptions of errors and the ways we give feedback and assess our students. Who defines what is right or wrong, and do we always have to follow these conventions? The process of teaching pronunciation, therefore, becomes more a process of awareness rather than teaching specified and conventional sounds.

So where do we start with helping students to develop their ELF pronunciation? Teaching pronunciation for ELF is really about re-thinking our goals and re-defining errors, not modifying classroom practice – this should remain the same. Instead, we need to think about existing activities and techniques. How can these be used to benefit our learners? How do we find out what our students have in common so that they can communicate more effectively with each other? Are they in a mono- or multilingual setting? What are their needs? Who will they be communicating with? What are their goals? What and who do they listen to?

CONCLUSION

Intelligibility in ELF is an accessible goal. ELF speakers will have to operate in a world populated by multiple accents, and the ability to accommodate these receptively and productively is a core skill.

So, to summarize, we need to be realistic about our goals and accept variations in the way we speak whilst preparing learners for the huge variety of ELF pronunciation through practical classroom activities that reflect their needs, raise awareness, and are more achievable. Adaptation/adoption of ELF features is not the adaption/adoption of errors; such features are just seen as a different standard. They are examples of successful applications of a strategy designed to ensure intelligibility in ELF communication, which should be the learner's goal.

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Research Session Papers

A Window into Another World: A Case Study in Two Rural Schools in Sabah, Malaysia

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This study was carried out in two rural schools in the Ranau and Inanam districts in Sabah, Malaysia, to adjudge the perceptions of the local pupils and teachers to visits of non-local educators with different learning approaches. Ten English language lecturers from the Islamic Education Campus Teacher Training Institute Malaysia in Selangor went to Sabah and conducted an English language program in the two rural schools. One hundred and thirty pupils participated in groups to complete five language games at five different stations while the thirty-one teachers attended a workshop on 21st century lesson planning. The findings of this study from questionnaires and interviews showed that the pupils and teachers were enthusiastic and eager to participate in all the activities. The pupils and teachers alike welcomed anyone from outside the school's usual circle of visitors to share knowledge and skills, and requested that more educational visits in the future.

INTRODUCTION

Malaysian teachers are required to attend Continuous Professional Development (CPD) workshops on 21st Century Education and Standard Curriculum for Primary School (KSSR) Lesson Planning to keep up with new developments in the Malaysian education curriculum. New approaches and activities abound in academic circles. Educators are encouraged to share and implement these approaches for positive achievements amongst their pupils. In Malaysian schools, CPD will mostly be run at school, as school-based training has proven to be the most effective form of CPD. It uses a network of peers, including teacher coaches, senior teachers, and principals, to disseminate best practices (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012).

This academic exercise was carried out under the backing of the MBMMBI, the Bahasa Malaysia acronym for "Upholding the National Language and Enhancing the English Language" National Program. One of the key performance indices (KPI) for the English Department is to do a community service responsibility (CSR) project. A team of ten English language lecturers from the Islamic Education Campus Teacher Training Institute (IECTTI) chose a rural school and a semi-urban school in the East Malaysian state of Sabah to do the CSR project. These two schools were chosen for their localities (semi-urban and rural), their teacher and pupil populations, and the school settings as well as ease of administrative management.

The project had two programs, one each for pupils and teachers. The pupils participated in groups to complete five language games at five different stations following the English is Fun concept within the time limit set. The teachers attended a practical hands-on workshop on 21st Century Lesson Planning handled by our own National School Transformation trainer. The global 21st century learning focused on how to best develop the "both/and" range of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and expertise most needed for "now" time. Recent developments in neuroscience have also confirmed that knowledge can best be learned through its real-world application and that an internal "need to know" can provide the motivation necessary for learning complex and challenging content (Thrilling & Fadel, 2009, p. xiv). The 21st Century Lesson Planning workshops prepare teachers to identify the needs of pupils for them to be effective learners.

Shimahara and Sakai (as cited in Kubow & Fossum, 2003, p. 210) opined that the most effective approach to enhancing individual professional teaching competence is regular, informal sharing with colleagues and that this approach has the most significant impact on their teaching, in comparison with other forms of in-service training programs. Ambigapathy, Gitu, Kelly, and Sarjit (2005) say that pedagogical knowledge and teaching skills do exist and need to be acquired somewhere or somehow. Raw context-free knowledge is not enough to create a competent teacher. Hence, a hands-on workshop conducted by a national trainer from "outside the state" is a bonus to them because it is not a regular occurrence for them to get such an opportunity.

One of this study's aims was to ascertain local responses to an "outsider" visit to their school. This is a contentious issue because regionalism or segregation by state is not healthy in a national education system, whether it is just perceived or real. The sense of belongingness of all groups in local communities arises due to certain dominant local groups possibly seeing the locality as "theirs," encroached upon by "others" who are alien and seem not to belong (Gundara, 2000). This sense of belongingness comes about due to certain happenings or circumstances in the local communities that might have affected them deeply in the past. The culture into which a person is born defines the dimensions of that individual's paradigm. Different cultures generate different paradigms and experiences of reality (Diller & Moule, 2005). Habibah, Zaidatol, and Rahil (2005) opined that the role of the "significant others," such as teachers or pupil minders, are important to overcome the mental block that English is difficult to learn, and they themselves need to be trained so that they will be better inclined towards English. With the second decade of the millennium coming almost to the end, it is interesting to know the younger generation's opinion of this "otherness" issue in these two school settings.

The other objectives are to ascertain the level of English proficiency amongst the pupils, their language aspirations, and their perceptions of the visits to their schools. The MBMMBI program had been shelved, and the new Dual Language Program (DLP) had just been implemented. The effect of the new program is yet to be seen in full, and authorities are very optimistic about its long-term effects. The pupils in this study are from the transition group: not MBMMBI, yet not touched by the DLP. The interviews at the closure of the activities will give authentic answers to questions regarding "outside" visitors to the school questions as well as the pupils' language aspirations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and English-for-fun concepts encourage pupils to participate fully and thus learn English in a non-threatening way. Collaborative or cooperative learning is a generic term for various small-group, interactive instructional procedures. Most educationists or language researchers equate collaborative and cooperative learning to mean a similar approach (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2005) with very slight variations existing lexically in their interpretations. Barkley et al. say that some authors use the terms “cooperative” and “collaborative” interchangeably to mean students working interdependently on a common learning task. Learners work together on academic tasks in small groups to help themselves and their teammates learn together. A cooperative or collaborative learning group is usually made up of a team of three to five. Learners work together on common tasks or learning activities that are best handled through group work. Learners are positively interdependent. Activities are structured so that they need each other to accomplish their common tasks or learning activities, yet they are individually accountable or responsible for their work or learning. This learning approach enhances learning by providing a shared cognitive set of information between the learners, motivating them to learn the material, ensuring they construct their own knowledge, providing formative feedback, developing social and group skills necessary for success outside the classroom, and promoting positive interaction between members.

New-millennium pupils learn differently from previous generations. Cooperative or collaborative learning is recognized as one of the most effective learning approaches now available. Meaningful and lasting learning occurs through personal, active engagement. The advantages of collaborative learning for actively engaging students are clear when compared with more traditional methods such as lecture and large group discussions – in which only a few students typically can, or do, participate (Barkley et al.). The implementations of cooperative and collaborative approaches in the study cover much of the need to get meaningful feedback from the pupils and their teachers. As a CSR project for IECTTI, it is able to fulfill our Institute’s KPI and the lecturers’ ways of giving back to the nation via unscheduled, added responsibilities and educational trips.

OBJECTIVES

This study aims to:

- Look into the perceptions of pupils and teachers towards “outside visitors” visiting and leading activities in their schools, sharing learning activities with them.
- Assess pupils and teachers’ acceptance towards new activities in English language learning.
- Assess teachers’ awareness on 21st Century Lesson Planning.

Methodology

Learning activities were carried out for pupils and teachers. These activities were done at five different stations. The five stations are named Word Hunt, Let's Go Fishing, Charades, Running Words, and Opposites Attract. The pupils performed the activities according to the set time limit. Prizes were prepared for the top five winners. At the same time, the teachers attended a practical workshop on 21st Century Lesson Planning handled by our own National School Transformation trainer. Teachers were given certificates of attendance.

The instrument for this research was adopted from a Teacher Training Institute of Malaysia research paper, consisting of eight, short Likert-scale statements and two open-ended questions (see Appendix A). All the participants answered their respective questionnaires after the completion of their programs. Simple unstructured interviews were also carried out with the school headmistress and a senior assistant as well as a few teachers and pupils to elicit their opinions and responses.

Due to the simple nature of this study, it is deemed enough that a simple analytical approach be employed to analyze the gathered data and the information. The analysis of the data collected from the questionnaires was by the simple analytical mean mode. The mean of each item responded to by the pupils and teachers of the two schools were then compared. The responses from the unstructured interviews with the school heads, teachers, and pupils provided us with an understanding of their feelings of academic isolation and a holistic view of their feedback to our visit.

Participants

A total of one hundred and thirty year-six pupils and thirty-one teachers participated in this study carried out in the Ranau (September 25, 2017) and Inanam (September 26, 2017) districts of Sabah in East Malaysia. Pupils from both schools were at varying levels of proficiency of English language. They formed mixed ability groups of at least ten participants for the activities. The sixty-six pupils from Ranau and sixty-four pupils from Inanam participated in five language activities at five different stations in each session. The pupils completed all of the five activities within the stipulated time limit, while practicing the cooperative learning approach.

Nineteen teachers from the Ranau and twelve from the Inanam schools attended the teachers' workshop with practical hands-on sessions on 21st Century Lesson Planning. These CPD sessions for teachers were carried out in the school resource center in each school. The pupils' and teachers' programs were carried simultaneously.

Research Instrument

The instrument for this research was adopted from a Teacher Training Institute of Malaysia research paper, consisting of eight short statements based on the five-point Likert scale and two open-ended questions. Two different instruments were developed for teachers and pupils to give their responses. The two sets of questionnaires had slight variations of questions tailored to the activities that the respondents went through. The data was analyzed using the simple analytical mean mode for items 1–8. The mean of each item responded to by the pupils and teachers of the two schools were then compared. The two open-ended questions provided a holistic summary of this study.

ANALYSIS

Table 1 displays the comparison of the mean of Items 1–8 from pupils of Schools 1 and 2. The result shows the mean of all eight items ranged from 4.50 to 4.84, with the overall mean for School 1 of 4.65 and for School 2 of 4.74. This means that the average pupil response from each school averaged between Agree and Strongly Agree to all the items stated: The event was very interesting to the pupils (4.82 and 4.84) with well-organized activities (4.50 and 4.66) that are suitable to them (4.67 and 4.73). The pupils liked all the activities (4.77 and 4.75) where they learned something new (4.52 and 4.78) that helped them to learn English language better (4.73 and 4.75). They agreed and strongly agreed that they would like to do these activities again in the future (4.65 and 4.70) and that these activities should be carried out in other schools, too (4.52 and 4.70).

TABLE 1. Comparison of Mean of Items 1 – 8 from Pupils of Schools 1 & 2

School\Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean
School 1	4.82	4.50	4.67	4.52	4.77	4.73	4.65	4.52	4.65
School 2	4.84	4.66	4.73	4.78	4.75	4.75	4.70	4.70	4.74

Notes. Item 1: The event is very interesting to me. Item 2: I found the activities are well-organized. Item 3: The activities are very suitable for me. Item 4: I learned something new in this event. Item 5: I like all the activities carried out in this event. Item 6: The activities help me to learn English language better. Item 7: I would like to do these activities again in the future. Item 8: I would suggest that these activities be done in other schools.

TABLE 2. Comparison of Mean of Items 1 – 8 from Teachers of Schools 1 & 2

School\Items	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Mean
School 1	4.74	4.74	4.74	4.74	4.89	4.89	4.89	4.84	4.81
School 2	4.75	4.67	4.75	5.00	4.92	4.83	4.92	4.92	4.85

Notes. Item 1: The event meets my expectation. Item 2: I found the event well-organized. Item 3: The activities are suitable for my pupils. Item 4: I learn something new in this event. Item 5: This event helps my professional development. Item 6: I am very satisfied with all the activities carried out in this event. Item 7: I would be interested to attend a similar event in the future. Item 8: I would recommend this event to other schools.

Table 2 displays the comparisons of the mean of Items 1–8 from teachers of Schools 1 and 2. The results show the mean of all eight items ranges from 4.67 to 5.00 with the overall mean for School 1 being 4.81 and that of School 2 being 4.85. This means that the teachers from both schools responded with responses averaging between Agree and Strongly Agree to all the items stated. The teachers found the event well-organized (4.74 and 4.67) and that it met their expectations (4.74 and 4.75). They learned something new in this event (4.74 and 5.00) that was suitable for the pupils (4.74 and 4.75). The workshop would definitely help their professional development (4.89 and 4.92), and they were very satisfied with all the activities carried out (4.89 and 4.83). The teachers were interested in attending a similar event in the future (4.89 and 4.92) and would recommend this event to other schools, too (4.84 and 4.92).

RESULTS

All the teachers and pupils responded with the value of 4 or 5 (agree and strongly agree) to all eight items. The mean for all items ranged from 4.50 to 5.00, which indicated very positive feedback from both teachers and pupils. The pupils reported that the event brought by the "visitors" was interesting and fun, as they used more English language than usual. Everyone was enthusiastic and participated actively in all the activities within their groups in a competitive spirit. They liked the activities as they learned something new and reported that it helped them learn English language better.

Similarly, teachers were also satisfied with the CPD input. They suggested more visits from vested parties from other divisions of the Education Ministry and especially the Teacher Training Institutes, showcasing different teaching and learning approaches that match the 21st century learning needed by the pupils. CPDs are good ways to narrow or eliminate "academic isolation" and to share knowledge as well as skills amongst teachers and educators.

Based on the interviews conducted, it is inferred that the objectives of this study were achieved and that more interactions of this nature should be carried out in the near future. Interviews with the school heads and the teachers gave us insight into their thirst for knowledge to help them develop professionally. The school heads stated clearly their appreciation of our visits to their schools. The teachers suggested that more interactions of this nature should be carried out in the future for their continuous professional development as well as to help to reduce their feelings of isolation from the mainstream of education. The teachers in these two schools were very enthusiastic towards the sessions that were shared.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study show that the pupils of these rural schools were enthusiastic and eager to participate in all the activities. Most of them welcomed anyone from outside the school's usual circle of visitors to share knowledge and skills. Pupils wanted extra input from fresh sources other than their own teachers to boost their needs and potential in learning the language.

The teachers gave a similar response to the lecturers' arrival and indicated that they need more sharing sessions with others in the education sphere to share experiences, knowledge, and skills to develop professionally. The rural and semi-urban schools they work in are usually small with a small number of teachers, thus very few teachers were assigned for each subject. They feel lost and out of touch with current developments in the education field. These teachers suggested that more visits from vested parties in the education field be planned for their schools so that they can keep up with their counterparts in urban schools as well as to share their problems and challenges faced daily. Then they will not feel isolated and out of touch with current developments in the nation's school system just because they are in rural areas. Both teachers and pupils want to keep up with mainstream education developments and not feel isolated and out of touch. This visit was an eye-opener for them to the possibilities of cooperation with the various education departments in the state and country.

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Appendix A

Sabah Event - PUPIL Feedback Form

Please answer the following questions sincerely. Your sincere responses would be very helpful for us to improve our services to the development of English Language in our primary schools.

Response:

Scale: 1 – 5

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = neutral 4 = agree 5 = strongly agree

		1	2	3	4	5
1	The event is very interesting to me.					
2	I found the activities are well-organized.					
3	The activities are very suitable for me.					
4	I learn something new in this event.					
5	I like all the activities carried out in this event.					
6	The activities help me to learn English language better.					
7	I would like to do these activities again in the future.					
8	I would suggest that these activities to be done in other schools.					

9 The activity that I like best is

______________________________ because ______________________________

10 My suggestion(s):

Thank you for taking the time to complete our feedback form. We take your feedback seriously and will be using it to improve our services.

English Language Department IPG KPI 2017

APPENDIX B

Sabah Event – TEACHER Feedback Form

Please respond to the following questions. Your sincere responses would be very helpful for us to improve our services to the development of English Language in our primary schools.

Response:

Scale: 1 – 5

1 = strongly disagree **2 = disagree** **3 = neutral** **4 = agree** **5 = strongly agree**

	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	The event meets my expectation.					
2	I found the event well-organized.					
3	The activities are suitable for my pupils.					
4	I learn something new in this event.					
5	This event helps my professional development.					
6	I am very satisfied with all the activities carried out in this event.					
7	I would be interested in attending a similar event in the future.					
8	I would recommend this event to other schools.					

9 The activity that I like best is

___________________________________ because ____________________________

10 Suggestion(s), if any:

Thank you for taking the time to complete our feedback form. We take your feedback seriously and will be using it to improve our services.

English Language Department IPG KPI 2017

Student Motivation: A Case Study at a Supplementary Language School

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This exploratory study examines students' motivation in a supplementary language school in Yorkshire, UK. The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors that could be influencing the students' motivation to learn Arabic. Through lesson observations and interviews, the study endeavors to understand the underlying circumstances determining the level of student motivation in this particular school. The findings and pedagogical implications of the research are presented, followed by recommendations that provide insight into motivation in language learners and how it could be tackled.

INTRODUCTION

A ten-year-old daughter of a relative of mine attends a supplementary Arabic school called LS twice a week. Neither she, Samar, nor her parents appear to like the school. Samar says that it is boring, and she sometimes misses class on Fridays. Samar's level of proficiency in Arabic is, according to her mother, unsatisfactory, and her marks are considerably low. Furthermore, whenever Samar's parents communicate with the school, the principle and teachers suggest that Samar is a slow learner. Later, I had the opportunity to meet with the school principal as well as the teachers, who raised a number of issues, among which were: low pay, students' distraction, and lack of motivation. (See Appendix A for information about the teaching staff at LS.)

While conducting a teacher development program at the school, I became strongly interested in observing the situation more closely and hearing the students' point of view as well. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that are affecting student motivation at LS supplementary school through observations and interviews.

Defining Motivation

Defining the term *motivation* seems to be a difficult task. Gardner (2005) remarked that motivation is "multifaceted," and a "broad-based construct." Evans (1998, p. 34) wrote that although there have been a plethora of descriptions of the term "motivation," most major studies "fail to incorporate conceptual definitions" for this term that contain all of its elements.

The term motivation is derived from the Latin verb *movere*, which means "to move." Dörnyei and Otto (1998, as cited in Dörnyei, 2001, p. 7) considered motivation to be "the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates, and evaluates the cognitive and motor process whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out."

I see motivation as a force stemming from a short- or long-term desire that pushes the person to act to achieve a certain goal. This definition takes into account the short- or long-term nature of a desire that is a possible source of motivation. The goal at which someone aims when roused through motivation can be a long-term goal, which needs a number of short-term actions or tasks through which it can be achieved. Importantly, though, the word *certain* in my definition implies direction and accuracy in deciding the goal. The attachment of the word *certain* to the task performed makes the definition focus on the free choice aspect of motivation: The person chooses from a number of different courses of action, the one which would move him or her towards achieving their goal. In sum, this definition covers not only the possibility of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation factors, but also the issue of deliberate choice, direction, and accuracy of a motivated course of action.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants in this study were groups of students from three different classes and grades at the school. The participating students came from different Arab countries including Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Algeria, Sudan, Yemen, Iraq, Palestine, and non-Arab countries such as Pakistan, Iran, Nigeria, India, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and England. They spoke English fluently as they were born and grew up in the UK, and some of them, whose parents spoke Arabic well, were able to speak relatively well in Arabic. However, these were relatively few, and like their other peers, they preferred to speak in English, too. The ages of the students ranged from four to seventeen, and students joined classes depending on their proficiency level rather than age; therefore, classes were mixed and sometimes age gaps existed.

The students at LS attended school two days a week: Fridays (5:30 – 8:30 p.m.) and Sundays (11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.). Some of the students, like Samar, missed classes on Fridays because their parents work, and there was no one to give them a ride to school, not to mention that they were usually too tired to go to evening classes after they had finished their mainstream school. I was not able to choose the participants independently, but after informing the teachers that five participants were required from each class, they preferred to select the students who would be involved. (In fact, this made me a bit worried that they might have chosen the "pick of the bunch"). Their decision was not resisted, but a request was put forward to have in each group students who were (a) males and females, (b) Arabs and non-Arabs, and (c) of different ages.

Data Collection

Classroom Observations

The first set of data was collected by means of unstructured classroom observations. Observations were non-interventionist, as the researcher did not seek to manipulate the situation or subject (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). With this approach, I thought the focus would be on the larger pattern of behavior more holistically and microscopically, and recording and analyzing were easy. Although they have many advantages, observations can also be time-consuming as well as physically and mentally demanding. Moreover, there is always the concern about whether informants consciously change their behavior while being observed (Scott & Morrison, 2005).

However, the hope was that the unstructured observations would provide some rich qualitative data to rely on in the research.

To come up with relatively valid data, nine classes were observed in all; three classes for each of the three teachers. Also, the observations were all drop-in visits. I made clear to the teachers that the observations had nothing to do with their performance appraisals and would remain confidential.

During the observations, the teachers' and the students' behavior in class was described. However, it was noticed that the students felt happy to see me, but some were rather distracted by my presence.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were chosen to be conducted with the students as this type is semi-formal and more flexible, allowing new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says (Cohen et al., 2000). Furthermore, it would be possible to tailor the questions to the interviewees and their context (Lindlof & Taylor 2002, p. 195). Focus group interviews were conducted.

The main focus of the interviews, as well as the main areas to cover, was specified well in advance (Robinson, 2007). There were three focus group interviews. Each of the groups consisted of five students. The interviews were digitally recorded and were conducted during the break times of their classes, lasted 10–16 minutes.

Examining the observation notes, certain predominant themes emerged and helped in the formulation of relevant interview questions. Since there were multiple factors that could influence motivation and demotivation in people, it was believed that open questions would help obtain a specific grasp of what the teachers and the students thought the challenges were. (See Appendix B for the interview questions.)

Data Analysis

Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was used in analyzing the data to discover the participants' main concern (Allan, 2003). When the observation and interview texts were examined, it was possible to identify units of analysis. What appeared to be the most significant issues brought by the participants were highlighted. The aim was to try to discover variables (categories) and their interrelationships as well as to have fairly abstract categories in addition to very concrete ones, as the abstract ones would help to generate a general hypothesis. Appendix C and Appendix D show sample data analysis from observations and interviews. Appendix E compares interview data with observation data and shows which issues were observed in both the interviews and observations.

FINDINGS

In the observations, some of the students of the three teachers – K.D., S.U., and H.F. – showed many signs of demotivation. Some students' continuous inattentiveness and distraction, boredom, and little participation in classroom activities were noticed. On more than one occasion, some students said they were "bored" and what they were doing was "boring." It was also noticed that many of the students in the classes observed were extremely keen on their break. Moreover, during classes, some students were frequently looking back at the observer or were gazing at the drawings and wallpaper on the walls. Students' continuous need for movement and playing with chairs, and putting their heads on the desks were also observed.

In the interviews, some students gave remarks indicating their lack of interest in the school in general. The obvious question that arose was "what could the causes be?" Why were some students not very interested in the school?

After analyzing the data, it was found that the following issues seemed to be the most important factors affecting students' motivation at LS.

Students' Attitude Towards the Arabic Language

It was noticed that Arabic language learning was not an easy task for the students. First, the students were mixed: Arabs and non-Arabs. For the non-Arabs, and even for the Arabs who are not accustomed to it, Arabic sounds considerably complicated. In the interviews, seven out of the fifteen participants said they did not like Arabic very much. Some students spoke of Arabic language learning challenges, which were causing them to feel unenthusiastic about learning the language in spite of its significance to them (Dörnyei, 2001).

In H.F.'s class, for instance, one student brought the issue of the big difference in vocabulary among the Arabic dialects saying, "When we are in our home there's like, we talk different types of Arabic." It is obvious that these differences between the dialects are confusing the students. The reason is that the teachers are all Iraqis, while the students come from different Arab countries, where the dialects and the vocabulary used in the spoken language seem to be very different. The textbook, on the other hand, uses Standard Arabic, which is considerably different.

H.F. remarked that she had been inundated with complaints from the parents that the children were picking up an Iraqi dialect and accent, but she had been striving to speak close to Standard Arabic. H.F. stressed that the Arabic language for the children was "very difficult; they don't understand." One student remarked, "When we write a word at the end it says 'ت'....different kinds of them and sometimes I don't know which one to write" (speaking about confusion between the two forms of the Arabic letter ة ت at the end of words). Yusuf and Maryan spoke of the difficulty in learning the Arabic numbers. Maryan stated, "I enjoy learning it [Arabic], but it's a bit difficult. "Six" [the number] in Arabic is like seven in English." Yusuf mentioned the difficulty to recognize the shape /o/, which is zero in English, but refers to number 5 in Arabic.

Students' Attitude Towards the School

When the fifteen participating students were asked in their interviews if they liked their Arabic language school (LS), the result was as follows: Three students said they did not like it; six said it was so-so (some only gestured indicating approximation); four students said they liked it; and only two said they liked it very much. Table 1 shows the above-mentioned facts.

Table 1. Students' Attitudes Measured by the Question "Do You Like LS School?"

Response	***I do not like it.***	***It is so-so.***	***I like it.***	***I like it very much.***
n	3	6	4	2

Some Teaching Habits and Methods

It was observed that the students are not sufficiently engaged in learning, which might be causing some to become demotivated. A lack of clarity of instructions (Dörnyei, 2001, 2005), lack of variety in the teaching methods (Dörnyei, 1994, 2001, 2005; Oxford, 1999), and giving input that goes beyond some students' level of understanding (Dörnyei, 1994, 2001, 2005) were common issues among the three samples (K.D., S.U., and H.F.) and appear to have a strong impact on the learners' motivation to learn. Appendix F shows examples of the methods, techniques, and habits exhibited by the three teachers.

The Students Involvement in Class

In the classes of K.D., S.U., and H.F., it was observed that many placid students who were naturally quiet were ignored or at least were treated as passive subjects. Sometimes, not everyone was involved in the activities. The teachers did not seem to take into account the students' various personality types and tended to assume that some students were incompetent or uninterested simply because they did not shout out the answers quickly. Therefore, the teachers gave them less attention, and the naturally active students, some of whom might be less competent than the quiet ones, remained in the limelight and received the accolades.

Moreover, neither group work nor pair work was used in the classes that were observed at LS, with the teachers dominating the class talking time.

Teachers' Attitudes Towards the School and the Students

When I first met the nine teachers of LS, all of them looked and sounded unhappy. In the observations, it was noticed that the three teachers rarely smiled and were sometimes ill-tempered, but at different levels. S.U. was tense and impatient with her students, shouting most of the time in her classes. She did not seem to enjoy what she was doing although she affirmed at our first meeting that she had a passion for teaching. During their interview, her five students mentioned how she always shouted. Ahmad said, “She shouts too much...when she gets mad her eyes like...go.” S.U. had already voiced her disapproval concerning a couple of points such as the lack of teaching equipment, the timing of the schooling, some students’ misbehavior, as well as work relationships. She said clearly, “I am not satisfied.” It is worth mentioning that S.U. never smiled during any of her classes and was very serious.

As for H.F., it was observed that she was extremely bored. She was unhappy about her pay, and she mentioned that she had personal problems: she had no access to her children as a new asylum seeker. In her classes, most of the time, she spoke in a monotone, moved very slowly, and looked around and up, before looking the students’ in the eyes. Indeed, although K.D.’s attitude was rather positive, H.F., and S.U.’s attitudes seemed to be negative.

Students’ Relationships with Their Teachers

It was noticed that while K.D. had a good relationship with her students, H.F. and S.U. had relatively cool relations with their students. S.U. shouted a lot and favored girls over boys. In the interview, a student stressed, “She only lets girls sit together, but boys she never.” It was clear during the observations that S.U. was very strict on discipline and even prohibited any student from natural movement. In one of the classes, Farah, one of the students, wanted to move her place, but S.U. stopped her, and did not even allow her to explain why she was moving. S.U. insisted that Farah should not move regardless of the reason.

On occasion, even a student shaking his or her leg would perturb S.U. Faisal remarked that he did not like LS very much because “with a question for water, the answer is always ‘no.’” The students stressed that their teacher never allowed them to go to drink water or use the bathroom.

This lack of rapport between the teacher and the students is not as obvious with H.F. as it was with S.U. In other words, H.F. seemed to have good experience in dealing with her students. It was observed that she was quiet in her classes and the general environment in the class was comfortable to some extent. Still, my relative said that one time H.F. called a student “too slow that he needed a mental health hospital.” The parents complained about her. On the other hand, it was observed that the three teachers sometimes used threats in order to silence their students and get their attention. They also all kept warning against touching any of the drawings and items in the class.

In their interviews, the students said they were generally satisfied with their teachers. Although, I was not sure how reliable this was, as the teachers were present during the interviews, and the students were unlikely to speak their minds. Interestingly though, when S.U. left her students’ interview, I asked the students about how they felt towards their teacher and they said they did not like her. One of them, Hanan, clarified, “I only said I liked the teacher because she was next to me.”

Summary

It can be concluded that the students’ attitude towards Arabic and their school, the teaching methods, the teachers’ negative attitude towards the school, and the way the teachers sometimes treated their students seemed to be the most significant factors influencing the students' motivation at LS. Three of these four factors relate to the teachers. My interpretation of the data is that the teachers seemed greatly responsible for some students' demotivation at LS.

Discussion

Pedagogical Implications: For Better Student Motivation

Motivating students is becoming an increasingly difficult task with the advent of a tremendous amount of distractions of various types, including entertainment options such as television programs and electronic games. The findings of this study suggest that students can be demotivated because of their negative attitude towards the language they are learning. As a result, there does not seem to be an obvious and concise method of maintaining interest and motivation of students in such a case.

Looking at the students wanting to study Arabic at LS, it has been found that some are naturally enthusiastic to learn the language, while others are not interested or regard Arabic as a difficult and confusing language to learn. Nevertheless, what is initially understood is that students' attendance highlights some desire to learn, as not a large percentage of students miss classes at LS in general. It seems likely that the teachers' continued ability to further develop this interest by using stimulating methods of teaching would have a positive impact on their students' motivation.

The teachers at LS could develop the initial interest of students in the subject matter by first providing contextual relevance to each student for coming to school and learning Arabic, and the positive merits involved with learning it: the ability to recite the Quran for Arab and non-Arab Muslims, and the preservation of identity for Arabs. Indeed, I do not think this could happen in a tense atmosphere where the students are always shouted at and threatened. Language educators share the view that effective teaching does not only involve imparting knowledge; rather, creating the appropriate and positive environment that encourages the students to learn and be creative should be at the top of the list of priorities of the language teachers.

Developing an open and constructive environment first, where students feel relaxed to share their thoughts and opinions would make the students feel at home and also further develop interest and motivation in the subject (Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 2005; Sass, 1989).

On the other hand, it is hard for the students to think clearly or study if they need the bathroom or they are thirsty like in S.U.'s class. The students have physical needs as well as the needs for feeling safe and secure in a positive and constructive classroom environment. The need for having an intimate relationship with the teacher and the need to feel respected and recognized are all lacking in S.U.'s class and therefore negatively affecting the students' motivation and precluding them from growing as individuals (Maslow, 1943).

After this positive and constructive environment is established, teaching methods need to be considered. First, the instructions need to be clear and concise. Teachers are facilitators of learning, and providing the students with clear and concise instructions that are easily understood is vitally important for learning. Second, the teachers should resort to a variety of methods to teach the material by making sure that young learners are given different learning tasks that would stimulate their interest and prevent boredom.

In addition, it is significant to perceive the students as capable individuals who come to learn and improve; and therefore, students should be engaged as much as possible (Spaulding, 1992). This is crucial to nurturing learning and maintaining a healthy relationship between the teachers and their students. Students whose opinions are respected, and for whom participation is encouraged and valued, are more likely to take an active role in the classroom and contribute a great deal to their own understanding of the subject. It would also develop their self-confidence and self-belief in their abilities.

Further enhancement of students' ability as well as motivation revolves around providing them with greater autonomy, and this can be done through cooperative learning where teachers create opportunities for students to develop their own learning through working in groups and carrying out presentation work. Being allowed to analyze their own performance and that of their peers would give the students a greater degree of control in their learning, which is a crucial ingredient to developing their thought processes and maintaining their motivation and interest in the subject matter throughout (Burden, 1997; Dickenson, 1995; Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 2005; Spaulding, 1991).

Moreover, the students seem to be in dire need of being given the chance to speak Arabic in class. Cutting down on teacher talking time and allowing more student talking time through speaking activities, and pair work and group work would certainly build the students' confidence in speaking Arabic.

Another aspect to take into account is that the students have varying motivation levels at different times for things, and the teachers' understanding of each student's specific needs would doubtlessly improve the teacher's ability to cater to each student's specific requirements at different times.

Conclusions and Recommendations

From a broad perspective, the situation at LS seems to be a complex one. Due to the lack of resources, the considerably variable quality of teaching in this supplementary school as well as the students' feeling that Arabic is not important, the problems at LS seem difficult to solve. Therefore, further research is needed for the students studying the Arabic language and the teachers teaching them at supplementary schools in the UK. The identity issue seems significant here and requires due consideration, as I feel that not only are the students' and their parents' identities at risk, but also the teachers' as well. I tend to think that many of them appear to develop a mixed identity, or possibly are moving towards losing their identities.

In my view, there is somewhat of a catch-22 situation when it comes to motivation for both teachers and students, which might be resolved by looking at how the two are interrelated and implementing a mutually agreeable strategy for improvement. This provides an opportunity for further research into what motivates teachers and students in a language school setting. It is particularly interesting to mention the fact that in the case of Samar, and probably many other students at LS, it is her mother who is concerned about maintaining identity and not necessarily Samar. Obviously, any research undertaken would have to consider this third party viewpoint. Exactly whose identity is being preserved? How is it possible to inspire a young person, born in the UK, to preserve an identity that they are removed from geographically? Moreover, is it possible to combine cultural preservation and language learning? Might it be better to focus on the needs of the students and consider ways in which to encourage them to learn Arabic for themselves as part of their individual personal development?

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APPENDIX A

Teachers' Information

Characteristic	Teacher		
	K.D.	S.U.	H.F.
Gender	Female	Female	Female
Nationality	Iraqi	Iraqi	Iraqi
Degree	High School	High School	Bachelor of Science
Teaching experience	9 years	5 years	12 years
Grade	2	1	3
Subjects	All	All	All
Students' age range	8 - 12	7 - 12	7 - 15

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

- How do you feel when you come to LS?
- How do you compare LS to your English School? Which do you like better? Why?
- What things do you not like about this school?
- What is your favorite subject?
- Do you enjoy learning Arabic?
- How often do you miss classes at LS? Why?

APPENDIX C

Main Themes of the Lesson Observations

Topic	Observations
Teachers' attitudes	H.F. was bored, and S.U. was tense and nervous.
	All three teachers rarely smiled or joked.
Student - teacher relationships	S.U. showed poor rapport, but H.F. and K.D. showed acceptable rapport.
	All the teachers were overly strict, making demands such as "No movement," "No water," and "Don't touch!" This created a tense environment.
Teaching styles	TTT (teacher talking time) style dominated; all the teachers used very little STT (student talking time).
	All the teachers lacked variety in their teaching ideas, which led to a lack of student engagement and difficulties in eliciting student input.
Students' attitudes toward Arabic	Some students did not appear to be very interested in Arabic.

APPENDIX D

Students' Interview Data

Topic	Interview Results
Teachers' attitudes	N/A
Student - teacher relationships	S.U. shouted and treated the students unfairly, according to the interviews with four of the five students in her class. They also stated that SU was inflexible.
Teaching styles	N/A
Students' attitudes toward Arabic	Of the 15 total students, seven said that they were not keen to learn Arabic, and six mentioned having challenges in learning Arabic.

APPENDIX E

Comparison Between Observational and Interview Data

Observation	Interview
Students' negative attitudes toward Arabic	Students' negative attitudes toward Arabic
Lack of school equipment	Lack of school equipment
Teaching methods	Difficulty of learning Arabic
Student - teacher relationships	Work relationships
	Low salaries
	Students' attitudes toward the school

Appendix F

Teaching Habits

Teacher	Teaching Habit	Examples
K.D. & H.F.	Method for teaching reading	K.D. and H.F. read each passage twice and explained and translated every word; then, each student read in turn. This was the only method that the teachers used to teach reading.
H.F. & S.U.	Use of a very loud or monotone speaking voice	S.U. used a very loud voice in her lessons. H.F. never altered her intonation and spoke in a monotone at all times.
S.U.	Method for teaching grammar	S.U. presented a theoretical description of grammar points but only provided four examples to explain Arabic pronouns.
K.D., H.F., & S.U.	Teacher-centered style that limits students' speaking time	All the teachers dominated their classes' speaking time; none of them assigned activities for pairs or groups. The teachers generally did not give students the chance to speak during the class.
K.D., H.F., & S.U.	Repetition of lessons	All the teachers repeated a lesson over 3 days. (Thus, the lesson took 3 weeks to complete, as lessons were usually taught on Sundays.)
K.D. & S.U.	Unclear or ineffective instructions	K.D. did not clearly explain the exercises or the activities. A student complained, "I am confused." S.U.'s students were unable to understand the instructions for a written test. A student complained, "I can't read this."
K.D., H.F., & S.U.	Insufficient time for answering questions due to teacher interruptions	When students experienced some difficulty when reading, all the teachers immediately said the words that the students were struggling with.
K.D., H.F., & S.U.	Ineffective use of the whiteboard	All the teachers wrote in small script, did not organized the board properly, or did not use the board at all.
K.D., H.F., & S.U.	Use of demotivating language	"You are completely lazy today." (K.D.) "Don't ask so quickly." (K.D., irritably) "Who can read better than that?" (H.F.) "Repeat in a way that is not so sleepy." (H.F.) "Don't touch that." (all the teachers, irritably)
K.D. & S.U.	Incomprehensible input	K.D. read a whole passage very quickly, and the students could not follow her. S.U. explained the interpretations of 16 Quranic verses in detail in just 30 min.
K.D., H.F., & S.U.	Poor student engagement	All the teachers seemed unaware that some of the students were not involved in the activities. In each class, at least four students were completely ignored.

Voicing Pattern Learnability of Interdental Fricatives

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The present study demonstrates how phonetic knowledge of the interdental fricatives in English develops in EFL learners. A total of 144 EFL students in Japan responded to the question of whether the focused sound, represented by the digraph "th," should be voiced or not. Results show that the judgment scores for the sound appearing in 20 words did not correlate with the participants' proficiency scores on the whole. In particular, the voiced sound in some less frequently appearing words was not correctly identified because of inference and association with certain sound-symbol correspondences that they already knew. It is assumed that the word-initial "th" sound is relatively difficult for English learners in East Asia to acquire not only because the interdental fricatives do not occur in the phoneme inventories of their L1s, but also because the word-initial voiced obstruents are in a phonologically irregular placement in Korean and Japanese, for example. Thus, the development of L2 phonetic knowledge, L1 phonological transfer, and the specific application of the mental lexicon were observed, and those properties should require more attention in L2 education.

BACKGROUND

Sound recognition begins with one's first language (e.g., Best, McRoberts, & Sithole, 1988; Flege, 1987; Polka, 1992). For example, Korean consonants are contrastive in the glottis features; therefore, Koreans may have difficulty distinguishing the [voice] feature, [p] and [b], for the identically spelled letter /b/ in English in word-initial position. Japanese may have an issue in discriminating [z] from [s] in word-internal or word-final position as observed among French, Swedish, and Finnish speakers (Asai, 2016; Baker, 1980; Flege & Hillendrand, 1986).

In the languages of the world, voiced fricatives appear less often than their voiceless counterparts; in particular, interdental fricatives are rarely used phonemes (Maddieson, 1984; Pullum & Ladusaw, 1996). Indeed, interdental fricatives are quite unique sounds, and thus may be substituted with other sounds which are familiar to speakers, typically [t, d] or [s, z] (Brannen, 2002; Teasdale, 1997). Particularly, the stimuli of [Θ, ð] can lead to the largest variety of perception for Korean L1 speakers (Cho, 2012; Schmidt, 1996). High proficiency is needed to achieve the perception and production of such distinctive sounds (Schmidt, Gilbers, & Nota, 2014). Phonetic perceptions and the resultant substitutions with particular phonemes belonging to the speakers' L1s have been extensively researched, but the characteristics of sound recognition concerning the position effect on which location a target phoneme is placed in a word are expected to be investigated further in today's classroom (Asai, 2016).

Study Purpose

According to the above-mentioned background information, the present study aimed to learn about phonetic recognition of the interdental median fricatives in English by EFL learners at the present-day college level in Japan, particularly in terms of the sound positions within words.

Survey Methods

The participants in the present survey were 160 students enrolled in their first year at two four-year universities in Japan in 2017 and 2018. Their English proficiency was measured with a reading and grammar test. Reading and grammar tests were well constructed and available with relatively higher reliability than listening and speaking assessments at the local settings.

The target sounds were determined according to a preliminary survey given to 201 students in 2016 with almost the same profile as those in the present survey. The words in question were therefore selected in a wide range of difficulty, to wit: *mouth*, *teeth*, *thought*, *though*, *thus*, *author*, *smooth*, *growth*, *worthy*, *clothe*, *thumb*, *sympathy*, *seething*, *methane*, *tether*, *wreaths*, *thatch*, *thirtieth*, *mouther*, *and orthoepy*.

The 160 participants judged whether the "th" letter set in these 20 words should be sounded [θ] or [ð] and entered their answers on the paper-based worksheet with no reward. Sixteen students missed answering at least one question, and thus those data were not used in the later calculation.

Survey Results

The participants' proficiency levels varied broadly from the high-beginning level (STEP Grade 4 or CEFR A1 level) to the low-advanced (STEP Grade Pre-1 or CEFR B2 level) (Amma, 2011; Council of Europe, 2001; Dunlea & Matsudaira, 2009; Hamada, 2015; Sarich, 2012), and their levels were divided into 10 classes as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1. The table lists the ratios of answering correctly on the present phonetic knowledge survey. For instance, the value .60 indicates that 21 participants answered correctly in a range of 40 to 49 percent for the STEP proficiency test, and that they responded to the phonetic knowledge questions correctly at 60 percent on average. The proficiency bands at both ends of the proficiency scale have only a small number of participants to which the bands apply, and thus have a low level of reliability for the data. "Correct ratio" in the caption refers to the ratio of answering correctly. The vertical bars in Figure 1 indicate the number of participants to which the proficiency score bands apply. The bold lines indicate the average ratios for answering correctly shown on the right-hand vertical scale to the phonetic knowledge questions by the participants belonging to each proficiency band.

Figure 2 shows the distributions of ratios of answering correctly to the phonetic knowledge questions as a function of proficiency test scores by three question groups: word-initial voiceless, word-internal voiceless, and word-final voiceless. In the caption, the word-initial voiceless is, for example, abbreviated as "initial θ" in order to refer to its position in a word. In a similar manner, Figure 3 exhibits the distributions of ratios of answering correctly by three question groups: word-initial voiced, word-internal voiced, and word-final voiced.

TABLE 1. Ratios of Answering Correctly by Proficiency Levels

Proficiency Bands	No. of Participants	Ratios of Answering Correctly
0-9	0	-
10-19	0	-
20-29	6	.55
30-39	10	.58
40-49	21	.60
50-59	22	.68
60-69	24	.68
70-79	29	.68
80-89	26	.76
90-100	6	.65

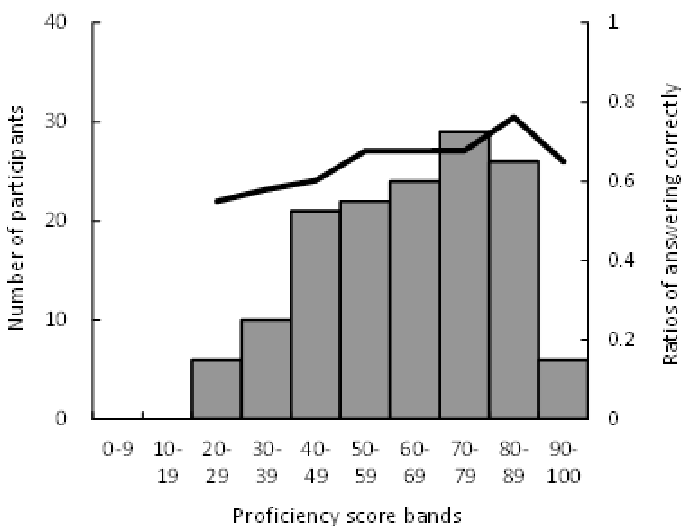

FIGURE 1. Distributions of participants' proficiency levels and correct ratios.

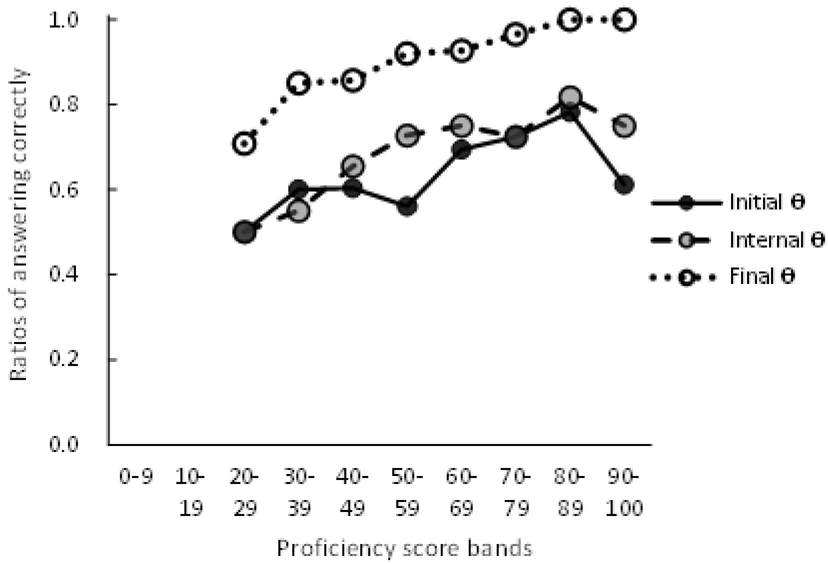

FIGURE 2. Voiceless interdental fricative knowledge distributions by sound position.

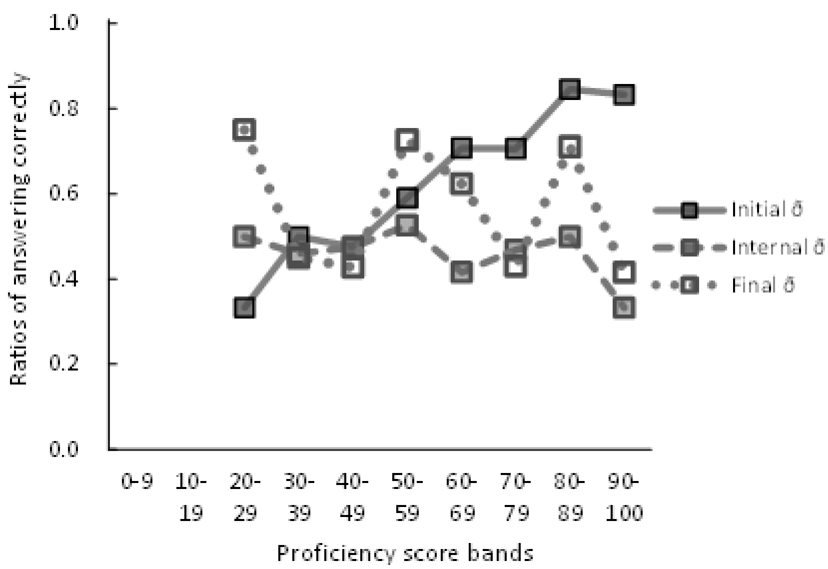

FIGURE 3. Voiced interdental fricative knowledge distributions by sound position.

DISCUSSION

On the whole, the judgment scores for the sound appearing in the 20 survey words did not seem to correlate with the participants' proficiency levels as drawn in Figure 1. However, as seen in Figures 2 and 3, the correct answer ratios for the word groups of word-internal voiceless, word-final voiceless, and word-initial voiced sounds reflected the proficiency levels of learners. The more highly proficient participants showed higher rates of answering correctly to those questions. This can reveal part of the development of L2 phonetic knowledge. The ratio of answering correctly for the word-initial voiced sounds by low proficient participants was below a chance level of 0.5. This means that those participants associated the sound in the words with some other words they already knew. Indeed, *though* and *thatch* could be confused with *thought* and *that*, respectively, because of the similarities in spelling. In addition, *thus* and *thumb* are not heavily used words for beginning- to intermediate-level EFL learners.

The correct answer ratios for the word groups of word-internal voiced and word-final voiced sounds did not agree with the proficiency levels of the learners. Each word group did not contain enough words to discuss it statistically, but those tendencies toward confusion like *cloth* and *clothe* or *worth* and *worthy* are observed even in advanced-level classrooms. In addition, the question group of word-internal voiced sounds includes some difficult words that English learners do not frequently see in generally used textbooks or readers. In fact, *author* is a frequent word, but *mouther* and *orthoepy* appear at very small rates of occurrences in most corpuses. The answer to these rare words needs some inference, and the answer may reflect a participant's ability to guess based on their phonetic and lexical knowledge. If a participant used inference from frequently appearing words with the interdental voiced fricative such as *farther*, they would answer the word-internal voiced sound correctly. In the case of the present questions, they must have applied their lexical knowledge of a related word *mouth* with the voiceless sound to the sound in *mouther*. If participants had made such voiceless and voiced correspondence, for example *north* and *northern* and *moth* and *mother*, with the *mouth–mouther* pair in the present questions, they could answer the questions correctly. The low score in this section indicates direct employment of their phonetic knowledge. That tendency of application was confirmed in the scores for other question pairs, (e.g., *worth–worthy* and *teeth–tether*). These findings indicate that participants may guess the sound of a newly encountered word based on their phonetic knowledge of individual words but that they will not regularize phonetic sequential patterns by the priority of frequency of contact and internalize the phonological system (Lahiri & Marslen-Wilson, 1991; Lombardi, 1999).

Furthermore, the word-final "th" questions resulted in a low score since East Asians tend to transfer their L1 phonological recognition that the sound "s" after long or consecutive vowels is likely judged as voiceless. Learning these phonetic configurations is a tough task for some EFL learners in East Asia. Thus, EFL learners' learning patterns involve both phonological and phonetic factors to which teachers should devote increased attention.

Conclusion

A total of 144 EFL students at the high-beginning to low-advanced proficiency level in Japan responded to the question of whether the focused sound, represented by the digraph "th," should be voiced or not. Results show that the highly proficient participants could not answer the sounds in 20 words correctly, particularly the word-internal voiced and word-final voiced sounds, and suggest that (a) the learners may apply their L1 phonological knowledge, that (b) they may extend their L2 phonetic knowledge directly to newly encountered words, and that (c) they may regularize frequently appearing spellings and those sounds, and internalize such patterning within their mental lexicon specifically on a word-by-word basis.

Limitations and Remaining Issues

In order to create a more statistically precise discussion, we should present more words in a larger range of frequency of occurrence to more learners.

The present study demonstrated the current situation of phonetic knowledge of Japanese learners of English at the college level, and it is expected to expand the scope for other L1 speakers in East Asia.

Acknowledgments

The author thanks Yuka Ishikawa and Akinori Konishi for their considerate cooperation as well as the participants in this survey. The author also appreciates Michael McCafferty for his helpful comments on language. The author is solely responsible for any insufficient descriptions or graphics, oversights, or errors that may remain.

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Strong Task-Based Instruction: Teachers' Perceptions and Practices in a South Korean Secondary School

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The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to investigate Korean secondary school EFL teachers' perceptions of task-based language teaching and to assess if instructors were inclined towards implementing TBLT in their classroom practices. The participants were 10 secondary school EFL teachers in Chungcheongnam-do, South Korea. The main instruments for data collection were questionnaires, classroom observations, and follow-up interviews. The results showed high consensus with empirical second language acquisition research that guides core TBLT principles; however, classroom observations revealed discrepancies between teachers' perceptions and practices. Teachers did not adopt TBLT, with the grammar-translation method or task-supported language teaching being preferred. Findings suggest one factor hindering communicative teaching related to negative washback associated with high-stakes examinations. It could be concluded that more context-sensitive approaches may be more situationally appropriate if teachers hope to integrate more communication-focused directives into lessons.

INTRODUCTION

In the South Korean context, various studies have investigated the suitability of implementing task-based language teaching (TBLT) (I. J. Jeon, 2006; Park, 2016). Few studies, however, have analyzed empirical data from authentic classrooms in which TBLT takes place. In particular, secondary schools are underrepresented in local research literature. To this author's knowledge, no studies in the context attempt to analyze the principles of second language acquisition (SLA) that inform a strong version of task-based instruction (TBI) in relation to the views of secondary school teachers. This study, therefore, aimed to investigate South Korean secondary school English teachers' perceptions and practices towards the core theoretical principles that guide a strong version of TBI.

The project's purpose had three aims: (a) to uncover Korean teachers' perceptions of the core principles of strong TBLT, (b) to discover to what extent teachers used TBLT in their classrooms, and (c) to examine if the responses teachers expressed on their questionnaires were equivalent to their observed classroom practices. To achieve these goals, the author posed the following questions:

1. What are South Korean secondary school English teachers' perceptions of

the core principles underlying a strong version of task-based instruction?
2. Were the secondary school teachers' classroom practices consistent with the responses they expressed on the questionnaire?

Literature Review

TBLT Background

To gain insights into TBLT's core features, it is necessary to briefly examine its fundamentals. TBLT is a teaching approach that began as a logical development of communicative language teaching (CLT). In TBLT, meaningful language use during real communication is viewed as crucial for language learning, and tasks are employed as central mechanisms to promote language acquisition (Bygate, 2016). As Ellis (2009) points out, TBLT is based on the assumption that the learner's natural capacity for language learning will proceed more successfully if the learner is exposed to contexts in which learning can be nurtured, and not systematically taught the language in individual bite-size pieces.

Defining "Task"

The concept of "task" has been subject to a wide range of interpretations. For the purposes of this project, Rod Ellis's (2003) definition of task will provide a model, as it is representative of general areas of research agreement (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). Tasks should comprise a plan for learner activity; get learners to interact pragmatically; and close an information, opinion, or reasoning gap without specifying the language forms that they will utilize; involve language use that reflects real-world communication; focus on receptive and/or productive skills; require cognitive processes such as classifying, ordering, reasoning and evaluating information; and have a clearly stated goal that can be met by learners to finish the task (Ellis, 2003).

Strong and Weak Approaches to Task-Based Instruction

Strong task-based approaches involve tasks forming the foundation for entire language programs (Ellis, 2003). Strong TBI assumes SLA is the result of similar processes as first language acquisition, views tasks as the primary mechanism to propel language development forward, and eschews the pre-selection of grammatical structures delivered through focused tasks designed to draw learner attention to particular language forms (Ellis, 2003). No pre-selected forms are specified, providing learners the choice of whichever language forms they wish to use to complete a task, catering to their differing levels of developmental readiness (Carless, 2009).

In the weaker form of TBI, task-supported language teaching (TSLT), tasks are combined with a linguistic syllabus through focused tasks employed in the final stage of a presentation-production-practice (PPP) methodology (Ellis, 2013). Learners are exposed to simplified dialogues and passages implanted with a high density of pre-selected linguistic forms, which are practiced extensively through exercises and followed by a free practice phase resembling little more than an expanded grammar exercise (Long, 2015).

The Core Principles of Task-Based Instruction

Two sets of instructional principles grounded in SLA findings, classroom research, and educational curriculum design, provided the project's foundation and were the basis for the study's questionnaire: Rod Ellis's *Principles of Instructed Learning and Teaching* (2005), and Michael Long's *Ten Methodological Principles of TBLT* (2015). Both principle sets are generally recognized by researchers as being required for language development. They provide a pedagogical blueprint for strong TBI, are consistent with task-based pedagogy, and contain universally agreed-upon instructional design components that are crucial for SLA.

Key Characteristics of Ellis's and Long's Principles

Ellis's and Long's principles contain eight related groupings of pedagogical concepts, which have been arranged by this author based on similarities. The groups, and Ellis's and Long's principles informing their selection, appear in Table 1.

Table 1. The 8 Instructional Principle Groups

	Principle Group	Ellis's Principles	Long's Principles
1	Focus on form.	3	6
2	Formulaic language and rule-based competence.	1	5
3	Task-based syllabus implementation.	Not directly stated.	1
4	L2 interaction, output, and a focus on meaning.	2, 7, 8	2, 9
5	Implicit knowledge, explicit knowledge, and negative feedback.	4	7
6	The learner's built-in syllabus and developmental processes.	5	8
7	Extensive, rich, and elaborated input.	6	3, 4
8	Individual learner differences and individualized instruction.	9	10

Notes. L2 = second language.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss each principle group extensively; however, the most crucial will be detailed in relevance to strong TBI before moving on.

First, successful L2 instruction requires a focus on form, which in strong TBI, concerns highlighting attention to grammar reactively in the context of task performance. When learners briefly pause while processing language for meaning, and switch to attending to the language itself, problem forms can be reactively targeted by the learner's developing language system, and better harmonize with the learner's current processing ability and developmental stage (Long, 2015).

Second, formulaic language chunks, such as *wh*-questions, are quickly retrieved from memory and are required for language fluency (Wray, 2002).

However, such chunks are incomplete and require rule-based competence to arrange coherently (Moser, 2005). Thus, strong TBI attempts to create conditions using tasks where learners process language for fluency and meaning first, and build in structural and grammatical meaning later (Willis, 2003).

Third, successful instruction employs the use of a task-based syllabus but avoids using tasks to deliver a linguistic syllabus.

Fourth, effective instruction caters to pragmatic meaning, where language acts as a communicative tool, not as an object of study (Ellis, 2005). Opportunities to produce output, especially when learners are stretched to express their messages more clearly during interaction, assist in noticing gaps between learner's current and desired language competencies (Swain, 1998). Interactional opportunities that cater to meaning negotiation, where learners attempt to resolve communication breakdowns and that prompt corrective feedback and recasts are also imperative as learners can be exposed to new linguistic forms (Long, 1996b) and achieve more accurate output (East, 2012).

Fifth, effective instruction should develop both implicit, unconscious language knowledge and explicit, conscious language knowledge. Implicit knowledge is necessary for fluent language production, and explicit knowledge primes important language acquisition processes, facilitating and speeding SLA (Ellis, 2005). SLA researchers agree that language proficiency rests on balancing both knowledge types. Through tasks, strong TBLT attempts to strike such a balance, prioritizing implicit knowledge but not neglecting explicit knowledge.

Sixth, effective instruction caters to the built-in learner syllabus. At certain developmental stages learners can only produce and understand language that their current language processor capacity can manage (Pienemann, 2003). As learners are at differing developmental stages, what is presented in the classroom cannot be guaranteed to lead to acquisition. Thus, language courses should not impose what learners at certain developmental levels need to learn and know. Research shows that SLA does not comprise a set of accumulated language structures, and learners do not move from zero knowledge to native-like mastery of forms one at a time (Long, 2015). Strong TBI catering to the learner syllabus is threefold: (a) There is no imposed instructional sequence, (b) errors are recognized as inevitable and assist in developing a working language system, and (c) focus-on-form episodes generated during interaction draw learners' attention to form in response to learner-generated problems.

Lastly, successful instruction maximizes input by making the L2 the instructional medium. Learners also need exposure to rich sources of comprehensible input, so commercially published, linguistically simplified texts are not recommended, and authentic materials originally intended for native speakers contain rich input, but may be beyond the knowledge of many learners. Instead of simplified texts, which starve learners of input they need to progress with acquisition, localized authentic texts can be elaborated by providing text redundancy. Repetition, paraphrase, synonyms of low-frequency lexical items, and use of full noun phrases instead of anaphors can improve comprehensibility by exposing learners to unknown language rather than excluding or simplifying.

Related TBLT Studies in Korea

Related TBLT studies in Korea reveal similar issues facing teachers. Instructors approved of the pedagogical benefits of tasks, and conveyed practical understanding of TBLT's core concepts (I. J. Jeon, 2006; J. H. Jeon, 2009), but various obstacles such as large class sizes, disciplinary problems, teachers' oral proficiencies and lack of L2 confidence, lack of access to communicative materials and impractical training, and fixation on high-stakes examinations hindered implementation. In a college context, Park's (2016) findings revealed that strong TBLT was not conducive to SLA, as students were not used to experiential, collaborative learning.

METHODS

To answer the research questions, provide an intensive look at secondary school teachers' perceptions of TBLT's core principles, and assess teacher preference for lesson approach, this project adopted a mixed-methods quantitative and qualitative research design involving questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations as the main data collection instruments.

Participants and Research Instruments

The 10 participants in this study, Korean EFL teachers at a private secondary school in Chungcheongnam-do, South Korea, were selected for their knowledge of the education system, but also out of necessity, for being the only Korean teachers accessible to the author. Four (4) participants instructed freshman-level students, 3 instructed sophomores, and 3 taught seniors. The teachers were all asked to fill out a questionnaire, with 3 consenting to interviews. Five (5) of the teachers permitted the author to observe their classes and gather data. In total, 10 paper questionnaires were administered, with a total completion and return rate of 100%. In this project, quantitative and qualitative instruments were used to gather data. The three instruments are detailed below.

Questionnaire

In keeping with research essentials, a trial questionnaire was developed and piloted to ensure a reliable, valid outcome. Then, a final three-part questionnaire gathered information on (a) the personal background of each participant, (b) the participant's perceptions of the core principles of TBLT, and (c) the participant's opinions of TBLT.

Interviews

Three 30-minute interviews were arranged and held with one teacher from each of the three grade levels: freshman, sophomore, and senior. Interviews were semi-structured so answers could deviate from topics to facilitate more detailed responses. Due to institutional constraints, no senior-level lessons could be observed, so a senior instructor was interviewed to attempt to close the observation data gap. Questions were recycled from the questionnaire to expand on the closed-item data with richer qualitative data.

Observations

Field notes were recorded during observation of five 50-minute English lessons in autumn 2017. Observations were scheduled in accordance with teaching timetables, and featured freshmen- and sophomore-level classes. The aim was to record lesson tasks, activities, and methodology to assess instructors' inclinations for strong or weak TBI. Notes were compared with questionnaire and interview responses to determine if participants' self-reported beliefs differed from observed practices. The observations were conducted to provide a more objective account of classroom events than second-hand data.

Data Analysis

As this study involved small-scale research, questionnaire data analysis required simple mathematical procedures to assess: percentages, averages, and mean scores. A five-point Likert scale was employed to calculate scores. The scoring system was as follows: strongly disagree = 1 point, disagree = 2 points, undecided = 3 points, agree = 4 points, strongly agree = 5 points. Mean results were coded by assigning each response option a number for scoring purposes. Scores for items relating to the same target were added up and averaged. Interview data was audio-recorded and transcribed to provide richer information than could be obtained from the questionnaire alone.

Results and Discussion

Korean EFL Teachers' Perceptions of TBLT Core Principles

Review of participants' overall perceptions on the survey section (Q1–Q40) revealed high agreement with strong TBI principles in 30 of the 40 items (75%), disagreement with 4 items (10%) corresponding to weak TBI preferences, and uncertainty with 6 items (15%). Data from the eight principle groups are ranked from highest to lowest mean in Table 2 in accordance with the questionnaire results.

Table 2. Principle Groups Overall Mean Rank

Rank	Group Number and Principles	Survey Items	Mean
1	Group 8: Individual learner differences and individualized instruction	9, 17, 29	4.56
2	Group 4: L2 interaction, output, and a focus on meaning	6, 14, 21, 26, 32, 37, 38	4.10
3	Group 6: The learner's built-in syllabus and developmental processes	2, 4, 15, 16, 19, 33	4.05
4	Group 3: Task-based syllabus implementation	12, 20, 28	4.03
5	Group 7: Extensive, rich, and elaborated input	5, 8, 11, 18, 31, 36	3.93
6	Group 2: Formulaic language and rule-based competence	1, 3, 27, 34	3.85
7	Group 1: Focus on form	10, 22, 24, 25, 35	3.78
8	Group 5: Implicit knowledge, explicit knowledge, negative feedback	7, 13, 23, 30, 39, 40	3.52

Participants showed the highest agreement with Group 8. For example, participants strongly agreed that SLA would be more successful if the level of instruction matched the ability level of the students (Q9). In Group 4, participants strongly agreed that social interaction was needed to acquire a language effectively (Q38). In Group 6, participants strongly agreed that students acquire a second language according to their own internal language system, which progresses at a different speed for each student (Q19). In Group 3, participants strongly agreed that a task-based learning program could be effective for SLA (Q20); however, they also strongly agreed that SLA is a gradual accumulation of structures that are accumulated piece by piece until a whole is formed (Q12), a concept that aligns with weak TBI. In Group 7, participants strongly agreed that the more second language input students are exposed to in the classroom, the more successful their language acquisition will be (Q8). Additionally, they disagreed that language programs based on commercially published textbooks could be effective for SLA (Q11). In Group 2, participants agreed that although formulaic sequences play a large role in increasing a student's grammatical competence (Q1), they also agreed that breaking sentences into constituent parts and analyzing them in terms of metalanguage was effective for acquisition (Q27). In Group 1, participants agreed that language rules could be implicitly acquired as learners worked on a communicative task (Q10), and somewhat agreed that learners could be pushed to notice errors they produced during the process of task interaction (Q22, Q35). However, participants were undecided as to whether communicative interaction alone was sufficient to acquire language effectively (Q24). The lowest agreement with the principles was shown in Group 5. Participants disagreed that grammatical structures needed to be pre-taught or explained before a task (Q7), and somewhat agreed that grammatical structures would be better analyzed after task completion (Q40). Participants also agreed with correcting student's errors indirectly through recasts (Q23), and somewhat agreed with correcting student errors directly (Q30).

Comparing Korean EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Classroom Practices

First, on the survey section of the questionnaire, teachers strongly agreed with the core principles of TBLT, and that a task-based syllabus caters to individual learning differences by not specifying the language forms that will be used in a lesson. Despite teachers' strong conviction in the value of tasks to individualize instruction, observations revealed that no lessons featured tasks as the central focus. When participants used tasks, they appeared to complement structural teaching in a task-supported, not task-based manner.

Second, results showed strong agreement that L2 communication is necessary for effective target language use, and promotes beneficial acquisitional processes such as meaning negotiation; however, the participants were unsure about providing opportunities for L2 classroom interaction. For instance, two of the five observed lessons were grammar translation lectures, and students had little chance for L2 communication. In the other three observed lessons, which followed a more eclectic approach, instructors facilitated L2 communication opportunities, but a paucity of English was produced, and there was little encouragement nudging learners to use the L2. L2 student interaction seemed to be neither expected nor deemed important due to the influence of the college entrance exam. One interviewee explained that "in the Korean situation, especially for high school students, the main purpose of learning foreign English is to get good grades on the *su-neung* [the College Scholastic Ability Test; CSAT]." Thus, the findings indicated that although teachers expressed high agreement with strong principles underpinning interaction, output and a focus on pragmatic meaning, their classroom practices did not completely correspond to self-reported responses. Washback from high-stakes examinations seems to play a large part in impeding TBLT due to the omission of productive skills testing, which is consistent with other findings in the context (Moodie & Nam, 2016).

Third, results revealed that language class content was not believed to be in harmony with the learner's built-in syllabus. Participants agreed that learners should ideally be developmentally ready to acquire new language forms. One interviewee stated, "I have to wait [and] respect the students' language acquisition ability ... because one student is very fast in English, but other students are slow, but I don't push them." Self-reported results suggested an appreciation for cognitive readiness; however, observations showcased no such appreciation. All observed lessons featured, to some extent, structural pedagogic approaches or methods; for instance, grammar-translation lectures with activities based on memorization. Although teachers highly agreed with the principles underlying the learner syllabus and developmental processes, their classroom practices neither corresponded with their questionnaire responses, nor with their beliefs disclosed during interviews.

Fourth, participants believed a task-based language program would be effective for students' SLA. On the open-ended questions comprising the third section of the questionnaire, half the participants expressed a desire to use TBLT in their future lessons. Conversely, survey responses and most observations revealed alignment with a linear, structure accumulation view of language learning, antithetical to strong TBI. Despite high self-reported agreement with strong TBI principles, teachers were reluctant to use communicative tasks as the primary focus of their lessons. All lessons had a primary focus on structural teaching, and practices revealed a paucity of communicative tasks.

Fifth, participants agreed that teachers should maximize classroom English use for the benefit of students' acquisition. Interviewees reported that between 10–50% of their total class output was in English. Observation findings seemed to contradict both self-reported approximations, with teachers tending to use English for brief instructions only. Results partially confirmed the findings of Nam (2011), who reported that approximately two-thirds of teacher talk in secondary school classrooms was in Korean. Additionally, participants disagreed that commercially published textbooks were effective for students' acquisition. One instructor claimed the texts were "not sufficient to improve ... English vocabulary." Despite such feelings, all observed lessons featured a government-issued textbook as the focal point. Although teachers expressed high agreement with the principles underlying input, classroom practices did not match questionnaire responses.

Sixth, participants agreed that through focus on form, a brief attentional switch towards grammar during a communicative task, successful implicit acquisition of rule-based knowledge may be primed. However, this finding was contradicted in the interviews, as all participants believed that implicit acquisition would prove difficult in an acquisition-poor EFL environment, and would occur only when students had more time and exposure to the L2. Observations confirmed interview responses, as extremely limited L2 interaction occurred during lessons, teachers did not appear to value or encourage L2 interaction, and as a result, students did not interact to an extent that allowed beneficial acquisitional processes to occur.

Last, the areas of implicit–explicit knowledge and negative feedback generated mixed results. The interviewees claimed to teach grammar explicitly or implicitly, depending on the lesson. For example, one instructor reported using and was observed implementing a more "hands-off" consciousness-raising task, guiding students to locate grammatical structures, generalize rules, and build their own explicit knowledge of the language. Additionally, self-reporting revealed high preferences for implicit corrective techniques like recasts. However, observation findings proved inconclusive, as it was difficult to ascertain whether explicit or implicit correction had occurred or not due to lessons operating almost strictly in Korean.

Overall, five of the eight item groups on the survey showed inconsistencies between self-reports and genuine classroom practice, with only item group, Group 2, remaining consistent. Observed lessons were characterized by structural approaches and teaching methods, use of commercially published textbooks for mostly exam preparation, predominantly teacher-centered lessons, some group work but meager L2 student interaction, some tendencies towards explicit grammar instruction, exercises not tasks, and limited instructor L2 use.

CSAT Washback

A well-discussed limitation hindering TBLT in the Korean context involves strong washback from the college entrance exam (CSAT). Despite highly favoring robust TBI principles and an expressed desire to include TBLT in future lessons, participants in this study were hesitant to encourage L2 interaction, a central tenet of strong TBLT. Participants disproportionately focused on teaching explicit language knowledge, and almost entirely excluded L2 communication. Due to lack of productive skills assessment on exams in Korea, teachers seemed to neither value nor encourage L2 interaction during lessons, as students do not require communication proficiency for exam success. Rather, students expect to be helped towards the goal of mastering explicit knowledge from reading- and grammar-based lessons. Thus, the CSAT still appears to be a major obstacle inhibiting communicative teaching in Korean secondary school, consistent with previous contextual findings.

Conclusions

This study explored Korean secondary school teachers' perceptions of strong TBI through analysis of self-reports and practices. The participants had a good understanding and highly agreed with 75% of the questionnaire items relating to the core principles of TBLT, recognized by researchers as necessary for language development. The findings, however, revealed large discrepancies between participants' self-reported beliefs and their actual classroom practices. The lack of correlation between the survey responses favoring strong TBI principles and the teachers' genuine practice appears linked to strong systemic washback from the CSAT, confirming previous findings in the context. Due to such strong negative washback, the teachers observed deploying tasks in their classrooms appeared to favor a task-supported approach and did not include tasks as the central unit of instruction. Despite some task implementation, instructors did not encourage learners to undertake them in English, as the development of implicit L2 knowledge seems irrelevant for the average secondary school student. A central goal of strong TBLT is developing implicit knowledge acquisition through interaction, whereas the purpose of learning English in Korea is mastering explicit knowledge for examinations. Thus, there appears to be a deep mismatch between what strong TBLT requires in practice, and what the situational context permits in Korea.

Limitations and Suggestions

Although important findings were revealed, the study had one main limitation. Data collection procedures were aimed at a small sample of teachers, and as a result, the findings cannot be generalizable and be a true representation of the whole population of Korean secondary school teachers. However, this study may be of use to other teachers in the context, particularly those working in secondary schools, and could prompt additional larger-scale studies to fill research gaps.

The implications of the study point to caution about the application of TBLT. Strong TBLT may be impractical in contexts like Korea, where teacher-fronted explanation, conventional teacher–student roles, and tendencies towards explicit instruction are commonplace. Context-sensitive approaches like TSLT that blend TBLT with local methodologies could serve to mitigate the strain between communicative curricula and high-stakes examination systems, and further research might examine how contextually appropriate methodologies that include communication may operate.

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Using Songs to Introduce Compelling Content in University Classrooms

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This article details reflections on two approaches to introducing song content within university classrooms. The two distinct lesson types had been implemented during the spring 2017 and spring 2018 semesters. Content selection processes were determined by course requirements and thematic content development goals, as well as the author's personal music preferences and expertise. The song-based lessons were executed within two contexts: (a) during a semester-long liberal arts elective course and (b) weekly, one-off participation-based special activity lessons. The principal goals of the lessons were (a) to expose students to compelling song content, which would be processed mainly through structured storytelling practice tasks, and (b) to inspire further exploration of the English language, as well as concurrently increase cultural awareness, through songs. Additionally, it is the author's hope that this article encourages language teachers to ponder and attempt new methods for introducing content through songs in the ELT classroom.

INTRODUCTION

Roy was fascinated by Nina Simone. He found the song *Mississippi Goddam* especially riveting. While researching Simone at his own leisure, he came across other civil rights inspired songs, including James Brown's *Say It Loud – I'm Black and I'm Proud*. Alas, Roy was a student among the ranks and not my course assistant. Unfortunately for the rest of us, the 1970s had been omitted entirely from the course syllabus (Western Culture Through 20th Century Music) due to time constraints – James Brown's repertoire would have perfectly transitioned civil rights era protest songs to the soul, funk, and R&B of the 1970s. Another course finished, another hundred lessons learned. But, without a doubt, my clearest takeaway was a renewed understanding that the *right content* may propel students deeper down the rabbit hole than we ever expected.

Along with OST Study special activity lessons, given weekly in 2018, the 20th Century Music History course content reservoir supplied endless narratives worthy of being told and retold, again and again, through structured story-building dialogue practice. For instance, the Five Ws alone can be highly fruitful when used to analyze rich song content. And sometimes song content is so magical that student engagement comes naturally. According to Stephen Krashen (2011), when content is compelling enough, motivation becomes an afterthought as students effortlessly acquire new language "with or without a conscious desire to improve" (p. 1). Based on my preliminary lesson goals, the initiative that Roy displayed during the course, as detailed above, was an exceptional outcome. Still, dozens of other cases convincingly reinforced Krashen's insights around compelling input. This article seeks to explain the intentions behind my song selection processes, as well as pedagogical considerations that produced the best results both inside and out of the classroom.

Course Planning

I had the privilege of teaching the music history course twice, in the spring of 2017 and 2018. Although the task of covering 100 years of music within just 40 hours of instruction was initially perplexing (I was only given the course title!), having total freedom turned out to be quite empowering. When course planning starts from a blank canvas, educators may impact student outcomes more directly; this rare educational privilege is immense and great freedom demands great responsibility. Based on efforts in advance of the term, as well as necessary adjustments made along the way, one may reap the rewards of instructional homeruns as well as glean vital insights from likely strikeouts. The opportunity to repeat the course a second time, one year later, was a huge advantage as I could plan accordingly around prior successes and failures. Ultimately, each unit included: one decade/distinct era, one or two music genres, and 1–5 featured artists (as well as 3–4 featured songs per artist). Because of my upbringing, "Western Culture" was adapted into American Culture/History as portrayed by songs that, in my opinion, best encapsulated each pre-determined era. Fortunately, online media sources offer vast supplies of free music content available at our fingertips.

To include valuable context leading up to the 20th century, I elected to commence the course timeline even earlier by featuring my favorite American folk hero (Unit 1: Frontier Era, post-US Civil War to WWI). Due to the richness of content, summarized below, students were easily drawn in by the narrative's magnetic pull:

> 150 years ago, there lived a man so mythically captivating, his legend inspired awe across socio-cultural, economic, and racial boundaries. Generations before Black Panther jump-started Marvel's overdue superhero genre makeover, the lore of an African American folk hero permeated throughout a society rebuilding itself from the ashes of the Civil War. John Henry was an inspiration to African Americans and blue collar laborers of his time; today his legend is esteemed alongside civil rights leaders of a century later (Au Yeung, 2018). (We may presume robber barons, Vanderbilts, and railroad bandits alike were eager promoters of the legend, too.) It is easy to marvel at the heroism of a one-man wrecking crew, who, using only muscle power and two hammers, demolished a railroad tunnel through a mountainside faster than a steam engine. Pollyanne Henry adds a feminist jolt to the folktale, when, after her husband's tragic collapse, she seamlessly takes over Johnny's place among men driving steel on the railroad. His death – from exhaustion, after beating the steam drill – transformed John Henry from a larger-than-life legend into a generationally boundless cultural icon (Au Yeung, 2018).

As for the song, with its dozens of renditions, "The Ballad of John Henry" tells the tale perfectly. For our course, Tennessee Ernie Ford's and Johnny Cash's versions were featured. The songs were introduced along with their charming music videos (via YouTube), and supplemented by narrated video segments of an illustrated children's storybook. Again, all selected content media are free of charge and accessible to both teacher and student alike at the stroke of a key and click of a mouse. All in all, the story content was so magical that even students burdened by L2/L3 limitations are motivated to eagerly engage with John Henry.

Unit 1 was bookended by the song "Over There," the patriotic rallying call that sent the boys off into the trenches of WWI. (Here, and in other units, I felt ethically obligated to introduce some of the harsher truths of US history. For example, after achieving the brutal aims of Western expansion – having literally steamrolled the continent via the transcontinental railroad – WWI expanded US military and economic pursuits to a global scale.) Luckily, the course content trajectory was not derailed, as my university students were keen to engage with disconcerting, age-sensitive topics. Next, we breezed through the Roaring 20s (jazz age), the Great Depression (1930s blues and folk), WWII Era (1940s patriotic songs and swing), the Baby Boom (1950s rock and roll), Civil Rights Era (1950s/60s protest songs and spirituals), Beatlemania (1960s pop), Counterculture (1960s psychedelic rock), and finally grunge (1990s).

Song Selection: Compelling Content

The careful selection of featured artists and songs, which epitomized the music genres that breathed life into each epoch, began as a daunting task (condensing each expansive unit topic into three lesson hours) and developed into a highly gratifying endeavor. As the composer of the course syllabus and conductor of lessons, the featured artists helped produce magic sparks with each wave of my instructional wand. Louis Armstrong's trumpet neatly introduced prohibition, speakeasies, and flappers of the 1920s. Robert Johnson and Woody Guthrie's guitars sweetly strummed through the struggles of the 1930s. Kate Smith's baritone pipes bellowed "God Bless America," and then Guthrie struck back with "This Land Is Your Land." Chuck Berry and Elvis Presley blasted rock to all corners of the suburbs – and then to our classroom! And Nina Simone stunned us all with her damning dirge. The deaths of rock pioneers Kurt Cobain, Janis Joplin, Jimmy Hendricks, Jim Morrison, and Robert Johnson intertwined tragic threads of the artists' deadly demons spanning across six decades of music content history. Once again, captivating content effortlessly motivated students, who were enchanted by the spell of rock and roll's morbidly infamous 27 Club. Robert Johnson's "Crossroads" myth alone was an intoxicating brew drained, in one shot, by all: Who could resist the legend of a man who sold his soul to the devil in exchange for supernatural guitar mastery? At the conclusion of the term, students were charmed by four highly disparate renditions of the "Star Spangled Banner" performed by Jose Feliciano (1968), Jimmy Hendrix (1969), Marvin Gaye (1983), and Whitney Houston (1991). The four versions of America's leading patriotic anthem triggered insightful, nuanced reflection from students, as compelling song content and engaging historical context combined to encourage meaningful cultural exchange.

OST Study lessons utilized welcoming content through a highly structured lesson development plan that intended to elicit student engagement and stress-free (ungraded) language production skills practice. While featuring unique OST content, one film per lesson, each 50-minute class session was executed using the following steps: (a) show the featured movie trailer; (b) introduce and discuss main characters and key plot points; (c) show 2–3 music videos from the OST; (d) discuss characters and plot clues realized from each song/video; (e) listen to two songs again while reading the lyrics (double-sided handout); (f) clarify and discuss song lyrics. This calculated lesson procedure facilitated students' content analysis and language production. The approach entailed practicing a range of target language skills located within the four middle levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: comprehension, application, analysis, and synthesis (Armstrong, n.d.).

Familiar films were purposely selected in order to facilitate student engagement by connecting new language with past experiences and prior OST content knowledge. However, lessons were carefully crafted to ensure participation from all students regardless of content familiarity. Well-known musicals (*The Sound of Music* and *Les Miserables*), Disney/Pixar favorites (*Moana* and *Toy Story*), and cult classics for Korean audiences (John Carney's *Once*, *Begin Again*, and *Sing Street*) usefully combine charming stories with catchy songs. Likable movie characters are easy for students to understand, discuss, and identify with. Moreover, songs created for the screen offer inherent advantages as original material written specifically for their parent films – the lyrics guide students as they explore language production by retelling characters' stories and song functions within the film. These favorable factors greatly enhanced student engagement with the content.

Additionally, the "winning Disney [song] formula" (Henry, 2014) offers a clever analysis of recycled song types that neatly combine character roles with common Disney story arcs: Take *Aladdin's* Genie, *Moana's* Maui, and *The Little Mermaid's* Sebastian who lighten the mood by singing their "sidekick song"; how "Part of Their World" and "How Far I'll Go" function as the "journey song" sung by the protagonist to propel the story forward; or how Scar and Ursula spin their sinister webs while singing their "villain song," "Be Prepared" and "Poor Unfortunate Soul." Finally, consider a grave warning: Some catchy tunes may offer blessings in the classroom that backfire into curses, as "Be Our Guest" and "Under the Sea" overthrow the soundtrack of your subconscious, looping inside your head on endless repeat throughout the term. But, have no fear – you are the wizard who waves the magic wand of cross-cultural exposure! Avoid pesky song fatigue by carefully selecting content that *should* satisfy all lesson participants, students, and teacher alike.

CONCLUSION

If you are given the freedom to design your own lessons or courses, embrace the challenge and dream big. Compelling content – delivered through film, poetry, sitcoms, comics, or web toons – may unfold your students' yellow brick road to their language acquisition Oz. For me, of all the tricks I've tried in the classroom, songs have always produced the most magical results. If we are lucky, the right content may inspire students to dream even bigger than we do.

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John Breckenfeld has an MEd in multiple subjects from the University of California, Los Angeles. He has been living and teaching English, from kindergarten to university students, in Gangneung, Korea, for over six years. His research interests and pedagogical influences include Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Freire's Popular Education, Krashen's Input Hypothesis, the role of songs and music in the ELT classroom, storytelling as a language production strategy, and the educational experiences of multicultural families living in Korea. In March, 2019, John joins the Foreign Language Education Center at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies. Email: johnbreck@ucla.edu

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Needs Analysis of the English Upgrading of Two Different Stakeholders

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This study was an effort to examine the extent to which the English upgrading program for non-English teachers and staff of the State Islamic University, Malang Indonesia (SIUM) matches its stakeholders' needs. These stakeholders include the non-English teachers and staff who took a month-long English upgrading program at the Indonesia Australia Language Foundation (IALF). The findings of the present study confirm previous research about the multiple roles of English used by the two different stakeholders. The results of the analysis of the two cohorts of stakeholders at SIUM see English as fulfilling several goals: international relationships, future careers, writing for publication in journals, using English in teaching, and using English in service excellence. They imply that there is a need to strengthen stakeholders' English practical application ability and to strengthen overall intercultural quality.

INTRODUCTION

Although English is not widely used in Indonesia, it continues to gain status as a global language and for this reason it has a significant role to play, especially as a language of instruction. During recent years, English has increasingly become important for learning many subjects especially at the university level, which relies to a great extent on textbooks written in English. In other words, English opens a window on the world of science and technology. The English upgrading program which is offered to the faculty members of the State Islamic University of Malang (SIUM) begins with some assumptions rather than a needs analysis.

Furthermore, Richards and Rogers (1986) deal with how learners are expected to learn in the system and with how teachers are expected to teach with respect to a particular set of instructional materials organized according to the criteria of a syllabus. In line with Richards and Rogers (1986), Dick and Carey (1985) mention that in order to have effective instructional materials, there must be a match between learners and materials. Consequently, developing in-house materials for the faculty member of SIUM is considered necessary.

The writer is interested in needs analysis because, according to Richards (1990), there are three purposes of doing needs analysis. The first purpose is providing a mechanism for obtaining a wider range of input into the content, design, and implementation of a language program by involving people such as learners, teachers, administrators, and employers in the process. Then, the second purpose is to identify general and specific language needs which can be addressed when developing objectives and content for a language program. Throughout Indonesia the need for English learning has increased over time; however, the impetus for developing English language proficiency differs across various stakeholders. Due to this variance in the pressure for the development of English language proficiency and because of increasingly globalized communication networks, universities have realized the need for equipping the academic and staff with English competency.

A needs analysis (NA) has a vital role in the process of designing, developing, and implementing any course, whether it be English for Academic Purposes (EAP), general English courses, or others (Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Finney, 2002). Leki (2003) further suggests that English courses are more beneficial if the goals reach beyond class assessment towards the real and future needs of learners and other stakeholders. In line with this, gathering information about the needs of faculty members of SIUM toward learning English and knowing the most fundamental needs of faculty members toward learning English has become the purpose of the study. To achieve these goals, the authors addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the English language needs of faculty members at SIUM according to different stakeholders (teachers and staff)?
2. What are the most dominant needs of the faculty members at SIUM toward English upgrading?

Literature Review

Theoretical Basis of Needs Analysis

The competence–performance distinction is also extensively discussed in Canal and Swain (1980) as the basis for language teaching and testing applications. They refer to Chomsky's weak version of competence as knowledge of grammar and other aspects of language while performance is concerned with social aspects of language and performance of the language such as acceptability.

Another theory proposed by Canal and Swain (1980) is to integrate the theories of grammaticality and acceptability into the theory of discourse. In their view, "an integrative theory of communicative competence may be regarded as one in which there is a synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social contexts to perform communicative functions, knowledge of how language is used in social contexts to perform communicative functions, and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse" (p. 20). This integrative theory of communicative competence is more comprehensive in that it also covers the theories of coherence, cohesion, conversational analysis, and speech acts.

Identification of Learners' Needs

As has been mentioned, learners should be taught only what they need. The identification of learners' needs is therefore very important in designing the materials based on learners' needs. In line with this, a number of experts have proposed different opinions and perceptions of need. Porcher (as cited in Richterich & Chancerel, 1987) points out that need is something that exists and might be encountered ready-made on the street. It is a thing that is constructed, the center of conceptual networks, and the product of the number of epistemological choices (which are not innocent themselves, of course). This, obviously does not mean that at an empirical level, needs, expectations, demands, etc. do not exist and are not experienced.

Need has a relationship with environmental conditions. Rivers and Melvin (1981) state that needs in language learning are dependent on three factors: political situations, societal demands, and career opportunities. Moreover, learners' wants are derived from their parents' perception of these factors and personal preferences. This perception concludes that there are several influential factors outside of the learner. These factors finally lead the learner to have their preferences and wants.

According to Richterich and Chancerel (1987), the concept of need has expanded. Not only does the concept of need cover the personal and social development of the individual but also the development of study skills and of self-reliance as a learner. The two opinions above show that the term *need* is specific. Need is not similar to wants, preferences, demands, and motivations. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) propose a need division relates to needs analysis. For them, there are two categories of needs: target needs and learning needs.

Needs Analysis

The definition of needs varies depending on the purpose of analysis, but all take the learner as a focus of analysis. Lawson (1979) defines *need* as "something that is recognized but is not in any sense 'discovered.'" and its "existence" derives from whatever criteria are thought to be relevant in making the diagnoses. This implies that in order to recognize need, one would have to carry out some kind of assessment or evaluation of the existing situation, and the diagnosis of assessment results would reveal some deficiency.

Altman (1980) explains types of learner needs based on individual differences within the framework of learner-centered language teaching. According to Altman (1980), learners should be properly placed based on their age, level of language proficiency, maturity, and time available. This requires the institution to make flexible educational arrangements to allow all learners' access to learning that is appropriate to the types of needs they have. In this way, the content and mode of learning will be influenced by the options available. The type of modification of learning resources is made according to individual differences with regard to time, goals, mode, or expectations of learning.

According to Munby (1981), analyzing needs is the ability to comprehend and/or to produce the linguistic features of the target situation. To have a rigorous target situation, Munby provides an outstanding concept for communicative needs processors (CNP). Furthermore, according to Stufflebeam (1984), there are several reasons for implementing needs assessment: to assist in planning, to promote effective public relations, to identify and diagnose problems, and to assist in the evaluation of the merit and worth of a program or other endeavors.

Lastly, it can be concluded that needs analysis is a process that can be used for many different purposes and seen from many different points of view. Needs analysis can be done as a one-time activity for a simple analysis in predicting the characteristics of future language use.

METHOD

To address the research questions and to provide a comprehensive picture of the needs of faculty members toward learning English, this study applied a quantitative and qualitative research design involving questionnaires as the instrument for data collection and analysis.

Participants

There were nine participants from the academic staff and six staff who answered the survey. Therefore, faculty members from diverse disciplines were chosen in order to get information about the needs for learning English.

Teachers (Academic Staff)

For the purpose of this study, there were nine teachers involved in the English upgrading program at IALF Bali, Indonesia. Each teacher in the department is usually assigned to teach in their field of expertise and to teach in more than one language. The teachers consisted of the key policymakers from various departments. They varied in their teaching experience, academic qualifications, their English backgrounds, and overseas experience.

Faculty Staff

The potential group from which this sample was drawn consisted of six staff enrolled in bachelor degrees programs. The sample was taken from all faculties' staff. At the time of the study the majority were in the age range 30–40 years old. They are categorized into two different kinds of workers: two part-time staff and four full-time staff (civil government). Four had master's qualifications either from Indonesia or from overseas, and two had a bachelor's qualification.

Instrument

The survey method is frequently used to collect descriptive data (Borg & Ball, 1979). They state further that surveys are used simply to collect information. The aim of using surveys is to get the fullest and most authentic description of the field of study. A questionnaire was used for collecting data about teacher and staff needs in learning English. In developing the questionnaire, the authors referred to factual information gathered from their observations. The questionnaire consists of items regarding English instruction and what the participants need.

Results and Discussion

The discussion is based on the findings involving interpretation by using results of the needs analysis surveys. The data analysis is done to gather valuable information on the learners and the purpose in acquiring the target language. The data collected are analyzed in a descriptive and statistical format. The authors use tables to clarify descriptive statistics to discuss the questionnaires.

The Purpose of English Upgrading

When asked about the purpose of English upgrading program, 27% (four respondents) chose developing future career, two respondents (13%) claimed that they wanted to support their study, two respondents (13%) stated that they joined the English upgrading program for international relationships, and seven respondents (47%) stated that joining the English upgrading program is for a combination of the three purposes. Thus, the finding in Point 1 implies that 47% of the respondents expect English upgrading to be used for a combination of the three purposes. It follows that the respondents consider English to have a prominent role in their work and study (see Table 1).

Table 1. The Purpose of English Upgrading

The Purpose of Learning English	Number of the Respondents	Percentage
To develop future career	4	27
To support study	2	13
For international relationship	2	13
Combining between the three	7	47
Total	15	100

The Major English Skill to Master for Career Development

In terms of the major English skill needed to be mastered immediately, the respondents made one response that stands out from the others. Table 2 shows the major English skill need to master immediately for developing their career.

Table 2. The Major English Skill Need to Master Immediately

English Skills	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Listening	0	0
Speaking	9	60
Reading	2	13
Writing	4	27
Total	15	100

As shown in Table 2, nine respondents (60%) of the total fifteen respondents chose speaking. Two respondents (13%) chose reading as the main skill to master, four students (27%) chose writing, and none (0%) chose listening. The finding for this item implies that speaking is the most prominent skill to master immediately compared to the other skills: listening, writing, and reading.

The Role of English in the Respondents' Work

The role of English in the participants' work was claimed by nine (60%) out of fifteen to be very important, four (27%) claimed that it was rather important, two (13%) stated that it was not very important, and none (0%) claimed that it was not important. Thus, the finding for this item implies that the role of English in the respondent's work is very important (see Table 3).

Table 3. The Role of English in the Respondents' Work

The Role of English in Respondents' Work	Number of the Respondents	Percentage
Very important	9	60
Rather important	4	27
Not very important	2	13
Not important	0	0
Total	15	100

Expectations After Taking the Program

The respondents' hope of applying English in their future work indicated variations among the respondents. Table 4 is the result of the expectations of the respondents after taking the program. The respondents' expectation of "writing in international journals" was chosen by eight respondents (53.4%), "giving international presentations" was chosen by two respondents (13%), "advising students' scientific writing" was chosen by three respondents (20%), and "study overseas" by two respondents (13%).

The result for this item indicates that most of the respondents (53.4%) chose writing in international journals for their future activity over giving presentations internationally, advising students' scientific writing, and studying overseas. So, it could be concluded that the respondents' expectation toward the English upgrading was mainly related to the work they expected to do (see Table 4).

Table 4. The Expectation of the Respondents' Activities

Types of Activities	Number of the Respondents	Percentage
Writing in international journals.	8	53.4
Giving presentations internationally.	2	13
Advising students' scientific writing.	3	20
Study overseas.	2	13
Total	15	100

The Frequency of Using English in the Future Career

The frequency that the respondents expect to use English in their future careers indicated variations among the respondents. As for the frequency of English used in their work field, four respondents (27%) stated that English would be used most of the time, two respondents (13%) said that English would be used much of the time, nine respondents (60%) stated that they would use English some of the time, and no respondents (0%) responded that English would almost never be used in their future work.

Table 5. The Frequency of Using English in the Future Career

Frequency of Using English	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Most of the time	4	27
Much of the time	2	13
Some of the time	9	60
Almost never	0	0
Total	15	100

The findings for this item imply that most of the respondents 60% claimed that some of the time English would be used in their future career. So the implication from this result is that respondents expect to be able to use English some of the time (see Table 5).

The Learning Needs of the Respondents in English Upgrading Method of Teaching

Dealing with the method of teaching, it was found that out of fifteen respondents, two respondents (13%) chose lecturing, eight respondents (53.4 %) chose games as an appropriate method of teaching, five respondents (33%) chose discussion, and none (0%) of the respondents chose question and answer (see Table 6).

Table 6. Method of Teaching

Method of Teaching	Number of Students	Percentage
Lecturing	2	13
Game	8	53.4
Discussion	5	33
Question and answer	0	0
Total	15	100

Respondents' Interest with the Provided Materials

The result of data analysis on the respondents' interest concerning the materials provided by the IALF team shows that out of fifteen respondents, nine (60%) stated that they were strongly interested, four (27%) stated that they were interested, two (13%) stated that they were less interested in the material given, and none (0%) stated that they were strongly uninterested in the material (see Table 7).

Table 7. Table Respondents' Interest in the Texts

Respondents' Interest in the Materials	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly interested	9	60
Interested	4	27
Less interested	2	13
Strongly uninterested	0	0
Total	15	100

The Respondents' Opinion of the Follow-up English Program

The results of the data analysis of the respondents' opinions of the follow-up English program shows that out of fifteen respondents, six respondents (40%) stated that they used English in an academic forum, seven respondents (47%) stated that they used English in their teaching in the classroom, and two respondents (13%) stated that they used English with their colleagues. This implied that English upgrading is crucial for their career development (see Table 8).

TABLE 8. The Respondents' Opinion of the Follow-up English Program

Opinion of Follow-up English Program	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Use English in academic forum.	6	40
Use English in teaching.	7	47
Use English with colleagues.	2	13
Total	15	100

Result of the Staff's Learning Needs in English Upgrading

The results from the questionnaire from six respondents indicated that they believed learning English provided them with improved life opportunities. The majority among the six respondents of the faculty staff, four of them (66.7%), claimed that learning English provided them with the skill of providing quality service that they believed would improve their life opportunities. Only two respondents (33.3%) stated that they needed English for overseas training and scholarship programs. Table 9 summarizes the English learning goals as indicated by the students in the survey.

TABLE 9. English Learning Goals

English Learning Goals	Number of Respondents	Percentage
To participate in overseas training and scholarship programs.	2	33.3
To have a better chance and life expectations, such as traveling, and using more sophisticated technology and books.	0	0
To establish business with overseas people.	0	0
To improve the skill of providing quality service.	4	66.7
Total	6	100

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of data analysis of the most dominant needs of the respondents related to the target needs, the respondents' purpose in English upgrading, seven respondents (47%) stated that English was used for a combination of the three purposes; namely, developing their future career, supporting study, and widening international relationships. In connection with the role of English they will use in their work, it was found that nine respondents

(60%) claimed it was very important.

Concerning the respondents' expectation of their future work in the field after the completion of the course, eight (53%) respondents chose writing in an international journal. As for the frequency of using English in their future career, nine respondents (60%) stated that they would use English some of the time. For the skill that the respondents need to master immediately, 60% selected speaking as their priority skill. Furthermore, eight (53.4%) suggested that the use of games was the appropriate method of teaching English. In sum, four major findings emerged from the teachers as the stakeholders. Firstly, teachers identified a number of needs, some related to their future career: support study, widening international relationships, and competence in English communication. Meanwhile, the staff, as the second group of stakeholders, was particularly concerned with two major priorities; namely, to participate in overseas training and to provide quality service. Further, the staff expressed the desire for some changes to be made in their future work performance rather than in administrative orientation.

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Spoken Fluency: What It Is and How to Teach It

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The seemingly effortless speech of daily interaction is described by the word *fluent*. However, a precise definition of fluency is challenging. This paper outlines some of the aspects of fluency and disfluency that are relevant to second/foreign language teaching and suggests some ways to teach fluency. The term *hyperfluency* refers to special genres of speaking such as speeches and other scripted speaking. This is speaking that is shorn of all of the pauses, hesitations, restarts, and repairs that characterize spontaneous interaction and is thus an unrealistic model for students. The term *confluency* refers to the co-constructed nature of interactions and highlights turn transitions and collaborative utterances as key indicators of fluency. Pragmatic language items such as discourse markers are also key components of fluency. Awareness of these items can inform teaching practice that actively promotes fluency development when combined with ample opportunities for spontaneous interaction.

INTRODUCTION

The word *fluency* is used widely by both specialists, such as linguists and language teachers, and also by non-specialists. In non-specialist discourse, *fluent* generally refers to the spoken output of a speaker of a language. That speaker may be a native speaker of that language who has learned the language automatically and more or less unconsciously during childhood. Alternatively, that person may be someone who has learned a language as a second or foreign language and has achieved a level of spoken, interactional ability that is on par with native speakers of the language. This definition contains within it the tacit assumption that all psychologically and physiologically unimpaired adults will be fluent in their native language. There is, however, an element of circularity in this lay definition. If native speakers are, by default, fluent speakers and fluent speaking is speaking that is like the speech of a native speaker, then we are still no closer to actually defining the elements of fluency.

Specialist discourse on fluency has also been prone to similar circularity and confusion. Heike (1985) asserts that the literature in fluency is "replete with vacuous definitions, overlapping terminology and impractical assessment strategies" (p. 135). References to such factors as speed of speaking; adherence to grammatical rules; lack of pausing, hesitation, restarts, and other performance factors all seem to fall within what might constitute a broad-brush definition of fluency. However, all of these factors are components of the holistic concept of fluency, not necessary and sufficient conditions themselves. In fact, they are all fuzzy-edged concepts when examined in more detail. Speaking speed varies across speaker and context, spoken grammar is often, but not always, different to written grammar, and the rules of both are frequently violated by native speakers in spontaneous speaking. Performance phenomena are a constant feature of all naturalistic, spontaneous talk and the *uhms*, *ers*, restarts, and rephrasings that occur in such talk may, counterintuitively, actually be signals of fluency, rather than indicators of sub-optimal speaking. The concepts that underlie the idea of fluency seem to be interdependent, varied, context and speaker-dependent, and resistant to metacognitive expression by persons who use the word *fluency* in daily situations. These caveats notwithstanding, there is still the sense that when it comes to fluency, people know it when they hear it, and many language learners tacitly or overtly strive towards it.

Four Concepts: Fluency, Disfluency, Hyperfluency, Confluency

As mentioned above, the word *fluency* is used unproblematically in daily discourse. Fluency may be seen as a gradable concept or talk may be classed as either fluent or not fluent, but fluency acquisition is seen as telic. That is, a learner may be possessed of various and emergent levels of fluency before reaching the end-point of fluency in the target language. Interestingly, there is no clear antonym for fluent. The terms that stand in opposition to the word fluent vary between *disfluent*, *dysfluent*, and simple negation "not fluent." Many of the uses *dis/dysfluent* in the literature (the variants seem interchangeable) refer not to the emergent speaking abilities of second/foreign language learners but rather to the speech disorders of people operating in their native language, such as stuttering (see, for example, Culatta & Leeper, 1988). In terms of foreign/second language learners, the category of *not fluent* is often used to refer to a person who has some proficiency in the language but is highlighting the fact that there are still some shortcomings, as in the following two extracts from the British National Corpus (Davies, 2004).

1. No way! In any case, I'm not fluent. Let's just say I can find my way about in the language.
2. Young Eric, who was modestly competent in English, but certainly not fluent, was packed off first to a boarding school then to University College School…

That which is not fluent, then, is applicable to two separate classes of speaking: native speakers with some physiological or psychological disorder, and second/foreign language learners with some ability in the language but often perceived as still having areas of weakness in their speaking.

The fluent/non-fluent (or not quite fluent) gradable distinction is not the only aspect of fluency. Goffman (1981, p. 189) coins the term *hyperfluency* to describe the talk of persons engaging in certain speech genres such as broadcast news reading, delivering prepared lectures, and the like. Hyperfluent speaking is speaking shorn of all of the performance phenomena that are found in mundane spontaneous spoken interaction, or "fresh talk." Goffman characterizes it thus:

> As suggested, conversational talk is full of minor hitches – hesitations, repetitions, restarts – that are rarely oriented to as such by speakers or hearers; these little disruptions are simply passed by. On the other hand, it is just such minor hitches that are noticeable when they occur in aloud reading, crudely reminding us that it is aloud reading that is going on. (pp. 188–189)

This is the kind of talk that is characteristically found in broadcast media, in the prepared, scripted, and autocued speeches of politicians, in certain kinds of spontaneous public oratory such as evangelical religious sermonizing, and in performance arts such as movies and plays. All of these commonly have this quality of hyperfluency, and the concept may partially overlap with what may be referred to as "eloquence." All (adult) native speakers of a language are deemed to be fluent in that language, but not all are eloquent (or hyperfluent) speakers of that language.

All, or as much as possible, of the performance phenomena that characterize mundane talk are excluded from hyperfluent speech events. It is interesting to note that many of these genres of speech are monologic in nature, precluding the usual turn taking mechanisms that pertain to dialogic talk (see Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). It may also be relevant to notice that many sample dialogues in language learning textbooks are similarly "cleaned up." This kind of "clean" exemplar dialogue may be seen as a kindness to learners, a way of making the language accessible to those still struggling with grammatical and lexical intricacies. But, if materials are ubiquitously hyperfluent in nature, this may lead to unrealistic expectations of what the target language is like. As Goffman noted, the performance phenomena of conversational talk are largely unattended to by participants, and it is by no means certain that learners will make the connection between what happens in mundane interactions in their L1 and talk in the L2. Even if they do understand the nature of spontaneous talk, the kind of performance phenomena that are found in daily talk may be criticized by their teachers, may remain untaught, or may be performed in the L1, such as students using L1 markers and repair initiators in L2 speaking activities. (See Campbell-Larsen, 2014, for examples of these phenomena in the talk of Japanese learners of English.)

Thus far, all of the labels for speech performance that have been noted, fluency and its superordinates *hyperfluency* and *eloquence*, and its antonyms *dis/dysfluent* and simple negation *not fluent* have all taken the view that fluency is a quality of the speech of an individual, a trait that the speaker carries around with herself from situation to situation, and is more or less the same in each of those various situations. Fluency may increase longitudinally as a general quality of language development, but at any given time, its level is perceived as fixed. A different view is taken by McCarthy (2010), who suggests the term *confluency* to capture the notion that fluency is not an individual, stable, and general property of speech, but that it is a highly context-dependent and jointly constructed phenomenon. As McCarthy puts it,

> In conversation involving two or more parties, the imperative to create and

> maintain flow ceases to be the sole responsibility of the single speaker within the single turn and becomes a joint responsibility for all participants. This includes a shared responsibility to fill silences and uncomfortably long pauses. (p. 7)

McCarthy stresses that what happens at turn boundaries may reveal a lot about how fluency is co-constructed, just as much as scrutiny of any full turn produced by a single speaker. If interaction is co-constructed, then the perceived level of fluency may vary depending on the confluent abilities of one's interlocutor. Investigation of turn transitions, both in their temporal aspects (ideally "no gap, no overlap"; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974) and their linguistic content (e.g., the regular occurrence of items that refer to or relate to the previous turn; see Tao, 2003) can provide empirically robust data about how speakers go about the business of co-constructing fluent interactions.

To sum up, fluency seems to be a holistic, gradable, and context-dependent phenomenon that is jointly constructed by participants in real time. It may be modelled on (and confused with) a hyperfluent standard of speaking that is not representative of most mundane L1 interactions. The precise components of fluency are not metacognitively accessible to speakers, but disfluency is recognized when it occurs. A teaching program that understands and takes account of fluency, disfluency, hyperfluency, and confluency will serve learners well in the development of their L2 speaking and interactional competence.

Teaching Fluency

Having thus outlined some of the conceptual bases behind the word *fluency*, I will now seek to deal with fluency in more concrete terms. The first observation that must be made is that fluency is a *performance* phenomenon. That is, no matter what the learners may know about fluency, there is no automatic connection between knowing and doing. Fluency in its pure sense is to be found in spontaneous, multi-party interactions, not really in monologic speaking such as presentations or speeches, not in scripted and rehearsed role-plays, and only marginally in such institutional talk as Oral Proficiency Interviews (for a critique of OPI's, see Johnson, 2001). Any teaching program that seeks to take fluency development seriously must give learners extensive opportunity to *do* speaking. That is, they must regularly take part in spontaneous, undirected, non-evaluated, participant-organized talk, even though this may fly in the face of both institutional requirements and teacher and learner expectations. This must occur as well as the explicit teaching of both specific language items and interactional behavior that contributes to fluency development. Some of these language items and behaviors will be detailed below.

Prompt Turn-Taking

One of the most striking features of spoken interaction is the precision timing of turn transition (See Jefferson, 1973; Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Jefferson, 1989). The timely uptake of a turn by the next speaker is a vital step in interaction, to the extent that it has been identified as a linguistic universal

(Stivers et al., 2009). Long (e.g., multi-second) delays in turn uptake may be due to cognitive processing by the learner, which may reveal the priority given to lexico-grammatical accuracy and the relative lack of priority given to considerations of turn taking. Perhaps because of classroom conventions, it may be the case that teachers, when asking questions to learners, may wait patiently for an answer to be forthcoming, thus unconsciously habituating learners to unrealistically patient interlocutors.

Not only the timing but also the unfolding of the taken turn is contributory to impressions of fluency. McCarthy (2010, p. 7) details the most common turn openers in English and comments that turn openers very often refer back to what has just been said by the previous speaker and thus serve to link what has been said with what will be said, thus maintaining progressivity. In contrast, a study by Campbell-Larsen (2018) of the turn-taking patterns of a Japanese university EFL student found that the turn openings predominantly opened with either a non-lexical utterance such as “ahh,” “uhh,” or the like, often prolonged, or with an L1 utterance such as *etoh* (similar in function to English *well*), and furthermore, that after this initial utterance a period of silence, often prolonged for several seconds, ensued before the turn proper commenced. The following excerpts are illustrative:

Excerpt 1

01. A: Uh: eh::(4.1) Do you like
02. (.) best singer?

Excerpt 2

01. B: My favorite song is ah (1.9)
02. uhmm (.) >shyunkan senchimentaru<=
03. A: = Ou uh uh (5.0) I don’t listen

Excerpt 3

01. B: Yah
02. A: E::to (.)eh I know e::h
03. shyoujyou ess
(*Syoujyou Ess* is the name of a pop group)

(Campbell-Larsen, 2018, p. 35.)

Clearly, not all turn onsets in fluent English interaction proceed without some kind of perturbation, and hesitations and repetitions are common. But the recurrent onset pattern here of (a) non-lexical/L1 utterance plus (b) extended silence is an example of temporal and linguistic behaviors combining to give an impression of overall disfluency. It is not just the occurrence of the practice but its frequent recurrence that is problematic in terms of fluency. The data in these excerpts also provides an empirical basis for future lesson content to address the issue.

Turn Closing

Just as turn openings are a vital locus for the joint production of fluent interactions, so turn closings are also important for fluency. In the author’s experience, learners may struggle with the mechanisms of how to close a turn and may even say "Finished" to indicate completion. The Japanese language is replete with utterance final particles such as *ne*, *na*, *yaro*, *desuyo*, and the like that fulfill a wide variety of pragmatic functions. (See, for example, Saigo, 2011) The difficulty of translating these particles is often noted in the literature, and the difficulty in rendering them into the L2 may account for some of the problems Japanese learners of English face in turn closings. Whatever other functions these particles fulfill (epistemic stance marking, softening, etc.), their occurrence in utterance-final position may also serve, however peripherally, as an indicator of speaker transition, and the lack of obvious or accessible counterparts in English may be problematic for Japanese learners.

In the case of the English language, McCarthy (2010, p. 8) states, "There appears to be a marked tendency for certain lexical items and longer chunks to trigger speaker change." Expressions referred to as general extenders or vague category markers (*something like that*, *and stuff*, *or anything like that*), for example (see Evison, McCarthy, & O'Keeffe, 2007; Overstreet, 1999), often occur at turn-closing position. For Japanese learners of English, the equivalent general Japanese extender expressions *nado* or *nanka* are often translated as *and so on*, which is a more formal and literary expression. The variety of general extenders in English is not explored in most textbooks. Overstreet, (1999, p. 4) gives a list of 34 items and comments that variants and novel creations are not infrequent. Other items that often trigger speaker transition are assessing terms such as *awful*, *great*, *lovely*, and figures of speech and formulas such as "he had a good inning" (see Drew & Holt, 1998), which trigger topic closing, also invite speaker transition. The common discourse marker *you know* also often appears at turn final position and often seems to invite speaker transition (contrast this with another common discourse marker *I mean*, which usually seems to project further talk by the current speaker).

Discourse markers in general are another teachable item that help the development of fluency (see Hasselgreen, 2005). Repeated focus on and practice of common markers such as *well*, *you know*, *I mean*, *like*, and *oh* can help students develop the means to overcome intra-turn pauses, signal turn onset even if further processing time will be required, initiate self- and other-repair and a number of other pragmatic functions. Hasselgreen (2005) suggests that the lack of such markers in learner speaking will contribute to a sense of disfluency, even if other aspects of speech such as grammatical and lexical proficiency are of a developed nature.

A further aspect of fluency development is related to a more basic assumption about what language learning is. Formal study is most commonly assumed to be an additive process in which learners gradually increase their knowledge and skills. But, in addition to the uptake of certain language items that relate to fluency, there may also be the need to engage in a subtractive process when striving to develop fluency levels. The items to be subtracted are L1 utterances. Many learners, in the author's experience, suffuse their L2 speaking with L1 words and expressions that serve a pragmatic function in their L1 and seem to transfer over in to the L2 unconsciously. The following extracts, derived from video recordings of Japanese EFL students' classroom talk are illustrative.

Excerpt 4

01. M: my >eto< I I was was born in Kobe but
02. eto (.) eto sss sugu e:: go to Shizuoka.

Excerpt 5

01. R: Tomorrow is Ryouya's tanjyoubi eh
02. tanjyoubi jyanai, birthday birthday

In Excerpt 4, the speaker is explaining where in Japan she is from. Her speech is replete with the Japanese hesitation marker eto (in addition to the lexical item sugu meaning "soon"). This frequent use of eto (and other L1 pragmatic markers) is a recurrent feature of many Japanese speaker's talk in English, even people with highly developed lexical-grammatical abilities.

In Excerpt 5, the speaker is relating his upcoming plans. He mentions that tomorrow will be his friend Ryouya's birthday. However, instead of using the English word *birthday*, he misspeaks and uses the equivalent Japanese word *tanjyoubi*. He is immediately aware of this and starts a process of self-initiated self-repair (see Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). His repair is initiated with the expression *tanjyoubi jyanai*, literally, "no, not *tanjyoubi*" before he completes the repair with the word *birthday*. It is interesting to note here that he is conscious of his misspeaking in reference to the word *tanjyoubi* to the extent that he interrupts the progressivity of his utterance, but he is seemingly unaware of his use of L1 pragmatic language to carry out the repair. In the author's experience, pragmatic language is often transferred wholesale, and seemingly unconsciously, from the L1 into the L2 by Japanese learners of English. It must surely be the case that suffusing one's speech with L1 expressions will give an impression of disfluency. Learners may not even be aware that they are doing this, and teachers may become habituated to learner talk that is filled with such utterances. Identifying the issue and seeking to reduce the occurrence of L1 expressions in L2 speaking is a concrete step towards fluency development, even though it may initially cause more pausing and rephrasing as learners attend to their speaking whilst consciously trying to avoid habitual L1 utterances.

Classroom Activities

As was mentioned above, fluency is a real-time phenomenon that emerges in its purest form in spontaneous spoken interactions that are not driven by overt institutional learning goals such as practicing a particular tense or the like, but are driven by the normal goals of most phatic use of speech: the creation, maintenance, and development of social relations between speakers. Thus, in addition to explicit teaching and practice of the items referred to above, teachers should set aside class time for learners to engage in "free conversation" in the target language. This will be classroom activity that is not driven by any overt task: It has no handouts, no worksheets, or any of the other paraphernalia of language classrooms. Learners will have to initiate and sustain the interaction, negotiate topics, and generally take responsibility for their own speaking. The teacher can serve as a monitor, checking for use of desired (e.g., discourse markers) or undesired (e.g., L1 pragmatic markers) language, and also desired and undesired linguistic behaviors such as lengthy pausing or over-concern with matters of grammar that lead to hypercorrection and lack of progressivity. The teacher may choose to intervene in real time to point out both desired and undesired behavior, or may choose to address the points noticed at a later time.

An understanding of the importance of spoken language in general and the nature of spoken fluency, hyperfluency, and confluency should form the foundation of a fluency-focused program. This can then be drawn on in both explicit instruction and the construction of classroom activities that promote development of learner fluency.

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Grammar Pedagogy in Primary Schools

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In spite of the National Literacy Reform program, where grammar is taught through a combination of deductive and inductive approaches, supported by context and with activities, many language teachers in Singapore still feel that the traditional explicit grammar instruction accompanied with multiple practice exercises is more effective. This paper explores the teaching experiences and beliefs of English language teachers on the role of grammar and how students should learn it. Juxtaposing their past experiences as a student and teacher, this paper reveals that while seeking a balance in the different grammar pedagogical stances, teachers generally considered explicit teaching of grammar indispensable. This paper concludes with possible exploration into other grammar pedagogy, such as implicit grammar learning.

Introduction: Growing Up with Grammar

Background to the Study

About a decade ago, in 2008, I graduated from Singapore's primary education system. I recalled English lessons as many sorts: reading, writing, presenting, and practicing for examinations with homework exercises. Ten years down my education journey, and as a student-teacher now in 2018, I was introduced to various grammar pedagogical approaches in my undergraduate teacher education. Informed by research-based and proven strategies, and instructional methods as well as the debates over how grammar should be taught, I reflected upon Singapore's English language (EL) education system, which I was educated in, and thought of how that would affect me in my professional preparation as a primary school EL teacher. I wonder if the approaches adopted by EL teachers today are indeed successful in teaching grammar and if traditional approaches have remained rooted in the teachers' practices, or if they have remained because of other reasons.

Is There a Grammar to Teaching Grammar?

There seems to be no undisputed answer as yet to this question. The debate over the type of grammar teaching approach – prescriptive or descriptive, deductive or inductive, whether the pedagogical focus should be on forms, form, or meanings, or even to teach or not to teach grammar – has been ongoing. Wyse (2001) reviewed empirical evidence to show that "the teaching of grammar (using a range of models) has negligible positive impact on improving secondary pupils' writing" (p. 422) and concludes that grammar study, though possessing some value, should be "a much smaller part of the English curriculum, particularly at primary level" (p. 424). On the other hand, Mulroy (2004) reflected on the communicative approach to language instruction and how that led to students' ignorance of grammar knowledge in general; he attributed this to "the failure of immersion on the lack of explicit instruction in the rules of language, i.e., grammar" (p. 56). Sipe (2006, p. 16) also explained through experiences that "sometimes grammar matters" and the study of grammar should be situated in authentic contexts. Almost two decades ago, Borg (1999, p. 157) had recognized these "ill-defined domains" in grammar teaching. In the face of these uncertain controversies, there is a need to examine (a) the educational context in which pedagogical grammar is situated in and (b) the grammar pedagogy adopted by EL teachers. This study would be guided by the following questions:

- How is grammar being taught in the EL classrooms in Singapore?
- Why is grammar taught the way it currently is?

Literature Review

Pedagogical Approaches to Grammar Teaching

Ellis (2006) acknowledged that traditional grammar teaching is largely concerned with the "presentation and practice of discrete grammar structures." He broadened the definition of grammar teaching to include presentation, practicing, discovering, inputting through examples, and addressing errors with communication; as such, it involves "any instructional technique that draws learners' attention to some specific grammatical form in such a way that it helps them either to understand it metalinguistically and/or process it in comprehension and/or production so that they can internalize" (p. 84). Ellis recognized that there are many approaches to grammar teaching, and it should not be limited to any one way when defining what constitutes grammar teaching. This broader definition reflects the ongoing debate surrounding grammar pedagogy.

In inductive teaching, students are encouraged to consolidate "metalinguistic generalization of their own" (Ellis, 2006, p. 97), caught from the examples of the grammar item presented to them initially. The grammar item is then taught when the teacher shares and reaffirms the rule with the class at the end of the inductive grammar lesson. Deductive teaching involves the presentation of a grammar item, followed by practice of the item parallel to the first two structured stages of the grammar-based Present–Practice–Produce (PPP) models, said to be "inadequate in meeting the communicative needs" (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011, pp. 4–5).

The grammar debate further distinguishes whether grammar should be (a) a focus on forms, (b) a focus on meaning, or (c) a focus on form. Long (1991) identified focus on forms (FonFs) as the traditional approach where individual grammatical structures are intensively introduced sequentially; FonFs is often directed "in the absence of a communicative context." Conversely, meaning-focused instruction, works on the assumption that students will be able to inductively work out the grammatical structures without explicit instructions about grammar (Loewen et. al., 2009, p. 92). Focus on form (FonF), planned or incidental, is commonly championed by these researchers for grammar teaching in recent years, as it seems to integrate and contextualize grammar features in communicative settings (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). Recognizing the contended issues on how to teach grammar and the various grammar pedagogies, Ellis (2006) thus concluded that it "is important to recognize what options are available, what the theoretical rationales for these options are, and what problems there are with these rationales" (p. 103). This study will evaluate the grammar pedagogical choices taken by the EL teachers, and position these choices with theoretical considerations in the literature and the language classroom reality.

Assessing Singapore's Education Landscape

Grammar in the Local Education Landscape

In view of studies conducted more than a decade ago (Chia, 2003; Farrell & Lim, 2005), and that a national literacy reform program (i.e., Strategies for English Language Learning and Reading, STELLAR) has been implemented since 2010, this current study will examine the beliefs and practices of local primary EL classrooms. Singapore's English Language Syllabus (Ministry of Education, 2010) explicitly states that possessing a strong grammar foundation "will enable pupils to use the language accurately, fluently, and appropriately for different purposes, audiences, contexts, and cultures" (p. 81). This clearly highlights the great value placed on grammar in Singapore's primary education system. Hence, with the above-mentioned debates on how grammar should be taught in EL classrooms and the important role that grammar has in the EL syllabus, it is imperative to examine the rationale for the pedagogical choices adopted by the EL teachers.

Profiles of School and Research Subjects

The English language department of Confidence Primary School, an established local government primary school, was chosen for this study. Founded in 1985, Confidence Primary School was awarded the School Distinction Award in 2016, adding yet another recognition to the school's milestones for its exemplary school processes and practices. Four primary school EL teachers (see Table 1) with an average of about 18 years in the education fraternity, teaching primary EL, ranging from lower to middle and upper primary, were asked to participate in the study through purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). These four teachers were chosen because of their experience in teaching during the use of the 2001 EL syllabus (2001–2009) and the 2010 EL syllabus (2010–present). This is an important criterion because of the change in emphasis in the use of contextualized grammar teaching with the introduction of STELLAR. As these teachers taught EL prior to STELLAR and during STELLAR, they would have taught grammar when the examination-driven drill-and-practice approach was unquestioned and accepted widely (i.e., prior to STELLAR) and when contextualized grammar teaching with a de-emphasis on drill-and-practice was strongly encouraged (i.e., during STELLAR), making them “information-rich” cases.

Table 1. Profile of Research Subjects

Subjects	Started Teaching	Teaching Experience	Levels Taught
T1	2003	15 years	Primary 3, 4, 5, and 6
T2	2002	16 years	Primary 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5
T3	2001	17 years	Primary 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6
T4	1993	25 years	Primary 1 and 2

Methods and Materials

This study adopted a case study approach: an in-depth analysis of a phenomenon within the boundaries of an EL department in a particular school in Singapore. Two research tools were used in this case study: a questionnaire and an interview.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was adapted and modified from the questionnaire used in Burgess and Etherington (2002), which surveyed 48 English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers in British university language centers on their beliefs about grammar and grammar teaching to discover if there had been “a bias towards decontextualized presentation of grammar and away from discourse-based, unified approaches” (Burgess & Etherington, 2002, p. 417). Barnard and Scampton’s (2008) adopted Burgess and Etherington’s (2002) questionnaire to survey 32 New Zealand university teachers on similar concerns. The study echoed this finding: The teachers were unanimous in their view of the centrality of grammar in language (Barnard & Scampton, 2008). Barnard and Canh (2009) similarly adopted the same questionnaire to survey 29 Vietnamese university teachers of EAP with the same research aims; they found a “clear preference...for explicit grammatical instruction and controlled forms-focused practice...” (p. 263). Incidentally, these three survey studies all targeted language teachers teaching at universities.

The questionnaire in the research by Burgess and Etherington (2002) employed a five-point Likert scale to survey the respondents. A four-point Likert scale was used in this study’s questionnaire to survey the attitudes of the EL teachers in Singapore on the teaching of grammar so as to “facilitate a clear analysis of positive and negative responses” (Barnard & Scampton, 2008, p. 64) and to minimize the inclination to opt for a middle point on controversial items in the questionnaire. The questionnaire seeks to provide insights to the teachers’ beliefs on the role of grammar, how students should learn, and some challenges faced by teachers and students. Demographic information was asked in the last section of the questionnaire. Ensuring that the questionnaire is more focused for the local primary EL context of primary school, the items in the questionnaire have been selectively adapted and organized. Statements adapted from the questionnaires cited have been categorized into (a) contextualized presentation of grammar, (b) problem-solving grammar tasks, (c) explicit/implicit grammar teaching, and (d) error correction.

Interview

The absence of a follow-up after administering the questionnaire was a limitation to the three above-referenced survey studies. As such, this current study followed up the questionnaire with an interview based on the questionnaire responses. The interview provided greater depth in understanding each unique case study presented by the individual teachers. The semi-structured interview allowed the teachers to share their personal views and challenges with their grammar pedagogy with respect to their school profile, the level(s) taught, and the class of students. The interview thus aimed to surface the link between the teachers' language awareness and the instructional practices in the EL classrooms in relation to the EL syllabus, teaching resources, and finally to the EL education landscape in Singapore.

Analysis: Findings and Discussion

How Is Grammar Being Taught in EL Classrooms in Singapore?

Contextualized Presentation of Grammar with STELLAR

From the teachers' responses, it seems that STELLAR has a dominant presence in primary language classrooms. All the teachers narrated their typical EL lesson by introducing the lesson with reading and comprehending the set STELLAR text before capitalizing on the text to work on language features such as vocabulary or grammar. T3 reiterated the routine where "we would definitely do the reading part first…" and "pull out the various grammar components"; explained further by T2 was "we follow the STELLAR guidelines quite closely; we read the story, then we focus [on] that particular grammar for the lesson," as the STELLAR guidelines "specify what the grammar items covered in the text are, and how you can teach each item using the text" (T1). It can thus be gleaned that the teaching of grammar is contextualized in the text that introduces the target grammar item to students and supported by the STELLAR materials. T1 opined, "I think with the introduction of STELLAR, the whole education system tries to move towards more contextualized teaching. Not so much on just teaching the grammar items alone anymore." The teachers unanimously agreed that "students learn grammar more successfully if it is presented within a complete text." (Questionnaire, Section One, Item 3d). The teachers cited that the contextualized presentation of grammar in the STELLAR materials makes grammar more meaningful as the students are learning the grammar rules and their application within a context.

Grammar Is Explicitly Taught with Metalanguage

"[Grammar] has always been taught," T1 commented, when being surveyed about the views of incidental grammar teaching and learning. She shared that it is not a matter of choice on whether grammar is to be taught or not. Grammar items, rules, forms, examples, and exceptions are explicitly conveyed to students in their grammar lessons. The teachers saw the need for students' conscious knowledge of grammar for language learning and improvement (Questionnaire, Section One, Item 2d); this is aligned to their strong agreement that "Explicit discussion of grammar rules is helpful for students" (Questionnaire, Section One, Item 5a). Hence, the teachers are driven to teach grammar explicitly with the perception that students need conscious knowledge of the grammatical system and its workings for language usage; that is, students need the conscious "learnable and verbalizable" facts (Ellis, 2006, p. 95). This is further supported by the fact that the teachers unanimously disagreed with the statement "Students do not involve conscious knowledge of the grammatical system and how it works when using language." (Questionnaire, Section One, Item 2c).

Metalanguage was perceived to be positively received by students as the teachers were generally agreeable in their views about students and the usefulness of grammatical terminology (Questionnaire, Section Two, Item 3d). MOE EL Syllabus 2010 views students' acquisition of grammatical knowledge and proficiency in grammar in terms of their use of the metalanguage. Hence, the implied responsibility of the teacher is to plan grammar lessons with explicit teaching of the target items. These learning outcomes envisioned by the 2010 EL Syllabus is realized through STELLAR, where grammar items presented in context with the injection of metalanguage during grammar lessons for students to learn from, and multiple opportunities for talk about grammar are recommended in the guidelines and materials. This value of metalanguage is clearly espoused by two of the teachers: T3 advocates the use of metalanguage where students should "not be afraid to use metalanguage," they should be "aware [of it]", because "when we use it frequently, they will get used to it, and understand it".

Why Is Grammar Being Taught the Way It Is?

After examining how grammar is being taught in EL classrooms in Singapore, the following discussion will reveal some of the factors explaining why grammar is being taught in the above-mentioned ways.

Grammar Teaching Is Spearheaded by Policies and Resources

The MOE, through its articulation in the 2010 EL Syllabus, views EL teachers as proficient in grammatical rules and metalanguage about language structures, and hence able to plan and execute grammar-focused lessons systematically in various authentic contexts. These lessons should aim to hone the students' grammar knowledge and proficiency in application "to the other areas of language learning, that is, listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing, and representing," as students progress from word level to whole-text level (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 81). Grammar would be learnt and taught in "explicit, engaging, and meaningful ways" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 10). With reference to the literature review, the 2010 EL Syllabus seems to favor an explicit teaching of grammar, in a contextualized approach. The national literacy program for primary schools, STELLAR, helps the teachers realize the 2010 EL Syllabus through its research-based teaching strategies such as the Shared Book Approach, Modified Language Experience Approach, Differentiated Instruction, and Supported Reading. These teacher professional development supports were designed and contextualized with the local students' sociocultural and linguistic needs in mind, to enhance students' language learning (Pang, Lim, Choe, Peters, & Chua, 2015).

The teachers spoke favorably of the 2010 EL Syllabus and STELLAR, which provided teachers with "more focus than before [and] an overview of the progression" (T2) in the mastery of language skills. The teachers' awareness of the syllabus is uniformly echoed by all the teachers with "the direction and stand of the [school's English] department to emphasize and teach grammar explicitly, and not be afraid to use metalanguage so that the students are aware…" (T3). However, in spite of this shift towards a closer alignment with the 2010 EL Syllabus, the classroom teachers are the ones who ultimately plan and deliver the grammar lessons; hence the chosen pedagogy would be influenced by other factors. As Borg (1999) posited, teachers' theories in grammar teaching may also be influenced by "personal understandings of teaching and learning which teachers develop through educational and professional experiences in their lives" (p. 157) or other contributing contextual factors. The teachers demonstrated that they are well-informed of the language education policies, but the responses in the surveys also revealed pedagogical concerns that vary between different teachers.

Grammar Teaching Is Informed by the Teachers' Perceptions of the Role of Grammar

The questionnaire began by surveying what teachers understand of the role of grammar in language (Section One, Items 1a–1d). Interestingly, the teachers generally agreed with all four statements. The four statements positioned and accorded grammar to different terms such as the "framework" or "building block," an add-on, or "a pillar" equal to other aspects of the language. The two statements of grammar as "a framework for the rest of the language – a basic system to build everything else on" and "the building blocks of language which are combined to form a whole"' both garnered a "strongly agree" response by all the teachers. Inferring these all-agreeing responses obtained in the questionnaire, nonetheless, still show the teachers' strong belief that grammar plays a central role in language.

The interviews further revealed the teachers' personal views on the role of grammar in language. T1 posited that "knowing the workings of grammar is important because it is the basic [thing that] you need to know for you to have good language," reinforcing Item 1a, which shows that grammar is seen as a key foundation for students' language development. The other three teachers also maintained the view that grammar had a meaning-making communicative value: "It is important because it makes meaning to what we want to say… without the basic grammar skills, it will affect their learning of the language" (T2), and "Without it there is no English; there is no communication; it forms the pillars and structure of the entire language. Really the bread and butter to language itself" (T3). As the teachers perceived that grammar holds a communicative role, this supports why grammar was being taught with language production, together with the viewing and representing skills.

Juxtaposing the above with earlier studies adopting similar questionnaire items (Burgess & Etherington, 2002; Barnard & Cahn, 2009), there were clear indications of a rejection of Item 1c, which stated that grammar is more than just a “refinement” that comes at a later stage in language development. Such similar inference could be drawn from the teachers surveyed in this current research. The teachers’ responses in the interview firmly summarized and confirmed that grammar is seen to be the foundation of language, and present in the receptive and productive language skills – which T1 and T4 listed in their interview responses. The lack of grammar impairs language learning and proficiency, and communication of meaning. Hence, it offers a perspective whereby teachers place importance on the accuracy of grammar knowledge and application in different forms of language production in meaningful communication and practice for examinable components.

Grammar Teaching Is Guided by Teachers’ Experiences as a Student and as a Teacher

The teachers were divided in their responses to Items 7a–7e in Section One of the questionnaire, which sought to elicit the teachers’ opinions about what might have determined the way they teach grammar. T2 and T3 disagreed that how they had learnt grammar affected the way they teach grammar today, while the other two teachers agreed to that statement (Item 7c). The interviews were then conducted with these views in mind. T1 strongly emphasized during the interview that how she was taught grammar did not influence how she teaches grammar, which was inconsistent with her response in the questionnaire. This mismatch was noteworthy because during the interviews, the teachers seemed to hold some reservations when asked if their teaching was influenced by the way they were taught. The teachers recollected learning grammar in a traditional drill-and-practice fashion where grammar was taught discretely with rules, followed by a series of practices (i.e., Focus on Forms). T1 recalled that “there used to be little books for grammar [with] those grammar exercise, so [there was] a lot of drill and practice,” and this was supported by T3, noting that from those books, “we had to memorize, ... recite, [and] even write down, ... given worksheets with tables.” The aims of a contextualized presentation of grammar in the syllabus appeared to be well-communicated in this survey. It can be inferred to coincide with how the teachers might have been taught grammar as students, influencing their grammar pedagogy. T1 recalled a teacher adopted this similar style of teaching, where grammar items are taken out of context and taught separately. The presence of this grammar pedagogy might result from the teachers employing the approaches according to how they were taught.

Only when she was a trainee teacher, did T2 began appreciating grammar knowledge more meaningfully as “it only makes sense to me when I was in NIE” (National Institute of Education; the sole institute for teacher education in Singapore). This outlook towards grammar learning, the need of a meaningful communication of grammar rules and exceptions to students today for the proper use of language (T4), coincides with the alignment of the teachers’ beliefs of explicit teaching with the policy. All the teachers agreed to the statements “Students need formal grammar instructions which help them to produce grammatically correct language” (Questionnaire, Section One, Item 2b) and “Students need to be consciously aware of a structure’s form and its function before they can use it proficiently" (Questionnaire, Section One, Item 2g). This clearly shows that the teachers see the need for students to be taught the grammar rules, explicitly yet meaningfully in a context, before the students can be capable of producing grammatically sound and proper language for communication.

T3 vividly shared about "thematic teaching" when undergoing teacher education, but in the evaluation of students' learning through this pedagogy being presented as "somewhat incidental," students were seen to use grammar "if it sounds right then it is correct." This was a challenge for T3 back then because it seemed like two conflicting grammar pedagogies since she noted that she was not taught that way as a student, for she "had a very good English teacher in primary school who really drilled the mechanics of grammar." In this recount, it shows the teachers' reliance on experiences as a student and teacher, how one had been taught and has taught over the years, having a significant impact in the current pedagogical decisions.

Grammar Teaching Varies with Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Learning Abilities and Preferences

At the heart of the language teachers' grammar pedagogy is the student. T3 reported that she would "unpack and simplify [grammar] for students so that it is at their level." This consideration of students' entry point prior to the language lesson shows that teachers adopt different strategies due to the unique profile of their students; and this is supported by the literature. Burgess and Etherington (2002) strongly echoes this point of students' expectations as a factor; while Farrell and Lim (2005) see the pedagogical judgements and decisions of teachers as products filtered and derived from the teachers' understanding of students. Borg (1998) argued that this will provide a realistic glimpse into teachers' grammar pedagogical choice.

All the surveyed teachers agreed that "Students are motivated by problem-solving techniques for learning grammar" (Questionnaire, Section Two, Item 2a). T1 innovated with grammar games, involving students to develop a "Grammar Monopoly" with a monopoly board and having students create the grammar questions with sentences. T1 facilitated by checking the grammatical accuracy of the sentences crafted, noting it to be well received by her students, who were more self-directed in their learning with such an activity. Acknowledging the issue of high-stakes testing, T1 shared the concern teachers had in structuring grammar lessons, especially for graduating students, with a balance of practice because worksheets are perceived as helpful tools for grammar learning. T1 also shared about language activities with discussions, web quests, and writing, which students seem to be enthusiastic about.

Finding a Balance

The teachers seemed to be seeking a "balance" when they were discussing grammar. Besides the dilemma between practice-oriented grammar pedagogy and engaging activities, the research reveals that there are different interpretations of the balance that the teachers are seeking. Three out of the four teachers agreed that students "feel insecure with a lack of explicit grammar teaching" (Questionnaire, Section Two, Item 3c), and the same number of teachers saw their students expecting teachers to "present grammar points explicitly" (Questionnaire, Section Two, Item 3a). From this, it can be assumed that the teachers may not have seen the potential of implicit grammar learning for their students. T1 saw grammar as "always [being] taught," and when interviewed about students' possibility of learning grammar through such means of exposure, the teacher felt related, "I think if they are able to do it, then yes, they are very smart. But maybe here they are not at that level, yet." The teachers' beliefs that students may not be capable of implicit grammar learning is extrapolated and shown in three teachers disagreeing that "If students discover the grammar rules themselves, they will be able to work out other grammar rules in future." (Questionnaire, Section One, Item 5c). Such pedagogy being adopted in the their lessons was not mentioned in the teachers' responses, and this is likely to have been due to the teachers' strong belief in explicit teaching or the students' capability of learning grammar through implicit means, which have been clearly articulated in the survey.

It is crucial to note that implicit grammar learning has its merits, too. Implicit grammar learning is seen to pave the way for "rapid and fluent communication" (Ellis, 2006, p. 95). There have been studies done on such grammar pedagogical options whereby a "communicative syllabus" is adopted for language teaching through language immersion (Mulroy, 2004, p. 55). The rich flood of input through language activities is seen to develop the grammar meaningfully, and such could be centered in the arts and literature (Weaver, McNally, & Moerman, 2001). Although the concerns raised by the teachers about students being casual with language learning without explicit and conscious knowledge of grammar or about needing high language proficiency to be capable of implicit grammar learning can be understood; however, moving forward as language teachers anticipate a new syllabus or more resources, implicit grammar learning is a potential area to embark on.

Redefining Grammar Pedagogy in Singapore's Primary Schools

Moving forward from the scope of this current study, understanding the case studies of the four experienced teachers adopting the EL Syllabus 2010 and the STELLAR resources, this study does highlight potential opportunities to redefine grammar pedagogy locally. Acknowledging that policies seem to have an overarching influence on the grammar pedagogical voice of the teacher, the education system could explore the advantages of implicit grammar learning and weave in such an approach to encourage language teachers to adopt it in their language teaching as well. It would be an avenue for students to build their bank of subconscious grammar knowledge, which would be further enhanced with the successes in the recommended explicit grammar instruction with metalanguage.

This research offered a study of the case studies of the four teachers in the EL department of Confidence Primary School – a glimpse at their approaches, activities, and resources employed by them and an understanding the motivations and concerns in the teachers' perception of grammar teaching. A future study of a larger group of such experienced teachers with classroom observations could lend the opportunity to observe the actual implementations of grammar lessons, and an angle for further triangulation from the teachers' perceptions raised in the surveys conducted in this research. Surveying groups of teachers from different schools may allow future research to draw a generalization of the grammar pedagogy in primary schools representative of more schools and make a comparison. Nonetheless, this research is strongly reflective of a case study providing a backdrop of a group of very experienced teachers in a school to the evaluation of grammar pedagogy in primary schools.

Conclusion: Is There a Grammar to Teaching Grammar?

Maybe. There seems to be no undisputed answer as yet to this question, and this debate in the literature might stay for a long time. However, this research, which was written in hopes of finding out how grammar is being taught in the EL classrooms in Singapore, and why grammar is taught the way it currently is, has depicted a promising local education scene where experienced teachers are informed in their pedagogical choices, undoubtedly from their teacher language awareness. This research hence answers that "yes," there is a grammar to teaching grammar, and this lies in the teacher and the teacher's clear understanding of what is in the syllabus, the teaching experiences accumulated, and most importantly, the grammar and language needs of the students, where this grammar to teaching grammar has to be closely catered and customized to the teachers' understanding of these.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my research supervisor, Dr. Loh Kok Khiang Jason, for the guidance and the opportunity given in this research project. The collaboration of the participating school and teachers who have immensely contributed to this research is also deeply appreciated.

I wish to acknowledge the funding support for this project from Nanyang Technological University under the Undergraduate Research Experience on Campus (URECA) program.

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EFL Learners' Perceptions of Developing L2 Proficiency Through Debate

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The present study explores EFL learners' perceptions of learning through debating in a speaking class. Thirty-three Taiwanese university students participated; they were taught rules and procedures of debate and ran a debate contest in class. Two measurements were adopted: (a) a Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety scale given before and after the debate, examining the participants' self-perceived anxiety reduction; and (b) a questionnaire given after the debate to survey the perceived learning effect. The questionnaire included questions on both language ability improvement, such as vocabulary and reading ability, and affective change, such as motivation and confidence. Results showed that the level of public speaking anxiety was significantly lower after the debate, and improvement of critical thinking skills, listening, and speaking were rated as the top three among linguistic and affective gains. The results also indicated highly perceived personal fulfillment. The present study displays a positive evaluation of learning through debate and suggests extensive integration of debate into EFL classrooms.

INTRODUCTION

Debate is defined as an organized argument or contest of ideas in which the participants discuss a topic from two opposing sides (American Debate League, 2018). As debate is frequently seen in public meetings and in legislative assemblies to discuss serious issues, it can also be any event "wherein people disagree with each other and exchange multiple reasons to support their positions in the attempt to persuade each other or onlookers of the legitimacy of their thinking" (Hughs, 2007, p. 625). Debate has been regarded as an active learning strategy to promote critical thinking and creativity (Walker, 2003), and to reach academic success (American Debate League, 2018). It allows students to enhance critical thinking through investigating arguments, engaging in research, gathering information, performing analysis, assessing arguments, questioning assumptions, and demonstrating interpersonal skills (Scott, 2008).

Debate can apply not only to general education but also to language learning. For L2 learners, debate is also beneficial for improving not only speaking ability (Arung, 2016) but pragmatic ability (Kennedy, 2007) as well. Adopting debate in the L2 classroom is believed to expand vocabulary breadth, enhance grammar accuracy, facilitate speaking fluency, and develop sociolinguistic appropriateness (Brown, Brown, & Eggett, 2014). Moreover, throughout the process of preparing for a debate, academic language skills – speaking, listening, reading, writing, and research skills – are developed (Stewart & Pleisch, 1998). Thus, there is no doubt in saying that debate is useful in developing L2 proficiency.

Due to the interactive and impromptu nature of debate, requirements of cognitive and linguistic capabilities for debate participants are demanding. For foreign language learners who develop their critical thinking in an L1 environment but are required to form arguments in an L2 classroom, they may perceive debating as more difficult, compared with other speaking activities like chatting and discussion (Syukri, 2016). However, expected benefits of developing L2 proficiency through debate – advanced communication skills, improved accuracy and fluency, and sufficient control of structures and vocabulary – correspond to performance profiles of advanced range in proficiency guidelines like ACTFL (2012), suggesting advantages of and the recommendation for using debate in L2 classrooms.

Previous studies mostly focus on proposing promising plans and practical techniques for using debate in EFL contexts. For instance, Alasmari and Ahmed (2013) propose 13 modules of debate practice in EFL classrooms. Hughes (2007) promotes teaching debate to low-level EFL learners and shares six classroom activities for training. Krieger (2005) provides a step-by-step guide, from introduction to final judging, to assist EFL teachers in conducting debate in class. Other studies pay attention to the learning outcomes. Arung (2016) conducted action research with Indonesian university EFL students and found an observable improvement in the students' speaking ability based on evaluation of vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. However, Syukri (2016) found a completely different set of results on Indonesian EFL students in another university: After running a debate contest in class, the students' fluency remained poor, judging from the high frequency of stutters, and accuracy was low, based on pronunciation errors and basic grammar mistakes. One reason of such contradictory learning outcomes may lie in the level of preparation and readiness on debating, the lack of which could be overcome by thorough guidance beforehand. Another possible reason, as Syukri (2016) also admits, may be related to learners' affective factors, that is, whether EFL learners have enough confidence to perform debate, or whether they are affected by the anxiety and tension of speaking in public. In other words, attention should be paid to how EFL students feel about learning English through debating as well as how they perceive the effects of learning.

The present study, as a qualitative descriptive case study, aims to explore EFL learners' perceptions of learning through debating in a speaking class. The perceived learning outcomes are defined as two-fold: The first is the effect on language ability, and the second is the effect on critical thinking development. In addition, the perceived affective influences are also defined as two-fold: motivation and desire for collaboration. Note that perceived public speaking anxiety is investigated separately, considering that anxiety is too vague in nature and is difficult to measure, and thus should be treated sparingly. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the EFL learners' perceptions on the learning outcomes of learning through debate?
2. What are the EFL learners' perceptions on the affective influences of learning through debate?

3. How does learning through debate influence EFL learners' level of public speaking anxiety?

Method

Participants and Background

A total of 33 EFL students from a university in Taiwan participated in the study. They were English majors in their junior and senior year. The estimated English proficiency level of these students was intermediate to high-intermediate level. They were local Taiwanese residents except for one student from Japan; Mandarin was the L1 of the 32 Taiwanese students and Japanese was the L1 of the one Japanese student. The average length of time previously spent learning English as a foreign language was 7.5 years; none of the participants experienced living in an English-speaking country for more than a year. The similar background of the participants helps to exclude any potential impact resulting from individual variations.

These students took an elective course called "Speech and Debate"; the course aims at preparing students with advanced oral speaking skills in English, including proper presentation manners, practical negotiation skills, and the ability to think critically. The students were told in the first class that they would have a debate competition with a group of students from another Taiwanese university by the end of the semester. During the first half of the semester (Weeks 2–7), they were trained to give informative speeches; the training included speaking styles and visual supports. They then spent another half of the semester (Weeks 9–17) learning verbal delivery skills and negotiation skills. The rules and procedures of debate were introduced in the first session of the second half (Week 9); the orientation was given at the same time to students of both schools through video-conferencing to ensure fairness; all students received the same instruction on debate. The detailed schedule is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Course Schedule

Week	Schedule	
1	Orientation. **wh*-questions about Speech and Debate	
2	Topic 1: Speaking Anxiety	
3	Topic 2: Style	*Clarity*: Speed, Tone, & Volume
4	Topic 2: Style	*Intelligibility*: Enunciation & Gesture/Posture
5	Topic 2: Style	*Appearance*: Eye Contact & Outfit
6	Topic 3: Visual Presentation	*Presentation*: PowerPoint & Visual Aids
7	Topic 3: Visual Presentation	*Persuasion*: Statistics, Tables, & Figures
8	Practice: Informative Speech	
9	Lecture: Debate Principles and Tips	
10	Topic 4: Verbal Delivery	*Topic Development*: Outlining & Evidence
11	Topic 4: Verbal Delivery	*Emphasis*: Transition & Twist
12	Topic 4: Verbal Delivery	*Rebuttal*: Inquiry Skills & Impromptu Speech

13	1st Interschool Debate	
14	2ndInterschoolDebate	
15	Topic 5: Negotiation Skills	Principles of Negotiation 1
16	Topic 5: Negotiation Skills	Principles of Negotiation 2
17	Championship Debate	
18	Final Exam Week	

Instrument

Self-Survey

A five-point Liker-scale survey was developed to investigate perceived learning outcomes and affective influences. A total of twenty-two statements were created to survey the students' perception of language abilities (L: 4 items), critical thinking (CT: 5 items), motivation (M: 5 items), collaboration (C: 5 items), the general opinion (G: 3 items). The order of the statements was randomized to avoid respondent confusion of whether similar items belonged to the same category. The students were asked to evaluate their level of agreement on the scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Personal Report on Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA)

The PRPSA survey designed by McCroskey (1970) was adopted to measure the students' public speaking anxiety. PRPSA is claimed to be a validated scale strictly tailored for public speaking anxiety, with a reliability found to be greater than 0.90 in subsequent research (McCroskey, 1997). The PRPSA has been used frequently in studies carried out in EFL contexts (e.g., Chen, 2009; Hsu, 2012) and thus is regarded suitable for the present study. The students were asked to rate the survey items on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to indicate their level of agreement on each statement. Scoring was accomplished following the three steps:

Step 1. Add scores for items 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10, 13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, and 34.
Step 2. Add the scores for items 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 24, and 26
Step 3. Complete the following formula: PRPSA = 72 – (Total from Step 2) + (Total from Step 1).

The total score should fall between 34 and 170. The anxiety level is considered high if the score is above 131, low if below 98, and moderate if score is between 98 and 131 (McCroskey, 1970).

RESULTS

Results of the Self-Survey

The results of the self-survey are reported in Table 2. The lowest mean of the 33 participating students was 3.8, while the highest was 4.5; the range of the means for the 22 statements indicates a positive student impression on learning through debate.

Table 3 reports the mean for each category, suggesting that critical thinking ability (CT; *M* = 4.14) was perceived to be the greatest gain in the learning process, compared to language ability (L; *M* = 3.93), motivation (M; *M* = 3.93), and collaboration (C; *M* = 3.99). The mean for general evaluation on the debate learning was 4.14, indicating high satisfaction with the learning experience.

Table 2. Results of the Self-Survey

No.	Statement	Mean	Category
1	Debating my classmates increased my motivation to learn.	3.8	M
2	I worked harder than normal when I had to debate my classmates.	3.8	C
3	Debating my classmates increased my motivation to improve my speaking ability.	4.0	M
4	Debating students from another school increased my motivation to improve my speaking ability.	4.1	M
5	I would encourage learning how to debate to other students in my department.	3.8	M
6	I would encourage debating against students from anther school to other students in my department.	3.8	M
7	Learning how to debate has improved my critical thinking skill.	4.4	CT
8	Debating has improved my speaking ability.	4.0	L
9	Learning how to debate has improved my ability to argue effectively.	4.1	CT
10	Learning how to debate has improved my ability to use evidence to support my viewpoint.	4.3	CT
11	Learning how to debate has improved my ability to see the weaknesses in an argument.	4.2	CT
12	Preparing to debate has increased my English vocabulary.	3.9	L
13	Debating has improved my English listening skill.	4.1	L
14	Debating has improved my English reading skill.	3.8	L
15	I am glad that I learned how to debate.	4.5	G
16	I learned a lot from my classmates when we debated.	4.2	C
17	I cooperated with my classmates more than normal when we were preparing for our debate.	3.9	C
18	I grew closer to my classmates because of working on our debate.	3.8	C
19	I appreciate my classmates more because of working on our debate.	4.2	C
20	I can understand both sides of an issue better because of learning how to debate.	4.0	CT
21	I am glad that debating was part of the course syllabus.	4.0	G
22	I am glad that debating students from another school was part of the course syllabus.	4.0	G

Table 3. Results of Mean of Statements in Each Category

Category (No. of Statements)	Learning Outcomes		Affective Influence		General Opinion (3)
	Language Ability (4)	Critical Thinking (5)	Motivation (5)	Collaboration (5)	
Mean	3.93	4.14	3.93	3.99	4.14

Results of the PRPSA

The PRPSA score indicates the level of perceived anxiety in public speaking: the lower score, the lower the level of anxiety. A paired-samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the PRPSA scores before and after the debate. The results are reported in Table 4. There was a significant difference in the scores of the pretest (M = 120.24, SD = 17.26) and those of the posttest (M = 109.88, SD = 15.19), $t(32) = 1.69$, $p < .00$. The results suggest that the anxiety was reduced after conducting the debates.

TABLE 4. Results of Mean of Statements in Each Category

	N	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*
Pre-PRPSA	33	120.24	17.26	32	1.69	.00***
Post-PRPSA	33	109.88	15.19			

DISCUSSION

The results showed that the improvement of critical thinking skills was valued the highest among all linguistic and affective gains. The students agreed that they can argue more effectively by spotting weaknesses in an argument and by supporting their own viewpoints with evidence. Statement 7, "Learning how to debate has improved my critical thinking skill" (M = 4.4), ranked top among the five statements in this category. The findings confirm that debate is as beneficial for critical thinking development in a language learning-related subject as in other subjects like science (Scott, 2008).

Interestingly, the students' impressions on language ability improvements were not so positive: the listening skill (M = 4.1) ranked the highest compared with the reading skill (3.8), vocabulary (3.9), and speaking (4.0). Krieger (2005) also mentions that debate provides meaningful listening and speaking practice; listening seems to be favored the most in the process. It is not surprising, though, that debate is a type of communication in which understanding arguments from the other side is necessary for rebuttal. The interactive nature of debate is thus confirmed.

As for the attitudinal statements related to learning motivation, the results suggest that the competitive spirit arises from the urge to do better than others, particularly those from different communities. The mean for Statement 4, "Debating students from another school increased my motivation to improve my speaking ability" (M = 4.1), is slightly higher than the mean for Statement 3, "Debating my classmates increased my motivation to improve my speaking ability" (M = 4.0); yet, the mean for Statement 5, "I would encourage learning how to debate to other students in my department" (M = 3.8), and for Statement 6, "I would encourage debating against students from anther school to other students in my department" (M = 3.8), are equal. As has been found in previous studies, competitive arousal positively correlates with motivation and behavior (Lim, Yim, Law, & Cheung, 2004; Malhotra, 2010).

Comparing motivation driven by the desire to win, the present study shows that the desire to collaborate (Statements 2, 17, 18) and the appreciation of collaboration (Statements 16, 19) were rated the second highest (M = 3.99), higher than motivation driven by competitiveness (M = 3.93) and only lower than the mean for critical thinking (M = 4.14). Though competition brings greater situational interest and enjoyment, collaboration is found to lead to stronger intentions to participate in an activity and to recommend it to others (Plass et al., 2013).

As for the general opinions, the students rated them quite high in the statements related to debate. Statement 15, "I am glad that I learned how to debate," got the highest mean (M = 4.5) in this survey, showing the high level of satisfaction with the learning experience. Statement 21, "I am glad that debating was part of the course syllabus," and Statement 22, "I am glad that debating students from another school was part of the course syllabus," also indicate the enjoyment of using debate in class.

Finally, the results of the PRPSA showed that the students' public speaking anxiety level was significantly lower after the debate training than before, suggesting that, after learning through debate, the anxiety of speaking in public was reduced. The process of debate – to stand by an argument and to convince others – is often seen as intimidating and difficult; yet, with proper training and enough preparation, debate can be a useful means to boost learners' confidence and to train their logical thinking skills, as well as make them resourceful thinkers and speakers.

As previous research has provided abundant ideas to plan out teaching and integrating debate in class, EFL teachers are suggested to view debate as a communicative task rather than just a one-time speaking activity. Task by definition is the activity "where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose in order to achieve an outcome" (Willis, 1996, p. 23); teachers can adopt task-based instruction, provide step-by-step guidance and practice to prepare L2 students, and take debate as the final product.

Conclusions

Findings of the study confirm the positive value of debate in developing L2 proficiency from various perspectives. The EFL learners participating in the study reported perceived improvements on language ability and critical thinking, and became more motivated, driven by the competitive as well as collaborative nature of debate. In addition, through the process of debating, the anxiety level was significantly reduced; in other words, the participating EFL learners felt less anxious when speaking in front of people. The experience of learning through debate gave them a high degree of self-fulfillment and thus led to a high level of satisfaction. Therefore, a more extensive use of debate in EFL classrooms is recommended.

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Implementing Self-Access Language Learning to the L2 Conversation Course Curriculum

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This study attempts to implement Self-Access Language Learning (SALL) into the curriculum in a hope to increase learners' motivation in learning English and promoting learners' speaking fluency. SALL is an approach that facilitates learners to shift from teacher dependence to learner autonomy (Gardner & Miller, 1999). Two intact classes, forty students each, underwent a crossover design, in which both classes prepared their own projects of SALL, including the methodological package of enhancing speaking ability. Conventional teacher-directed instruction was implemented as a comparative control group to detect the effectiveness of SALL. The result reveals that there is a significant difference between SALL and conventional methods in terms of speaking fluency by using rubrics for evaluation. A self-check reflective questionnaire showed a positive attitude toward the utilization of SALL along with teacher's guidance.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking and writing are regarded as "productive abilities" compared to reading and listening, which are "receptive abilities." Speaking in a second or foreign language is even more difficult than other abilities. In a typical ESL classroom in Taiwan, with a relatively high numbers of learners, it seems to be a demanding task for teachers to focus on speaking for each student, not to mention promoting speaking fluency. In addition to a teacher-led conventional way of instruction, such as dialogue practices and information-gap activities, another type of approach can be integrated into the conversation curriculum: this is self-access language learning (SALL). SALL is an approach "which facilitates learners to shift from teacher dependence to learner autonomy" (Gardner & Miller, 1999, p. 8). Other than only the teacher's direct instruction, learners have more opportunities to gain control over their learning and to learn to be a more responsible language leaner. In an optimal state of language learning, SALL is expected to assist learners to become autonomous learners. In accordance with Gardner (2017a), there are five models of SALL: (a) a (physical) self-access center, (b) online self-access, (c) self-access in the classroom, (d) self-access in the course, and (e) hybrids of the above four. To foster autonomy, one of the models that has been implemented across the globe is the establishment of self-access learning centers, running in various educational and cultural environments and accompanying diverse styles of learning (Benson, 2001). In this study, the implementation of SALL is as in model four, self-access in the course, the so-called "integrated SALL." Within integrated SALL, there are five models: (a) the self-access course, (b) the course with an optional self-access component, (c) the course with a compulsory, non-credit self-access component, (d) the course with a compulsory credit-earning SALL component, and (e) the course with homework exercises labelled "self-access" (Gardner, 2017b). In this current study, model (d) is adapted to best meet the learners' need and to fit the institutional setting.

Literature Review

Developing Autonomous Learning via SALL

Autonomy is the ultimate goal for one's learning, whether one could be accountable for their own learning and whether this willingness could proceed as life-long learning. Autonomous learning means that the learner takes an active role in their learning: "the ability to take charge of one's learning" (Holec, 1981). In other words, learner-centeredness and learner autonomy are interchangeable. According to Nunan (1988), "the key difference between learner-centered and traditional curriculum development is that, in the former, the curriculum is a collaborative effort between teachers and learners, since learners are closely involved in the decision-making process regarding the content of the curriculum and how it is taught" (p. 2). There are five key elements to autonomy (Benson & Voller, 1997, p. 2):

1. Situations in which learners study entirely on their own.
2. An inborn capacity that is suppressed by institutional education.
3. A set of skills that can be learned and applied in self-directed learning.
4. The right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning.
5. The exercise of the learners' responsibility for their own learning.

To develop and further promote autonomy in a language class, three things are important to meet the needs: to "allow learners to plan their own learning activities, monitor their progress, and evaluate their outcomes" (Benson, 2003, p. 290). With regards to the practice of autonomy, Gardner and Miller (1999) demonstrated how self-access centers are useful in providing structure for the development of an autonomous learning capacity by offering a space which allows learners to interact with the learning environment and to converse with themselves and others at one's own pace. Although self-access centers are successful, there is no doubt that due to institutional policies at the administrative level, not every institution can have one. An alternative method, therefore, is for the language teacher to integrate SALL into their curriculum or course with compulsory, credit-earning SALL (Gardner, 2017b).

A SALL-Integrated Curriculum for Promoting Speaking Ability

For students who have never taken control of their learning and who have never been responsible for their own learning, pushing toward greater control is a very demanding and challenging task. To facilitate this task, we referred to seven steps from a nine step program for learner training and autonomy by Nunan (2003):

Step 1: Make instruction goals clear to learners.
Step 2: Allow learners to create their own goals.
Step 3: Encourage learners to use their second language outside the classroom.
Step 4: Raise awareness of learning processes.
Step 5: Help learners identify their own preferred styles and strategies.
Step 6: Encourage learner choice.
Step 7: Allow learners to generate their own tasks.

In Step 1, the instructor states clearly the goal of enhancing speaking ability, including the practice of pronunciation, the utilization of words and grammar, the fluency of speech, etc. During Step 1, direct instruction by the instructor of conversational exercises is implemented to reinforce students' speaking practice. In Step 2, students learn to create their own speaking goals and keep a weekly record-of-work log, which constitutes the "planning" part. Students can consult the instructor for materials mining. In Steps 3 and 4, students are encouraged to use the second language outside the classroom in order to activate their language learning outside of the instructed learning of the classroom. In this study, such activation was done during the process of students sharing their record-of-work logs with their partners and teacher. They shared what they had learned, done, and gained from their recent self-learning experiences. The feedback their partner and teacher provided allowed them to reflect on their learning processes and consider what kind of learning they should do during the following week. This constitutes the "monitoring" part. In Steps 5 and 6, the instructor assists students either individually or within groups to ascertain students' learning strategies by providing them with techniques in practicing speaking or getting access to handy online learning materials. In Step 7, students generate their own tasks, and the instructor is the examiner to evaluate the results (e.g., to read out an article clearly and fluently). This part can be called the "evaluating" part.

METHOD

Research Design

The current study was designed to enhance learners' speaking ability, raise their willingness to speaking in public, and foster their autonomous learning. To this end, two classes, accounting for forty students each, underwent a crossover design study (see Figure 1) with two types of treatment: Lecture (dialogue practice, mini-role plays, information-gap activities, etc.) and Lecture + SALL (learners' self-learning project in promoting speaking) through an 18-week academic semester. Data were collected from sophomores, distributed as pairs, in an English conversation course in a junior college. Metacognitive strategies (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990) as well as seven steps from a nine-step program for learner training and autonomy by Nunan (2003) were introduced to guide learners' on their self-learning projects in promoting speaking. Learners' speaking performances (i.e., mini-talks) were evaluated via rubrics with reference to their pronunciation, vocabulary, accuracy, fluency, confidence, and time control by quantitative analysis. Learners' self-learning projects included self-reflection logs (i.e., planning, monitoring, and evaluating records), and peer and instructor feedback were examined. Learner's reflective questionnaires were analyzed to understand their attitude toward SALL.

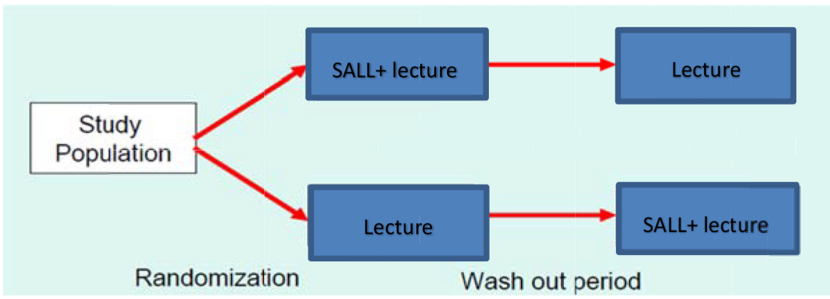

FIGURE 1. Crossover design of the study.

Participants

The participants were two intact classes of forty students each. The students were sophomores in a junior college in Taiwan, and their English proficiency level was pre-intermediate. They met two hours a week for a regular English conversation class.

Procedure

Students in SALL+L//L (SALL+Lecture, followed by Lecture) class implemented self-access language learning, in which they consulted learning materials provided either by the instructor or authentic materials online as well as having in-class conversational instruction (dialogue practice, information-gap activities, etc.). The students were required to keep a record-of-work log weekly, after they had done self-access learning outside the classroom, in order to keep track of their learning path. When they came to class, they shared what they had accessed (i.e., learning materials) with their peers. In Week 5, students were required to give a mini-talk with a 3x3 Mandala chart, describing what they had done for improving their speaking ability. During Week 9 and Week 10, there was a second round of mini-talks with an extension to a 9x9 Mandala chart in which students elaborated on their previous study plans in more detail. They also underwent an oral test, consisting of a read-out-load section and answering the instructor's oral questions.

For the last half of the semester, there was the instructor's direct lecture only. Students did not need to do self-access learning, nor did they need to fulfill the record-of-work form. They had a third mini-talk performance in the final week as well as an oral test to evaluate their progress.

Students in the L//SALL+L class underwent equivalent instruction, but they first received the instructor's lecture only, and then for the last half of the semester, they were guided to do self-access language learning. The two classes experienced two different instructional methods synchronically within a semester, but they experienced the same two parts in a different order. See Table 1 for the procedure for the SALL+L//L class. The instructional methods for L//SALL+L class were the same as for the SALL+L//L class; the only difference was their sequence. The crossover study design is a good way to enable different classes/groups of participants to receive equivalent instruction without compromising one another.

TABLE 1. Procedure of SALL+L//L Class

Weeks	Content of Instructional Methods
W1	Introduction of SALL (package of SALL), lecture
W2 - W4	Ss' record-of-work log shared with peers
W5	Mini-talks (2 mins; 9 squares to describe your study plan)
W6 - W8	Ss' record-of-work log shared with peers
W9 - W10	Mini-talks (5 mins; 27/81 squares), oral test (read-aloud, Q&A)
W11 - W12	Break time, movie
W13 - W16	Lecture only
W17 - W18	Mini-talks (5 mins; 27/81 squares), oral test Reflective Questionnaires

RESULTS

Through a paired *t*-test, the results showed that in the SALL+L//L class, there was no significant difference between Oral Test 1 and Oral Test 2 (p = .196), while in the L//SALL+L class, a significant effect (p = .000) was detected, with the SALL+L method gaining higher scores than the lecture-only method (L), regardless of the order in which it was administered. In terms of time differences, Talks 1–3 represented different time slots with distinct approaches. Across the times, through one-way repeated measure ANOVA, the two classes of students performed differently as measured by mini-talk scores, which showed significant differences (p = .000) as mediated by rubrics. However, in the SALL+L//L class, Talk 2 and Talk 3 did not yield significant differences (p = .336), indicating that students might regard SALL as a different kind of assignment.

In the L//SALL+L class, Talks 1, 2, and 3 yielded a significant difference in effect (p = .014) and mean scores ascended from 63.45 to 84.45. This suggests that the students preferred the teacher's guidance first and that such instruction could be seen as a fundamental underpinning of their learning. In accordance with Vygotsky's (1978, 1986) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and scaffolding theory, learners' learning can be elevated through the instruction or guidance of capable peers or the significant other individuals, such as teachers. When learners have achieved a certain level for autonomous learning, teachers can function as a facilitator to invite more advanced thinking and analyzing skills for students.

With regards to the reflective questionnaire (see Table 2), 82.5% of the students gave positive feedback toward SALL. Of the 80 students, 84% students were willing to access English learning materials in the future, and 94% thought that self-access language learning was meaningful. Being accompanied by the teacher's guidance made learning even better.

Table 2. Reflective Questionnaires

Questions	No. of Students	Average Score
1. I think the teacher's lecture and self-access learning made me learn more.	80	4.7
2. I enjoy self-access learning.	80	4.0
3. I prefer the teacher's lecture, a more conventional way of learning.	80	2.8
4. After SALL, I know how to access learning materials.	80	4.3
5. After SALL, I am more willing to access learning materials in the future.	80	4.2
6. After SALL, I presume myself to be an autonomous learner.	80	4.0

Discussion

The overall findings suggest that the combined SALL+Lecture method (SALL+L) outperformed the conventional, lecture-only one (L) in both classes in terms of speaking performance. However, students' speaking ability was enhanced not only because they did self-access learning but also due to the instruction and guidance from the instructor, evidence from the Mini-talk 1–3 performances of the L//SALL+L class. In the L//SALL+L class, students' mini-talk scores increased to a significant degree, indicating the effect of practice as well as intervention. It is logical to infer that with the instructor's instruction in the beginning half (Weeks 1–4), students increased their speaking ability. Later on when students were assigned to do self-access learning, they had the basic preparation and knowledge for improving their own speaking ability. They were better able to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning process when it came to SALL. The reason students in this class could have better performances across the three mini-talks was because of the prerequisite or prior knowledge the instructor provided during the beginning weeks in the lecture-only section.

On the other hand, the post-hoc analysis showed that in the SALL+L//L class, although Talks 1–3 yielded significant difference, Talks 2 and 3 did not. Talk 2 ended after the SALL section and Talk 3 was the final talk after the lecture-only section. This we found among the students' qualitative responses from the questionnaires in the SALL+L//L class: "I think self-access learning is a burden for me, because I need to write report card every week. But in the end, I think it's worthy" (a qualitative response from SALL+L//L class). For some students, keeping a self-reflection log was another "assignment." This could probably explain why there were no significant differences between Talk 2 and 3, even though Talk 3 gained the highest scores. The oral tests showed similar results with the mini-talks: that the L//SALL+L class showed a significant difference, while the SALL+L//L class did not. Similar claims as those for the mini-talks could be applied to the oral tests.

In terms of the self-reflection logs, keeping a record of work helped students' learn how to learn and raised the learners' awareness effectively in taking responsibility for their own learning, which is in line with what Lai, Gardner, and Law (2013) said about self-access: that it is beneficial to learners in "diagnosing their learning needs, and finding their own preferred ways of learning and reflecting on their progress" (p. 281). Both peers' and teachers' written or oral feedback help learners monitor their speech production in order to mend their speech flaws and reflect on their learning progress. The reflective questionnaire suggested that with SALL, the more learners took charge of their learning, the more motivated and autonomous they perceived themselves to be.

Limitations and Future Study

The limitation in this study is that speaking ability is accumulated, and when it is presumed as an ability or capacity, a longer period of time could be implemented to see the longitudinal result of self-access learning on the effect of speaking. Future study can be carried out on the longitudinal effect on SALL in different aspects of language learning. Another limitation is that the SALL is not enough SALL. Self-access learning center is indeed a need for students to get access to abundant English learning materials.

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A Comparison of the Language Awareness Between Student Teachers in Two Teacher Education Programs

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This study aims to examine the language awareness of the student teachers from two distinctly different teacher education programs and to determine if there are any patterns or associations between their level of teacher language awareness (in relation to grammar) and the teacher education program. Previous studies conducted in relation to teacher language awareness (Andrews, 2001) have shed light on its role and prominence in education. In this study, BA/BSc participants demonstrated a relatively higher degree of teacher language awareness as compared to postgraduate diploma in education (PGDE) students, through their ability to engage with students in grammar teaching and error correction. Participants from the respective teacher education programs also explain what they have reaped from their program and suggest possible improvements to enhance their learning experience of grammar as future English language teachers.

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to examine the teacher language awareness (TLA) of pre-service student teachers from the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore. These student teachers undergo training in one of two different Initial Teacher Preparation (ITP) Programs: the Bachelor of Arts/Science (Education) Program and the Postgraduate Diploma in Education Program (hereafter referred to as BA/BSc and PGDE, respectively). As there has yet to be studies assessing the TLA of pre-service English language teachers, this study aims to ascertain if there are any associations between their level of language awareness, in relation to grammar, with the ITP program they undergo. Additionally, this study aims to determine whether there are any associations between the level of TLA teachers possess and their knowledge of the language and their preparedness for teaching grammar. This study also aims to determine the merits of each NIE ITP program and how it hones student teachers with skills, knowledge, and competencies required of an English language teacher.

The ITP programs differ in duration of study and the modules offered to students. Students receive different types and durations of exposure to practical school settings, such as practicum stints. For the purpose of this study, only the aspect of grammar is focused on in relation to one's level of TLA. Other aspects of language, such as vocabulary, are not included in the scope of this study.

Data attained from this study is assumed to be representative of the general experience of the cohort of students in the respective programs. Another assumption made pertains to associating the participants' stated pedagogy of grammar to how they would carry out grammar lessons in reality. This also applies to each of their respective stances towards grammar.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualizing Teacher Language Awareness

Teacher language awareness is conceptualized as “the knowledge teachers have of the underlying systems of the language that enables them to teach effectively” (Thornbury, 1997, p. x). TLA enables an English language teacher to perform different roles (i.e., language user, analyst, and teacher) successfully. These three roles are outlined as a teacher’s ability to (a) use language proficiently (user), (b) recognize how language systems function (analyst), and (c) provide language learning opportunities in the classroom (teacher) (Edge, 1988; Andrews, 2003). As such, each teacher’s language awareness could potentially have a significant impact on one’s pedagogical practice.

Andrews (2001) emphasizes the importance of a language teacher in being able to reflect on “both her explicit knowledge of the relevant grammar rules and her own communicative use of the grammar item” (p. 77). Andrews concept of TLA is closely related to a language teacher’s communicative language ability (CLA) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), depicted in Figure 1.

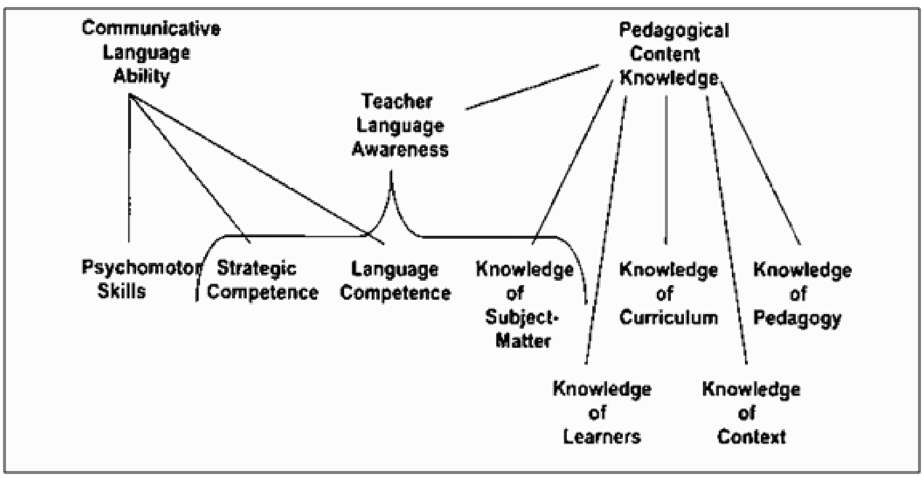

FIGURE 1. Relationship Between Teacher Language Awareness (TLA), Communicative Language Awareness (CLA), and Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK).

Notably, the term “awareness” is employed instead of “knowledge” since the nature of TLA should be dynamic in terms of the teacher’s own metacognitive ability, employing her continuous and active reflection towards language use along with aspects of language teaching (Andrews, 2001). Such reflection spurs the teacher to build her existing awareness of language, contributing to her TLA. TLA goes beyond being proficient in the language. It additionally requires pedagogical knowledge and the ability to reflect on one’s knowledge and underlying language systems (Andrews, 2001, 2006; Svalberg, 2007). Having TLA is imperative for language teachers to ensure accurate and effective explanations of language systems to students by applying their knowledge of the language. A teacher's language competence is required to strategically engage students in learning and is a determinant of their TLA, affecting overall effectiveness as a language teacher.

Turner-Bisset (1999) posits an extensive model of knowledge bases for teaching, which similarly accounts for key aspects such as content knowledge (subject matter knowledge), curriculum knowledge, knowledge of models of teaching, knowledge of learners, and pedagogical content knowledge. She explains and contextualizes how the knowledge bases could collectively provide greater understanding of teacher thinking and development while meeting teaching and learning objectives. The employment of TLA draws relevance to this, as the language teacher draws upon different areas of knowledge to plan, carry out, and reflect on the lesson while considering learners' needs.

Svalberg (2007) notes how possessing a sense of language awareness enables language users, learners, and teachers to potentially develop a deeper understanding to use language effectively. Beyond knowledge of content and pedagogy, effective language teachers should have a "willingness to engage with language content and a desire for self-development, helped by confidence in their own TLA" (p. 295).

Impact of Teacher Education Programs on Teacher Language Awareness

The importance of developing TLA and relevant knowledge bases for student teachers undergoing teacher training programs has been made salient in several studies (Bolitho, 2015; Turner-Bisset, 1999). They explain how it is important to equip teachers with an independent view of language, enabling them to be on pace with the dynamism of changes in language. Xerri (2015) aptly describes this value of TLA as "an essential professional arsenal teachers need [in order] to engage in effective teaching" (p. 2). Being equipped with TLA spurs deeper engagement with language and enquiry, influencing students' attitudes towards the value of language.

Bolitho (2015) explains that teachers often "oversimplify or distort the real nature of grammar" and cause learners to "internalize rules and apply them in decontextualized examples" (p. 3). Andrews (2003) similarly reveals that students share teachers' perceptions towards grammar based on the pedagogy adopted. Teacher cognition and perceptions of grammar have an impact on their pedagogical practice. For instance, teachers who doubt the value of explicit and conscious grammar knowledge tend to adopt a more inductive approach, believing students are not required to know the language system: "The teachers' feelings, beliefs, and understandings of grammar and grammar teaching collectively inform what they consider as necessary and desirable in grammar pedagogy. Such awareness is therefore related to how teachers engage with grammar-related issues in the classroom" (Andrews, 2003, p. 370). This implies that teachers' knowledge and perceptions towards grammar is influential since it has the potential to impact pedagogy, students' learning, and their attitudes. Teacher education programs hence have a role to play in developing relevant TLA for the effective teaching of grammar.

Research Questions

This then leads us to the research questions for this study. This study seeks to investigate the following with respect to the two different teacher education programs:

1. What are the similarities/differences between PGDE and BA/BSc students' level of TLA and potential teaching practices?
2. To what extent does the teacher education program equip a student teacher with TLA of grammar?

Despite previous research done with respect to TLA, there is no research on a comparison of TLA between student teachers from different teacher education programs. This study explores possible associations between TLA and potential teaching practices. Studying the TLA of student teachers in Singapore may uncover any potential benefits and improvements that should be addressed in hopes of enhancing the effectiveness of teacher preparation for English language teaching.

METHOD

A three-part questionnaire was administered to the study's participants, with Part 1 assessing for any prior experience and knowledge of grammar before the Initial Teacher Preparation program, along with any prior experience of teaching English grammar.

Part 2 of the questionnaire was comprised of language awareness tasks adapted from Thornbury (1997), assessing knowledge of syntax/sentence structure and tenses. Furthermore, the tasks assessed participants' understanding and awareness of the language's underlying systems, and the extent to which they were able to deal with grammar tasks or student errors from a pedagogical perspective (Thornbury, 1997; Ellis, 2012). Tasks relating to syntax/sentence structure and tenses were selected as both have been identified as most frequent error types in the Singapore primary school learner corpus (Alsagoff, 2016). Part 2 included a section on "Approaches to Teaching Grammar"; items pertaining to teaching approaches were selected from Burgess and Etherington's (2002) English for Academic Purposes (EAP) questionnaire to survey the participants' stance towards grammar teaching and ways of engaging students. The items provided a condensed overview of the participants' beliefs towards grammar teaching before they elaborated further on the open-ended section on "Student Difficulties with Grammar" by providing examples based on a specific grammar feature.

Part 3 of the questionnaire surveyed the participants on their opinion on how their respective Initial Teacher Preparation program had contributed to their competence and, in turn, to their TLA.

The participants were 90 student teachers from the National Institute of Education, Singapore's sole teacher education provider. These student teachers come from the two main ITP programs – the PGDE and BA/BSc. All participants were primary school preservice teachers and had attended grammar courses in their respective programs to equip them as future English language teachers. The specialization and content major of the student teachers differ depending on the degree program undertaken by each participant; however, all will need to teach English in primary schools after graduation, as that is one of the teaching subjects assigned by the Ministry of Education.

TABLE 1. Composition of Participants from Each Program

Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE)		**Degree** (BA/BSc)
Class 1 (Humanities)	Class 2 (Science)	
29	31	30

Table 1 shows the composition of participants from the ITP programs. The PGDE participants are segregated into two classes according to the nature of their degree studies: Class 1 being those with a previous humanities background and Class 2 for those with a science background. As compared to the degree program, recruitment for the PGDE program tends to be at a higher level to meet the needs of the teaching force, since they have already been equipped with a prior degree in education (i.e., training duration is much shorter). The program hence serves to provide them with an intensive 16-month postgraduate teaching qualification, in contrast to degree participants who attend a four-year integrated program of both teaching knowledge and undergraduate academic studies.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Similarities and Differences Through Language Tasks

To investigate Research Question 1, data collected from Part 2 of the questionnaire (comprised of language awareness tasks and participants' teaching approaches) were analyzed and compared. Participants were evaluated on their level of engagement and classified into levels of TLA with triangulation by the research supervisor and another student researcher. Teaching practices of participants were also analyzed and compared across both programs.

Syntax/Sentence Structure Tasks

Based on the tasks posed, participants in the BA/BSc program fared better in terms of their ability to identify clause elements. Common errors identified related to how participants were unable to identify the whole complex noun phrase containing a non-finite clause post-modifier (Questions 2 & 5) or prepositional phrase (Question 4). Table 2 consolidates participants' results for Questions 1–5.

The open-ended Question 6 garnered largely similar responses, with almost all participants accurately pointing out that both clauses were incoherently joined together with a comma. Some went further to explain that "it would be more appropriate to use a period to separate the clauses," or to use the conjunction "because." A few participants elaborated further, assuming the teacher's role while posing relevant questions to guide students in error correction. One participant stated the following:

> This sentence contains two phrases: you running in the park and the weather being very nice. Did you want to link these two phrases together or were they supposed to be separate ideas? If you wanted them to be separate phrases, you could write them as separate sentences. If you wanted them to be linked somehow, then you might be missing a word that connects these two phrases together. If we want to connect these two phrases together, we use a conjunction. Which conjunction do you think would be best?
>
> (BA/BSc participant)

TABLE 2. Participants' Results for Syntax/Sentence Structure Tasks (Questions 1-5)

Marks	**Class 1** (Humanities)		**Class 2** (Science)		**Degree** (BA/BSc)	
1	1	(3.6%)	-		-	
2	8	(28.6%)	1	(3.2%)	5	(16.7%)
3	5	(17.9%)	4	(12.9%)	3	(10%)
4	3	(10.7%)	8	(25.8%)	3	(10%)
5	11	(39.3%)	18	(58.1%)	19	(63.3%)
Total	28	(1 spoilt response)	31		30	

This participant guides the student systematically, demonstrating what Andrews (2001) refers to as "filtering" while employing one's TLA. "Filtering" refers to teacher mediation of language input for learners, structuring the content to suit learners' needs (e.g., ensuring accurate language structure, pitching to the student's level, and reacting constructively to language issues) (Andrews, 2001). Overall, the participants from the BA/BSc program demonstrated greater proficiency in explaining the error, while engaging in the role of a teacher, whereas most PGDE participants merely stated the error without too much elaboration on the reason for correction.

Tenses

Data from both tasks reflected that PGDE participants mainly corrected the errors but were unable to provide an explanation of the errors. Most recognized the need to use past perfect, but few managed to explain that its purpose is to show that one was the first of two past events. Though demonstrated by several PGDE participants, participants from the BA/BSc program were better able to provide the necessary school metalanguage (e.g., *past perfect, past perfect continuous*) when pointing out the errors. More BA/BSc participants were also able to attempt explaining the errors, often suggesting the use of a timeline to depict the sequence of events to students.

Overall Performance on Language Awareness Tasks

Comparing the two programs, participants in the BA/BSc program demonstrated greater ability to engage with the different language awareness tasks from the role of a language teacher. They also showed greater ability in their content knowledge and competency in the language through their explanations for the tasks. To ensure an objective comparison between the participants' language competence and ability to engage students, participants were graded based on Andrews' (2001) model of Teacher Engagement Styles.

Similarities and Differences Through Styles of Engagement

A teacher's competence in the language and ability to engage students in learning the language affects the style of engagement in the language classroom (Andrews, 2001). The lack of either would imply ineffective teaching and learning of the language. Differing levels of engagement were evident in the participants' responses. Andrews' (2001) model for styles of teacher engagement consists of two continuums: knowledge and awareness (vertical continuum) and engagement (horizontal continuum), as shown in Figure 2.

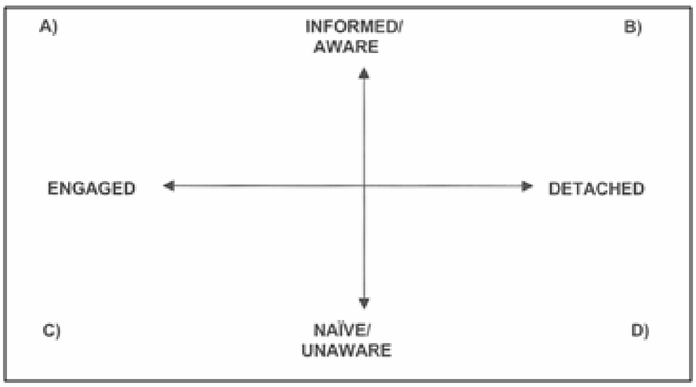

FIGURE 2. Styles of Teacher Engagement.

Based on the participants' abilities demonstrated in the language awareness tasks for grammar in Part 2 of the questionnaire, their respective levels of engagement are tabulated in Table 3. With reference to Andrews' criteria for each of the four engagement styles, a participant having Style A demonstrates the ability to engage with the task in a "principled manner" through their knowledge of grammar and relevant metalanguage. They show ability in engaging with students in error correction and explanation, recognizing the need to convey it effectively to students. Those with Style B similarly show their knowledge of grammar, but are unable to explain and discuss language errors with students. Style C participants believe students should be taught grammar explicitly and show attempts at explaining the errors to students yet are hindered by their lack of confidence and competence in grammar. Participants classified as Style D are those who showed little attempt and knowledge when doing the tasks. They were usually unsure of how to answer and explain the errors involved.

Participants in the PGDE program, Class 1 and 2, possessed rather similar abilities and competencies as seen from the language awareness tasks. Notably, comparisons could also be made between Class 1 and 2 of PGDE participants, with the majority of them being classified as having Level B or C of engagement. Nevertheless, since Class 1 consisted of participants possessing degrees in English language-related disciplines, a higher percentage of them demonstrated greater ability in explaining and correcting the errors in the language awareness tasks.

Table 3. Composition of Participants' Level of Engagement

Style	Class 1 (Humanities)		Class 2 (Science)		Degree (BA/BSc)	
A	11	(37.9%)	9	(29%)	17	(56.7%)
B	-		5	(16.1%)	2	(6.7%)
C	12	(41.4%)	16	(51.6%)	8	(26.7%)
D	6	(20.7%)	1	(3.2%)	3	(10%)
Total	29		31		30	

Establishing Levels of Teacher Language Awareness

As current studies have yet to establish a specific grading model on levels of TLA, this study classifies the participants into categories derived from Andrews' conceptualization of the multiple aspects of TLA (Andrews, 2001; Bolitho, 2015). This grading model accounts for the level of teacher engagement (Andrews, 2001), including his ability to explain and correct students' errors, level of confidence to teach grammar, and awareness of grammar pedagogy. The criteria for each level are reflected in Table 4.

Table 4. Levels of Teacher Language Awareness

Level 3: Highest, Most Aware
• Those belonging in this level have Level A of Teacher's Engagement • Demonstrate strong language proficiency as a language user, few to no errors in language or grammar used • Show ability to explain and correct errors by students • Possess a strong sense of confidence to teach grammar
Level 2: Average Awareness
• Those belonging in this level have Level B or C of Teacher's Engagement • Possess several errors in language or grammar used • Are less able to explain and correct errors by students • Possess a weaker sense of confidence to teach grammar
Level 1: Lowest, Least Aware
• Those belonging in this level have Level D of Teacher's Engagement • Possess many errors in language or grammar used • Show inability to explain and correct errors by students • Possess little to no confidence to teach grammar

Based on the above criteria, the composition of participants' TLA levels was tabulated as shown in Table 5. Comparing the percentage of participants, the BA/BSc program possesses a greater number of student teachers with Level 3 TLA, as demonstrated through their ability to explain and engage with the learner through heightened awareness and knowledge of the language.

Table 5. Composition of participants in respective levels of TLA

Level of TLA	PGDE		BA/BSc (Ed)	
	No.	Percentage	No.	Percentage
3 (highest)	20	33.3%	17	56.7%
2 (middle)	33	55%	10	33.3%
1 (lowest)	7	11.7%	3	10%
Total	60		30	

In Relation to Teaching Practices

Participants from the PGDE program mainly stated on the questionnaire that they would adhere to the Present–Practice–Produce framework (PPP) of teaching grammar, where a grammar feature is explicitly taught before students proceed to further practice and production of the feature (Netto-Shek, 2010). During the practice stage, however, students would engage in drills and practice – isolated grammar practice to internalize the use of the feature. This prevalence of using decontextualized practice was also evident on the questionnaire in Item 6 of the section on "Approaches to Teaching Grammar," where almost all of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that it "has a place in language learning." This data, however, challenges that of Item 5, where most participants similarly indicated that it is important to "practice structures in full communicative contexts." This could perhaps suggest that PGDE participants still possess certain inconsistencies in their perceptions and stances towards teaching grammar, which could present an impediment to engagement in grammar teaching.

Responses from Part 2 of the questionnaire ("Student Difficulties with Grammar") also included "modelling," "teaching students grammar rules," explaining how teaching should be "contextual and meaningful," and "for students to have more exposure to language through stories and drama to boost competency."

In contrast, almost all the BA/BSc participants mentioned how they would contextualize learning and listed a variety of pedagogical methods. A few mentioned the use of more practice or drew relations to the PPP model of teaching. Some participants expressed that "decontextualized practice has a place in learning" in Item 6, but it was a proportionately smaller number than that in the PGDE group. Several mentioned the use of the Strategies for English Language Learning and Reading (STELLAR) teaching approach, whereby grammar is contextually taught through a rich text. Almost all of the BA/BSc participants highlighted the need for explicit teaching with the use of a text and authentic examples, allowing students to notice the target grammar form. This was largely missing in the PGDE participants' responses.

Relationship Between Level of TLA and Teaching Practices

From the data gathered, the level of TLA possessed by the BA/BSc participants was higher than that of the PGDE participants, as reflected in the percentages in Table 5. Teaching practices for the PGDE participants seemed to be restricted to the PPP approach, while the BA/BSc participants proposed a wider range of practices, with several drawing reference to the STELLAR approach used in language classrooms (i.e., contextualized grammar teaching with both explicit and incidental elements). It is notable, however, that both groups of participants still possess some inconsistencies in their knowledge and stances towards grammar teaching. This aspect should be more strongly addressed in the respective teacher education programs or it could impede teachers' performance and their choice of approaches in mediating and deconstructing language input for students' effective engagement if the teacher is unable to "filter output" and structure input for learners in the classroom (Andrews, 2001).

Relationship Between ITP and TLA

This section aims to investigate the features of each teacher preparation program and the participants' perspectives on how they have been equipped with relevant TLA to teach grammar in the future, in order to provide an answer to Research Question 2. It also discusses the strengths of each program and what participants feel could be improved upon or added to enhance the experience provided to better hone their skills as future language teachers.

Perceived Usefulness of Program to Teach Grammar

Table 6 details responses on the extent of how the respective programs have contributed to the participants' competence to teach grammar. Comparing the proportion of participants who rated their program 4, the BA/BSc program fares better with a higher percentage. This could be attributed to several reasons expressed by participants in Part 3 of the questionnaire related to opportunities provided by the program: hands-on practical experience to apply pedagogies and receive feedback, microteaching, mini-lessons and seminars, demonstration of learning centers, and discussion of relevant literature in relation to pedagogy. They also cited benefits from English language pedagogy courses that organize trips to schools to observe grammar lessons or provide in-class demonstrations, along with a few who mentioned the provision of the opportunity for educational research in relation to English grammar. Most of the participants mentioned additional local and overseas practicum stints across four years. PGDE students who rated their program 4, on the other hand, may not have had the chance to experience the same degree of immersive learning experiences due to the short time span of their program. They mentioned their "competence is largely attributed to the content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge introduced in the NIE classes" and that they have "gained confidence of knowledge and pedagogy to teach it." This variance in responses is key in understanding the difference between the two programs. It clearly reveals that the knowledge PGDE student teachers acquire is comprised mainly of head knowledge, while BA/BSc student teachers acquire both head knowledge (i.e., cognitive knowledge gained through information and facts) and experiential knowledge. The additional experiential knowledge seems to contribute to the difference in the TLA.

A significant proportion of the participants rated both programs as "3," expressing that they have definitely gained more competence in teaching grammar and grammar rules, in addition to classroom teaching practices. This indicates first-hand perceived effectiveness of the PGDE and BA/BSc program courses in equipping teachers with knowledge and confidence in teacher preparation. Despite this, they still express uncertainty in teaching and explaining grammar to students in age-appropriate language.

TABLE 6. Usefulness of Each Teacher Education Program on Building Grammar Competence

Rating	Class 1 (Humanities)		Class 2 (Science)		Degree (BA/BSc)	
4	8	(27.6%)	7	(22.6%)	9	(30%)
3	15	(51.7%)	18	(58.1%)	13	(43.3%)
2	6	(20.7%)	5	(16.1%)	8	(26.7%)
1	-		1	(3.2%)	-	
Total	29		31		30	

Improvements to Enhance the Learning Experience

With regard to suggestions provided for enhancing the respective programs in the aspect of grammar teaching, several participants from the PGDE program mentioned that they were keen to learn more pedagogies for teaching grammar. There were also suggestions of how they should learn more about error correction and how to teach grammar with age-appropriate language and pedagogy, as compared to how they learn grammar in the course. Most expressed the need for more practice and opportunities for microteaching to simulate the classroom setting, while some expressed that their 16-month program is “too short” for them to have sufficient time to “absorb the content.”

Participants from the BA/BSc program similarly mentioned that they hoped to have more practical experience in teaching grammar to students themselves, to learn how to correct students’ errors, and to receive more feedback from classmates and professors on improving their teaching of grammar.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has shed light on the teacher language awareness levels of a sample of student teachers from the PGDE and BA/BSc programs at NIE with first-hand student perceptions on how each ITP program has contributed to their competence in teaching grammar as a future English language teacher. Through their performance in language awareness tasks, participants from the BA/BSc program demonstrated greater ability in engaging with students’ language errors and grammar teaching as compared to the PGDE participants. BA/BSc participants are hence better equipped with higher levels of TLA based on their styles of teacher engagement. A possible correlation between level of TLA and teaching practices was also evinced from how degree participants possessing higher TLA have knowledge of a wider range of grammar teaching approaches (e.g., to teach grammar features in a contextualized and explicit manner, as opposed to the drill-and-practice commonly mentioned by PGDE participants). Participants from both programs highly attributed their competence in teaching grammar to their respective programs, citing reasons such as the effective provision of hands-on practical experience and feedback from microteaching. Nevertheless, it is notable that the BA/BSc participants had greater opportunity to gain additional experiential knowledge through more practicum experience and microteaching sessions over the course of their four-year-long program, as compared to the PGDE participants. The latter also expressed the need for their program to be longer and for more practical experience to be provided to enhance learning.

Beyond the differences in level of TLA between students of the respective ITP programs, this study essentially provides insight on features of each teacher education program that contribute to teacher preparedness in the area of language teaching: the experiential element and the exposure to more ways of teaching grammar, which are largely missing in the PGDE program. As the characteristics of each ITP program contribute to a teacher's competence, confidence, and experience, it is critical that this aspect of teacher education and teacher language awareness be explored in future related studies, so as to ensure that the elements missing in the PGDE program are addressed.

There are several limitations to this study. They include (a) the difficulty in ascertaining whether the claims in the survey are actualized in reality (actual classroom practices) and (b) the small sample size. Classroom observation of the student teachers teaching and expanding the survey to all the students in the two ITP programs would help to address these limitations.

THE AUTHOR

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Memorization as a Vocabulary Learning Strategy Among Korean EFL Students

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Developing vocabulary skills is known to be a fundamental skill among Korean EFL students. The purpose of this research is to identify whether these students use memorization as a learning strategy in improving their vocabulary, determine the effectiveness of memorization in improving vocabulary skills, and discern the advantages and disadvantages of memorization. In order to answer the research questions, a survey and pre- and post-tests were conducted on 18 grade nine students at the Korean International School Philippines (KISP). Using triangulation, the authors found that students use memorization as a strategy in improving their vocabulary. However, the results of the tests show that memorization is not an effective strategy. Interviews conducted with the two teachers showed that the memorization strategy needs revision for it has notable disadvantages in addition to its advantages. Therefore, memorization as a learning strategy needs critical development for it to be efficient since the use of memorization is inevitable for EFL students who are beginning to learn the English language.

INTRODUCTION

Various professionals have argued about the importance of vocabulary learning because it directly affects learners' English proficiency and competencies (Nation, 2001, as cited in Alqahtani, 2015). Most significantly, according to Rivers and Nunan (1991, as cited in Alqahtani, 2015), sufficient vocabulary learning is a central step for learners to take in order to acquire second or foreign language successfully, for the absence of expanded vocabulary knowledge will hinder students in applying English vocabulary and grammar properly. Extensive vocabulary skills enable learners to speak, write, read, and listen with more understanding and confidence. Basically, EFL learners need to acquire a broad vocabulary in order to maximize its use in an appropriate setting. Knowing the importance of learning vocabulary, EFL students devote a large amount of time and effort to overcome their lack of vocabulary knowledge and recently this issue became an impediment to EFL students (Huckin, 1995, as cited in Alqahtani, 2015).

Additionally, Freire (1970, as cited in Brown, 1991) mentioned that teachers and students have been subjected to by banking education. "Banking education attempts to pour knowledge into the supposedly passive, empty vessels of student's mind" (p. 238). Freire (1970) argued that banking education is a misguided system that lacks communication, creativity, and knowledge because students only patiently receive, memorize, and repeat the given information. Given the definition, the basic idea underlying banking education is very similar to memorization as a strategy for building vocabulary skills. Learners receive, memorize, and repeat in order to broaden their vocabulary. By reading articles about different viewpoints on memorization, the authors started to have questions towards memorization as a strategy in building vocabulary skills. This paper intends to determine the effectiveness of memorization in building vocabulary skills among EFL students through answering the following research questions:

1. Do EFL learners use memorization as a strategy in building vocabulary skills?
2. Is memorization an effective strategy in improving vocabulary skills of EFL learners?
3. What are the advantages of using memorization as a language learning strategy to improve vocabulary skills?
4. What are the disadvantages of using memorization as a language learning strategy to improve vocabulary skills?

Review of Related Literature

In order to answer the research questions, the authors reviewed articles that are related to the two main keywords of the research topic: vocabulary and memorization. For vocabulary, the authors studied the importance of learning vocabulary, and for memorization, the authors looked into supporting and opposing arguments made by professionals.

Importance of Learning Vocabulary

As mentioned earlier, based on expertise, vocabulary indeed takes on a vital role in learning English language not only for EFL students but for English-learning students in general. To give more information on the importance of vocabulary, Clauston (2013) defined vocabulary as “words of a language, including single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do” (p. 2). This indicates that vocabulary is not always a single word, but it can be characterized as phrases or more than two words (Alali & Schmitt, 2012, as cited in Clauston, 2013). Moreover, according to Clauston (2013), vocabulary is the center of English. The absence of adequate knowledge of vocabulary will hinder learners’ ability to clearly express their feelings and meaning, and it will also block their communication with other people, which will result as lack of interaction. To support this, Wilkinson (as cited in Clauston, 2013) stated that vocabulary is more important than developing grammar because students with the absence of vocabulary skills would not be able to communicate properly. This conveys that in order for the students to be equipped with eloquent skills, they must first be equipped with a broad knowledge of vocabulary skills. Therefore, teaching and learning vocabulary is crucial for learners to communicate and comprehend English language in their society (Clauston, 2013).

Advantage of Memorization

Kyaw and Sinhaneti (2012) examined the function of rote memorization in vocabulary learning from the perspective of Burmese EFL students. The study was conducted at the Yangon Institute Education, Myanmar, with 100 students and teachers as participants answering survey questionnaires and interviews. This study states that a rote learning strategy is frequently used by Burmese EFL students as compared to other learning strategies. In addition, one of the Burmese students indicates that rote memorization is effective for the EFL beginners but also for intermediate students who are willing to expose themselves in higher stages (higher stages in this context mean deeper English skills as speaking, listening, and writing). Therefore, through their study, the effectiveness on memorization has been proven and as conclusion, rote memorization strategies will persistently be used by Burmese teachers and students in building vocabulary skills.

Disadvantage of Memorization

Brunner (2015) claimed that some points must be considered in deciding on a learning strategy in building vocabulary skills. The basic idea underlying these points is higher-order thinking skills, where the learner can acquire deeper comprehension and understanding of the content and be engaged in the learning process. Brunner strongly stated that in vocabulary building, learners must go beyond memorization and learn to connect the vocabulary with their own life by using higher-order thinking skills: applying, analyzing, and evaluating as stated in Bloom's Taxonomy. However, the learning process would take a certain amount of time and effort to result in successful vocabulary skills. Also, teachers should accept the fact that learners must learn to apply vocabulary in different contexts beyond simply memorizing the vocabulary.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants of this study were composed of 18 Korean students and 2 expert teachers (one Filipino and one Korean). They were selected from the Korean International School Philippines (KISP) located in Bonifacio City. The English classes in KISP are handled by both Filipino teachers and Korean teachers.

Instruments

To compare and contrast results from the qualitative and quantitative methods used, the authors have used the triangulation method consisting of a pre-test and post-test experiment, an interview, and a survey.

Pre-test and Post-test Experiment

Vocabulary items were selected by the teachers and the list was given to the students every Monday. Students were expected to memorize the words and on Friday, they took an exam. For the pre-test, 18 students answered the test developed with the assistance of the expert teachers without inserting the independent variable, memorization. The test was composed of a short paragraph from a TOEFL intermediate reading book with chosen vocabulary. By reading the context clues, students filled out the blank space of the paragraph as they choose the appropriate vocabulary. Moreover, students, by using the vocabulary, created their own sentences. After the treatment, students took a 20-minute post-test consisting of the same content given on the pre-test. The results of the pre-test and post-test were calculated and analyzed using a *t*-test to determine the effectiveness of memorization. The authors gave a total of three sets of pre-tests and post-tests.

Interview

On the last day of the pre-test and post-test experiment, the authors interviewed Mr. D. Seo, a Korean English teacher, and Mr. R. Maraya, a Filipino English teacher, at KISP. The interview was conducted with three general questions and respective follow-up questions. The questions were generally asking for professional opinions on the effectiveness of memorization in teaching vocabulary, advantages and disadvantages of memorization as a learning strategy, and their experiences on using memorization as a learning and teaching strategy. Lastly, the authors asked these professionals to give recommendations on using memorization as a strategy in building vocabulary.

Survey

The survey, answered by 18 students, was developed by the authors and the questions were validated by Dr. Alan Munoz, Dr. Jose Antonio Tamayo, and Mrs. Jeanne Jiao Flores of De La Salle University's Department of English and Applied Linguistic. The survey generally asked about the perspectives of students on memorization, their learning preferences, and most importantly, their usage of memorization as a learning strategy in building up their vocabulary skills.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Research Question 1

In order to determine if EFL the participants used memorization as a strategy in building vocabulary skills, the authors conducted a survey using Google Forms. Eighteen (18) participants at KISP answered the survey during a one-week period. The results showed that all the students (100%) had employed memorization as a vocabulary-building skill. For the frequency level on the use of memorization, some students answered that they have always used memorization (27.8%), most of the students answered often (50%), fewer students responded sometimes (11.1%) and seldom (11.1%). However, most of the students had not used memorization voluntarily. They used it to fulfill requirements from their parents, school, and academies (83.3%). From these results, the authors were able to determine that it is natural for Korean EFL students to be exposed to memorization as a strategy, as it is traditional in Korean education. The results from the survey showed that some students were still uncertain about the effectiveness of memorization as a strategy (33.3%) because they had no opportunity to ponder about or choose other strategies in building vocabulary skills. In addition, when it comes to students' application of memorized vocabulary in real-life contexts, most of the students answered that they apply the word in real contexts "sometimes" (72.2%), while some students answered "seldom" (16.7%). It was because many of the students (50%) did not know which context was appropriate for a certain vocabulary item. The authors also found that some students always forget the vocabulary items after memorization (33.3%) while other students often forget (38.8%). To figure out the reason behind this, the authors looked at the number of vocabulary items that students memorize at one time. The results revealed that half of the students memorize 80–100 vocabulary items at once (50%). Despite this fact, the majority of students (66.7 %) responded that memorization is an effective strategy in building vocabulary skills.

Research Question 2

To determine the effectiveness of memorization as a strategy building vocabulary skills, the authors used the results from the survey and the pre-test and post-test experiment. As mentioned earlier most of the students (66.7%) responded that memorization was an effective strategy in building their vocabulary. To justify the students' responses, the authors conducted three sets of pre-tests and post-tests. However, the outcome of pre-test and post-test experiment was contradictory to the authors' hypothesis (memorization as an effective strategy in improving vocabulary skills) and the results of the survey. The results are displayed in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1. Pre-test and Post-test Set 1 Results

	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	10.29	13.35
Standard Deviation	5.51	3.99
Degrees of Freedom	16	16
***t*-value**	- 2.97	- 2.97
Critical *t*-value	2.12	2.12
Significance Level	0.05	0.05

Table 1 is the result of the first pre-test and post-test set. From the results displayed in Table 1, it can be seen that the mean score of the pre-test and post-test showed improvement by three points. However, the calculated *t*-value, –2.97, is less than the critical *t*-value, 2.12, at a significance level of 0.05. This indicates that the first set of pre-test and post-test results showed no significant difference.

TABLE 2. Pre-test and Post-test Set 2 Results

	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	10.76	13.53
Standard Deviation	3.95	3.91
Degrees of Freedom	16	16
***t*-value**	- 2.89	- 2.89
Critical *t*-value	2.12	2.12
Significance Level	0.05	0.05

Table 2 is shows the results of the second pre-test and post-test set. It shows comparable results with those of the first set. The mean scores of the second set are similar to those of the first set. The *t*-value, −2.89, is less than the critical *t*-value, 2.12. Therefore, the results show no significant difference.

TABLE 3. Pre-test and Post-test Set 3 Results

	Pre-test	Post-test
Mean	10.28	15.61
Standard Deviation	5.68	5.32
Degrees of Freedom	17	17
***t*-value**	- 5.06	- 5.06
Critical *t*-value	2.11	2.11
Significance Level	0.05	0.05

Table 3 is the last set of pre-test and post-test experiment. The difference between the mean scores of this pre-test and post-test set were higher compared to the previous two sets. However, the *t*-value taken from the dependent *t*-test was −5.06, which is lower than the critical *t*-value, 2.11.

In each of the three sets of the pre-test and post-test experiment the results showed no significant difference for the treatment memorization. Therefore, the authors, with a null hypothesis, have concluded that memorization as a strategy for improving vocabulary skills for the 18 Korean EFL participants at KISP was not effective.

Research Question 3

In order to answer Research Questions 3 and 4, the authors interviewed Mr. D. Seo, a Korean English teacher, and Mr. R. Maraya, a Filipino English teacher. During the interview, the authors first asked about the thoughts of the two teachers on memorization as a strategy for building vocabulary skills. According to Seo and Maraya, memorization is a learning strategy frequently used by Korean students when acquiring vocabulary because it functions as the fundamental step that should be taken in order for the Korean EFL students to enhance their vocabulary skills. According to Seo, the advantage of memorization is that the students can learn several vocabulary items in a short period of time. Also, when reading or listening to a certain text, they can understand what it is about for they can recall the definition or a synonym of the vocabulary item that they have memorized. On the other hand, Maraya stated that memorization can sharpen the minds of the students and that it is an ingredient in building vocabulary at the beginning of the learning process.

Research Question 4

As the authors analyzed the interview with the two teachers the results showed more of an emphasis on disadvantages to memorization compared to the advantages. According to Seo, Korean English education does not focus on application, but it focuses on the meaning of vocabulary items. However, due to memorization without any application, the students may know the word but not know how to use it in different situations. He added that memorized vocabulary items do not stay in the memory long. Therefore, memorization alone cannot be an effective strategy because it does not cater to higher-level thinking skills for the learner, and it does not promote lifelong learning. Similar to this, Maraya claimed, “If memorization is the sole purpose of the lesson, it does not serve its purpose at all because there is no appreciation of meanings of memorization.” In order to make memorization as a good strategy, students must give importance to applying the vocabulary in a real context. Both teachers strongly stated that there should be a revision of the memorization process so that students can apply and use it to their language learning benefit.

Conclusions

As globalization becomes embedded in daily life, learning English, a global language, has become very crucial. South Korea is a country which emphasizes the importance of English for global communication. Therefore, students strive to learn English in order to be a successful global communicator. However, one of the problems they face is a lack of vocabulary. A lot of Korean students use memorization as an effective strategy especially when they are studying English. Therefore, the authors wanted to determine if memorization is an effective strategy in building vocabulary skills for EFL Korean students. The research was done in the Korean International School Philippines with 18 ninth-grade students, a Korean English teacher, and a Filipino English teacher. A triangulation method consisting of a pre- and post-test experiment, a survey, and an interview were applied in order to answer the four research questions. The survey revealed that all students are using memorization to build their vocabulary and most of the students thought that it was actually an effective strategy, which was similar to the expectations of the authors. However, the results of the pre- and post-test experiment supported the null hypothesis, for there was no significant difference in the three sets of tests. Moreover, the interview with the two teachers showed that the students’ memorization strategy needs to be revised and developed because it has strong disadvantages in addition to its advantages. The overall results showed that memorization is a traditional strategy that Korean EFL students use but that it was not an effective strategy for the 18 grade 9 Korean students at KISP. Therefore, their memorization strategy needs revision so that students can apply it effectively in different situations.

Limitations of the Study

There are several different limitations to this study. First, the authors conducted a pre-test and post-test experiment as well as a survey on the grade nine students, consisting of 18 students at KISP. However, the 18 students are only a small sample to represent the whole of Korean EFL students. Second, in the pre- and post-test experiment, the study was exposed to one of the threats to the internal validity of testing. That is, the students were given the pre- and post-tests on a different schedule. It is always possible that students may score higher on the pre-test or post-test due to external factors such as their condition on a particular day or at a particular time. Third, the 18 students who participated in the research have different backgrounds. Some students had been in the Philippines for a long time compared to other students. Fourth, the authors were not able to observe the memorization treatment. Therefore, there is the possibility that the students did not memorize the given vocabulary. Moreover, for some of the students, four days of treatment may not have been sufficient. Fifth, in the first two sets of the experiment, one student was absent due to personal reasons. Lastly, for Research Questions 3 and 4, the authors interviewed only two teachers, and this may make the result weak.

Recommendations

For the sake of future researchers who may wish to conduct similar research, the authors recommend to further study about the effectiveness of using context-based education. According to Wang (2011), context-based learning is an effective strategy in motivating students to use appropriate vocabulary in the proper situations. Vocabulary that is merely memorized may enter into long-term memory with only the initial memorized information associated with it. Considering the personal interview with Seo and Maraya, who strongly claimed that memorization needs revision, the authors recommend that other researchers continue the research on memorization by integrating memorization and context-based learning, as Wang (2011) did not specifically indicate the effectiveness of context-based learning with memorization. The authors think that the effectiveness of integrating memorization and context-based education would be innovative for Korean EFL education.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to express special thanks to Mrs. Jeanne Purpura who guided the authors throughout the journey and provided the opportunity to present at the 2018 Korea TESOL International Conference.

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The Use of VoiceTube for TEFL Listening Fluency

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The use of VoiceTube offers multiple functions helping listening comprehension through technological affordances and extensive listening. In this study, VoiceTube was used as a platform for English learning, offering language learners maximum flexibility to obtain English listening video resources. The purposes of this study are mainly (a) to develop the listening fluency of TEFL university students with the use of VoiceTube video materials, and (b) to examine TEFL students' attitudes towards the use of VoiceTube in teaching listening. For data analysis, mean, percentage, and *t*-test score for the dependent sample were employed. The results indicated that (a) the students' English listening comprehension ability increased significantly after learning with video tasks, and (b) students developed positive attitudes towards using VoiceTube videos to improve their listening skills.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Motivation

Listening is crucial in language learning and real communication (Rost, 2002; Vandergrift, 2007). Traditional listening materials present the target language in a simplified manner, lacking language context and authenticity of natural speech. In the EFL classroom, the emphasis of the listening class is mainly on a means of preparing learners to take standardized tests. A study of Fortune 500 corporations by Wolvin and Coakley (1991) found that listening was perceived to be important for communication in the workplace. EFL learners need to be given a variety of listening input in preparing for real use of language and listen to far more input, processing language naturally rather than just practice daily conversations, stories, and test materials.

In real-life communication, listening is an active process that is created through the interaction of critical thinking, language expression and use, and note-taking. In this study, multimedia-enhanced video materials were used an alternative instructional tool for listening training because they are a rich source of conversation, authentic context, and dialogue by English speakers. Advances in multimodal classroom practice focus on the active roles of EFL learners with input engaging their socio-cognitive processes (Pica & Doughty, 1985).

Research Questions

Based on the discussions and assumptions above, research questions aim at exploring the following:

1. To investigate the effectiveness of the multimodal-based video instruction on TEFL listening comprehension ability.

Hypothesis 1: With VoiceTube video tasks, learners may become more aware of the input and visual literacy, leading to meaningful production (Willkinson, 1984; Vandergrift, 2004).

2. To examine TEFL students' attitudes towards the use of VoiceTube in listening fluency.

Hypothesis 2: As with the findings of previous studies, multimodality tasks have a positive impact on language learning (Cunningham, Fagersten, & Holmsten, 2010; Cziko, 2004; Wu, Yen, & Marek, 2011).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Listening Fluency and Listening Comprehension

Listening fluency is of great concern in the EFL field (Helgesen & Brown, 2007); correlated to the degree of automatic processing is how much is understood and what is said (Segalowitz, 2003). Vandergrift (2007) explains that the construct of listening fluency by exploring how much spoken language is comprehended. The natural input is transferred into communicative output. Ordinary-life listening as an interactive process relies mainly on the listener to give feedback, but the EFL classroom conditions are limited with teacher-provided feedback and predictable context. Vandergrift and Goh's (2012) model of L2 listening asserts that to be successful L2 listeners, learners automatically engage several interactive strategic processes for meaning construction.

The Use of VoiceTube for Visuals and Schema

Multimedia offer individualized access to target video materials that the learner can use, interact with, and examine in an autonomous format. Visualization can be used as a new communication media to support engagement and input (Kress & Jewitt, 2003). Mirvan (2013) claims that employing video materials in the classroom can enhance learner motivation to learn since it can expose learners to a wide variety of situations that can help them comprehend similar situations in real life. VoiceTube, as an online platform, offers language learners maximum flexibility to obtain rich English resources, with a wide variety of topics and level selection.

It is suggested that images enhance comprehension, storage, and recall of information (Pavio, 1965). The multiple functions of VoiceTube are displayed in Figure 1.

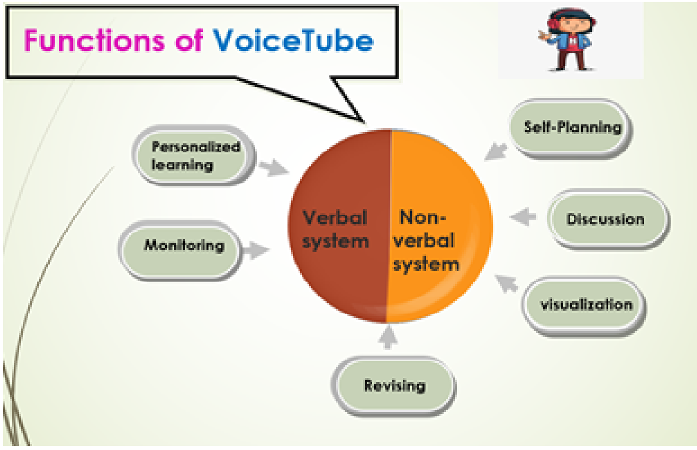

FIGURE 1. The Functions of VoiceTube.

VoiceTube provides learners with different learning modes, which can be a link between speaking and listening practice (see Figure 2).

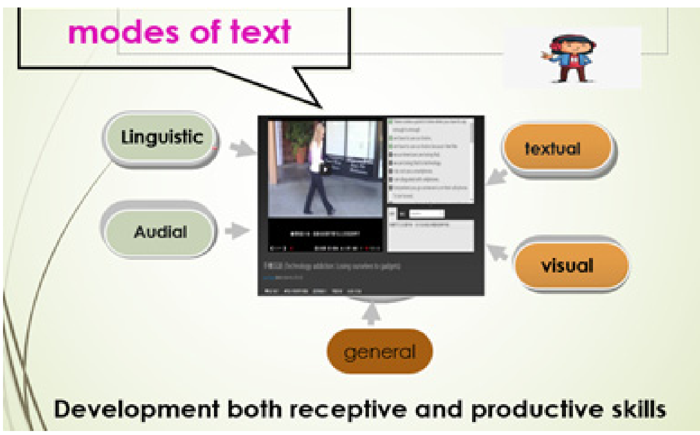

FIGURE 2. The Leaning Modes of VoiceTube.

The subtitled videos (multimode input composed of visual, audial, and textual modes) employed in listening enrich comprehension, enhance recall of information (Svensson & Borgarskola, 1985), and stimulate more learner output (Garza, 1991). Cherednichenko, Shapran, and Kunitsea (2011) conclude that multimedia-supported listening makes it possible for learners to combine sounds and images in a way similar to that which they would use in a communicative situations outside the EFL classroom.

METHOD

Participants

Fifty-two English sophomores of a Technology University, Taiwan, composed the research population. The one-group, pre-test–post-test design was implemented for a sixteen-week treatment (Table 1). A pre-test was given in the first week, and a post-test was conducted at the end of the 16-week treatment. The learners' performance was examined based on these five categories: fluency, accuracy, pronunciation, structure, and lexicon.

TABLE 1. The 16-Week Treatments

Week 1	Pre-test	Listening
Week 2-15	Treatments	VoiceTube
		True/False, Multiple Choice, *Wh*-Questions, Cloze, Discussions
Week 16	Post-test	

Instruments

The instruments included (a) video lessons and exercises, (b) English comprehension tests (pre-test and post-test), and (c) a questionnaire of TEFL learner attitudes. Fluency tasks were designed based on three criteria:

1. Authenticity
2. Automaticity (Timothy Rasinski; e.g., Rasinski & Padak, 1988)
   - Decoding words correctly and effortlessly: to make sense of what they read.
   - Quick and effortless word identification: one's limited cognitive resources can be used for comprehension.
3. Prosody and Rate
   - Proper intonation and expression.
   - Proper pitch, phrasing, and stress in one's voice.
   - Attaining appropriate speed based on the author's purpose.
   - Proper situational cues.

VoiceTube

Used as digital multimodal environment, the applications of VoiceTube consist of the following: (a) easy access, (b) a theme-based visual connection, (c) a variety of channels of input, (d) a selection of English proficiency levels, (e) learning modes, (f) language captions, (g) repetition, (h) a dictionary, (i) a word bank, (j) the flow of natural words, and (k) an appropriate rate of speech.

Participants accessed the shadowing exercises for intonation, fluency, and accuracy, following step-by-step VoiceTube video practice: planning (motiving, predicting, and previewing), monitoring (comprehending and questioning), evaluation (integrating and comparing), and problem-solving (tasks for future application). These benefit the development of critical thinking and self-regulated learning.

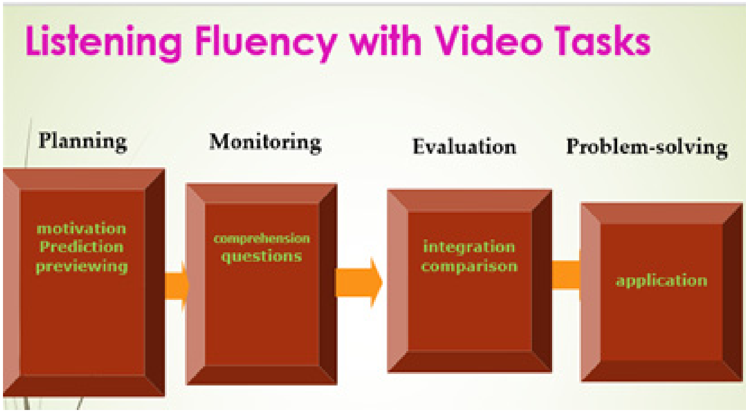

FIGURE 3. **VoiceTube as Multimodal Learning Environment.**

For more practice, our participants could self-access the VoiceTube platform at any time. As well, they were also able to personalize or switch the speaking modes and save files for review and examination to suit their needs (see Figure 4).

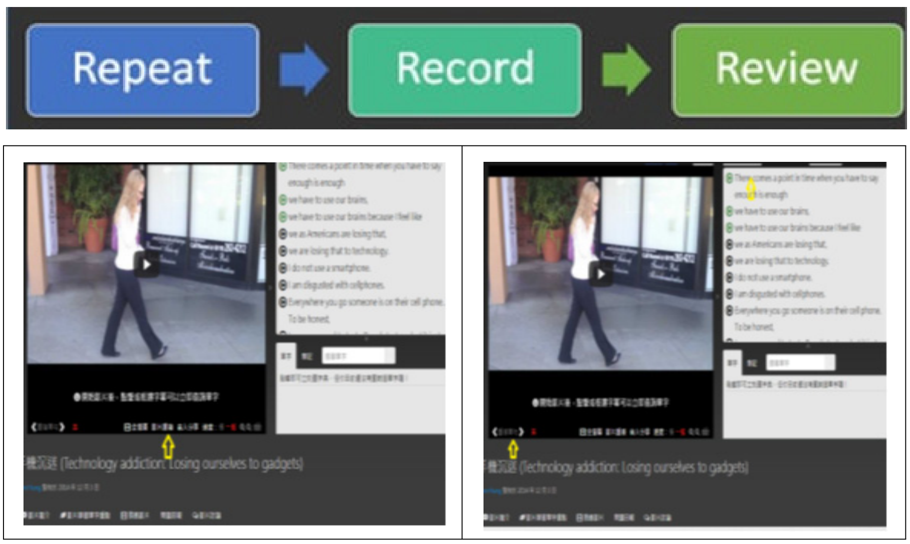

FIGURE 4. **Leaner Access and Process on VoiceTube Videos.**

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed for investigating TEFL leaners attitude towards the use of VoiceTube for fluency. A five-point Likert scale was employed, and the results were analyzed with SPSS.

RESULTS

The mean score on the questionnaire of 52 TEFL university students' attitudes towards listening fluency was 4.12. The TEFL students generally held positive opinions towards the integration of multimodal tasks with VoiceTube. The learners demonstrated much interest both in in-class (4.32) and out-of-class video materials (4.28), and VoiceTube videos can be used as a useful aid for a better understanding of real language (4.26).

TABLE 2. Results of Learners' Attitude Towards Listening Fluency

	Item	SD(1)	D(2)	UN(3)	A(4)	SA(5)	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
1	I prefer to use English video materials rather than use those materials provided in the textbook.	0	0	18.7	48.7	32.6	4.14
2	Video materials motivate me to do more listening outside the classroom.	0	0	13.1	53	33.9	4.21
3	I prefer not to use simplified listening materials provided in the textbook.	0	0	26.1	44.3	29.6	4.04
4	Keywords I have learned prior to watching videos motivated me to learn English.	0	4.3	19.6	38.7	37.4	4.09
5	Video materials help me improve my languate proficiency.	0	2.2	30.4	32.8	34.6	4.00
6	English subtitles in the video materials are helpful in learning English.	0	0	20.7	47.7	31.6	4.11
7	The video materials listened in class are more interesting than non-authentic materials or simplified listening materials.	0	0	17.4	47.8	34.8	4.17
8	Video materials help me to understand other listening materials outside the class.	0	0	14.1	44	41.9	4.28
9	Video materials in the listening course motivate me to listen to other materials outside the class.	0	2.2	15.2	42.3	40.3	4.21
10	Video materials introduce me to how language is used in the real world.	0	0	10.8	52.2	37	4.26
11	I think my video preferences will affect my learning.	0	4.2	21.8	43.6	30.4	4.00
12	Video materials improve my language proficiency more than modified or non-authentic materials.	0	3.5	19.6	32.8	44.1	4.18
13	Video materials improve my listening comprehension ability more than modified or non-authentic materials.	0	0	22.1	35.4	43.5	4.25
14	Video materials help develop my speaking ability more than modified or non-authentic materials do.	1.1	3.3	20.1	40.1	35.4	4.05
15	Video materials increase my familiarity with the use or grammar rules in their original context.	2.3	5.9	28.1	41.3	22.4	3.76
16	Video materials increase my knowledge of vocabulary which I need in real life situations.	2.3	5.9	28.1	27.3	36.4	3.90
17	I am interested in learning English if the teacher use video in English as teaching materials.	0	0	10.8	51.2	39	4.32
Average mean							4.12

*SD= Strongly Disagree; D= Disagree; UN= Undecided; A= Agree; SA= Strongly Agree.

Moreover, the comparative results of the pre-test and the post-test (at a significant level of 0.012, displayed in Table 3) for the listening comprehension test indicated that the results supported VoiceTube for fluency. Participants performed significantly better on listening comprehension based on the use of the video function of VoiceTube.

TABLE 3. A Comparison Between Listening Comprehension Pre- and Post-tests

Group	Test	*N*	Mean	Pair-Difference		
				Mean	***SD***	**Sig.**
EG	Pre-test	52	70.61			
	Post-test	52	79.75	- 9.13	11.50	0.00

To conclude briefly, the advantages of using VoiceTube include (a) learners can be guided to trigger engagement in language input and (b) activating schemata and captivating easy access to authenticity. Echoing the studies of Kress and Jewitt (2003) and Mirvan (2013), our findings indicate that using authentic materials improves students' listening comprehension and fluency by means of the interaction between visual images and sounds, which stimulate students' perception. Furthermore, the video tasks can facilitate learners' listening fluency in learning new themes and in encouraging autonomous learning.

IMPLICATIONS

As for pedagogical implications of the development of listening fluency, it is suggested that listening instructors encourage students to cooperate with group members in practicing English listening. Second, the VoiceTube materials incorporated with activities and tasks can be meaning-centered, scaffolded with visual input. Third, different methods of listening practice involving learners with comprehensive input and output are needed, instead of one-way listening and responding. Truly, fluency may occur when there is interactive processing through activities with clear communicative input and speed, as well as a greater level of familiarity with texts, topics, and experiences.

Designing fluency activities associated with video-based instruction, such as self-questioning, giving feedback, group discussion, and oral presentations can develop students' listening and speaking skills spontaneously. A study on using other authentic materials such as movies or news commentaries should be conducted through comparing two groups of students for promoting other language skills.

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Toward a Better Discussion in English: A Quantitative Perspective of Feedback

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This paper aims to introduce the egg-shaped microphone array that gives feedback from a quantitative perspective to its users, and to examine the possibility of improving discussion skills and self-monitoring in English. In the classroom, teachers have difficulty giving their feedback simultaneously to each student and evaluating their performance. Therefore, we will introduce a simultaneous, objective, and teacher- and learner-friendly device that can support learners' collaborative learning. It can record utterances of people and analyze the verbal data from a quantitative perspective after being recorded. In this paper, we will also share the comments of the five participants regarding their self-monitoring.

INTRODUCTION

When searching the keywords "discussion" and "active learning" on the Internet, the top three webpages that appear are "Promoting Active Learning" (Stanford University), "Active Learning for the College Classroom" (Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, California State University, Los Angeles), and "Active Learning Strategies" (Berkeley Center for Teaching and Learning, University of California). This shows that the term "active learning" has drawn the attention of teachers in educational settings. Active learning refers to a form of learning where students are actively involved in the learning process (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). The Central Education Council of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology of Japan suggests group discussion, groupwork, and debate as effective approaches in active learning (MEXT, 2012). That is, the main focus is placed on interaction with others in a group. However, some possible problems remain. The first problem is related to the evaluation/assessment process for the group work. According to Aichi Sangyo University (2014), teachers experience difficulty in recognizing how each student in a group has contributed to overall group work because one teacher cannot simultaneously listen to all the utterances of all the group members. Therefore, teachers fail to offer appropriate feedback to their students. The above situation motivated the second author of this paper to develop the egg-shaped microphone array explained in detail in the next section.

Overview of the Discussion Assessment Service

The discussion assessment service (hereafter, Hylable DAS) is a cloud service provided by Hylable, Inc. that automatically quantifies and visualizes a discussion using microphone array processing technology. It is a recording device with multiple microphones placed in different positions. By utilizing the transfer path differences from a sound source to all microphones, the service can detect the utterances and estimate their directions of arrival (DoAs). The user can use the Hylable DAS (Figure 1) with the following two steps: first, place an egg-shaped microphone array at the center of a discussion group; second, record the discussion. Then the microphone array automatically uploads the recording to the Hylable DAS and automatically analyzes and visualizes the discussion.

Figure 1. A Recording of a Discussion.

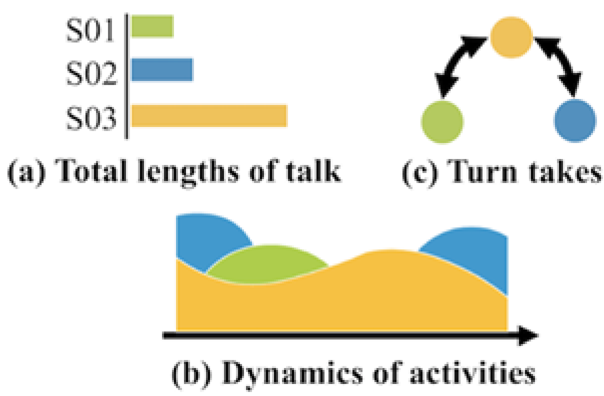

Figure 2. A Sketch of Discussion Visualizations.

Figure 2 depicts a visualization that the Hylable DAS provides. Visualization (a) shows the total length of talk of each student. We can compare students' participation quantitatively (e.g., S03 spoke the most and S01 spoke the least). It is also possible to assess the students' chronological activity change by comparing the same data from other discussions. Visualization (b) shows the dynamics of activities (i.e., the lengths of each talk) of each student. We can find that S02 and S03 spoke at the beginning of the discussion; then, S02 stopped talking, and S01 joined the discussion. Since the Hylable DAS also provides a playback function of the recording along with the dynamics, we can replay the utterances of S01 efficiently using the visualization as a guide. Otherwise, we would need to listen to the recording carefully to find S01's utterances. Visualization (c) shows the turn-taking, (i.e., who talked after whom). Each circle corresponds to a student and each arrow corresponds to the interaction between them. The size of the circle is proportional to the number of the self-turn-takes, and the thickness of the edge between the circles is proportional to the number of turn-takes between them. The Hylable DAS assumes that turn-taking occurs from A to B when B speaks after A.

The current version of the Hylable DAS does not include an automatic speech recognition (ASR) function because ASR performance degrades sharply in natural conversations. Although ASR accuracy is impressively high when the speaker clearly gives a command to the system, the accuracy in natural conversation is still a challenging problem. In contrast, DoA estimation is more robust in noisy environments, such as classrooms. By removing the ASR function, the Hylable DAS conducts an automatic analysis of group discussions that occur in parallel in the same classroom. In fact, it robustly visualizes the group discussions of a class consisting of around forty students in an elementary school.

Note that the Hylable DAS is not designed to show "you are better if you speak more." Instead, it is designed to enable students and teachers to easily review their discussions in an evidence-based way to improve their behaviors in discussions. For example, by referring to Figure 2, the users can easily ask, "The amount of utterances of S01 is the smallest, but activity exists at this time. What did he/she talk about?" and find the answer by replaying the actual recording.

SURVEY METHODS

We conducted an experiment to examine the effectiveness of quantitative feedback of a discussion. The experiment was conducted as follows: First, the participants of the experiment discussed a certain topic. After the Hylable DAS finished the quantitative analysis, they reviewed their own behavior using the visualization. We have analyzed both the discussion and the review processes.

The participants were five female graduate students at Kyoto University. Three were master's students (S02, S04, and S05) and two were PhD students (S01 and S03) in psychology. S02 was an English native speaker, while S01 was a very proficient English speaker who had lived in an English-speaking country for eight years. The other three students were non-native English speakers with moderate English speaking skills.

The discussion was conducted at the end of the first semester in 2018. The students used English during the discussion. The topic was their collaborative research focusing on English learners' metacognition. The discussion was recorded with the egg-shaped microphone array. After checking the visualization data, they shared their thoughts from the perspective of self-monitoring. The participants aimed to have a discussion for eight minutes and the discussion lasted for about 7 minutes and 55 seconds. Figure 3 shows the seat positions for each participant during the discussion.

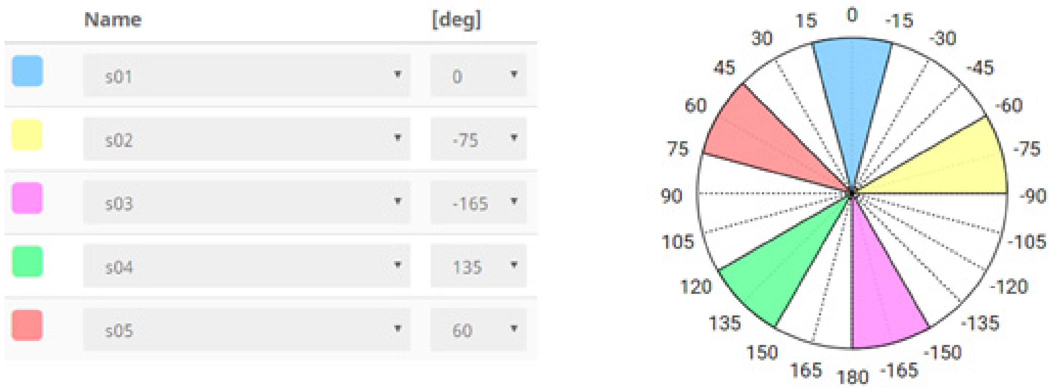

FIGURE 3. Visualizations of Directions of the Five Participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The feedback report provided by the Hylable DAS showed that S04 was the best contributor for a smooth discussion. In fact, the amount of S04's utterances was the largest. Judging from the number of turns from S04 to other members, S04 gained many reactions from the other members. However, focusing on the questions posed in the discussion (as one of the self-monitoring perspectives), the participants found that S01, whose amount of utterances was small, produced some important questions that led the discussion to the core of the necessary matters that had to be discussed first to decide the main theme of their study.

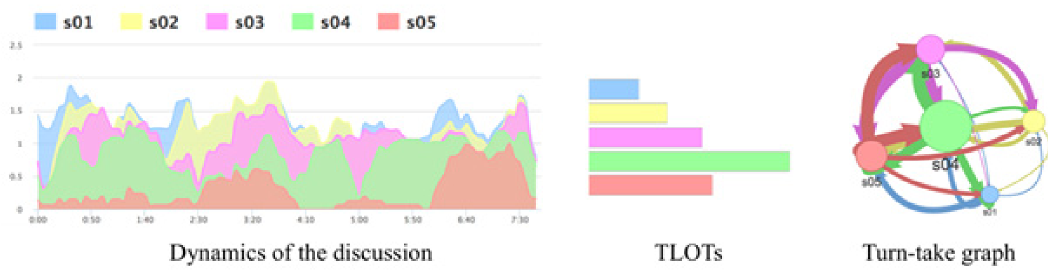

FIGURE 4. Visualizations of Discussion by Five Participants.

In addition, the participants noticed that S04 mainly tried not to state her own ideas but support another member's comments or suggestions. That was one of the possible reasons why the amount of S04's utterances was the largest and led the whole discussion. The visualization of the dynamics of their discussion (see Figure 4) shows that there were at least six time-points where the amount of utterances reached over 1.5. Table 1 shows (a) the duration time of discussion, (b) the contents of their discussion, (c) the appearance of convergence, divergence, and emergence in the discussion, and (d) the person who mainly led the discussion at each time-point. For (a) above, the authors checked the starting and ending points of each phase listening to the discussion to measure the duration time of each phase. In this study, it was a basic rule that each phase should generally include one topic (content). However, if another topic was suddenly brought into a discussion and the speakers continued the discussion with two topics (not decreasing the amount of speech), it was acceptable for two topics to be included in a phase (as in phases A, D, E, and F). For (c) above, the three concepts by Hadwin, Miller, Webster, and Winne (2011) were incorporated: convergence, divergence, emergence. “Convergence” refers to an idea unit in the individual participants’ perceptions that a group includes in the shared group perception through negotiation, “divergence” is an idea unit in an individual participant’s answer not included in a group’s shared perceptions and not included in the negotiation process, and “emergence” is defined as an idea unit in a group’s shared perception that appears during negotiation and is not included in individual participants’ perceptions. As the study of Hadwin et al. targeted CSCL (Computer-supported collaborative learning) planning, the second idea unit, divergence, can be found. In the present study, the authors dealt with verbal data, not texted data; therefore, divergence cannot be found.

TABLE 1. Detailed Information About the Six Time-Points

Phase	Time Duration	Content	Convergence/ Divergence/ Emergence	Person Mainly Leading the Discussion
A	00:47	What they need to discuss today (S05) How many experiments they should do in the next study (S03)	Convergence	S05 & S03
B	01:13 (73 sec)	Whether or not they would try to apply for the tournament for a research grant in their university	None (just sharing the requirement)	S03
C	01:21 (81 sec)	What kind of research can be expected	None (just sharing the information)	S01
D	00:35	What kind of topic they would choose (S04) The requirement that at least one teacher must be included as a researcher (S03)	None (just sharing the information)	S04 & S03
E	00:57	Two topics that they got interested in: emotion and self-monitoring (S05) One of the topics: overlapping (S04)	Emergence	S05 & S04
F	00:21	Explaining how the topic “overlapping” is interesting (S04) Leading to the pair discussion (S03)	None	S04 & S03

Table 1 could offer the participants the opportunity to easily recognize the flow of the discussion. In fact, one of the participants (S02) noticed that they were not able to deepen their discussion toward a new solution or ideas, but only shared the information. In addition to this, two other students (S01 and S03) mentioned that S03 suggested many topics, although one topic had not been successfully discussed because the discussion time was limited. According to S01, this was because the participants had only eight minutes for discussion; that is, the discussion should have been much longer in order to exchange their ideas or thoughts for only one topic, not several. Using the Initiation-Reaction-Evaluation (IRE) framework (Edward & Westgate, 1994), the participants noticed that there was a deep-thinking question that made a speaker explain her idea more precisely after a shallow question was posed. This shows that supportive interaction appeared in their discussion. As shown above, using the results produced by the DAS, the participants could recognize the details of their performances easily with the quantitatively analyzed data, reflect on their discussion processes, and gain important self-monitoring perspectives toward engaging in better future discussions.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this study revealed some possibilities that the users of the Hylable DAS could employ to reflect on their discussion more easily and effectively. As quantitative feedback can be produced by this DAS, teachers integrate "qualitative" perspectives for reflection. In particular, in order to recognize the flow of discussion, it may be useful for teachers to ask their students to listen to the recording mainly focusing on several time-points where the amount of talk is largest. Toward a better discussion, the Hylable DAS will surely and strongly support its users.

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Generic Skills Testing as an Indicator of Language Learning Ability

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In line with the increasing popularity of generic skills testing in many countries, the Progress Report on Generic Skills (PROG) is a test that is becoming widespread in universities in Japan. This paper aims to determine whether the PROG can be used as in indicator of language learning ability. PROG Literacy and Competency scores of a group of Japanese first-year university students were correlated with changes in TOEIC scores after one semester of English instruction. Participants were divided into two subgroups based on the initial TOEIC scores. Weak correlations were found between TOEIC Reading and Competency, and between TOEIC Listening and Literacy for the lower-level group, while negative correlations between Competency and Listening were found for the higher-level group. Although more data analysis is necessary, the results indicate that generic skills tests can provide language educators with valuable information.

INTRODUCTION

Due to concern that universities are not teaching the skills that employers seek, there is a growing trend to go beyond course content and teach generic skills. Generic skills are "manifested by different people in many different contexts" (Curtis, 2004, p. 141), and are "any skills that learners need for lifelong learning and living" (Clayton, Blom, Meyers, & Bateman, 2004, p. 159). As society and industries change, so do the demands on employees. Employees with stronger generic skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, will be better able to adapt to the changing demands. Greater desire for cultivation of these skills has lead to an increase in popularity of testing generic skills.

The Progress Report on Generic Skills (PROG) is a test that is becoming widespread at Japanese universities. The PROG was released in 2012, and as of 2015, 290 universities in Japan had used the test (Uchida et al., 2018). Another, even more widespread test in Japanese universities is the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC). Employers and educational institutions often use the TOEIC as a high-stakes test of English proficiency. This paper will compare changes in TOEIC scores of university students with PROG scores to determine whether the PROG can be used as an indicator of language learning ability.

The PROG Test

The skills that the PROG aims to test are based on the Definition and Selection of Key Competencies (DeSeCo). The DeSeCo was developed by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), of which Japan is one of the 36 member countries. The goal of the competencies is to respond to changes in the world, such as technological advancement, environmental issues, and globalization, by providing a list of competencies individuals need to meet new demands and goals (OECD, 2003). It includes three categories of competency: using tools (e.g., language and technology), acting autonomously, and interacting with heterogeneous groups. The PROG is in Japanese only and contains two sections: Literacy and Competency, with the former based on DeSeCo's using tools competencies, and the latter based on DeSeCo's acting autonomously and interacting in heterogeneous groups competencies (Narita & Matsumura, 2012). As Ito (2014) points out, the terminology may be confusing because of the difference in the use of the term *competency*.

The Literacy section of the PROG intends to measure knowledge-based intellectual skills that are expected to improve through the acquisition and application of knowledge. The test measures four problem-solving skills and two processing skills. For each skill, participants receive a score out of 5. These scores are combined to give and overall score of 7 for the Literacy section, where a score of 4 is considered to be what is expected of a first-year university student. An example of a Literacy question involves participants reading a short case study and providing suitable analysis and recommendations. Figure 1 shows the outline of the Literacy section.

Literacy	Problem Solving Skills	Ability to Gather Information
		Ability to Analyze Information
		Ability to Detect Problems
		Ability for Structured Thinking
	Processing Skills	Verbal Processing Ability
		Non-Verbal Processing Ability

Figure 1. PROG Literacy Section Outline.

The Competency section intends to measure communicative competence and behavioral traits. These skills are expected to improve through reflecting and acting on one's experiences. As with Literacy, students receive an overall score out of 7. Competency skills are split among three categories, which are further divided into nine subcategories, which encompass 33 more categories. Competency questions are short with numerical answers corresponding to answers such as "very much" and "not at all." The nature of the questions is relevant to the student's personality and life experience. Figure 2 shows the outline of the Competency section.

Competency	Basic Interpersonal Skills	Affinity Cooperation Leadership
	Basic Self-Management Skills	Emotional Control Creative Confidence Perseverance
	Basic Problem-Oriented Skills	Identifying Problems Planning Practical Ability

FIGURE 2. PROG Competency Section Outline.

The PROG may be an indicator of language learning ability because some of the skills the PROG aims to test are similar to strategies that successful language learners employ in comprehending and producing a second or foreign language. Brown (2014) summarizes the work of a number of researchers to produce a typology of language learning strategies describing four categories: cognitive, affective, sociocultural-interactive, and compensatory. Cognitive strategies "help the learner construct, transform, and apply L2 knowledge" (Oxford, 2013, p. 14). As they are knowledge-based, they are likely to be influenced by Literacy skills. Affective strategies relate to emotion and attitude and are thus likely to be influenced by the "basic self-management" Competency skills. Sociocultural-interactive strategies involve interacting with others and have similarities with Literacy and Competency skills. For instance, the "interacting to learn" strategy is similar to the "basic interpersonal" Competency skills, while the "activating sociocultural schema" strategy is similar to the Literacy skill of "gathering information." Compensatory strategies involve overcoming weaknesses to comprehend or produce language and are likely to be influenced by the Competency skill of "solving problems."

Although the PROG is becoming more popular, there is a lack of research testing its validity. A number of studies comparing university students' GPAs with PROG scores find weak correlations with Literacy scores (Ito, 2015). While there appears to be no research directly comparing PROG with language learning ability; although, a study by Uchida et al. (2018) comparing PROG scores with the results of first-grade dental university students' subject scores includes some English subjects. Among the many subjects that showed moderate correlations with overall Literacy, one of the strongest correlations was that of Practical English II. Scientific English was also among the moderately correlated. Of the 22 subjects included, only three were shown to have noteworthy correlation with Competency, one of which was Practical English II. They believe that correlations with Competency may be due to the presence of "interpersonal dialog and group work performance" (p. 18) in these classes. Such interaction is likely to occur in most modern language learning classrooms. The findings of Uchida et al. support the expectations of the current study, that the skills tested by PROG may influence language learning ability.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

The participants were 183 first-year university students from a liberal arts school in Japan who are majoring in tourism, hospitality, or global studies. During the first year, students take 12 hours per week of EFL classes across the four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. In addition to the EFL classes, they take some additional core classes in either Japanese or English. The participants took a TOEIC test during orientation week in April 2018, the results of which were used to place them in classes. They also took the PROG during orientation week, and the TOEIC again in July. After removing students that had not completed at least one of the tests, and one additional student who had not taken all scheduled English classes, 160 remained: exactly 80 males and 80 females. The participants were divided into two groups based on their April TOEIC scores: The lower-level group (Group A) included 123 participants with scores ranging from 100 to 345, and the higher-level group (Group B) included 37 participants with scores ranging from 345 to 685. Group B contained a considerable number of students whose first language is not Japanese. It was anticipated that this would affect results of the PROG; therefore, dividing the participants this way created a more homogenous group in Group A.

Procedure

After collating the results of the three tests, the differences between TOEIC scores from April to July were calculated for each student, including changes not only in total score but also in scores for the Reading section and the Listening section. Using R for Statistics programming language (version 3.5.1), correlation coefficients between changes in TOEIC scores and PROG scores were calculated. The Spearman rank-difference correlation (Spearman's rho) was used instead of the Pearson formula because the PROG test scores are ordinal data. The Spearman rho is the appropriate choice when computing correlation coefficients for nonparametric data (Terrell, 2012).

RESULTS

The descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1. From left to right are the Listening, Reading and total TOEIC scores for April, followed by the changes in TOEIC scores in July. Finally, the PROG Literacy and Competency scores are shown. In April, the mean Listening score was 181, and the mean Reading score 110, which are that of basic users equivalent to Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) levels A1-A2 (ETS, 2015). The Literacy and Competency scores were 2.78 and 3.13, respectively, which are both lower than the score of 4 expected of first year university students.

TABLE 1. A Descriptive Statistics

	April TOEIC Scores			Change in Score			PROG	
	Listening April	Reading April	TOEIC April	Listening Difference	Reading Difference	TOEIC Difference	Literacy	Competency
n	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160
min	30	45	100	-100	-110	-135	1	1
max	370	330	685	170	125	295	7	7
median	177.5	100	265	37.5	10	50	2	3
mean	180.81	110.22	291.03	39.31	13.38	52.69	2.78	3.13
std.dev	63.93	44.82	98.52	42.18	35.05	57.94	1.51	1.48

Table 2 shows the mean TOEIC score changes for all participants and the two subgroups. It also shows the mean PROG scores for each subgroup. Unsurprisingly, Group A had larger gains in TOEIC than Group B, the former improving by 36 points and the latter by 58. However, Group B improved slightly more than Group A in the Reading section. Group B had higher PROG scores for both Literacy and Competency, with the difference between the two groups greater for the Literacy section.

TABLE 2. Means of TOEIC Differences and PROG Scores for Each Group

	All	Group A TOEIC 100-345	Group B TOEIC 345-685
n	160	123	37
Listening Difference	39.3	44.9	20.7
Reading Difference	13.4	12.8	15.3
TOEIC Difference	52.7	57.7	35.9
Literacy	2.8	2.5	3.6
Competency	3.1	3.0	3.4

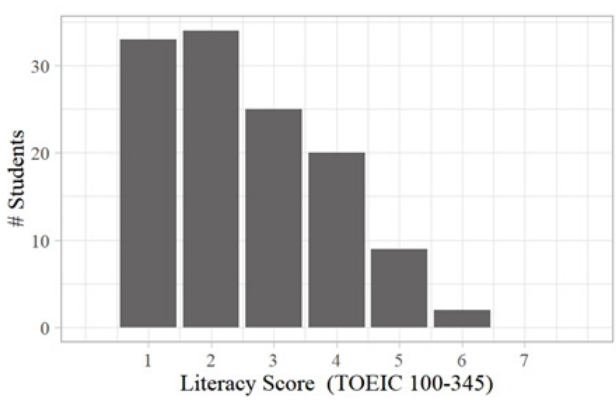

FIGURE 3. Distribution of PROG Literacy Scores for Group A.

The difference in Literacy scores between the two groups is further illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, which show the distribution of Literacy scores for Groups A and B, respectively. Note that because of the difference in size of each group, the scale of the y-axis, which shows number of students, is different for each chart to allow the distributions to be compared. Group B's scores are fairly evenly distributed across all Literacy scores, except 7. In contrast, Group A's scores are generally lower, with most of the scores between 1 and 3. As Literacy intends to reflect intellectual ability, those with higher TOEIC scores are likely to score higher in this section of the test.

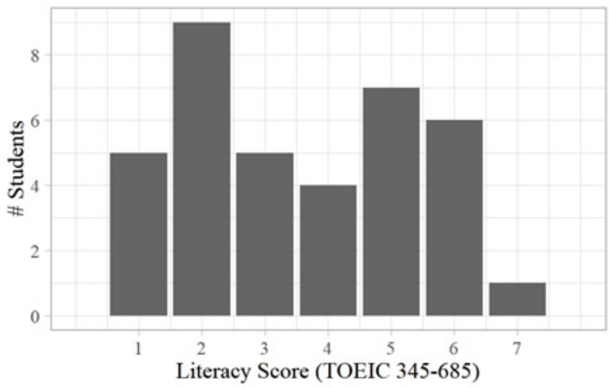

FIGURE 4. Distribution of PROG Literacy Scores for Group B.

Below are labels to describe the effect size of correlation coefficients provided by Evans (1996). Compared to other guides that label anything below 0.3 as weak, this is more useful for this study as it allows us to differentiate between weak and very weak correlations.

0.80 to 1.00	Very Strong
0.60 to 0.79	Strong
0.40 to 0.59	Moderate
0.20 to 0.39	Weak
0.00 to 0.19	Very Weak

TABLE 3. Correlations Between TOEIC Difference and PROG Scores

			All	**Group A** TOEIC 100-345	**Group B** TOEIC 345-685
Literacy			0.21 **	0.28 **	0.20
	Problem-Solving Skills	Ability to Gather Information	0.02	0.00	0.16
		Ability to Analyze Information	0.01	0.00	0.14
		Ability to Detect Problems	0.03	0.03	0.07
		Ability for Structured Thinking	0.22 **	0.27 **	0.25
	Processing Skills	Verbal Processing Ability	0.19 *	0.20 *	0.28
		Non-verbal Processing Ability	0.00	0.02	0.02
Competency			0.04	0.10	-0.06
		Basic Interpersonal Skills	-0.02	0.03	-0.16
		Basic Self-Management Skills	-0.02	0.04	-0.13
		Basic Problem-Oriented Skills	0.07	0.13	-0.02

Note. **Correlation coefficient is significant at the 1% level (both sides). *Correlation coefficient is significant at the 5% level (both sides).

Table 3 shows the Spearman's rho correlations between total TOEIC score differences and PROG scores. Group A shows weak, significant correlations with Literacy (r = 0.28, p < 0.01); and within Literacy with "ability for structured thinking" (r = 0.27, p < 0.01); and "verbal processing ability" (r = 0.20, p < 0.05). Group B's scores have weak correlations for the same skills; however, they are not significant. Competency scores show no correlations with total TOEIC scores.

Table 4 is similar to Table 3; however, TOEIC Reading scores are correlated. As with total score, there are some weak correlations. Group A shows weak, significant correlations with Competency (r = 0.29, p < 0.01) and within Competency with "basic interpersonal skills" (r = 0.27, p < 0.01). Group B has some weak but non-significant correlations within Literacy.

TABLE 4. Correlations Between TOEIC Reading Difference and PROG Scores

			All	Group A TOEIC 100-345	Group B TOEIC 345-685
Literacy			0.16 *	0.14	0.17
	Problem-Solving Skills	Ability to Gather Information	0.06	-0.02	0.20
		Ability to Analyze Information	-0.02	-0.07	0.13
		Ability to Detect Problems	0.02	0.03	-0.05
		Ability for Structured Thinking	0.19 *	0.17	0.25
	Processing Skills	Verbal Processing Ability	0.10	0.04	0.25
		Non-verbal Processing Ability	-0.05	-0.10	0.08
Competency			0.25 **	0.29 **	0.06
		Basic Interpersonal Skills	0.21 **	0.27 **	0.02
		Basic Self-Management Skills	0.12	0.13	0.06
		Basic Problem-Oriented Skills	0.15	0.17	0.06

Note. **Correlation coefficient is significant at the 1% level (both sides). *Correlation coefficient is significant at the 5% level (both sides).

TABLE 5. Correlations Between TOEIC Listening Difference and PROG Scores

			All	Group A TOEIC 100-345	Group B TOEIC 345-685
Literacy			0.11	0.23 **	0.03
	Problem-Solving Skills	Ability to Gather Information	-0.05	-0.01	-0.08
		Ability to Analyze Information	-0.02	0.01	-0.03
		Ability to Detect Problems	0.02	0.02	0.19
		Ability for Structured Thinking	0.12	0.22 **	0.04
	Processing Skills	Verbal Processing Ability	0.11	0.19 *	0.02
		Non-verbal Processing Ability	0.05	0.10	-0.06
Competency			-0.14	-0.10	-0.22
		Basic Interpersonal Skills	-0.19 *	-0.16	-0.28 *
		Basic Self-Management Skills	-0.11	-0.04	-0.26
		Basic Problem-Oriented Skills	-0.05	0.00	-0.15

Note. **Correlation coefficient is significant at the 1% level (both sides). *Correlation coefficient is significant at the 5% level (both sides).

Table 5 is also similar to Table 3; however, TOEIC Listening scores are correlated. Group A shows weak, significant correlations with Literacy ($r = 0.23$, $p < 0.01$), and within Literacy with “ability for structured thinking” ($r = 0.22$, p < 0.01) and “verbal processing ability” ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.05$). Group B has weak negative correlations with Competency, with “basic interpersonal skills” being significant ($r = -0.28$, $p < 0.05$).

Discussion

The aim of this study is to determine whether the PROG can be used as an indicator of language learning ability. The weak correlations shown by Group A between Reading and Competency, and Listening and Literacy suggest some aspects of PROG may give some indication of language learning ability (assuming TOEIC is a valid test, and that an improvement in TOEIC score indicates an improvement in language proficiency).

As mentioned, the higher-level group, Group B, contains a number of students whose first language is not Japanese. As a result, they may have encountered language difficulties in taking the test, particularly in the Literacy section, which contains short essay type questions. This may account for the lack of correlation that was present for Group A. This hints at the possibility of the test scores being able to flag students with language difficulties that may have gone unnoticed. The PROG may not be valid for students for whom Japanese is a second language, even if they performed well academically in a Japanese high school.

One factor that may have weakened correlations is that the TOEIC is a high-stakes test, whereas the PROG may not be. Students at the university in this study are under pressure to improve their TOEIC scores. Furthermore, it is valued by most companies in Japan; therefore, there is a large amount of external motivation to do well in the test. The PROG test, however, is not known to the students or other stakeholders; therefore, the test may not have been taken as seriously as the TOEIC. Ito (2014) interviewed students in his study and learned that some students did not take the PROG test seriously, which may have affected results. Another factor is that the April TOEIC scores for many of the students in the current study were so low that the TOEIC Bridge may have been a more appropriate test for them to take. The administering company of the TOEIC test recommends people with such low TOEIC scores take the TOEIC Bridge instead (ETS, 2015). Furthermore, although the TOEIC is a high-stakes test, the initial testing in April may have been viewed as higher stakes than the July test due to its role as a placement test, whereas the July test serves as a measure of progress. This is supported by some casual interviews with participants where it was discovered that some had slept during the July test.

Conclusions

This report explains the preliminary findings of a longitudinal study that uses statistical analyses of the correlation between PROG scores and TOEIC scores to determine if the PROG might be an indicator of language learning ability. With such weak correlations, it would be difficult to claim that the PROG can be used as a predictor of either language learning ability or TOEIC performance. However, even a weak correlation can account for 5–10% in the variance of TOEIC differences. Therefore, the current findings support the possibility of using the PROG as an indicator of potential language learning ability and/or test-taking ability for tests such as the TOEIC.

There are countless variables that figure into a model for EFL learners to advance their language skills as well as their test-taking skills. The PROG scores, along with knowledge of other variables (high school education, class attendance, extra-curricular commitments, and motivation to study) can help teachers understand more about their students in order to plan lessons, design curriculum, and set realistic goals for teaching.

As a longitudinal study, this research project intends to continue analyzing students' TOEIC scores after a second semester and collect new data from the 2019 group of freshmen students. Additionally, the researchers intend to conduct deeper analysis of specific generic skills and their correlations with TOEIC scores. The researchers plan to use regression analysis to build a multi-generic skill model indicating the extent to which those skills may account for specific percentage variances in scores.

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Making Words Work: Using Lexis in Academic Writing

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Academic writing and EAP teachers are often faced with the challenge of increasing their students' vocabularies rapidly to improve learner writing. One technique is the use of academic word lists to teach targeted scholarly vocabulary. To investigate the relationship between academic lexis and student writing, research was done analyzing one hundred "apprentice academic texts" (seven- to ten-thousand-word bachelor's research theses from an EMI institution). The correlations between academic vocabulary use as defined by the Coxhead (2000) *Academic Word List* and text effectiveness as assessed by grades was investigated in expectation of a positive correlation. Overall written proficiency was then investigated through error analysis. The results show only a weak correlation between academic vocabulary range and higher marks, partly due to the error level involving academic words. A proposed suggestion is combining targeted academic vocabulary teaching with *The Lexical Approach* (Lewis, 1993) to promote uptake and improve writing.

INTRODUCTION

Effective writing is in demand. Academic writing skills and good research-based writing in English are highly prized at universities and colleges worldwide. The requirement to write exams, submit assignments, and get publication using English is a high-stakes game at all levels, and this is likely not only to continue but to increase in intensity in the future as the need for publication permeates further and further into tertiary institutions globally and the influence of international academic English "gate-keeping" exams like IELTS and TOEFL grows.

For working English language teachers, academic writing at the university level is often seen as "the end of the road," the final phase of the English-learning process where students polish their skills and rise to a new challenge. EAP is supposed to be built upon the learner's previous mastery of so-called general English, which enables them to begin specializing and go from the English-leaning phase into the English-using phase. This, however, is not always an ELT reality. EAP and academic writing teachers often face the challenge of closing the gap between their students' current English abilities and the requirements of institutions, exams, thesis supervisors, and journal editors. Language learning, particularly lexical development in academic English, is jagged not linear, and there is no guarantee that a novice academic writer has the presumed baseline vocabulary of 2000 (Nation, 1990) or 5000 "common" English words before undertaking a research paper. The wide vocabulary knowledge derived from large amounts of extensive reading in English is often lacking in learning contexts where that experience is not available.

The Uses of Academic Wordlists

One of the tools that research has produced in the last 20 years to help close this knowledge gap is the prefabricated, data-driven academic word list (e.g., Coxhead, 2000; Gardner & Davies, 2013; Paquot, 2010). These selective, targeted lexical collections can help novice writers to focus on the most essential scholastic vocabulary items. Scholarly writing requires specialized lexis and novice academic writers need to effectively use that specific brand of vocabulary before they can enter the English-medium intellectual discourse community. The lexical fields used by academic writers tie explicitly to reader expectations and psychological preferences about the kinds of words and phrases used in serious "intellectual" prose, what Hoey (2005) called the reader's "lexical priming." Critics present (Pinker, 2014) and past (Orwell, 1946) have decried the lack of clarity and generally low quality of academic writing, but the fact remains that academic texts have a distinctive style and tone across genres and that lexical choices play a large part in conforming to those stylistic expectations.

Vocabulary teaching informed by an academic word list provides a shortcut to the learner's goal of adopting and adapting to academic writing style. The logic behind the production of academic word lists is inductive. Academic English follows different lexical and stylistic convention from everyday English (for better or for worse); therefore, it is beneficial to establish and group the high-frequency words that are specific to academic discourse (e.g., *factor*). To do that, researchers identify the words that appear most often in a large, broad-based corpus of academic texts such as theses, textbooks, and journal publications, quantify those words, and separate the lemmas (or headwords) that are specific to academic writing by comparing their quantitative results with those of other, non-academic corpora. The resulting lexical items are then classified into word lists according to frequency or discipline. The quantitative approach to list-making is further used to prioritize the highest frequency lexis, then the next most frequent group, and so on. The resulting lists provide the background data to help streamline EAP learning (Coxhead, 2000) but are not necessarily designed as teaching materials themselves.

Research into academic lexis has produced different, sometimes overlapping results, as research often does. Refinements of technique (Gardner & Davies, 2013) and the broadening of results (Paquot, 2010) have spun variations on the core idea of a definitive academic word list; however, they all share the tactical goal of focusing and speeding up lexical learning. This is mainly applied to receptive vocabulary for academic reading because without understanding between 90% and 95% of the lexis in a passage, learners are unable to read the text as a text because of the prevalence of unknown words (Laufer, 1989). It stands to reason that the same high-frequency academic lexis, laboriously identified by computerized corpora, needed to cross the threshold of understanding for reading skills, should be beneficial in academic writing, but research in this area is not as prevalent. So the question presents itself: Do student academic writers need to use academic vocabulary as defined by academic word lists to produce effective texts?

It is important to note that two problems present themselves from the word list-based approach to teaching lexis. The first questions the existence of a unified general academic vocabulary set that is useful for all disciplines. Hyland and Tse (2007) attack the generic word-list concept and produce data to show, for example, that science students are not as well served by the Coxhead (2000) AWL as other learners. They put specific academic disciplines in the foreground and point out that across genres, discipline-specific lexis is just as pervasive as generic academic vocabulary. Coxhead herself (in Byrd & Coxhead, 2010) has done more recent research exploring the breakdown of academic lexis by discipline and moved from identifying single words in frequent use to the frequency of set or partly set, multiword combinations and academic phrases, which she terms “lexical bundles” (Byrd & Coxhead, 2010, p. 31).

This links to the other difficulty with the word-list approach both as a research path and as a teaching technique. The artificiality of individual words baldly presented on frequency lists does not reflect real usage, where those words would be employed in phrases, often set expressions or collocations. Lewis (1993) claims that people simply do not learn words one by one, they learn prefabricated phrases and “chunks” of language that they read and hear then appropriate. The word-list approach may be useful for enabling learners to move more quickly into reading academic texts, but it might be less useful when they need to employ those same words in their writing because they don’t know how to use them in academic phrases (e.g., *…is an important factor in…*). Lewis’ Lexical Approach puts teaching multiword units at the center of ELT, including EAP. This perspective is not really compatible with a list-of-single-words-based vocabulary teaching strategy.

Background to This Study

The inciting question for this research project is whether the need for academic lexis applies to learner writing the way it does to reading. Does an “apprentice” academic writer require and use academic word-list items to produce an effective text? If the answer is yes, how much academic lexis is present and how well (i.e., accurately) are these words used?

An opportunity to examine this presented itself when the Institute for Tourism Studies (hereafter, IFT) rolled out an undergraduate thesis writing project. An English-medium tertiary school in Macau, China, IFT started as a vocational college in a city where tourism and related industries are the major employer. Recently, IFT has responded to increased job competition in the local tourism industry and the resulting demand for master’s degrees by instituting a mandatory 4th-year research-based thesis paper in English text of 7–10 thousand words to better prepare seniors for graduate school. The learners had not received specific instruction in academic lexis before starting. Language use in terms of both range and accuracy is one of several criteria for overall assessment. The thesis project created a large pool of learner writing to study their use of academic lexis as measured against the wider success of the texts in terms of grades. With the student’s permission, 100 sample texts were selected for anonymization, analysis, and comparison.

METHODOLOGY

In order to determine the extent of academic lexis use in student texts, the theses needed to be analyzed quantitatively. Despite the publication of more recent, competing academic vocabulary lists, Coxhead's (2000) *Academic Word List* (hereafter, AWL) was used as the basis for this aspect of the research. The reason for this was our main research tool for this phase was The Complete Lexical Tutor from the University of Quebec at Montreal, which has the AWL and its sub-lists already preset within the platform. In addition to being free of charge and painless to use The Complete Lexical Tutor allows for easy exclusion of technical and discipline-specific lexis that would otherwise be flagged as erroneous (e.g., *foodways* in a culinary arts thesis).

The student texts were broken down by frequency-based sub-lists of the AWL for lexical analysis in aid of two quantitative data goals. First to see how much raw AWL coverage there was in the texts. This would help to assess the amount of academic lexis in productive use. Second, these results allowed a comparison of the AWL usage with the language use marks the writers were awarded. The basic hypothesis being that writers who use more words from the AWL are likely to get better grades for language use. The assessment benchmarks that were used in this comparison were validated by a combination of in-house multiple marking, blind marking, and special external assessment employed for research purposes.

The next level of analysis was to more closely investigate AWL use across grade strata. The focus was broadened to include the accuracy of AWL use. Employing Laurence Anthony's Ant Conc. concordance software and Ant Word Profiler, AWL use and the surrounding co-text were specifically selected for text analysis and error analysis. Twelve texts were randomly selected from within four grading bands (40–59%, 60–69%, 70–79%, and 80–91%) to analyze in greater detail to investigate how exactly AWL use translated into text effectiveness or ineffectiveness in a typical thesis paper. All data was analyzed using Excel.

RESULTS

The correlation hypothesis (high-frequency AWL users would thereby get better scores) was borne out but very weakly. Overall high scorers used more AWL words but the differences were not very large in terms of percentage coverage. Looking at the data from AWL Sub-list 1 (the most frequent academic lexis) the higher scorers did use more AWL Sub-list 1 words, but not by much (<4% difference):

TABLE 1. AWL Sub-list 1 Results

Language Score	AWL Sub-list 1 Word Families (as a percentage of text)	Difference
40 - 59%	23.41	–
60 - 69%	23.55	+ 0.14
70 - 79%	25.11	+ 1.56
80 - 91%	27.40	+ 3.99

The concordance and co-text data gave a closer picture of problems with AWL use in these texts and the related errors. Four broad categories of AWL usage errors emerged.

1. Mis-collocations: where the writer uses the target word but fails to link it with an appropriate collocate in the co-text or phrase, for example "the *first* factor in..." instead of "the *prime* factor in..." or "money *washing*" instead of "money *laundering*."
2. Errors in lexical meaning: errors in which the writer has used an AWL word but not selected the correct one (e.g., "Gambling is one of Macau's most important *exports*.").
3. An emergent category is errors in colligation (mis-colligation): not to be confused with collocation, colligation (Hoey, 2005) involves elements of syntax, in that words are primed to appear in or avoid certain grammatical constructions. For example, "I hid behind the door" is preferred to "*I concealed behind the door" even though *hide* and *conceal* have similar meanings.
4. Lastly, the largest category to emerge was lexico-syntactic errors: Here an AWL word's misuse is tied to related grammar errors more than anything else. For example: "*A lot of *researches* have done on this subject."

Within these four broad categories, the twelve selected papers yielded 153 total errors, broken down into the following categories:

- Mis-collocation 40 instances
- Error in lexical meaning 40 instances
- Mis-colligation 11 instances
- Lexico-syntactic error 52 instances

DISCUSSION

The limited but upward trend in AWL word use from lower to higher grade bands shows that these apprentice writers do use AWL words and it can be interpreted as weakly supporting the supposition that 'better' writers used a larger variety of AWL words. Less adept and perhaps less confident writers tended to rely on repeating a more limited set of "academic" words that they felt sure in their knowledge of. These provide "islands of reliability" in text production in that the writers see these specific AWL items as known and feel they cannot go wrong in using them. The problem that emerges is that less proficient writers have a limited number of academic lexical items, resulting in less range of language and more repetitive texts. In spite of the demands of thesis writing, a number of these senior students did not venture out of their lexical comfort zone. More problematic is the phenomenon that the apprentice writer knows the target word (spelling, meaning, and grammar) but not the use of that word in the kind of prefabricated, fixed, or semi-fixed multiword phrase that it would commonly be used in for academic writing. This results in errors that detract from the potential positive impact of using academic lexis.

Even though the thesis writers have had three years of English-medium instruction their lexical range as measured by AWL coverage is somewhat limited. Content-driven EMI teaching does not seem to be a substitute for EAP input or extensive reading in terms of either raw vocabulary acquisition or improving writing skills through reading content instructional texts or writing assignment for content courses.

The high level of errors observed in the sample texts analyzed shows that inaccuracy ultimately undermines academic vocabulary use in that writers are using AWL words, but not correctly, with errors both in word choice and word-syntax. This finding is similar to what researchers Johnson, Acevedo, and Mercado (2016) found in a study of Peruvian college students writing in English. Their work is in some ways similar to this research but with far more detailed results. The upshot is using AWL words improves writing performance only if it is accurate use. The difference between receptive knowledge of a lexical item and productive knowledge enabling effective use is critical. Academic writing requires a more specific form of word-knowledge for that word to be useful and operational to the writer.

Conclusions for the Classroom

Apprentice writers benefit from improving their accurate use of general academic lexis. Teaching academic lexis in chunks or "bundles" can link this lexis with the item's usage and help prevent co-text errors that undermine the effectiveness of the target word. So, a pedagogical implication of this research is that it is probably more useful to teach academic vocabulary not as individual words the way they are displayed on word lists but to teach the collocations and related lexical chucks (Lewis, 1997) of academic lexis. For example: *factor* is on the AWL, but related phrases such as *the key factor that influences*... and ...*is an important factor in*... are better candidates for teaching than the stand-alone word. Like other language users, academic writers do not build sentences word by word for the most part, they use prefabricated phrases and already-processed strings of words when they write. Teaching these kinds of word units in combination with corpus data about academic lexis (such as the word lists mentioned earlier) is likelier to improve the lexical quality of learner academic writing than the teaching of individual academic words from word lists even if they are high-frequency words as identified by corpora.

One way to do this is to employ discovery learning at the sentence level using short excerpts that model multiple common uses of the target word within academic phrases. Some sample teaching materials prepared by Sandra Haywood (2003) are included in the Appendix to illustrate this idea. The goal is to replicate in a time efficient way the kind of text-based discovery learning that takes place over years of extensive reading by, in effect, reversing the input-to-learning target ratio. An extensive reader only stops to check meaning or make note of a usage pattern occasionally while reading, if they are reading a text appropriate for their level. Drawing on the noticing hypothesis (Schmitt, 1990), the goal of this kind of targeted discovery learning of AWL-based lexical phrases is to highlight patterns of use around specific words with a minimum of text.

Word choices are the earmarks of style especially in EAP. Learners need to notice the lexical choices in the academic genres and texts they encounter. The learner will tend to see the prevalence of unknown words as a barrier but work on exploiting those same texts, as models of vocabulary in use can increase awareness of style, especially if the focus can be kept on common academic phrases such as *research has shown that...* or *research on ... has been conducted*. This kind of text exploitation can teach collocations, dependent prepositions, and the word grammar (*research* is uncountable) as well as provide the learner with pre-fabricated chunks ready for use.

Good writing is something that is easy to recognize but hard to define. It can be even harder to identify piecemeal the components that make a text effective. By teaching high-frequency academic words using a lexical approach, we can holistically help students make their words work more by supplying them with useful phrases that proficient academic writers employ without a thought. These can be determined by function as in *Academic Phrasebank* (Morley, 2014), based around a frequency- or discipline-based word list such as the AWL or extracted from reading texts by either the teacher or a student. Not all the lexis that is learned this way will necessarily be used in student writing, but the ability to use more and more academic phrases correctly is the basis of building writing skills.

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APPENDIX

VOCABULARY STUDY: FACTOR

TASK ONE: Study the concordance lines.

Which preposition often follows *factor*?

List the adjectives that are used with *factor*.

1.	Several	*factors*	are responsible for this disturbing development.
2.	Appearance is only one of many	*factors*	that influence body image.
3.	Many external	*factors*	can influence suicidal people.
4.	Wind is always an important	*factor*	in soil erosion.
5.	I think this is a	*factor*	we should consider
6.	The weight of portables is a key	*factor*	in attracting customers.
7.	Your reputation is the biggest	*factor*	in business.
8.	Television viewing is an important	*factor*	in childhood obesity.
9.	Television advertising is the prime	*factor*	in determining what you buy.
10.	A major	*factor*	in these attacks is racism.

A *factor* is one of the things that affects an event, decision, or situation.

TASK TWO: Practise

Choose three questions from the list below and write a sentence to answer them.

What was the most important factor for you in deciding to come to this conference?
What are the key factors that influence a country's development?
What are the important factors in maintaining good health?
What is the major factor in the development of anti-American feeling in some countries?
What is the prime factor in being a successful student?

(Adapted from Sandra Haywood, 2003)

The Case Study of MOOCs for College Students in Japan

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Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are borderless, free educational resources and materials for all learners who want to study at any time, whatever they want, wherever they are, and whoever they are. MOOCs were started mainly in the United States in 2012 (JMOOC, 2016), and there were a total of 81 million MOOC learners all over the world in 2017 (Shah, 2018). The implementation of MOOCs in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes, however, was hardly known in Japan in 2014. This researcher has been utilizing appropriate MOOCs with first-year students as a means of self-directed learning in required courses at Niigata University of International and Information Studies (NUIS) since 2014. The potential value and effectiveness of MOOCs are clarified and demonstrated by the data findings and analysis of questionnaires completed by NUIS students.

INTRODUCTION

This study reveals the effect of MOOCs (massive open online courses) as a method to enhance student motivation and self-directed learning, and to help them acquire the key skills needed in order to succeed; the study was conducted at Niigata University of International and Information Studies with overseas universities. Two types of MOOCs were offered to first-year students majoring in international studies at NUIS: "University Preparation Course" at the University of East Anglia and "Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study" at the University of Reading. These courses constitute two of the six MOOC platforms (Yamada, 2014) offered by FutureLearn (FL). FL is a digital education provider launched in December 2012 and owned by the Open University in Milton Keynes, UK.

With the establishment of the new faculty at NUIS in 2014, 132 first-year students were required to take two compulsory CEP (Communicative English Program) courses and a BE (Basic English) course for one year. In the BE course, students learn introductory reading and writing as well as basic English grammar. One MOOC, selected especially by this author, was assigned to the participants as a five-week self-study course in 2015 and 2016 and a six-week course in 2017. The aim of this MOOC is to improve fundamental academic skills for ESL/EFL students who plan to enter or transfer to universities in English-speaking countries and for ESL/EFL learners who want to brush up on their writing skills for their future career. Finally, this paper shows the positive results of a survey and the students' feedback after completion of the MOOC.

MOOC Trends in 2016-2017

Udacity, established by Sebastian Thrun at Stanford University, launched the first MOOC in 2012, which is almost seven years ago. Nowadays the majority of “non-native English speaker” (NNSE) users register for various courses either in English or in another language they are interested in. According to Shah’s (2018) Class Central report, approximately 81 million people have registered for 9400 MOOCs at over 800 universities in 2018, as shown on Figure 1. Webb and Doman (2017) presented the ratio of nationalities enrolled in MOOCs in 2016 at TESOL 2017 in Seattle: 35% of the participants were from the US, 25% were Middle-East nationals, 25% came from Asian countries, and 5% were other nationalities. This shows that one fourth of users come from mainly Asian countries such as India, China, Korea, and Japan.

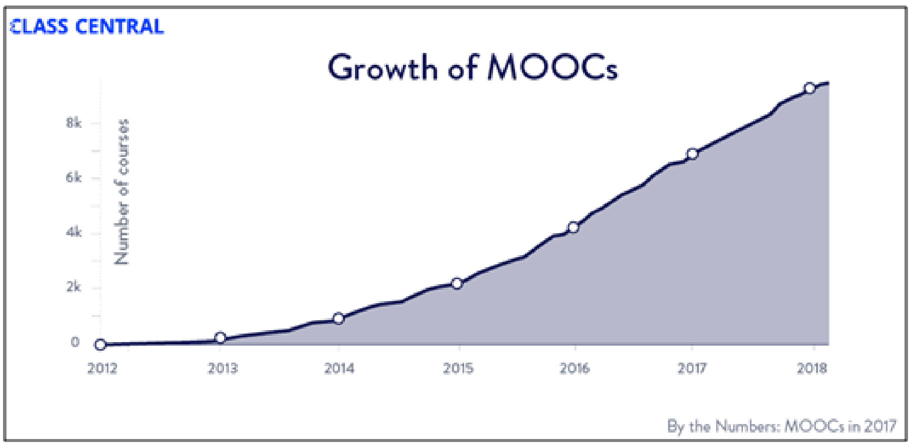

Figure 1. The Growth of MOOCs Worldwide. (Shah, 2018)

Table 1 provides a brief description of the five top-ranked MOOC providers in the world as well as the top eight MOOC providers in Asia.

Table 1. Ranking of Select MOOC Providers Worldwide

Ranking	Course Provider	Country	Background
1	Coursera	United States	It launched in January 2012 and was started by two Stanford University professors. There are over 25 million students registered.
2	edX	United States	It was founded by Harvard University and MIT in 2012, edX is a non-profit organization. It’s the second largest MOOC provider in the world with over 10 million students and now offers over 1,500 courses.
3	FutureLearn	United Kingdom	This is a UK-based MOOC provider and is wholly owned by Open University since the end of 2012 and now has more than 6 million registered learners.

4	XuetangX	China	It was founded in 2013 by Tsinghua University under the supervision of the China Ministry of Education Research. In October 2016, the platform had over 400 courses, and the number of registered learners has crossed 7 million.
5	Udacity	United States	It is a tech unicorn and partners with technology companies like Mercedes Benz, BMW, and McLaren to create Nanodegrees that train students for a particular job. There are more than 4,000 students enrolled in the master's program.
		Asian Countries	
13	ThaiMOOC	Thailand	It is the official MOOC platform for Thailand, launched early in March 2017. This platform is built on Open edX and currently lists around 50 courses.
15	SWAYAM	India	It is the official MOOC platform for India. SYAYAM means "Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds. The platform hosts 350 free online courses.
16	NPTEL	India	NPTEL stands for "National Program on Technology Enhanced Learning" and is a project funded by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) of India. It offers hundreds of free online courses, mainly in the field of engineering.
17	CNMOOC	China	This is the official website of the Chinese university Muji Union, an open cooperative education platform for some high-level universities in China. The platform offers more than 400 courses from 70+ universities.
18	Chinese MOOCS	China	This Chinese MOOC provider hosts over 50 courses from several Chinese universities.
19	University of China MOOC-icourse163.org	China	This is an online education platform launched by Netease and Higher Education Society. It offers more than 700 courses from 130 Chinese universities.
20	Ewant (Education you want)	Taiwan	This MOOC platform was launched in 2013 by National Chiao Tung University, one of Taiwan's leading public research universities. It offers more than 500 courses from 80 different universities. Its aim is to educate the global Chinese population.
25	gacco	Japan	This MOOC provider partners with universities in Japan to offer online courses in Japanese. Gacco has over 350,000 students registered on its platform. The platform has other features such as peer assessment and a premium interactive learning service.

From Shah (2017a).

METHOD

Participants

There were 126 students registered for the MOOCs and 120 of them completed their course (over 95% of the registered students). They were all Japanese university students at the Faculty of International Studies. After their completion they provided feedback in a survey.

Procedure

As part of self-directed learning, one of the MOOCs that the author chose, "A Beginner's Guide to Writing in English for University Study" by the University of Reading in the UK, was implemented in the second semester from January to March 2018. The duration of the free online course was five weeks, with a three-hour study section each week. Anyone who completes 100% of the course is eligible to pay £42 and attain a certificate of achievement from the University of Reading.

The content of the course is for students to acquire academic English writing skills as a preparatory course for university because academic writing differs from other kinds of writing. This MOOC has been developed to guide students to study the basics of academic writing and brush up on their English language skills. In this program, Prof. Steve Thomas, director of the Academic English Program at the University of Reading, helps overseas students to develop their full academic potential. Of the course, he states,

> You'll develop some proficiency in the key areas of "academic" grammar, learn about the stages in essay writing, and produce an essay of your own. You'll also explore how to organize an essay, write in an academic style, and use tools to evaluate your own writing and other learners' writing, so that by the end of the course you're able to write good, basic academic essays. (FutureLearn, 2017, para. 2)

Procedure for MOOC Study In and Outside of Class

Step 1. The student completes the registration and is assigned to a MOOC in the computer lab together with a teaching assistant.

Step 2. After registration, each student completes a three-hour study per week using their own device, such as a PC, tablet, or smartphone, over six weeks as their on-/off-campus self-directed study.

Step 3. The student essay is read with feedback given interactively online by other students around the world as part of the assignment, while the student also gives feedback to the other students on their essays.

Step 4. The student's understanding and progress can be checked on their own device every week, as a weekly quiz is assigned and marked.

Step 5. The student completes the six-section program, and sees the blue bars just below each week. This designates the completion of all six sections of the MOOC (see Figure 2). After the completion of the sixth section, the 100% completion is shown as in Figure 3.

Step 6. Finally, the feedback sheet that the student completes must be sent to the program coordinator at the student's university (the author).

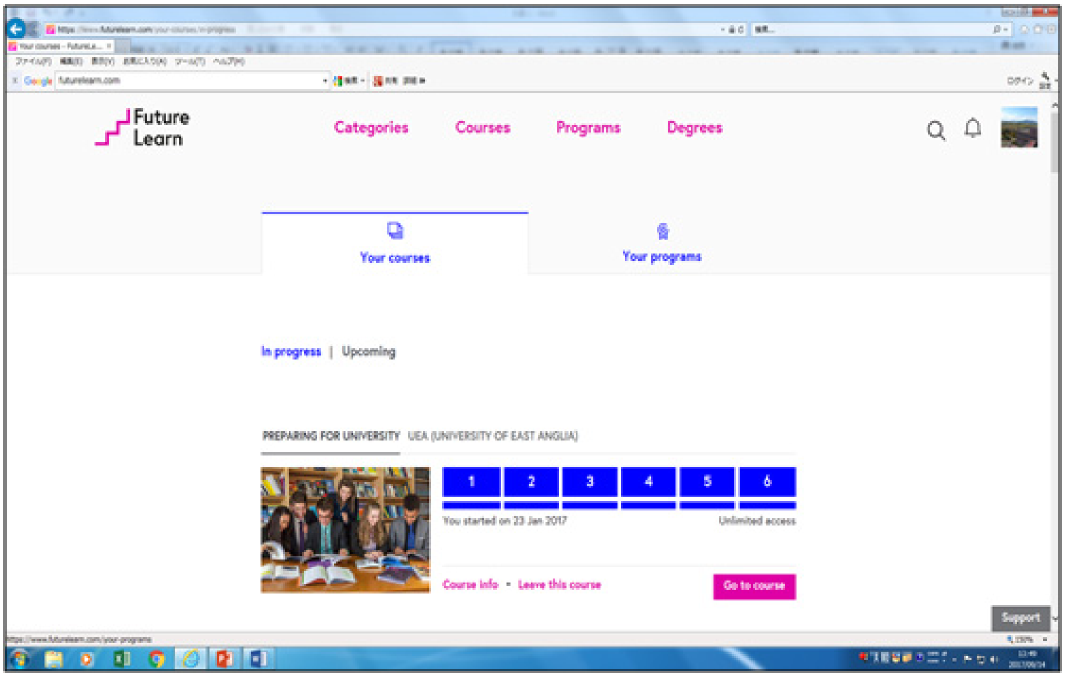

FIGURE 2. Screenshot showing the student's progress on the MOOC. This screenshot indicates that the MOOC has been completed. This is shown by the blue bars under each of the six numbered blue boxes. One bar appears under each box as that section of the MOOC is completed. (From the FutureLearn website)

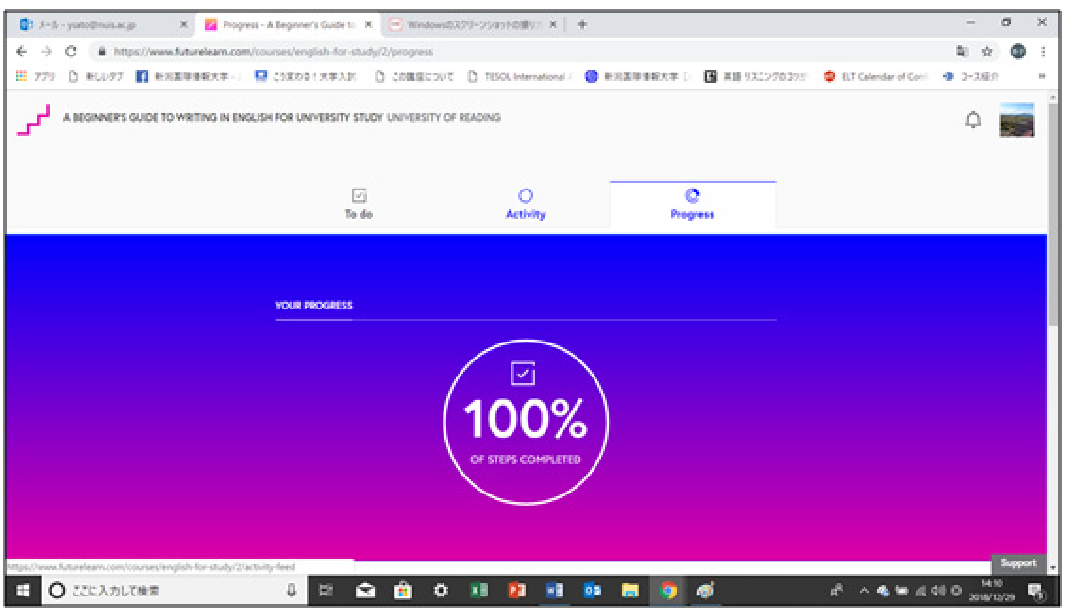

FIGURE 3. Screenshot showing that all the steps of the MOOC have been completed. (From the FutureLearn website)

Topics for Study by Week

Week 1
- Key features of academic writing
- Developing essay ideas
- Organizing your ideas effectively

Week 2
- Essay structure and organization
- Choosing a title
- Writing in an impersonal style

Week 3
- Using academic language
- Writing about facts and activities
- Writing about groups of people
- Writing longer sentences: Linking words and subordinators

Week 4
- The stages of writing an essay
- Analyzing an essay title
- Deciding what evidence to use
- Writing a first draft of an essay

Week 5
- Evaluating a first draft of an essay
- Reflecting on feedback on your first draft of the essay
- Responding to feedback on your first draft of the essay

(FutureLearn, 2017)

DISCUSSION

In the latter part of the students' second semester, this five-week MOOC was introduced to 126 first-year students at NUIS and was completed by more than 95% of them on their own devices on and off campus. As the result of the survey completed by the NUIS students, 71% of them responded that they mainly used their own mobile phones to study the program, while completing the final essay in the fifth week with their own or their family's personal computer (PC) at home. During spring break, the majority utilized their own mobile phones off campus rather than on campus since less than 20% of them owned their own PC, and additionally, they responded on the feedback sheet that it was easy for them to access the MOOC by mobile phone wherever they were.

The survey about MOOCs conducted among the NUIS first-year students in the study showed that approximately 95% of them completed the entire MOOC and that more than 80% recognized it as being effective (see Figure 4). It is deduced that this is due to (a) more than 5.7 million people gained access to high quality and free online education from top universities and specialist organizations (Marszal, 2012), and (b) the NUIS students realized that MOOCs were not as difficult as they had previously expected. Merely by staying connected to the Internet, they were able to study at any time and in any place to obtain credits from among more than 100 academic courses in FL throughout a year. According to the results of Question 2, more than 20% of the students responded that three skills (listening, writing, and reading) were acquired in equal amounts because the aim of this MOOC at the University of Reading was to learn how to use English for overseas study at an institution of higher education and to develop English skills, such as writing, vocabulary, and grammar (see Figure 5). In Question 3, more than 60% of the students responded positively that they were able to develop their language skills through the MOOC (see Figure 6). Some students pointed out the effectiveness of MOOCs and positive attitudes towards them, including high quality and no-cost online education from prestigious institutions without any limitation of location or the device they were using. Yet, others negatively indicated the reality that more than half of the students had to complete their final essay on a mobile phone because they did not have a PC to use at home, and they found it difficult to concentrate deeply on the course throughout the entire five weeks.

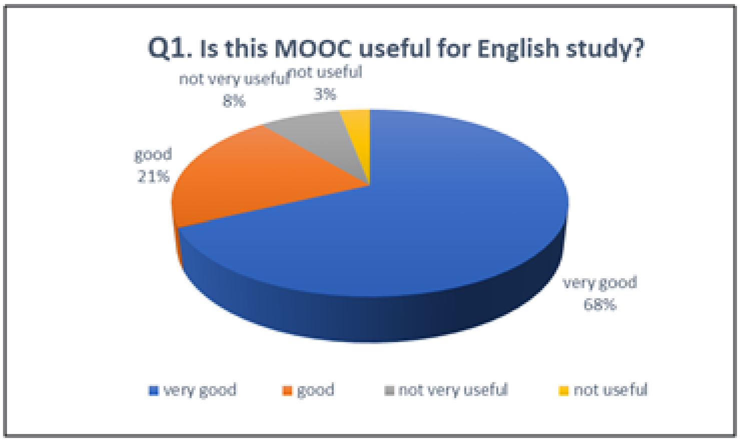

FIGURE 4. This figure shows how the students assessed the MOOC in terms of English study on the survey (*N* = 126).

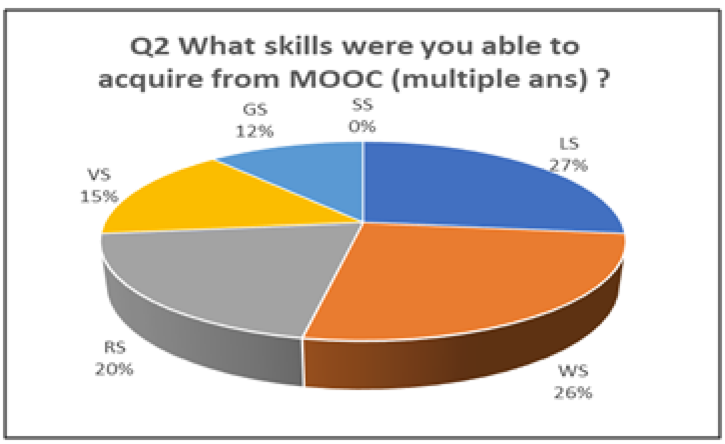

FIGURE 5. This figure shows how the students rated on the survey six English skills (listening, writing, reading, vocabulary, grammar, and speaking skills) acquired through the MOOC (*N* = 126). [LS = listening skills, WS = writing skills, RS = reading skills, VS = vocabulary skills, GS = grammar skills, SS = speaking skills.]

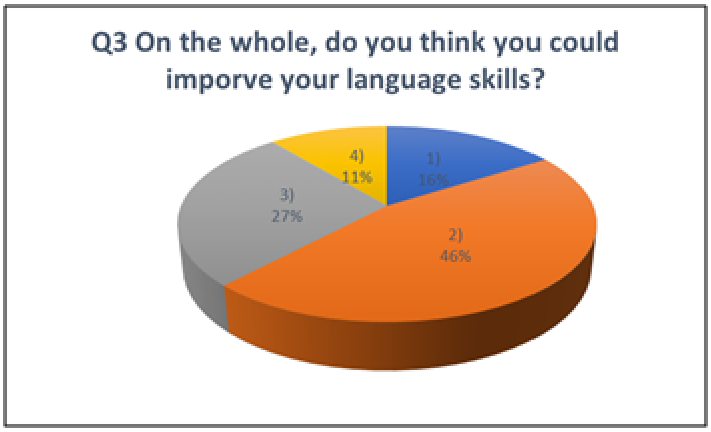

Figure 6. This figure shows how the students reported on the improvement of their language skills through the MOOC. There were four responses: 1) Strongly agree, 2) Agree, 3) Neither agree nor disagree, 4) Disagree (*N* = 126).

Conclusions

A primary limitation of this study is that student progress had to be assessed only after the completion of the course. A photo of early drafts of the final essay would allow the instructor to check and evaluate student progress before the final draft is submitted. The MOOC in the required course introduced by the author is a part of self-directed learning, and the main goal was to enable students of English as a foreign language (EFL) to experience the effectiveness of MOOCs and the infinite possibilities of MOOC study, as well as acquisition of English language skills. At present, anyone who cannot study suitable courses either in their own or a foreign country due to economic and situational restrictions can make use of MOOCs anywhere in the world and take free online courses as lifelong education at any time. Additionally, the upgraded course (at US$59) allows learners to get unlimited access to MOOCs from FutureLearn and a certificate of achievement as proof of successful course completion.

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Performance in English Listening Class: Flipped versus Traditional Classroom

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The aim of this research is to investigate whether employing the flipped classroom approach is beneficial to undergraduate students taking an English listening course at a Korean university. A pre-test–post-test design is used to assess performance in two groups of students: a flipped class and a regular class. First, a paired sample *t*-test is used to analyze the students' pre-test and post-test scores to detect statistically significant improvement in both groups. Second, an independent sample *t*-test is used to determine whether the average improvement in the flipped class group is greater than that of the regular class group. The result of the study may provide support for offering more flipped learning classes in lieu of regular classes for the English listening course.

Introduction

Undergraduate students in an EMI (English as a medium of instruction) setting often need support with their academic English language skills to succeed in their studies (Breeze, 2014). While certain elements of this support may be better suited to the flipped approach currently popular at the higher education level, there has been little research on the appropriateness of this method for classes aimed at improving students' academic listening strategies.

This pilot comparative study aims to determine whether there is a significant improvement in the test scores of flipped AEL (Advanced English Listening) class students compared to regular AEL classes when certain elements of the course objectives such as the teaching of listening strategies are flipped. The following research questions are addressed:

1. Is there a statistically significant improvement between the pre-test and the post-test of a regular and a flipped AEL class?
2. Do students perform better on the post-test in a regular AEL class or in a flipped AEL class?

Literature Review

Academic Listening

Academic listening "involves the reception and understanding of spoken material with an educational purpose" (Universidad del Rosario, 2018). Within a higher education environment where the lecture remains the most common form of educational instruction (Stains et al., 2018), being a competent listener can have a substantial effect on learning (Canpolat, Kuzu, Yıldırım, & Canpolat, 2015).

Listening Strategies

Developing students' listening strategies has long been considered a teachable, actionable approach that can go some way to improve listening comprehension and consequently academic listening. Richards (1983) included students being able to determine the purpose of discourse markers, infer relationships (such as cause and effect) and to understand the relationship between different parts of discourse (e.g., between major ideas, supporting ideas, examples, etc.) as micro-skills necessary for students to be successful at academic listening. Vandergrift (1997) suggested the use of listening strategies can maximize listening ability, while Anderson and Lynch (1988) refer to the importance of activating background knowledge in order to assist in discourse understanding. The micro-video lessons that form the flipped element of the study therefore focus on, among others, the aforementioned strategies as part of the course's notetaking strategy instruction. The first part serves to introduce and provide content knowledge required for the unit the students study. The second part covers the explicit skills necessary to improve the students' notetaking and listening skills.

Flipping the Listening Classroom

Research on flipping listening classes in an EFL (English as a foreign language) context has tended to involve the use of pre-existing content, often sourced from video-sharing websites. The response to the approach among students and researchers has generally been positive. Ahmad (2016) found an improvement in Egyptian trainee teachers' listening comprehension judged on criteria such as understanding the main idea of a lecture, recognizing purpose, and listening for details. Roth and Suppasetseree (2016) found similar results with Cambodian pre-university students who responded favorably to the approach via a questionnaire. In Kang's (2015) comparison between regular and flipped classroom approaches, 73.95% of South Korean students surveyed believed the latter was more useful for improving listening skills, while Caruso and Tebbit (2017) also reported positive student responses – this time from students taking an Italian-language listening class in Australia. The pair further noted that a flipped listening class can operate well online provided the course is "grounded in sound pedagogical choices" (p. 17).

Aside from the above positives, the flipped approach also facilitates the preparation and asking of better questions on subjects by students (Roehl, Reddy, & Shannon, 2013) and the opportunity for more language input to "stew" and consolidate (Bruning, Schraw, & Ronning, 1999; Muñoz, 2012).

The existing literature motivated the authors to design a course with flipped pedagogical elements for an academic listening-focused EFL class for university-level students, as to our knowledge no such course, nor empirical assessment of it, exists.

METHOD

Student Participants

The students who participated in the study were undergraduate students enrolled in AEL at a science and engineering university in Korea. In the beginning of the semester, the pre-test was administered to 49 students in the regular class and 51 students in the flipped class. The two numbers of students changed to 46 and 45, respectively, for the post-test due to course drops and transfers.

Measuring Instrument: Pre-test / Post-test

A pre-test and post-test were administered approximately 16 weeks apart. Both pre-test and post-test were divided into three sections: (a) notetaking (20%), (b) fill in the blanks (40%), and (c) multiple choice (40%). The first section was designed to test notetaking skills by assessing accuracy and quantity of the test-taker's notes after watching a nine-minute academic lecture. The lecture was shown twice with a ten-minute break in between to allow the test-takers to review and modify their notes. The lectures were of different topics for the pre-test and post-test to minimize topic familiarity. Notetaking responses were rated by the class instructor based on a five-point scale on a rubric that emphasized information accuracy and quantity, use of symbols and notations, keywords, and definition. The second section was designed to test the test-taker's ability to answer vocabulary and content questions via the fill-in-the-blank method by using the notes from the first section. The last section was designed to test comprehension (main point, detail, and inference) of the lecture by answering ten multiple choice questions with four possible answers each. The test-takers were required to listen to an audio file for the questions, as they were not written on the third section. Before this section began, the instructors collected the first and second sections, requiring the test-takers to answer based on their comprehension and memory.

Flipped Class

To investigate the research questions, student performance from two AEL class types were examined: flipped class and regular class. In the flipped class, commonly referred to as "EDU" at the institution, students were given detailed instructions to watch their weekly micro-video lessons on content introduction and listening skills, followed by a set of tasks to practice their newly learned skills. In addition, students were asked to watch academic lectures provided by the course textbook (online) before attending class and to complete an online vocabulary quiz. During the class session, students were given discussion activities and comprehension checks, followed by a unit and achievement quiz. In the regular class, the same content as the flipped class was given, but the students could not watch any video content at home. Instead, the videos were shown in class by the class instructor.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

To better understand the nature of the performance of the test-takers in different class types, descriptive statistics were calculated by class type. The following section is an analysis of the pre-test and post-test in the regular and the flipped class setting. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the listening pre-test and post-test for both groups by test sections. Overall, the mean scores of the pre-test for the regular and the flipped classes were 15.73 (*SD* = 3.26) and 15.10 (*SD* = 2.84), respectively, out of a possible total of 25. The mean scores of the post-test for the regular and the flipped classes were 20.58 (*SD* = 2.64) and 19.77 (*SD* = 2.43), respectively, out of a maximum possible score of 25. Negative skewness for all test groups except REGpre (pre-test in the regular class) shows that the majority of the test-takers performed well. The kurtosis for both REGpre and REGpost (post-test in the regular class) are positive, indicating that variability or heterogeneity in terms of listening ability based on the tests are small. On the other hand, the kurtosis for both EDUpre (pre-test in the flipped class) and EDUpost (post-test in the flipped class) are negative, indicating that there is relatively high variance and heterogeneity in listening ability.

TABLE 1. Descriptive Statistics

Test Group	*n*	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
REGpre	49	9.5	24	15.7347	0.46522	3.25657	0.603	0.237
EDUpre	51	8	20	15.0980	0.39755	2.83905	-0.296	-0.519
REGpost	46	14	24.5	20.5761	0.38946	2.64148	-0.770	0.103
EDUpost	45	14.5	24	19.7667	0.36153	2.42525	-0.402	-0.406

Paired *t*-test

To address the first research question, two sets of paired *t*-tests were conducted as shown in Tables 2 and 3. The first set (Set 1) was analyzed to compare the test scores of the pre-test and post-test in the regular class and the second set (Set 2) was analyzed to compare the test scores of the pre-test and post-test in the flipped class. In the first set, there was a significant difference in the scores for pre-test (M = 15.74, SD = 3.34) and post-test (M = 20.58, SD = 2.64); $t(45)$ = 9.10, p = .000 in the regular class. With a positive t value, the results show that the test-takers in the regular class performed significantly better on their post-test when compared to their pre-test. In other words, on average, students in the regular class scored 4.84 higher on the post-test than on the pre-test. In the second set, there was a significant difference in the scores for pre-test (M = 15.19, SD = 2.84) and post-test (M = 19.77, SD = 2.43); $t(44)$ = 9.07, p = .000 in the flipped class. Also with a positive t value, the results show that the test-takers in the flipped class performed significantly better on their post-test when compared to their pre-test. On average, students in the flipped class scored 4.58 higher on the post-test than on the pre-test.

TABLE 2. Paired Sample *t*-Test

	Test Comparison	Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Set 1	REGPost vs REGPre	4.83696	3.60718	0.53185	3.76576	5.90816	9.095	45	0.000
Set 2	EDUPost vs EDUPre	4.57778	3.38774	0.50501	3.55999	5.59557	9.065	44	0.000

The researchers expected improvement in listening ability in both the regular and the flipped classes, as students learned listening strategies (Vandergrift, 1997) and watched micro-videos that aimed to activate background knowledge (Anderson & Lynch, 1988) over a 16-week semester. With an average improvement of 19.35% from the regular class and 18.31% from the flipped class, the researchers agreed that the degree of improvement was sufficient and as expected.

TABLE 3. Paired Samples Statistics

	Type of Test	Mean	n	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Set 1	REGpost	20.5761	46	2.64148	0.38946
	REGpre	15.7391	46	3.34288	0.49288
Set 2	EDUpost	19.7667	45	2.42525	0.36153
	EDUpret	15.1889	45	2.84103	0.42352

Independent *t*-Test

To answer the second research question, four sets of single-sample *t*-tests were conducted to compare post-test scores of the regular class and the flipped class across three sections of the post-test, and the total score of the post-test (Tables 4 and 5). The motivation behind investigating the test as a whole and as subsets is that each section of the test examines different areas of listening ability. The first set was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in scores for notetaking skills (Section 1). There was a significant difference in the scores for the post-test in the regular class (M = 4.26, SD = .48) and the flipped class (M = 4.00, SD = .50); $t(89)$ = 2.54, p = .01. The second set was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in scores for the vocabulary and fill-in-the-blank sections. There was no significant difference in the scores for the post-test between the regular class (M = 7.77, SD = 1.52) and the flipped class (M = 7.39, SD = 1.70); $t(89)$ = 1.13, p = .26. Next, the third set was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in scores in comprehension, detail, and inference. There was no significant difference in the scores for the post-test between the regular class (M = 8.54, SD = 1.31) and the flipped class (M = 8.87, SD = 1.10); $t(89)$ = -1.27, p = .21. The fourth set was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in the total score of all three sections of the post-test. There was no significant difference in the scores for the post-test between the regular class (M = 20.58, SD = 2.64) and the flipped class (M = 19.77, SD = 2.43); $t(89)$ = 1.52, p = .13. The results suggest that students in the flipped class had a higher gain than in the regular class for notetaking, but not for the vocabulary, fill-in-the-blank, comprehension, detail, or inference sections.

TABLE 4. Independent Samples Test

	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Set 1 Post-test 1	1.552	0.216	2.539	89	0.013	0.26087	0.10274	0.05673	0.46501
Set 2 Post-test 2	0.81	0.371	1.133	89	0.26	0.38285	0.33801	-0.28876	1.05446
Set 3 Post-test 3	1.819	0.181	-1.272	89	0.207	-0.32319	0.254	-0.82788	0.1815
Set 4 Post-test Total	0.221	0.64	1.522	89	0.132	0.80942	0.53191	-0.24747	1.86631

Although our results show no significant evidence that students' listening comprehension improved because of the flipped approach employed unlike Ahmad's (2016) study, students performed significantly better in notetaking, a primary focus of the course. This can be feasibly attributed to the additional practice participants in the flipped group received via the notetaking-related micro-video watched prior to the in-class session. Furthermore, anecdotally at least, researchers noticed a greater likelihood that students would ask questions about notetaking at the review session at the beginning of the class, in keeping with Roehl, Reddy, and Shannon (2013).

TABLE 5. Group Statistics

	REG vs EDU	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Post-test 1	REG	46	4.2609	0.48004	0.07078
	EDU	45	4	0.5	0.07454
Post-test 2	REG	46	7.7717	1.51916	0.22399
	EDU	45	7.3889	1.7019	0.2537
Post-test 3	REG	46	8.5435	1.3116	0.19338
	EDU	45	8.8667	1.09959	0.16392
Post-test Total	REG	46	20.5761	2.64148	0.38946
	EDU	45	19.7667	2.42525	0.36153

CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this study was to determine whether a flipped classroom can result in better performance by students in a listening class in an EFL setting. The results of the study showed that students in both the regular and the flipped classes performed significantly better in the post-test when compared to the pre-test. There was supporting evidence that suggests students in the flipped class performed better than those in the regular class for notetaking skills (Section 1). However, when Section 2, Section 3, and the composite score of all three sections were analyzed, there was no evidence that students who enrolled in the flipped class performed better than those in the regular class.

Limitations

There are limitations in this study that must be addressed. First, the number of test-takers in both the regular and the flipped classes was small. In addition, fewer test scores were used for analysis due to student transfers and course drops. Since the data was based on the first trial of employing a flipped AEL class, one way to address this issue may be to collect more data over the subsequent semesters. Lastly, it was difficult to control the study behavior of the students in the flipped class. In other words, it was difficult to measure the efficacy of the flipped classroom because it relies on student's motivation and willingness to watch the micro-lesson and lecture videos before class. While some students may have intentionally enrolled in the flipped class, it is possible some may have done so without knowing what a flipped class truly entails. One way to remedy this is to provide sufficient information about flipped classes to prospective students.

Moving Forward

In addition to collecting more data, further insight about the potential benefits of a flipped class may be gained by investigating other aspects of the AEL course. For example, currently, students are graded on their in-class discussion, unit tests, and proficiency tests in addition to the post-test. Since the post-test is only a part of the course grade, investigating the aforementioned assessment methods may provide more complete and accurate information about the efficacy of a flipped class for the AEL course.

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Building Learner Preparation Skills for the Classroom

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Getting university language learners to prepare in advance for task-based lessons in the classroom can at times be an extremely challenging yet necessary learning skill. Studies in Japan (Rogers, 2014; O'Dowd, 2010; Rubrecht, 2004; Mimura, Monk, & Ozawa, 2003) have shown that many first-year students, regardless of institution or faculty, struggle to adapt to tertiary education in Japan. Often this results in student apathy toward class preparation. If the preparation involves text reading, learners often leave the preparation till the last minute, causing instructional issues for the actual task in class. In this article, a method is described that has changed both existing preparatory and in-class habits of learners. This method focuses on intensive reading.

INTRODUCTION

Reading Pedagogy

Reading has long been considered a bedrock of learning, despite reading pedagogy changing over the years, as a focus on comprehension skills in the 1940s moved toward reading strategies in the mid-1990s (Afferbach, Pearson, & Paris, 2008). Such approaches toward reading in SLA have been further moderated in Japan. Over the last few centuries, it has been argued, foreign ideas and concepts have been translated into Japanese perspectives using a grammar–translation approach called *yakudoku* (Terauchi, 2017). This method of learning was all about the transfer of knowledge rather than understanding through the cultural lens of a foreign language. This approach has been heavily used in secondary schools in Japan. This does not mean other approaches are eschewed by schools or teachers, it simply means that *yakudoku* is still a common approach that lends itself well to the assessment of reading comprehension in Japan.

Tertiary SLA education on the other hand, requires learners to move beyond just remembering or understanding text. After all, such knowledge occupies just the two bottom cognitive components of Bloom's taxonomy (Anderson et al., 2001) of reasoning skills. Rather, SLA educators in Japan typically want their students to exhibit critical thinking: to be able to use understood knowledge and then apply or analyze it for other situations in the target language. Doing this requires a shift in learner attitudes and preparation for class, as most learners are simply not used to being required to do so before arriving at university in Japan.

Intensive Reading

Intensive reading invariably requires the learner to focus on a text and analyze it, typically using both top–down and bottom–up processes. Essentially, for top–down processing, students need to contextualize the text, understanding the genre, probable message, and connection to other issues. For bottom–up understanding, students need to break down paragraphs into sentences and clauses, whilst also checking the meaning of unknown topic words. These two approaches typically require the conscientious student to read again and again until the learner can not only understand the text semantically but potentially be able to critically respond to the written material. This usually requires several hours of intensive work for 3–4 paragraphs, depending on the level of relative difficulty. In class, this effort and knowledge can then be used for a variety of tasks to further deepen the learners understanding.

THE PROGRAM

Requirements

For context, students at the author's institution are expected to take English language content classes from their third year; they have to prepare for third- and fourth-year classes in which they will undergo specialized study in their L2 with international students. These will be content classes in which Japanese students will be expected to complete academic activities, such as discussions, essay writing, or presentations, at a similar level to their international classmates. The focus will be on content rather than language instruction, so students would need to demonstrate comparable levels of second language proficiency. This is why, during the first two years, students are required to take preparatory language skill classes. One targeted skill is preparatory reading for in-class activities. The faculty is in its third year, and this research is based on an intensive reading course with five iterations.

The second language component of this degree comprises three semesters study (with a skills focus) at their home institution, followed by one to two semesters of study abroad with a partner tertiary institution. All classes for the initial three-semester component are divided into three levels. Students were streamed into one of the three levels based on an entry CASEC (Computerized Assessment System for English Communication) test. Of these, Level 3 was the highest stream. The highest level includes students with a CASEC score of 540 or above. This paper describes a Level 2 course.

Performance Gap

During the initial stages of the first iteration of the course, the author quickly became aware of the large gap in performance in comparison to what would be expected in the future content courses. Specifically, these shortfalls were a lack of background knowledge, study skills, preparatory skills, and critical thinking. Accordingly, the author decided that not only did the students need to regularly do out-of-class work, the students needed to adequately prepare for their classes. Generally speaking, students had hitherto not demonstrated an aptitude for adequate preparation. Knowing that students would be expected to prepare by reading and retaining knowledge in their third year of 15–20 pages of preparatory reading for their content courses, it was decided to introduce a series of structured readings that would aim to induce both behavioral changes and improvements in L2 skills.

Reasons for student apathy have been extensively researched using theoretical frameworks of motivation (see, for example, Da Silva & McInerney, 2005). Typically, student apathy toward class preparation has been a major hindrance to in-class work (Rubrecht, 2004). If students are underprepared for class activities, this can completely upset both class flow and peer motivation. Nevertheless, for task-based activities such as that described in this article, it has been pointed out that preparatory activities can reduce the cognitive or linguistic demands placed on the learner (Ellis, 2003, pp. 246–247).

Critical Thinking

Fake news has become a significant factor in the media. Fake news has become important because certain media reports, even if proven to be fake, remain credible to so many viewers. This phenomenon has transformed public opinion leading to questions over critical thinking and media literacy. Accordingly, it was decided to use a similar concept in this university course to better develop students' critical thinking skills. Although the overall objective was to help students develop better preparatory study habits, developing critical thinking was an important auxiliary objective as (noted earlier) it had been found that many students simply did not have sufficient general knowledge or appropriate communicative competence in English to discuss a wide range of topics in class.

Another issue that had been noticed was the naivety of students with regard to media-sourced news (Wineburg & McGrew, 2016). Many students exhibited an inability to critically consider information regardless of media type. By getting students to critically examine texts in class (with subtle alterations from texts studied before class), it was hoped to elicit more effective preparation from students that may be further encouraged in subsequent classes.

Method

The process students were required to undertake had several stages. For the first stage (first five lessons), students were expected to read 2–3 paragraph news article texts before class. Class texts were available from the class Moodle page one week before the relevant class. In their personal class notebooks, students were expected to highlight unknown vocabulary. They were asked in this regard to select such vocabulary, and write practice sentences collocating the target words or phrases, endeavoring to use explanatory sentences so the meaning could be construed in later reviews without reverting to Japanese. In class, students had to complete a quiz that incorporated both comprehension and vocabulary components. These quizzes continued for the duration of the course and were seen as a simple low-level participation component. Importantly, it was designed to get the students used to reading specific material. Furthermore, in class, students participated in a range of other activities that they could mediate through discussion (cloze, rephrasing, etc.) to elicit and reconstruct basic grammar skills. Furthermore, applied activities were employed to activate student schema and build knowledge in a collective atmosphere. It cannot be emphasized enough how important these classroom activities are for Japanese students to build relationships and trust in the classroom. Finally, after class, students needed to demonstrate some reflection on the topic by writing a short text in their personal class notebook. This was considered important to develop critical thinking that was not employed for various reasons in the classroom itself.

The fake news component was incorporated from Lesson 6. Students were assigned on their class Moodle page an authentic text from a news source on the Internet. At first, a single source text was supplied one week before class, but this was later extended to two texts. The two texts related to the same news item, from either slightly different perspectives, or displaying slightly different (but not contradictory) content details. As noted earlier, students were asked to carefully read the texts, study the topic further, and moreover, make sure to study difficult vocabulary that was used in the texts. Importantly, students were also made aware that they would be given a text with modified details in class.

In class, students were asked to not access the Internet or their notes, and not refer to the assigned texts. However, conversation between classmates was acceptable and encouraged. As noted earlier, initially, students took a quiz based on the assigned text. This was followed by a modified "fake" item – a two paragraph text that summarized the gist of the original text. Students had to determine which meanings were different from their prepared understanding of the original text, and they were able to work in pairs or small groups to share their impressions and find the key differences. An important component of this exercise was to get students to engage in meaningful communication on the topic. Naturally, English was the expected primary tool of communication, with occasional references in Japanese tolerated in pair work.

The revised fake item was generally presented as a short two-or-three paragraph text, while the assigned homework was two to three pages. Note it was expected that readings for third-year classes would be typically 15–20 pages. Vocabulary of the in-class fake item was modified so that students wouldn't need to check difficult vocabulary. However, nomenclature in some form was retained so that, if the student had prepared appropriately, such terminology should be comprehensible. Also, care was taken to modify content details rather than focus on semantic differences, unless it changed the significance of the news in a substantial way. In doing so, students could rely on the fact that they wouldn't need to memorize specific numbers or dates – such details were only changed in a way to support the main content differences.

The final stage of the course added more activities to the in-class component. Students had to not only find the errors in the falsified text, they also had to describe with what the errors should be replaced. Furthermore, they had to write written responses to questions. These responses typically needed to include specific details in the text. About half of the questions revolved around the various falsehoods. Again, students could discuss their ideas with their classmates, but they could not check notes, notebooks, or the original reading.

For the last three weeks of the course, students had two separate tests that replicated these lessons. Students were asked to read authentic texts a week in advance and were then tested on these with a modified text in class. The one variation was that students were not allowed to discuss the differences, instead they were tested on their ability to independently locate the several errors and then describe what these errors should have been. Marks were based on being able to legibly communicate these points; as long as the correct inference was clear, students were awarded marks. In other words, spelling and some grammar errors were ignored as long as the inferred meaning was clear, although full marks were only given to error-free answers.

Results

Students generally responded well to the activity. Although a small number found it difficult to adequately prepare for various reasons, most students prepared sufficiently well. This reflected earlier iterations of the course. Most found it very challenging in the last stage, considering that they were unable to check details and struggled to express certain points of view. However, as the course progressed, most students found it a kind of challenge – to solve the puzzle. Frequently the texts led to a very animated discussion between students, although sometimes this went into Japanese as their frustration to communicate became too much for them. However, such first-language moves were rare.

This type of communicative activity requires a high level of mutual trust and respect in the classroom. Accordingly, the six-week lead-in period was really important as the students got used to each other during this period. This aspect could be modified for similar courses in other countries where the development of mutual trust is not as critical for classroom participation and interaction, especially in the L2.

One beneficial side effect was that the post-class summary and reflection text (typically 100–200 words) often became much more personalized and introspective than beforehand. As not all students did this well, it likely demonstrated the time and effort the more-motivated students put into the reflection. It could also be surmised that both preparing and discussing the topic helped them to reflect more effectively as the course progressed. This ties back into the observation that many students had inadequate knowledge to discuss certain topics in class.

A number of the students commented in the end-of-class survey that although the homework load was heavy, they had definitely started focusing much more on the required text. Most students in the degree program feel pressure to improve, and the majority of the class responded to the author that they felt they had developed better preparatory habits and skills. The hope is that they will retain these attitudes as they move on to other courses.

Conclusions

Measuring the utility of an individual course is difficult. Students typically take several courses in their major at the same time, so it is problematic to ascertain where improvements have been made. Nevertheless, as pointed out earlier in this paper, the main objective of this course was to get students to demonstrate effective gains in preparatory skills, discrete language skills (such as vocabulary and grammar awareness), and critical thinking. It is the opinion of this author that most students who participated demonstrated steady improvements with regard to these objectives. This is based on several factors: an end-of-course questionnaire, personal communication with several students, observable output, and finally, but perhaps most importantly, student attitudes, and arguably, therefore, motivation.

Despite extrinsic motivation being an important prompt for the students that participated in this course, the author believes that this method could be successfully applied in other language institutions.

One way in which this course could be improved would be to emphasize the media literacy. Specifically, it could include a variety of media types, for example, satirical cartoons, video, or audio. Although university courses continue to lean heavily on the written genre, understanding how to deal with a multitude of media is increasingly becoming important in the workplace. Nevertheless, intensive reading remains an integral component of SLA at any university.

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Improving Curriculum in Private English Language Programs Targeting Very Young Learners: Using the Three M's (Music, Movement, and Manipulatives)

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Despite new regulations restricting Korean public schools from teaching English as a Foreign Language prior to 3rd grade, English language programs targeting very young learners (VYLs) have gained a substantial parental following in Korea. The purpose of our research is to help instructors utilize different teaching techniques that work with the learning skills already present in VYLs, while meeting rigorous parent demands and acknowledging Korean social expectations. First, we will examine the current body of research concerning young learner educational environments. We will add to that first-hand experience data from educators in the field and cross-reference critical components of any language/literacy program targeting VYLs. We will then introduce three practices that can be implemented in classrooms to improve the learning environment and enhance lessons. We expect that these methods will benefit educators of VYLs in Korea by reinforcing well-documented and effective teaching practices already present in kindergarten classrooms worldwide.

INTRODUCTION

Korea has experienced many shifts in its education programs during the last few decades, with the continued development of early childhood education programs seeing changes that stem from practical analysis of current methodology but also from Korean cultural influences as well as public perceptions. Modern early childhood education began under the influence of Japanese educators in 1897 and involved such concepts as structured play as well as uniformity in behavior. More recently, Korean preschools have accepted some techniques of open education that highlight individual interests and development, concepts reflecting Western influence (Kwon, 2002). Korean social systems, including education, government, and economy, seemingly have adapted to globalization and are in line with the concepts dominant in Western countries. However, the nation's guiding philosophies and traditions, including Confucianism, continue to hold a deeply rooted place in Korean society. This can be seen in the educational practices as well, where Korea continues to be hierarchical and rank conscious and where educational success can lead to one finding a position in Korean society (Park, Lee, & Jun, 2013).

Another more-recent focus of early childhood education is early English language programs: a sought-after piece of childhood education that parents and private educators seek to fill. Most Korean kindergartens, including public ones, offer English classes once or twice a week to begin exposing children to English. However, Korean law currently dictates that students should not be given English education during 1st and 2nd grade in public schools (Ghani, 2018). The debate over exactly how early English as a second language should be taught in Korean public schools has been going on for nearly two decades, and private institutions catering to young learners have flourished as parents continue to demand their children receive English classes from a young age. While the widespread increase in the number of early English language programs continues, there is currently no agreed-upon system in place to ensure students are getting helpful, meaningful education.

The sentiments towards these programs in Korea vary. While many parents want their children to develop English skills, there are societal and cultural concerns regarding the style of education that is acceptable for young learners. While educational philosophies from Western programs, such as intrinsic motivation and child-directed play, have been added to public curriculums (Kwon, 2002), programs dedicated to English language learning have varied standards due to differences in parental ideas of what education should be, teacher's educational standards, and cultural-normative early childhood education, as well as education in general.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the implementation of current developments in early education programs within Korea while considering the social and cultural attitudes that will influence the direction early education programs progress through, and to introduce teaching practices for educating preliterate Korean students that both satisfy the Korean parents' desire for effective English education and adherence to Korean social values. To support our research, we will look at studies pertaining to different early childhood education programs, as well as studies pertaining to Korean cultural influence on educational developments. Further, we will survey current and former educators with experience in early childhood education to better understand their needs and desires. Using both the research available and the data received from our surveys, as well as our own personal experiences working in early education programs in Korea, we intend to introduce successful learning techniques that can be modified and used by others within our field.

Research Questions

Our research questions are the following:

1. What do English language programs aimed at very young learners (VYLs, or children under the age of 6) currently look like?
2. How can these programs in Korea adjust to the changing dynamics used successfully elsewhere, while satisfying the perceptions about what an early English language program should look like in Korean society?

By answering these questions, we will offer three learning techniques that can enhance kindergarten English language classrooms around Korea.

METHODOLOGY

This study is being done in part to improve the teaching standards in our own young learner classrooms, but we hope to further use the information gathered to help others improve the quality of their classrooms as well. We will reference both qualitative and quantitative research as well as draw on both of our experiences as educators of young learners to provide an accurate guide for improving early English language classrooms.

Defining "Very Young Learners" (VYLs)

Outwardly people understand that the capabilities of children at different ages range dramatically, but when applying this to private education programs with varying objectives and an absence of standards, too often both parents and teachers want lesson plans more appropriate for young elementary students. To understand how to best serve VYLs, we need to first define where they are from cognitive, social, behavioral, and linguistic standpoints.

Children are in a state of constant development, and much of their learning is through concrete experience or by being allowed to engage in new activities and process information received throughout the experience. Educators often talk about developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) when discussing children at this level and include active learning and deep understand methods (Trying Together, 2018). Children at this age are prepared and eager to learn, but learning must be conducted in a way that is transferable to a young mind.

In order to understand why certain tasks fall into the category of developmentally appropriate, it is important to understand a VYL's capabilities. Primarily, each activity should serve multiple purposes. In other words, an activity used for learning numbers must extend beyond numbers and reinforce social development, fine motor skills, sentence structures, or any other area in which young learners are growing. An English task cannot be isolated from the burgeoning developmental skills that VYL's are already acquiring. Additionally, while children possess the facility to become remarkably competent speakers of a new language in a short period of time, provided they get sufficient exposure to the language, they forget it with seemingly equal ease (Harmer, 2007). Varied and repetitious usage of the language is required to ensure it is not forgotten.

Children at this age must learn through play and experience. According to neuroscience research, learning is both a cognitive and affective process. The emotions must be stimulated to enhance intellectual development (Gilbert, 2002). Intrinsic desire must be present in the learner for language acquisition to take hold (Ghosn, 2013), and young children enjoy few things in life more than play. Play, movement, and exploration are directly associated with each other and must be encouraged in classrooms intended for young learners (Azlina & Zulkiflee, 2012). Children aged 3–5 are inherently curious, yet lacking in knowledge and life experience, and therefore are constantly learning through their actions and environment.

Young learner curriculums that purposefully include activities to encourage movement will not only help students learn targeted lesson objectives, but also help focus their short attention spans and exhaust their high energy levels. Alonso (1991) recommends play situations that help stimulate children while creating a relaxed environment, and at the same time, help address the issue of short attention spans, which dictate that an activity should last no more than 15 minutes, and preferably less.

Attitudes Towards English Education

English education in Korea has a long association with what is often referred to as "education fever," a national obsession in much of East Asia equating educational achievement with success. This idea is not Korea's alone, but it is a palpable aspect of Korean society and gives precedence to the current phenomenon of "English fever" (Park, 2009). McLaughlin's (1984) research on second language acquisition identified 36 months as the pivotal point in language development when a dominant language is established. Perhaps this is why children younger than three years old are learning English in private programs, with parents going so far as to have their families live apart, with one parent living with their children abroad in order to improve their English abilities. This practice is less common than sending children abroad for an overseas education when they are older, but it is still a commonly acknowledged method to help children advance within an increasingly global society.

Another example of the importance of English language education is the construction of "English villages," which try to simulate an English-speaking society and where children can stay for short camps for an English immersion experience without leaving Korea (Shim & Park, 2008). Given the perceived importance placed on English education for the purpose of obtaining an advanced degree and eventual employment success, it is not surprising that more and more parents want their children to begin learning English before they are literate in Korean (Park, 2009).

Korea is not alone in the quest for citizens with high English language skills. As English has spread as the dominant lingua franca, the language of the UN, the World Bank, and by far the most common language encountered on the Internet as well as the dominant language for international business purposes, the rise of English language schools around the world has been dramatic (Shim & Park, 2008; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996). Whether one sees Korea's drive for English proficiency as positive or negative, it is indisputably prevalent, and as such, Korean parents are likely to continue seeking ways to improve their children's English abilities from a young age.

English Kindergartens in Korea

Korea's education system has shared a similar trajectory as their economic development, and the steep trajectory has left several gaps along the way. With compulsory education not beginning until grade one of elementary school and the race for high scores on college entrance exams beginning as early as elementary school, in association with English proficiency equating with higher paying, more reputable employment, English kindergartens (classified as language schools with young learner programs) have filled a gap in needs for families with the time and financial means to attend.

The tuition costs at many English kindergartens exceed 10,000,000 won a year, with the elite schools charging in excess of 30,000,000 won. Parents expect strong academic gains to accompany their significant investments (Chia, 2013). Most English kindergartens in Korea begin accepting students between the ages of 24–36 months and begin formal English instruction between 36–48 months; at least six years before students begin receiving English classes in public school.

Public kindergartens and those that receive state subsidies are required to teach a continuum of the Nuri Curriculum that has been introduced in daycare programs, which is the standard, national-level curriculum for children who are 3–5 years old (Kim & Sung, 2017). The Nuri Curriculum has been in practice since 2013 and follows a whole-child model of education that places equal importance on children's physical, emotional, social, and academic growth. Class sizes are regulated at 17 students or less per teacher, and play-based learning is emphasized (World Education Forum, 2015).

Apart from class size and other safety standards, schools that do not accept government subsidies are not required to follow the nationally mandated curriculum guidelines and thus install any curriculum deemed suitable and appropriate by the school leadership. This could be a globally renowned curriculum such as the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program, Waldorf, or Montessori methods, but the lengthy and costly accreditation process required to become and maintain accreditation to operate these programs may be discouraging (International Baccalaureate, 2010; Association of Waldorf Schools of North America, 2016). Many school systems from Canada, the United States, and other Asian locations such as Singapore, offer an export version of their curriculum, typically associated with an "International School" label. There are also many English school franchises in the niche market that have created their own kindergarten curriculum in accordance with company or brand expectations. This has created inconsistencies in the knowledge, skills, and habits acquired by students who attend these institutions.

Survey Results

After reviewing our survey, a few noticeable abstractions presented themselves. First, the parameters of the survey should be clear. We received survey results only from instructors with experience, past or present, working with VYLs in Korea. Most of our surveys came from those who have working experience in kindergartens in Korea, either in private or public schools, although very few of these respondents held degrees in early childhood education.

The most surprising aspect of our survey came from the responses involving different teaching materials and styles. Of the group surveyed, more than 60% classified their program as following a teacher-led instruction model primarily using nursery rhymes, student books, workbooks, and worksheets for instruction material. Most respondents (84%) described their classroom as being in a traditional style with desks and chairs taking up most of the floor space. Dramatic play is used only occasionally or never by 64% of the respondents. Further, over half (60%) never used puppets in the classroom, with a remarkably small percentage ever using puppets. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the instructors surveyed did not include playdough, paint, or clay in their lessons, and 60% claimed to use no manipulatives inside their classrooms. From these results, we can ascertain that a significant percentage of classes are forgoing instruction methods proven to be effective and engaging to VYLs. These responses factored heavily into our development of the instruction techniques introduced below.

Instruction Techniques

The reason for presenting these three techniques is that they are proven to be effective aspects of learning programs and, according to our survey and experience, are either underutilized or not used at all in private language programs aimed at VYL's.

MI #1: Music

The idea of using music in classrooms full of young learners is clearly not new, but we intend to defend the use of songs and dance as more than just respite and filler, as well as suggest a lesson that can be easily adapted and used for several successful teaching goals. Music is often seen as a gentle way to get a young student's attention, or even learn new vocabulary, but implementing musical lessons in the classroom can have a wide variety of purposes. Studies have shown a link between learning with music and rhythm, and a young student's phonological awareness as well as word recognition (Herrera, Lorenzo, Defior, Fernandez-Smith, & Costa-Giomi, 2011; Moritz, Yampolsky, Papadelis, Thomson, & Wolf, 2013). Therefore, music should be an essential element for VYLs who should be starting the process of learning to read. Phonological awareness, our conscious ability to recognize sound structures in a language, is well-studied yet still difficult for second language learners, although it can be supported through focused music study from a young age (Herrera et al., 2011).

Moreover, the use of music in a language classroom has been shown to have a direct effect on recall and retention in young learners. Songs are helpful for memory in several ways. They often contain repetitive lyrics and formulaic sets of language, which are helpful for recall in future conversations. Further, utilizing music in the classroom helps create a positive atmosphere and a safe learning environment, while promoting entertainment, and at times, cultural awareness (Abdolmanafi-Rokni & Ataee, 2014).

Example Music Lesson. For VYLs, acquiring new skills and learning new tasks comes much quicker than with their adult counterparts. While teaching new rhythms and song patterns certainly is beneficial, we would like to suggest a lesson incorporating new lyrics and movements into already familiar songs. This lesson can be reused time and again with different songs that children already know and is easy to set up. The teacher only need to consider their learning goal, and what words and movements will help to achieve this.

Begin by considering what the lesson intends to teach, then match that material to a song the students already know. Nursery rhymes are particularly easy to utilize. By reworking the lyrics to match the lesson, the students will quickly learn new material as they connect it to the familiar rhythm, and the intonation of the song will help encourage young children to use and recognize proper second language intonation. As mentioned before, no lesson should be single-purpose, and this lesson serves both linguistic and developmental purposes.

MI #2: Movement

Movement is more than exercise or practicality for kindergarten children; it is a basic form of gaining experience and communication that helps children learn to execute different activities in their lives. Incorporating different movement-based activities into a classroom, from dances to structured acting-based activities, children can develop their imagination, improve their fine motor skills, practice expressing their emotions properly, and make tangible connections with the language they are trying to acquire (Walter & Sat, 2013).

VYLs often need more physical activities naturally in their day to help mitigate their high energy levels. In addition to scheduling unguided playtime throughout the day, instructors can utilize this need to move by creating kinesthetic learning activities that engage a young learner's high energy and can be focused towards a language learning goal. As Bas states, "Do not rely on the spoken word only. Most activities for the younger learners should include movement and involve the senses." (2008, p. 2). Incorporating movement harnesses a child's burgeoning motor skills, and promotes social development and cooperation techniques, all while engaging in kinesthetic learning.

Below is a small list of activities often used in VYL classrooms that involve movement.

- Dances to familiar songs. The dance movements should represent vocabulary or actions.
- Short plays or dramas. Given the limited language structure and vocabulary these will often be short and repetitive, but still effective.
- Miming or charades. This is particularly helpful for students in the nonverbal stage.
- Puppets. Puppets are great for allowing students to express themselves through or to imaginary figures.

MI #3: Manipulatives

Manipulatives, anything used for teaching purposes that can be physically touched or moved, have been utilized in kindergarten classrooms since the introduction of the first kindergartens in 1837. Classroom manipulatives can range from dried beans to expensive toys designed for pedagogical purposes (Boggan, Harper, & Whitmire, 2010). Manipulatives have long been used to teach introductory mathematical concepts. While an excellent way to teach numerical groupings in a second language environment, they have further benefits when working with young children. According to Collier (2006), "Students like to smell, touch, see, hear, taste, connect, disconnect, heat, cool and quantify things" (p. 243). Introducing manipulatives into a classroom for VYLs will help spark curiosity, interest, and interactivity as well as foster retention and comprehension.

FIGURE 1. Four-year-old students using manipulatives during a lesson.

Manipulatives encourage play-based activities, which can help foster advancements in oral language development by mimicking the real-world dialogue necessary when pretend is successfully utilized (Alonzo, 1991). By supplying young learners with a multitude of different manipulatives, the teacher will be able to engage in a wide range of enjoyable lessons. Imagine how far a teacher could stretch a set of plastic food pieces. Lessons covering food vocabulary, polite phrases, simple commands such as giving, taking, eating, and sharing, or larger dialogues mimicking ordering food or shopping could be done in a social, active, relatable way that is likely to be retained.

Research suggests that many students perform better when they are able to learn using manipulative materials and engage in tactile learning experiences (Alonzo, 1991). The use of hands-on materials shows a direct link to recall, and studies have shown that children develop a cognition for abstract subjects with manual activities involving movable objects (Alonzo, 1991; Stapleton, 2014). Not only will adding manipulatives to the classroom help make the classes more fun, they will simultaneously improve the students' language acquisition.

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Redesigning a Forum Tool: The Process of Developing and Researching an Educational Technology Intervention

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Research into educational technology has provided guidelines for how teachers might integrate technology into their curriculum using effective instructional strategies and support. Less attention, however, has been given to the underlying assumptions of the code and processes that can have a direct impact on teacher and student affordances. The decisions made during the development process can be invisible to users in educational contexts, but these decisions and the assumptions behind them can influence educational use. As a result, attention needs to be given to a process that balances both theory and practical considerations related to both technical and educational areas. As part of an ongoing study to redesign forums with embedded formative assessment activities, Lean UX web development principles were incorporated into the design-based research process. This paper describes the rationale for integrating these two approaches and initial results of this integration.

INTRODUCTION

Despite the many benefits technology can afford learning, teachers face difficult considerations and barriers to realizing the potential of technology use. Technology not specifically designed for education, such as Facebook and Twitter, may have special considerations. Rodriguez (2011) points out that instructors need to be knowledgeable of relevant legal areas when extending learning activities into public social media spaces, such as accessibility of the service and ownership of the work. McBride (2009) outlines a variety of reasons that implementing social media may be difficult such as a lack of willingness to use the services or be online friends, and the perceived effect of the teacher's role in online social media interactions. Even incorporating technology designed specifically for education relies on employing successful instructional strategies and support. Ebner, Kickmeier-Rush, and Holzinger (2008) found that no students added or edited wiki pages in a voluntary wiki activity intended to foster collaborative knowledge building to support exam preparation. In the case of forums, student discussion may be of superficial depth and have minimal participation (Gao, Zhang, & Franklin, 2013; Brooks, Greer, & Gutwin, 2014; Loncar, Barrett, & Liu, 2014; Zheng & Warschauer, 2015) unless effective strategies are employed (Loncar et al., 2014; deNoyelles, Zydney, & Chen, 2014).

While the effectiveness of teachers' practices impacts integration, decisions developers make during software development can directly contribute to difficulties teachers face using technology. The design decisions behind software components impact educational affordances. Software relies on an ecosystem of standards, codes, and tools that come from the work of many programmers and organizations. Decisions made about how a program or its components should operate are invisible or remain hidden. Edwards (2012, 2015) notes that the code, algorithms, and standards behind software used in education may perpetuate a hidden curriculum. Because the work behind software is largely invisible to instructors, little is thought about its inner-workings and design, and the effects these aspects have on the curriculum (Edwards, 2015). Decisions made about the way data is collected, manipulated, and standardized can lack justification based on educational merits. In particular, data could be overly simplified (Edwards, 2015) or even filtered with a particular ideology (Edwards, 2012) unbeknownst to teacher and student end-users. Furthermore, software design can push users toward certain actions regardless of their educational value. Lane (2009) notes that system design can obscure default settings, meaning that settings teachers may want to change are not changed because faculty cannot find them or do not know how to use them. In this case, design can refer to the level of embedded support within the system for helping teachers understand the system as well as the broader design of how a user is expected to interact with the system. An unintuitive design for educational software may force users to think about something in a way that complicates the process of implementing their pedagogy through the software (Lane, 2009). The hidden curriculum of educational technology can affect not only the knowledge presented but also the actions used by students and teachers within a course.

Design of educational software needs to balance both educational and technical considerations. A process that only focuses on education may miss areas of improvement that computer science literature offers. Similarly, while there are a number of rich methods for software design and development, these must have grounding in educational theory in order to produce effective learning products. Vieira, Parsons, and Byrd (2018) found in their literature review of visual learning analytics studies that “research should also explore how to better integrate the information visualization and educational research fields” (p. 131) because studies integrating sophisticated visualizations and educational theory are lacking. Attention not only to theoretical perspectives but also to teacher practice will strengthen a particular learning software. The process behind development can help integrate theoretical and practical knowledge bases from various fields. Educational design research provides a method to develop interventions with a strong focus on educational outcomes and theory around design principles. This paper looks at how integrating Lean UX web development principles into the design-based research (DBR) process supported the development and research of an educational forum.

BACKGROUND

Forums are incorporated into a variety of learning management systems and can also be stand-alone products. Though there are different types, the most common is a threaded forum (Gao et al., 2013). In such forums, students upload posts in response to a prompt and offer replies to peers. However, educational forums may lack dedicated formative assessment activities. Due to the effects of teacher presence on forum participation (Mazzolini & Maddison, 2003; Brooks et al., 2014; Loncar et al., 2014; Zheng & Warschauer, 2015), teachers may find it difficult to include formative assessment in forums without disrupting discussion. While effective instructional strategies can lead to successful forum use (Zydney & Seo, 2012), redesigning forums themselves can be a promising way to support learning (Gao et al., 2013). As part of an ongoing DBR study, the author developed a forum that incorporated formative assessment activities.

The forum used the MEAN stack (MongoDB, Express.js, Angular 6, and Node.js). This stack was familiar to the author, and the document database schema was similar to the forum data. The forum included five formative assessment activities: checklist, reflection prompt, goal setting, feedback request, and exemplar. To retain control over design, the author developed a new site instead of using or adapting a pre-made site. As the project has continued, updates based on participant evaluations and site data have and will continue to be implemented across DBR cycles.

DBR seeks to uncover design principles and theory that arise from multiple cycles of refining an intervention. It has been used to developed both technological and non-technological interventions in various educational fields. It seeks to avoid reducing the complexity of variables that can affect real educational environments and acknowledges that results from experiments conducted in laboratory conditions may not transfer outside those settings. Amiel and Reeves (2008) define technology as “a process that invokes the complex interactions of human, social, and cultural factors as well as the technical aspects” (p. 31). As such, the investigation of how a tool impacts educational outcomes may have less importance than the design principles behind it that can be applied more broadly (Amiel & Reeves, 2008).

The basic steps of DBR are that (a) a problem is analyzed, (b) solutions or interventions are developed using existing design principles, (c) the interventions are tested and refined through iterative cycles, and (d) design principles are produced upon reflection (Amiel & Reeves, 2008). McKenney and Reeves (2014) expanded the process to include three phases that occur within three cycles. In the analysis/exploration phase, researchers gather information about the problem to understand design requirements. This understanding is developed through a “literature review to gain theoretical insights” (McKenney & Reeves, 2012, p. 78) as well as in collaboration with practitioners to understand the “real contextual opportunities and constraints” (p. 80). In the design/construction phase, the researchers create the intervention along with frameworks and guidelines for the designs employed. In the final phase, the evaluation/reflection phase, the researcher reviews data from the intervention. Iterations of these phases constitute cycles. A microcycle denotes one phase. A mesocycle includes two or more phases in sequence that are evaluated. A macrocycle encompasses the entire project.

The forum DBR project has progressed through one mesocycle and is currently in the second mesocycle. The next section will describe the Cycle 1 development process and lessons learned. Then, the section will continue with changes made to Cycle 2’s process and how those have impacted the project.

PROCESS

Cycle 1: Initial Development

From winter 2018 to fall 2018, Cycle 1 focused on the initial development, testing, and revision of the forum site. Research focused on four areas. A literature review was conducted on forums, formative assessment, and DBR. Additionally, several learning management systems were reviewed to understand how existing systems implemented or supported formative assessment in forums. Further, technical literature informed how to develop using the stack. Finally, research was done on the participating classes. This research base provided practical and theoretical insights to support the design and development of the forum.

Development proceeded in three general phases. The initial focus was on the functionality necessary for the base server and threaded forum, including basic CRUD (create, retrieve, update, and delete) operations for forums, posts, and replies. Further, this stage involved deciding what data to preserve and modify, data such as timestamps for posts/replies. The next phase focused on administrative functions, including login/logout and user CRUD operations. As a result of adding users, the earlier work on basic forum functionality required updates. Finally, the aforementioned formative assessment tasks were implemented.

After initial development had finished, the forum underwent beta testing. Structured beta tests asked participants to work through a list of tasks based on how the site was intended to be used. First, beta testers would act as teachers, then as students. Screencasts captured audio of testers' talking and video of their actions on screen. Generally, testers completed most tasks successfully with few problems, but some issues arose. Inconsistency in font color made elements hard to find. Navigation was complicated because icons had no labels. Additionally, unstructured beta tests in which testers explored the site without a task list found some broken functions. Passwords and IDs did not update. Posts and forums did not automatically appear on creation, necessitating a page refresh. These problems were the result of existing functionality that had broken during updates. Based on test results, site updates were applied, and the site worked as intended. With the first development cycle complete, the forum was used as an intervention in two courses.

While this process led to successful development and testing of the intervention, it lacked a cohesion between research and development. The research components felt isolated from the technical development. A body of literature informed both research and technical considerations. Indeed, research and testing informed the rationale behind design prototypes and production designs. However, much of the initial development revolved around setting up the server environment, administrative functions, and threaded forum functions, which were not the focus of the project, but necessary nonetheless. The actual code and coding process behind this development did not produce data that could support the research easily upon review after implementation.

Furthermore, feedback from teachers and students supported research objectives but not the development. As a result, the initial ideas had less practical grounding than if that feedback had been given earlier. Beta-tester feedback came after the entire site was developed. Beta tests showed designs that had failed or hindered use. This feedback led to important revisions before the first implementation. Data from users came at the end of the first implementation. Survey data gave insights into students' perceptions but did not reflect opinions throughout development. When looking at student work after the first implementation, the author noticed that many students had failed to use the feedback request feature included in an assignment. Similarly, a participating teacher did not feel knowledgeable enough about the formative assessment features, so only used the threaded forum for two of three assignments. Despite an introduction session, support materials, and continued contact, the participating instructor needed contextualizing assistance for the new activities embedded in the site. While these data informed design changes for Cycle 2, these problems could have been addressed earlier had data come earlier in the design process. Facilitating collaboration with practitioners earlier could have reduced development time by avoiding errors, improved designs earlier, and yielded more valuable data.

Cycle 2: Lean Design-Based Research Development

Cycle 2, which is still ongoing, has incorporated elements of Lean UX into the DBR project in order to overcome the issues observed in Cycle 1. Lean UX is a project development process and set of 16 principles that aims to foster collaboration among designers and non-designers for efficient software development (Gothelf & Seiden, 2016). It builds upon elements of Agile project management and Design Thinking (Gothelf & Seiden, 2016). The general process of Lean UX uses the following four steps (Gothelf & Seiden, 2016). First, the development team outlines assumptions and hypotheses. These include developing user stories that represent users of a service and selecting goals the service should achieve. Next, a cross-functional team collaborates to quickly design an aspect of the product such as the layout or a particular function. They also generate documentation as confidence in their design's effectiveness grows. Third, the team creates a minimum viable product (MVP), which should be developed enough to answer questions with the least amount of effort/work spent developing the MVP. As Lean UX is a business-oriented process, it minimizes "waste" that can affect business returns and revenue. Finally, the MVP, whether low-fidelity or high-fidelity, is tested with users, which gives direction for further development.

While DBR and Lean UX have notable differences, they overlap in ways which can support each other. Both processes emphasize collaboration. Lean UX focuses on teams with members of various specializations. DBR has roots in the field of instructional design (McKenney & Reeves, 2012), in which many development processes incorporate various stakeholders. Both focus on a similar process of learning, development, and testing driven by attention to end users. They differ in the scope of development. DBR uses large cycles of developing and refining a full intervention; whereas, Lean UX, with its Agile background, uses short "sprits" to learn and to build components of a larger product. These processes result in different outputs. The outcome of DBR is not only an intervention but also design principles and theory that can be shared and are generalizable to other situations or tools. Lean UX focuses on making a team aware of contextual design successes so that they can function faster and more independently in the development process, not necessarily to share successes beyond their organization.

In Cycle 2, Lean UX was used as a continuous subprocess that generated data throughout DBR cycles. The overall sequence of both processes remained the same. However, the Lean UX sprints encompassed fast design iterations focused on specific features of the broader intervention. Sprints are first informed by educational theory and practical research. They move from low-fidelity prototypes, such as general ideas and sketches, to high-fidelity prototypes, such as mockups and working samples (Gothelf & Seiden, 2016). After several sprints, the designs have received multiple levels of scrutiny and testing from practitioners. This process readies the designs for the production environment where participating students and teachers use them and generate data for the DBR evaluation microcycle. Integrating Lean UX into DBR in this way preserves the overall research process while the smaller sprints inform each microcycle. Figure 1 shows the Lean Design-Based Research process.

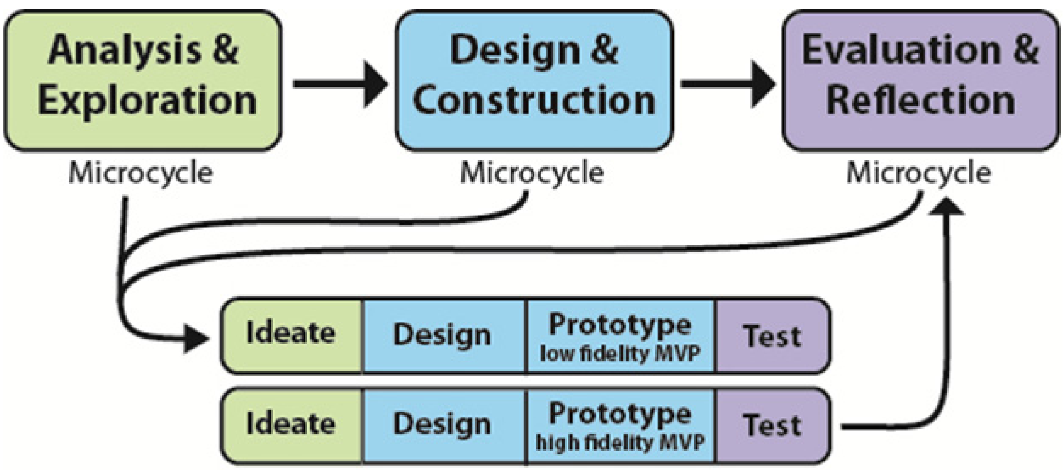

FIGURE 1. One Mesocycle of the Lean Design-Based Research Process.

This change in process has increased sources of data. In Cycle 1, most data came at the end of either the development or implementation microcycles. Integrating conversations with practitioners earlier in the DBR process has reduced the need to rework designs and helped capture detail from multiple sources earlier rather than only from journals, survey data, and site use data. While teacher journals captured their thoughts on the completed system, including their intentions for use and their thoughts about improvements to the service and their own site use, the shorter sprints have allowed for more data to be systematically collected on the design progress because the participants were involved in the process. The integrated lean design-based research process generates feedback early in cycles and preserves a cross-section of opinion throughout development.

Furthermore, technical components can be used as data to drive participant collaboration and support the research. A focus of DBR is on the professional development of both researchers and participants of a project (McKenney &

Reeves, 2012). A core principle of Lean UX is that non-designers can help make design decisions (Gothelf & Seiden, 2016). Edwards (2014) noted that expecting teachers to learn the digital literacy necessary to understand code may be unrealistic to expect. In Cycle 2, design decisions have been documented in a style guide that incorporates code, visuals of elements, and brief explanations of their rationale and functionality. This document can give participants a better understanding of the technical aspects behind design solutions. This style guide can support teacher participants not only because they have a comprehensive document but also, and more importantly, because they have been involved in the design discussions and processes that generated the style guide. Additionally, further technical components, such as writing code tests, code comments, and version control, are being used to document decisions and will help guide discussions with teacher participants as the designs mature. While these may be unfamiliar to participants, they can also be sources for collaboration.

Discussion

The four microcycles of development have not only yielded insights about the effectiveness of the intervention's designs but also the process of making those designs. In addition to the general process outlined earlier, the following strategies may aid development of educational software interventions.

Focused Sprints

A critical question or questions should limit the focus of sprints. Each sprint should answer these questions based on an appropriate MVP before development continues. Sequences of sprints should provide answers that gradually help build from simple prototypes to refined production products. This focus limits the work done on a part of the intervention to the amount of data collected about its effectiveness.

Collaboration

Feedback and ideation between practitioners and researchers should be built systematically into the sprints. This participation needs to be intentionally designed and deployed not only to ensure that valuable data is gathered and preserved but also to respect participants' time.

Accessible Technical Data

Some technical data sources can be used to support collaboration throughout sprints. Designing unit tests can be done in a non-technical way with practitioners by describing how data that students enter, for example, should be treated and what output should be shown to students and teachers. A design style guide can document the evolution of design decisions. Contextualized data sources can, at certain times, help practitioners understand an intervention or its components.

Avoid Distractions but Maintain Flexibility

Software interventions have necessary components not related to the project focus. Researchers need to be open to ideas from outside sources but filter them against the project goal. However, researchers may want to consider incorporating practitioners' suggestions that are outside the project's scope yet nonetheless help the instructor use the service since they are volunteering their efforts and time to help the researcher.

Conclusions

With barriers to entry into software development lower and more technical support available than before, teacher-researchers may be able to make locally focused software that takes into account the specific conditions under which it will be used. Companies, as well, may be interested in developing educational software for broader markets. Regardless of the developer or team, the rationale behind the design process needs to have a solid foundation in both practical and theoretical educational issues. A variety of project management methodologies could be integrated into the research process, depending on the nature of the intervention. With the increased collaboration in lean design-based research, the impartiality of the research may be questioned, especially as the researcher takes a greater role in the intervention. In DBR, the goal is to produce an intervention that stands alone without the researcher because such an intervention would allow for designs that can be applied broadly. It is worth noting that the mesocycles of DBR can represent different phases of a project. While researchers may be more involved in the intervention early on, later cycles will stand on the strengths of designs, which the researcher must continue to test to ensure their strength (McKenney & Reeves, 2012). Using a lean design-based research process can help developers iteratively build an educational intervention grounded in theory with multiple levels of testing to validate its designs.

The Author

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Utilizing Cellphones to Improve Learners' Pronunciation and Fluency

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The advancement in mobile phone applications has made this device a useful tool for language learning. This article reports on research that investigated the effectiveness of using mobile phone applications to improve students' independent speaking competence, especially pronunciation and fluency. Thirty-two students were selected and separated into an experimental group and a control group. This presentation describes the treatment for the experimental group over fourteen weeks, as well as the performance of the participants in both groups. Through analysis of the results of the pre-test and post-test, and the grading sheets and diaries, the findings reveal that the participants with the treatment outperformed the ones in the control group and have shown much improvement in fluency and pronunciation of a number of individual words and sounds.

BACKGROUNDS AND PURPOSES

The boom in educational technology has opened up more conditions and conveniences than ever before for mobile learning. Over a few decades, many applications have been developed and integrated into electronic devices like televisions, laptops, tablets, and smartphones to serve the needs of teaching and learning. Among these devices, the mobile phone appears to be the most popular due to its slim size, portability, and functionality.

Quite a few studies have been carried out to provide educators and all those involved with an insight into this portable device, together with evidence of the effectiveness of this device in application. An experimental study conducted by Cavus and Uzunboylu (2009) aimed to investigate the effect of mobile learning over the critical thinking skills of 41 undergraduates at the Near East University in North Cyprus. Comparison of the results of the 23-item pre-experience and post-experience questionnaires revealed that participants' creativity increased greatly. In 2011, Ozdamli and Cavus explored the basic elements and characteristics of mobile learning and ended up with seven features: ubiquity, portability, blending, privacy, interaction, collaboration, and immediacy. In Asia, a study with Japanese students revealed that using the phone video-recording feature could help students use more words in their speech (Gromik, 2012). Also, Wu (2014) concluded after a pre-test–post-test study with 50 ESL college students that the use of a Java-application software program on smartphones helped students learn vocabulary more effectively. Another case study reported that 99% of the target students in the focused group associated the effectiveness of smartphones with language learning development (Muhammed, 2014). In addition, Gheytasi, Azizifar, and Gowhary (2015) provided evidence that using smartphones in educational settings helped raise reading comprehension proficiency of Iranian EFL learners. What is more, Sung, Chang, and Liu (2016) performed a meta-analysis and synthesis of 110 journal articles on the effects of integrating mobile devices in teaching and learning and found that using mobile devices was better than using desktop computers. These research findings lay foundations to confirm the belief that the use of mobile phones is truly beneficial to teaching and learning activities and is worth being exploited in various aspects of learning.

This case study conducted at International University, where many students are phone addicts and come from wealthy families, was an attempt to explore the effectiveness of using the recording function on the mobile phone to help students improve their independent speaking competence, especially for pronunciation and fluency.

METHODOLOGY

The Samplings

A total of 68 students from two intensive English classes, with a score range between 35 and 60, were taken to the English laboratory and given instructions on how to do the recording. They were then asked to take the pre-test, which included the two independent questions of the TOEFL iBT Speaking test. Students' responses were electronically recorded into audio files, which were then carefully graded by two examiners. To accurately analyze and evaluate the students' speaking competence as the starting point of the research, the ETS Speaking grading rubric (see Appendix A) was applied with the four main criteria: general description, delivery, language use, and topic development. Results of the pre-test allowed the selection of 16 students for the experimental group and 16 for the control group with the criteria in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Requirements for the Samplings

Pre-test	Control Group	Experimental Group
Mean	56.81	56.94
Median	56	56
Score range	43-70	42-70

The Treatment

During the course of fourteen weeks, students in both groups worked with the same textbook and topic; they were requested to join the same activities in class such as vocabulary games, pairwork and groupwork since Richards and Rodgers (2014) state that cooperative learning creates opportunities for natural language acquisition, develops successful learning, helps focus on lexical items, language structures and communicative functions, boosts learner's motivation, and maintains a positive learning atmosphere. The procedures for giving feedback or corrections during oral work were also kept similar between the two groups. It is stated in Harmer (2007) that the way teachers intervene for feedback should depend on whether we expect students' complete accuracy or "whether we are asking the students to use the language as fluently as possible" (p. 104). Corrections could be useful for systematic mistakes, but for minor problems or slips of the tongue, frequent corrections may result in stress and hesitation, and inhibit the acquisition process. In this study, teachers just observed and made notes during the students' oral work and gave feedback to the whole class at the end of the activity.

There were just two distinctive features in methodology between the control group and the experimental group. First, only the students in the experimental groups were guided to use the mobile phone recording function to record their responses in class when they practiced individually or in pairs and at home when they were assigned more tasks. A diary was made to keep track of students' behavior and reaction towards using the phone's recording function. Second, students in the experimental group made the best use of the peer feedback technique. Students mostly worked in pairs for this oral work. After receiving the feedback slip (see Appendix B) and listening to the instructions and explanations from the lecturer, students strictly followed the designated steps of brainstorming, recording the response, exchanging audio files and listening to the partner's response, giving feedback, responding to the partner's feedback, etc.

After fourteen weeks, the students took the post-test in the same format and conditions as with the pre-test.

RESULTS

From analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores (see Table 2 and Figures 1 & 2), both groups showed improvement in overall performance except for one student in the control group who performed lower (score discrepancy of -4); however, the experimental group saw more improvement in general with an average increase of 13.81 points compared to 9.56 points for the control group.

TABLE 2. Post-test Overall Score Comparison of Control and Experimental Groups

Pre-test	Control Group	Experimental Group
Mean	66.4	70.4
Score discrepancy (max.)	26	27
Score discrepancy (min.)	- 4	4
Improvement average	9.56	13.81

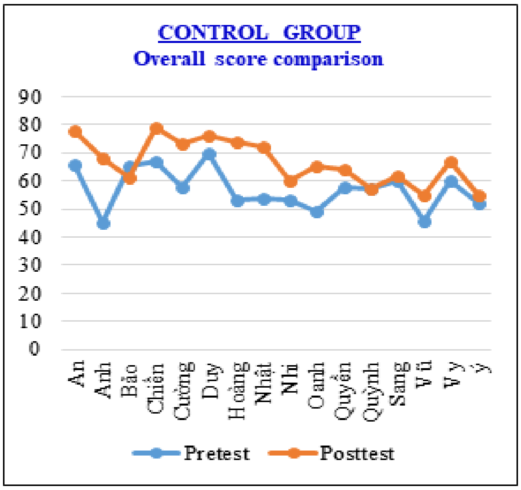

FIGURE 1. Pre-test – Post-test Overall Score Comparison of the Control Group.

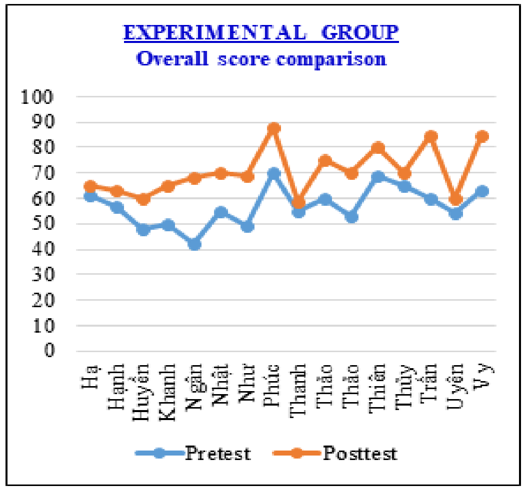

FIGURE 2. Pre-test – Post-test Overall Score Comparison of the Experimental Group.

In reference to analytical assessment, performance in the area of delivery on the post-test witnessed a major difference of 13.25 points average increase for the experimental group, whereas the average change for the control group was 7.75 points (see Table 2 and Figures 3 & 4).

TABLE 3. Post-test Delivery Score Comparison of Control and Experimental Groups

POST-TEST	Control Group	Experimental Group
Mean	60.5	66.6
Score discrepancy (max.)	25	30
Score discrepancy (min.)	0	0
Improvement average	7.75	13.25

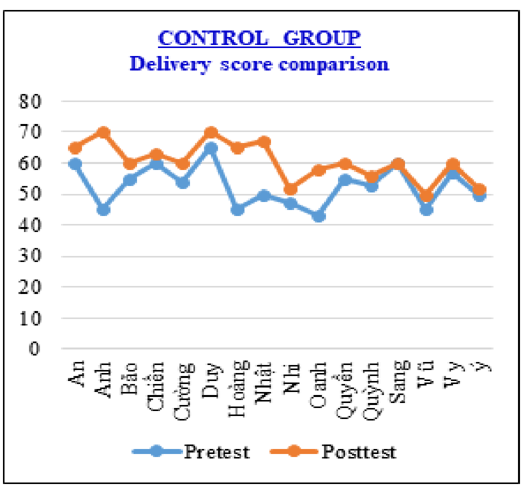

FIGURE 3. Pre-test – Post-test Delivery Score Comparison of the Control Group.

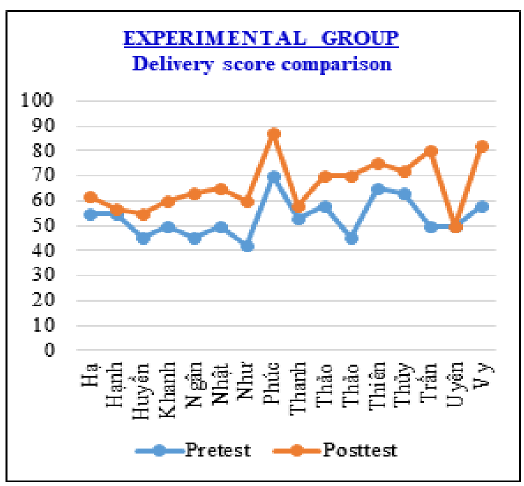

FIGURE 4. Pre-test – Post-test Delivery Score Comparison of the Experimental Group.

Taking an in-depth look at delivery, which, according to ETS, involves (a) flow of speech, (b) intonation, (c) pronunciation, and (d) intelligibility, diaries within the treatment period specified that students in the experimental group became quite well aware of all of the four areas of delivery. Descriptions of students' performances before and after the treatment are detailed in Table 4.

TABLE 4. Notes of Performances in Delivery Before and After the Treatment

Areas of Delivery	Stages	Descriptions
Flow of speech	Pre-test	– Slow, illogical pausing – Lots of informal fillers (*uhm, uhh, ahh*...) – Rough, choppy...
	Post-test	– Noticeable pacing – Some quite fluent – Use of pragmatic fillers (*well, sort of..., what I mean is..., I can say that...*)
Intonation	Pre-test	– Quite flat – All words stressed – Not clear pattern, awkward intonation
	Post-test	– Most content words stressed – Voice rising for question – Voice falling for affirmatives
Pronunciation	Pre-test	– Unclear articulation in some cases – Common final sounds missed: /s/, /z/,/k/, /v/, /f/... – Pairs mispronounced: /tʃ/and /t/, /s/ and /ʃ/, /ð/ and /Θ/, /p/ and /b/... – Wrong stress or mispronouncing in a few words: <u>Ja</u>pan, <u>pre</u>fer, com<u>for</u>table, inte<u>res</u>ting, m<u>o</u>ther, <u>ho</u>nesty...
	Post-test	– Pronounce correctly final sounds: /s/, /z/, /v/, /f/, /p/, /b/... – Fewer repetitions of common mispronouncing errors
Intelligibility	Pre-test	– Sometimes need effort for comprehension – Meaning obscured due to poor pronunciation or language use
	Post-test	– Mostly understood with ease – Pronunciation problems still exist, but not obscure meaning

DISCUSSION AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study reveal that using the recording function on the mobile phone did have a positive impact on the effectiveness of the learning process. Although the result of the study is encouraging and motivating, it is obviously a small-scale experiment, and there are cases that need special attention or adjustment. Students participating in this study have improved quite a lot in regards to fluency but accuracy still remains a problem for many of them. In reality, accuracy appears to be the problem to all language learners. Hammerly (1991) asserts that "in the classroom, fluency does not lead to accuracy, and most errors do not disappear through communicative interaction" (p. 60) and that language can be learnt successfully only through conscious processes. It could be concluded that this study would have better been carried out and examined in greater depth through a larger sample to certify the benefits that applying the mobile recording function could bring to English language learners.

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APPENDIX A

TOEFL iBT – Speaking Rubric

Independent Speaking Rubric

* Examiners are requested to give students whole band scores for each task. (E.g., task 1 - 70, not 70.5) A student's speaking score is the average of the 2 speaking task scores.

SCORE	General Description	Delivery	Language Use	Topic Development
76 - 100	The response fulfills the demands of the task, with at most minor lapses in completeness. It is highly intelligible and exhibits sustained, coherent discourse. A response at this level is characterized by all of the following. ⇒	Generally well-paced flow (fluid expression). Speech is clear. It may include minor lapses, or minor difficulties with pronunciation, or intonation patterns, which do not affect overall intelligibility.	The response demonstrates effective use of grammar and vocabulary. It exhibits a fairly high degree of automaticity with good control of basic and complex structures (as appropriate). Some minor (or systematic) errors are noticeable but do not obscure meaning.	The response is sustained and sufficient to the task. It is generally well developed and coherent; relationships between ideas are clear (or clear progression of ideas).
51 - 75	The response addresses the task appropriately, but may fall short of being fully developed. It is generally intelligible and coherent, though it exhibits some noticeable lapses in the expression of ideas. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following. ⇒	Speech is generally clear, with some fluidity of expression, though minor difficulties with pronunciation, intonation, or pacing are noticeable and may require listener effort at times (though overall intelligibility is not significantly affected).	The response demonstrates fairly automatic and effective use of grammar and vocabulary, and fairly coherent expression of relevant ideas. The response may exhibit some imprecise or inaccurate use of vocabulary or grammatical structures or be somewhat limited in the range of structures used. This may affect overall fluency, but it does not seriously interfere with the communication of the message.	The response is mostly coherent and sustained and conveys relevant ideas/information. Overall development is somewhat limited, usually lacks elaboration or specificity. Relationships between ideas may at times not be immediately clear.
26 - 50	The response addresses the task, but development of the topic is limited. It contains intelligible speech, although problems with delivery and/or overall coherence occur; meaning may be obscured in places. A response at this level is	Speech is basically intelligible, though listener effort is needed because of unclear articulation, awkward intonation, or choppy rhythm/pace; meaning may be obscured in places.	The response demonstrates limited range and control of grammar and vocabulary. These limitations often prevent full expression of ideas. For the most part, only basic sentence structures are used successfully and spoken with fluidity. Structures and vocabulary may express mainly simple (short) and/or general	The response is connected to the task, though the number of ideas presented or the development of ideas is limited. Mostly basic ideas are expressed with limited elaboration (details and support). At times relevant substance may be vaguely

	characterized by at least two of the following. ⇒		propositions, with simple or unclear connections made among them (serial listing, conjunction, etc.).	expressed or repetitious. Connections of ideas may be unclear.
1 - 25	The response is very limited in content and/or coherence or is only minimally connected to the task, or speech is largely unintelligible. A response at this level is characterized by at least two of the following. ⇒	Consistent pronunciation, stress, and intonation difficulties cause considerable listener effort; delivery is choppy, fragmented, or telegraphic; with frequent pauses and hesitations.	Range and control of grammar and vocabulary severely limit (or prevent) expression of ideas and connections among ideas, Some low-level responses may rely heavily on practiced or formulaic expressions.	Limited relevant content is expressed. The response generally lacks substance beyond expression of very basic ideas. Speaker may be unable to sustain speech to complete the task and may rely heavily on repetition of the prompt.
0	Skip task or does not respond. The response not related to the topic.			

Educational Testing Service (2014)

APPENDIX B

Feedback Slip

FEEDBACK SLIP Q1a

Experimental Group
Student Name: ____

Topic: What is the most important quality of a good teacher? Explain why it's important. Please include specific details in your explanation.

RECORDING (FIRST TIME)		
Brainstorm Ideas / Make an Outline		
PEER FEEDBACK		
	Feedback	**Suggestions**
Delivery		
Language Use		
Topic Development		
RESPONSE TO PEER FEEDBACK		
I will… because…		
I will not… because…		

CHECKLIST
How is your response marked? **Delivery** ● Did you pronounce individual words correctly? ● Did you vary your tone / have appropriate intonation? ● Did you have logical pauses? Was there a lot of hesitation? ● Is the response easy to understand (without effort)? **Language Use** ● Did you use a wide range of vocabulary and grammar correctly? ● Did you use correct collocations / expressions? **Topic Development** ● Did you develop your ideas well? (relevant info, 2 reasons with supporting) ● Are the supporting and examples relevant to the main ideas? ● Did you use suitable cohesive devices to connect ideas? (coherent)

SELF-EVALUATION - HOMEWORK		
RECORDING (SECOND TIME)		
	Remaining Drawbacks	**Improvements**
Delivery		
Language Use		
Topic Development		

Techniques and Activities Reports

Creating an Alexa-Enabled Textbook Exercise: An Easy Approach to Custom Automatic Speech Recognition Application

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This article focuses on automatic speech recognition (ASR) with special reference to creating custom applications for Amazon's voice assistant, Alexa, which allows students to self-study from their textbook. There is an extremely brief literature review that references some of the current studies into the use of ASR in second language acquisition. This review also references papers that suggest design criteria for app creation, guidelines for introducing the new technology with learners, and suggestions for future uses. There is a short report on the experience of introducing ASR into the classroom and the results of an initial test of Alexa with language students. There is an explanation of a method that uses Alexa Blueprints to adapt a textbook exercise for self-study via ASR. The successes and difficulties resulting from testing the Alexa-enabled textbook exercise are discussed along with some ideas to take the project forward.

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses reasons for using automatic speech recognition and suggests some methods for using ASR in and out of the classroom. Computers are improving at an exponential rate and have been used in the classroom for a long time. There are many opportunities for Internet-based projects, but these all require good reading and writing ability, and they are complicated to learn, so some teachers have not been willing to engage with new technology. Currently innovation is focused on using voice-to-Interact with computers. While voice-activated computers have been around for a long time, it is only within the last few years that they have become good enough for casual use, and while many are aware that their smartphones have the capability to recognize speech, very few people use this because they invested a lot of time learning to type on keyboards.

In language learning, voice activation can be a very helpful, too, because it allows learners to focus on their speaking skill, and it can be used in a lot of different ways. There are some methods that can be used without any special equipment other than the stock capabilities of personal devices. There are also certain gadgets that are designed only for voice: Google Home and Amazon Alexa are two examples that let the user customize the programming. Amazon Alexa and Google Home both have a lot of support for application development by programmers who have limited skill. Later in this article, there will be a discussion on using Amazon Blueprints to make a textbook exercise that can be completed at home without the need of a teacher.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been considerable research into the possible uses of computer speech recognition, with several older studies that point to proven methods, other papers detail theoretical ideas that may now become reality, a handful of very modern research papers deal with the current state automatic speech recognition in the language classroom. The "traditional" view of automatic speech recognition in teaching is for improving pronunciation, and several studies have shown that this is useful for different reasons.

Firstly, studies of student perceptions show that voice recognition facilitates a very safe and comfortable one-to-one interaction (e.g., Tanaka, 2000) and also provide interactive feedback, which helps the learners to diminish their dependence on the teacher's feedback and develop better self-study habits (e.g., McCrocklin, 2016). Another very useful application of ASR is for scoring tests because students can understand that computer systems will be completely objective and any teacher preferences are going to be eliminated (Isaacs, Kang, Thomson, & Murphy, 2018).

Pronunciation training via ASR is useful for teachers, saving time spent micromanaging individual student's error corrections for valuable communicative activities (Amaral & Meurers, 2011). Getting feedback from the computer is an important factor, and some studies have shown that students can develop strategies using speech-to-text output as implicit feedback (Shadiev, Hwang, Huang, & Liu, 2015). ASR use has also been shown to be low anxiety and even fun (Chen, 2011).

Studies have also detailed useful criteria to consider when making a custom application, and many agree that it is very important to limit the range of language that the application is expected to deal with. Limitation helps voice recognition, so for students that have a little bit of a problem with pronunciation, they will get better results (Isaacs et al., 2018). Studies have also shown that learners who found that their computer recognizing words that were beyond their level lost trust in ASR systems (Ploger, 2015) and that limiting the vocabulary to what the learners were actually studying was more effective. It is also important that the learners understand exactly what is going on with the system and have explicit instructions of what to do and what the system is going to understand (Amaral & Meurers, 2011).

Many academic writers recognize the possibilities for using automatic speech recognition in the classroom (Dixon, 2018). Some studies have brought the voice assistants into the classroom and reported how young learners responded, detailing some creative ways that they were used for academic support (Underwood, 2017). Others have looked at interactive stories, trivia, and adventure games, and consider them fun and engaging for students (Kessler, 2018). Another study focused on asking teachers to think of creative ways for using custom ASR applications in the classroom (Incerti, Franklin, & Kessler, 2017).

Methods

Introducing ASR into the Classroom

Before the main discussion of designing and creating a custom application, it was necessary to introduce and test the standard voice recognition software, which usually comes as standard with smartphones, and try out an Amazon Alexa smart speaker. Firstly, in the classroom, students were asked to try speech recognition as speech-to-text, using different applications on their smartphones, for example, doing an Internet search or writing an instant message. In this way, they could see their spoken words appearing as text and get some familiarity with speaking to a modern computer.

The second part of the introduction to ASR involved the Alexa smart speaker. The students found it was not easy to use at first. The activation word, "Alexa," was difficult for many students to pronounce; it was necessary to test the other options. "Echo" was the easiest word to switch on the speaker. Also some students were softly spoken and could not activate the speaker across the classroom, perhaps only two or three meters in distance. Simply getting the speaker to light up when students spoke loudly and clearly was an achievement. After the students are able to interact with the speaker, they started asking very easy questions; for example, "How old are you?" and "What's your name?" Introductory questions proved to be a fun activity for students, when weaker speakers saw their classmates were asking questions and getting Alexa's response, they simply wanted to get some recognition from the computer by trying the same questions.

Then, some of the applications or "skills" that can be accessed using the voice assistant were tested. Firstly, there was a pronunciation application that simply required students to listen and repeat sentences. Although this was specifically designed for learners, many of the students had problems because the speaking speed was too fast, and the sentence structures and vocabulary did not match well with the course content that was fresh in the students' minds. Games designed for native speakers were also tested. There was a guessing game and an interactive story, but while students could see the value and the fun factor in these games, the vocabulary levels were not well matched with learners' ability, and again, the speaking speed was too fast. It soon became apparent that a custom application would be more suitable.

Making an Application

Making a custom application using Amazon Alexa is very accessible. At the time, there were two methods to do this. The Alexa Skills Kit allowed more creative freedom but involved some level of coding skill. Amazon Alexa: Skill Blueprints (n.d.) had a selection of premade interaction types and did not require any coding, so that was the obvious choice for a first attempt at custom content.

Using a Skill Blueprint was as simple as typing what Alexa was to say and what Alexa expects to user to say. The aim was to make an interactive game from a textbook page so that the students could self-study. They could say, "Alexa let's play page 54" and have fun practicing their English skills talking to the speaker.

The exercise that was selected was a game based on an elementary-level textbook page. The game involved describing the contents of different toy boxes (see Figure 1). The language consisted of only three nouns and several adjectives, six colors, and the numbers one to four. There were four toy boxes on the page, and each one contained three differently colored toys. The speaker had to describe the toy box by describing two of the three toys in it, which was enough for the listener to guess the correct box. Programming this using the Blueprints was very simple: A list of all the possible sentences was made and typed into slots in the "Trivia Quiz" Blueprint webpage with the correct answers that Alexa expected to hear. Unfortunately the quiz only worked one-way with Alexa making the statements and the user giving the answers. In order to have the game working the opposite way, a different Blueprint had to be used.

FIGURE 1. The Textbook Page. (from Lawday, 1996)

The "Custom Questions" Blueprint was used so that the user could describe the toy box and Alexa could guess. This was a little more complicated because all the combinations of toys had to be input twice. The computer sometimes made mistakes if the speaker said one of the toys before another. While a person hearing "My doll is pink and my kite is green" or "My kite is green and my doll is pink" would understand exactly the same thing, for the computer, these two structures had to be explicitly programmed, making the list of sentences twice as long. Despite having to make some special arrangements to use the Blueprint system, it was possible to program a custom method so that the students could speak and listen alone, playing the textbook game on their own without the need of a teacher or a classmate to assist.

Results of Testing

The students were already familiar with the toy box exercise and could complete it without making mistakes before they tested the Alexa version, but there were still some unexpected problems that needed to be considered when making further ASR exercises.

The first issue was that students didn't know how Alexa listened, so when it came time to speak the answer whatever they said was treated as "the" answer. Consequently, there were many incorrect responses such as "Do I speak now?" or "One more time please." Fortunately, Alexa gives feedback as an inbuilt part of the quiz blueprint, simply repeating any incorrect answer. Students quickly identified where they were making mistakes, whether these were pronunciation mistakes or simply that they made mistakes using the computer program. The listening quiz section was considered a success as the students got used to the feedback system.

The second section of the exercise focused on speaking. The students had to say the toy colors and Alexa had to identify the answer. There were also some unexpected issues during testing. Firstly, the younger students experienced difficulties. Although it was expected that their pronunciation might cause a problem, it was actually discovered that they spoke too slowly and didn't finish speaking in the time allowed by the program. To let the students succeed, the teacher had to drill the kids to speak the sentences quickly. The older students suffered the expected problem that Alexa didn't understand their speech. This was initially frustrating for them because the teacher and their classmates would usually understand what they were saying. However, when these students succeeded getting the computer to understand their pronunciation, they felt very happy. They didn't feel that Alexa was biased against them; they just knew that they had achieved good pronunciation.

Lastly, the exercise was tested with other teachers who deliberately tried to get the answers wrong, which uncovered some issues with the speech recognition. It turned out that crucial errors in the answer were not picked up by Alexa, this actually meant that during the listening quiz, Alexa always gave a positive response as long as the speaker said "Is it box...." the crucial number could be incorrect or omitted. The teachers discussed changing the listening quiz so that Alexa was programmed to listen for the correct number only, but it was decided that students rarely made a mistake and that the language goal was training them to speak full sentences.

Similarly during the speaking section it was possible to fool Alexa by saying most of the programmed words and adding some nonsense. Even though answering correctly was impossible, Alexa would still guess a box number. This issue was considered less serious because the student still had to get the intonation, speech speed, and sentence structure mostly correct, and then the student still had to decide if Alexa was getting the answer right. For example, if the student would say "My ball is fat and my kite is little," and Alexa would answer with a hopeless guess, they would still have managed to achieve the goal of recognizable speech!

Conclusion

In conclusion, creating and assigning tasks that require first- and second-year students to engage with their third-year counterparts is one way that teachers can offer students an early insight into their language learning future as well as help to build links between learners at different ages and language proficiencies. Through the tasks outlined in this paper, students in different year groups were able to engage with each other in English and build connections between the content and goals of their various English courses. This type of vertical integration within a program can benefit all parties: while younger students can begin to conceptualize what they can achieve, older students are afforded a chance to reflect upon how far they have already come.

The Author

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Fostering Fluency and Critical Thinking Through Learner-Centered Collaborative Discussions

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A collaborative discussion is a learner-led, evidence-based, focused conversation for which learners have prepared by contemplating a focus question, exploring resources, reflecting on experiences, synthesizing ideas, and taking a position. The teacher scaffolds this by explaining the question, providing a wide array of resources from differing viewpoints for learners to draw from, helping learners formulate and support their positions, and supporting appropriate language use. Collaborative discussions engage learners in authentic L2 use, which leads to deeper understanding of and more critical thinking about a concept; furthermore, these discussions are a motivating way to develop fluency in L2 reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Although collaborative discussions can be adapted for younger learners, this article focuses on their use with high schoolers and adults. After describing principles for planning, structuring, scaffolding, and evaluating collaborative discussions in ESOL classes, the value and impact of collaborative discussions is briefly addressed.

"Only dialogue which requires critical thinking is also capable of generating critical thinking. Without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education." — Paolo Freire, 2005, p. 92–93

Introduction

As a language teacher, my goal is to help learners improve L2 proficiency while learning to think critically and communicate effectively about issues that matter. To this end, one of the most effective, and interesting, activities that I use with my students is the collaborative discussion.

What Is a Collaborative Discussion?

A collaborative discussion is a learner-led, evidence-based, focused conversation for which learners have prepared by contemplating a question, exploring resources, reflecting on experiences, synthesizing ideas, and taking a position. It is a spin-off of the better-known Socratic or Paideia Seminar (see Chowning, 2009). While similar in concept and structure, in contrast to the Socratic Seminar, the collaborative discussion draws from multiple texts and the discussion itself is completely student-centered.

Beyond these differences, I have come to call the collaborative discussion as such to avoid confusion stemming from variable meanings of the term “seminar” and because the name “collaborative discussion” accurately reflects the nature of the activity: As a large group, learners explore an idea by verbally building on each other’s thoughts and questions. The objectives are multifaceted: to motivate students to read critically, listen carefully, and think deeply; to construct meaning and improve understanding; to express, explain, and defend thoughts orally and fluently in the L2; to behave professionally, take initiative, and involve others; and to build a culture of inquiry and reasoning.

The collaborative discussion works well with learners from diverse cultural backgrounds and English levels. For example, I have successfully used them with heterogenous classes of adolescent English language learners (A1–B2) in a public New York City high school, with adult women learning English (A2) for professional purposes in Rwanda, and with university students (B1–C2) in the Philippines.

How to Run a Collaborative Discussion

The collaborative discussion has three distinct stages, preceded by teacher preparation.

Teacher Preparation

Based on curricula, formulate a focus question, perhaps interdisciplinary, that is high-interest, thought-provoking, and open-ended. Depending on your course matter, for example, you might ask, “What does it take to be a successful leader who effects change?” “Why is poetry – in any of its forms – important?” or “To what extent should ‘alternative’ assessment be used in EFL instruction?”

Next, gather authentic resources that might inform the learners’ understanding of the issue. As a collection, the resources should be accessible to a range of language proficiencies and literacy levels and should include different genres (e.g., journal articles, news items, short stories, memoirs, editorials, informational texts, poetry, TED talks, music videos, songs, short documentaries). Where possible, upload the resources into an accessible depository such as an online blended learning platform. When in a low-tech setting, I avail fewer resources, print them, and use political cartoons or artwork to complement more text-heavy resources.

The Preparation Phase

Consider introducing the collaborative discussion by engaging learners with the highest-interest resource, such as a relevant song, so as to hook them into the topic. Introduce and clarify the focus question. Once you hold learners’ interest, explain the goals and expectations of the collaborative discussion process. The clearest way to achieve this is often by sharing the rubric.

You might suggest directions the eventual discussion might take by directing learners to consider particular aspects of the issue or by listing guiding questions. Next, show learners the resources; I allow for choice but usually require at least one print and one multimedia source. Finally, give learners time to independently absorb the resources. I allow time for this in class, where I can support individuals in selecting appropriately leveled resources. I allow students to access relevant resources in languages other than English, too, if so desired.

To maintain focus and to help with synthesis, give students an "entry ticket," which includes the focus question and space for students to synthesize their position in a thesis statement-like sentence. I make myself available to help learners succinctly formulate this; it is the most important part of the preparation. The entry ticket also contains space for listing each source selected and for taking notes; it also includes a box with sentence starters, which later scaffolds more fluent expression of ideas.

When working with L2 beginners and/or in large classes, consider having learners prepare in heterogeneous partnerships.

The Discussion Phase

Arrange the furniture into what best resembles a large conference table, which allows for body language that facilitates the exchange of ideas. If assigned a room in which desks are bolted down, select a day when you can use an alternative space so that students can sit facing each other.

Because preparation is key for a fruitful discussion, I require students to show their entry ticket to verbally participate; without it, they sit apart from the conference table and silently observe. They will be expected to listen actively and later reflect on what they heard. Fully participating students bring their entry tickets, a pen, and any notes or reference documents to the table.

Remind learners of the evaluation criteria, point out the sentence starters, and remind students to converse in English before letting them begin. The actual discussion then starts organically. The first time, this may prompt a long moment of silence during which students look around uncomfortably. It is important not to step in; just look back at the students silently and neutrally. The magic of the collaborative discussion largely occurs when students forget the teacher and begin to authentically engage with one another. Once they realize you are no longer directing everything, a few will step up to lead, and most will start to explore their actual thoughts more freely.

While observing, it is helpful to take copious discussion notes. I record insightful ideas, helpful comments, and conceptual misunderstandings, as well as observations about language use (e.g., grammar, pronunciation, pragmatics, fluency, turn-taking, communicative strategies) and body language (e.g., appropriate eye contact, posture).

Although the collaborative discussion is meant to occur in a large group, only so many students can engage in one conversation. In large classes, consider building upon partnerships used in the preparation stage and designating one student as a spokesperson and the other as a coach. During the discussion, the coach observes silently from the sidelines, but when the discussion stalls or goes off track, the teacher may call a time-out. At this point, the coach and spokesperson, in any language, together formulate a strategy. Afterwards, the spokesperson returns to the table and the discussion ensues.

After the Collaborative Discussion

Ideally, the collaborative discussion ends authentically. It varies, but the ones I run with high school English learners tend to last about 50 minutes. Avoid prematurely interpreting conversational lulls as signals of the end; these give shyer students a chance to speak. When the ideas seem to be exhausted, or when time is nearly up, try to give a warning so that learners can wrap up their ideas satisfactorily.

The Rubric

I include four categories for evaluation: expression, support, engagement, and professionalism. First, to express ideas, students should aim to demonstrate a solid to deep understanding of the topic and clearly express their position using appropriate register and precise language. Their timing and content should fit elegantly with the larger discussion, perhaps by synthesizing information, building on a previous idea, or making a relevant connection. Second, to support their ideas, learners must refer to relevant, reliable, and powerful facts, examples, explanations, and connections. Third, to engage ideas, learners should appropriately encourage, elicit, restate, clarify, empathize with, summarize, and reframe ideas; at the same time, they must create space for others to contribute meaningfully. Finally, to be professional, students must come to the discussion fully prepared, speak to peers respectfully, go out of their way to include others, and demonstrate complete presence and focus through attentive body language.

Student-Centered Reflection

Reflection is essential to the learning process. Ask students to use the rubric to honestly evaluate their own performance. Then, ask them to write about what they learned during the collaborative discussion process. Their focus could be conceptual or behavioral, and could include what they still wonder about the topic. The rubric and response could be briefly shared with a peer or submitted to the teacher.

Teacher-Led Reflection

It is also important to share your thoughts about what learners did well, conceptually and linguistically. Keep these comments general, as students usually know if a comment is individually applicable. It is also helpful to ask learners to share their thoughts orally. From their viewpoint, what went well during the discussion? What was learned? How could the experience be improved for the next time?

IMPACT

Although some research documents the effectiveness of the Socratic Seminar in improving students' critical thinking (see, for example, Polite & Adams, 1996), to my knowledge, there is no peer-reviewed research about the effectiveness of collaborative discussions on critical thinking or for L2 acquisition. For this reason, I have begun to more systematically collect student feedback as a type of exploratory research. This has revealed three initial findings: When engaged in collaborative discussions, students (a) come to class better prepared, (b) understand concepts better, and (c) enjoy the discussions enough to want to engage in them again.

Specifically, on a five-point Likert scale, 73% of graduate students (n = 15) and 58% of undergraduates (n = 24) at a large public university in the Philippines reported preparing anywhere from "a lot more" (5) to "a little more" (4) than usual for class when they had a collaborative discussion. All reported increased understanding as a result of the process, with 87% of graduate and 46% of undergraduate students reporting "quite a lot" (5) more; the remaining 13% of graduate students and an additional 42% of undergraduates reporting "quite a bit" (4) more; and the final 12% of undergraduates reporting "somewhat" improved understanding. Perhaps most telling, students wanted to engage in the activity again. In New York, my high schoolers became comfortable with the activity, and frequently and enthusiastically asked for additional collaborative discussions. In the Philippines, where learners only had the chance to try it once, 80% of graduate students reported "absolutely" (5) wanting to engage in another one, with the remaining 20% agreeing, "Yes, I think so" (4). Likewise, albeit with less fervor, 38% of undergraduates reported "absolutely" wanting to engage in the activity again, 25% reported "Yes, I think so," and the remaining group felt neutral. One Filipino student explained, "I love the collaborative discussion! I have learned a lot in reading the resources. It is both interesting and challenging to synthesize, connect, relate ideas from what we have read." Another added, "It is also a fun activity hearing the thoughts of my brilliant classmates about their entire experiences and perspectives. Nice!"

Collaborative discussions may work well with English language learners because the process of reading, viewing, and listening provides a rich experience of comprehensible input. Comprehensible input is the key factor in L2 acquisition (Krashen, 2009), and when learners successfully receive a message in language not yet fully acquired, they are immersed in a net of non-targeted comprehensible input, which consists of many language structures and features they are ready to acquire (Krashen, 2013). This is facilitated especially well within the collaborative discussion process, as learners select level-appropriate input and then discuss it, negotiating understanding with their peers.

Conclusion

In sum, the collaborative discussion – sprung from the Socratic Seminar – is a powerful way to get students to interact with texts more authentically. It has revolutionized my teaching practice, turning passive learners seeking external approval into active learners who engage in passionate, idea-focused, evidence-based discussion with their peers. Teachers love collaborative discussions because they observe learners using the L2 in a way that demonstrates critical thinking; it is also a motivating way to get students to develop fluency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening in English. Likewise, learners love collaborative discussions because they get involved: It's all about constructing their own understandings and then exploring their thoughts with their peers. As Freire (1970/2005) states, "The teacher cannot think for her students, nor can she impose her thought on them. Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about *reality*, does not take place in ivory-tower isolation but only in communication (p. 77). Collaborative discussions facilitate that well.

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Using Drama to Motivate and Engage Low-Achieving High School Students: A Case Study

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Drama involves students actively in learning and increases motivation (Maley & Duff, 2005). This paper discusses an English drama contest participated in by 256 first-year EFL students in a high school in Gyeonggi-do, Korea. Based on observations of videotaped performances and the results of a survey, we found that the majority of the students responded positively to the contest, and we conclude that the contest increased student motivation and engagement through opportunities for choice and autonomy, collaboration, creativity, personalization (including "cultural personalization"), and agency/ownership. Some instances of language development were also observed.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation "has been considered one of the factors with the greatest influence on an individual's success in L2 learning" (Song & Kim, 2017, p. 90), yet Korean high school students are frequently demotivated towards learning English (Song & Kim, 2017), with the interplay between their lack of success and lack of interest leading students to develop negative perceptions of English and of their own language learning abilities.

This paper presents some observations on the motivation and language development of a group of Korean high school students who participated in an English drama contest in the spring of 2018. The authors used a mixture of self-report and analysis of videotaped contest performances to conclude that, overall, the drama contest increased student engagement and motivation through providing them with opportunities for collaboration, personalization, choice, and creativity. Moreover, there is evidence that the contest also led to instances of language processing and fluency development.

Finally, we observed that the student versions of the scripts included an element of what we may call "cultural personalization," by which we mean that the student teams changed portions of the original script to versions more reflective of Korean culture, which also promoted and demonstrated "ownership" as a motivating factor.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Drama is widely viewed as a powerful teaching tool in the language classroom. Drama activities are fun and entertaining, create many and varied opportunities for language use and engage the participants' feelings, thus providing a "rich experience of language for the participants" (Zyoud, 2010, p. 1). Drama activities involve students actively in learning and increase student motivation by developing self-esteem and confidence, promoting exploration and creativity, and creating a positive group dynamic (Maley & Duff, 2005). Drama also helps students "take ownership" of the target language, which is especially important for students learning a foreign language, since a sense of ownership "reduces the emotional distance between them and that language" (Puchta, Gerngross, & Dewitt, 2012, p. 7).

Motivation is a key factor in foreign language learners' success or failure (Dörnyei, 2009; Gardner, 2007). Learner success, personalization, collaboration, choice, and autonomy have all been linked to motivation (Dörnyei, 2001). Zoltan Dörnyei connects autonomy with group dynamics, stating, "the group's internal development and growing maturity go hand in hand with the members taking on increasing responsibility and control over their own functioning. From the point of group dynamics, involved students are increasingly autonomous students" (p. 103). Autonomy is also linked with choice, permitting "learners to see that they are in charge of the learning process" (Dörnyei, 2012, p. 104). Cordova and Lepper (1996) report, "Students who were offered a modicum of choice ... showed greater increases in motivation" (p. 726). Opportunities for learners to personalize, or invest the learning material with personal relevance, can also enhance motivation. Cordova and Lepper report "larger gains in motivation" among "students for whom the learning contexts had been personalized" (p. 726).

All of these motivating factors are relevant for Korean high school students, who often experience demotivation in EFL classrooms (Song & Kim, 2017). Song and Kim cite various external factors that demotivate Korean high school students, who "generally [start] to lose their interest in English in junior high school" (p. 100). These factors include teacher-centered teaching methods, uninteresting textbooks, exam-focused lessons, difficulty with studying English, and decreased test scores (Song & Kim, 2017). To re-motivate these students, it would make sense to provide them with more interesting and relevant lessons and with convincing reasons for learning English.

Yet even students who receive interesting, personally relevant, or student-centered lessons face difficulties in 21st century classrooms, since, as Dörnyei has recently pointed out, "there are [now] many competing influences on a student's mind at any one time," so that "even high motivation can be cancelled out by various distractions" (Cambridge University Press ELT, 2018). Dörnyei insists that, in our information-rich 21st century reality, creating a motivating environment is no longer enough; we must also engage our students: "If a student has engaged, the student has cut through the distractions" (2018). He emphasizes that teachers must strive to engage learners not only in the classroom and with the lesson material but also within their peer groups. He therefore recommends project-based and collaborative learning to promote group cohesiveness (2018).

METHODOLOGY

This paper presents a case study of a drama contest ("Drama 4 U") held in a high school in Gyeonggi-do (Samyang High School – a pseudonym) in the spring semester of 2018. The text for the contest was a recently published book of eight graded Reader's Theater (RT) scripts and connected lessons by one of this paper's authors: *New Aesop's Fable Scripts: Drama Resources for Multi-Skills Classrooms* (Moore, 2018). Although the scripts in the book were intended as RT, the English teachers at Samyang HS decided to use it as a source book for a drama contest, conceived of as a replacement to their traditional English speech contest. The student teams each chose a fable script from the book, adapted and rewrote it, memorized, and then rehearsed it. On the day of the contest, student teams performed their plays for their classmates and teachers and, winners were chosen. After the contest, the students responded to a survey that elicited their reactions to the project. In the Results sections below, we will look at the students' survey responses, at their adaptations of the original scripts, and at some aspects of their videotaped performances.

Background

In Samyang HS, the students' English level is about average. Among 256 first-graders, just seven students got over 90 in the Korean SAT mock test administered in June 2018. The class atmosphere of low-achieving high school students is not conducive to language learning. Some students just sleep, use smartphones, and make noise. Traditionally, Korean high schools have tended to only take the needs of high-performing students into consideration, but the English teachers in Samyang HS began to consider the needs of all the students. As part of this impulse, the English teachers decided to replace the traditional speech contest with a drama contest as a culminating English project. The teachers decided that a drama contest had some valuable advantages over a speech contest. First, everybody participated. In the speech contest, many students never made it to the final rounds because of their lack of English ability, and it became an event for only high-level students. But in the drama contest, all the students could be on stage and gain confidence through performing. Second, the drama contest was collaborative: Students could work together with their friends, scaffold each other, and develop group cohesiveness. Finally, the drama contest would allow students to make choices, personalize, create, and use different learning channels and multiple intelligences as they acted, wrote new scenes, negotiated with their friends, designed props and costumes, and rehearsed.

Lessons

There were 256 first-grade high school students in ten classes who participated in the contest, with ten teams chosen for the final round. The students prepared for the drama contest over seven once-a-week, one-hour English classes at Samyang HS after the midterm examination. In the first week of the project, teachers gave students time to choose a script from the book according to their level and interest. Then, the student teams transcribed their chosen script. This was necessary because copies of *New Aesop's Fable Scripts* were limited. Following the transcription, the teams reflected on the moral of their story, chose roles, and discussed how they wanted to change the original fable and/or moral. The teams then revised the original script, adapting it for fewer actors, shortening it or adding scenes, and sometimes making substantial changes. Once the revised scripts were written, the students rehearsed and made props and costumes. The teacher's role was important. Teachers facilitated discussions, helped students become and remain motivated, motivated them to enjoy group work, and kept them on track. In the sixth week, the students took a performance test for the school record. Then the top-scoring teams – comprised of students with varying levels of English – from each of the ten classes performed in front of all the finalists and a panel of judges (five English teachers).

RESULTS: SURVEY

A survey was administered after the project to elicit the students' feelings and opinions. Seventy-one percent (71%) said that they liked the project, while 29% said that they didn't like it (this question elicited their opinion of the project itself). Of those who liked it, 25% said that they liked group projects, 19% said that they liked creative activities, 15% liked that they could choose their own themes, 11% liked role plays, 10% thought the project was helpful for improving English skills, 7% said they liked fables, and 5% gave other responses. Of the 29% who didn't like the project, 38% said that they didn't like "role plays," 29% said that the project was not helpful for improving their English skills, 8% didn't like group projects, 2% thought fables were childish, 2% didn't like the book, 2% objected to the fact that the teacher did not designate the theme for them, and 15% gave other reasons (such responses included statements like "I didn't want to do anything").

When the students were asked if they enjoyed the project, 72% said yes and 27% said no, with 1% not responding (this question sought to elicit their feelings about the process, regardless of whether they liked the project itself). Those who enjoyed the project stated reasons like these: Cooperating with friends was good; revising the content and becoming friendlier with my friend was good; customizing and preparing the play was good; I liked the group activity; I could cooperate with the members; it was good for the sense of cooperation; making our own ending was fun. Those who didn't enjoy the project stated reasons like these: Memorizing the script was demanding; I could not memorize well; the members didn't cooperate; group cooperation was not good; nobody helped me; my group member did not work.

RESULTS: ADAPTATIONS AND PERFORMANCES

We will now look at how the students changed their chosen scripts from the original script in the book, and also at how they improvised, made changes, and assisted each other in performance.

As the student teams prepared for the drama contest, they went through the processes of adapting the original scripts, rehearsal, and performance. We were not privy to the nature and quality of student interactions during the adaptation and rehearsal stages, but we may make some inferences about the cohesiveness of the groups from their videotaped performances and survey responses.

Script Adaptation

The student teams were given considerable freedom over important aspects of the drama contest. They could choose the story that most appealed to them from among the eight fable scripts in the book. The student groups chose "The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf," "The Rabbit and the Turtle," "The Lion and the Mouse," "The Man, the Boy, and the Donkey," and "Androcles and the Lion." They were free to adapt and change the scripts in the book and to introduce props and costumes. They could even change the moral of the original fable as long as their version still had a clear moral.

They changed the scripts in several ways. First, they often shortened the original script because of memorization demands (the original RT scripts were intended to be read not memorized, but their use in a drama contest made memorization necessary). It is worth noting that the finalist teams' shortened versions all made dramatic sense, showing that they approached this task carefully and critically.

Second, they adapted the scripts for fewer readers to accommodate the number of team members by eliminating characters and sharing roles. Again, their changes made dramatic sense, showing care and thoughtfulness.

Finally, some teams changed the original scripts more substantially, personalizing dialogue to reflect the concerns of Korean high school students, changing the moral and ending, or introducing what we may call "cultural personalization" by bringing the original version into harmony with Korean cultural understandings. We will now review some of these more substantial changes.

In "The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf," the students, desiring an additional instance of the boy's trick, inserted this speech, based on the Shepherd Boy's opening monologue:

Opening monologue (Moore, 2018, p. 36)	Students' new speech
Shepherd Boy: Well, here I am again, in the same old meadow, watching the same old sheep! How boring! Nothing ever happens! The birds sing, the sheep eat grass, the sun shines, the clouds float in the sky, and the forest just stands there at the edge of the meadow. Every day is exactly the same [...] HELP! WOLF! WOLF!	**Shepherd Boy**: Nahh, every day is same! I'm so bored. I want to go outside and hangout with my friends, but my mom will scold me. Hww ... it will be fun. WOLF! WOLF AGAIN! MY SHEEP ARE BEING EATEN BY THE WOLF!

Both versions provide motivation for the boy's trick: boredom. The students' version, however, maps the precise boredom of a Korean high school student – endless study enforced by parental authority – onto the Shepherd Boy's situation. We are no longer in a meadow, but in front of a book or computer in a stuffy room. Of course, the Shepherd Boy is not studying in a room, and we will later see how the student actor changed these lines.

In "The Man, the Girl, and the Camel" (originally "The Man, the Boy, and the Donkey"), the students made several interesting changes. First, they changed the donkey into a camel because the student playing the girl wanted to wear a hijab. Then, they expanded the following scene, in which a villager prompts the boy to get off the donkey and let his father ride.

Original scene (Moore, 2018, p. 88)

Narrator: The farmer and his son went on their way with the boy riding on the donkey. Then they met another villager.
Villager 2: Look at that lazy boy! He makes his father walk while he rides.
Farmer: I guess he's right. Son, get off the donkey and let me ride.
Narrator: So the boy got off and the father got on. They went a little further and met another villager.

Students' version

Narrator: The farmer and the daughter went on their way with the girl riding on the camel. An hour later, the daughter seemed to say something again.
Girl: Papa, I think I'm a really bad girl. I am so sorry for you, Dad!
Farmer: What's the matter with you suddenly? Tell me!
Girl: I now realize that I made you walk while I ride. It's immoral. I shouldn't have ridden on the camel. I feel ashamed and guilty. I'm so sorry!
Farmer: I guess you're right, daughter. Get off the camel and let me ride.

The original script does not give the boy any lines in this scene; the villager's criticism causes him to get off the donkey and let his father ride. There is no indication that the boy feels bad about this; the point of the original fable is that the foolish farmer and son try to please everyone they meet and end up carrying the donkey themselves, with tragic results.

The students' version adds more depth to the daughter's character, giving her a dramatic and emotional speech and motivating her from within, not from without. Moreover, the students changed the daughter's speech to reflect Korean cultural understandings, specifically the key Confucian virtue of filial piety, which was absent from the original but which had cultural and emotional resonance for them. This is what we call "cultural personalization."

We can see another instance of "cultural personalization" in the changed ending of "The Turtle and the Rabbit." In the original, the race between turtle and rabbit is a zero-sum game in which the overconfident rabbit loses and the turtle wins. In the students' version, the rabbit is distracted by playing a game in a PC Room. The student writers made these changes to the original.

Original ending (Moore, 2018, p. 66)

Turtle: Right foot, left foot, steady and slow. I'll be back before you know!
Squirrel: Come on, Turtle! You're almost there.
Magpie: Here comes the Rabbit, like a streak of greased lightning!
Turtle: Front leg, back leg, slow and steady. I've come back to the park already!
Squirrel, Magpie, and Mrs. Hedgehog: The turtle wins!
Rabbit (out of breath): Here I am! Where's the turtle? Where's the turtle?
Squirrel, Magpie, and Mrs. Hedgehog: You lost! The turtle won!
(Etc.)

Students' version

Turtle: Right foot, left foot, steady and slow. I'll be back before you know!
Squirrel: Come on, Turtle! Oh ... wait a minute! Where's the Rabbit?
Turtle: I don't know. Hmm. She loves playing games. She must be in the PC Room. Let's go to the PC Room!
Squirrel and Turtle: Hey, Rabbit! What are you doing here?
Rabbit: Oh, sorry! This game was so funny that I couldn't go back to the race.
Turtle: That's OK. Let's go to the finish line together. And then, how about having some strawberries - together!
Rabbit, Turtle, and Squirrel: That sounds great! Let's go!

Here the student writers changed the original into a win-win situation in which Rabbit and Turtle cross the finish line together, and then all the animal friends share the prize. Since “slow and steady wins the race” no longer applied, they changed the fable’s moral to: “Shared joy is double joy, and shared sorrow is half sorrow” (included as a subtitle to their submitted script), thus fulfilling the requirement that any changed version should still have a clear moral. Finding an appropriate English proverb must have involved some research, and applying it to their script showed critical thinking skills. But more importantly, the students changed the script from one that reflected Western, individualistic values to one that was in harmony with their Korean, collectivist values, where the importance of the group supersedes that of the individual – what Geert Hofstede calls a high level of Group Attachment (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). Again, the students have “personalized” the text so that it is more relevant, emotionally resonant, and culturally comfortable for them.

Of course, other teams claimed ownership of the text not by making it more culturally relevant per se, but merely for fun or to suit their own tastes. An example of this is “The Mouse and the Lion.”

Original ending (Moore, 2018, p. 77)	Students’ version
Lion: Hurry! The hunters could be back at any minute! If they catch me, they’ll sell me to a zoo or a circus! Or maybe they’ll cut off my head so some rich American can put it on his wall.	**Lion**: Hurry! The hunters could be back at any minute! If they catch me, they’ll sell me to a zoo or a circus! Or maybe they’ll cut off my head so some rich American can put it on his wall.
Mouse: We’re chewing as fast as we can! ... (Chewing sounds) ... There! You’re free!	**Mouse**: We’re chewing as fast as we can! ... (Chewing sounds) ... There! You’re free!
Lion: I’m free! Thank you, Mouse! I was wrong to doubt you. And thank you too, Mrs. Mouse!	**Lion**: I’m free! Thank you, Mouse! I was wrong to doubt you. And thank you too, Mrs. Mouse!
Mrs. Mouse: You’re welcome, Your Majesty. Isn’t my husband awesome?	**Mrs. Mouse**: You’re welcome, Your Majesty. Isn’t my husband awesome?
Mouse: See? Even a mouse can help a lion!	**Lion**: By the way, because I am hungry, I will eat you!
	Mouse: You said you would have mercy on me!
	Lion: You talk a lot! (shoots mouse) In trust is treason!
	Mrs. Mouse: (crying)

In the students’ ending, the Lion turns into an action movie villain who delivers a typical bad guy line (“You talk a lot!”) before producing a prop gun and shooting the Mouse. The student writers/actors could have done this for increased relevance to themselves – action movies are more a part of their world than moralistic fables – or they could also be following the “negatonic” impulse – common to all teenagers – of deflating the pat moralism of the adult world. They could merely have wanted to amuse and shock their audience. Whatever the reason, by changing the ending and the tone, they made the play their own, and, like the Rabbit and Turtle team, found an appropriate moral to fit their changed version.

Contest Performances

All of the finalist teams’ performances were videotaped. In all of them, we observed a positive rapport between the actors and the audience, who seemed to enjoy themselves and were amused at seeing their friends onstage in uncharacteristic situations – the actor playing Mrs. Mouse, for instance, was a male student wearing a pink wig to denote his wifely status, much to the good-natured amusement of his peers.

We also noticed some instances of autonomy and language development, and some evidence for a positive group dynamic among the teams. Here is a scene from "The Shepherd Boy and the Wolf" as written in the students' script and as performed in the contest.

As written in the students' script	As performed
Shepherd Boy: Nahh, every day is same! I'm so bored. I want to go outside and hangout with my friends, but my mom will scold me. Hww ... it will be fun. WOLF! WOLF AGAIN! MY SHEEP ARE BEING EATEN BY THE WOLF!	**Shepherd Boy**: Nahh, every day is same! I'm so poor. Nothing ever happens. Isn't there anything fun? I'm so bored. Let's play the wolf trick again. It will be fun. WOLF! WOLF AGAIN! MY SHEEP ARE BEING EATEN BY THE WOLF!

Here the actor changes the written line about wanting to go outside, probably because he realizes that this line doesn't make sense coming from a shepherd boy in a meadow. We are informed that he changed this line in his team's final rehearsal, demonstrating both critical thinking and commitment to the project.

The performance of "The Man, the Girl, and the Camel" provides an example of spontaneous language production.

As written in the students' script	As performed
Father: Sara, how about riding a camel with me? I don't want you to have a hard time. Let's ride together!	**Father**: Sara! **Daughter**: Yes? **Father**: How about riding a camel with me. I don't want to have a hard time. **Daughter**: Oh, you don't want me to have a hard time. **Father**: Yes. **Daughter**: Ok, let's ride together.

Here the actor playing the daughter notices her partner's mistake, realizes that it affects the meaning, and improvises to make the scene work. We can identify Merrill Swain's metalinguistic function of output (Swain & Lapkin, 1998) in this interaction, and also recognize that the actor was aware of form and meaning together, which Scott Thornbury (2005) recommends as being facilitative of language development. As for fluency, the actor deals with this situation deftly and without hesitation, although she mainly uses words already in her partner's speech.

The performance of "The Mouse and the Lion" provides another example of extempore language production.

As written in the students' script	As performed
Mouse: You said you would have mercy on me! **Lion**: You talk a lot! (shoots mouse) In trust is treason! **Mrs. Mouse**: (crying)	**Mouse**: You said you would have mercy on me! **Lion**: You talk a lot! (shoots mouse) In trust is treason! **Mrs. Mouse** [improvising]: Oh, my God! I'm so sad! The lion is a liar!

Here the actor playing Mrs. Mouse, perhaps sensing that the ending had fallen a little flat, improvised an emotional outburst in an attempt to conclude the play more effectively, much to the amusement of the audience. The actors playing the Daughter and Mrs. Mouse both demonstrate their commitment to their team's project and their willingness to help their fellow team members.

Discussion

The survey responses indicated that a majority of the students both liked the project (71%) and enjoyed it (72%). Reasons for liking the project included preferences for group work, creative activities, and activities that allowed choice, in line with collaboration, creativity, and choice/autonomy being identified as motivators (Dörnyei, 2001, 2012; Cordova & Lepper, 1996). (The 8.4% of the total sample who found the project unhelpful for improving English skills may have been rejecting anything unrelated to SAT preparation.)

The 72% who enjoyed the collaborative process stated that they enjoyed the creative, autonomous, and collaborative aspects, while the 27% who didn't pointed to the difficulty of memorization and/or the lack of cooperation within their group, in line with Dörnyei's (2018) emphasis on group cohesiveness as a key factor in engagement.

The adapted scripts and videotaped performances of the finalist teams, as well as showing engagement through the actors' and audiences' enthusiastic responses, also show the strength of "ownership" as a motivator. Through personalizing the text by mapping a character onto their own pressing concerns, by changing an ending to suit their own tastes, by introducing elements of their own world (e.g., action movies), or by modifying the text so that it reflected Korean cultural understandings ("cultural personalization"), the student writers/actors claimed ownership of the text and of the project, becoming engaged with the project as something they had control over and could use to express their own feelings and ideas.

Other students expressed increased confidence and interest in English. One of the students in the final round had minimal English skills but was scaffolded by his friends and worked hard so he wouldn't let his friends down. Through this positive experience, he became interested in studying English. Another student changed her life dramatically through this project. This formerly disengaged student said she didn't realize that she had talent as a leader and creator. She began to plan for her future and became more actively involved in school events.

Conclusions

Drama projects have the potential to re-motivate and engage Korean high school English learners through giving them opportunities to work together, create, personalize, and claim ownership of English, as well as providing opportunities for written and spoken TL production and for active involvement with compelling and comprehensible content. The positive reception given this project also confirms that such projects can be successful in Korean high schools. Finally, although it is common to recommend a positive attitude toward the TL culture as a motivating factor (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Dörnyei, 2001), little attention has been given to the motivational potential of using the TL as a vehicle for expressing the learner's own culture. Given the role of English as an international language, and of "the importance of moving from a 'birthright paradigm' to an 'appropriation model'" (Parmegiani, 2010, p. 359), research into what we have called "cultural personalization" might prove fruitful.

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A Case Study of Design Thinking Model I^4 in EFL Teaching and Learning

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This article presents the implementation of Design Thinking Model I^4 for the Project Design (PD) English courses at Kanazawa Institute of Technology, Japan. These courses have dual goals: (a) to improve students' multiple English skills (speaking, writing, presentation, and research skills) through an innovative design process in teams and individually and (b) to provide employability skills for future graduates as global engineers and businessmen. The article then describes one PD course as a case study. Results of students' self-assessment of the PD course indicate that their English multiple skills, confidence, motivation in English learning improved as well as their employability skills.

INTRODUCTION

English teaching and learning in the 21st century has witnessed many changes in teaching methodologies and approaches. The needs of our language learners have become broader, not merely about their acquisition of language skills. Our teaching experiences show that many students want to use English to explore opportunities for innovation and creativity beyond classroom instructions. This requires language educators and instructors to redefine what the language education is that 21st century learners need. To meet this end, language teachers should be innovative to revolutionize students' learning experiences (Kwek, 2011). To date, there have been many innovative ways to teach English communicatively; however, the use of design thinking as a pedagogy in English teaching appears to be limited (Roy & Brine, 2013).

The ultimate goal of English language learning is to have learners attain both language skills and communication skills to communicate effectively. In the 21st century, to work as a global citizen, a language learner should acquire more skills than merely language skills. The job market nowadays requires graduates to have an expanded "comprehensive essential skill set" or life-skill set to be successful at work (Eaton, 2010; Shute & Becker, 2010). In language teaching, the four Cs (critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity) have been widely used to equip language students with important skills beyond the classroom (Herrmann, 2015; Yujobo, 2014).

In Japan, to meet the needs of the change in foreign language education, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2009) restates the objectives for English education for school students:

> To further enhance students' abilities to evaluate facts, opinions from multiple perspectives, and communicate through reasoning and a range of expressions, while fostering a positive attitude toward communication through the English language. (p. 2)

In the same document issued by Japan's MEXT (2009), the materials used in the language curriculum design should be

1. useful in understanding various viewpoints and ways of thinking, developing the ability to make impartial judgments, and cultivating a rich sensibility,
2. useful in deepening the understanding of the ways of life and cultures of Japan and foreign countries, raising interest in language and culture, and developing respectful attitudes toward these elements,
3. useful in deepening international understanding from a broad perspective, heightening students' awareness of being Japanese citizens living in a global community, and cultivating a spirit of international cooperation,
4. useful in deepening individual thinking on humanity, society, nature, etc. (pp. 3–4)

These contents required by MEXT indicate the necessity of incorporating different thinking skills, judgment skills, developing empathy towards people and community, raising a sense of respecting humanity and nature in the language curriculum design. In his study, Johnson (2018) conducted the industrial design-themed English for Specific Purposes for EFL engineering class students and found that students responded positively to the materials used in the industrial design EFL classes. He concluded that language learning materials can contribute greatly to students' learning motivation and engagement in the EFL classrooms. Design thinking and the four Cs appear to be well aligned with these objectives and language curriculum design contents set by the Japan's MEXT.

This article aims to introduce the design thinking model used in the Project Design (PD) English courses at Kanazawa Institute of Technology (KIT), Japan. The article also explains the implementation of one Project Design I (PDI) English course as a case study. Some main outcomes of the course are discussed regarding students' improved fluency of multiple English skills, confidence and motivation in English learning, and their development of employability skills.

DESIGN THINKING

According to Kelly (2012), design thinking directs the learning and solving of active problems to make influential changes to develop students' creative confidence both resiliently and highly optimistically. In the problem-solving process, design thinking learners think divergently, critically, and collaboratively (Kwek, 2011; Scheer & Plattner, 2011; Watson, 2015). As for Johansson-Sköldberg, Woodilla, and Çetinkaya (2013), design thinking is considered as artifact creation, a reflexive practice, a problem-solving activity, a way of reasoning things, and as meaning creation.

Design thinking entails both mindset and process because they are "both intricately linked together" and "the mindset is required before one begins to do the design thinking process" (Lor, 2017, p. 43), which is different from traditional learning methods. For all of its innovative features employed within, design thinking has been recognized as an effective approach to developing learners' 21st century skills (Luka, 2014; Razzouk & Shute, 2012; Scheer & Plattner, 2011).

Today, design thinking is being used most widely in the areas of engineering, architecture, marketing, and business to create new values based on users' needs, and recently in the educational realm (Alhamdani, 2016; Dunne & Martin, 2006; Leinonen & Durall, 2014). Design thinking education has drawn great attention from educators in teaching students to create innovative solutions and understand true values through an iterative learning process (Kurokawa, 2013).

Currently, there are different models of design thinking being used for different purposes and contexts, but all models are based on the core nature and characteristics of design thinking. The most popular design-thinking process model for educational purposes, is probably the one created by d.school (2018) at Stanford University with five modes:

1. *Empathy*: Learning users' values by observing, engaging, and immersing.
2. *Define*: Transferring findings into needs and insights, and proposing a challenge.
3. *Ideate*: Creating design ideas.
4. *Prototype*: Turning ideas into a physical form.
5. *Test*: Gathering feedback from users to improve the solution.

According to Owen (2006, pp. 24–25), characteristics of design thinking are described as "special ways of design thinking, almost implicit in the nature of the design process and usually taught tacitly in today's design education programs" with the following details:

- *Conditioned inventiveness*: Creative thinking for designers directs toward inventing, but within the human centered and environment-centered frameworks to govern the designer's efforts.
- *Human-centered focus*: Design thinking must continually consider how what is being created will respond to the users' needs.
- *Environment-centered concern*: Design thinking focuses the ultimate value of human- and environment-centeredness on the best interests of humankind and the environment in any design project.
- *Ability to visualize*: Design thinking promotes designers' visual abilities in a broader range of media.
- *Tempered optimism*: Since design thinking is involved in creative work, optimistic attitudes and enthusiasm are very important.
- *Bias for adaptivity*: Design thinking accepts adaptive solutions for meeting different users' needs.
- *Predisposition toward multifunctionality*: Design thinking keeps a broad view in mind (multiple solutions) while focusing on specifics (specific concept).
- *Systemic vision*: Design thinking is holistic to create a holistic solution.
- *View of the generalist*: Design thinking is highly generalist in preparation and execution.
- *Ability to use language as a tool*: Design thinking uses language as a tool to verbally explain patterns and describe the creative process.

- *Affinity for teamwork*: Design thinking is highly influenced by teamwork because of the benefits brought by team members' multidisciplinary areas to develop interpersonal communication skills.
- *Facility for avoiding the necessity of choice*: Design thinking takes the view that making a choice is a last resort from searching many competing alternative choices, then proposes ways to reformulate new configurations in order to avoid a decision and combine the best possible choices.
- *Self-governing practicality*: Design thinking praises inventiveness that explores freely in the foreground while maintaining in the background a realistic appraisal of costs.
- *Ability to work systematically with qualitative information*: Design thinking involves design methodology and design processes with different ranges of tasks for many kinds of concept problems, which requires the ability to work systematically with qualitative information.

In the list of the characteristics above, the "ability to use language as a tool" refers to the ability that design thinkers have to use language as a means to verbally explain different patterns and describe the whole creative process. In English learning, students can use English as a tool to explain or describe the creative process of solving problems. Besides, since design thinking is an iterative process and "essentially does not follow the sequential waterfall model where progress is seen as flowing downwards" (Lor, 2017, p. 143), we believe that English learners will have opportunities to reinforce their language skills or fluency in each task or step of the learning process. In other words, students will become creative learners who have abilities to develop their "creative fluency" to "invent a high number of solutions in a task" (Albert & Kormos, 2004, p. 92) and "create more opportunities for themselves to use the language" (p. 73).

Project Design Education

The Kanazawa Institute of Technology (KIT) in Japan has employed Project Design (PD) English courses (I and II) for its engineering and science students since 2016. The PDI English course is offered to freshman students and PDII to sophomore students. PDI encourages students to use English through the learning of the problem-solving process using familiar and simple themes (e.g., student life, campus life, or academic stress), by identifying a problem from the main theme, collecting related information, and reporting ideas about solution concepts.

In PDII, students experience the problem-solving process in English at a higher level of research and problem-solving, usually about real-life problems in society or local communities (e.g., improved life of the elderly, saving energy, and disaster prevention). In this paper, PDI will be described as a case study.

Educational Objectives

The PD English courses incorporate the features of Project-Based Learning and design thinking into the problem-solving process to foster students' innovative skills. These courses have dual goals: (a) improving students' English fluency in speaking, writing, presentation, and research skills through an innovative design process in teams and individually; and (b) providing employability skills for future graduates as global engineers or businessmen. PD courses can be regarded as a type of content and language integrated learning (CLIL), which refers to a dual-focused approach that integrates "teaching and learning through a foreign language" (Marsh, 2002, p. 54) and also improves students' employability skills. The skills students learn through these PD courses have been confirmed to be correlated with contents of the CDIO Syllabus (Nguyen-Xuan, Sato, Dam-Duy, & Nguyen-Xuan-Hoang, 2018) which is an educational framework developed to "educate students who are able to Conceive-Design-Implement-Operate complex value-added engineering products, processes and systems in a modern, team-based environment" (Crawley Malmqvist, Ostlund, & Brodeur, 2007, p. 1).

Innovative Problem-Solving Process: Design Thinking Model I^4

The innovative problem-solving process in KIT's PD English courses is summarized in the Design Thinking Model I^4 (Figure 1), which was developed based on the design thinking model of Stanford d.school (2018). Model I^4 offers students an opportunity to develop innovative skills in solving problems using English as a medium. A main theme is given by the instructor to the class. Students discover the problems related to the main theme through the project themes. Students work in teams and individually to accomplish the goal of designing a suitable solution to the problem selected, based on the information gathered from the users or customers. A short sharing session of homework assignments is included in each class. Students perform three mini-presentations (in pairs) and a final presentation (whole team) throughout the course. Use of English is required in all activities. Minimal use of Japanese is sometimes accepted to reduce the students' English language anxiety.

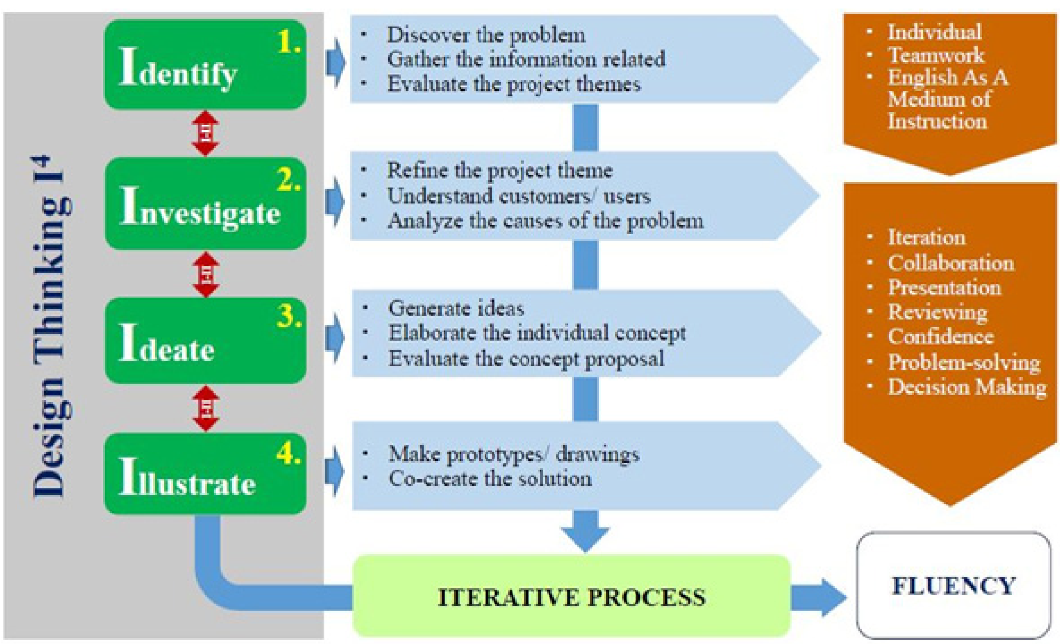

FIGURE 1. Design Thinking Model I^4.

Design Thinking Model I^4 has four stages: identify, investigate, ideate, and illustrate.

Identify: Students determine the problems, gather information on the problem identified, propose an individual project theme, and then evaluate and select the tentative project theme.

Investigate: Students survey the existence of the problem or similar existing problems, understand the needs of users/customers in relation to the problem, establish indicators for success, survey the existing solutions to the problem or to similar existing problems, analyze the causes of the problem, and select the specific cause to solve.

Ideate: Students first create a persona to capture the overview of the project-theme problem. The persona includes details of a ficticious character, such as educational background, academic major, behaviors, hobbies/values of life, goals, pain points, and needs. Later, students generate all possible ideas using brainstorming and clustering to solve the specific-cause problem, select the most potentially viable ideas to turn into an individual concept (simply image or sketch of the concept).

Illustrate: Students illustrate the concept or make a simple prototype of the selected solution.

All steps are iterative, which allows students to return to previous activities during the problem-solving process. In so doing, students can practice using English skills repeatedly on the project.

IMPLEMENTATION

This section will describe the PDI English class as a case study implemented in the fall/ winter semester of 2017. This class consisted of ten pre-intermediate EFL learners.

The main theme of the class was “To improve the students’ campus life.” The class was divided into two teams. Each team worked on a separate project theme following Model I^4. The examples described in this section were taken from Team A’s work.

Stage 1: Identify

Team members were asked to think about or recall their own experiences about university campus life that they wished to improve, such as limited coverage of campus wi-fi, lack of printers, crowded cafeteria, etc. Each individual selected one problem for further investigation and gathered information about it. They consequently proposed an individual preferred project theme. After that all members evaluated all the individual project themes using an evaluation matrix and selected the best project theme for the team. Here, the project theme “crowded and timing-consuming printing network on campus” was selected as a tentative one for Team A.

Stage 2: Investigate

Team A proved the existence of the selected project-theme problem “crowded and timing-consuming printing network on campus” by doing surveys, on-site obervations, and self-experiments. They found that students who wanted to use the printer had to enter IDs and passwords every use, which caused many other students to wait. They further confirmed the need to solve this problem by doing interviews or other surveys to students.

The team then established several indicators to solve the problem, such as number of users in the morning time, time to enter IDs and passwords to use the printer, and waiting time for using the printer. They then searched the existing solutions to a similar problem at other places, such as facial regconition, card readers, or fingerprints. This enabled them to have a better understanding of their own situation and think about new solutions.

Next, the team listed all possible causes of why the printing network was crowded. Some of the causes were (a) many students from other departments came to use the printers, (b) there were some printing errors, (c) students always used printers in the morning before their classes, (d) students did not have printers at home, and (e) students had a lot of homework assignments to print. Later, students transferred these ideas to a fishbone diagram to see the overview of causes more clearly. Finally, they selected one cause to solve: because many students use the printer at the same time before the class. The problem now was called the specific-cause problem (SC problem).

Stage 3: Ideate

Team members reviewed all the information from the previous steps to create personas that could represent the whole situation of the problem “crowded printing network” and students’ needs. One example of a persona showed a ficticious character of a second-year male student. He had many projects, and he needed to print assignments before every morning class. He was unhappy waiting for printing every morning because the printing room was always crowded. He wanted this problem to be solved as soon as possible.

Next, students generated all possible new design concepts (solutions) to the SC problem by providing answers to the question “How might we reduce the crowdedness of the printing network before class time?” A facilitator for the team was nominated to lead the brainstorming. After the ideas were created, the team grouped similar ideas together. They discussed the results, and each individual picked one idea to sketch in more detail as a personal concept proposal to the SC problem (see Figure 2). After evaluating the individual concept proposals, the team selected one concept and made a poster to show the timing of the crowded printing network (No. 3 in Figure 2) as the final concept for the team. They hoped that this would help to alleviate the crowdedness in the printing areas.

The leader directs the team's discussion and evaluation.
The recorder writes the opinions.
1) Write down all Individual Concept Proposals and their author's names.
2) Work on the viewpoints/ criteria for evaluation and selection, using "can" or "will."
3) valuate the proposals by checking if the proposal matches the criteria.
   - match, write ○ (*2 points*)
   - doesn't match, write × (*0 point*)
   - undecided (difficult to decide), write ? (*1 point*)
4) Write your total score.
5) The concept that receives the highest total score should be the best alternative.

		• The value of the desired conditions will be improved.	• The concept can satisfy all preconditions of the project theme.	•When the concept is realized and implemented, it can contribute to society without causing any ethical problems	• The created concept has its own identity or uniqueness.	• The concept can be realized and implemented (high feasibility).	• When the concept is realized, the problem will be solved.	• When the concept is realized, stakeholders will accept and use it.	**Total**	**Concept Selected**
Individual Concepts	*GET-AWAY-FROM-STRESS APP (GASA)*	○	○	?	○	?	○	○	**12**	✓
	① Strategy to reduce waste of time	○	○	○	○	x	○	○	**11**	
	② IC card reader to verify IDs	○	○	○	x	?	○	○	**10**	
	③ Poster to reduce congestion of printing network	○	○	○	?	○	?	○	**12**	✓
	④ E-bulletin boards to inform the students of situation	○	○	○	?	?	?	○	**11**	
	⑤ Use of monitors and student portal	○	○	○	?	?	?	○	**11**	

FIGURE 2. Evaluation of Individual Concepts.

Stage 4: Illustrate

Figure 3 shows four examples of poster illustrations for Team A's selected concept. Within the team, they shared their poster concepts and received feedback to improve their works.

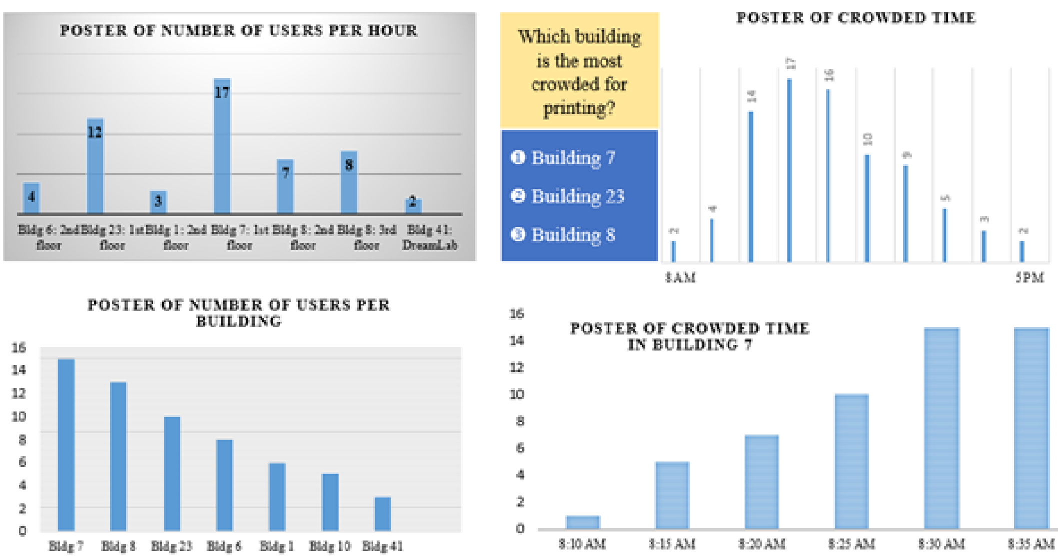

FIGURE 3. Poster Illustrations of Individual Concepts.

During the course, students were also required to do three mini-presentations (two presenters from each team and two minutes per presenter) and a final presentation (all members in the team and 10–12 minutes per team). Students were encouraged to only use positive comments, suggestions, or questions (i.e., no use of *but* or *however*) to the presenter in their Q&A sessions for both mini-presentations and final presentations.

Results

During the course, students performed many activities in English (homework and in-class assignments, sharing, surveys, discussions, and presentations). These activities are different each time, but frequently repeated during the designing process. This developed students' fluency by using different language skills and motivated them to do the task creatively. Thus, the iterative learning process of the Design Thinking Model I^4 greatly contributed to their language learning improvements.

A self-assement using open-ended reflection was applied to report the students' learning progress in the course. The results indicated a positive change in impressions and motivation towards the course, that skills and knowledge developed during the course, and a positive change in the students' mindsets. The following are some selected open-ended responses collected from students to show their positive changes.

Selected Open-Ended Responses and Respective Skills Learned

- My ability to understand English spoken by other members improves day by day. [Listening skills]
- I can speak English more positively. [Speaking positively]
- I don't feel ashamed of speaking English now. [Confidence]
- I can join the group discussion in English more positively. [Teamwork]
- I can communicate in English more fluently than before. [Oral communication]
- My writing and listening skills are improved a lot now! [Writing and listening skills]
- I enjoy learning English in this class. [Motivation]
- I now speak English more frequently than the first few weeks. [Speaking skills and motivation]
- I get used to asking questions in English. [Asking questions and confidence]
- I enjoyed English and have become more involved in English learning. [Motivation]
- I can work with other members in the team and explain in English now. [Teamwork]
- I can participate constructively, listen, and understand the opinions of other members well. [Teamwork]
- I can explain my thoughts in writing well using figures and data collected from surveys. [Writing skills, analysis skills]
- I can analyze the data I collected and discuss them effectively. [Research

skills]
- Through doing surveys, I can observe how people act and understand their needs. [Observation skills and needs-finding skills]
- I can give a presentation with illustrations and eye-contact effectively. [Presentation skills]

CONCLUSIONS

The Design Thinking Model I^4 in the Project Design English courses has been shown to be a useful approach to developing students' fluency of multiple English skills and students' employability skills. Through the PD English courses, students additionally had positive changes in their mindsets about being able to learn English innovatively. Their confidence and motivation in English learning, especially in written reports of surveys or interviews, and oral presentations, greatly improved. During the course, however, the most common challenge students faced was expressing technical terms in English, especially in speaking tasks. This sometimes caused students to have some speaking anxiety in class.

There are some important implications for teaching the PD English courses. First, regular student–teacher conferencing is needed to help students with written reports and presentation skills in English. Second, the degree of focus on both English language practice and learning content should be considered carefully in teaching PD English courses. Finally, collaboration between the language teacher and content teachers is highly recommended to give better advice to students on their design projects.

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Revisiting the Deep-End Strategy: Unrehearsed Discussions in University EFL Classes

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What would happen if you took a group of lower-proficiency, lower-motivation students in compulsory university EFL classes, put them in groups, and told them to talk about a given topic using only English? I used to think it was a recipe for a silent catastrophe. In this paper, I argue that putting aside a commercial textbook and revisiting a proposal from the formative years of the Communicative Approach is not only possible at any proficiency level but motivating – or re-motivating – for both instructors and students. It proposes throwing learners straight into the "deep end" of a communicative task, and offering alternative vocabulary and language forms intermittently and if necessary. Tentative results have been encouraging. In most cases, learners tread water just fine. I sketch the basic framework of the classroom design, with commentary as appropriate, as well as offer samples of language that students produce in class and on tests.

"If you teach a man anything, he will never learn." — George Bernard Shaw

Introduction: The Eternal False Beginner Syndrome

Jack Richards commented as follows in his plenary address at the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) Conference in 2011:

> So, all of these things, then, define the contexts in which we work, and which shape the way teaching operates. And you all know more than I do the way ... the role of tests here, and uh, and parents' expectations ... that some parents want their children to have a very early start with English and would like to start English at kindergarten, and so on. And you have what I call the eternal false beginner syndrome, where they have a little bit of English at primary school. They don't learn very much. They go to secondary school, they have a little bit of English, they don't learn very much. They get to university and they start all over again. So, they are starting with the basic-level English books when they get to university again. ... This false beginner syndrome, which we encounter in contexts where students really don't have a lot of need to learn English even though it's here in the system.

Richards was referring to the reality that, often, Japanese university students are facing the same material over again, repeating a cycle of learning and forgetting and re-learning and re-forgetting vocabulary and grammar patterns of a language that has little immediate relevance to their daily lives.

In the event students do need English, they find themselves at a fluency disadvantage. Japan continues to rank poorly on global comparison scales of proficiency as well as compared to its Asian neighbors (Lai, 2014; Aoki, 2017; EF EPI, 2018). Many fingers have been pointed at a pre-tertiary educational system that is mired in traditional classroom methods like *yakudoku* (Hino, 1988; Gorsuch, 1998), Japan's unique blend of grammar-translation, reading, and audio-lingual methods. *Yakudoku*, they observed, has long retained its sway in pre-secondary classrooms largely because it is suitable for the majority of teachers in middle school and high school classrooms, who (a) have low proficiency in English and (b) are obligated to prepare students to take discrete-point-based, language-forms-focused examinations.

By the time students reach university, it is most likely their third iteration. The expectation is that, because they have studied so hard to pass difficult examinations, they should be at a higher level than when they started out in middle school. Indeed, many students do know more than they did before, regardless of how much some forget. However, because classes must cater to the lowest common denominator, there is a tendency to review the basics (again) before any new headway can be achieved. However, the newest element for most students in university EFL classes tends to be communicative activities. That is, talking to one another in English in class. This is something that happens very little in the pre-tertiary environment. However, like the pre-tertiary environment, these EFL classes are mandatory at most universities for at least one year. The reality, then, is that students are put in a position where they have to talk to one another, particularly in classes headed by foreign teachers.

Most are sorted into classes of different levels by a (written) placement test. These placement tests are often created in-house by university staff and follow the same discrete-point-based formats (multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blank, word order, translation) as tests that appear at the pre-tertiary level. They attempt to measure accurate language form. The goal of placement tests is to promote homogeneity of "ability level" in university EFL classrooms. Some universities may offer beginner, intermediate, and advanced classes. Indeed, a large variety of publishers cater to the market for university EFL textbooks, including for "general skills" classes. Some publishers offer textbook series with a variety of levels (e.g., *Worldlink*, *Fifty-Fifty*, *Headway*).

These texts, like CLT as an approach, seem to promise "communication" and to "get students talking." However, ultimately, these textbooks are just that: books full of text, although they may have glossy covers, beautiful pictures, intriguing graphics, or even accompanying audio, video, and online elements. The matter then becomes one of motivation, of instructor and of students, and whether or not the instructor can use the text in an engaging way. That is arguably difficult to do, particularly for classes of so-called lower ability. They are, after all, about to re-learn the same things, the same basic vocabulary, the same language forms they encountered in the past. When there is a textbook, there is usually also a test, and that test will – as most written tests do – test for accuracy.

One crucial difference about EFL classes at the university level is whether or not to use a textbook. There is an enormous market for them, and in some cases university EFL programs want teachers to use a certain one, or to at least use a textbook of some kind. However, a strong argument can be made for abandoning a textbook and "going rogue." In the case of general English classes, that I teach, where I am able, that is what I have done. Below, I will briefly explain why, and how.

Rediscovering "Strong CLT"

There is an oft-cited passage in A. P. R. Howatt's (1984) volume titled *A History of English Language Teaching* (p. 279). There he proposes a distinction between two forms of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), coining the terms *weak CLT* and *strong CLT*: "learning to use English," versus "using English to learn it," and that the weak version seemed to be predominant. Martin Murphy (2013a) catalogues his switch from the weak version to the strong version by abandoning the commercial four-skills textbook he was using in favor of discussions/debates in small groups that changed members frequently. As to why: he wanted them to talk most of all. Arguably, his thinking was in line with the original precept of CLT, as Hatch (1978, p. 404) commented, "Language learning evolves out of learning how to carry on conversations, out of learning how to communicate." Or, as Widdowson (1990, p. 159) put it, "The communicative approach reverses the emphasis of the structural. It concentrates on getting learners to do things with language, to express concepts, and to carry out communicative acts of various kinds." With the textbook approach, the focus was on learning English first, with the hope of using it subsequently. The non-textbook approach promoted using English first, with the hope that some learning would come out of it.

It is intriguing to note that a newer edition of the same title by Howatt and Widdowson (2004) omits any reference to strong or weak CLT. On the other hand, Howatt's (1984) original observation that the weak version was, ironically, the stronger of the two seems to hold true today. Although Ellis (2003, p. 28) mentions that strong CLT "reflects what White (1988) has called a Type B approach (i.e., an approach that is non-interventionist and holistic). It is evident in Krashen and Terrell's (1983) *Natural Approach* and also in proposals for teaching centered on the use of tasks (Candlin, 1987). Thornbury (2016) comments that "the strong version evolved into what is now known as task-based instruction" (TBI, or task-based language teaching, TLBT). However, there is a great paucity in the literature that catalogue strong CLT implementations; none at the Japanese university level. Rather, among the references to strong and weak CLT, there is plentiful reference to the pervasiveness of the weak version. Long (1985) observed the trend along with Howatt (1984) that weak CLT was standard practice. As Van den Branden (2016, p. 239) puts it, "Although many teachers and textbooks were inspired by CLT to extend the third phase of the present-practice-produce paradigm, neither the basic structure of classroom activity nor the linear, incremental, structure-based view on language acquisition underpinning it turned out to have been significantly challenged by CLT." Or, as Didenko and Pichugova (2016, p. 2) point out, the novelty of CLT as an overarching innovation seemed to promise fizzled because, they say, of a "lack of communicativeness in the approach that contains the very word 'communicative' in its name."

This has been particularly the case in East Asia, including Japan, for a number of reasons, including cultural mismatches (Tanaka, 2009; Samimy &

Kobayashi, 2004), teacher unfamiliarity (Nishino, 2008), and a deeply ingrained high-stakes testing system whose negative washback effect keeps test preparation at the forefront of EFL classroom priorities (McKinley & Thompson, 2018), hence maintaining the tendency for pre-tertiary instructors to significantly prioritize grammar, reading, and writing over oral communication (Sakui, 2004; Butler & Iino, 2005), and to use Japanese as the primary language in their English classes (Okuno, 2007). Some have even proposed that the Japanese education system remains unchanging for the convenience of an unseen nationalist agenda (McVeigh, 2002, 2006; Miyashita, 2017; Hagerman, 2009).

Political agenda aside, however, the so-called hypocrisy of “communicative in name only” extends to textbooks that are popular in the university EFL market. Pre-tertiary textbooks are highly and traditionally structural, based on a highly and traditionally structural forms-and-vocabulary-focused syllabus, which is called the Course of Study and is preordained by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT). Ellis (2003, p. 207) terms this kind of syllabus a *linguistic syllabus*: one that “focuses on ‘what is to be learned’; it is ‘interventionist’ and ‘external to the learner.’” Textbooks for the university EFL market are largely rooted in a notional-functional syllabus. Ellis (2003, p. 28) notes that the weak version of CLT is manifest in *notional-functional syllabi*. This kind of syllabus is, notably, what most commercial textbooks available for “general English” (or so-called “four-skills”) classes in the Japanese EFL university market are based on.

This is where the promise of “something different” reneges on itself. Ellis (2003, p. 207) goes on to mention that “the ‘notional-functional approach’ is still essentially a linguistic syllabus as it still involves specifying the linguistic content to be taught, and it is still essentially interventionist and external to the learner.” In the PPP sequence, the instructor presents words and language forms, and then learners practice them in controlled tasks. In many cases, however, students produce only a meager amount of unscripted language in the final stage – if it is in fact achieved at all.

With regard to the textbook tenacity to cling to the tradition of PPP, Thornbury (2016, p. 233) states that “nowhere has this erosion of ‘strong’ communicative principles been more apparent than in general English textbooks. Indeed, it is arguable that the ELT publishing industry has not so much reflected as driven this trend.”

Chris Brumfit (1979, as cited in Johnson, 1982, pp. 192–193) first proposed reversing the traditional PPP classroom process, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Traditional vs. Communicative Classroom Procedures

	Traditional Procedure	Communicative Procedure
Stage 1	Present.	Students communicate with available resources.
Stage 2	Drill.	Teacher presents items shown to be necessary.
Stage 3	Practice in context.	Drill if necessary.

Johnson (1982) described this reversal as a “deep-end” strategy in CLT, whereby students are effectively “thrown into the deep end of a communicative task and left to sink or swim" (Harmer, 1982, pp. 164–165). The implication is that students will experience undue difficulty because they are left to struggle with the language they know, which may be insufficient to allow them to say what they may intend. As Murphy (2013a), upon whose ideas this re-visitation of strong CLT is based, as well as I have found, some students will experience difficulty and/or initial disorientation, but generally student response to this classroom design is encouragingly favorable (see Murphy, 2013b; Murphy & Rian, 2014; Rian, 2014). A broader discussion of the classroom setup is discussed in these articles; a synopsis is provided in the following section.

A "Deep End" Classroom Design

Johnson (1982) offers an example of how the "deep-end strategy" could be applied using a common textbook activity (the functional act of "inviting," using phrases such as "shall we" or "would you like to" or "let's"). However, he admits that any time there is a conflict of interest between the free-conversation nature of the deep-end task with the introduction of language forms and a social setting. In other words, if the task is to invite someone to go see a movie, but the conversation is genuinely free-form, then technically the entire exchange could end like this:

A: Would you like to go see a movie?
B: No.

Therefore, although the debate over how much to focus on forms remains ongoing (see, for example, Ellis, 2016), Murphy and I (hereafter, *we*) agree with Johnson (1982) that even in a "deep-end" communication scenario, setting up a speaking task with rules, and also supplying some language that might be useful in that task, is helpful. Generally, we employ two main activities per topic: (a) a "find-someone-who..." task, in which students must circulate and ask each other a set of questions about a given topic, and (b) group conversations, where groups of three or four students discuss a topic that can be argued from various angles and has no clear answer. The group conversation task is to sustain a conversation for about 10 minutes or more that involves an unrehearsed exchange of views or experiences. Using only these two activities, one topic can usually be covered in one or two weeks.

Step 1. Provide an Arguable Topic

The entire classroom design revolves around the exploration of a topic that can be argued from multiple angles; one that has pluses and minuses, merits and demerits, good points and bad points. Many such topics appear in commercial textbooks for the EFL market that focus on debate. Often they feature controversial ones such as gun control, abortion, or assisted suicide. Whether these topics may be feasible or not is up to the individual instructor and the relative interests of the learners. Some topics succeed or fail merely on the passion of the instructor or the chemistry with the students.

Choosing a topic that is likely to be interesting to both students and the instructor is paramount. A workable topic is one that is neither too deep nor too shallow, is multifaceted, and has no definite right or wrong. We usually use "fast food" as an introductory topic. Is fast food a good thing or a bad thing? There are pluses and minuses on both sides: convenience and good taste versus healthy and environmentally responsible. Instructors who decide to experiment with this classroom design will find which topics work well in their own classes through trial and error. Other topics that have worked well include video games, technology in the classroom, mandatory English classes, and university education – a topic that ironically pits the purpose of university against itself. At higher proficiency levels, gender equality, generation gap, environment, and politics topics have also worked.

Step 2. The "Find Someone Who..." Activity

The "Find Someone Who..." activity is intended to allow students the opportunity to practice asking questions related to the topic. Minimally, the teacher furnishes a list of statements that students must turn into question form and then ask their peers. An excerpt from a worksheet for a lower-proficiency class is given in Figure 1. The style and content of this handout can be adjusted to instructors' preferences and level of proficiency of students.

Find someone who ...	**Name**	**Follow-up Questions**
... played video games recently. ❑ Yes		➜ What? When? How long?
... sacrifices study time for video games. Sleep time? *Sacrifice X for Y = YのためXを犠牲にする* ❑ Yes		➜ Grades OK? Credits OK? ➜ Is he/she sleepy?
... thinks that video games make people violent. *violent = 暴力的* ❑ Yes		➜ For example?
... thinks that video games are a good learning tool. ❑ Yes		➜ For example?
... is addicted to video games. *[be] addicted to ~ = ～に依存している* ❑ Yes		➜ Why does he/she think so?

FIGURE 1. Excerpt from a "Find Someone Who..." Worksheet.

The instructor may choose to review certain terms (underlined), as well as how to form questions from statements, before the activity. Students are then given 15 or so minutes to ask as many questions as they can. After they have done this, the instructor may solicit answers from students: "Did anyone find someone who ...?" This is an opportunity for students to practice using the third-person singular "He/She ..." Instructors may choose to jot some student responses on the blackboard, offering alternative language when they see fit.

This "Find Someone Who..." activity may be supplemented or entirely replaced by any number of other activities that introduce and practice topic-related vocabulary and language forms. Model dialogues, brief surveys, short writing exercises, or short passages for reading homework are also feasible.

Activities that introduce the topic may also be omitted altogether.

Alternatively, students could be put into groups and told simply to come up with and jot down arguable points on a given topic (see Step 3).

Step 3. Group Discussions

Group discussions proceed as follows.

(a) The blackboard is divided in half, and the topic is put at the top. One half is for (positive) arguments, the other for negative arguments, generally. If the previous "Find Someone Who..." activity is used, statements elicited from students may be recycled here (see Figure 2). A few positive and negative points on the topic can be put on the blackboard. Meanwhile, students are furnished with a piece of paper and instructed to write down whatever they like. They are encouraged, but not told, to take notes – not only from the blackboard, but from what they hear in group discussions.

(b) Students are seated in groups of three. If there are extra students, one or two groups of four is possible.

(c) The instructor assigns letters A, B, C to students. In groups of four, the fourth student is D.

(d) Students discuss the topic. Each must choose a position. That is, they must argue from a standpoint of for or against, pro or con, good or bad. One student might open the conversation with, for example, "I think fast food is good. How about you?"

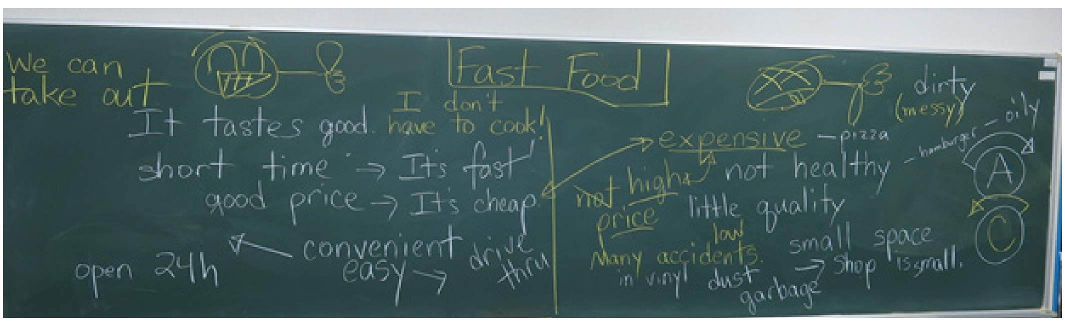

FIGURE 2. Blackboard with Topic and Pros/Cons.

The discussion rules are simple:

(i) *Use zero Japanese*. On the other hand, students may use whatever English they can. If it makes sense to the other person, it is tentatively good enough English.

(ii) *Keep the conversation going*. Students are encouraged to ask questions if the conversation seems to stall and to ask for clarification if they don't understand. Note: The introduction and practice of oral communication strategies, such as asking for clarification, paraphrasing, approximating, and circumlocution, is beneficial.

(iii) *Stay on topic*. No non-sequiturs (e.g., "I like fast food. By the way, what music do you like?").

(iv) At any one point in the conversation, all members of a group *cannot assume the same position*. For example, not all members of a group can say that "fast food is good." They can tentatively agree with what the other person argues but must continue from the standpoint they started with. This fourth rule is key, because it encourages role-play. What students may actually think about a topic is never revealed. To follow the rule, it is possible that one or two students may need to take a position opposite to what they might really think, or to form an ad-hoc opinion to a topic they may not have any definite opinion about. In Japan particularly, assertion of individual opinions in order to persuade others, or the revelation to others of one's *honne* (本音, or "what one really thinks"), especially in a foreign language and at low proficiency levels, may be terrifying to students. However, in this setup, *honne* is protected. This is important, especially in Japanese culture.

(v) After about five minutes of discussion, groups are rotated. The instructor can choose which letters rotate. A simple illustration of the rotation is depicted in Figure 3. A students rotate clockwise, while B students rotate counter-clockwise. C students stay where they are. If student D is present (group of 4), D also does not move.

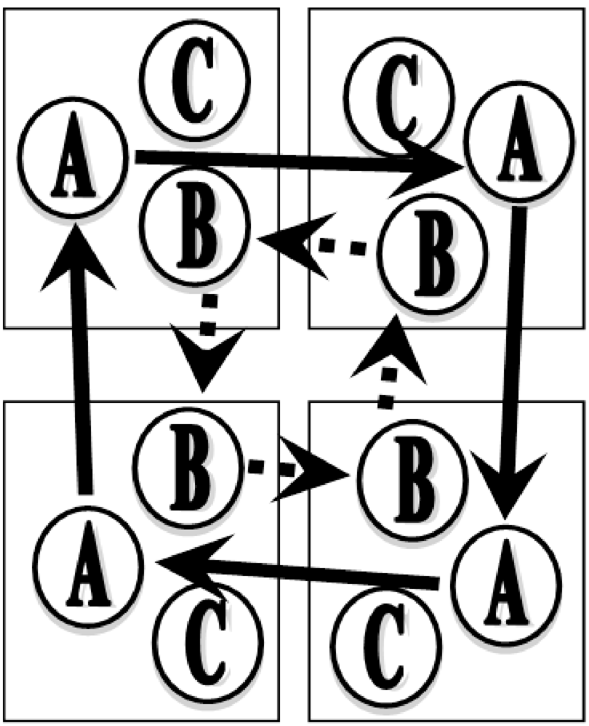

FIGURE 3. Group Rotation.

Groups are rotated every 5–10 minutes. Students begin the discussion again, and are free to change their stance. Between rotations, the instructor may solicit arguments from groups and record language and vocabulary on the blackboard. Students are encouraged, but not required, to write down whatever language they like on a piece of paper, either from the blackboard or from what they glean from other students as they move from group to group. The act of "stealing" choice vocabulary, phrases, and arguments from other students and then using them as one's own in another group is highly encouraged.

At the end of class, a short writing activity can be done. For example, using the notes they may have taken, each student must write five good points and five bad points on the given topic (see Figure 4).

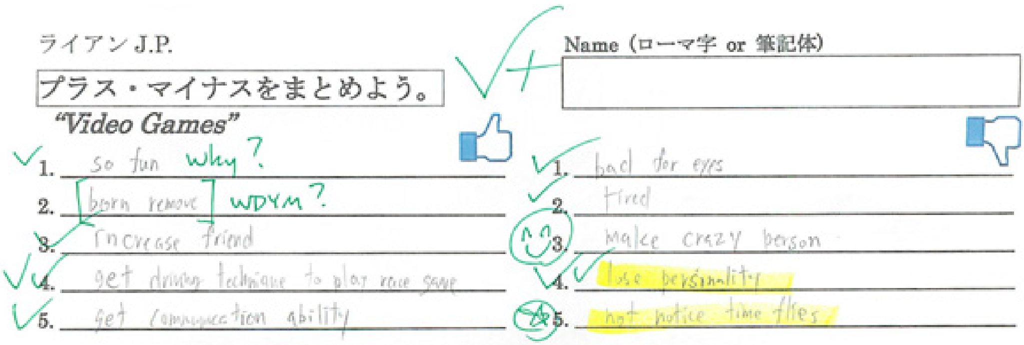

FIGURE 4. End-of-Class Practice Writing Activity: Five Pros and Cons.

Note that in this example the student used "lose personality." This term was never heard nor recorded by me anywhere. The term appeared on several other students' paper slips, which suggests that it was devised by one student, recorded by others, and transcended groups through the group switching. These slips are marked by me and returned the following week. Marking is minimal (see "Some Considerations" below). Highlight indicates a phrase I particularly like, especially one that I never wrote on the blackboard during class. I usually give them five minutes to do this activity.

As an alternative end-of-class writing activity, students individually write a conversation between Person A and Person B. The rules are the same as in conversation: All English, and A and B can never completely persuade one another – they must continue the conversation. A ten-minute limit is good for this half-page, A4 paper-size activity (see Figure 5).

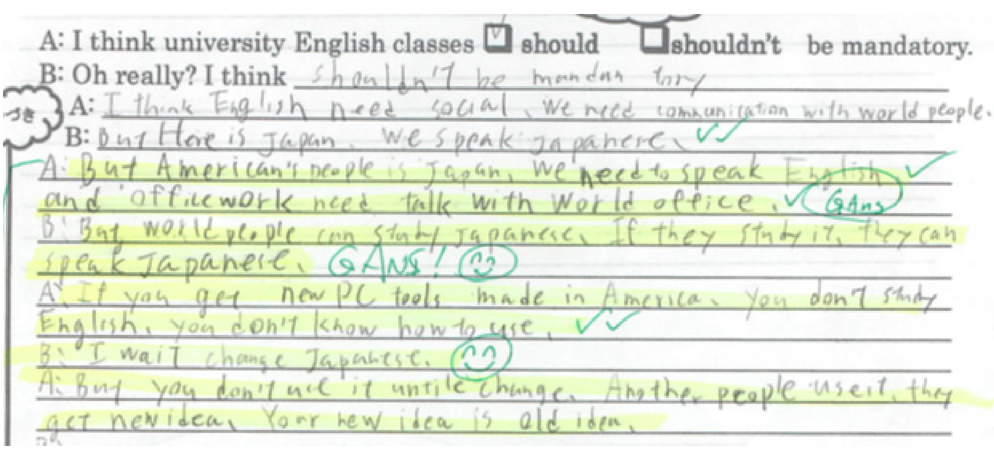

FIGURE 5. End-of-Class Practice Writing Activity: Conversation Between A and B.

As can be seen, but which cannot be discussed here for sake of space, amid the butchered sentences and clumsy spellings, there is surprising creativity. Students are writing as they would speak. While there is an ongoing debate in the SLA literature about the importance of not completely ignoring language forms ("correct English," as it is often called), the philosophy for this classroom design is that most students' prior careers have focused almost exclusively on accuracy. While ideally there is a balance between accuracy and fluency in the same EFL classroom, as Gatbonton and Segalowitz (2005) have argued, this design proposes balancing out the over-attention to accuracy they have already been subjected to with a diametric shift toward a focus on fluency; namely, the fluency that students already may possess, but without actual in-class experiential practice, might not realize they have. In short, it is intended to elicit from, and to showcase to, students in real time what they do know, versus what they do not know. By "using English to learn it" (Howatt, 1984, p. 279), students will ideally learn about what they can do more than what they cannot do.

Some Considerations

Testing

Murphy and Rian (2014) believe that testing should be a direct reflection of what goes on in the classroom. Therefore, written tests are designed in the same style as the end-of-class writing activities. For classes of fewer than 25 students, a conversation test (I call it a "performance") can be conducted in the time remaining after the 20-minute writing test (see Appendix). Groups are chosen at random. If an adjacent empty classroom is available, they can be conducted there. Other teachers may choose to do them in class.

Grading

Grading is, admittedly, holistic. This seems to fit with White's (1988) non-interventionist, holistic "Type B" syllabus proposal. A brief rubric of what constitutes an A, B, C, D, etc. can be given to the students. For conversation, generally, students who talk a lot, ask questions, ask for clarification when they don't understand, and make effective arguments get higher marks than those who are quieter. The underlying philosophy is that if a student is present in a conversation, he or she is participating in some way, even if he or she isn't always talkative. Students who struggle – which happens on occasion, although not as frequently as one might suspect – simply get lower marks. It helps to encourage them that everyone gets tongue-tied sometimes, and that they can try again in class and during the next test.

Marking

Marking tests is labor-intensive; prohibitively, if the instructor aims to mark and correct the accuracy (grammar/spelling) of each test. Only when meaning is dubious or genuinely not understandable to me will I flag errors, usually with the simple abbreviation “WDYM?” (What do you mean?). Other abbreviations I have used are: GQ = good question; GAns = good answer; GEx = good example; [circled] “i” = interesting! (tell me more!). I will also highlight words, phrases, and dialogue chunks that I think are particularly good (see Appendix).

Use of L1 (Japanese)

The use of L1 in the L2 classroom is a hotly debated topic (see, for example, Critchley, 1999, 2002; Carson & Kashihara, 2012; O’Keeffe, 2011). I side with the principled and judicious use of L1 based on the needs and wishes of students. For lower-proficiency classes, I will use as much Japanese as will make them feel comfortable. The trade-off is that the in-class conversations are, in principle, all in English. Tests demand absolute English. For higher-proficiency classes, little or no Japanese may be needed (or wanted) at all.

Totally Mangled (But Still Plausible) English

Those of us who are trained, as I was, to “teach” English will be as startled and disoriented as some students are when they begin taking this kind of class. The underlying philosophy is that, in the real world, English that someone else can understand is good enough for the time being. The role of the instructor in this classroom design is, as Alison King (1993, p. 30) memorably phrased it, to be a “guide on the side” rather than a “sage on the stage.” Martin Murphy (2013a, 2013b), my colleague from whom I have borrowed and with whom I have helped develop this reversion to strong CLT, once commented to me, “You know you’re doing your job as a teacher well when you find yourself bored and wandering around class watching your students talk to each other in English, and when you try to join in one of their conversations, they give you that kind of ‘butt out, go away, we’re busy’ look.” [personal conversation, 2012]. If one can learn to acquaint him- or herself with that English being far from perfect, one will begin to delight in the variety of non-native, irregular expressions that a native or native-like speaker would be hard pressed to come up with, but that are just as succinct. An example is when one student told me, on the topic of parenting, that some parents “don’t think children heart.”

Conclusions

For the sake of space, a great many details have been omitted from the outline of this strong CLT design presented here. Doubtlessly, it leaves as many questions unanswered and alternative possibilities unexplored, and may even, as Johnson (1982, p. 193) opines, “offend traditionalists.” An extended version and/or follow-up versions that treat these are necessarily forthcoming. For now, I have offered the framework for a truly student-centered classroom design that actualizes what Johnson (1982), Howatt (1984), and others might have envisioned when Johnson termed his classroom design the “deep-end strategy.” While it is neither a new strategy nor an unprecedented idea, its implementation and sustained development in a Japanese university EFL setting is, heretofore, without parallel.

When employed at the university level, it appears to be a potent salve to Richards' (2011) "false beginner syndrome." In many cases, students are true beginners at holding unscripted conversations, where they can basically say and write anything they want to. If, as Harmer (1982) suggested, students are left to "sink or swim," as it would seem, even low-proficiency students can tread water just fine. Some appear to have fun splashing around. Still others will assist those they see floundering a bit. In the end, no one sinks; this EFL classroom design is a pool, after all, not an ocean. In the end, when they dry off from the experience, a few of them might think about seeking out open seas – genuine chances to communicate for genuine purposes in English. At the very least, some may not feel as terrified if they should ever find themselves bobbing in one.

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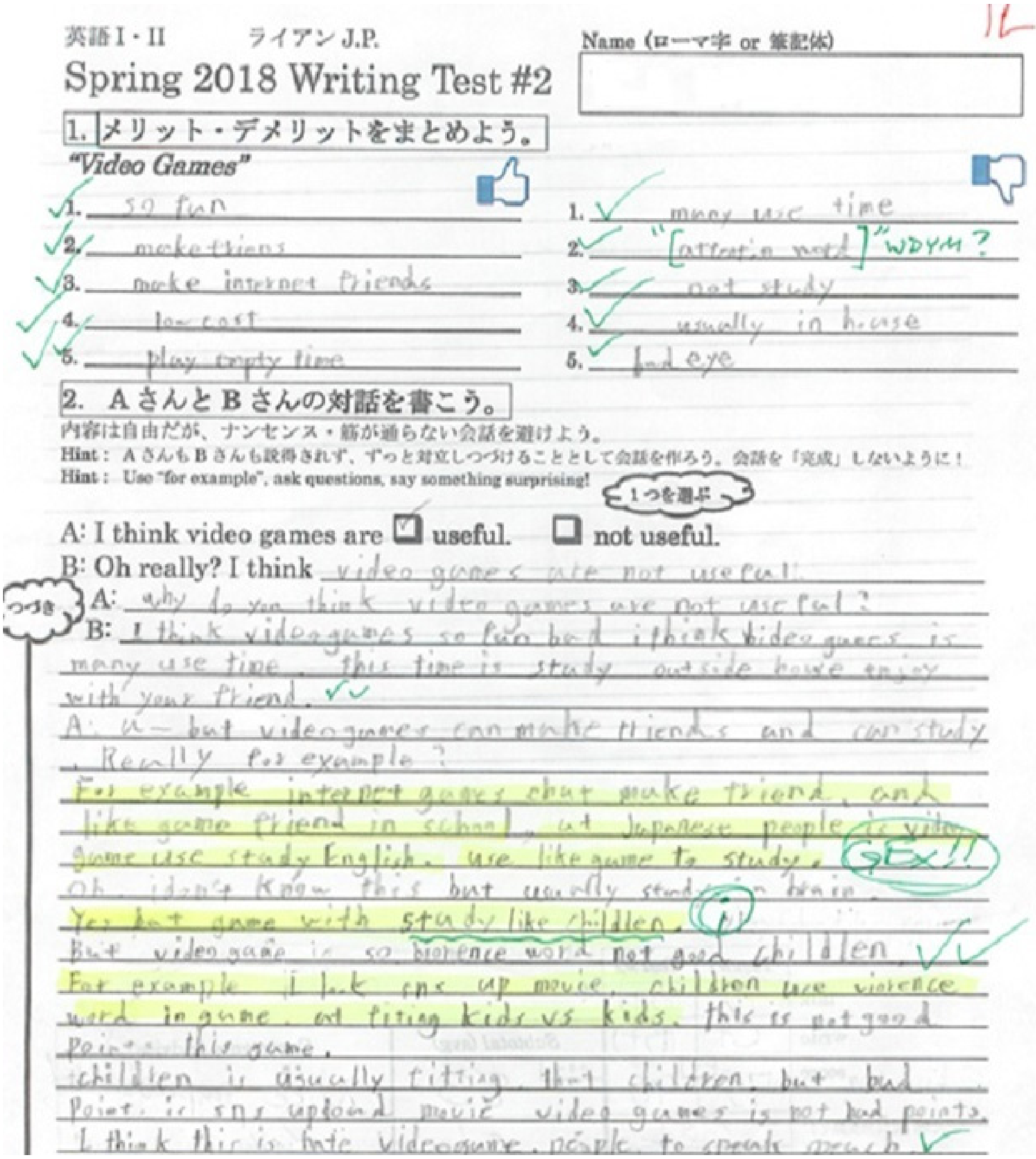
APPENDIX

20-Minute Writing Test (Lower Proficiency Student)



英語 I・II　　ライアン J.P.

Name (ローマ字 or 筆記体)

Spring 2018 Writing Test #2

1. メリット・デメリットをまとめよう。

"Video Games"

1. so fun
2. make friends
3. make internet friends
4. low cost
5. play empty time

1. many use time
2. "[attention word]" WDYM?
3. not study
4. usually in house
5. bad eye

2. A さんと B さんの対話を書こう。

内容は自由だが、ナンセンス・筋が通らない会話を避けよう。

Hint: A さんも B さんも説得されず、ずっと対立しつづけることとして会話を作ろう。会話を「完成」しないように！

Hint: Use "for example", ask questions, say something surprising!

1つを選ぶ

A: I think video games are ☑ useful. ☐ not useful.

B: Oh really? I think video games are not useful.

つづき

A: why do you think video games are not useful?

B: I think videogames so fun but i think video games is many use time. this time is study outside home enjoy with your friend.

A: u- but videogames can make friends and can study. Really for example?

For example internet games chat make friend, and like game friend in school, at Japanese people is video game use study English. use like game to study.

GEx!!

Oh. i don't know this but usually study in brain.

Yes but game with study like children.

But video game is so violence word not good children.

For example i look ens up movie. children use violence word in game. at fiting kids vs kids. this is not good point this game.

children is usually fitting that children. but bad point. is sns upload movie video games is not bad points.

I think this is hate videogame. people to speak much.

Using Recordings and Speaking Fluency Tasks to Enhance Spoken Interactions

Christopher Tempest
Sojo University, Japan

A new curriculum was implemented in a Japanese University that focused on recorded conversations and speaking fluency tasks. The curriculum was organized by topics, each of which was covered over the course of three lessons. In the first two lessons, students were exposed to vocabulary, phrases, and structured and semi-structured practice related to the topic. In the third lesson, students engaged in unstructured speaking practice and recorded an extended conversation in groups of three. The performance measure for the course consisted of three ten-minute conversations that were evaluated based on the number of words spoken by the student, the number of utterances they made, and the average number of words per utterance. In this workshop, the presenters introduced why such an intervention was needed, discussed the core of the three-lesson cycle used for each topic, and outlined the methods used to record student conversations.

Background and Rationale

In this workshop, the presenters first introduced the context of the university where the new curriculum was implemented and the rationale for introducing it. In the current context of English language education in Japan, there is a heavy focus on grammar and reading skills with little attention paid to students' speaking ability. Whilst there are initiatives by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) currently being implemented to improve English education (MEXT, 2015), there is still pressure on teachers and students alike to pass entrance examinations to gain entry to their preferred high schools and universities. As such, speaking is not considered a high priority as it is not part of those examinations. This often results in students entering an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) course at university with underdeveloped conversation skills (Rowberry, 2012). As part of an intervention to address this, a fluency-focused curriculum was introduced to (a) aid students in developing their speaking and listening skills, (b) objectively measure students' progress, and (c) utilize teacher collaboration for materials development.

The curriculum was trialed with approximately 800 first-year students enrolled in a compulsory English communication course. The general level of students was A1–A2 on the Common European Framework of Reference of Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2009). As most students had already completed six years of grammar- and reading-focused English education prior to starting this course, the curriculum was speaking- and listening-orientated with little to no instruction on grammar. This was because in this iteration, fluency was deemed more of a priority than accuracy.

Finally, to aid in material development and to establish consistency for all the students and teachers involved, there was a heavy focus on collaboration. This was to share resources with each other easily, delegate tasks between teachers, and unify tasks and assessments. By doing this, student progress could be measured over the course of the semester across different departments.

CURRICULUM

The curriculum lasted one semester and was split into seven topics. The topics chosen were deemed relevant to student life and familiar enough that they wouldn't be overly difficult to talk about (e.g., family, hobbies, music, etc.). Each topic was covered over three lessons with each lesson building on the previous one. Lessons aimed to cover preparation, practice, and performance, respectively.

Lesson 1: Preparation

The objective of the first lesson of each topic was to introduce new words and phrases, and activate existing vocabulary through both individual and pair work. Prior to class starting, students were expected to have completed homework via an online flashcard platform called Quizlet (Dizon, 2016). Through this app, students would be exposed to new vocabulary items, pronunciation, and visual prompts. After completing the homework, students engaged in group work using a feature of Quizlet called Quizlet Live (Wolff, 2016), where students would have to answer multiple-choice questions with the vocabulary items in the context of a sentence rather than a stand-alone word or phrase.

Students also used a different digital flashcard activity that was accessible via the university's learning management system (LMS) Moodle. Students were shown a Japanese sentence or question that they would translate into spoken English. A microphone would record their speech, and it would then be transcribed by the software in real time. Artificial intelligence would decide if the student's production was accurate. If it was, the student would progress to the next flash card; otherwise, they would be expected to try again.

Following this, students would engage in a variety of pair-work activities and tasks. This was to introduce them to the topic via example dialogues, interviews, and games. Such activities, whilst including reading, had a heavy focus on listening and responding. Tasks such as simple interviews about the topics where often used, but other (more engaging) activities, such as guessing key vocabulary from simple riddles/hints, and "Find Someone Who..." (Deesri, 2009) tasks were also featured.

Lesson 2: Practice

During the second lesson in the cycle, students further developed their conversation skills through activities such as reading aloud short passages and asking their partners a combination of questions about both contents of the text and about themselves. This helped reflect a conversational situation where students would have to listen to and retain information from their partner. It also gave them practice asking and answering questions about themselves. One other activity was a question game where students would have a grid of 36 questions related to the topic. Students would then roll dice and ask their partner the question that the dice showed. The aspect of randomness not only exposed students to a wide variety of questions but answering them became more of a challenge as the students had to answer questions without knowing what they were going to be asked.

In the final stages of this lesson, students had the opportunity to create their own scaffold in preparation for their extended conversation lesson, Lesson 3. This scaffold essentially provided space for students to write down any useful or difficult-to-remember questions and follow-up questions that they could ask their partner. Space was also provided for key words and phrases that students could use to talk about themselves. Students could write as much or as little as they wanted, as they could decide how much assistance they felt they needed.

Lesson 3: Performance

The main activities of the third and final lesson of the topic were conversation practice and recording of an extended conversation. In the initial stages of the conversation practice, students took part in a "speed dating" activity. Students were split into pairs and given their scaffolds that they had completed in the previous lesson to use as a reference. Students then had a series of timed conversations, usually about 3–4 minutes, related to the topic they had been learning about. For the second half of the conversation practice, students repeated the same process but without their scaffolded sheets. This was to help students practice conversations without any assistance. Once students had practiced several times with multiple partners, they then recorded a conversation in a group of three.

Recordings

For the final part of the three-lesson cycle, students were placed into groups of three. In these groups, students then recorded a five-minute, unassisted conversation among themselves. Recordings were usually captured using a tablet computer and uploaded to the Moodle LMS. However, using students' smartphones was also a suitable option. Upon completing their recordings, students listened to their conversation one more time then reflected on their performance by answering some simple questions based on how well they thought they performed according to various criteria.

Performance Measures

A pre-test, midterm test, and final test was taken by each of the students. The pre-test was conducted on the first day of class. Students were grouped according to the results of an online test conducted prior to starting the English course. Students were grouped into threes and instructed to have a ten-minute conversation that was recorded. Upon completion of the test, students transcribed what they themselves said during the conversation. From this, the total number of words spoken, the number of turns, and the average number of words spoken per turn was calculated for each student. The same process was repeated for all three tests. From this, teachers could measure and share these measurements with the students.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Initial feedback from a survey (of 748 students) taken at the end of the semester shows that the students felt that their speaking, vocabulary, motivation, and ability to collaborate had improved (Table 1). The data below shows that a majority of students felt that they had significantly improved their speaking with 96.53% students expressing agreement with the statement “After taking this course, my speaking improved” after taking the course. Students also showed significant agreement with the statements “After taking this course, my vocabulary improved” (92.65%), “...my ability to collaborate improved” (97.86%), and “...my motivation to study English increased” (95.19%). As such data shows, the curriculum received lots of positive feedback, and the students felt that they improved over the course.

TABLE 1. Student Feedback

After taking this course...	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly Agree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
my speaking improved	28.48%	41.31%	26.74%	1.87%	0.94%	0.67%
my vocabulary improved	27.81%	35.96%	28.88%	5.48%	1.07%	0.80%
my ability to collaborate improved	44.92%	38.64%	14.30%	1.64%	0.40%	0.40%
my motivation to study English increased.	40.91%	32.22%	22.06%	3.34%	0.80%	0.67%

CONCLUSIONS

As part of an intervention to improve students speaking and conversation skills, a fluency-focused curriculum was implemented in an EFL context at a Japanese university. The curriculum covered seven topics deemed to be relevant to students’ everyday life. Each was covered over three lessons, focusing on preparation, practice, and performance, respectively. To aid in students’ reflection of their performance, they recorded their extended conversations in groups of three. This was to reflect their pre-, mid-, and post-tests that they completed throughout the semester to help measure their performance via the amount of words they spoke and how many utterances they made. Feedback from students showed an overwhelming positive impression from students regarding speaking, vocabulary, collaboration, and motivation. Whilst feedback from students was positive, by utilizing teacher collaboration in future iterations, a wider variety of fluency-focused activities and tasks could aid in further deepening student engagement and improve their overall speaking performance.

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Christopher Tempest is originally from England and has been an educator in Japan for almost ten years. He has experience in teaching English at all levels of education in Japan, from kindergarten through to university. His main research interests are in second language acquisition and computer-assisted language learning. Upon completing his MA in TESOL from the University College London, he has spent the last two years teaching an English communication course at Sojo University in southern Japan, where he is currently doing research in spoken interactions and intensive reading. Email: ctempest@m.sojo-u.ac.jp

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Getting a Job at a Korean University: Observations and Suggestions

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There is a growing audience of teachers who are seeking faculty positions at Korean universities. Job applicants have described the recruitment process as confusing, ambiguous, inconsistent, and frustrating. In the spirit of Korea TESOL's guiding mission, "Teachers Helping Teachers," this article offers cover letter and resume advice for ELT university job applicants. Drawing from my experience on a hiring panel, I reflect on some of the errors I noticed in screening applications for a non-tenure track position in the Department of Language and Literature at a midsize university in Seoul. After identifying these errors, I offer four suggestions to keep in mind: follow the instructions in the job advertisement, be personal, be professional, and look professional. To conclude the article, I acknowledge the limitations and offer suggestions on how universities can improve their recruitment practices.

INTRODUCTION

Korea TESOL's (KOTESOL) founding mission is "Teachers Helping Teachers." At conferences, workshops, seminars, and other events, KOTESOL brings together a diverse gathering of expatriates and Koreans to learn, network, discuss, debate, share, and collaborate on all facets of English language teaching (ELT). Years ago, for example, Julian McNulty gave one of the most entertaining and informative presentations on ten ways to use a blank piece of A4 paper to teach skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Some of the examples I can recall include folding the paper in eight squares, then asking the students to make their own comic book stories using English. Another example was folding the paper into a paper airplane following the teacher's instructions in English. His charisma, charm, and passion enlivened the audience and helped answer the question we, as teachers, have all seemed to have encountered at one point or another: how to teach an ELT lesson with limited time or preparation. It was magic. Teachers helping teachers.

In the spirit of that tradition, the interest of this article seeks to help teachers who are interested in finding employment at a Korean University. Each year, it seems, I inevitably come across a teacher employed in either a private academy or a public school who is interested in this type of career advancement. Many expressed concerns over the Ministry of Education's mandate that all university teachers have at least two years of university teaching experience and a master's degree, preferably one closely related to English language teaching. Others have lamented legitimate concerns. In the job interview, for instance, some have been shell-shocked when confronted with personal or invasive questions. In another example, one teacher confided in me that he was feeling pretty good in answering questions from a hiring panel only to realize by the end of the interview that the panel had mistaken him for another applicant. In my own experience, I found it to be a little disconcerting sitting in a room waiting to be interviewed, alongside ten other applicants who were there for the same reason. As a profession, ELT has a long way to go in terms of professionalism and doing things the right way.

Within the scope of this article, however, I will not comment on mandated hiring policies or the job interview. Instead, I wish to offer resume and cover letter suggestions. As one who has risen through the ranks of Korea's education system, I have attended interviews in person and online at public schools, academies, and universities, which has allowed me to identify themes and tendencies as well as cultural differences in recruitment practices. At the university level, I have attended 30 interviews and received offers from some 11 universities. As the population continues to decline, faculty recruitment continues to become more competitive, despite stagnant wages and few opportunities for tenured positions. My authority to offer these suggestions comes not from my experience as a job applicant *per se*, but rather from my experience as a member of the hiring panel at my former university. In that role, I was asked to review applications for two vacant positions: one tenured position for a Korean faculty member and a foreign language faculty member position. In this article, I will focus on the latter. I knew the duties, tasks, and responsibilities of this job well. I had occupied it for 3.5 years but had to resign so that I could return to Canada to begin my doctoral studies.

Suggestions

Follow the Instructions in the Job Advertisement

A cursory glance at some job advertisements shows that most require applicants to submit a university application form, cover letter, resume (with photo), passport ID page, alien registration card, and institution-issued employment records. My university's job advertisement asked applicants to submit these documents in Microsoft Word or PDF. Yet, to my surprise, there were applicants who submitted documents as HWP files, TXT files, and even via Dropbox. One of the applicants who used Dropbox embedded the files so they could not be downloaded or printed. Applicants who looked more favorable were surprisingly far less than a majority. These applicants submitted their documents in PDF format and had them properly labeled (e.g., Smith – Cover letter and resume; Smith – ARC; Smith – Passport; Smith – Employment Records). Zip files are fine, unless stated otherwise. One of the more exceptional applicants put all of his documents into one PDF file with a table of contents on the first page. This level of sophistication not only demonstrated his ability to follow instructions but also made it easy for me to quickly see that he met all of the essential qualifications. As a result, his application made it to the next stage in the recruitment process.

Be Personal

When I was reviewing applications, there were an alarming number of applicants who were woefully generic. Reading through the cover letters and resumes, I got the impression that many copied and pasted from applications to other institutions, which in the case of one applicant, turned out to be true. The cover letter was addressed to the wrong university, which not only signaled this individual's incompetence but also gave me the impression of his laziness. There is an alternative.

In the case of my university, the name of the department chair was listed in the job advertisement. It would obviously make sense to address the cover letter directly to her, as in "Dear Professor Yoon." Yet, to my surprise, the vast majority of applicants used generic addresses, such as "To Whom It May Concern," "Dear Hiring Manager," or "Dear Selection Committee." Another suggestion would be to spend some time researching the institution's mission or vision statements. For instance,

> The founding purpose and spirit of Myongji Institution is to educate capable individuals not only to contribute to national culture and economics but also to world peace and development of human culture, following Christian truth: believing God, being filial to parents, loving others as oneself, caring for and developing nature. (You Byong Jin, 1956)

These words can be used in the introduction of the cover letter; for example, "I am writing to apply for the vacant assistant professor position in the Department of English Language and Literature. In my five years of teaching experience, I have developed a philosophy that aligns well with Myongji University's vision of educating individuals to contribute to national culture and economics." Personalizing cover letters through individual addresses and including a statement like this are clever ways to show the hiring committee that the applicant has invested time in researching the university. Showing this kind of dedication will not guarantee one the job or even an interview. Based on my experience, however, it will make one's resume stand out in a stack of applications that fall hopelessly short.

Be Professional

Among the 285 job applications, there were an alarming number of avoidable mistakes. There were people who wrote in their application the name of the wrong university. Others had grammatical errors, typos, and incomplete sentences in their cover letters. These mistakes are avoidable. For starters, Grammarly may not be perfect (e.g., see Brogan, 2018), but it will catch most typos and errors. For those who use Apple devices, there is a text-to-speech configuration you can enable. Video tutorials, such as BeatDyslexia (2013), show how you can highlight text on your computer, then have it read back to you simply by pressing and holding the "Alt" key plus the "Esc" key. Hearing the text, exactly how it is typed into a Word document, will help you catch, for example, that missing preposition or word that is consecutively typed twice. When reviewing your cover letter, ask yourself if your cover letter includes a clear introduction, thesis statement, body section, and conclusion. Does the cover letter answer to all of the essential requirements listed in the job application? It would be a good idea to have a friend or colleague proofread for clarity and cohesion with these guiding questions in mind.

Look Professional

Perhaps the most telling blunder of all was in the profile picture. Strangely, two applicants submitted self-portraits (so-called "selfies"). Others were blurry or obviously dated photos, which reminded me of brochures you typically see at funerals. A dozen applicants included unedited mug shots, ones typically taken in small booths at the immigration office. The facial expressions in the photos of some of the applicants evoked curiosity; there were grimaces, frowns, and looks of confusion. What would compel a person to think that this is his/her best look? Thinking about this, I was doubly confused by the fashion choices of some individuals. One applicant submitted an action shot of himself teaching; his style included a black tee-shirt, black jeans, a silver necklace with matching bracelets, and long hair that emulated rock stars of the early 1990s. There was a female applicant who wore a spaghetti-strap blouse. In some respects, these clothing choices reveal individuality, yet at the same time, these applicants are evidently unaware that such wardrobe choices would garner second looks and some temple tapping from colleagues and students on campus.

The importance of looking professional cannot be understated, especially in a Confucian society like Korea, where teaching positions in educational institutions are often associated with respect and status (Breen, 2004; Choi, 2008). For starters, get a haircut or have it styled. Hair salons can be found even in the most remote parts of the peninsula, offering a plethora of services at affordable prices. Korea is replete with photo studios, many of which even offer a wardrobe of your choice. Smiling in your photo conveys friendliness and confidence, as if you are indirectly communicating to the hiring panel that you enjoy the profession of teaching and know what you are doing. Finally, for less than 30,000 won, a professional photo studio will take a high-definition portrait and then have it edited to ensure you look your best. In a job market as competitive as the one for teaching positions at Korean universities, going these extra lengths shows the hiring panel that you take pride in your personal appearance and that you look the part.

Conclusion

In the spirit of KOTESOL's mission, "Teachers Helping Teachers," this article offered suggestions for applicants interested in applying for teaching positions at universities in Korea. Drawing mainly from my hiring panel experience, I urge applicants to follow the instructions in the job advertisement, find ways to show the employer they are special, be professional, and look professional. I asked a couple of friends to proofread this article. In an email reply, one of the proofreaders commented, "These [suggestions] are not exactly novel ideas; they should be obvious." He has a point. I am not the first one to, for example, state the importance of proofreading and looking professional. In addition, I cannot say for certain whether my experience on this hiring panel serves as an outlier or a representative snapshot on the state of the ELT job market in Korea. Notwithstanding, pertinent questions remain as to why there are gaps in the purported obvious versus the quality of applications received.

One explanation is that there are not a lot of resources available to help job applicants navigate through the ambiguities and inconsistencies of the recruitment process, although some have tried. There is, for example, a book titled *How to Get a Job at a Korean University: The English Teaching Job of Your Dreams*, yet some of the passages are a little troubling: "While people from other countries can legally get visas to work in Korea [...], most universities prefer people from the USA or Canada, simply because it is the accent that they are used to. Black people and Asians can have a difficult time, even if they are from North America. Yes, it is racist and terrible, but it is also just the reality in South Korea" (Bolen, 2013, p. 8) and "In Korea, it may seem unbelievable, but if you look like a 'teacher,' Koreans will think that you really are a good teacher" (p. 13).

Another resource is Dream University Job (www.dreamuniversityjob.com). After signing up online, recipients receive a chain of emails with links to private YouTube videos that recount the website curator's personal experience and urge applicants to apply by distributing hard copies of their teaching portfolios to universities, yet the three-minute video clips do not show an example of what to include in a portfolio or how such materials should be presented. A more descriptive example on how to make a teaching portfolio can be found in a video tutorial by Pocketful of Primary (2017).

My concern is that both of these resources highlight the glamor of teaching at a university, as if it is something that is easy or not to be taken seriously. Stated specifically, for example, the unifying word in the book title and website URL is "dream." Moreover, I would be especially skeptical to take advice from someone who, in addition to what was mentioned above, purports that "Koreans will ask you personal questions at your interview, which would be considered illegal and/or extremely rude in Western countries" (Bolen, 2013, p. 29). Disparaging remarks like this not only undermine the good work being done by Koreans across the peninsula, they do little to bridge cultural differences in the recruitment process. I hope the suggestions outlined in this article will be interpreted as a helpful alternative, though I would urge readers to look into Kelsky's book, *The Professor Is In*. Although it was not written specifically for teachers in Korea, Kelsky (2015) is a reader-friendly resource that offers advice on cover letters and resumes, job interviews, and other important pro tips on how to penetrate (and succeed in) the world of academia.

Within my field of study, educational leadership, I have discussed this issue with my colleagues at the University of Calgary at length. They were quick to point out that better decisions could have and should have been made by the hiring panel. For starters, the advertisement was posted on Dave's ESL Café (www.eslcafe.com). This website remains a central resource for those interested in ELT employment in Korea, which is problematic because content on the website seems to be particularly tailored for novice or less-experienced teachers. The Chronicle of Higher Education (https://www.chronicle.com/) is a more reputable alternative. It lists teaching positions at universities across the world, yet curiously, few of them are in Korea. Content posted in job advertisements also needs to be carefully re-examined. Most give generic descriptions, which fall short in preparing applicants for the kinds of challenges university teachers must confront. In a mixed-level conversation class, for example, how should one go about marking students on a strict grading curve? Within this setting, what kind of content should be included in speaking exams and how should students be assessed? Urging applicants to answer these questions in their cover letter provides a starting point in identifying the ones who deserve the privilege of teaching at a Korean university. By proceeding this way, hiring panels may be in a better position to identify the truly creative ones who, as mentioned in the introduction as an example, have the creativity and passion for teaching by finding multiple uses of a blank piece of A4 paper to teach skills in English.

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Materials Development to Improve Learners' Fluency in English Class

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This paper (based on a "101" presentation at the 2018 Korea TESOL International Conference) aims to share with teachers eight practical points to improve learners' fluency in English oral communication. They are connected to four key concepts for good-quality language learning and teaching tasks: task authenticity, impromptu responses, intelligibility-oriented tasks, and negotiation of meaning. Initially, the definitions of good "language tasks" and "communicative activities" are presented. Then, the eight points for communicative language materials to help learners produce longer utterances and increase their fluency are discussed one by one, illustrated with examples: (a) providing meaningful (not mechanical) tasks, (b) making use of context, (c) providing open (not closed) tasks, (d) providing authentic (not artificial) tasks, (e) providing tasks for practicing communication strategies, (f) making a set of questions that lead to the main idea, (g) producing longer utterances with better understanding of English discourse structure, and (h) considering language-use situations and language functions. Finally, the four essential key concepts are summarized.

INTRODUCTION

The Japanese government's present curriculum guidelines by the Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture, Sciences, and Technology (MEXT, 2011a, 2011b) show the directions of education in its section "General Policies Regarding Curriculum Formation" as follows:

> In providing educational activities, each school should create specifically tailored educational activities by making use of originality and ingenuity in order to foster in students *a zest for life*. In doing so, each school should be committed to enhancing its instruction to enable students
> (1) to solidly acquire basic and fundamental knowledge and skills,
> (2) to foster *the ability to think, to make decisions, to express themselves* and other abilities that are necessary to solve problems by using acquired knowledge and skills,
> (3) to cultivate an attitude of proactive learning and to develop pupils' individuality.
> In working toward these goals, each school should enhance its students' *language activities*, ... [Emphases added]

In relation to points (1) and (2), teachers need to help students improve their communicative competence, especially discourse competence, including raising their awareness of coherence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communicative Competence

The components of communicative competence have been delineated since the 1980s (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Canale, 1983; Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995; Savignon, 1983). Canale (1983) argues that communicative competence consists of four sub-components: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. As shown in Figure 1, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell, (1995) put discourse competence in the center, coordinating it with other components, which means that discourse competence is central in importance.

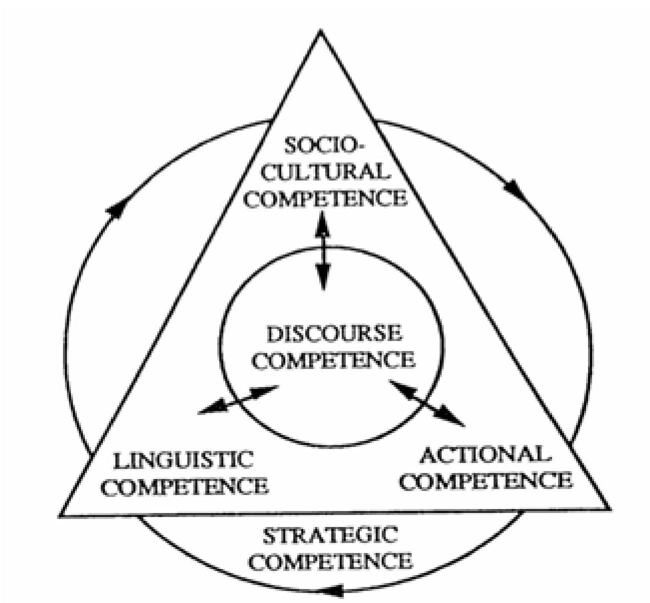

FIGURE 1. Schematic Representation of Communicative Competence. (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrell, 1995)

What Is a Task?

Numerous researchers to date have tried to describe the most effective classroom language-learning tasks. In relation to the components of a task, the present author believes that the most comprehensive explanation has been given by Nunan (1989, p. 10):

> I shall want to suggest that, in analytic terms, *tasks* will contain some form of *input* data which might be verbal (for example, a dialogue or reading passage) or non-verbal (for example, a picture sequence) and an *activity* which is in some way derived from the input and which sets out what the *learners* are to do in

> relation to the input. The task will also have (implicitly or explicitly) a *goal* and *roles for teachers and learners*. In synthetic terms, we shall find, lessons and units of work will consist, among other things, of sequences of tasks, ... [Emphases added]

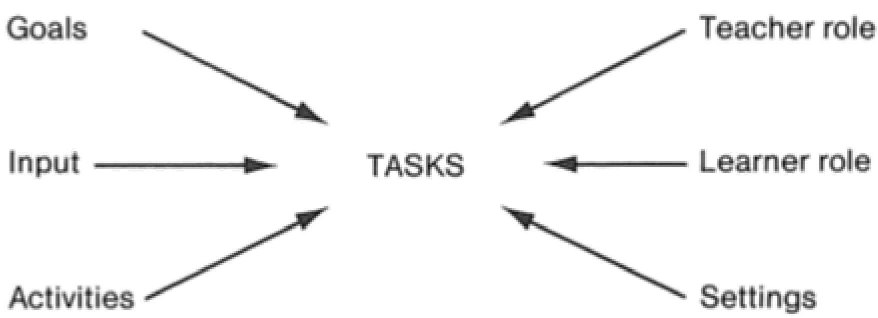

FIGURE 2. A Framework for Analyzing Communicative Tasks. (Nunan, 1989, p. 11)

What Is a Communicative Activity?

Many people have defined the concept of “communicative activity,” but the one described by Scrivener (1994, p. 62) is very simple and comprehensive:

> We normally communicate when one of us has information (facts, options, ideas, etc.) that another does not have. This is known as an “*information gap*.” The aim of a communicative activity in class is to get learners to *use the language* they are learning to *interact* in *realistic* and *meaningful* ways, usually involving *exchange of information*. [Emphases added]

Scrivener’s idea can be visualized as in Figure 3.

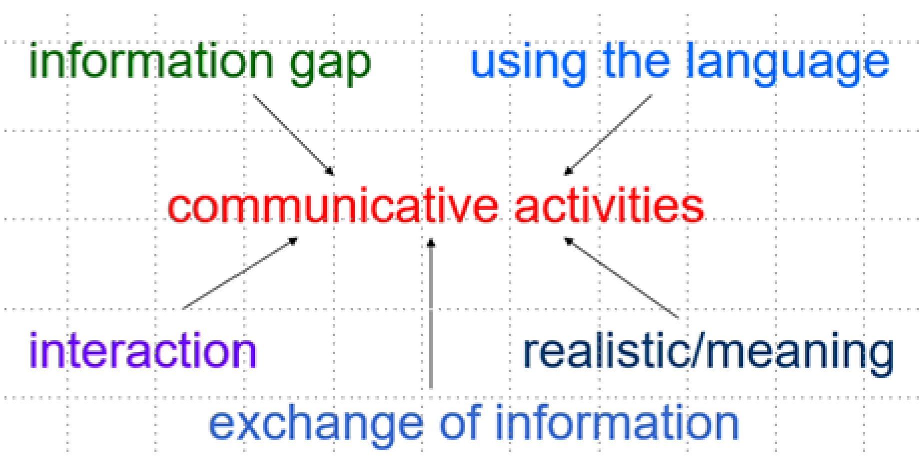

FIGURE 3. Some Key Words/Phrases for “Communicative Activities.”

Eight Points for Communicative Activities

In this section, eight viewpoints or considerations to make classroom activities more communicative are proposed.

Providing Meaningful Tasks

Language tasks can broadly be divided into three groups: mechanical, meaningful, and communicative tasks. For beginners, mechanical drills are crucial, especially for acquiring knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and usage. However, mechanical translation work is not enough for real language use, so students should learn when particular words are used in certain contexts. Here are some examples:

Fill in the blanks with an appropriate word.
For junior high school students:
(a) Our plane had some trouble and could not take off. We had to wait at the ________ for two hours.
(b) Susie wants something to drink. She is very ________.

For senior high school students:
(a) A young man was shot in the street. The police are looking for a ________.

Making Use of "Context"

Unfortunately, teachers often ask students to translate sentences, but translation rarely guarantees proper language use when necessary. Instead, teachers should provide appropriate contexts where students want to produce the information voluntarily. That is how real language works. Here are some examples:

For junior high school students
This is what Yumi's mother said to her one morning. Write something using "will."
"Yenni, it's already 7:30. Hurry up, or ___________."

For senior high school students
Write one English sentence using "should have" and express your idea about Koji's behavior.

Takuya has been in hospital for two weeks. He was trying to cross the street against the red light and was hit by a car. He broke his leg and was taken to hospital by ambulance. ____________________.

Providing Open Tasks

Language tasks can be divided into two kinds: open tasks and closed tasks. When teachers make language tests, closed tasks are a lot easier for marking. However, students are living language learners and can be very creative. Those creative language experiences nurture the real "use" of the target language. Let us look at the following exercise:

Fill in the blanks.
(a) A: Do you have any identification?
B: Yes. Here's my ________.

(b) A: Let's go to karaoke this evening.
B: Thanks. _________________. Sorry. Maybe next time.

Students can put "passport," "student ID," or "driver's license," in the blank in (a). As for the blank in (b), possible answers could include the following:

I'm eating out with my family today.
I have an English test tomorrow.
Today is my mother's birthday.
I don't feel very well today. (/I have a cold.)
I don't have much money.
I have my first date with Stephen.

In class, teachers can put students in pairs and tell them to take turns between A and B, and to follow the rule in which each student has to say something new or different from the previous answers. In this way, the learners have to be creative and think of appropriate coherent messages immediately.

Providing Authentic Tasks

Teachers often believe that they need to provide a lot of pedagogical and artificial language materials, especially in the early stages of language acquisition. Although some artificial language is needed, teachers should not forget to gradually give as many authentic materials that reflect the students' daily lives as possible. For example, the conversation recording for the following listening task is very authentic (see Appendix), but beginning learners can still work on the task, as the task is not too demanding and students use their life experiences as schema.

Listen to the dialogue between a landlady and a student. Put a cross on the picture where the rule is being broken. Make brief notes of each rule.

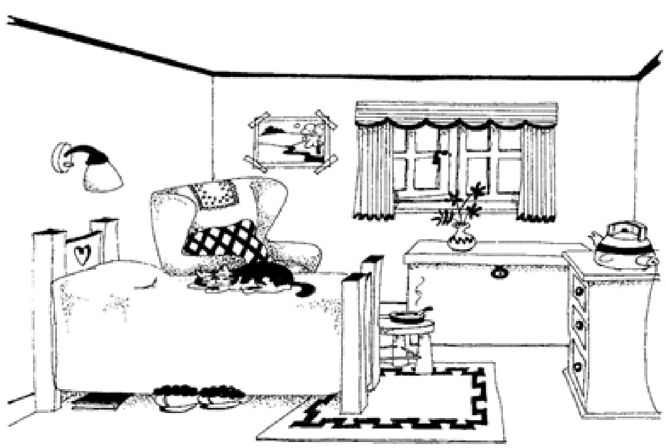

FIGURE 4. Unit 5: Finding Out the House Rules. (Blundell & Stokes, 1981)

Answer Key (to Figure 4)
Cats are not allowed to be upstairs.
Smoking is not allowed in the bedroom.
Sticking pictures on the walls with sellotape is not allowed. (It may leave marks.)
Remember to close the window when you go out.
Boil the kettle on the floor, not on the chest of drawers.

There are a lot of authentic materials available such as telephone recordings, tour guide talks, and announcements at train and bus stations, airports, and shopping centers. If teachers control the difficulty of tasks, which learners have to do after recording, then they can use almost any authentic materials.

Providing Tasks for Practicing Communication Strategies

Communication does not always go as expected. To overcome or avoid communication breakdowns, teachers need to help students learn how to paraphrase, use circumlocution, mime, and appeal for assistance (see Tarone, 1981, pp. 286–287). The following are some examples of paraphrasing exercises to help L2 speakers when proper vocabulary items do not come to mind.

Guess what your friend is talking about.
(a) We can heat something to eat or drink with this machine. If we wait for some time, we can enjoy hot food or drinks. (Answer: microwave)
(b) I want to get a cooking tool. I need it to take the skin of potatoes off. (Answer: peeler)

The curriculum guidelines of Japan (MEXT, 2011a, 2011b) clearly encourage students to use those communication strategies when necessary.

Junior High School: Understanding correctly what is spoken by asking the speaker for repetition. (for listening)
Senior High School: Making good use of basic expressions that are effective in asking others to repeat or in rephrasing what one wants to say.

Some useful expressions that junior and senior high school students should be able to use when asking for clarification are the following:

You mean ... ?
That means ... ?
Is it ... ?
Is that ... ?

Making a Set of Questions to Lead to the Main Idea

It is usually difficult for beginners to work on open-ended questions, which require understanding whole messages as well as complicated local pieces of information. The teacher can prepare a couple of questions to help students answer more difficult questions. Please look at the dialogue and questions below (Tatsukawa, Lauer, & Yamamoto, 2017, p. 10):

At a Party
M: Excuse me, have we met somewhere before?
W: I'm not sure. (slight pause as they think about where they might have met)
M: Oh, yes! Now I remember. You work at the new store near the train station, don't you?
W: Yes, that's right.
M: Well, I shop there once in a while. My name is Mitsuo.
W: It's a pleasure to meet you, Mitsuo. I'm Sandra, Sandra Berg.
M: Are you having a good time?
W: Yeah, it's great. I've already got a couple of new friends.

***Level 1: True or False?**
(a) They know each other very well.
(b) The woman works at the train station.
(c) The man sometimes drops in at the store near the station.

***Level 2: Questions that help understand the whole discourse better.**
(1) Do they know each other well?
(2) Did they meet before?
(3) Where (How) did they meet?

***Level 3: An advanced/global question**
What is the relationship between the two speakers?

Considering the students' proficiency levels, the questions of Level 1 (or Levels 1 and 2) can be deleted, but those are surely helpful for beginners to work on the more difficult Level-3 questions. In other words, easier questions are of some help before tackling more difficult ones.

Producing a Longer Utterance Through a Better Understanding of English Discourse

Students need to learn what pieces of information they should include to keep "politeness" in communication. Discourse analysis provides us with some useful findings. For example, note the following interaction.

A: Would you like to come over for a drink tomorrow?
B: Yes, that would be nice. (accepting)

A: Would you like to come over for a drink tomorrow?
B: Yes, if it could be after six. (accepting with condition)

A: Would you like to come over for a drink tomorrow?
B: No. (rejecting)

A: Would you like to come over for a drink tomorrow?
B: Thanks very much, but I'm afraid I'm booked up tomorrow night, what about...
(McCarthy, 1991, pp. 120–121)

As for accepting responses, interlocutors do not have to worry about politeness so much, but when rejecting an invitation, they need to be more careful to avoid loss of face for the inviter. McCarthy (1991) explains “internal structure of a discourse” in this case as follows:

thanks very much	(appreciation)
I’m afraid	(softener)
I’m booked up	(reason)
what about ...	(face-saver)

Teachers need to explain and teach that speakers should include some reason when they turn down requests and invitations. Nunan (1993, p. 113) says that there is evidence that these skills could and should be explicitly taught.

Considering Language-Use Situations and Language Functions

The curriculum guidelines for junior high schools in Japan (MEXT, 2011a, 2011b) clearly show examples of language-use situations and language functions.

Examples of Language-Use Situations

a. Situations where set phrases are used frequently: greetings, self-introduction, telephone calls, shopping, asking or telling the way, traveling, at the table, etc.
b. Situations familiar to the students’ everyday life: home life, studies and activities at school, local events, etc.

Examples of Language Functions

a. Facilitating communication: calling attention, nodding, requesting repetition, repeating, etc.
b. Expressing feelings: thanking, complaining, praising, apologizing, etc.
c. Conveying information: explaining, reporting, presenting, describing, etc.
d. Conveying thoughts and intentions: offering, promising, giving an opinion, agreeing, disagreeing, accepting, declining, etc.

Language functions can be explained as the purposes for which utterances or units of language are used. In language teaching, language functions are often described as categories of behavior (e.g., requests, apologies, complaints, offers, and compliments). The functional uses of language cannot be determined simply by studying the grammatical structures of sentences. For example, sentences in the imperative form may perform a variety of different functions:

Give me that book.	(Order)
Pass the jam.	(Request)
Turn right at the corner.	(Instruction)
Try the smoked salmon.	(Suggestion)
Come round on Sunday.	(Invitation)

(Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 148)

Holmes (1992, p. 289) also urges that there are various pragmatic ways to have someone sit down with different expressions:

(Please) Sit down.
Would you please sit down?

Your legs must be tired.
You must be worn out.
I can't see.

Many researchers have described the relationships between grammatical forms and their communicative functions as in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5. Form and function: The relationships between the grammatical forms of a language and their communicative functions. (McDonough & Shaw, 2003, p. 23)

CONCLUSIONS

In summary, it can be said that there are four keys to developing good quality materials (tasks) and communicative language activities:

1. Materials and language tasks should be authentic. Authentic materials make it easier for learners to imagine situations for language use.
2. Open tasks, not closed or mechanical tasks, should be used with students as much as possible. Students can deduce how to make impromptu responses in real life.
3. Intelligibility-oriented tasks should be provided where students are expected to exchange new information. Information-gap activities guarantee that students will communicate and exchange necessary information.
4. Activities have to be as interactive as possible. The tasks should require some negotiation of meaning, with students using appropriate communication strategies when necessary.

These principles are essential for improving learners' discourse competence, and in particular, raising their awareness of coherence. Only by doing this will students produce longer utterances more fluently.

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Appendix

Transcript of Listening Task for Unit 5

Judy: Well, it's a lovely room. It's quite a nice size.
Landlady: Oh, yes. It's a good-sized room, and it's well-furnished.
Judy: Yes. Yes, I can see that. Erm ... is there anything that I should know?
Landlady: Well, I don't allow the cat to go upstairs at all.
Judy: Oh? Not at all.
Landlady: No, absolutely not. I don't like cats upstairs. (Oh right.) And I don't allow people to smoke in the bedroom.
Judy: Oh, no, no. I agree with that. I don't smoke anyway.
Landlady: And ... erm ... I don't allow people to stick pictures up on the walls with sellotape. (Oh?) Well, you see, when you take the picture down the sellotape leaves ... erm ... a mark on the paper.
Judy: Oh, I see. Can I use Blu Tack or something?
Landlady: Oh, yes. Something like that (Oh right.) is quite acceptable. (Lovely.) And there are just two more things (Oh.) if you don't mind. (Yes.) If you do go out, would you please remember to close the window?
Judy: Right. I'll do that.
Landlady: And there's the kettle here, as you can see (Yes.) but when you boil the kettle could you please put it on the floor and not on the chest of drawers.
Judy: Oh, I see. Does it make a mark or something?
Landlady: Yes, it would probably leave a mark.
Judy: Oh, right. I'll do that then.
Landlady: Is ... is that all right?
Judy: Well, it sounds very fair. Thank you very much.
Landlady: Yes, all right. (OK.) Good.

(Blundell & Stokes, 1981, p. 20)

Workshop Reports

Integrating Technology with Extensive Reading

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This paper is a review of the conference session on integrating technology into extensive reading classrooms. A framework for assessing a tool is given using the SAMR model and the backwards design approach. The SAMR model allows for a critical appraisal of educational tools, and in tandem with backwards design, allows for effective and meaningful syllabus design when integrating technology. As both time-saving tools and assessment augmentation strategies, the tools demonstrated in the workshop are reviewed in the context of the framework in order to allow reading teachers to consider utilizing the tools in their own classrooms.

Introduction

This paper should be of interest for those presently using technology in the classroom to find some reflection for the present rationale of technology in the classroom as well as those new or unfamiliar with some of the strategies explained. As noted by (Ertmer, 1999, p. 58), strategies for implantation of technology into a classroom are often lacking in teacher preparation courses, and so, by introducing some basic tools for implementing technology into the reading classroom, this paper hopes to allow some more skeptical or hesitant teachers to experiment in integrating technology. Further, by offering a framework for analyzing the value of a tool in integration to a reading course, the paper will allow for teacher's to gain a better understanding of which applications are of use. The tutorials from the session are available online at the link provided.

Purpose of Educational Tools: SAMR and Backwards Design

The SAMR model developed by Ruben Puentedura, analyzes the function of a digital tool on a hierarchy running from substitution through augmentation, modification, and redefinition, and allows teachers to identify how a tool can "transform learning experiences so they result in higher levels of achievement for students" (Schrock, 2018, para. 1). The SAMR model has gained popularity, as it is a relatively simple yet accessible way for teachers to "generate ideas about ways to modify future instruction to better make use of the available technology" (Hilton, 2015, p. 71). Importantly, "both the SAMR model and Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives support the development of key competences" (Netolicka

& Simonova, 2017, p. 281), in particular (to this paper), critical assessment and communication in a foreign/second language.

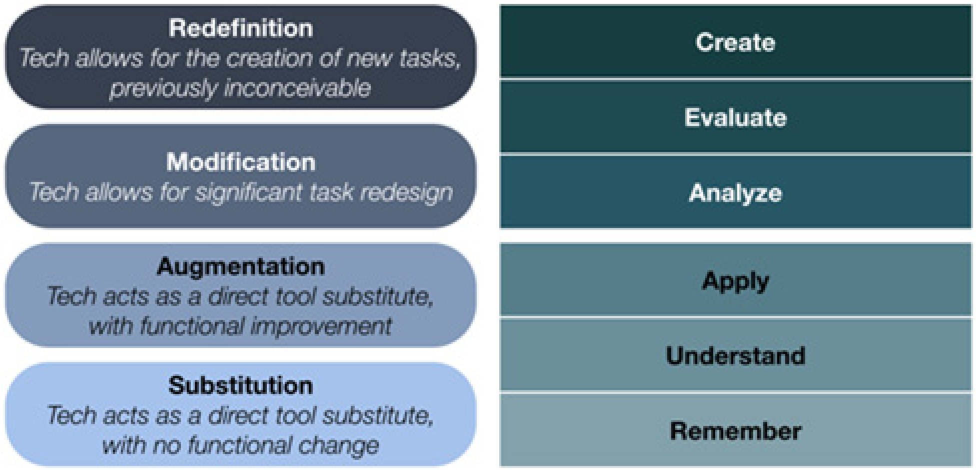

FIGURE 1. Association of SAMR and Bloom's Taxonomy. (Puentedura, 2014)

To make the most effective use of the SAMR model, it is important to remain realistic about the tools you are using as "different representations can lead to misunderstandings and confusion" (Hamilton, Rosenberg, & Akcaoglu, 2016, p. 435), with some interpretations using the model to shoehorn a particular tool into the higher end of the taxonomy when it may actually be failing to achieve anything even at the substitution level. For example, an application that allows students to "battle" each other in a vocabulary game, may be far more tedious and time-consuming than anything that would originally appear in the original syllabus design, whence the importance of backward design in technology implementation.

Certain tools can be over-restrictive in their effect on curriculum design, and fix a course into particular forms of content and assessment that best fit the tools themselves. This puts a curriculum designer in a position whereby "we limit ourselves to what we already know the tools can do" (Firek, 2012, p. 36). The backward design approach begins by identifying the target goals and objectives for a lesson or course, identifying appropriate evidence and then deciding on the experiences and instruction necessary (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005, p. 17–18). Therefore, the tool should fit the purpose of the strategy, be it instruction, content, or assessment. If the tool is not fit for achieving the purpose, then it should not be implemented. For example, if an instructor confines themselves to only an LMS that is readily available to them, then they may find themselves designing assessments that best fit the tools on the system, rather than identifying tools that best fit the needs of a particular course element. By using a backward design approach, the course designer can best make the judgment on whether or not a tool is appropriate or inhibitive.

Extensive Reading in the Classroom

Traditional methods in reading courses are particularly demanding of class time, and developments in collaborative reading approaches have extended that. Moreover, the demands of a standardized syllabus can threaten to shelve the extensive reading method in a course, as creating a meaningful form of measurable assessment can be difficult when students are free to choose their own texts, and existing graded readers may be considered too varied for standardized assessment. Educational technology offers new opportunities to manage this element of the extensive reading approach. The tools described in this paper are effective in substituting traditional class-time exercises, such as the reading itself or the writing of an exchange of ideas, and the teacher therefore is able to utilize more of the classroom time for pre- and post-reading strategies, placing more emphasis on the expertise of the instructor. Further, as collaborative reading strategies have been shown to be effective in terms of improving reading comprehension and improving vocabulary competency (Karabuga & Kaya, 2013, p. 629), the tools described also enhance the collaborative elements of a reading course.

Effective Educational Tools

A simple search engine query will return a plethora of articles listing "essential" education applications. While many tools on the surface can be attractive, the principles described above allow for a critical appraisal of which tools might actually be useful. Students are not going to be engaged with applications as a result of novelty, when digital media is readily available; therefore it is important to ensure that the tool matches the goals and objectives of a course rather than be implemented for the sake of adding a technology element. The following section describes three readily accessible tools useful for implementing within a reading course, with reflection on the SAMR model approach.

Cloud Documents

Cloud documents are common, and students are typically highly familiar with them. A tool such as Google Docs allows a traditional word document to be accessed and edited anywhere, across multiple devices and by multiple users. This type of tool is an excellent starting point for "digitizing" the reading classroom. For example, a typical pre- and during-reading activity is compiling a vocabulary list. Cloud documents allow students to readily share their lists and work collaboratively on them as they read, as opposed to compiling a personal list on paper. Note that having students produce work in Google Docs is substitution, it is a transfer of the same analogue activity to a digital format, but the benefits come from the ease of analysis and access when it comes to utilizing the output in the classroom.

TABLE 1. Vocabulary Lists: Analogue and Digital

Analogue	Digital
Students write down key vocabulary that can be shared in class or reviewed individually.	Students write down key vocabulary in a cloud document that be *shared at any time* and reviewed by other classmates *outside of class*.

This type of document also allows for ease of adjustment for individual students. As noted in Cabaroglu and Yurdaisik (2008, p. 135), "Teachers have to learn students' skills that help them understand the texts," and the readily available output provided by cloud documents, offers a strategy to achieve this. For example, with vocabulary lists, the ease of access across multiple students' work allows the teacher to identify common words that require reinforcement or where individual students have struggled with particular elements of vocabulary.

A more advanced substitution option that begins to augment an activity comes through the collaborative approach to extensive reading. The reading circle approach, whereby students are put into small groups but have different tasks for the same reading is synthesized using class time in an analogue method. In digital form, however, a student tasked with finding case studies for events in a chapter and a student asked to come up with discussion questions based on the reading could complete the task simultaneously in a cloud document, enabling students to be more ready for post-reading strategies in classroom time.

TABLE 2. Collaborative Reading: Analogue and Digital

Analogue	Digital
Students complete reading role sheets individually and share ideas in the classroom. Students take notes for their own reading diaries or journals in the class.	Students complete reading roles on a cloud document that is shared immediately amongst the group. Discussion on each role can take place inside and outside of the classroom.

Google Forms

Google Forms began as a survey tool but now offers some power options for a teacher. It is easy to develop quizzes that allow for a teacher to quickly identify difficulties amongst students, and it offers instant output on individual answer papers and patterns amongst the whole group. Students can also work collaboratively in the cloud to create their own quizzes, a far more efficient approach than doing such a task in analogue form, and it also gives the teacher more accessible insight into what kinds of questions students are focusing on.

TABLE 3. Text-Based Quizzes: Analogue and Digital

Analogue	Digital
Teachers and/or students generate a quiz to review vocabulary or other material from a text. Questions could be shared amongst a class or prepared as homework.	The quiz is created online, amongst all of the students, with immediate feedback and explanations.

One of Google Forms' most powerful tools is the threaded form. This allows responses to be directed down different branches. While this is substitution on the surface, it offers some genuine augmentative advantages, given the difficulty and time-consuming manner of creating activities that ask a respondent to go to a different section. It also offers the teacher the space to create new types of tasks, such as giving students their own chances to make character choices with open-ended consequences. Further, the task can be put across to students to develop their own thoughts and connections to readings by devising their own types of challenges for each other, allowing the teacher to begin moving up the taxonomy with the technology. This transforms a character-perspective question into something much more creative and demanding of students' understanding of a text.

Wikis

Another opportunity for post-reading reports is to have student output be published online on a wiki tool. Tools such as PBWorks can be used to have students create character, plot, or definition summaries in what quickly becomes a student-produced, on-line knowledge base for the reading. This again allows us to move up the taxonomy as the tool is open to manipulation by the teacher and can be made to best fit the objectives of the course, albeit in a form previously not possible. While an assessment such as a chapter review would be submitted directly, and possibly shared amongst other students for review, the on-line format of the wiki redefines some of the assessment criteria, allowing for more advanced augmentation of the desired student output.

CONCLUSION

When employing models such as SAMR, a teacher must keep sight of the learning goals and not aim solely for "redefinition" wherever possible (Shaw, 2015). Understanding how the model aids the design of a curriculum is key, and by introducing several well-known tools at the lower end of the SAMR hierarchy, this paper hopes to have given a clearer definition of how to implement the model.

The purpose of focusing on the "lower" end of the SAMR model is to demonstrate the ease with which tools identifiable as "useful" from the backward design approach can be easily integrated into the syllabus and also open new possibilities in a reading course by reducing the more time-burdensome, in-class tasks. This allows the curriculum designer to focus on the higher ends of Bloom's taxonomy within the classroom itself, and also put their pedagogical approach to greater effect. A teacher must maintain their autonomy when designing a course, and too many educational tools require shoehorning or modifying assessment and strategy to fit the tool. The tools presented in this paper are simple, but that is entirely the point, design remains in the hands of the course designer, and the tools can fit seamlessly into existing course strategies.

Tutorial Links

The workshop gave practical examples of the tools described above, including examples. Tutorials for using these tools are available at www.mikebrandon.me/kotesol.html.

The Author

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Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into EFL Programs

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The purpose of this workshop was to present components of critical thinking skills that can be integrated into an Academic English program for EFL university students in Korea and extended to other relevant EFL programs. The particular approach adopted by the presenter was logic intensive: an approach not uncommon in some non-EFL critical thinking courses (MacPherson, 1998). The lesser-developed and yet highly relevant component of this approach was that of focusing on techniques for enhancing foreign language acquisition specifically through the skill sets involved in the study of selected topics in logic. That foreign language acquisition can be enhanced through such means was the central claim of this workshop, and this claim has some recent research support (Safranj, 2016). Methodology and relevant exercises were presented in four segments to support this claim, from the basics in argument structures to advanced functions in definition and dispute identification.

INTRODUCTION

In many university ESL and EFL programs there is a demand for "content-based material." The effectiveness of "high-interest, 'compelling' input in multiple-language acquisition" was something highlighted by Stephen Krashen (2018) in his plenary address at the 2018 KOTESOL International Conference entitled "The Secrets of Hyper-polygots." The integration of critical thinking skills into EFL (and ESL) programs is a potentially fertile approach to this challenge. This workshop focused on such a dimensional approach with engaging and interactive material for the use of language acquisition, simultaneously endeavoring to enhance students' logical and general analytical abilities. As proposed by Gardiner (1983) in his groundbreaking book *Frames of Mind*, there are multiple intelligences in which this kind of criteria, the fourth in Gardiner's seven abilities for meeting intelligence modality criteria – the logical-mathematical – can have relevance to the field of language learning.

With the title "Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into EFL Programs," the parameters of integration are entirely flexible and the content may be incorporated as a module, or modules, in a more general curriculum, or as has also been done by the presenter of this workshop, it can be taught as a specialized course (elective) related to language acquisition.

This workshop report will now proceed in a similar format as the workshop, starting with a presentation of the use of basic logical concepts: propositions, premises, conclusions, deductive and inductive arguments, truth, and validity.

From this foundation, this paper proceeds to analysis of arguments, highlighting techniques of argument recognition and diagraming. All these skills culminate in one of the most dynamic components: solving problems through reasoning. The third segment, "The Uses of Language," is in some ways the most relevant in the field of language acquisition, although requiring a more advanced level of proficiency. It also lays the foundation to move into the fourth segment, definitions, in which interactive exercises in dispute identification are presented. Two other relevant segments have been omitted due to time constraints in the workshop. These were an extension of the last section of "Disputes and Definitions" into "Definitions and Their Uses" and one of the core topics: fallacies. Just treatment of these topics would involve a workshop of similar length.

SEGMENT 1: THE BASICS

Propositions

In the first lecture of the elective course I teach, and also when introducing the module in the general academic English program, a definition and brief explanation of the nature of "propositions" is given. Providing an awareness of what distinguishes a proposition from other forms of utterance is an expedient starting point. The distinguishing component of a proposition is that it contains a truth-function. To make this more salient, students are shown that the truth-function need not necessarily be determined, for example, in the proposition *There is life on other planets in our galaxy*. Furthermore, propositions are not confined to any given language, for the same proposition can be expressed in almost any known language. Thirdly, propositions are not to be confused with sentences: the same proposition can be expressed by two grammatically different sentences: *John read the book* and *The book was read by John*. Fourthly, there are simple propositions of which only one truth or falsity is expressed, and there are compound propositions containing two or more simple propositions. Students are asked how many propositions they can identify in a sentence like the following:

> The British were at the gates of Hamburg and Brenen, and threatening to cut off Germany from occupied Denmark.
>
> (Shirer, 1960, as cited in Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 6)

Brief mention can also be made of two special kinds of propositions that do not assert the truth of their components as in the case of propositions using *or* (disjunctive or alternative) and propositions using *if*, *then* (hypothetical or conditional). In the first case, the proposition is false if both its components are false. In the second case, the proposition is false if the antecedent is true and the consequent is false.[1]

Once this fundamental building block has been shaped, it is then easy to provide definitions of other elementary terms such as "premise" and "conclusion," along with "argument" and "inference." Understanding the concept of "inference" as “a process of linking propositions by affirming one proposition (conclusion) on the basis of one or more other propositions (premises)” (Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 7) is of profound significance, if not deceptively simple.

It was at this stage that the first task set was introduced in the workshop. This involved exercises in which students were asked to identify premises and conclusions in passages (primarily conclusions). It was shown how this could be made relatively simple with passages containing what are commonly termed premise and conclusion indicators. Premise indicators use such words or phrases as *since*, *because*, *for*, and *for the reason that*; conclusion indicators use such words or phrases as *therefore*, *hence*, *so*, and *for these reasons*.

Presenting students with passages that contain no such indicators can make the task more challenging. On the first task sheet distributed in this workshop, problems like the following were distributed and participants were asked just to identify the conclusions.

> We can avert a majority of cancers by prevention efforts, even if we can never get straight on the causes; more research on prevention and less on cure makes increasing sense.
>
> (Callahan, 1995, as cited in Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 10)

Having students reinsert the conclusion and/or the premise indicators often led to a correct answer and adequate comprehension of that answer. Furthermore, although the vocabulary used in this kind of example may seem difficult for lower-level students, dictionary usage led to an adequate level of comprehension in most cases. Quizzes and exams with these kinds of problems were entirely open-book. I advocate that understanding this kind of relationship between premise(s) and conclusion(s) expressed in a foreign language can do much in terms of enhancing students comprehension level of the kinds of passages presented here.

Inductive and Deductive Arguments, Truth, and Validity

With a clear definition of the term “argument” given as “a structured group of propositions, reflecting an inference” (Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 7), a straightforward distinction can be made between an inductive and deductive argument. Inductive arguments are those in which the conclusion can only become more or less likely, while deductive arguments are those in which the conclusion is claimed to follow necessarily. This leads into the next component in this segment on the basics, which was to have students recognize the difference between “truth,” which applies only to propositions, and “validity,” which applies only to arguments. Using this terminology, arguments are not true or false but rather only valid or invalid.

The second set of tasks presented displayed exercises in which students are required to distinguish valid from invalid argument forms. This involved the (initially puzzling to some students) claim that arguments can contain false premises and conclusions and yet remain valid. Strictly, from the point of view of logic, a valid argument is one that cannot have true premises and a false conclusion. Cases were shown like the following:

[F] All four-legged creatures have wings.
[F] All spiders have four legs.
[F] Therefore, all spiders have wings. (Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 17)

In such cases, if the premises were true, the conclusion would necessarily follow, making the argument valid. It could then be emphasized to students for debate purposes that in less obvious cases, the premises need to be attacked, but not the argumentative form itself. An exercise sheet was distributed in the workshop showing a large combination of valid and invalid argument forms in order to allow students to become more familiar with some of those forms. Getting students to explain the reason for invalidity has proven to be a useful language acquisition tool. For example, in a simplified invalid argument form such as the following,

If I have a credit card, I can make an online purchase.
I do not have a credit card.
Therefore, I cannot make an online purchase.

the student is almost compelled to give the explanation that there are other ways to make an online purchase, and the vocabulary is readily available if they are not already familiar with it. To illustrate a slightly more sophisticated case, below is a valid argument form with what appears as a more contestable conclusion:

If it is morally permissible to kill an eight-month-old fetus, then it is morally permissible to kill a newborn infant.
It is not morally permissible to kill a newborn infant.
Therefore, it is not morally permissible to kill an eight-month-old fetus.
(Rubin, n.d.)

The truth of the first proposition would need to be attacked for a refutation of the argument, and students may readily be motivated to do so. Teachers are encouraged to find relevant valid and invalid argument forms that students will readily respond to with explanations.

SEGMENT 2: ANALYZING ARGUMENTS

The Power of the Enthymeme

In this workshop, I advocated enthymemes as being a powerful tool to enhance language acquisition and clarity in structure. An enthymeme is defined as "an argument containing an unstated proposition" (Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 36). The set of exercises distributed in relation to this involved having students formulate a missing proposition that could take the form of a premise or a conclusion in the argument. This also integrated and further cemented more of the basics mentioned above. Exercises contained arguments such as the following:

> All physicians are college graduates, so all members of the American Medical Association must be college graduates. (Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 283)

The first step in formulating the unstated proposition is to employ some of the basics covered in the previous segment to discover if it is a conclusion or premise that is missing. The presence of a conclusion indicator *so* suggests that a premise is missing. In order to make the conclusion follow necessarily, the missing premise can be formulated as "All members of the American Medical Association are physicians." In Academic English Foundation-level classes tested at Korea University, as high as ninety percent (90%) of students were correctly formulating this kind of missing propositions, in many cases with improved sentence syntax from their usual syntax. I suggest that understanding the enthymeme also improves coherence in language, although further testing would be required to prove this.

Another example with an unformulated conclusion, as opposed to an unformulated premise can be given as follows:

> Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.
> (George Orwell, *1984*, as cited in Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 285)

In this case, neither a premise nor conclusion indicator appears in the passage. Yet, if the two propositions are taken to be true, the result is seen to follow necessarily; in this case, the proposition "Who controls the present controls the future." Again, in test situations, more than ninety percent of students at the above-mentioned level were correctly formulating this kind of proposition with improved syntax.

Argument Diagramming

Another powerful tool for enhancing comprehension levels in language acquisition is to be found in the employment of argument diagramming. In this case, a two-dimensional representation of an argument showing the relationship between premises and conclusions is given. Workshop participants were presented with such diagrams and methods for creating student exercises with those diagrams. The scope of this cannot be fully presented here. Below is a simplified sample exercise.

> **Instructions**: Choose the best diagram for the argument(s) stated in the following passage. Then write the proposition numbers correctly into the diagram.

> (1) Genes and proteins are discovered, not invented. (2) Inventions are patentable, discoveries are not. (3) Thus, protein patents are intrinsically flawed.
> (Alroy, 2000, as cited in Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 28)

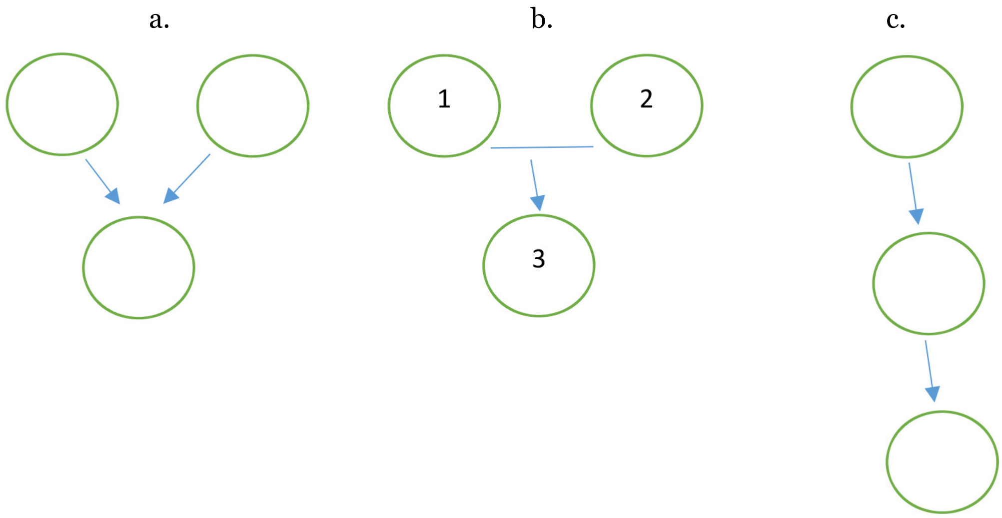

FIGURE 1. Sample Exercise of Argument Diagramming.

In Figure 1, "b" shows a correct relationship between premises and the conclusion in the above passage. Proposition 3 is identified as the conclusion and is numbered in the lowest circle on a vertical plane. Premises 1 and 2 need to corroborate to establish the conclusion and are connected with a horizontal line. Note that in case "a," the conclusion could follow independently from each premise. In case "c," there is a (sub)conclusion that becomes a premise for a main conclusion. For specific examples of these cases, along with more complex combinations, refer to Copi and Cohen's (2005) *Introduction to Logic*. My innovation was to create multi-choice exercises with the propositions numbered for the students. Studying the relationships between the propositions and representing that relationship in the above diagram form clearly enhances comprehension skills using a more visual dynamic in which most students could fully engage.

Solving Problems in Reasoning

Some of the most positive feedback in the courses where this program has been implemented has come from this component focusing on the application of many of the above skill sets to solve problems that require reasoning for their solution. Participants in this workshop were given one (of many) problem(s) that had been presented to students in the critical thinking elective and asked to apply reasoning skills. The sample problem was as follows:

> In a certain mythical community, politicians never tell the truth, and nonpoliticians always tell the truth. A stranger meets three natives and asks one of them, "Are you a politician?" The first native answers the question. The second native then reports that the first native denied being a politician. The third native says that the first native *is* a politician.
> How many of these three natives are politicians?[2] (Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 65)

Understanding this kind of problem does not require a high level of comprehension in the foreign language and having students reason it out (with some solution strategies being provided) has led to some vigorous discussion (as also occurred in this workshop).

Segment 3: The Uses of Language

As mentioned in the introduction, this segment relates most directly with language acquisition. The topics of basic functions of language, discourse serving multiple functions, and language forms and language functions have tremendous potential for development in language courses. However, just the topics of distinguishing emotive and neutral language, and distinguishing agreement and disagreement in attitude and belief, were given brief mention in this workshop.

With regard to distinguishing emotive and neutral language, the nature of how different words with the same meaning, for example "bureaucrat," "government official," and "public servant," have different emotional impact was highlighted. Understanding more about this, along with the general nature of euphemisms, was instrumental in developing the second distinction mentioned above between "belief" and "attitude." Here, "belief" is defined more in terms of what can be established through reason and argument, while "attitude" is defined as more of an arbitrary value one holds. Attitude therefore connects more with the emotional impact given to words, while belief at least aspires to greater emotional neutrality and a reasoning process.

While time parameters prevented exercises on this being given in the workshop, students in both my critical thinking elective and academic English programs have been given exercises whereby they are asked to distinguish agreement and/or disagreement in belief and attitude in short passages. This also proved instrumental in enhancing the students' understanding of the language. For example, take two proverbial expressions:

a. A stitch in time saves nine.
b. Better late than never. (Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 88)

Here we can see that both "a" and "b" could agree in belief that time is important but may disagree in attitude about how they value time.

Only students at an upper-intermediate level to an advanced level could really begin to master some of this material. However, at these levels, much can be done to enhance understanding of the second or foreign language. This segment also becomes quite pivotal for mastering the final segment dealt with in this workshop, namely, disputes and definitions.

Segment 4: Disputes and Definitions

The final segment of this workshop built on the skill sets from the previous segment in order to venture into exercises in which students are required to identify three different kinds of language disputes: (a) obviously genuine, (b) merely verbal, and (c) apparently verbal but really genuine. Although this material had been presented to students at an upper-intermediate to advanced level in academic English programs, the level of difficulty in mastering these exercises suggests that it is more appropriate for advanced levels, or solely within a critical thinking course.

An *obviously genuine dispute* is defined as one in which there is a clash of belief (as defined in the previous section) that can be corrected. For example, a dispute over the exact height of a building. This can be fact-checked and resolved. It can also be a dispute involving a direct clash of attitudes (values). For example, whether soccer or baseball is a more enjoyable sport.

A *merely verbal dispute* is one that can be resolved once the meaning of some key word or phrase is clarified. For example:

> Daye: Helen lives a long way from campus. I walked out to see her the other day, and it took me nearly two hours to get there.
> Knight: No, Helen doesn't live such a long way from campus. I drove her home last night, and we reached her place in less than ten minutes.
> (Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 96)

In this case, clarifying what is meant by "a long way": whether it is by car or by foot, should resolve the dispute.

Thirdly, *apparently verbal but really genuine disputes* are given as those in which there is some ambiguous word or phrase, however, even after identifying that word or phrase, the dispute will not be resolved. For example:

> Daye: Ann is an excellent student. She takes a lively interest in everything and asks very intelligent questions in class.
> Knight: Ann is one of the worst students I've ever seen. She never gets her assignments in on time.
> (Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 95)

In this case, Daye and Knight seem to disagree on the meaning of "good/excellent student" – but the dispute appears to be about the criteria for "good/excellent student." They also seem to disagree in attitude towards Ann.[3]

Workshop participants were presented with a few other similar disputes and asked to categorize them according to the above criteria. Similar exercises have been given to students in academic English programs and critical thinking courses. In smaller groups, students were asked to reach consensus on a categorization and explanation of that categorization. At an advanced level some lively debate has taken place with the potential for an enhanced understanding of the language structures involved, particularly in terms of sociolinguistic skill sets.

Conclusions

Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into EFL Programs is a dimensional approach among many for adding potentially "high-interest 'compelling' input in multiple language acquisition." Using the more logic intensive content covered in this workshop, strategies have been given for enhancing foreign language acquisition through employment of the relevant critical thinking skills covered in each segment. More time was spent with the basic building blocks in this workshop: preposition, premise, conclusion, and argument validity. Some methods of enhancing language proficiency, even at this foundation level, were given. From this starting point, the workshop moved into developing skill sets in such topics as identifying missing propositions (enthymemes), two-dimensional visual representation of arguments (diagramming), and solving problems in reasoning, which are proffered as providing further potential for engaging input in language acquisition. The more advanced functions of distinguishing emotive and neutral language for the purposes of then identifying distinctions between attitude and belief were employed as a means for deeper comprehension of a foreign language. Finally, this led into exercises in dispute and definition recognition that, with further development, would expand both language proficiency and sociolinguistic skills.

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FOOTNOTES

[1] For further explanation of these kinds of propositions, refer to Copi and Cohen, 2005, initially on p. 6-7 and throughout the text.

[2] This problem can be reasoned out in the following way: "If the first native is a politician, then he lies and denies being a politician. If the first native is not a politician, then he tells the truth and denies being a politician. In either case, then, the first native denies being a politician. Since the second native reports that the first native denies being a politician, he tells the truth, and is, therefore, a nonpolitician. The third native asserts that the first native is a politician. If the first native is a politician, then the third native speaks the truth and is, therefore, a nonpolitician. If the first native is a nonpolitician, then the third native lies and is, therefore, a politician. Hence only one of the first and third natives is a politician, and since the second is a nonpolitician, there is only one politician among the three natives." (Copi & Cohen, 2005, p. 586)

[3] *CD-ROM eLogic Exercises in* Logic for Essentials of Logic *and* Introduction to Logic (12th ed.), Copi and Cohen, 2005.

Activate Concept Building: Activities to Prepare for the Writing Process

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Learning to write in English can be daunting for both new instructors and students. Much of the time, instructors feel overwhelmed with the responsibility of creating good writers out of their students. Often novice instructors, especially those working with English language learners, are without a strong understanding of how to introduce concepts before brainstorming and the writing process themselves. Activities in a writing course can be dull and uninventive. It has been through experience, mentors, and trial and error that I have had the opportunity to gain knowledge of activities that have had a positive influence for my previous and current students. The activities outlined herein are personal strategies that can be used to promote creativity, idea sharing, and student empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

Students typically lack scaffolding to write and are easily tired with misunderstandings of what academic writing should be. By using these activities, information is elicited from students, and they can grasp the concepts linked to different writing genres, creating more inventive brainstorming sessions. This creativity can then be applied to their writing samples. These activities help students to grasp an understanding of the concept, in order to brainstorm better and start to organize information. Showing students their creativity empowers them to take risks and delve deeper into a topic. These activities may give novice teachers a starting point to support writing development. It opens the door to differentiation, which can contribute to ease and confidence for students studying English.

UNDERSTANDING FORM AND STRUCTURE THROUGH TEAMWORK

Purpose

At the beginning of each semester, there is a natural resistance to collaborate on writing. Trust is key for students. They need to know that they can help one another through encouragement and positive reinforcement rather than judgment and negativity. Seeing this knowledge put into practice gives a student more confidence.

It is equally important for English language learners to understand what good academic writing consists of. This activity also reflects the importance of writing structure or genre organization. This activity creates a shared experience that instructors can continually refer back to in order to remind students of the importance of form and organization in their academic writing (Matusov, 2001).

Procedure

As a variation of the marshmallow challenge, building a tower is used as a way to establish trust between students and to help them reflect on the importance of writing structure and organization. Students should be split into groups and given the following materials:

1 paper clip
1 plastic cup
2 rulers
3 pieces of large paper
1 large strip of masking tape

Without touching any items, but having them in view, the students can speak together for 3–5 minutes about how they would build a tower that stands 1.5 meters tall using only the materials provided. This tower must be strong enough to stand after it is blown on. Then the students get the same time to build the tower after they have talked. The idea is to not give the students too much time, so they must work, share, plan, and build (Wujec, 2010).

Once the building is complete, the instructor blows on the towers to see if it falls over or is stable. This can be used as a metaphor for writing organization. If the form and organization is strong and correct, it will stand strong, just like the tower. If it is not, then it will be weak, like your tower if it falls over.

Reflection

All activities done in the classroom should allow for some reflection. Two questions can be posed to the students after this activity.

1. How does this activity relate to writing?
2. What did this activity teach you about writing?

This could be done in two ways. One way is to regroup the students and talk about the questions. Their ideas can then be shared as a whole class. Another way is to have students do a written reflection. The students would answer the questions as an individual in their writing after having the chance to talk with classmates.

During the student reflection, there are several points that the instructor needs to acknowledge. Allowing students to share their thoughts means allowing students to take control of the conversation. They should drive the topic, and the instructor's role is to guide students through their thoughts. This lack of control can be intimidating to instructors, but by doing this, they are empowering the students. This is a life skill that can be applied to aspects outside of the classroom.

Giving Enough Detail in Descriptive Writing

Purpose

Before starting to write, I like to ask my students about activities they do outside of class. From day one, it is important to keep the five *wh*-questions in mind (*who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and when applicable, *how*). It is helpful to record their responses on the board because it helps connect ideas in class to something real for the students. It opens communication between students and the instructor, and provides another perspective to descriptive writing in addition to the senses.

Activity Procedure

The instructor writes a student response on the board. Once the response is written on the board, start going through the *wh*-questions. Ask if more information can be added. For an example, refer to the Appendix. Once students start and understand the process, they begin to police each other. This is when the purpose and execution has become a regular part of their routine.

Reflection

It is important for students to be given examples of what they are expected to do in class. This activity may be spoken, but it easily translates into the writing process. This is something to help students understand giving detail, but it is also an activity that can continue after focusing on this genre. All writing styles can benefit from a little more detail. Again, students can reflect on the following questions:

1. Which sentence is better, and why?
2. How does adding details make my writing better?
3. Why is detail important to my writing and English skills?

The same process of discussion or journaling can be used as a student reflection. It is important for the instructor to state to students that a longer sentence does not make writing better. It is the detail in the sentence that makes it better.

Compare and Contrast Genre Writing

Purpose

This genre of writing is often boring because there is no creativity behind the topic. Many programs use two items from the same classification for practice and assessment (i.e., “apples” and “oranges,” or your hometown now and 10 years ago). To bring more excitement to the topic, it is more effective to spur students’ creativity, forcing students to really think deeper about the connections between items. This enhances their critical thinking skills and allows them to develop their sense of connections, which can be used outside of the classroom as well.

Activity Procedure

Before starting a lesson on specific language, go around the room and ask students what is similar between two items. For example, a pencil and the room clock. Students find it difficult at first, but once they try the task a few times, the creativity starts to come forward. Students often take control and make a game or competition of it. Students can group themselves, and see if their group can list more ideas than another group. This activity becomes inventive, engaging, and allows students to build creativity and critical thinking skills. As more ideas are expressed, the instructor can start to introduce language for comparisons that the students can use. The same activity can be used for contrasting ideas as well.

Instructor Reflection

This activity allows students to start thinking critically and creatively. There could be student reflection included with this activity, but it is especially important for the instructor to reflect on this activity (Hatten & Smith, 1995). The main questions to ask are (a) how involved or engaged the students were and (b) whether they were doing the intended work. After this activity's execution is the perfect time for an instructor to informally assess where the students are at this point, where they need to finish, and the best way to get them from point A to point B.

Conclusion

A caution offered to colleagues is that as the instructor, the students are best known by you. The direct instructor should evaluate which activities, or parts of an activity, work with their population. Activities can be molded, adapted, or fit to any proficiency level. Although the focus is to use these activities to promote better brainstorming and concept building in writing courses, the suggestion is to use as much differentiation as possible in an English language classroom to reach all of your students. The activities outlined here are only a start to improve students' confidence and creativity as well as to give the instructor something different in order to elicit information.

The Author

Candace Lake is currently an English language instructor at Yonam Institute of Technology in Jinju, South Korea. She has recently started to present at conferences and is preparing to write for publication. Her passion is to help other instructors by providing the same support and advice received from her mentors and colleagues. Candace has taught in her native United States as well as in Ecuador, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea.

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APPENDIX

Example Descriptive Writing Prompt

1. I went to the mall.
    - The instructor asks if it is a good sentence.
    - Ask the students if there is a *who*. If yes, identify it. If no, add one.
    - Ask the students if we can add more about *who*.
2. My mom and I went to the mall.
    - Ask the students if there is a *what*. If yes, identify it. If no, add one.
    - Ask the students if we can add more about *what*.
3. My mom and I went to the mall and ate at a restaurant.
    - Ask the students if there is a *when*. If yes, identify it. If no, add one.
    - Ask the students if we can add more about *when*.
4. Last weekend, my mom and I went to the mall and ate at a restaurant.
    - Ask the students if there is a *where*. If yes, identify it. If no, add one.
    - Ask the students if we can add more about *where*.
5. Last weekend, my mom and I went to Central Mall and ate at Luigi's Pasta Palace.
    - Ask the students if there is a *why*. If yes, identify it. If no, add one.
    - Ask the students if we can add more about *why*.
6. Last weekend, my mom and I went to Central Mall to shop and ate fettuccine at Luigi's Pasta Palace because we haven't spent a lot of time together recently.
    - Ask the students if there is a *how*. If yes, identify it. If no, add one.
    - Ask the students if we can add more about *how*.
7. Last weekend, I took the bus to my mom's house. We drove to Central Mall to shop and walked to Luigi's Pasta Palace to eat fettuccine because we haven't spent a lot of time together recently.
    - The instructor asks if it is a good sentence. Why?
    - Remind students this is the response to be striving for every time.

Engaging and Motivating Students with Active Learning: Project- and Task-Based Learning

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Engaging English as a foreign language (EFL) learners is a challenge facing educators, especially with non-English majors. Active learning may increase student engagement. Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Task-Based Learning (TBL) are communicative teaching strategies that can employ active learning. PBL and TBL ask students to do projects or tasks in the target language. Students are able to use the target language in a more natural context, closely related to their educational needs and interests. The development of PBL and TBL curricula for both small and large classes for non-English majors – program planning, development of individual units for each class, development of models for evaluation, and teaching PBL and TBL in the classroom – are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Engagement and motivation of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners has been considered and important variable in language acquisition (both L1 and L2) (Brown, 2000; Ellis, 1997; Gardner, 1982, 1985; Larson-Freeman & Long, 1994; Lightbown & Spada, 1993; Spolsky, 1989) is a challenge facing educators, especially with non-English majors.

Recently, active learning has received more attention to increase student engagement in the learning process. There are many ways that educators can apply active learning in the classroom. Two effective approaches that utilize active learning are project-based learning (PBL) and task-based learning (TBL). Both PBL and TBL ask the students to do tasks or projects in the target language to create something meaningful for them. As such, students can them use and experience the target language in a more natural context, more closely related to their educational needs and interests. By using classroom time as organizational and workshop type activities for the students, TBL and TBL can also utilize active learning. This paper outlines how to create a PBL curriculum that can be utilized in both small and large classes. In this paper, a working definition of PBL and TBL is offered. Furthermore, program planning (back-casting), development of individual units of a PBL for each class (TBL stand-alone units in PBL curriculum), development a model for evaluation, some techniques for teaching PBL and TBL in the classroom are discussed.

What Are Task-Based Learning & Project-Based Learning?

PBL and TBL ask students to complete a task or a series of connected tasks to accomplish a goal. PBL could be seen as a natural extension of TBL when the tasks are incremental steps in the process of completing a long-term project. Students can experience the target language in a more natural context than with traditional classroom approaches that are directly related to their educational and professional needs. Since improving motivation and engagement are considered important in curriculum design (Alessi & Trollip, 2001; Keller & Suzuki, 2004) TBL activities and PBL should be considered because of the emphasis on authentic and meaningful materials and activities. Since I have defined PBL as a series of interconnected tasks, I will focus on a PBL program. The planning of TBL exercises is similar to PBL but on a smaller scale (e.g. 2–3 class lessons).

Challenges in Adoption

PBL and TBL focus on use of authentic language, so learners need to conduct meaningful tasks in the target language. However, typical suggested exercises or lessons include role plays of hospital visits, job interviews, currency exchanges, ordering in restaurants, etc., and can be widely found in ESL and EFL classroom textbooks by leading publishers (Richards, Hull, & Proctor, 2004; Barnard, Cady, Buckingham, Duckworth, & Trew, 2009; Saslow & Ascher, 2011). Willis (1998) defined a task as

> a goal-oriented activity with a clear purpose. Doing a communication task involves achieving an outcome, creating a final product that can be appreciated by others. Examples include compiling a list of reasons, features, or things that need doing under particular circumstances; comparing two pictures and/or texts to find the differences; and solving a problem or designing a brochure. (What Is a Task, para. 1)

While these types of exercises could use authentic language, for EFL learners they are not meaningful tasks, especially since many students have encountered these types of exercises many times by the time they have reached tertiary education. Therefore, educators who want to adopt PBL/TBL need to develop their own curriculum and learning materials that are specific to their language learners.

Choosing a Project

The most important step is choosing an appropriate project that will engage learners as well as meet the curriculum requirements of the educator's institution. There are many options, but for the purpose of this discussion, I have chosen poster presentation of academic research in the students' major. This topic initially arose from a brainstorming session with students to discuss their needs and goals.

This is an important step in PBL and was chosen based upon the needs of my students for their own professional and academic development. All students in my classes are required by their academic supervisors to publish in English language academic publications. Furthermore, later in their academic careers, many of my students hope to have the opportunity to do a poster presentation at an academic conference. Since, in order to present the research, they need to be able to understand it, this already helps them meet one of their goals.

Planning

It is important to plan from the perspective of what the students need to do, and then help develop the skills (scaffolding) to achieve the goal, rather than starting from a language point and then trying to adjust the task or project to incorporate the language teaching point. So, planning should start with back-casting: looking at the goals and planning backwards from these goals. For this example, the goal is to make a presentation of another person's research at the end of a fifteen-week semester. As such, Week 15 is the presentation, and in order to be able to do a presentation, students need to have sufficient practice for the spoken aspects, and they need to memorize and practice their spoken content. To make this content, they need to be able to summarize the research, use appropriate grammar and vocabulary for academic presentations, and understand the material that they have read. They also need to learn and practice presenting skills, voice inflection, eye contact, gestures, and body language (including posture). They also need to be able to make the poster, considering color, how to use visuals, font size and selection. As you can see, PBL can be quite complex, but by back-casting the bottlenecks can be identified and appropriate planning step and scaffolding undertaken.

For this example, the main bottlenecks are their oral message (writing the text), the poster (making the poster), and comprehension (understanding the original article). By some dividing of these tasks, the framework can be developed.

TABLE 1. Framework for PBL

Oral message	Poster	Comprehension
Text	Text • sizes • fonts • content	Understand structure and purpose of each part of an academic article
Grammar	Layout • no of columns • orientation • placement of visuals	Scientific vocabulary/jargon
Active Voice	Color Scheme	Passive voice/Active voice
Presentation		Complex sentences

Once the project has been divided into main sections, the relationships between the sections and the bottlenecks can be considered, which in turn leads to the overall plan for scaffolding the project for the students, as well as the need for task progression and deadlines. These bottlenecks are also suitable points for interim evaluation and for feedback from the instructor. This leads to the development of an overall task plan consisting of interlocking steps towards completion of the project (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. PBL Curriculum Overview

Week	Activity
1	Course Outline Requirements Final Project Evaluation Scheme Assign: Students choose academic paper
2	Approval of topics
3	Reading academic papers: Abstract, grammar, & meaning
4	Reading academic papers: Deconstructing text/introduction
5	Public speaking techniques
6	Reading academic papers: Conclusion
7	Reading academic papers: Results & discussion
8	Poster design & content
9	Reading academic papers: Results & discussion
10	Summarizing information for effective presentation
11	Visuals, writing for oral presentation
12	Open according to student needs
13	Public speaking practice (Final poster deadline)
14	Presentation workshop/practice (Final oral text deadline)
15	Final presentation: Presentation & evaluation

CLOSING COMMENTS

Creating a TBL or PBL curriculum can be very challenging. While this paper offers general suggestions and some rationale for adopting PBL and TBL, it is very limited in scope. Many aspects have not been addressed, such as evaluation, specific teaching content, and the specifics of scaffolding for students. Although conducting PBL and TBL can be a daunting undertaking, they are, in my opinion and my experience, very effective ways to engage learners. The quality of the final projects of the students can be exceptional (see Appendix), so PBL and TBL can be very rewarding and motivating for both the students and the educators.

THE AUTHOR

Peter Lutes is an associate professor at Kagawa National University, Japan. He holds a Master of Applied Linguistics in Language Program Management, and TESOL certification. He has developed a successful project-based learning curriculum for his faculty, including required courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. He has been teaching for over 25 years. He has conducted teacher training workshops both in Japan and internationally for both native and non-native speakers of English. His research interests

include curriculum development, English for specific purposes, active learning, task-based learning, and project-based learning. Email: plutes@ag.kagawa-u.ac.jp

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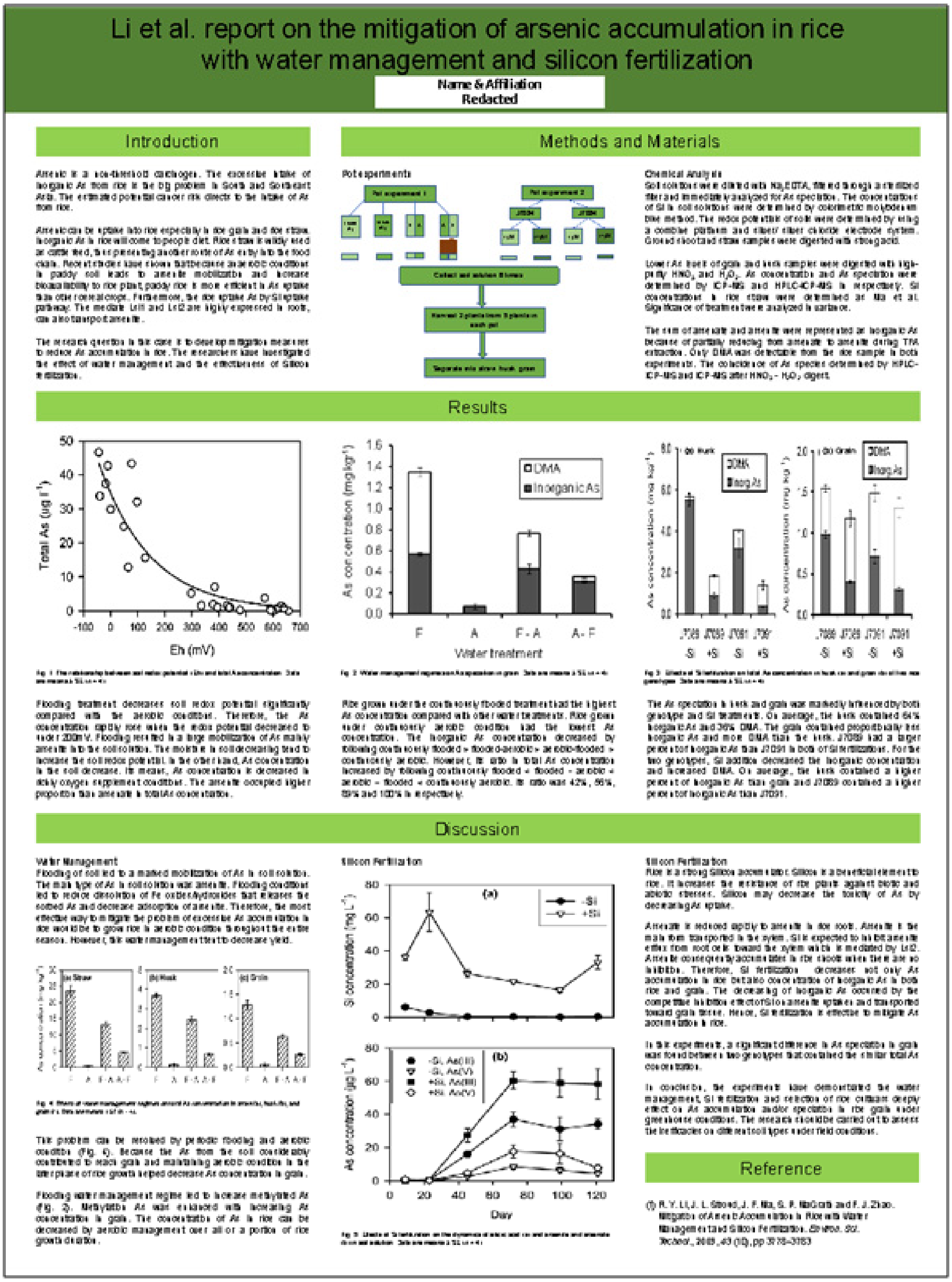
Appendix

Typical Student Poster: 2018



Conference Overview

Presentations of

The 26th Annual Korea TESOL International Conference – 2018

Focus on Fluency

October 13–14, 2018, Seoul, Korea

The 2018 Korea TESOL International Conference Committee gratefully recognizes the following individuals for presenting research papers, conducting workshop sessions, and leading discussions of various types at the 26th Korea TESOL International Conference.

Invited Speaker Sessions

Stephen Krashen	How Polyglots Did It, and Developed Accuracy as Well (Plenary Session)
	The Conduit Hypothesis
Scott Thornbury	Fluency and How to Achieve It (Plenary Session)
	Going Mobile
	Gay Is a Global Issue
Jill Hadfield	What We Talk About When We Talk About Interaction
	The Changing World of Materials Design: How to Create Online Tasks
Yilin Sun	Focusing on EMI and PBL in Fostering Fluency: Implications and Strategies
Steven Herder	Action Research in Blended Learning Classes
	Understanding and Increasing the Role of Fluency in Expressing One’s Skill Set Fluently
Jill Murray	The Pragmatics of Fluency and Disfluency: Teaching and Testing Implications
	Integrating Pragmatic Information in Teaching
Ki Hun Kim	Field Manual on Building Up Reading Fluency in English
Jennifer Book	Pronunciation as a Lingua Franca: What Are Our Goals?
	Intercultural Competence and Critical Incidents in the Language Classroom

Featured Panel Discussion Session

Boyoung Lee, Kyungsook Yeum, Joo-Kyung Park	Focus on Fluency in the Korean Context

Research Paper Sessions

Mohammad Hosam Alnahas	Student Motivation: A Case Study at a Language School
Ulziinaran Amgalan	Using Technology in English Speaking and Listening Classes of Mongolian Learners
Editha Atendido	Developing Students' English Essay Writing Fluency and Confidence Through Freewriting
Matthew Baldwin	Performance in English Listening Class: Flipped Versus Traditional Classroom
Christopher Binnie	Strong Task-Based Instruction: Korean Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions and Practices
Joff P. N. Bradley	On How to Teach Multiperspectivism
Kevin Browne	How Test-Raters' Accent Familiarity Differences Impact TOEFL Pronunciation Scores
Simon Buckland	Fluency Assessment and Remediation: What Works and What Doesn't
Langgeng Budianto	Needs Analysis of the English Up-Grading of Two Different Stakeholders
Diem Bich Huyen Bui	Utilizing Cell Phones in Improving Learners' Pronunciation and Fluency
Peter Burden	Student Views on Studying English Abroad in a Globalized Era
Jhyyi Chen	Using Interactive Mobile Devices to Enhance TOEIC Vocabulary Learning.
Rainbow Chen	Journey to the West: Taiwanese Exchange Students Abroad
Yi-chen Chen	EFL Learners' Perceptions of Developing L2 Proficiency Through Debate
Kai-Jye Chia	Using Interactive Mobile Devices to Enhance TOEIC Vocabulary Learning
Yueh-Tzu Chiang	Implementing Self-Access Language Learning to a Conversation Course Curriculum
Ah-ra Cho	The Benefits and Drawbacks of a Body-Coda and Synthetic Approach
Hyerim Choi	Memorization as a Vocabulary Learning Strategy Among Korean EFL Students
Eva A. Combs	Teaching Intercultural Communicative Competence in Korea: Theory to Practice
William Egerton Darling	A CLT-Based Curriculum in Practice: Revealing Teachers' and Students' Perceptions
Tannistha Dasgupta	Approach for Objective Assessment of L2 Fluency Using Cognitive Fluency

Robert Dickey	Representativeness and Development of Leaders in Korea TESOL
Thomas Luke Dillon	Designing an Automatic Speech Recognition Application to Complement Classroom Teaching
Nicole A. Domay	Challenges in Utilizing English Articles by Korean Learners
Aymen Elsheikh	Teacher Development Through Teachers' Associations: Lessons from Africa
Michael Faudree	Voice Contrast in Japanese Speakers of English and Markedness Universals
Fitriah Fitriah	Teachers' Creativity in Indonesian Higher Education: Where Does It Come From?
Luke K. Fryer	Motivation Profiles for Learning Own and Foreign Languages
Arata Fujimaki	Voice Contrast in Japanese Speakers of English and Markedness Universals
Michael Gale	Enhancing Vocabulary Learning in a Japanese EFL Setting with Quizlet
Stewart Gray	Privilege and Marginalization: Complex Identities of Foreign English Teachers
Jeremiah Hall	Topic Selection Impact on Writing Fluency and Student Perceptions
Christopher Haswell	Utilizing a Smartphone App to Improve Student Engagement with Microlearning
Eric Hirata	Topic Selection Impact on Writing Fluency and Student Perceptions
I-Chun Hsiao	Implementation of the Flipped Classroom Approach in an ESP Course
Shao-Ting Alan Hung	Investigating EFL Learners' Engagement and Skills in Creating Digital Stories
Douglas Jarrell	Voice Recognition Software, Schoology, and LINE for Pronunciation Practice
Juho Lee	Memorization as a Vocabulary Learning Strategy Among Korean EFL Students
Mikyoung Lee	Achievement Goals and Foreign Language Performance in Korean Students
Yong-Jik Lee	Using ESL Microteaching to Shape Teacher Self-Efficacy for Preservice Teachers
Chia-Yi Li	The Use of VoiceTube for TEFL Listening Fluency
Sean Mahoney	Turning to Non-native English-Speaking Assistants in Primary Schools
Mayuko Matsuoka	Toward a Better Discussion in English: Quantitative Perspective of Feedback

Edward Patrick McShane	Generic Skills Testing as an Indicator of Language Learning Ability
Scott Miles	Do Positive Psychology Practices Work in the Korean EFL Classroom?
Yoshihiro Minamitsu	Promoting Fluent Language Production Through the Method of Consecutive Interpreting
Takeshi Mizumoto	Toward a Better Discussion in English: Quantitative Perspective of Feedback
Daniel Mortali	Foreign Language Choice in University: English or Chinese?
Chamintsetseg Myagmarkhorloo	Using Technology in English Speaking and Listening Class of Mongolian Learners
Hung Nguyen-Xuan	Design Thinking to Improve English Fluency Through Project Design Courses
Quint Oga-Baldwin	Motivation Profiles for Learning Own and Foreign Languages
Yosuke Ogawa	Improvisational Fillers in Pechakucha Presentation
Jeremy Ortloff	Teaching ELLs in an After-School Setting: Implications for School Day Outcomes?
Cuong Pham	Socio-affective Affordances for Language Learning in Group Projects
Duc Thuan Pham	Google Classroom and Google Forms in EFL Classroom
Jeremy Phillips	Making Words Work: Lexical Skills in Academic Writing
Christopher Pirotto	Identifying ELL Anxieties in the Tertiary-Level EFL Classroom
Max Praver	Utilizing a Smartphone App to Improve Student Engagement with Microlearning
Cynthia Quinn	Corpus Referencing to Address Lexical Error in L2 Writing
Michael Rabbidge	Translanguaging in South Korea
Rakhmawati Rakhmawati	Teachers' Creativity in Indonesian Higher Education: Where Does It Come From?
Richard Rose	High Stakes, Low Standards: The Korean CSAT Urgently Needs Reform
Jack Ryan	Foreign Language Choice in University: English or Chinese?
Nopporn Sarobol	Factors Enhancing English Speaking Fluency: Exemplary Cases of Thai Students
Myeong-Hee Shin	How to Use Flipped Learning in the English Language Learning Classroom
Seungmi Shin	Effects of Home Literacy Environment on Korean Children's English Literacy

John William Simmons	Effective Teaching for Live Online Courses
Youngsoo Song	Performance in English Listening Class: Flipped Versus Traditional Classroom
Yi-Ling Sung	Effects of AR on Students' Learning Motivation, Speaking Proficiency, and WTC
Feliz Tayao	Developing Students' English Essay Writing Fluency and Confidence Through Freewriting
Nathan Thomas	Focus on Listening Fluency Inside and Outside of the Classroom
Greg Thompson	Redesigning Forums to Promote Formative Assessment
Thanatchaporn Triwittayayon	Factors Enhancing English Speaking Fluency: Exemplary Cases of Thai Students
Joseph Vitta	Enhancing Vocabulary Learning in a Japanese EFL Setting with Quizlet
Tien Thinh Vu	Utilizing Cell Phones in Improving Learners' Pronunciation and Fluency
Ittiphat Wattaya	Factors Causing Unwillingness to Communicate: Revealing Students' Perceptions
Chun-Chun Yeh	Interaction and Participation in the Small Group Writing Conference
Tecnam Yoon	Korean ELLs' Vocabulary Learning Using Multimodal Visual Imagery
Ifta Zuroidah	Needs Analysis of the English Up-Grading of Two Different Stakeholders

Workshop Sessions

Steven Bagley	Building Disciplinary Fluency in Speaking and Writing
Jeffrey Baldwin	Implementing an Engaging and Effective Curriculum for Very Young Learners
Michael William Brandon	Strategies for Integrating Education Technology into the Reading Classroom
John E. Breckenfeld	Multiple Ways to Utilize Songs in the ELT Classroom
Ian Brown	Animation, Stories, and Comics – Online with Any Level Student
Krista Brusky	Make It Work: Creating Meaningful EFL Materials for Elementary Textbooks
Jeff Buck	Increasing Student English Talking Time Through Scaffolding
Jin-Suk Byun	Speaking Fluency Development Through the Application of Linguistics and Authenticity
John Campbell-Larson	Fluency: What It Is and How to Teach It

Maria Luz Elena N. Canilao	From Voiceless to Fearless: Designing Innovative Tasks to Enhance Fluency
Mary Chang	Adapting Textbook Materials for Reading Fluency and Speed
Heehwa Choi	Designing Real-World Contexts for Writing Fluency in Classrooms
Eva Combs	Tips for Introducing Third Person Singular *They* in the Classroom
Daniel Corks	Grammar Errors in L2 Writing: Teacher's Burden vs. Students' Expectations
Anthony D'Ath	Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into EFL Programs
Ajiya Musa Dan Karami	Designing Real-World Contexts for Writing Fluency in Classrooms
Jan Mathys de Beer	Korean-Specific Fluency Exercises
Gerald de la Salle	Using CBLT to Enhance Speaking Fluency and Other Skills
Mary Eppolite	Reflections in the Classroom: Strategies for Gathering Student Feedback
Ashley Ford	Poetry, Songs, and Posters for Collaborative Oral Presentations
Michael Free	Pronunciation Teacher (Re)Training for English as a Lingua Franca
Herminigildo Garrobo	Gap-Fill and More: Rewordify and "Kahootify" Your Next Activity
Sean Eric Kil Patrick Gay	Timed Writing: Writing Fluency with a Side of Critical Thinking
Kylie Genter	Improv Comedy as a Tool for Fluency
Jennifer Groat	Reading With and Beyond the Textbook: Give Students Choices
Jessica Alison Ives	Teaching Vocabulary: Is the Definition Enough?
Paul Johnson	Adventure Role-Playing for Language Development
Leah Jordano-Kudalis	Fostering Fluency and Critical Thinking Through Learner-Centered Collaborative Discussions
Chayart Kasatepibal	Reflections in the Classroom: Strategies for Gathering Student Feedback
Takayuki Kato	Enhancing Self-Regulated Learning Through Learning Logs
Mitzi Kaufman	KOTESOL International Conference Orientation Session
Rizqi Khoirunnisa	Fostering Critical Reading and Creative Writing in the English Classroom
James Kimball	Improving Conversational Fluency
Sunette Labuschagne	Why Doesn't It Work Anymore? Adapting Activities to Student Needs

Elton LaClare	Using Recordings and Speaking Fluency Tasks to Enhance Spoken Interactions
Candace Lake	Activate Concept Building: Activities to Prepare for the Writing Process
Becky Lawrence	Creating Internet Memes for Vocabulary and Grammar Building
Jaekyoung Lee	Building Competency, Complexity, and Confidence Through Poster Presentations
Kent Lee	A “the” or the “a”? A Cognitive Grammar Approach
Kyounghee Lee	Using Readers’ Theater to Motivate Low-Achieving High School Students
Roxy (YounJung) Lee	English, Expression, and Transgression: Incorporating Creativity into Young Learners’ EFL Classes
Jo-Anna Lynch	Vlogging the Way to English Speaking Success
Jeffrey Maxwell	Focusing on Fluency Through Technology-Based Communicative Activities
Scott Miles	Crucial, Yet Often Missing, Components of a Successful Reading Course
Yoshihiro Minamitsu	Enhancing Self-Regulated Learning Through Learning Logs
Kenneth Moore	Using Readers’ Theater to Motivate Low-Achieving High School Students
John Moulton	Creating Personalized “Find Someone Who...” Activities with Student-Generated Content
Ahmad Mursy	Towards More Humanistic Teaching Materials
Heidi Nam	Adapting Classroom Materials for Braille Readers
Heidi Nam	KOTESOL International Conference Orientation Session
Allison Park	Building Competency, Complexity, and Confidence Through Poster Presentations
Youngmin Park	State of the Art Flashcard: Classcard 101
Lucas Pignolet	Using Less Class Time to Build Listening Fluency
Alexis Pusina	EFL or ELF? Increasing Cultural Diversity Driving Changes in Japan
Bilal Qureshi	Expanding Speaking Through Digital Audio Recording
Zeeshan Qureshi	Expanding Speaking Through Digital Audio Recording
Mark Rebuck	How to Make Corrective Feedback Less Futile
Eric Reynolds	Building Vocabulary Skills and Classroom Engagement with Kahoot!
Joel P. Rian	Sink or Swim: Strong CLT and Unrehearsed Discussion in Class

Cameron Romney	Typographic Influences on Reading Fluency: Best Practices for Teacher-Made Materials
Matt Saunders	Using Less Class Time to Build Listening Fluency
Kat Sten	Implementing an Engaging and Effective Curriculum for Very Young Learners
Michael Stockwell	Enhancing Learning Opportunities with Good Vocabulary Design
Daniel Svoboda	In Pursuit of Great Lessons
Ben Taylor	Building Vocabulary Skills and Classroom Engagement with Kahoot!
Christopher Tempest	Using Recordings and Speaking Fluency Tasks to Enhance Spoken Interactions
Simon Thollar	Old Wine in New Bottles: Using Emoji to Enhance Understanding
Tory Thorkelson	KOTESOL International Conference Orientation Session
Vanessa Virgiel	Autism Spectrum Disorder: An Introduction for EFL Teachers
Colin Walker	Getting a Job at a Korean University: Observations and Suggestions
Julian Warmington	C3, The Climate Change Curriculum: An Open Source ESL Resource
Thomas Webster	Approaches to Building Technology Fluency
Kevin Were	Cream Puffs and the Zombie Apocalypse
John Wheeler	Reading for Real
John Wilson	Poetry, Songs, and Posters for Collaborative Oral Presentations
Cheryl Woelk	Building Fluency and Community Through REAL Communication
Kalina Wong	Putting Pronunciation into Context for Student Presentations
Jocelyn Wright	Understanding and Teaching Key Principles of Social Justice Through Poetry
Kuniko Yoshida	Enhancing Self-Regulated Learning Through Learning Logs

"101 Presentations" *(Basic Techniques)*

Debra Abrams	Learning Lessons: Developing a University Reading and Writing Curriculum
Hetal Ascher	Using Post-It Notes for Language Production
Michael Bade	Content-Inspired Writing Courses 101

Michael Bade	Engagement Drives Discussion: Inquiry-Based Courses 101
Terri Beadle	Using Dr. Seuss to Help Build Fluency
Adam Booth	Content-Inspired Writing Courses 101
Adam Booth	Engagement Drives Discussion: Inquiry-Based Courses 101
Krista Brusky	Easy Applications of Informal Assessments in the Elementary EFL Classroom
Kim-Lan Bui	Teachers as Agents of Success: Revisiting Student Motivation
Erin Garnhum	Using Post-It Notes for Language Production
Jim Hwang	Selfie Videos: A Student Tool Suggesting Phones Foster Fluency
Peter Lutes	Engaging and Motivating Students with Active Learning, Project-/Task-Based Learning
Craig Magee	Learning Lessons: Developing a University Reading and Writing Curriculum
Louise Ohashi	Building Fluency Inside and Outside of the Classroom
Jack Ryan	Effectively Utilizing Group Work in the EFL Classroom
Keiso Tatsukawa	Materials Development to Improve Learners' Fluency in English Class

Dialogue Sessions

Eunseong Gong	Learning Through Lit: A Viable Option for Public Schools
Ehean Kim	One Is Never Too Old to Learn
Susan Masterson	Developing Globally Competent Educators: Preparing Transnational Teachers
Shannon Tanghe	Developing Globally Competent Educators: Preparing Transnational Teachers
Devin Joseph Unwin	Creating Communities, Fostering Fluency: Situated Learning and Dialogic Teaching
Sheariah Yousefi	Exploring Teaching Strategies for Relevance-Based Instruction

Panel Discussion Sessions

Matthew Bachtell	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities: Fluency for School and Society
Douglas Baumwoll	EFL and Climate Change Justice: What, Why, and How?!
Allison Bill	So You Wanna Go to Grad School?

Greg Brooks-English	EFL and Climate Change Justice: What, Why, and How?!
Luis Roberto Caballero Orozco	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities: Fluency for School and Society
Lindsay Herron	Practical Tech in the Classroom: Potential, Promise, Pitfalls, and Pedagogy
Lindsay Herron	So You Wanna Go to Grad School?
Aaron Jones	Practical Tech in the Classroom: Potential, Promise, Pitfalls, and Pedagogy
Chelle Jones	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities: Fluency for School and Society
Maria Lisak	Practical Tech in the Classroom: Potential, Promise, Pitfalls, and Pedagogy
Elizabeth May	Practical Tech in the Classroom: Potential, Promise, Pitfalls, and Pedagogy
Joanne McCuaig	So You Wanna Go to Grad School?
Erin Okamoto	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities: Fluency for School and Society
Victor Reeser	Practical Tech in the Classroom: Potential, Promise, Pitfalls, and Pedagogy
Eric Reynolds	So You Wanna Go to Grad School?
Hayden Royalty	Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities: Fluency for School and Society
Dan Svoboda	EFL and Climate Change Justice: What, Why, and How?!
Julian Warmington	EFL and Climate Change Justice: What, Why, and How?!

Poster Sessions

Calum Adamson	Model United Nations: Globalized Education in Microcosm
Atsushi Asai	Learning Purposes Can Govern Reading Strategies
Rebecca Ann Brinkley	Chit Chat: A Successful English Conversation Program
Sebastian Brooke	News Stories in Group Discussions for Fluency and Learner Autonomy
Nicole Brothers	Graded Readers: You CAN Choose a Book by Its Cover
Wei Ling Jane Chan	Grammar Pedagogy in Primary Schools
Vanessa Chin	Teacher Language Awareness in Teacher Education: Learning How to Teach
Chad Cottam	Peer Revision: Identifying Attitudes and Effectiveness in ESL Writing
Robert Dykes	FLCAS: A Comparison of Three Models Revisited

Reginald Gentry	Validation of a Japanese Behavioral and Instructional Management Scale (BIMS)
George Hays	TIU English Plaza: Developing Fluency in a Self-Access Center
David Johnson	Developing EFL Reading and Writing Fluency
Dustin Kidd	Designing and Developing a Study-Abroad Scrapbook
Richard Lee	Designing and Developing a Study-Abroad Scrapbook
George MacLean	Enhanced Reflective Learning Using ICT
Mayuko Matsuoka	Learning Purposes Can Govern Reading Strategies
Daniel James Mills	Quantifying Student Satisfaction with Technology-Enhanced Textbooks
Deanna Rasmussen	Graded Readers: You CAN Choose a Book by Its Cover
Paunluck Puntahachart Saengsawang	Vocabulary Knowledge Retention Through the Support of Blended Learning
Yasuko Sato	The Case Study of MOOC for Japanese College Students
Paul Spijkerbosch	Building Learner Preparation Skills for the Classroom
Aaron Claude Sponseller	Validation of a Japanese Behavioral and Instructional Management Scale (BIMS)
Christina Tat	Peer Revision: Identifying Attitudes and Effectiveness in ESL Writing

Additional Sessions

Matteo Fuoli	Exploring the Language of Business
Doeur Bunhorn	An Analysis of an Intensive English for Academic Purposes Textbook
Mabel Chan	Teachers' Perceptions of Cantonese Learners' Difficulties Acquiring English Articles
Robert Cunninham	English as an International Language Pronunciation in a Monolingual Classroom

Organizational Partner Promotional Sessions

Matteo Fuoli	University of Birmingham: MA TESOL, MA Applied Linguistics
Susan Masterson & Shannon Tanghe	Alternative Licensure Pathways: US/UK Teaching Licensure While Teaching in Korea
Jill Murray	Postgraduate Study and Research Pathways for Applied Linguistics and TESOL
Aaron Siegel	Having Fun with Grammar: Yes, It's Possible!

Ally Zhou & Robert Griffin	Oklahoma City University MA TESOL Program
Patricia MacKinnon	Non-stop Discussions in Student-Led Reading Circles
Kevin Search	Accelerating Phonics Learning with Readers

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