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Peterson and Bowyer on conversations in class,
Matkhiya Usmonova studies stressed students,
Kent Lee makes patterns with nouns and articles,
and, we remember Mitzi

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To promote scholarship, disseminate information, and facilitate cross-cultural understanding among persons concerned with the teaching and learning of English in Korea.

Editorial

By Julian Warmington Editor-in-Chief

"Have enough courage to trust love one more time and always one more time." — ***Maya Angelou***

"The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud." — ***Coco Chanel***

"Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage." — ***Anais Nin***

In thinking on an elusive unifying theme to bring together disparate threads into one brief editorial, the one word that seemed most pertinent is *courage*. Mitzi Kaufman and I met only a few times, and I was lucky to receive emails, including some of her words of wisdom and sisterly advice, upon a couple of those occasions. Since the start of the online group of sharing memories of Mitzi, it's been impossible not to gain a clearer picture of who she was, as well as a stronger appreciation for someone who had the courage of not only her convictions, but of the trust to love openly and broadly, including meeting and sharing with people in her regular annual celebrations, no matter how well she knew them.

Mitzi thought clearly, aloud, and, at times, after listening and/or observing, appropriately loudly. She appeared to have lived life large, enjoying connecting and bringing people together. But no one word can fairly or adequately summarize anyone, so as a start we have dedicated pages 14 and 15 to sharing others' impressions and memories of her. If you are new to KOTESOL and know someone who knew her and is open to talking about her, it is likely worthwhile to take the time to learn more of the skill and spirit she brought to conferences and meetings, both formal and beyond.

Teaching can be a stressful, demanding job, even with ideal professional and personal support. Living as an obvious minority in a relatively homogenous, conformist society comes with another whole set of daily pressures. So this is a vote from me to you to look after yourself this year. And to consider using your professionally honed communication skills and developed confidence to connect more with co-workers and friends. We never know when they might be looking for someone else to chat or talk with, nor when that person might be ourselves. Matkhiya Usmonova quite possibly remains KOTESOL's youngest active member, yet her article on page 22 suggests wise insights and practical classroom strategies for dealing with stress as students and teachers alike.

A final footnote for this edition: I am glad to have started working with Andrew White in this edition of *The English Connection*. He has been hugely helpful already in what has really been his learning and training stage before taking over the position of editor-in-chief beginning with the next issue. I also remain grateful for the learning experience of this last year's worth of TEC. I'm glad to have worked again with the great team of proofreaders, KOTESOL leaders, and you, all the contributors to these pages, past and potential. I hope you have found some things interesting in each issue, perhaps even inspiring, and, for Andrew's and your sake, I hope I have left the place somehow better than it was before.

President's Message

By Dr. David E. Shaffer KOTESOL President

Spring is knocking at Korea's door. Ipchun (입춘) gave us the alert back in February, and March 6 is Gyeongchip (경칩), the seasonal term when buds begin to emerge and underground creatures awaken from their winter sleep. As the Year of the Golden Pig begins, KOTESOL is awake and budding. Many of our chapters have events scheduled for March, and even more have workshops planned for April. Of these, Gwangju-Jeonnam and Seoul Chapters are planning regional conferences for March 10 and 24, respectively; and Busan-Gyeongnam Chapter's conference is scheduled for April 20. We hope that you will take a look at the programs of these once-a-year opportunities and decide to become part of what they have to offer.

At the time of this writing, plans are in the making for our national conference on May 25 in Jeonju. It looks like one of the foremost authorities in ELT will be coming as our plenary speaker: Jack Richards! The call for presentation proposals is now open. Submit your proposal soon, and be watching for additional conference details to appear on our website, in our Facebook group, and in our monthly e-newsletter. These are all great sources of information on what's happening in KOTESOL. The call for presentation proposals for the international conference is earlier this year; it is already open and will be closing May 10.

Another deadline that we want you to be aware of is that of the KOTESOL research grants. The deadline for the 2019 grant applications has been moved to March 31 this year to give interested members more time to apply (via the online form on the KOTESOL website). So consolidate your ideas and hone them into proposals for the opportunities that await you this spring.

In the last issue of TEC, I announced the chapter president election results of four of our chapters. Three more chapters have had chapter elections since then. Allison Bill has been elected president of the Jeonju–North Jeolla Chapter, Mike Peacock has been re-elected as president at the Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter, and Stewart Gray was elected president for another term by the Yongin-Gyeonggi Chapter. We look forward to their leadership not only at their respective chapters but on the National Council as well. And we look forward to chapter members stepping into volunteer and leadership roles in all our chapters. It is the spirit of volunteerism, the spirit of service, that drives KOTESOL. We encourage you to be part of that drive.

One new committee and at least one new SIG (special interest group) are in the process of being formed. Our first vice-president, James Kimball, is working on the creation of a classroom management SIG. Let him know of your interest in such a SIG. The National Council has recently approved the establishment of an ad hoc diversity committee to be tasked with suggesting ways in which KOTESOL can make our organization more welcoming to and more representative of the diversity in teachers in our field. We are looking forward to it beginning its work.

There is a regrettable announcement that I must make: KOTESOL has lost one of our prominent members – Mitzi Kaufman of Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter. I would like to thank all those who attended the memorial service for her in Daejeon on January 26. For more on Mitzi, see the editorial and pages 14-15 of this issue.

One final announcement to be made is that *The English Connection* will be seeing a change in the editor-in-chief position. Julian Warmington will be stepping away after coming back to fill the position for a second time. We will miss him, but his contributions to the betterment of the magazine will remain. To the editor-in-chief helm, we will be welcoming Dr. Andrew White, who is already working on TEC to make the transition as seamless as possible. Dr. White is a longtime resident and ELT professional in Korea who, I am sure, has much to offer to this publication.

Present at the 2019 Korea TESOL International Conference

By Kathleen Kelley
KOTESOL Publicity Chair and 2018 International Conference Chair

The 2019 Korea TESOL International Conference Committee (ICC) is currently seeking presentation proposals from any and all interested English educators, applied linguists, and ELT scholars.

This year's theme is "Advancing ELT: Blending Disciplines, Approaches, and Technologies," and the conference is scheduled for October 12–13, 2019, in Seoul. The plenary speakers this year have been confirmed and announced. The first is **Rod Ellis**, of Curtin University in Perth and Anaheim University. The second is **Andrew D. Cohen**, professor emeritus of the University of Minnesota. Both have published

▲ *Participants enjoying a presentation at KOTESOL's 2018 International Conference.*

numerous books on second language acquisition and are leaders in the field. Additional invited speakers will be announced as they are confirmed.

I recently talked with Luis Caballero, the ICC program director, and someone who has presented at past international conferences. I asked him what he would consider to be the most significant benefits of presenting at our international conference (aside from being able to rub elbows with the likes of Rod Ellis and Andrew Cohen in the presenters lounge). Below is his response.

1. Shine a spotlight on ELT topics that interest you. If a particular topic in ELT is of interest to you, it may be because of your own background or experiences in the classroom. You just might be surprised by how many other people have run into similar situations as you. For instance, as an attendee at last year's conference, I was delighted to see sessions offered on language pragmatics, which is a field I had enjoyed learning about as an undergrad but had never actually seen discussed in professional circles among educators. Thanks to a presenter at last year's conference, I was able to walk away with new ideas for activities in my classroom. Facilitating your own conference session allows you to showcase any topic you feel is in need of discussion and allows others to get your valuable insight.

2. Build community around social justice issues. As language educators, it is impossible to separate social justice issues from our profession. We need to be well equipped to both navigate and discuss themes related to diversity, such as culture, socioeconomics, and sexual orientation. Last year, I had the pleasure of being a panelist during a discussion on LGBTQ+ issues in the classroom. We filled an entire auditorium with attendees comprised of students, teachers, administrators, and community organizers. Our lively discussion empowered everyone in the room to share their thoughts and ideas on this long-untouched topic in ELT. As a result of the session, many people in

▲ *Luis Roberto Caballero Orozco speaks as part of a panel discussion at KOTESOL's 2018 International Conference.*

the audience were able to network with one another and continue these discussions for long after the conference. The most rewarding aspect of presenting for me was when a young first-year teacher sent me a message online the following week saying that for

▲ *Jennifer Book, from the University of Sussex, presents at KOTESOL's 2018 International Conference.*

the first time in a very long time, he felt visible and supported in his career teaching English in Korea.

3. Put it on your CV!

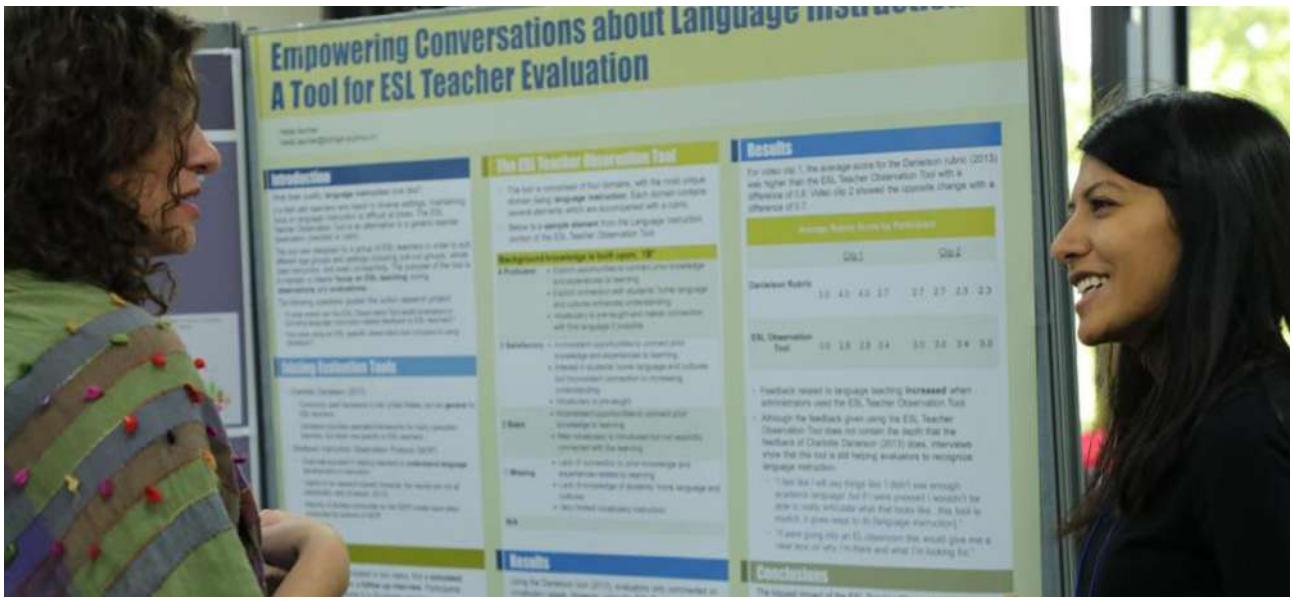
Presenting at our International Conference is a wonderful way to add entries to your CV/resume. Many people want to move up the ranks in education to become head teachers, school administrators, tenure-track faculty, or even to enroll in post-graduate study. Having conference presentations under your belt is a great way to show employers and universities that you are not only a talented teacher in the classroom, but also a curious scholar with the intellectual prowess to lead academic discussions on complex topics in education. Many of us are often left scratching our heads when we need to write CVs or cover letters, and presenting at the International Conference is a great way to show potential employers and graduate schools who we are as teachers and as researchers.

4. Explore the "Seoul of Asia."

Reward yourself with a trip to Seoul! We are honored to hold our conference once again at Sookmyung Women's University, a prestigious university with a beautiful campus in the heart of one of the largest cities in the world. Accepted presenters can enjoy exploring this incredible metropolis that mixes the timeless classics of Korean culture with modern infrastructure and futuristic technological innovation. Many presenters decide to arrive a few days before the conference and/or stay for a few days afterward. They will often visit historical landmarks, take a boat ride down the Han River, go out and have fun in Seoul's vibrant city nightlife, or hike one of Seoul's mountain national parks. Make our International Conference one stop in your Korean adventures!

The call for presentation proposals closes May 10. If you are interested in presenting at the 2019 Korea TESOL International Conference, please visit *koreatesol.org/IC2019* for details. There is a wide range of topics and formats available, so you may, as Luis suggests, choose a subject that interests you. Then select the presentation format that suits you and your topic best, whether it is a poster presentation, research presentation, workshop, or panel discussion.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2019 Korea TESOL International Conference – "Advancing ELT: Blending Disciplines, Approaches, and Technologies."



▲ *Poster presentations are a great way to network and to start participating actively by sharing knowledge and ideas.*

A Noun, *the* Noun, or Just Noun?

By Kent Lee

Few grammar forms have proven as vexing as definite and indefinite articles for EFL/ESL learners. This is because (a) some languages like Korean have no analogous forms, (b) linguists' have an incomplete understanding of how they function, and (c) even those limited insights have not been translated well into materials for teachers or students. The situation in Korea is compounded by teaching approaches and materials that emphasize traditional teaching based on a few simplistic rules (H. Lee, 1997, 1999), particularly the familiar first-mention rule (for *a/an*) and subsequent-mention rule (*the*), and the distinction between count and non-count/mass nouns. However, for learners, such rules can be incomplete, unhelpful, difficult to apply, and even inaccurate (Yoo, 2009). These rules are also presented in artificial, isolated sentences or short, artificial texts, yet these forms depend crucially on context.

My research with learner errors and text analysis has led me to a different system for understanding and teaching these forms. First, I prefer to call them "delimiters," as they delimit and indicate how the noun is used in context. (I also find the term "article" to be confusing, opaque, and unhelpful as a grammar term, especially for students.) The approach outlined here is based on cognitive linguistics and schema theory, which explain how our minds store, classify, and connect information about the world, and then how information is expressed in language and in context.

Delimiter usage depends on how a noun is understood and used in a particular context, and many times one has options – a noun might be used differently, depending on the desired nuance or meaning that one wishes to express. Thus, I contend that these forms are not to be understood as traditional rules, but as patterns. These are patterns that have meanings, and their use can vary according to context and the desired nuance. Finally, just as psychological schemas can be flexible, extended, and applied to new situations (Murphy, 2004), the basic delimiter patterns can be extended or specialized for more specific nuances.

"Korean students have greater difficulties with more abstract nouns, less common nouns, and nouns with multiple meanings and uses."

▲ *"Would you like some coffee?"*
"No thanks, but I'd love a coffee, please."

I also contend that the count–mass distinction is unhelpful, and in fact, is often inaccurate. For example, my students often think that "coffee" and "water" have to be bare nouns, and they do not realize that we can say "a coffee" (e.g., a cup of coffee), and perhaps less often, "a water" (e.g., ordering a bottle of water) in the right context. Finally, bare nouns (those with no delimiter or so-called "zero articles") are as important as marked nouns (those marked with *a/an* or *the*), but a clear distinction is needed between singular and plural bare nouns. So, I will delineate here a few basic patterns that first apply to more concrete and physical nouns. These are then extended to non-physical and abstract nouns to create more specialized meanings. These can better explain many of the noun patterns of English than the traditional rules.

Basic Patterns

We will start with bare singular nouns with no delimiters ("coffee") versus those marked with a delimiter ("a coffee, the coffee"), particularly for physical nouns. Instead of a count–noncount distinction, we actually have these more fundamental patterns.

Bare Pattern. Bare singular nouns indicate materials or substances. This is the basic, default meaning of bare singulars. We speak of drinking water, coffee, or juice, and eating chicken, salad, or cake.

Marked Pattern. Marked singular nouns (with *the*, *a/an*) indicate objects, things, and entities that we conceptualize as distinct things. This includes objects that consist of materials that have been quantified

(e.g., put in a container). We can thus order *a water*, *a coffee*, or *a juice*; we can buy *a chicken* (a whole bird at the store), *a salad*, or *a cake*.

These basic patterns and their distinction are more fundamental that the mass–count distinction and offer a better explanation because many nouns can vary depending on the desired meaning or nuance. For instance, many nouns can be used as materials in some contexts (e.g., *cake*), but as objects in others (*a cake*). In teaching, I prefer to present these patterns by pairing sample pictures of the object and material nouns together (e.g., *juice*, *a juice*, etc.), and text examples that juxtapose the two concepts (e.g., "My car hit *a chicken*, and now there is *chicken* all over the road"). Students discuss these examples in groups to try to deduce the differences, and then I guide them toward an understanding of the object–material noun distinction.

Next we have bare plural nouns, which essentially refer to a set of things. Common, everyday examples include buying items as a set or bunch, such as tomatoes, potatoes, chicken nuggets, pencils, screwdrivers, or books. These can be presented easily with pictures of sets of the same objects and text examples.

Bare plural pattern. Bare plurals indicate a set, group, or bunch of items. For example, we speak of buying *onions*, *potatoes*, *carrots*, and other things sold as sets or groups.

For the next two patterns, we need to clarify the first-/previous-mention rule and the meaning of the so-called indefinite *a/an* and the definite *the*, as these terms can be abstract and unclear to learners. The basic idea is familiar and can be illustrated in short narratives with the nouns mentioned first with *a/an* and then with *the*. With group discussion and then teacher-guided discussion, we arrive at the following patterns:

- **Indefinite Pattern.** Indefinite *a/an* means that the noun is new, unknown, or unfamiliar to the listener or reader in the context. It is also used for singular nouns.
- **Definite Pattern.** Definite *the* means that the noun is known or familiar to the listener/reader in the context.

For definite nouns, singulars should be taught first. Nouns can be definite due to the previous mention and also by their presence in the physical context (e.g., "You can take the red pill...or the blue pill").

I emphasize that these are only patterns, and when they don't seem to be followed, that is because of different patterns that are in effect (specialized uses, as explained below). Communicative or interactive exercises can include creating shopping lists in groups, which can involve objects (*a watermelon*), materials and foods that we treat as materials (*chicken*, *broccoli*, *tofu*), and items sold as sets (*onions*).

Extensions of the Basic Patterns

My research (K. Lee, 2016) has shown that Korean students have greater difficulties with more abstract nouns, less common nouns (e.g., words that they do not know or do not know well), and nouns with multiple meanings and uses. They also have more difficulties with the specialized uses of such nouns that are described below.

These basic physical noun patterns are extended to yield more advanced patterns, which are really just specialized applications of the basic patterns. This gives us various specialized meanings and nuances (e.g., non-physical and abstract uses of nouns). These can be presented as extensions of the basic patterns, and each specialized use can be presented, discussed, and practiced by itself or in comparison with another specialized usage.

The **Bare Plural Pattern** naturally extends to generic descriptions or when one speaks of potentially all members of a category (e.g., "Magpies are large birds related to crows"), that is, encyclopedia-style descriptions. (This one is rather straightforward.)

The **Indefinite Pattern** can be extended to hypothetical uses of nouns (e.g., "I need a new job – *a job* with more flexible hours"). This is then extended to a common genre of definitions via a hypothetical noun, especially in more formal contexts, with *a/an* (e.g., "*An* insect is a six-legged arthropod").

The **Bare Singular Pattern** is used for more non-physical and abstract concepts when used in a general sense (e.g., *language*, *love*, *fear*, *hope*, *existence*, *boredom*, *neoliberalism*, *socialism*, and *feminism*).

The **Bare Singular Pattern** can be applied to objects and items to make their meaning more general (i.e., used in a generalized, or slightly more abstract, sense, especially in prepositional phrases). For example, something is "in orbit" as a state or type of location, not a particular item in a particular time and space. Likewise, we speak of "playing piano," "going by bus," or "being at school" as general activities and states. This is common in academic English (e.g., in *dialect*, in *situ*, by *rote*).

The **Bare Singular Pattern** can indicate general activities (e.g., "I like swimming" or "Beware of theft"), while the **Marked Pattern** nouns indicate specific instances or events (e.g., "I had a great swim" or "There was a theft yesterday; the theft was shocking").

The **Definite Pattern** can be applied to material nouns to indicate a particular instance, set, example,

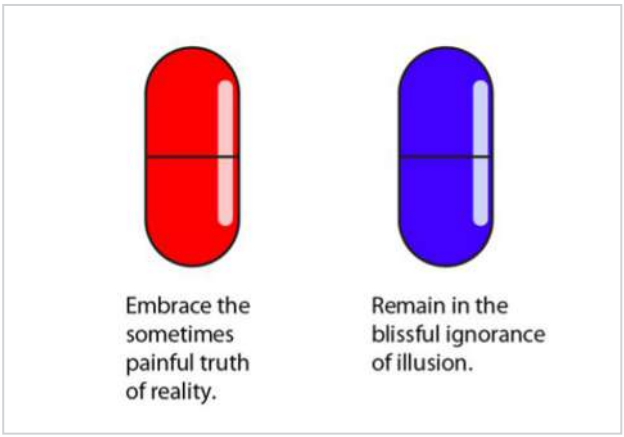
or type of a material (e.g., "the water of Mars," or "the carbon" for the batch of carbon used in my experiment).

The **Definite Pattern** can be applied to abstract nouns to indicate a specific type, instance, or example of the concept (e.g., "the love of chocolate," "the gravity of earth," "the feminism of the 1960s").

The **Definite Pattern** applies to nouns that the speaker/writer assumes to be known, familiar, or inferrable for reasons such as these:

- Comparative and superlative adjectives, numerals, and other prespecifiers imply one specific, definite item from a potential set of items ("the better choice," "the best/worst choice," "the first/last choice," "the same thing").
- For part–whole relationships, a part is assumed to be familiar by virtue of mentioning its whole. For example, when speaking of a computer, one can then mention familiar parts like "the monitor," "the case," or "the hard drive."

A similar function is using a noun that is understood as part of the background of a scene or context. When speaking of any outdoor scene, we speak of "the sun, the moon, the weather, the sky." When speaking of anything indoors, we speak of "the window, the door, the floor," and for classrooms we automatically say "the table, the desk, the chairs, the teacher, the students." Background scenes come from background knowledge for various contexts and scenes, or scene schemas, which significantly influence our knowledge and recall of items in various situations (Pezdek, Whetstone, Reynolds, Askari, & Dougherty, 1989).



▲ *"Which pill will you choose, Neo? The red pill, or the blue pill?"*

The **Definite Pattern** has other specialized uses for nouns that are not previously mentioned. One use is for nouns that are used habitually or regularly. Just as the simple present ("I go to school") denotes habitual action, a definite noun can indicate habitually used items. Thus, I might speak of "going to the store" or "taking the bus to the office" or using "the photocopier," not necessarily for one store, vehicle, office, or machine that you personally know of, but its familiarity is implied because these are things that I normally or regularly use. We speak of "playing the piano" to convey a nuance of habitual activity or "playing piano" (generalized noun) for a nuance of general activity. Definite nouns are also used to indicate a typical example, known as "exemplars" in schema theory (e.g., "In the jungle, the mighty jungle, the lion sleeps tonight" – a famous song by The Tokens). This makes listeners imagine a typical, representative jungle and lion based on their jungle and lion schemas. This exemplar definite noun is used in narratives and sometimes in academic writing.

These advanced patterns can be presented and illustrated with short sample texts, and since many of these are common in academic writing, academic examples can be appropriate. Examples of one or two patterns can be presented together and contrasted, allowing students a chance to try to deduce their nuances or differences in meaning. Specific activities and exercises can be tailored to focus on one or two of these at a time. For example, standard paragraph or discourse forms can be adapted to interactive group tasks, as described below, that students discuss together, possibly leading to an oral or written product (e.g., a short presentation or paragraph).

- A short narrative or description
- Explanation of an idea by examples
- Comparison or contrast of two items or concepts
- Describing a process

For more academic classes, or for tasks involving multiple delimiter usages, the following can be done.

- Explain an important concept in your field (including how it is used and why it is important).
- Correcting or revising noun phrases in a text.
- Describe and explain the typical features of X. Then discuss one example of X, how it is typical, and how it differs from typical Xs. Here, X can be anything, depending on the desired difficulty level and students' interests (e.g., insects, birds, penguins, sports, sci-fi films, anime, superheroes, video games, romantic poems, mystery novels, stars, jazz music).

It is best if delimiter patterns are presented and discussed with helpful or interesting pictures, interesting sentences, or contexts of at least short paragraphs (not just isolated and artificial sentences). It may actually not be so difficult to find interactive or communicative tasks or useful writing activities, as long as you tailor the task to a particular noun pattern or usage, or comparing two different noun patterns or uses. Essentially, teachers can probably think of many possible activities for practicing delimiters and noun patterns, as long as they have in mind a particular pattern or nuance to practice.

"Examples of one or two patterns can be presented together and contrasted, allowing students a chance to try to deduce their nuances or differences in meaning."

In this article, I have tried to cover a lot of ground about definite and indefinite articles, with a few teaching suggestions. Over the coming months, I will be putting up more explanations and teaching ideas on my website. I also welcome your suggestions, questions, and teaching ideas.

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Quick and Easy Speaking Activities to Get Students Talking

By Sara Peterson

Teachers are busy. With various classes and a mix of student levels, it is hard to find effective new activities for students. This article will walk participants through seven speaking activities that can be used with a variety of levels and topics. They require no prep or extra materials on the part of the teacher. Instead, the focus is on the students producing the activity to get them talking!

Number Game

This first game can be used on the first day as an introduction. First, the teacher gives a list of numbers about themselves and gives students a few minutes to guess the meaning in groups. For example, 1 (daughter), 1 (dog), 2010 (year I moved to Korea), and so on. Once they have made guesses, I reveal the answers. Then, students can make their own lists of numbers and guess in groups. If there is enough time and if students are at an appropriate speaking level, ask each group to nominate one student. This student comes in front of the class and shares one of their numbers for everyone to guess. This activity can also be used for other topics. Take transportation, for example: 1 (hour to commute), 2 (buses ridden to school), 4 (times traveled per week), etc. This flexible activity is easy for different English proficiencies to approach.

List Game

This game uses "Scattergories" as an inspiration. Ask students to get in groups and make a list of as many items as possible in a given category (usually 2–3 minutes). The categories can vary to fit into any lesson you might teach, such as "fruit," "vocabulary words from this lesson" or "things that annoy you." When time is up, choose one group to read their list first while the other groups listen. If the first group reads a list item, like "strawberry," and another group has that on their list, they respond by saying "strawberry" back, and no point is given. If no other group has written "strawberry," and there is no response, then mark a point for that group. If there is confusion about two list item, matching, for example, "cookies" and "chocolate cookies," then the groups vote on whether they are the same (no point) or different items (point). Students can become very competitive as they try to think of creative words to outsmart other groups.

Majority Rules

This activity is inspired by the TV game show of the same name. The class is divided into two teams. One student from each team comes to the front and answers a question by writing on a hidden whiteboard or piece of paper. For example, "What's the best gift to give to your girlfriend?" Student A may write "flowers," while student B writes "a ring." If both students write the same answer, the first student to finish claims it. The teacher announces the two answers, concealing which student wrote which. Give students a minute to discuss, then vote on which answer is best. The teacher reveals which team won and marks down a point. Questions can vary widely, depending on student level and relevant topics.

Two Truths and a Lie

This activity is fairly straightforward. First, give an example. Write two true statements and one lie about yourself. In groups, students discuss the three statements and choose which one they doubt is true. The teacher reveals which is the lie and (if you choose) points can be given for guessing correctly. Then, students can write their own statements – two truths and one lie. They can discuss and guess in groups. If time allows and the students are fairly confident, the teacher can ask each group to nominate one student to share. The class can guess together or in groups for points. This game is quite flexible as the statements can be about anything with some preparation. For example, the teacher can find two real facts about any topic and make-up a third.

Salad Bowl

Teachers can use this activity for vocabulary review. First, divide students into groups and have them write a set number (usually three per group member) of target words on little slips of paper. Once they are finished, fold the words up and trade them between groups. For example, Group 1 gives their 10 words to Group 2, Group 2 gives their 10 words to Group 3, and so on. The game is played in three rounds. In the first round, a member of the group draws a slip of paper

> **"...an engaging and student-centered addition to any class and can be easily inserted into a variety of lessons."**

and gives hints to help their group members guess the word. Each student gets one minute to go through as many words as possible, then passes the unused words to the next student in their group. The teacher can time this and shout out when it is time to switch. Once a group finishes all the words, they move on to Round 2 – they throw all the used words back in and start again. However, in Round 2, the active student is only allowed to give one word as a clue. This is a bit harder as students try to remember words from the previous rounds. Once they guess all of the words, they start again on Round 3. In this final round, the active student is not allowed to use any words but instead gestures to give hints to the others. The one-minute time limit remains the same for all rounds. The subject matter of this game can vary: vocabulary words, phrases, or sentences work as well.

▲ *ESL students enjoy sharing opinions, ideas, knowledge, and fun.*

Jeopardy

This game is inspired by the TV show of the same name, though phrasing the answer as a question is not necessary. First, ask student groups to rank given content from easiest to hardest. For example, if there are 12 possible questions for a speaking test, students can rank them 1 (easiest) to 12 (hardest.) Next, add up the rankings and then assign point values to the questions. Using the example of 12 questions, the three hardest questions would be 400 points, while the three easiest would be worth 100 points. The groups take turns choosing a point value and are asked the corresponding question. If one of the group's students can answer successfully, they are given the points. If the group is unsuccessful, the question is posed to the class and students can "buzz in" (quickly raise their hands) to steal the question. This can be used for a variety of topics as long as there is content for students to rank.

What's Yours Like?

This description guessing game is adapted from a card game of the same name. Teachers or students can write nouns on slips of paper, for example, "refrigerator."

"The focus is on the students producing the activity to get them talking!"

In groups, there is one student guessing while all others look at the slip of paper. The guessing student asks, "What's yours like?" and the other students take turns describing theirs. For the refrigerator example, the other students could say, "Mine is white," "Mine is big," "Mine is cold," "Mine is in my kitchen," After each hint, the guessing student gets a chance to guess the answer. Points can be kept by counting the number of guesses it takes to get the answer, with a lower number of points being desirable. Depending on student levels and your lessons, the content that students are guessing can vary widely: "my best friend," "my dream job," or "my commute."

Both teachers and students will enjoy these speaking activities. They allow for an engaging and student-centered addition to any class and can be easily inserted into a variety of lessons.

The Author

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Remembering Mitzi Kaufman

KOTESOL member Mitzi Kaufman departed this world from her home in Daejeon on January 10, 2019. KOTESOL held a memorial service for her on January 26 to celebrate her life and cherish her memory. On this page and the next are the opening remarks made at the memorial service by KOTESOL President David E. Shaffer and a sampling of the loving remarks made by Mitzi's friends on social media. — Ed.

We are gathered here today for Mitzi Sarah Kaufman, to remember her life and to celebrate her achievements.

It was not until a few years ago that I came to know Mitzi. It was at a Daejeon Chapter Symposium. Her name had, of course, preceded her – such a vibrant, bubbly person, so full of life, who left us much too soon.

I recall one of the reminiscences on one of the Facebook pages devoted to Mitzi's memory featured a letter Mitzi had written to an acquaintance experiencing difficulties. It ended with these words:

"I wish you an abundance of laughter and love!"

What she meant by "laughter," I think, was not a ha-ha-ha laugh, but being able to live free from stress and injustice from others. And by "love," she was not referring to just a simple smile and hug type of love. Mitz's love was a true caring for the wellbeing of others – an uncalculating, selfless love, a caring for others more than for self.

Mitzi had long been an advocate for others. She was an "Aggie Ally" working for women's and gender equality as a graduate student at Texas A&M. That continued when she came to Korea to work in Seoul in 2006, and when she came to work at KAIST in Daejeon in 2014.

It was when she came to Daejeon that she became involved in KOTESOL, joining the Daejeon-Chungcheong Chapter that same year and soon becoming a chapter council officer. In 2018, Mitzi became active in our Social Justice SIG, becoming a leader in advocating for LGBTQ rights, among others.

I think of Mitzi as more of an advocate than an activist. Her promotion of causes was not so much standing up in front of a group with a "Hey, look at me and look at what I'm doing!" attitude or style. A lot of Mitzi's work was done more quietly, out of the spotlight, and on a one-to-one interpersonal basis.

Mitzi's compassion has touched more hearts and souls than we will probably ever know. Mitzi Kaufman will be sorely missed. May her memory be a blessing to all those she knew.

Opening Remarks at KOTESOL memorial service for Mitzi Kaufman

David E. Shaffer, President, Korea TESOL
January 26, 2019
Woosong University, Daejeon

All excerpts below have been printed with permission from, and thanks to, respective authors.
To read more, join the Facebook group where these were first shared: For Mitzi Kaufman.
(This section prepared by Dr. Andrew White.)

"[Mitzi] was kind and compassionate, adventurous and brave. She saw the best in people, and I'm so shocked that the unfettered love she poured out for us wasn't given to herself for all she did. I'll miss her dearly."
— W. Todd Magowan

"Mitzi's passing has hit me pretty hard. I didn't see or talk to her that often, but I'm heartbroken. ... She was so fun to be around. She used to say "adios chingoes" (Spanish, Korean, and English). The pink glove dance is probably my fondest memory of her. I will miss her. RIP."
— Danelle Yang

"I met Mitzi when I first came to Korea in 2015. Without even knowing me, she invited me to her annual Hanukkah party in Daejeon. She made my first Hanukkah in Korea a memorable one. I was so thankful to have somewhere to go to celebrate and her delicious latkes to eat. She outdid herself. Her kindness touched my life, and I am so sad to hear about her death. I send my deepest condolences to her close friends and family."
— Kim Goldsmith

"I'll never forget all the knowledge she's shared. ... I've never met a more beautiful soul, and I'm so happy to have known her."
— Jung Mina

"I will always be very grateful to have met Mitzi and to have shared some wonderful memories with her as a friend and former colleague. … She was one in a million, and we will never forget her. My heart goes out to her family and other friends."
— Penny Crawford

"I met Mitzi when I first arrived to Daejeon in the winter of 2014. As others have said, she was always so inclusive and welcoming to everyone…. Whether she was hosting a dinner or a painting party, all were welcome. I will forever be grateful to her for that.

"Mitzi was also an expert 'people introducer'…. I was lucky enough to have met some incredible people through Mitzi. In our last correspondence, we were joking about how we will be 'forever linked' due to the wonderful web of friends she'd spun. I'm going to miss you, my friend. I love you, and I hope you are at peace now. Rest easy."
— Kimberlee Walter

"She was such a bright light, a fiercely loyal friend, passionate, fiery, caring, funny, her laughter consumed a room, generous, kind, always an advocate for those who didn't have a voice. ... I hope, wherever you are, that you feel at peace and are surrounded by warmth and love. You meant so much to so many people, and YOU were so special. I'm sorry this world wasn't ready for you. Miss you and love you."
— Kay Mehe

"I always enjoyed Mitzi. This news has shocked me as I remember her as a bubbly, enthusiastic, and incredibly caring individual. She was always involved in some project or other. I met her during our Daejeon production of the Vagina Monologues. ... I didn't realise you were struggling, but what is amazing is you still continued to fight for what you believed in, and you brought so much joy to all you met. This has made me realise, hold those you love dear, and reach out more often, and make more time for the people who truly matter.

I hope you have found your peace, amazing soul, and just know we all are thinking of you, and we love you."
— Noelle Liszkay

"Although I hardly knew her, I was so impressed by her passion and authenticity. It was not difficult for me to recognize her values and value, and welcome her as a leader in our community. I have no regrets. She was like a breath of fresh air for our SIG, bringing new and diverse people together, sharing valuable experiences and resources, advocating and calling people to action."
— Jocelyn Wright

"I miss Mitzi so much. But she left a wonderful example of love through words and action that I want to carry with me for the rest of my life."
— Dan Buller

"The fierce, brilliant, unapologetically loving force that she is. In her memory, I vow to feel joy as purely and endlessly as I have felt sadness or anger. To find bliss in simple moments. I am so grateful that I met Mitzi. It is rough to see how much of my time with her I have taken for granted. But I want to go forward, awake enough to share the blessings of this world with others, to show more compassion and empathy as she did, to allow myself to accept the love that wants to flow back to me."
— Stacy McFaul

"Thank you, Mitzi, for impacting all of us in some way."
— Sophie Longley

Eastern vs. Western Thought and ESL:
Confucian Thought and the Korean Pronouns *Wuli* and *Nae*

By Eric Shewack

When one ponders the attributes an effective English teacher should possess, qualities such as experience, English proficiency, and teaching experience, all come to mind. These are all indeed crucial characteristics that contribute to the overall composition of an ideal English instructor. However, an attribute of equal, or arguably even greater, importance is that of the teacher's understanding of his or her prospective students' culture, native language, and thus mindset. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked, and when teachers from Western cultures enter classrooms with students of Eastern mindsets, unintended barriers become established and ultimately interfere with the language-learning process. This article seeks to raise awareness of this problem and offers countermeasures to dealing with cultural misunderstandings and different interpretations of concepts in the Eastern world versus the Western world. It is based on personal experience and later elaborated upon with an extensive study of Korean collectivism based on the findings of a master's thesis dedicated to the subject.

"... an attribute of equal or arguably even greater importance is that of the teacher's understanding of his or her prospective students' culture, native language, and thus mindset."

Having spent five years teaching English in Korea, I have had many first-hand encounters with interference in language instruction due to cultural differences. However, as time went on, these cultural *faux pas* became less and less as I melded into the mindset of Korean collectivism. I vividly recall teaching in a small *hagwon* classroom with three teenage boys, who were of very low English level, explaining to me where their "brother" was when I was taking attendance. This caused confusion on my end with me thinking the boys were literally siblings and confusion on their end when they seemed befuddled that their native English instructor couldn't understand the word "brother." When I later learned the hierarchical terms Koreans used for peers based on age and gender, it was obvious that they were simply translating *hyeong* into English when the word "friend" did not quite equate to the relationship in their mindset.

Language aside for a moment, I found it strange when co-workers took me to an American chain restaurant, placed each attendee's Western food in the middle of the table, and shared it Korean style. In hindsight, knowing what I know now, I probably came off as quite rude for daring to think that plate of spaghetti was entirely for me. Surely, something must account for this "we-ness" behavior, and the enigma began to become unraveled when I looked into the Korean language itself.

Anyone who has studied Korean, even at a rudimentary level, must have encountered the first person singular and plural pronouns *na* + *ui* (or *nae*, colloquially) and *wuli*, respectively. When the number count of the included speakers is more than one, it is quite obvious to choose the pronoun *wuli*, which then behaves like its English counterpart, *our*. However, when a sole individual introduces his or her mother as "our mother" in Korean to a complete stranger, this indeed is a hard concept for Westerners to grasp, yet it may seem like second nature to native Korean speakers. It should also be noted that it is not uncommon for young or novice Korean EFL learners to translate this literally as "our mother" in English essays or while speaking. This serves as another example of where EFL teachers, who are perhaps new to Korea and the Eastern world, may assume the student has not yet grasped basic English pronouns. However, the reality is that the Korean student is actually reflecting his or her perception of relationships with human entities from his or her cultural mindset.

The key to understanding this clash of cultures more clearly seems to reside in the Confucian school of thought, which was developed by the Chinese politician, philosopher, and scholar, Confucius. Though this was developed in China rather than Korea, it is often thought that Korea adopted the philosophy in an even more rigid form than that of its neighbors. Conner (2012, p. 180) asserts that "nothing has shaped Korean society as much as Confucianism. This philosophy was accepted so eagerly and in such a strict form that the Chinese regarded the Korean adherents as more Confucian than themselves." Kang (2006) refers to Korea as the "honor student of Confucianism"

or "heavily tinged" with Confucianism in general. Potential reasons for Koreans' strong embrace of the philosophy can be attributed to political factions, social circumstances at the time of inception, and indigenous religions that had to coexist or at least adapt to Confucian infiltration. For example, in the case of Japan, Levi (2013) makes note that the state-religion of Shintoism had already been established when Confucianism reached the Japanese archipelago.

"Confucianism is reflected not only in the way Koreans think and behave but also in the way the Korean language works in terms of both vocabulary and grammar" (Song, 2009, p. 10). In order to delve deeper into the Korean mindset, it is important to understand the way culture has influenced the Korean language itself. This became my primary goal while working on my master's thesis in the linguistics program at the Graduate School of International Cultural Studies at Tohoku University in Sendai, Japan. I had always felt that Korean language-learning textbooks did little justice to cover the ambiguous Korean pronoun *wuli*, often offering vague blanket statements that often gave very prototypical cases of when *wuli* is chosen (such as one's home or grandmother) but fail to offer insight as to where usage ends, or when the line between the Korean "my" and "our" blurs. However, it is worth mentioning that the University of Hawaii's *Basic Korean* by Andrew Sangpil Byon (2008) addresses the pronoun with considerable attention, at least when compared to many other texts.

Previous Studies and Methodology

In order to seek a deeper understanding of why Koreans opt for this pronoun when the number count does not agree or in cases where *nae* is also acceptable, I went beyond Korean language-learning textbooks and compared academic studies on the pronoun's ambiguous behavior. Recalling the experience where my Korean co-workers converted an American-style dinner into a Korean dining affair, I read that *wuli* is the preferred pronoun when Koreans want to express intimacy or group harmony. Na and Choi (2009) inform us that Confucius was very much concerned with harmony and laid out five key virtues in order to bring out the best in individuals. It was his belief that if all humans followed this moral code, a harmonious society would follow (Connor, 2002).

If it is indeed the case that *wuli* is chosen over *nae* where intimacy and affection is concerned, then it is important to consider the Korean notion of *jeong* which is derived from the Chinese character 情. One needs to look no further than boxes of "Choco-pie" to see this character in the public eye, but that is only one of many places it appears in public in Korea.

In my experiences, Koreans are very familiar with the concept of *jeong* but seem to be hard-pressed when asked to actually define it. Years ago, a Korean friend described it to me as the new car that has all the new gadgets but doesn't have that familiar worn-in seat and scent, or the new phone that is shiny and loaded with the latest applications but still not your trusty old phone that fits perfectly in your pocket or doesn't have a crack from the time you dropped it, which reminds you of a special day. "Emotional attachment" seems to be a suitable English counterpart but still might not do the notion justice to the non-Korean mind.

All of the content in the aforementioned paragraphs served as the basis of a master's thesis study of sixty-three native Korean-speaking participants to find clues as to where the usage of *nae* begins and *wuli* ends and vice versa. Kim (2003) suggests that *wuli* is chosen when one wants to emphasize familiarity and inclusion with the hearer. Further, Kim also gives specific collocational patterns with examples of relationships that can take *nae*, *wuli*, or either. However, it was my goal to get raw data from actual native Korean speakers, apply percentages to pronoun choice, and form conclusions as to why one pronoun was chosen over the other. Additionally, I was driven from the outset to find a line, or some form of breaking point where the choice between the two pronouns began to blur. I fortunately stumbled upon a study by Yang (1993), *The Korean Jealousy Sentence*, which served as the perfect framework to craft my own sentences to test the extremities of Korean possessive pronoun choice. Yang proposes a family boundary based on blood-links, which are referred to as *chon* in the Korean language. The ego or extremity of the ego or speaker's immediate family ends at *sam-chon*, which is a three-step blood link and the furthest relation away from the speaker that still receives the pronoun *wuli*. On the other hand, *nae* usage allegedly begins at four-step blood links or *sa-chon*, which is also the Korean word for cousin. This is called *chon-su-pəp* (촌수법), which is the law of measurement of blood-linked kin that Yang believes to represent Korean kinship very well linguistically (Yang, 1993, p. 109). The boundary illustrated in Yang's study is shown below.

The Family Boundary (were numerals indicate χ-step distance)
0, 1, 2, 3 ‖ boundary ‖ 4, 5, 6,…
└ ego's family ┘ └ outside ┘

The breakdown of the actual "jealousy sentence" from Yang (1993, p. 108) is the following:

sa-chon-i non-il sa-myən, pae-ka aph i - ta.
4-step-kin-Nom paddy-field-Acc buy if stomach-Nom sick

"If an ego's 4-step-distance sibling buys a paddy-field, the ego's stomach aches." (literal)

In simpler terms, this traditional Korean proverb may hold clues as to where the embedded psyche of Korean intimacy begins and ends. This would suggest that relationships residing closer to the boundary should show gradience regarding pronoun selection, whereas pronouns further away from the boundary should be more resilient to optional choice. The questions in my study were crafted not only based on the boundary proposed by Yang (1993) but also with contextual circumstances to increase or decrease intimacy or attachment based on Korean *jeong*.

Because the purpose of the article is primarily to inform readers of Eastern versus Western thought, the results of this study are not only too long to include in this publication, but also too detailed. However, three results, one on each extreme of pronoun choice and one that resides somewhere in the middle, where *nae* was expected to be the dominantly chosen pronoun, yet open to overlap with *wuli*, will be shown to provide an overall summary. The results are very much in alignment with Yang's framework and offer deeper clues as to how Korean speakers choose pronouns in regards to relationships. This is because the questions were crafted with the intent to increase or decrease emotional value or intimacy with the hearer.

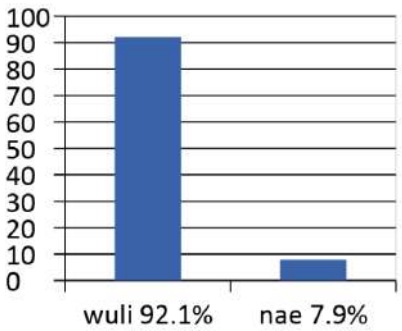
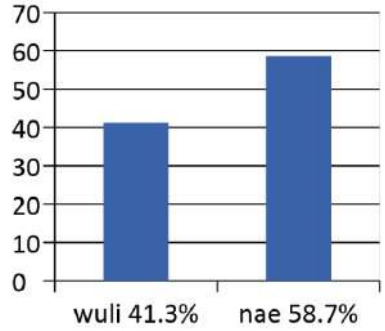
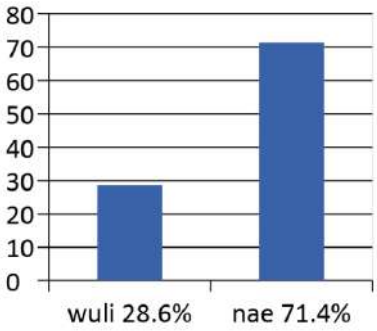
It is interesting to note that the results of Example 3 show a step away from blood relationship in linear terms but reflect Korea's Confucian-driven affinity for hierarchy in accordance with age and its corresponding respect.

Future plans for this study are to hone in on responses that showed spikes in one pronoun or another where certain key words were mentioned. That is, certain responses showed noteworthy fluctuation for key words that were not intentionally inserted prior to situation or circumstance creation in the sentences. One such example was found when the word *family* was either used or implied in the background context. This shifted pronoun choice to *wuli* even when the pronoun and relation set was the same when compared to examples without mention of family. Furthermore, pronoun selection regarding one's spouse were nearly evenly split and a clear pattern or indication for such selection was not observed.

Conclusion

As a whole, this article aims to raise awareness among aspiring or current EFL instructors who come from more individualist societies to understand cultural barriers that may impede learning in the classroom. Though the research shown is primarily concerned with phenomena in the Korean language, the overall message that this article wishes to convey is that background knowledge of the society and culture where English is being taught plays a significant role in EFL instruction. Likewise, this awareness and some of the topics addressed in this article can also be applied or considered, particularly in other countries such as Japan and China where Confucian thought has flourished for centuries. Hierarchical structures and equivalent words to show respect for individuals

Results and Discussion

Example 1: You are showing your friend a book your great-grandfather wrote. *wuli/nae* grandfather wrote it.	**Example 2: You are talking with a friend.** *wuli/nae* cousin recently had a baby.	**Example 3: You are showing your friend a gift that you love which you received from your thoughtful younger brother/sister.** *wuli/nae* younger brother/sister is the best.
		

"...the reality is that the Korean student is actually reflecting his or her perception of relationships with human entities from his or her cultural mindset."

or institutions held in high esteem are lacking or non-existent in English. Therefore, an awareness of these principles helps break down the barriers of communication caused by cultural differences in the classroom as well as pinpoint root causes for the mistakes our students make in English.

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Can Teachers Help Students Who Struggle with Stress?

By Matkhiya Usmonova

TEC is always eager to publish the perspectives of all our members, especially those just starting out in the EFL field as a teacher or student. The following article comes from one of KOTESOL's youngest members and provides an interesting perspective from the other side of the classroom. — Ed.

For many, being a college student means overcoming daily academic stress. Being a student is not easy, nor is it all fun and games. In fact, there are several situations in regular university life which can provoke major stress, such as writing essays, doing presentations, and learning a lot of new things at once, not to mention the looming scheduled exams for which they have to work hard to pass. As a result, students typically and regularly confront various negative consequences of stress, including these three significant ways:

- Stress decreases sleep quality.
- Stress makes students angrier.
- Stress worsens grades.

Of course, students need to be able to manage stress by themselves; it is a major component of maturing and gaining responsibility. But others in positions of responsibility, such as parents and teachers, can and should also play a role in helping to reduce this problem. Indeed, parents who are not as supportive as they could be can cause more stress for their children at university.

And this is also true for teachers. It is very important for teachers to consider their students' problems and to help them overcome their academic stress so that their students can live a better life and, more importantly from the perspective of the teacher, enhance their learning.

Personally, while studying at an IT college, I needed to learn English and take an IELTS exam to gain eligibility

to study abroad. Undoubtedly, it was very stressful for me. It was really challenging to find a teacher with good teaching skills. I went to several language education courses, but I was not satisfied with their methods of teaching because they always forced us without encouragement. Thankfully, I eventually found one highly qualified teacher in my city who always understood youngsters' situations and could teach us in a more helpful way. She used seven really easy ways to help students cope with stress effectively. Here they are.

Meditation for 10 minutes before class

Every student came early and entered the empty room to meditate. It may sound a bit straightforward, but it was really helpful to lower stress levels. We practiced a good breathing technique that put us in a more relaxed state as we sent oxygen surging through our bloodstream.

Providing Time to Exercise

We should not only exercise our minds, but also our bodies. We did not need to go to the sports center or gym; we could do simple exercises during class. Are you wondering how? It was so simple yet joyful. Our lovely teacher played upbeat, feel-good songs to dance to for only about ten minutes. Thus, this method assisted us in increasing our interest in the subject.

Playing Music While Completing In-Class Tasks

Listening to music can help calm students down and put them in a better frame of mind. The teacher put on some inspirational music or the music that we adored, while we were working in class.

Telling Jokes Was the Best Medicine

When the teacher told some funny stories, the students started to laugh out loud. This served to increase oxygen and blood flow, which automatically relieves tension and physical stress. Similarly, there were lists of funny jokes that our teacher told, and she played some humorous videos just before finishing her class.

Encouraging Students to Watch Motivational Videos and Movies

Current youngsters often focus on the negative aspect of a situation; thus, they are confronted with mental stress as well as unhelpful thoughts. In order to tackle this problem, our teacher tried to search for an extensive diversity of spiritual movies and suggested that we watch them at home. Not only were we to watch them, she later asked us about the films in class. By discussing those stories, we learned more and understood the specific meaning of the movies. Through a sense of optimism (instead of feeling upset over a bad grade), we tried to sustain a positive attitude and looked at ways to develop even more.

Allowing Students to Study the Things They Love the Most

When she felt that students were becoming extremely stressed out, the teacher gave us a break to do something we loved to do. Whether it was reading, listening to music, or dancing. Doing something we enjoyed would cheer us up and distract us from stress.

Improving Relationships with Students

Improve relationships with students and enhancing students' learning was incredibly important to our teacher. To do this, she provided a structure at the onset of the course, encouraged class participation, got to know students by name, mobilized student tutors and study groups, used appropriate personal stories, and developed advising skills. This had the effect of students feeling less stress and being able to cope more effectively with stress, as we felt we belonged within the academic community.

In fact, it has been proven that teachers should understand the mindset of students in order to help them relieve their strain and stress. Teachers must ask themselves what is most important to the young generation; how do they wish to spend their valuable time; and what is the most healthy, realistic way that they can invest in themselves to ensure their learning skills are productive and effective for the future.

The Author

Matkhiya Usmonova is from the Republic of Uzbekistan and is presently a student at Chonnam National University in Gwangju, majoring in English language and literature. She is seeking to communicate more with highly qualified English teachers in order to lay the groundwork for a successful future career back in her homeland. Email: matkhiya98@gmail.com

Considerations for Graduate School: Removing Barriers to Career Progression

By Joanne McCuaig

The following is intended for individuals considering furthering their education, be it a certificate, diploma, masters, or PhD, either within your current employment context or branching into a different area. As with any advice, be sure to take a critical, self-reflective stance to determine what is applicable and appealing to you and why. The goal is for you to form an opinion to guide you to an appropriate decision for yourself.

One does not necessarily need to have an exact career goal in mind when considering furthering their education. Rather, instead of regarding a degree as having the ability to open doors, consider it more as a removal of barriers. Once you complete your studies, in most cases, someone is not knocking on your door offering you an ideal position; however, you now have the ability to apply for jobs, with confidence that your education has seen you develop appropriate skills relevant to that position. From an employer's perspective you have demonstrated at a fundamental level that you can read extended texts, synthesize and utilize current information, and follow instructions and deadlines. Given your higher level of literacy, time management, and other skills, let us look at some considerations poised as self-reflection questions. There will be overlap and linkages within the categories, just as in life.

"Instead of regarding a degree as having the ability to open doors, consider it more as a removal of barriers."

First, your location while studying. Are you considering a local institution (in your current country of residence)? Do you prefer distance or mixed-mode learning? Would you move to either your home nation or a third one? This ties into finances and expenses for most programs: how are you paying for your education plus your cost of living, and do you have any dependents? If you have the ability to work and study at the same time, this can generally save you some money and potentially avoid debt overall with the trade off of time. In the third option, moving "home" or to a third country can be expensive, and you should consider the "What's next?" question after completion: would you return to Korea, or go somewhere else? Again, look at your financials as a starting point to help you decide.

Another consideration is for the actual program: the content, skills and knowledge attainment, time commitment, and networking and support offered by the institution. Does the program offer something relevant to your current career? Is it clear what you will learn and how it will further develop you within that field? How long will it take, and how is the program delivered: face to face, online, videos, group meetings, group projects, research projects, research papers? How does the institution support you as a learner? Are there opportunities for networking? Becoming a student again can be challenging, and you want to have a clear understanding of what you will do and who you can contact if you need support.

Speaking of support, let us consider life outside of your studies: friends, family, and the future. If you have dependents, be they spouses, children, or aging parents, they too will factor into your decision-making process of where you will study, how long it could take, and overall costs of education and living. This obviously links into the location you will be in for the duration of your studies and where you might want to live afterwards.

Overall, this has been a basic summary of Where? How long? How much? and What's next? The particular content of what to study and how to develop your career is far too personalized a topic to discuss here. For that, you need to network: speak to graduates; contact specific institutions; and go to education fairs; for example, check out the educational booths at the KOTESOL International Conference and ask the representatives questions. In the meantime, try to decide upon your answers for these self-reflection questions with the understanding that modifications will occur as your circumstances change.

The Author

Joanne McCuaig is a 2012 graduate of the University of Birmingham, where she gained her MA in applied linguistics (with distinction). She is a tutor, marker, and dissertation supervisor for the program. She is also the in-country representative for Korea and offers a writing workshop and dissertation induction to masters students in the program. Email: J.McCuaig@bham.ac.uk

Recursive Conversations and Fluency Development in a First-Year EFL Oral Communication Course

By Scott Bowyer

Recursive conversations (RCs; Kindt, 2004) have been an area of recent research interest with regard to the instructed acquisition of interactional competence (IC) in an L2, particularly within the field of sociocultural theory (O'Connor & McDermott, 1997). The author has been teaching freshman oral communication classes with a focus on conversation skills and was under the impression that learners might benefit from a reduction in the number of activities per class and an increase in speaking time. Upon learning about RCs and their potential benefits, he decided to conduct a short, six-week experiment in order to ascertain what effects, if any, RCs would have on the participants and whether or not these effects are beneficial for the development of L2 IC.

Recursive Conversations

Recursion is a process in L2 learning that promotes the developmental restructuring of one's interlinguistic system through the "return to a similar experience – but with a wider knowledge" (Kindt, 2004, p. 15). As O'Connor and McDermott (1997) suggest, it can be viewed as "a spiral staircase to bring you to higher and higher levels" (pp. 100–101). This focus on the return to a similar experience, but with new knowledge, may help learners to increase their fluency and their overall oral competence.

Murphey (2003) discovered that one of the key missing components in the classes of language learners was the lack of adequate performance opportunities (p. 51). By allowing learners to engage in multiple extended discourse opportunities (MEDOs), he noted a significant increase in learner speaking confidence and feelings of ownership over the L2 (p. 52). Although he used different terminology, his MEDOs appear to be the same as RCs. Based on Murphey's results, then, it appears that RCs can lead to increased learner confidence and motivation. However, the question remains of whether or not RCs can have a tangible effect on learners' oral proficiency.

Research Goals

This research expands on Murphey's original study by incorporating the use of fluency data to ascertain (a) learner perceptions of RCs and (b) the effects of RCs on learners' oral fluency.

Data Collection

This research was conducted with a group of 18 first-year English majors selected from a larger group of 34, based on their responses to a data-sharing permissions survey. Participants experienced two different implementations of a three-week-long oral competency course. The first non-recursive course consisted of a thirty-minute conversation strategy lesson followed by a ten-minute, three-student conversation. The RC course used the same lesson but was instead followed by two five-minute conversations. In order to collect a mixture of data types and combine them into a cohesive whole, a concurrent, multiple-perspective triangulation design was followed (Dornyei, 2007, pp. 170–172). Learners were asked to complete pre- and post-questionnaires in weeks 3 and 9 in order to gauge changes in their perceptions of the changes made to their classes and to gain useful information about the class composition. The conversations were recorded during each lesson, then transcribed and analyzed for fluency.

Results and Analysis

Learner perceptions of the recursive conversations. Learners' differing experiences in the RCs and non-RCs groups resulted in interesting differences in their questionnaire responses. As can be seen in Figure 1, the RCs were rated as more interesting (1), less useful (2) and less challenging (3) than the non-RCs. The changes to the interesting and challenging categories are as hoped for. However, the perception that the non-RCs version is more useful is somewhat surprising.

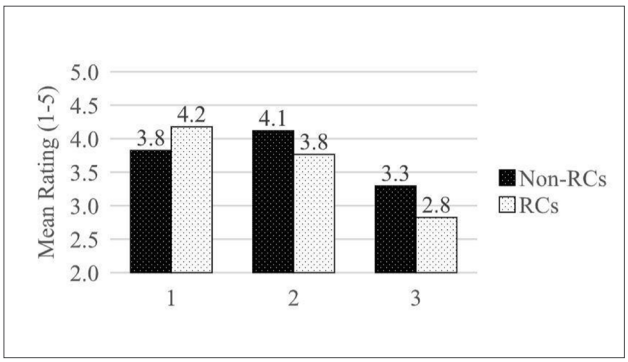

Figure 1. Learner perceptions of RCs versus non-RCs.

Overall, it is pleasing to see that learners found the new Let's Talk/Discuss to be more interesting and less challenging, even at the expense of a decreased perception of usefulness. Learners did not expand upon their reasons for their choices, but it seems likely that the reduced conversation length of the RCs resulted in decreased perception of usefulness, particularly as teachers did not explain the theory underpinning the change.

Group Fluency. In order to gauge the effect of RCs on learner fluency, the total number of recognizable words in the conversations were counted and divided by the total conversation time to establish a mean number of words per minute (WPM). In Table 1, a stark difference is visible between the WPM of the first and second conversations for all three weeks. Each displays an increase in WPM during the second conversation in comparison to the first. The degree of difference varies, with a relatively small increase of 6 WPM between C1 and C2 in week 8 and a relatively large increase of 18.5 WPM in week 9. On average, learner groups spoke 58.5 WPM in C1, compared with 70.8 WPM in C2, an increase of 12.3 WPM. Based on these results, RCs appear to have had a significant short-term positive impact on learner fluency.

Table 1. Group Fluency Changes During Recursive Conversations

	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Mean	SD
WPM C1	62.4	72.4	40.8	58.5	16.2
WPM C2	74.6	78.4	59.3	70.8	10.1

The standard deviation (SD) also provides some interesting information about fluency changes between the first and second conversations. Whereas C1 has a standard deviation of 16.2 WPM, C2 shows a significantly lower SD of 10.1 WPM. Compared to C1, the C2 learner fluency is much less varied. This may be an indication that the RCs allowed learners to approach their maximum fluency rate, resulting in the smaller difference between weeks in comparison to C1. Furthermore, this implies that adding a third or fourth conversation may lead to a situation of diminishing returns as learners approach their fluency ceiling.

Conclusions

Recursive Conversations. One of the main problems that was identified with the class was the overabundance of activities and lack of genuine speaking time, which was addressed via the introduction of RCs. When asked about the change in the questionnaires, learners had extremely interesting responses: on average, they rated the 5-minute RCs as more interesting, less challenging, and less useful than the original 10-minute group conversations. That learners found the RCs to be more interesting and less challenging was a welcomed result as it seems to indicate that learner engagement had increased while the barriers to entry for the conversations were lowered. It is interesting to note that learners considered the RCs to be less useful than non-recursive conversations as the analysis of the transcribed conversations indicates the opposite to be true. The transcription data shows that RCs had a significant effect on learner fluency, with an increase of at least 6 WPM in each of the three weeks. The second RCs were consistently better in terms of fluency, showing that recursion can be a highly useful method for improving learner IC.

Final Thoughts. Recursion was a powerful tool for increasing learner fluency by allowing the students to self-assess and practice in subsequent episodes. However, the surprising disconnect between the large improvements in oral competence shown by the transcription analysis and the overall perceptions of learners regarding this tool show that more needs to be done regarding making learners part of the classroom planning experience. They need to be provided with useful information in order for them to make informed decisions regarding the efficacy of new pedagogical tools.

Future Issues. Recursive conversations are a powerful tool for learners that could be made even more impactful than they were over the course of this research. It would be prudent to experiment with increasing recursion in the classroom by having three seven-minute RCs every week and making them the focus of the lesson. Significant questions remain regarding the long-term impact of RCs and how they should be integrated into the classroom. This study was relatively short at only six weeks long. Although significant short-term changes were visible in the transcriptions of learners' conversations, it is unclear whether or not these changes hold up over longer periods of time or if learners return to previous tendencies. This research also bears some limitations with regard to the statistical significance of the results. Although the results were quite positive, the experiment was conducted with only 18 learners in an English program raising the question of how the results would look with a much larger number of students from a more diverse range of contexts. The author looks forward to attempting to shed light on these issues in future research projects.

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Scott Bowyer is a lecturer at Nagoya Gakuin University in Japan, and the membership chair of Nagoya JALT. His research interests are centered around the development of interactional competence and the application of neuroscience to language learning. Email: scottyboyer1@gmail.com

Eight Essential Characteristics of "Student-Centered" Instruction

By Dr. Thomas S.C. Farrell

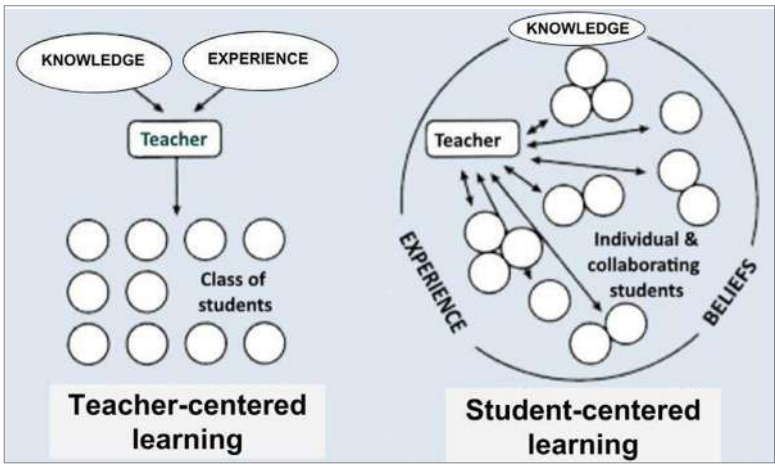
Introduction

I have heard from many TESOL (teachers of English to speakers of other languages) that they are "student-centered" in their approach to instruction. When pushed to define what this means, many respond that this is "opposite" to a "teacher-centered" approach where the teacher speaks most of the time or more than the students. The main point many teachers want to make is that both "student-centered" and "teacher-centered" sit on opposite ends of a continuum and are thus very different ways of instructing second language students. Is this a correct interpretation of what it means to be "student-centered" (or "teacher-centered")? I believe that it is not so easy to define each and that there has been, over the years, a lot of disagreement about what so-called "student-centered" learning and teaching actually is. In this article, I would like to reflect on what I think these approaches to instruction mean.

Eight Essential Characteristics of Student-Centered Instruction

Since the development of communicative language teaching (CLT) in the 1970s, learners have been encouraged to produce the second language they are learning with more of a focus on fluency and where errors are seen as being as part of development. Before this, in "traditional" second language classes, teachers were seen as the knowledge providers and sole controller of the class. In the communicative language teaching approach, English language teachers were encouraged to share this control and "facilitate" learning rather than just dispensing knowledge. Of course, I want to acknowledge that this interpretation of CLT is somewhat general, and today there still exists as many diverse interpretations of CLT as there are language teachers and second language educators. The point I want to make, however, is that it sets the scene for the acknowledging of a shift in the role of the teacher in second language learning and teaching from knowledge transmission expert to where they share learning (Farrell & Jacobs, forthcoming).

It would be clear if that were, in fact, the meaning of "student-centered" teaching, where the teacher gives up more control to the students with the idea that this will promote more learning. However, there is a lot more involved when interpreting student-centered teaching, so I suggest the following eight characteristics as key essentials for the successful implementation of a student-centered approach to language teaching. These eight essentials are (a) encourage learner autonomy, (b) emphasize the social nature of learning, (c) develop curricular integration, (d) focus on meaning, (e) celebrate diversity, (f) expand thinking skills, (g) utilize alternative assessment methods, and (h) promote English language teachers as co-learners (from Farrell & Jacobs, forthcoming)



Learner Autonomy

When implementing a CLT approach to instruction, teachers focus more on the role of learners for instruction to be considered "student-centered." In other words, the center of attention in learning English as a second/foreign language has shifted from the teacher to the student, or from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered instruction. Learner autonomy is a key concept here: learners have an important share of the responsibility for and control over their own learning.

Social Nature of Learning

To be social in learning, some form of interaction and cooperation is necessary within a CLT approach to instruction. Greater attention is placed on the social nature of learning English as a second/foreign language rather than on students as separate, decontextualized individuals. To understand and promote learning, student-centered teachers look not only at individuals but also at the people who make up their world and the connections among them to include not only teachers but also peers, administrators, and people in the outside community. Cooperation is valued over but not exclusively in place of competition or working alone.

Curricular Integration

Curricular integration refers to a second language pedagogical approach that fuses knowledge from

different disciplines to create more meaningful contexts for overall learning. With a communicative language teaching approach to instruction, the integrated approach purposefully and systematically guides second language students toward discovering these connections and processes, connections and processes that help ESL/EFL students better understand themselves and the world around them. In its highest form, this student-centered approach uses real-life issues and varied resources to bring students as close to the "real thing" as possible. Furthermore, integration can also include integrating the various language skills as well as integrating the academic with the social and emotional.

Focus on Meaning

For this essential, student-centered teachers focus instruction for their students on learning English as a second/foreign language for purposes other than just passing exams. Education is not just preparation for life; it is also participation *in* life. Students understand the purposes of learning and develop their own purposes for learning regardless of the subject. Within learning English as a second/foreign language, student-centered teachers suggest that understanding also involves their students' comprehension of what they are learning rather than learning by rote learning methods, such as drills, so that they can be educated as complete human beings.

Diversity

Student-centered teachers celebrate diversity among second language learners and see this diversity as a plus in their English as a second/foreign language classes. Student-centered teachers focus on discerning, taking into account, and appreciating differences among second language learners and consider all second language students to be unique. This uniqueness includes differences not only in first language backgrounds but also in intelligence profile, personality, and such other background factors as race, ethnicity, social class, religion, sex, and sexual preference.

Thinking Skills

For this essential, student-centered teachers focus on how students learn, rather than looking only at what they produce, through a process of expanding their thinking skills. This emphasis on process rather than just on end product encourages second language students and teachers to promote reflection on one's thinking, to encourage deeper critical thinking and more varied ways of solving problems, and to gain a clearer sense of how to approach questioning how things are done. With an appreciation of the complexity, uncertainty, non-linearity, and instability of knowledge in learning a second language, students not only come to see change as a constant but also recognize that learning a second language is a lifelong process.

Alternative Assessment

Student-centered teachers recognize that within a CLT approach to second language education, while standardized, objective-item tests do provide relevant information, sole reliance on such measures blinds us to a great deal of what is important in education. Student-centered teachers maintain that more alternative assessments connect closely with real-world purposes. Furthermore, this type of assessment is done not mainly by outsiders but, more importantly, by those actually in the classroom (peers), who grasp the particular context in all its complexity. Thus, alternative assessment includes students assessing themselves, peers, and the "how" and "what" of their English as a second/foreign language learning.

Teachers as Co-learners

Student-centered teachers recognize that language teachers do not principally possess knowledge that is to be passed on to students; instead, student-centered teachers learn along with second language students because knowledge is dynamic and learning is a lifelong process. Student-centered teachers learn with their students, and they learn along with their fellow teachers. Based on this learning, teachers join students in playing a greater role in such matters as materials design and institutional governance.

Conclusion

In this article, I have attempted to make the case that in order to be considered a "student-centered teacher," eight related and connected essential characteristics of being a student-centered teacher need to be implemented for successful English language teaching. The eight essentials are encourage learner autonomy, emphasize the social nature of learning, develop curricular integration, focus on meaning, celebrate diversity, expand thinking skills, utilize alternative assessment methods, and promote English language teachers as co-learners.

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Thomas S.C. Farrell is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. Professor Farrell's professional interests include reflective practice and language teacher education. Professor Farrell has published widely and has spoken at major conferences worldwide on these topics. A selection of his work can be found on his webpage: *www.reflectiveinquiry.ca*

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	Gwangju Christian Hospital	Mr. Thomas Kim - kchmild@hanmail.net

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