Alternative Pedagogies In The English Language and Communication Classroom

CELC SYMPOSIUM
Bridging Research and Pedagogy

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1 Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS) and the Teaching of EFL Reading and Writing--or Genre Is Much More Than Text Structure

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Abstract: In this paper, the author argues that all major genre theories and pedagogies are characterized as social, that is, that texts from genres are considered to be social actions taken by writers within a specific context. After mentioning two "linguistic" genre schools, the Sydney School and English for Specific Purposes, she turns to the school that takes context most seriously, one that begins with the social and then moves into the text: Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS).

Drawing from the work of several RGS theorists and practitioners, she suggests pedagogical approaches for EFL teachers concerned with incorporating a context-driven genre-approach into their classrooms.

Key Words: genre, Rhetorical Genre Studies, The New Rhetoric, reading and writing pedagogies

This text was initially inspired by a response to my plenary address at the Second Language Writing Symposium in Tempe, Arizona (2009), where I argued that as literacy practitioners, we must look beyond text structures when defining and teaching genres if we are to be true to current theories. At that conference, a group of Chinese-speaking teachers approached me with some concerns about my argument. This is the gist of what they said:

> *This talk about context, audience, writer stance, and other features of genres may be important in an L1 environment, but in an EFL context with large classes and traditional assessments, we need to concentrate on what is in the text, by teaching text types as genres.*

These teachers went on to explain that particularly with less advanced EFL students, they were successfully concentrating upon a genre approach based on what are generally called "Rhetorical Modes" in the current literature, e.g., comparison-contrast, cause-effect, extended definition, and exemplification.[1] With these practitioners, and later, at the CELC Symposium at the National University of Singapore in May, 2013, I made a similar argument, relying principally, but not exclusively, upon Rhetorical Genre Studies (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010), also called The New Rhetoric (Hyon, 1996; Johns, 2002) and insights from RGS experts (Prior, 2006; Walker, 2012) to support my claims. My argument, in brief, is that though certain rhetorical modes may appear in texts from a particular genre, very few authentic texts are pure, that is, written in only one mode. More frequently, a single text will include a number of modes, depending upon the purposes of the writer, the context, and the genre, as well as other factors. In addition, concentration upon the text itself, to the detriment of the social nature of genres, does not do justice to genre theories. Instead, the features in the writing "scene" must be seriously considered in a pedagogy.

The purpose of this paper is to reiterate and expand upon my argument: that the term *genre*[2] as defined in the major theoretical "schools" requires a serious consideration of the context in which a text appears. Systemic Functional Linguists from the "Sydney School" (Hagan, 1994), English for Specific Purposes (ESP) theorists, (e.g., Hyland, 2009a & b; Swales, 1990), and especially in Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS) practitioners work with much more than elements of a text; and when textual elements are considered, they are viewed as purposeful, interacting with context to achieve a "social action" (Miller, 1994).

How do the various genre schools approach the "much more" to which I refer? The Sydney School theorists and ESP researchers tend to begin their work by inferring the social nature of genre from analyzing texts and their features and therefore are said to take "linguistic

1 See http://www.tc.umn.edu/~jewel001/CollegeWriting/START/Modes.htm.
2 For a lengthy exploration of definitions of genre, see Johns, 2008.

"approaches" (Flowerdew, 2002). From textual analysis (e.g., corpus studies), augmented by other methods (e.g., interviews), researchers and theorists then draw conclusions about the contexts in which genres are operating. Jim Martin and David Rose, leaders in the Sydney School, present their conclusions about the social nature of genres in *Genre relations: Mapping culture* (2008) and elsewhere. John Swales, in his groundbreaking ESP work, *Genre analysis* (1990), spoke of the social in terms of "discourse communities" such as academic disciplines, which utilize and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of [their] aims" (p. 26) .[3]

Drawing from this insistence upon the interaction of text and context within ESP and the Sydney School, and especially within RGS, Bawarshi and Reiff, in their excellent overview of genre theories and pedagogies (2010) note that what connects the [several] approaches to genre studies is a commitment to the idea that genres reflect and coordinate *social ways of knowing* and acting in the world, and thus provide valuable means of researching how texts act in various contexts (Bawarshi & Reiff, p. 5).

Despite this agreement upon the social nature of genre, theoretical views and research differ between "schools" in important ways. Both the Sydney School and ESP are firmly in the "linguistics" camp, for features of texts remain prominent and central to their work, much of which is now based upon extensive corpus studies. However, because it may not be as familiar to readers, I will focus here upon a third "school," that begins not with text and a linguistic approach but with a text as social action within a context; Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS), earlier spoken of as The New Rhetoric (Hyon, 1996; Johns, 2002).

Though in agreement upon the social nature of genre, RGS is quite different from the "linguistic" theories, the Sydney School and ESP, for several reasons. First, it originated among theorists and teachers of college composition, not linguists, principally in countries (Canada and the United States) where English is the medium of instruction though not always the native tongue of students. Rather than being grounded in linguistics, experts in this "school" are informed by socio-cultural theory, explained in the following way in About.com:

> *Sociocultural theory is an emerging view in psychology that looks at the important contribution that society makes to individual development. This theory stresses the interaction between developing people and the culture(s) in which they live.*

It is not surprising, then, that RGS researchers, pedagogues, and students begin by studying the "contexts of use," the cultures and situations in which texts from a genre are found, and then turn to how individuals and their spoken and written discourses are influenced by these cultures within a specific context. In their student coursebook based upon RGS, *Scenes of writing: Strategies for composing with genres* (2004), Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi suggest that students begin their genre analysis with the "scene of writing" for a chosen text, making general observations about the context, identifying situations and human interactions within the scene, and only then turning to the genres that are typical of the scene, asking questions such as "What written documents typically appear in and are used repeatedly [in this context]?" It is the scene of writing and its typical, often complex, activities and actors that determine what genres are present and how a text is processed, produced and distributed. How the texts are organized and the linguistic choices that are made depend upon these factors. The Scenes of writing authors provide a series of scene-discovery questions that guide students through the process of gaining access to a scene, to carrying out ethnographic observations of the scene's participants and activities, to exploring and analyzing the genres used within that scene. In addition to collecting samples of the community's genres, students are urged to interview participants about their uses of the genre as well as take observational notes on the patterns or habits of interaction within a situation. Thus, they come close to] what Freedman (1993, 247)defines as the two necessary criteria for effective writing instruction: the exposure to [authentic] written discourses combined with immersion in the relevant contexts (2010, p. 205).

Applying RGS in an EFL context

These RGS approaches which begin with the "scene" of writing, the context for a text, can serve a useful antidote to augment or replace pedagogies found in many ESL and EFL contexts in which the "scene" is not seriously considered, where a text is, in actuality, isolated from its context and taught principally as text structure, grammar, vocabulary, and syntax. But we need to consider the students and their own experiences, of course. If practitioners are going to succeed with introducing, even partially, a social, contextual approach to genre, they need to introduce to students texts from a genre that are familiar, that deal with topics that are being discussed in the context where the students live or study.

The example[4] in Appendix A, "Why the future of health

3 Swales' later work, Other floors, other voices: *A textography of a small university building* (1998) takes a much more thorough-going approach to the context/text/disciplinary integration.

4 Several genre indicators (e.g., the photograph, captions, etc.) have been stripped from this authentic text for pedagogical purposes. In my classrooms, I give students the text as it was published and they number the paragraphs of that text. This gives them a much better sense of the actual genre.

care lies in integration," was selected by the CELC teaching staff at the National University of Singapore as an appropriate starting place because it focuses on a problem familiar to many readers in Singapore, the fragmentation of health care services. Also familiar may the genre, an opinion editorial, found in newspapers and on-line in most parts of the world and often referred to as an "op-ed piece."

Of what might a "social" EFL writing and reading pedagogy consist? Although the *Scenes of writing* suggestions are valuable, EFL students and their instructors may find them a bit too general, as mine have. This is why more specific contextual genre analysis topics and questions, found in Appendix B, have been adapted from the work of a rhetorician, Janice Walker at the Illinois State University (2012) based upon the articles by Paul Prior, whose publications on socio-cultural theory and composition (e.g., 2006) are well-respected in the RGS community.

A classroom approach: Pedagogical steps in emphasizing the "social" using "Why the future of health care lies in integration"

How might an EFL lesson be constructed? Here are some suggested classroom-tested steps:

Step 1: *Draw from students' prior knowledge:*
Ask students to name what they have read or written recently (e.g., a blog, a tweet, a novel). Select one or two of the most familiar genres named and tell students to work in groups to determine answers to these questions:

- Where might you find a text from this genre?
- Who might write it? Why? What might be his/her purposes?
- What audiences would be interested?
- What might the audiences do with what they read, hear or see? How might these audiences respond or distribute the text?

Step 2: *Lead a class discussion, drawing from the groups' findings, and emphasizing the importance of context to understanding how texts are constructed and used.*

Step 3: *First reading: "Why the future of health care..."*
Ask students to read the assigned text silently, keeping in mind what they have already about the genres with which they were familiar (Step 1).

Step 4: In pairs (or individually), ask students to read "Why the future of health care..." and complete as much of the scene-driven genre analysis from Appendix B as possible. Call on different students to present parts of their completed Appendix B analysis. Discuss those questions that cannot be answered in the grid under Appendix B and what needs to be done to obtain answers (e.g., interview the author; check the website of the publication for comments on the text).

Step 5: *Introduce textual analysis through a contextual lens:* Tell the students that the language and structure of a text interact with and are dependent upon the context; that the author selects a genre and textual elements after assessing his/her purposes and intentions for the text's reception.

Step 6: *Third read* (determining the text's paragraph structure). This next activity, called "Charting a Text," (LeMaster, 2008), assists students to understand that authentic texts can be organized in a variety of ways, often determined by the genre and the author's purposes, and, of course, the actors and activities within a context. Ask the students, working in groups or pairs, to "chart" the assigned text ("Why the future.."), determining not only what the text says (the paraphrase) but what it does. [Students at a lower level can be asked to "jigsaw" the text, with each group taking responsibility for a few of the sections. Students might also be asked to complete the "do" sections first, with the "say" sections to be completed later, since the "doing" shows students how the writer has structured the text to enhance its reception by the audience.
Note: The first two sections are completed by the teacher, who models the activity.

Table 1: Charting the text: Identifying the functions of paragraphs/ Paraphrasing the text

Paragraph numbers	**"Doing"** (Functions of the section)	**Saying** (A paraphrase)
# 1 # 2 # 3	Using a story, the author is setting the stage for the discussion of the problem which is the focus of the text.	A middle-aged, diabetic patient is given two sets of medication by two entities. This is confusing for the patient and the doctor.
# 4 # 5 # 6	Citing his own experience, the author focuses upon the problem for patients and the surrounding culture.	The problem in the story, of an "inefficient, frustrating, and very expensive" medical experience, is very common in Singapore.
# 7 # 8	*(Before deciding, review paras 1-3.)*	
# 9 #10	*(Before deciding, review paras 6.)*	
#11 #12	*(Before deciding, review paras 9-10.)*	
#13 #14 #15	*(Before deciding, review paras 9-10.)*	

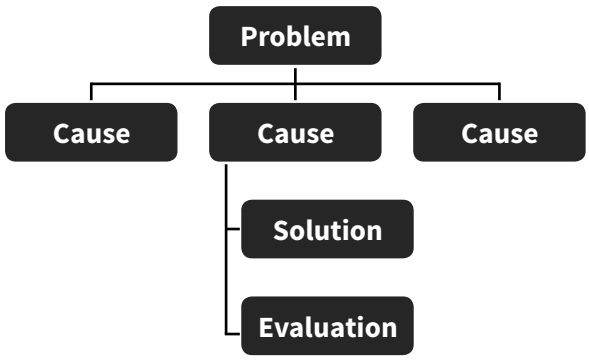
Paragraph numbers	"Doing" (Functions of the section)	Saying (A paraphrase)
#16		
#17		
#18		
#19		
#21		
#22		
#23		
#24		
#25		

Step 6: *Lead a discussion on the "do" structure of the text. Talk about why the author might have organized the text in the way he did. What did he accomplish in terms of persuading his audience? How much of the structure is his idea--or conventional in the genre, an op-ed piece?*

Step 7: *Explain the writing task for students* (Completing a "Situated Problem/Solution Summary.")

Step 8: *Completing a problem/solution graphic.* One of the most common modes in academic and professional writing (in English) is the problem/solution. According to Carter (2007), a problem/solution structure can be found embedded into a number of genres, e.g., case studies, project reports, proposals, and business plans. Op-ed pieces can also be reformulated, particularly for purposes of summary, into problem-solution structures. Give students the graphic found in Table 2; using the charting table, ask them to fill in the sections of the graphic organizer in Table 2.

Table 2: Graphic organizer for problem-solution summaries



Step 9: *Completing a summary, using a template:* After students have filled out the graphic organizer, they are ready (if intermediate) to complete a summary template[5] which incorporates both the contextual analysis completed (Appendix C and the summary grid).

Table 3: A Contextual Summary Template (Problem/Solution)

In his _____(genre) entitled _____ published in the _____, _____(author's name), _____(the author's title or profession) presents a problem which is of concern to _____(audience): _____(the problem). The cause(s) for the problem are _____. The suggested solution is _____(solution), supported by evidence including _____ _____. The author believes that his solution is appropriate because _____ _____.

Step 10: *Reflecting on the lesson.* Particularly if analyzing contextual factors in this way is new to the students, it would be beneficial to ask them to devote a few minutes to consider the work they have just completed. The instructor might ask them to respond to questions, orally or in writing, such as the following:

- What were the purposes for completing Appendix A? What were you to consider?
- If you were going to summarize, in one sentence, the relationships between writer, text, and context, what would you say?
- When your instructor speaks of genres as social actions, what does s/he mean?
- Consider something you have read or written outside of the classroom, what elements of the context in which it is found (writer, audience, scene, genre) might be most important to the success of the text? Why?

Conclusion

In this paper, I argued that as practitioners, we must make sure that our students take the social nature of genre seriously and, I would argue, those who assess our students should take the interactions between texts and contexts very seriously, as well. Though I have not discussed the nature of the RGS approaches that represent the scenes of writing at length, I have devoted considerable space to pedagogical implications of the necessary social approach to genre. I am well aware of the more traditional assessment practices which are common in many parts of the world, practices that emphasize correctness and structures rather than the social nature of texts. However, in the English-speaking world, the nature of the social, as evidenced in Appendix

5 If students are more advanced, they may be asked to complete a summary without a template; however, I find that using a template, at least initially, is useful for practicing academic English.

B, is fully, if not more important, than any other aspect of communication. It is my hope that those who read this short article will delve much more deeply into the nature of genre and attempt some, or all, of the activities suggested here. I have found them to be motivating and enriching for EFL/ESL and other students.

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Appendix A: "Why the future of health care lies in integration" [by Loke Wai Chiong in the Straits Times (April 10, 2013)[6].

Why the future of health care lies in integration
Wednesday, Apr 10, 2013
The Straits Times
By Loke Wai Chiong

1) A middle-aged diabetic woman experiences a gnawing tummy ache and sees her regular general practitioner (GP). He prescribes antacids and warns her to watch for worsening pain.

2) Hours later, her condition worsens and she is hospitalised. Delirious with pain, she cannot relate her medical history to hospital doctors or provide details of her earlier visit to the GP. A gamut of tests - some already run by her GP - are carried out. It turns out she has appendicitis, and she undergoes surgery.

3) Upon her discharge, the hospital starts her on a totally different set of medication. All this while, her GP is unaware of what has happened to his patient. Both are confused when she turns up months later with bags of new drugs.

4) In my years as a practising doctor, I have seen too many of such cases. It is puzzling how the treatment of a patient often ends up being so inefficient, frustrating and very expensive - despite rapid advances in medical science.

5) When it comes to responding to health-care challenges such as ageing populations and spiralling costs, the knee-jerk reaction of many governments has been to invest in infrastructure.

6) However, building more or bigger hospitals is not the solution. Rather, the answer may well lie in addressing the current fragmented state of health systems.

7) Such fragmentation results in poor coordination among different care providers and an over-reliance on costly specialist care.

8) It can also sometimes lead to unnecessary and duplicative tests that put patients through emotional and financial strain, and delays in timely diagnosis and treatment.

9) The definition of integration varies among systems, but at its heart, the idea is to be able to offer coordinated care across the whole patient journey.

10) Integration can be driven by payers such as insurers and governments, or be provider-led. An example of the former is De Friesland Zorgverzekeraar. The Dutch insurer coordinated health-care providers within a region to shape networks of care. One network may include services ranging from emergency and intensive care to oncology and chronic care.

11) Exemplifying provider-led integration are the United States hospital systems. Many have integrated through merging primary and ambulatory care capabilities, home health and skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation and other capabilities into one delivery chain.

12) These industry players are investing in integration because they believe benefits can be reaped. A growing body of evidence suggests that the quality of health care can be improved and costs lowered if health-care provision is well-integrated.

13) One successful model of integration can be found in Coxa Hospital in Finland. The hospital, which specialises in joint replacement surgery, developed a partnership with primary-care physicians. They integrated the entire patient experience from referral, through initial visit and pre-operation, to operation, rehabilitation and follow-up consultations.

6 The paragraphs have been numbered for pedagogical purposes.

14) The result: 90 per cent of its patients receive rehabilitative care in primary care closer to the home.

15) Besides excellent surgical outcomes and very low complication rates, Coxa received the highest national rankings in Finland for patient and staff satisfaction. Such positive outcomes are possible because of better coordination among health-care providers, which allows for earlier detection and better treatment options. In other words, patients receive the right care at the right place and time, and by the right provider.

16) Despite the growing number of success stories, most health-care systems around the world are still struggling with integration.

17) Technical challenges remain, such as developing registries and sharing records digitally. Developing accountability for outcomes is also tough, as is developing financing models to determine how payment is reimbursed to different providers.

18) The human element is another major challenge. Health professionals with differing approaches and risk appetites must overcome a history of working in silos, while patients' beliefs and attitudes have to change.

19) In an integrated health network, doctors at the GP or community level may be identified as the ones who should provide appropriate care. Patients must therefore understand that the most advanced and expensive treatment in the newest hospital may not be the best or even necessary. This is especially so in the early or more stable phases of chronic disease. In fact, hospital stays can be costly and expose patients to the unnecessary risk of hospital-acquired infections.

20) In Singapore's recent Budget announcement, the Ministry of Health announced plans to build six new public general hospitals and 12 to 14 additional polyclinics by 2030. These are on top of previously announced plans to triple community hospital beds and double long-term care capacity by 2020.

21) It is vital to ensure that these new institutions in Singapore operate within the context of integrating services within our Regional Health Systems (RHS). In place since 2009, RHS such as the Eastern Health Alliance and the Alexandra Health System have been actively joining the dots in their respective regions. They are forming partnerships among GPs, community hospitals, nursing homes and other stakeholders to care for their patients within respective designated zones.

22) The path to integration will not be easy, given the existing divide between public and private sectors; GPs and specialists; and hospitals and community-based care in Singapore.

23) It might be useful at the national level to consider how we can facilitate stronger partnerships among health-care providers. For example, there can be more funding and incentives to encourage providers to become integrated.

24) Singapore's population is ageing rapidly, and the onset of chronic diseases is rising. A coordinated and sustainable health-care system, rather than more hospitals and more clinics per se, can help the country prepare for a spike in patient load.

Appendix B: Analytical terms and questions (RGS), adapted from Walker

Contextual Genre Analysis	Explanation	Notes
Ecology	What is the broader context for this text? What's going on?	
Production	Is the text written? Spoken? On-line? How has that affected the production of the text?	
Representation	What or who initiated the text? What were the writer's purposes? In what genre is it written/spoken? What are the conventions of this genre?	
Activity	What practices and sources were involved in producing the text? What was the process?	
Distribution	To what audiences was the text addressed? Where was it distributed?	

Appendix C: Completed Analysis for "Why the future of health care lies in integration"

Note: This analysis is completed after the students have read the text for the first time. Further readings will be necessary to answer some of the questions.

Contextual Genre Analysis	Findings	Pedagogical notes
Ecology: What is the broader context?	Current health coverage in Singapore is "fragmented" in that there are various health care providers and other, related thorny issues (para 220.	Class discussion around this question: "Do you, your family, or friends find that getting health care in Singapore presents problems? What are they?"
Production: Is the text written, spoken, on-line.	This is a written text that appears in both the *Straits Times (in print)* but also on-line. The original (which the students see) contains pictures as well as a revealing sub-title.	Students are given the original text from the newspaper to study in terms of how pictures and other features result from production of this type of text. They discuss why these features may be included.
Representation: What were the writer's purposes? In what genre is it written? What are the conventions of this genre?	**Author:** A practicing doctor, involved in the Singapore health care system. http://www.kpmg.com/global/en/industry/healthcare/center-of-excellence/pages/wai-chiong-loke.aspx **Purposes:** To present a problem faced by the medical services and patients in Singapore and offer a solution. **Genre:** An op-ed (opinion editorial) from a local newspaper. An op-ed piece is written by a named author who establishes his/her credibility and generally presents a problem to be solved. The title tends to present the author's claim/solution although this is generally explained at the end of the text, as well.	Students can research the author's background to further determine his credibility. Because the lesson is based upon a problem/solution summary task, this is the macro-structure into which the discussion is fit. However, it could also be viewed as argument text with a claim and evidence provided. One of the most important pedagogical implications of a named "genre" is that readers often have prior knowledge of the conventions. Having prior knowledge of the repeated nature of these conventions helps student readers to access the text.

Contextual Genre Analysis	Findings	Pedagogical notes
Activity: Who initiated the text? What practices and sources were involved in producing the text? What was the process?	**Process**[7]**:** Some of these questions, which integrate "process" approaches with genre theory, cannot be answered without interviewing the author or the publisher. **Sources used:** Effective argumentation requires appropriate use of evidence, often credible sources. Though the author does not cite sources formally (formal citation is seldom employed in op-ed pieces), he demonstrates his knowledge of successful integrated systems in at least three developed countries.	One of the major tenets of genre theory is that there are many contextual factors that influences the author's writing processes and the final text. Students often find out more about the author from the Internet, or they email the author about his/her writing processes and reasons for writing. Some authors respond to the students' questions, something which is exciting for them. Sources used: Effective argumentation requires appropriate use of evidence, often credible sources. By scanning the op-ed piece (e.g., paragraphs 10-15), the students determine that the author is familiar with specific examples from other countries that support his claim.

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7 I have already discussed the importance of considering processes in the contexts of genre (2003).

2 Key Issues in L2 Reading Development

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Abstract: In this article, I provide an overview of key issues for L2 reading development. The goal is a succinct summary of ideas that should support more effective teaching and improve students' reading abilities. The article first outlines the nature of reading abilities, particular in academic contexts, and identifies major component skills and knowledge bases needed for L2 reading comprehension. From this foundation, a set of research implications for instruction are noted. These implications, in turn, form the basis for recommended teaching practices that will build comprehension abilities. Nine specific curricular and instructional themes are then presented briefly and suggestions for teaching and curriculum planning are explored. The article concludes by noting the need for additional research to validate, and to provide new insights into, effective teaching practices.

Introduction

1. The miracle.
2. The nature of fluent reading and the way that reading comprehension is carried out cognitively.
3. The "reading construct" as the goal for the development of reading abilities.
4. Expertise and reading: Get a good coach.
5. Implications from research for reading instruction.
6. Curricular and instructional options for effective L2 reading instruction settings.

The ability to read fluently is, in fact, quite miraculous. Our brains were not designed to be reading brains. But we have learned, from one generation to the next, to take graphic forms on a page and mentally interpret them into our own language, no matter what language. As fluent readers, we do this at a rate that is even faster than our fluent listening abilities. What is more remarkable, we can do this for hours at a time if we choose to, and we often do this for enjoyment! So what is it we do when we read, and how do we do it? I will address this large question, but do so in the context of academic reading because that is the key concern for educators.

The ability to read English efficiently for academic purposes is widely recognized in EFL/ESL contexts as a critical skill in a wide range of secondary and university settings, and especially for more advanced students. I will first review the nature of (English L1) fluent reading and the way that reading comprehension is carried out cognitively. This foundation helps define the "reading construct" of the fluent reader, here viewed as the integration of many component skills. Determining the construct then provides rationales for the development of reading abilities and various instructional practices. The focus of this chapter will not be an extensive review of the reading construct. That has been developed in more detail in other sources (e.g., Grabe, 2009; Koda, 2005; Perfetti & Adlof, 2012; Rayner et al., 2012). Instead, the goal is to draw connections from the reading construct to potentially effective ways to teach reading.

Defining Reading

Reading can simply be defined as a complex ability to extract, or build, meaning from a text. However, this definition, by itself, is not very informative. The most commonly accepted way for researchers to explain the above definition is to identify the key component abilities and skills that allow reading comprehension to emerge. Reading comprehension involves abilities to recognize words rapidly and efficiently, develop and use a very large recognition vocabulary, process sentences in order to build comprehension, engage a range of strategic processes and underlying cognitive skills (e.g., setting goals, changing goals flexibly, monitoring comprehension), interpret meaning in relation to background knowledge, interpret and evaluate texts in line with reader goals and purposes, and process texts fluently over an extended period of time. These processes and knowledge resources allow the reader to generate text comprehension to the level required.

The identification of these skills and resources has been the outcome of many research studies, and it remains the source of much ongoing research. These skills work together in a complex, finely-coordinated set

of processes (Grabe, 2009; Koda, 2005; Cain & Oakhill, 2012; Perfetti & Adlof, 2012). In this section, research is reviewed that supports the relationship between reading skills and reading comprehension. Much of the research has been conducted in English L1 reading contexts, though increasing amounts of L1 reading research in other languages has also emerged in the past fifteen years (Joshi & Aaron, 2006; Verhoeven & Perfetti, 2011).

Reading Processes: How does Fluent reading work?

In this brief section, I have divided reading abilities into lower level and higher level processes. All processes occur in working memory—which can be understood as the pattern of cognitive neural network activations at any given moment. Lower level processes do not mean that they are easier. In some respects, they are much harder to develop for L2 readers. Lower level processes include fast, automatic word recognition skills, automatic lexico-syntactic processing (automatically recognizing word parts and morphological information and automatically parsing the immediate clause for syntactic information), and semantic processing of the immediate clause into relevant meaning units (or propositions). Higher level processing involves those processes and resources that more closely align with strategies and resources for comprehension with more difficult texts: (a) form main idea meanings, (b) recognize related and thematic information, (c) build a text model of comprehension (an author-driven summary understanding), and (d) use inferencing, background knowledge, strategic processing and context constraints to create a situation model of reading (a preferred personal interpretation) (Hannon, 2011; Perfetti & Adlof, 2012).

Lower level processing: Research on reading has shown that beginning readers need to establish strong linkages between orthographic forms and the sounds of the language (Ehri, 2006; Cain & Oakhill, 2012; Rayner et al., 2012). Extensive research in L1 contexts across languages has demonstrated that training in phonological awareness and letter-sound correspondences predicts later reading development among children and beginning readers (Ehri, 2006). While L1 reading in other languages may not require that same level of instructional effort as does English for phonological awareness, all young learners benefit from explicit instruction in letter-sound correspondences (Lundberg, 1999). The automatization of letter-sound relations is the foundation of all alphabetic reading and supports syllabic reading systems as well. Even Chinese, as a morpho-syllabic system, incorporates information from the phonetic radical within characters to aid word recognition and uses phonological information at the point of lexical access; Chow, McBride-Chang & Burgess, 2005; He, Wang & Anderson, 2005).

Research on English L1 vocabulary knowledge has demonstrated that fluent readers have very large and automatic recognition-vocabulary knowledge and that vocabulary knowledge is highly correlated with reading ability (see Grabe 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). While estimates of English L1 word knowledge vary greatly (from 19,000 to 200,000; Anglin, 1993), the most widely accepted figure is that high school graduates know on average 40,000 words as fluent L1 readers (Stahl & Nagy, 2006). This is a very large number of words to learn and most accounts suggest that many of these words are learned by exposure to new words through continual reading practice. Stanovich (2000) has argued that extended exposure to print (reading extensively) over years leads to major differences in both vocabulary knowledge and comprehension abilities. Research on L2 vocabulary knowledge has also shown that vocabulary is correlated with L2 reading comprehension. Droop and Verhoeven (2003) reported a strong relationship between 3rd and 4th grade L2 students' vocabulary knowledge and their reading abilities. (See also Qian, 2002).

Research on L1 morphological and syntactic knowledge shows that they both have an impact on reading comprehension. A number of studies have shown that morphological knowledge contributes to reading comprehension. Research by Anglin (1993), Nagy et al. (2006), and Wagner, Muse & Tannenbaum (2007) all argue that morphological knowledge (knowledge of word parts) is very important to more advanced word recognition and reading development (see also Bowers, Kirby & Deacon, 2010; McCutchen & Logan, 2011; Kieffer, Biancarosa & Mancilla-Martinez, 2013). There is also evidence that grammatical knowledge and discourse knowledge both play roles in L1 reading comprehension (Lesaux, Lipka & Siegal, 2006; Perfetti and Adlof, 2012; Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002). Research on L2 syntax has shown that there are strong relationships between these language knowledge bases (syntax and discourse awareness) and reading comprehension (see Grabe, 2009; Shiotsu, 2010).

For the fluent reader, automatic semantic processing of texts occurs at the same time that automatic syntactic parsing is been carried out (See Perfetti & Adlof, 2012; Rayner et al., 2012). For a brief explanation, Grabe and Stoller (2011) identify the importance of propositional meaning units in the building of text main-idea comprehension. There is strong research evidence to show that fluent readers automatically process the meaning units that they extract from the syntactic parsing of clauses (e.g., who does what to whom, and how, and when).

Higher level processing: Higher level processing is not better, or harder; it is just processing that is closer

to conscious introspection on the part of the reader. Overall, comprehension of a text is created when the reader builds a semantic network of ideas drawn from the text to form a "text model of comprehension." This basic text model—what the text is about—is supported and expanded by readers' use of background knowledge, inferencing, and attitudes to the text information, thus creating a second "situation model of Comprehension" (Kintsch; 2012). The text model of comprehension requires that semantic information from clause-level processing be combined in a network of central ideas and references that recur through the text. Readers form links across ideas that are repeated, are referred to again, or are inferred in order to maintain a coherent interpretation of what they read. This emerging network of ideas is what produces the gist of the text. The situation model is built upon the text model to establish what the reader decides is necessary, relevant, appropriate, and useful. The active reader interprets the text to decide what it should mean to him or her. That interpretation is the information that also is stored in long-term memory as learned information (Kintsch, 2012).

Our ability to attend selectively to certain information and to respond strategically to this information is represented cognitively in working memory as executive control processing. We are all able to focus our attention on some point and "think" about it. During reading that requires learning (including both content and language learning), this attention typically involves strategic reading. L1 research on strategic processing during reading (e.g., inferencing, comprehension monitoring, goal setting) demonstrates that strategic processing and metacognitive awareness influence reading comprehension. Discourse comprehension researchers have shown that inferencing that arises from 'reading-to-learn' has an important impact on comprehension (Goldman & Rakestraw, 2000; Perfetti & Adlof, 2012). Similarly, comprehension monitoring appears to be a good predictor of comprehension abilities. At the same time, these abilities, being metacognitive in nature, are not simple reading strategies. Rather, they constitute a range of skills and abilities, and represent a range of strategic responses to text difficulties.

Experimental research on comprehension instruction and strategy training is extensive (see Pressley, 2006; Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002). Many L1 studies demonstrate a causal impact of instructional skills and strategies on reading comprehension. Important evidence supports answering main idea questions as a post-reading task, using semantic mapping of ideas from a text, previewing specific information from the text, asking student to formulate questions about a text, filling in and generating graphic organizers that reflect the organization of the text, visualizing information from the text, and raising awareness of discourse organization of the text, among others. Overall, a number of effective strategies have been identified in instructional research, though *combinations of strategic responses to texts* appear to be more effective in supporting comprehension (See Grabe, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011).

Research on L2 strategic processing is more limited. There are relatively few studies that demonstrate a direct relationship between reading strategies and reading comprehension. In a recent meta-analysis of L2 reading strategy research, Taylor, Stevens & Asher (2006) reviewed the existing empirical research in L2 reading strategy training (10 published studies and 12 dissertations) and concluded that a low to moderate effect exists between strategy training and L2 reading comprehension improvement. The analysis is encouraging, but it should be treated cautiously due to the limited database available for the analysis.

Purposes for Reading

One of the most important factors in reading comprehension abilities is how reading processes vary depending on the reading purpose. It is clear that reading for entertainment is quite different from reading to learn information or reading to integrate information from multiple sources. It is also clear that skimming a text for a very general idea involves distinct skill combinations from reading for main idea comprehension, the latter being by far the most common type of reading carried out by fluent readers.

A critical factor in teaching L2 reading is helping students understand that different tasks and different activities involve differing levels of demand on comprehension. Some tasks require a high level of detailed comprehension. Other tasks may involve the understanding of main ideas and some supporting information (see Grabe, 2009).

Further Factors: Reading Fluency and Extended Exposure to Print

L1 research on reading fluency has demonstrated that reading fluency, and especially among children, is strongly correlated with reading comprehension (Samuels, 2006; Klauda & Guthrie, 2008). Fuch et al. (2001) have shown that oral passage reading fluency—orally reading a text for one minute—is strongly related to reading comprehension abilities for L1 children. A number of studies have shown that training to recognize words faster will lead to faster word recognition on other words if the training is sufficiently extensive (Martin-Chang & Levy, 2006). However, this type of training appears to have only limited direct benefits for reading comprehension. In the area of passage fluency training, primarily by rereading passages multiple times

(sometimes aloud and sometimes silently), there is good evidence that passage rereading improves both reading fluency and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000).

At present, there is less research that demonstrates a relationship between reading fluency and reading comprehension development in L2 contexts. However, Sawaki and Sabatini (2007) reported a strong relationship between oral passage reading fluency and reading comprehension (r^2 =.36). In a series of L2 training studies by Taguchi, Gorsuch, and colleagues (see 2008, 2010, 2012), there is evidence that fluency practice leads to increased L2 reading fluency and to some improvement in L2 reading comprehension. Improved word reading fluency through training has also been reported by Fukkink et al. (2005).

L1 research on extended exposure to print (extensive reading) has demonstrated a strong relationship between amount of reading (over long periods of time) and improved reading comprehension (Grabe, 2009; Krashen, 2004; Stanovich, 2000). Stanovich and colleagues, in a series of studies, showed that exposure to print (amount of reading) was an important independent predictor of reading ability (see Stanovich, 2000 for overview).

Research on extensive reading is relatively unexplored in L2 reading (cf. Krashen, 2004, 2011). The one set of studies that has indicated the positive effects of extensive reading on reading comprehension was those studies carried out by Elley over a period of 20 years (see Elley, 2000). In these studies, he has shown that getting students to read extensively over a long period of time consistently improved reading comprehension abilities as well as a number of other language skills. In most other studies on extensive reading, there is little carefully controlled empirical evidence that reading extensively significantly influences L2 reading development.

L1 and L2 Reading Differences

The above section developed the concept that L1 and L2 reading abilities share many of the same component skills and that the reading construct is very similar in terms of underlying cognitive and linguistic components. In most respects, this is a reasonable position to take. At the same time, any consideration of L2 reading abilities has to recognize that there are several ways in which L2 reading differs from L1 reading abilities. Most of these differences center, either directly or indirectly, on the linguistic resources that a reader can bring to bear on text comprehension.

1. Learners have a much smaller L2 linguistic knowledge base when they begin reading. Their knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and discourse structure is more limited.
2. L2 students, overall, will have much less experience with reading exposure in the L2. They simply will have had much less practice in L2 reading.
3. L2 students will experience L2 reading differently because they have experiences reading in two different languages and because cognitive processing will involve two language systems (e.g., accessing the bilingual lexicon, using a joint strategy system—Kern, 1994; Koda, 2005).
4. Aside from the possibilities of developing somewhat distinct cognitive processing, students engaged in L2 reading will also experience a range of transfer effects (cognitive skills, strategies, and goals and expectations). Some transfer effects will involve interference from the L1; others will facilitate L2 reading processes. (See Dressler & Kamil, 2006; Koda, 2005.)
5. L2 readers rely on different combinations of general background knowledge when reading in the L2. Drawing on information about "how the world works" sometimes varies between L1 and L2 reading experiences.
6. L2 readers will encounter distinct social and cultural assumptions in L2 texts that they may not be familiar with or find somewhat hard to accept.

There has been a growing debate on the extent of the differences between L1 and L2 readers. Drawing on the arguments made by Koda (2005), and Genesee et al. (2006), a number of statements can be developed. First, beginning and intermediate L2 reading abilities are more distinct from L1 reading than advanced L2 reading abilities will be. As an L2 reading becomes fluent and highly skilled in reading comprehension, the reading processes involved become more similar (though perhaps never the same). Second, the extent of the linguistic differences between L1 and L2 (e.g., the linguistic differences between Spanish and English vs. Chinese and English) will have an impact on L2 reading. This impact of L1/L2 differences will diminish with increasing L2 reading proficiency (but will not disappear). Third, higher-level skills relate to comprehension skills more generally, and are not constrained by limited amounts of linguistic knowledge, so they will be essentially the same in both L1 and L2 contexts.

Finally, the actual *underlying cognitive processes* involved in L1 and L2 reading are generally the same, but the linguistic limitations and the processing practice limitations will create real L1—L2 differences until the

L2 linguistic resources and processing practices have grown sufficiently strong and fluent. Nonetheless, overall patterns of component-skills development across L1s suggest that the underlying component skills are essentially the same (see Geva & Farnia, 2012; Lipka & Siegal, 2011; Verhoeven & van Leeuwe, 2012). Moreover, as L2 reading proficiency increases, the reading comprehension process looks increasingly similar; there are numerous reasons for this increasing similarity, including greater amounts of reading practice and exposure to L2 print, greater resource knowledge of the L2 and the social/cultural world of the L2, greater fluency and automaticity of L2 reading skills, recognition of successes in L2 reading, and an increasing willingness to read in the L2 for various purposes. One conclusion to be taken from this discussion of L1/L2 differences is that many results of research on component skills that support reading comprehension will likely apply across both L1 and L2 learner groups.

Expertise and Reading: Get a Good Coach

From time to time, researchers argue that reading extensively is all that a student needs to do t become a good reader. However, there is overwhelming evidence that effective instructional interventions significantly improve students' reading abilities (e.g., Trabasso & Bouchard, 2002; Taylor, Stevens & Asher, 2008), and especially so in combination with an effective extensive reading program. Aside from many studies in reading research, an additional sub-field of cognitive psychology highlights the importance of an effective mentor or coach (or teacher).

Research on expertise (Ericsson, 2006; Ericsson, Prietula & Cokely, 2007) highlights the importance of getting a strong mentor or a good coach. People who develop levels of high expertise in various fields—medicine, physics, law, math, chess, dance, wine tasting, sports, computer programming, and more)—all seek out coaches who bring them to higher levels of performance. If we see advanced fluent reading as a level of expertise, and we should, then the notion that students will gain enormously from effective teachers is a straightforward conclusion. Indeed, effective instruction in reading skills does lead to significant reading comprehension improvements. The notion that a person only has to read, and read a lot, does not turn out to be sufficient for students' reading development. Effective and focused reading instruction does make a difference.

L2 Implications for Reading Instruction

Overall, the combination of research on L1 and L2 reading abilities suggests that there are important implications for L2 reading instruction that can be taken from research results. Reading comprehension requires the following skills and knowledge resources:

1. The ability to decode graphic forms for efficient word recognition
2. The ability to access the meanings of a large number of words automatically
3. The ability to draw meaning from phrase and clause level grammatical information
4. The ability to combine clausal level meanings to build a larger network of meaning relations (comprehend the text)
5. The ability to recognize discourse level relationships and use this information to build and support comprehension
6. The ability to use reading strategies with more difficult text and for a range of academic reading tasks
7. The ability to set goals for reading and adjust them as needed
8. The ability to use inferences of various types and to monitor comprehension in line with reading goals
9. The ability to draw on prior knowledge as appropriate
10. Abilities to evaluate, integrate, and synthesize information from a text to form a situation model of comprehension (what the reader learns from the text).
11. The ability to maintain these processes fluently for an extended period of time
12. The motivation to persist in reading and to use the text information appropriately in line with reader goals

In an ideal world, each of these implications from research would be subject to instructional training studies and longitudinal studies to determine the potential for turning implications into effective applications in the classroom. Once interesting specific applications are developed, it would then be important to explore the effectiveness of those applications more generally for the development of L2 reading abilities (see Grabe 2009). In the real world, we cannot wait for all of this research. We need to improve L2 students' reading abilities in the present moment. Fortunately, a number of teaching practices can provide the needed help.

Teaching L2 Reading

The major argument of the chapter to this point is that a number of key reading sub-skills can be taught successfully, and further, that the learning of these sub-skills will contribute to a learner's reading comprehension abilities. How these skills should be taught most effectively is indicated to some extent by the research reviewed above. However, there are many instructional approaches that potentially can contribute to the development of reading abilities. This discussion begins with curricular principles for

organizing instruction and establishing goals for learning. The section then covers eight topics that are important for reading instruction.

Curriculum Development Principles

The goal for reading instruction, at a general level, is to incorporate key component skills and knowledge into a reading curriculum in a principled and consistent way (see Grabe & Stoller, 2011, 2014). Specific instructional activities included in a curriculum should follow from the major themes developed earlier in this article and the resulting implications. To frame instructional options for the reading classroom, a set of more general principles are needed for building a reading curriculum. These principles include:

1. A curricular framework for conceptualizing L2 reading instruction that should integrate major skills instruction with extensive practice and exposure to print (building upon a needs analysis, goals and objectives or teaching and testing, plentiful resources, appropriate curriculum planning, and effective teaching materials)
2. Reading resources that are interesting, varied, good-looking, abundant, and accessible
3. Some degree of student choice in selecting major reading sources
4. Reading skills that are introduced and taught by examining the primary texts used in the reading course. There should not be a need for special materials to introduce reading skills (though additional activities for further practice are necessary).
5. Lessons that are structured around pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading activities, and these activities should be varied from one major reading to the next
6. Opportunities for students to experience comprehension success while reading
7. Expectations that reading occurs in class every day and that many extended reading opportunities are provided on a regular basis
8. Instruction that is built on an integrated curriculum framework and can support the following developmental goals:
    A. Promote word recognition skills
    B. Build a large recognition vocabulary
    C. Practice comprehension skills that combine awareness of grammar, main idea identification, and comprehension strategies: Strategy instruction is not separate from text comprehension instruction
    D. Build awareness of discourse structure (recognize main ideas, recognize major organizing patterns, recognize how the information is organized in parts of the text, recognize overt signals of text structure, recognize anaphoric relations in texts, recognize other cohesive markers in texts)
    E. Promote strategic reading
    F. Practice reading fluency (build reading rate, build text passage reading fluency, read and reread at home with parent or tape or self)
    G. Develop extensive reading
    H. Develop motivation
    I. Combine language learning with content learning

Promoting Word Recognition Skills

Students at beginning and low intermediate levels need to be able to use letter sound correspondences easily and recognize frequent words rapidly and accurately. Most L2 students will have reasonable control over these basic skills, but checking how quickly and accurately students can read a word list provides a useful diagnostic tool, particularly if a teacher is concerned about a student's reading progress (see Wang & Koda, 2005 for an example list). Students who have difficulty with letter-sounds correspondences should be given training in more consistent associations between letters and sounds. Most students will not have significant problems at this level if they are in academic settings at secondary or higher levels. Beyond the ability to read a basic word list reasonably well, many students should get the needed practice in word recognition skills through vocabulary development, extensive reading, and fluency practice.

Building a Large Recognition Vocabulary

If student are to become good readers with a wide range of texts, they need to recognize at least 95 percent of the words they might encounter in these texts, and fluency generally occurs when a reader can recognize 98-99 percent of the words in a given text. The number of words that would be needed for 95 percent coverage of most texts seems to lie somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 words; 98-99 percent of words probably requires a recognition vocabulary of about 40,000 words (Stahl & Nagy, 2006).

The real goal for more advanced L2 reading is an L2 recognition vocabulary level anywhere above 10,000. At the same time, the need to know the first 2,000

word families still retains its force as a key argument for vocabulary instruction. In order to institute an active vocabulary development framework in the L2 curriculum, a carefully designed framework for instructional activities must be built around the following nine goals:

1. A framework for understanding vocabulary learning in the classroom
2. Procedures for selecting words to focus on
3. Techniques for introducing new words
4. Ways to practice using words
5. Activities to build word learning strategies
6. A vocabulary–rich environment to support learning
7. Activities to help students collect words
8. Ways to build motivation for word learning
9. Activities that recycle texts and vocabulary

There are a number of good resources for exploring each of these principles. In L1 settings, useful ideas are outlined in Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2008), Graves (2009), and Stahl and Nagy (2006). Good L2 vocabulary instruction ideas can be found in Anderson (2009) and Nation (2001, 2008).

Practicing Comprehension Skills

The ability to understand a text requires a reasonable knowledge of basic grammar, an ability to identify main ideas in the text, an awareness of discourse structure, and strategic processing with more difficult texts. Reading comprehension instruction—helping students find the main ideas and be able to say what a text is about—should give some attention to directed grammar teaching, particularly at beginning and lower-intermediate levels. In certain cases, teaching or reviewing a key grammar point will support the material that students are reading.

Most reading instruction occurs beyond the level of the beginning ESOL student, and it is not necessary for a reading course to have a full grammar review. In some cases, grammatical knowledge can make a difference in reading comprehension with more difficult texts, particularly *if the grammatical form occurs multiple times and plays a role in comprehension*. Some subset of this knowledge should be taught, first directly from the text material itself, and then through additional activities and a review of other text material if needed. However, a reading course is not the place in which to embed a grammatical syllabus.

Main idea comprehension is not an easy skill to teach and, more commonly, teachers assess comprehension rather than teach comprehension through post-reading questions. Post-reading comprehension questions *can* offer good instructional opportunities if teachers have students explain why an answer is appropriate and explain where the text supports his/her answer. Two other ways to teach comprehension skills include strategy instruction that requires comprehension of the text (involving discussions around comprehension and specific strategy uses) and instruction that emphasizes discourse structure awareness (especially the use of graphic organizers) (see Grabe & Stoller, 2014).

Building Awareness of Discourse Structure

Teaching students to become more aware of text structure is a further critical aspect of reading instruction and curriculum planning. Teachers need to be aware that texts have larger units of structure that achieve writers' purposes. Moreover, writers' goals and task requirements determine basic discourse organization, and the specific information that a writer presents has a major impact on how a text is organized. A teacher with some knowledge of text organization and discourse signaling markers can help students build their knowledge of text structure and discourse organization. Eight specific activities are noted below, though many more could be incorporated into a reading curriculum

1. Preview texts and highlight key words that signal text structure.
2. Highlight a paragraph and decide its function in the text.
3. Fill in an outline of the text and determine main units of the text. Decide what makes each unit identifiable as a separate unit.
4. Fill in a table, chart, graph, timeline, tree, etc. How was the information that was taken from the text signaled so that it fits in the given place in a graphic organizer.
5. Find patterns of discourse organization in a text (cause-effect, comparison-contrast, problem-solution) and generate very simple graphic displays.
6. Reorganize scrambled paragraphs and sentences to reassemble a text or to make a good summary.
7. Remove a wrong sentence from a summary or a paragraph.
8. Match main ideas and supporting information across two columns.

Much like other types of knowledge and skills to be learned, there are some key principles for text structure instruction. First and foremost, this type of instruction must be consistent and continual. Second, teachers must also use the texts that they are reading for other purposes so that students see the pervasiveness of discourse structure—Students shouldn't be provided

with special texts to show the discourse structure. Finally, students need to explain to teachers and classmates how texts are structured and how discourse structure is signaled (Grabe 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 2011, 2014).

Promoting Strategic Reading

Strategies for reading comprehension build on the linguistic resources (words, phrases, and structures) and support the basic comprehension model developed by the reader. When good readers read for careful comprehension, they actively engage academic texts through multiple strategies and a heightened level of metacognitive awareness (Pressley, 2002:294-296):

1. They plan and form goals before reading.
2. They form predictions before reading.
3. They read selectively according to goals.
4. They reread as appropriate.
5. They monitor their reading continuously.
6. They identify important information.
7. They try to fill in gaps in the text through inferences and prior knowledge.
8. They make guesses about unknown words to keep reading.
9. They use text structure information to guide understanding.
10. They attempt to integrate ideas from different parts of the text.
11. They build interpretations of the text as they read.
12. They build main idea summaries.
13. They evaluate the text and the author, and form feelings about the text.
14. They attempt to resolve difficulties.
15. They reflect on the information in the text.

These strategies and associated goals, as well as a few other strategies, are often applied in combinations that support each other to achieve comprehension. Among good readers, these strategies are often applied initially without a lot of conscious thought. It is only when the initial set of strategies does not lead to successful understanding that a much more conscious problem-solving mode of attention is activated.

Training students to become strategic readers requires that strategy development be given a high priority throughout the curriculum and that strategy instruction be seen as a long-term goal. Strategies are introduced, usually one or two at a time, and developed in the course of instruction. Teachers provide direct teaching of strategies while students are reading the course texts. The key for students to become strategic readers is for them to experience many subsequent iterations of practice in using effective strategies. This continual recycling of key strategies is a process that textbooks typically are not able to incorporate in a curriculum, and most teachers do not know how to do this successfully. These two limitations are a major reason why most reading strategy instruction is not useful.

Teaching for strategic reading involves consistent modeling, scaffolding, extensive practice, and eventually independent use of the strategies by students. Consistent discussions about how to understand the text are a major way to introduce and practice strategies, and comprehension monitoring is a regular feature of instruction. In this way, strategy instruction is seen as part of everyday reading instruction, and not as separate lessons. A long-range goal is to automatize strategy use for fluent reading. Teaching students to become more strategic readers is central to comprehension instruction and deserves greater instructional attention.

The best program for developing students as strategic readers is through the English L1 program known as Concept-Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI). There is no space to describe this program involving motivation instruction, strategy instruction, content learning, and extended reading input, but there is over 15 years of empirical research evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach in L1 contexts (Guthrie, Klauda & Ho, 2013; Guthrie, Wigfield & Perencevich, 2004; Taboada et al., 2009). CORI has yet to be implemented in any L2 context. At the same time, there is some evidence that L2 reading strategy instruction can be useful based on the meta-analysis by Taylor, Stevens and Asher (2006).

Practicing Reading Fluency

The development of reading fluency is an important component ability for advanced reading comprehension skills (Gorsuch & Taguchi, 2008; Grabe, 2009; Klauda & Guthrie, 2008; Taguchi et al., 2012). Building word and passage reading fluency also requires an extended commitment in the reading curriculum. One cannot build reading fluency by practicing for a month or two. It is critical to explain to students why they are working on fluency and to “sell” students on fluency, rate, and recognition activities. At the same time, if these activities are done right, students enjoy fluency activities and look forward to them.

Developing word-recognition fluency can be carried out through repetition and “beat the clock” practice with flash cards and timed reading of lists of words that have been introduced. Students can also improve in word-recognition fluency through practice in rereading texts, reading along in a text as the teacher reads aloud, and engaging in extensive reading. Passage-level fluency

can be developed with consistent practice in rereading texts, both silently and aloud. Passage fluency also is developed through extensive reading, recycling through previously read texts to carry out new tasks, timed reading activities, and paced reading activities.

In English L1 reading settings, repeated reading is becoming an important aspect of reading curricula, and many alternative options exist for providing repeated reading practice (Rasinski, 2010). Repeated reading can either be unassisted or assisted. Unassisted Repeated Reading involves students reading aloud short passages alone until they reach a set rate of reading speed. Assisted Repeated Reading can involve students reading a passage silently along with an audio-tape, reading a passage aloud with an audio-tape, reading a passage with a teacher or aide, or first listening to a passage and then reading along (among other variations).

Developing Extensive Reading

Extensive reading, to be reasonably successful, generally requires a significant effort in motivating students. Students need to be aware of the goals for working on extensive reading. They also need to be sold on the benefits of extensive reading, encouraged to read extensively at every reasonable opportunity, given many good opportunities to read extensively, and provided with many excellent extensive reading resources (e.g., graded readers and level-appropriate reading material). The following list simply sketches some of the ways to engage students in extensive reading

1. Provide many attractive reading materials.
2. Provide time for free reading or SSR in class.
3. Create many opportunities for all types of reading, in class and out.
4. Have a good class library.
5. Read interesting material to students.
6. Find out what students like to read and why.
7. Create ways to interest students in reading topics.
8. Let students read magazines, comic books, newspapers in class.
9. Talk about what you read and why that material is interesting to you.
10. Have students share and recommend reading material.

Building extensive reading skills requires long-range curriculum planning if it is to have a major impact on fluency and reading comprehension development. Extensive reading in class also requires scaffolded support from the teacher while students are reading silently (see Reutzel, Jones & Neuman, 2010). In addition, extensive reading in classroom contexts requires some type of accountability and evaluation, though this should be simple and not threatening. Despite these cautions, it is important to point out the obvious: *There is no way to get around the fact that students only become good readers by reading a lot.*

Promoting Motivation for Reading

It is now clear that motivation training and teaching positively impacts the development of reading comprehension abilities (Guthrie, Klauda, & Ho, 2013; Schiefele et al., 2011). Teachers commonly think that they do not have a major role to play in student motivation for reading. This view couldn't be further from the truth. Most students take a dim view of becoming good, fluent L2 readers. Students know that reading development is a hard task and they need effective motivational support from teachers and the curriculum itself. Moreover, there are important ways in the classroom for teachers to promote student's motivation for reading. Motivation growth can be supported in the following ways:

1. Talk about what interests you and why.
2. Have students share their interests.
3. Promote the development of group cohesiveness
4. Create communities of learners who support each other with difficult tasks.
5. Increase students' expectancy of success in many particular tasks
6. Have good lead-ins for major texts and tasks in order to build initial interest.
7. Match student skills with challenge.
8. Make the curriculum relevant to students.
9. Make learners active participants so learning is stimulating and enjoyable
10. Build real levels of expertise in topics of readings (CORI, Content-Based Instruction).
11. Give students some degree of choices within the curricular framework.

Combining Language and Content Learning

A priority in building a reading curriculum is to consider which goals will have a high priority and how to combine all of the priority goals into a coherent overall educational plan. Any careful consideration of academic reading development has to take into consideration the various component skills outlined in this article. While not every component skill and knowledge base can receive equal amounts of attention, one approach to building a coherent and effective reading curriculum would be to combine an emphasis on content learning as well as language learning (and language skill use), often labeled as content-based instruction.

Sustained content and language learning, if developed appropriately, provides opportunities for the

development of various language skills and resources (much as other curricular models would). However, combined content and language learning also provides many opportunities for extended reading, motivational learning experiences, strategic responses to increasing complex tasks, greater choices in reading materials, and growing challenges to match growing skills. The combination of content and language learning brings in opportunities for project learning, the recycling of important skills and strategies on a regular basis, the rereading of many text resources, and more realistic needs to interpret, integrate, and evaluate information from multiple texts. These types of activities are what students should be trying to do with information resources in academic settings (Grabe & Stoller, 2014; Guthrie, Wigfield & Perencevich, 2004)

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

While there are a number of additional recommendations that can be made for building L2 reading instruction and planning appropriate reading curricula, this article describe key skills and knowledge bases needed for academic reading, and suggests ways to develop effective instruction. This article first described the research foundations for L2 reading comprehension and noted 'implications for reading instruction.' It also outlined a simple array of instructional practices that can be integrated into an innovative and effective framework for teaching L2 reading. A short article of this type can only begin to identify the potential instructional options and variations that could help make a difference in reading success with L2 students. The key to these on-going efforts is to continue exploring effective practices for reading instruction based on persuasive instructional research studies.

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3 The Role of Intercultural Rhetoric in ESP Education

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Abstract: Intercultural rhetoric (IR), previously called contrastive rhetoric (CR)[1], is "the study of written discourse between and among individuals with different cultural backgrounds" (Connor, 2011, p. 1). IR examines the influences of first language, culture, and education on the production of texts with the aim of advancing cross-cultural communication research as well as informing writers, editors, translators, and language and composition teachers and learners, among other users and producers of text.

This paper outlines the history of IR as well as highlights its current concerns and applications. In particular, attention will be given to the changing definitions of culture and their impact on research and practice in IR and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Finally, sample applications of research to ESP instruction will be described.

Key Words: intercultural rhetoric (IR), contrastive rhetoric (CR), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), culture, cross-cultural communication, intercultural communication

Background

The identification of preferred patterns in texts and interactions across cultures and languages is important because this knowledge can inform ESP teachers and advanced learners. For example, graduate students, post-doctoral researchers, and other novice academic writers can use a corpus of articles to compare their own rhetorical and organization habits and lexico-grammatical choices with those of successful practitioners in the discipline. Teachers of writing for specific disciplines can benefit from the comparison of corpora of discipline-specific texts in different languages in order to identify potential pitfalls for their students. Such corpora comparisons thus help teachers to understand reasons for potential mismatches in the formulation of specific text types by students. Research article introductions are a well-studied example, where reliance on the practices in one's native language can lead to a mismatch with the expectations in the target language. IR research can also shed light on successful strategies for business negotiations in situations where a variety of languages and cultures interact to conduct commerce.

Studies of cross-cultural writing in ESL began with Robert Kaplan's (1966) research into differences in organization of essays written in English by international students with a variety of backgrounds. Connor's (1996) *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-Cultural Aspects of Second-Language Writing* set out to define contrastive rhetoric and establish it as a legitimate area of research in second language acquisition studies. The book reflected the interdisciplinary nature of this research and the resulting pluralism of the research methods. In building a theory of contrastive rhetoric, the influences on this newly defined field were identified. These influences included the two cornerstones of contrastive rhetoric, namely the transfer of first language patterns to a second language, and the theory of linguistic relativity (i.e., the notion that patterns of language and writing are culture-specific). New influences introduced in the book, however, were theories of rhetoric (writing as communication and persuasion is affected by audience),

1 In the early 2000s, some postmodern second-language writing scholars launched a criticism of contrastive rhetoric, characterizing it as static and linking it directly to contrastive analysis, a movement associated with structural linguistics and behaviorism. In a 2002 article, Connor addressed these criticisms and to offer new directions for a viable contrastive rhetoric. In addressing the critiques, she aimed to draw attention to the broadening scope of contrastive rhetoric and considered that a new term would better encompass the essence of the field in its current state. To distinguish between the often-quoted "static" model and the new advances that have been made, Connor suggests it may be useful to use the term intercultural rhetoric instead to refer to the current models of cross-cultural research. However, over the following decade many scholars have continued to use the term contrastive to refer to the kinds of analysis they do, especially when describing quantitative corpus-based analyses of text that do not consider contextual influences.

text linguistics (texts and writing have systematic, analyzable variation), genre analysis (writing is task- and situation-based and results in discourse types), literacy (the activity of writing is embedded in culture), and translation (texts are translatable across cultures but may take different styles and forms). Connor's 1996 book defined contrastive rhetoric as "an area of research in second language acquisition that identifies problems in composition encountered by second language writers, and by referring to the rhetorical strategies of the first language, attempts to explain them" (1996, p. 5). The goal of the book was to give practical advice for researchers and teachers of ESL.

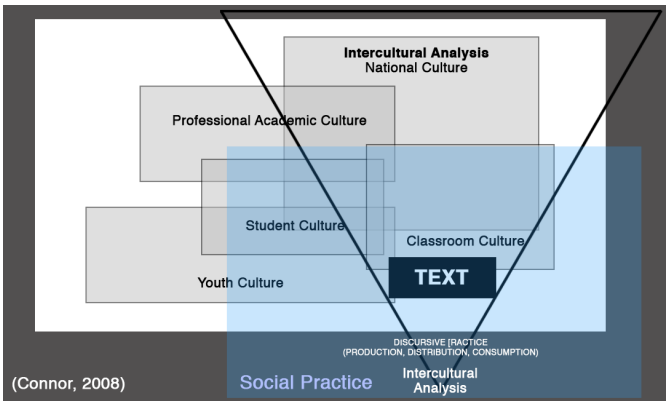
Contrastive Rhetoric brought about a renewed interest in the study of writing cross-culturally and an attention to the interdisciplinary potential of contrastive rhetoric. Subsequent years have witnessed several book-length publications on cross-cultural writing such as Panetta's (2001) edited book *Contrastive Rhetoric Revisited and Redefined* (on the use of contrastive rhetoric in first-language contexts), Kassabgy, Ibrahim, and Aydelott's (2004) edited book *Contrastive Rhetoric: Issues, Insights, and Pedagogy* (focusing on writing and translation, diglossia, second language acquisition, and pragmatics), and McCool's (2009) *Writing Around the World: A Guide to Writing Across Cultures* (offering practical advice for global writers). Several other published books include chapters on intercultural writing, e.g. Manchón (2009), Palmer-Silveira, Ruiz-Garrido and Fortanet-Gómez (2006), Ruiz-Garrido, Palmer-Silveira and Fortanet-Gómez (2010), and a special issue of the *Journal of Asian Pacific Communication* (2005), edited by Li and Casanave.

Most recent treatments of IR include Connor's 2011 book *Intercultural Rhetoric in the Writing Classroom* and Belcher and Nelson's edited book *Critical and Corpus-based Approaches to Intercultural Rhetoric* (2013). Belcher and Nelson are credited for the vision of shaping IR and moving the field forward. For anyone interested in acquiring initial knowledge about IR, their book is a must read.

Basic Tenets of Current Research in Intercultural Rhetoric

In 2008, Connor proposed a multilayered model of IR. Figure 1 shows the three major tenets of this model: (1) texts need to be seen in their contexts with meaningful contextual and purposeful descriptions, (2) culture needs to be complexified to include disciplinary cultures in addition to national/ethnic cultures, and (3) dynamic, interactive patterns of communication are important to consider, which leads to convergences among cultural differences. Of these three, the ESP teacher should consider culture to be of the utmost importance.

Figure 1: Multilayered model of intercultural rhetoric



Culture is a complex concept in today's world. Already in 1997, Heath referred to culture as one of the most contentious subjects in all humanities and sciences. Culture has been generally defined as the lifestyle of a group of people: values, beliefs, artifacts and behavior, and communication patterns. Mathews (2000) calls this traditional view "the way of life of the people" (p. 2). This definition leads to terms like 'American culture', 'Chinese culture', and 'Finnish culture', for example. Such a notion of culture has come under increasing attack in the post-War period, particularly noticeable in postmodernist criticism. For example, Keesing (1994) regards culture as largely the invention of Western anthropologists who simply needed "a framework for [their] creation and evocation of radical diversity." He believes that this essentialist notion of culture infiltrated our everyday discourse and, over time, led many Westerners to understand culture as something defined by objects and rituals, usually as they related to a non-Western "other" (p. 301). In other words, this notion allowed us to define ourselves by comparison to what we were not.

Considering these and other aspects of the evolving concept of culture, the ability to frame the concept of culture as used in IR research is critical. In fact, a review by Alan Hirvela (2009) of Connor et al.'s *Contrastive Rhetoric: Reaching to Intercultural Rhetoric* (2008) points out that the field of IR needs to develop "an effective and commonly agreed-upon construct for culture" for the field to continue (p. 287).

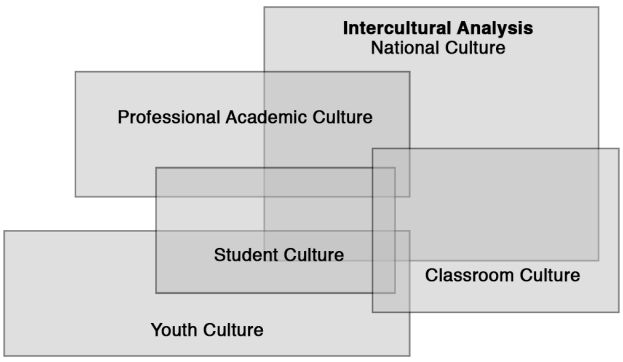
Dwight Atkinson (2004) wrote about the need for contrastive rhetoric to change its conceptualization from a "received" view of culture to an alternative view. A received view considers cultures as ethnic, national, and static; alternative views take into account the changing nature of global communication and the changing definitions of culture as previously described. The most useful concept in Atkinson's discussion of new cultural concepts for IR is the distinction between "large cultures" and "small cultures" (Holliday, 1999). This discussion would go on to shape the framework of

culture in IR. Legal culture, business culture, classroom culture, etc., can be analyzed using the same parameters as one uses for culture: norms, values, social practices, roles, hierarchies, and artifacts. We know from genre theory, for example, that various discourse communities have their own norms about genre characteristics and social practices about how to produce and consume these genres. Different norms for research papers often exist from discipline to discipline. Business executives in any given culture (national/ethnic and professional), for example, know what a typical sales letter looks like, and they have a schema about how sales negotiations are expected to proceed.

Thus, Holliday provided a concrete model of small cultures in educational settings (1994, 1999). Large cultures have ethnic, national, or international group features as essential components and tend to be normative and prescriptive. Small cultures, on the other hand, are non-essentialist and based on dynamic processes that relate to cohesive behaviors within social groupings. Small cultures avoid culturist ethnic, national, and international stereotyping: "In cultural research, small cultures are thus a heuristic means in the process of interpreting group behavior" (1999, p. 240). Small cultures are rooted in activities, and a specific discourse is one of the products of small culture. According to Holliday, "In many ways, the discourse community *is* a small culture" (p. 252).

Classrooms also can be said to have their own culture. Holliday described a classroom using his model. In it are various overlapping social institutions and practices, such as national culture, professional academic culture, student culture, etc. (Figure 2) that represent some examples of the cultures that can be found in a single educational setting.

Figure 2: Interacting cultures in an educational setting [adapted from Holliday (1999) and Atkinson (2004)]



A complex notion of the interactions of different cultural forces emerges when one analyzes the small and large cultures present in a given situation, such as in Holliday's classroom model. National culture overlaps with other, smaller cultures such as professional-academic culture, classroom culture, student culture, and youth culture. This is important for teachers of writing to take into consideration in ESL and EFL situations, where the makeup of the class includes students from such diverse disciplines as engineering, nursing, business, liberal arts, etc., in addition to the diversity in terms of age, gender, and national and socio-economic backgrounds.

However, given the controversial nature of boundaries as they relate to identity construction against socio-historically informed power differentials, culture has become a burning issue, not just in the world of EFL/ESL, but in 21st century scholarly discussion as a whole. Defining culture has never been easy, especially because definitions tend to freeze concepts in time. 'Culture' continues to be one of the most complex words in the language (Williams, 1983, p. 87). Whereas early notions of culture, the "received view," consider large groups as sharing a definable culture (ethnic, national, international), postmodern views see culture as "a dynamic, ongoing process which operates in changing circumstances to enable group members to make sense and meaningfully operate within those circumstances" (Holliday, 1999, p. 248). Thus, culture has become less and less a national consensus, but "a consensus built on common ethnic, generational, ideological, occupational, or gender-related interests, within and across national boundaries" (Kramsch, 2002, p. 276).

Particularly relevant to the EFL/ESL community, and especially to ESP practitioners, is the notion of culture from the bottom up, i.e. from the perspective of the individual. Atkinson (1999) and Atkinson and Sohn (2013) argue that people live "culturally" and propose the cultural study of the person. They aim to describe culture as represented in the lives of its individual users from their perspectives. Thus, they focus on the *cultural nature of the individual* (how sociocultural influences contribute to individual identity) as well as on the *individual nature of the cultural* (how cultural material is actively interpreted, appropriated, and (re)created by individuals).

Recently Published Research in ESP/EAP

As the domain of writing in ESP/EAP has expanded from the teaching of essay writing to other genres in academic and professional contexts, genre analysis has provided IR researchers with methods of analysis that supplement the discourse analysis methods used in previous contrastive rhetoric research. The development of genre analysis (Bhatia 1993; Swales 1990) has been beneficial for IR research as it has forced researchers to compare textual and contextual features of the same specific genre across different cultures, whereas previous to genre analysis there was the danger that apples were being compared to oranges. In addition, this focus on the rhetorical analysis of specific

genres by genre analysts has led IR research to expand into many additional academic and professional genres.

The number of comparative empirical genre analyses has been staggering in the past two decades. Published studies have compared the rhetorical moves and linguistic features of the research article in a number of disciplines in various countries (e.g. Ventola and Mauranen 1991; Duszak 1994; Golebiowski 1998; Moreno 1998; Bielski and Bielski 2008; Mur Dueñas 2008; Pabón Berbesí, and Dominguez 2008; and Vladimirou 2008). Other genres that have been studied across cultures include the business letter request (Yli-Jokipii 1996; Kong 1998), the sales letter (Zhu 1997), the grant proposal (Connor and Mauranen 1999; Feng 2008), the application letter (Upton and Connor 2001), the letter of recommendation (Precht 1998, 2000), web pages (McBride 2008), and newspaper commentaries (Wang 2007, 2008). The empirical studies referenced above illustrate the expansion of the genres studied interculturally in English for specific purposes. Many of the above use rhetorical moves analysis (e.g. Connor and Mauranen 1999; Feng 2008), but other linguistic analyses are also used to identify and explain cultural differences in writing for a specific genre. Mur Dueñas (2008) uses metadiscourse analysis to examine Spanish-English contrasts in academic research articles, while Wang (2007, 2008) applies systemic-functional appraisal theory (Martin and White 2005) to evaluate newspaper commentaries in Chinese and English.

Pedagogical Applications of Intercultural Rhetoric

Recent research has reported promising results from implementing IR-oriented writing instruction for East-Asian students in China (Xing, Wang, & Spencer, 2008), Japan (Yoshimura, 2002), and Korea (Walker, 2006). Each study showed improved writing effectiveness when students were made aware of audience expectations and shown ways to avoid negative transfer from L1 to L2. In addition, Yoshimura showed the effectiveness of using the students' L1 in the EFL writing class.

Two sources provide clear pedagogical strategies for using intercultural rhetorical approaches in the writing classroom. Reflecting on contrastive rhetoric, Casanave (2004) shows how it has helped teachers build awareness about different conventions of writing in different cultures. She mentions that differences that affect writing across cultures have included rhetorical patterns of organization, composing conventions, cohesion and coherence patterns, writing conventions affecting choice and frequency of text types, and knowledge of audience expectations. Although contrastive rhetoric was never meant as a method for teaching, it has encouraged such teaching techniques as reorganizing scrambled sentences and identifying topic sentences, as explained in such well-known teacher reference books as Ferris and Hedgcock (2005) and Reid (1993).

Casanave (2004) recommends a three-pronged approach to applying contrastive rhetoric in the classroom that considers the contexts of writing more carefully, and thus is consistent with the directions of IR:

1. Teachers should encourage their students to analyze the purposes of their writing and analyze their audiences carefully: "This kind of investigation may involve breaking down students' stereotypes of their L1 and L2 and helping them come to a more complex understanding of how their L1 rhetoric creates meaning" (p. 46).
2. Teachers can ask students to compare L1 and L2 texts with regard to paragraph and discourse-level organization (preferably at intermediate and advanced levels of instruction). The comparisons of L1 and L2 texts within the same genre can be taken to full text levels. In other words, students who need to write research papers could be analyzing published articles across language or disciplines. This could be especially helpful for writers who have had practice in writing those genres in L1s.
3. Teachers can involve students in examining audience and reader expectations in different cultures. Casanave's discussion of Xiaoming Li's (1996) study of what teachers in the United States and China consider "good" writing is an eye-opener and could serve as a model. Evaluating six student narrative essays in each of the respective languages, Li (1996) found that U.S.-based teachers valued logic and strong openings, whereas the Chinese teachers valued sentiments and moral messages. Casanave suggests that students in classes could react to texts written for the same purposes in L1 and L2 and discuss cultural expectations for certain types of writing.

Casanave's suggested techniques are consistent with the premises of IR: context and text are important, and interactions among native and nonnative speakers bring new insights about norms of writing related to specific genres in English.

Walker (2011) discusses a variety of methods and techniques he has successfully implemented in teaching writing to Southeast Asian college students. He recommends using teacher conferencing and peer-response activities to help students write more

rhetorically effective English academic essays. Walker suggests several student-centered activities instead of lecturing about rhetorical styles. In particular, student journals can be used as part of turning students into ethnographers by assigning students targeted questions concerning the essays and articles they read in the writing process. These questions would make students compare rhetorical patterns in English and their L1. Walker offers a number of helpful strategies for effective peer-response sessions and teacher conferences in a rhetorically oriented revision process.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the role of intercultural rhetoric in ESP in terms of its basic tenets, recent research, and applications of ESP. We maintain that IR is a focal interest to ESP researchers and teachers. This recognizes that intercultural rhetoric should not be seen in its 1996 contrastive rhetoric state. The field continues to expand as its regularly held international conferences and resulting published volumes confirm (Connor et al, 2008; Belcher and Nelson, 2013).

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4 Exploring Theory in Computer-Assisted Language Learning

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Abstract: The field of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is, by the very nature of its dependence on technology, one that is in a constant state of change. As a result of this change, it may be argued that theory, research, and even practice in the field struggle to keep pace with these technological developments. Given the centrality of technology in CALL, any discussions of theory, research or practice must take into the consideration the impact that technology has, not only on the learning process, but also on the reasons for and the focus of research undertaken in the field, and the range of factors which may contribute to how and why technology is employed in a given context. Although each has featured in the CALL literature over the past several years, the complex interrelation between them remains largely unexplored. This paper examines the elements of what theories of CALL must include, and provides some examples of theories that are from outside the mainstream language learning literature that may be of relevance to teachers and researchers in CALL. The paper concludes with a brief discussion of the complexities of theory in CALL, and how a rethink of the position of theories that draw more heavily on the technological aspect of the field may help lead to a deeper understanding of the role that technology plays in the language learning process.

Introduction

Although there was some sporadic use of technology in language teaching environments prior to this time, if we look at how long the major journals and books in the field have been around, we could say that CALL as a discipline has been around for more than a quarter of a century. The *ReCALL* journal is now into its 25th year, *Computer Assisted Language Learning* journal into its 26th, and the *CALICO Journal* into its 30th, and it has been nearly 20 years since Higgins and John's (1984) seminal work was published. Needless to say, the development of an interdisciplinary field such as CALL has not been without difficulties, and many researchers over the years have stopped to take a look at what has been done and the future directions of the field (e.g., Warschauer, 1996; Bax, 2003).

As A. N. Whitehead (1911, p. 233) very famously noted, "It is a well-founded historical generalization that the last thing to be discovered in any science is what the science is really about." It would not be too much of an exaggeration to say that this is also applicable to the field of CALL. We may say that it is widely agreed that CALL refers to the use of technology to facilitate the language learning process, but exactly how technology can be applied to achieve this has gone through several stages of thought. One factor that has made it particularly difficult in CALL when compared with other fields is that one of the major players, technology, keeps changing at a phenomenal rate, and the effects of this change reach not only to the classroom, but rather into virtually all aspects of our daily lives. Technologies have become more accessible, smaller and more portable, and exponentially more powerful. At the same time, there has also been a significant change in the educational environment itself, with a shift in focus from the teacher to the students, from centralized to distributed. In the midst of this ongoing change, the field of CALL has pushed steadily onwards, and this has been evident in the myriad of ways that technology has found itself into a wide range of language teaching and learning contexts, the scope and scale of the research conducted, and the theories that have been applied to explain the various phenomenon that have emerged.

The purpose of this paper is to take a look at theory, research and practice in the field of CALL, considering how they interrelate and how they have developed. It will aim to examine how CALL research has been conducted, and provide some suggestions for how research and practice in the field may be carried out to

be of maximum benefit to language teachers who wish to implement technology smoothly and effectively into their individual language learning contexts.

Interdependency of theory, research and practice

As alluded to above, the essence of CALL is to determine how technology may play a role in the teaching and learning of a second language. How exactly technology may be used to achieve this will depend very heavily on what technologies are used, as this will necessarily have an effect on when, where and how the technology can be applied to the language learning context. Technologies that are fixed, such as desktop computers, will mean that their usage is limited to a time and place that they are available, which may entail setting aside a certain amount of time on a regular basis in a computer laboratory. Technologies that are portable, such as MP3 players, mobile phones, tablet computers or laptops, have meant that there is a far greater amount of freedom with regard to time and place, but their usage is still very much dependent upon what the technology is capable of doing (e.g., mobile phones are easy to carry around, but there are limitations in screen size and text input) and, of course, the types of tasks or activities that students are required to use them for. Thus, practice in CALL—the collective term we might use for how technologies are used to teach languages—is highly dependent on the technologies, but at the same time, one might question whether the technology itself is the primary factor which determines the language learning uses that it is put to. Underlying the use of the technology are the language learning goals that the teacher (or learner) has in mind, and it should be kept in mind that technology itself cannot contribute to learning a language. Healy (1999) puts this very accurately with her metaphor that, "…technology alone does not create language learning any more than dropping a learner into the middle of a large library does" (p. 136).

Practice in CALL is exceedingly complex, and is constantly affected by the context in which it occurs, be this at an individual level, an institutional level, or a societal level (see Stockwell, 2012a, for a discussion). The way in which learners use technologies in their everyday lives will, for example, have an effect on how they apply these technologies to other usages as well (Levy & Stockwell, 2006). Similarly, if there are institutional preferences for using technologies, such as an institution-wide learning management system (e.g., *Blackboard, Moodle,* etc.), this will also likely have some influence on not only what technologies are used, but also what they are used for. At a societal level, some technologies are more readily available than others. Tablet computers are quite popular amongst students in Australia (Fujimoto, 2012), but ownership by students in Japan still seems to be very much in the minority (Stockwell, 2010). As a result, requiring learners to use their tablets to complete tasks in Australia might be considered as a possibility, but in Japan it would mean that only a very small number of learners would be able to do this. In this way, the context will always have an effect on the ways that technologies could and should be used to achieve language learning goals.

How, then, does this relate to research? The terms research and practice appear frequently together in the titles of books and journals in a range of fields, and CALL is no exception to this. There is clearly an interrelationship between the two, and one could not be carried out effectively without at least some minimal reference to the other (Hinkel, 2005). The nature of the relationship depends very much on the focus of what is being undertaken, however, with research often being the point of departure for what happens in practice, and practice being the point of departure for what ends up being researched. For example, if a developer of CALL software has a desire to see whether some tool that they have developed is effective for learners to acquire vocabulary, it is likely that the teaching environment will be shaped to make such a study possible. Should an experimental or quasi-experimental type of approach be undertaken, then it is likely that learners will be—at times rather arbitrarily—divided into two separate groups, where one uses the technology and the other does not. Given the ethical concerns of having one group of students potentially advantaged by the use or non-use of a technology, the researcher may decide to use a matrix approach, where the two different groups are given access to the technology at different times during the course. While in this case both groups of learners have had access to the same technology, the timing in which this access occurs is necessarily going to have some kind of effect, be it on the content which is taught, or in the way that it relates to other material which has been taught. In this way, it becomes clear that research has clearly shaped what happens in practice.

In CALL contexts, the starting point for research may also be the technology itself, where a teacher may have an interest in a new technology, and be interested in its applicability to a learning situation. In this case, the technology itself has shaped not only what has happened in practice, but research is likely to be undertaken at the same time, meaning that it has also shaped what is researched. In this way, it becomes evident that the relationship between practice, research and technology is a mutually dependent one, where it would be rather difficult for one element to exist without some effect on the other two.

What about the role of theory? Before embarking on the discussion, it helps to have a view of what we mean when we refer to theory. Mitchell, Myles and Marsden

describe theory as, "...a more or less abstract set of claims about the entities which are significant within the phenomenon under study, the relationships which exist between them, and the processes which bring about change" (2013, p. 2). Whether the theory that is applied is formalized or just an informal perspective on a given situation, we would assume that teachers applying theory would maintain some perspective of how learning will occur.

The role of theory is always going to be present in any discussion of research or practice, and, for that matter, technology. This perspective will obviously directly shape what happens in the classroom, but at the same time, it can also have an impact on research. It is likely to affect not only on what data are collected, but also how these data are viewed and interpreted. An interactionist may look at the turn-taking that takes place between learners interacting via Skype or some other audiconferencing tool, while a socioculturalist, with the same data set may look at instances of scaffolding. In this case, it is possible to think of theory as a means of bringing some elements to the foreground or the background (Levy & Stockwell, 2006). A researcher who is looking to investigate turn-taking may adopt a different data collection method from a researcher who is interested in scaffolding. To this end, as Mackey and Gass (2012, p. 1) argue, "…research methods are dependent upon the theories that they are designed to investigate." Indeed, the theory which is applied can bring about a completely different view of the same situation, shading it in the unique characteristics inherent in the theory.

The same may be said of the choice of technology and how it is used. A strong advocate of drills may see the technology of choice—be it a desktop computer, mobile phone or tablet computer—as a tool in which to achieve this, providing answers to questions generated from some kind of a database. The types of activities that they design will likely fit this view, and as such the technology and the software that is used will need to make this possible. In contrast, a person who advocates natural communication between learners may believe that social networking service (SNS) sites provide exactly the environment that they would like to use with their learners, allowing them to communicate with each other through *Facebook* or some other tool. In this case, the choice of technology has become something completely different from the advocate of drills, and the manner in which the technology is used would be affected by this view. In this way, it becomes very clear that the impact of the theory that is applied to a given situation is likely to have a very wide-reaching impact on all aspects of how CALL is conceptualized and conducted. Theory is discussed in more depth in the following section.

Theory in CALL

As the discussion above has alluded to, theory has always had a place in CALL. It may seem somewhat odd to point out, then, that at times its position has been rather tenuous. CALL practitioners for the most part recognize the importance of theory, and several theories have been cited in the CALL literature over the past three decades. How could this position be considered as being "tenuous" then? A reality is that there has been a not-insignificant body of research in CALL that does not cite any theoretical framework at all, particularly in the early years. Even when it is not cited, there going to be, as described above, a view of how languages are learned in the background behind how technology has been implemented in the language learning context. In many cases, however, it has remained somewhat tacit, and it is only in the past decade or so that theory has featured more prominently in CALL research. It is certainly possible to argue that it has been this lack of reference to theory that has been at the base of some criticisms directed towards the field of CALL, which is seen very much as an extension of second language acquisition (see Chapelle, 2005; 2007; Egbert & Petrie, 2005).

There have in fact been very few serious attempts at looking at theory in CALL. While it has received passing reference in many publications, these are generally limited to a particular study or environment. Two of the more notable analyses of theory and CALL have been carried out by Levy and Stockwell (2006) and Hubbard (2008). Levy and Stockwell (2006) suggest that theory can be used for different purposes in CALL, including theory for design, theory for teaching, and theory for research. It is conceivable that practitioners in CALL apply multiple theories at the same time, depending on their needs in a given teaching and learning situation. This means that it is important to be aware of the purpose of theory and to ensure that conflicts in theories are avoided.

In Hubbard's (2008) research, he examined theories cited in the CALICO Journal from 1983 through to 2007, finding that theories that pertained to second language acquisition or linguistic theory made up 38 of the 90 articles that mentioned a theory, and a further 27 being based on educational, pedagogical or learning theory. Of some concern in his study, however, was that a large number of theories were mentioned only once, indicating that while there is an attempt to look beyond the mainstream theories, very few of these have been given serious consideration beyond a cursory mention.
It is probably not that surprising that CALL should have reference to second language acquisition (SLA) theory. The acronym that forms the word CALL entails two primary components – "computer" and "language learning." Without underplaying the importance of

the "assisted" part of the equation either, it becomes obvious that these two parts will certainly affect the way that CALL is conducted, and of course the theories that underlie CALL research and practice. The argument for the use of SLA theories is in many ways a convincing one, and there have been those who suggest that CALL is, in essence, and extension of mainstream second language teaching and learning. One would argue, however, that this view is one that underplays the role of technology in the language learning process. Is it possible to simply view the technology in the same way as any other language learning tool, such as a textbook, a cassette, or even pen and paper? While it is indeed possible that technology may take on the role of at least one of these tools, we could argue that its role goes beyond them, and into a wider scope within our daily lives. Technology has become ingrained in many of the things we do on a daily basis, and where once we may have memorized telephone numbers, addresses, important dates and other events in our lives, much of this is now being left to the range of devices that we choose to own.

To this end, it is possible to argue that, particularly in this current day and age (although this was evident to a degree in the past as well), that technology has taken on more than the facilitator role as might have been assigned to it in the past, much as a textbook was. In our everyday lives, we often choose not to remember details – who needs to when they can easily be looked up in our electronic address books or calendars, or, depending on what it is we wish to find out, simply searched for on the Internet. It is possible to take pictures of signs, menus or other scenes and then forward these on to others, rather than taking the time and effort to describe them. In language learning contexts as well, where we use the technology to take on certain roles that might once have been within the domain of the learners themselves. This of course would relate to the process through which languages are learnt. Based on this idea, it becomes apparent that any theory of CALL needs to look at the process of learning the language, and at the same time the effect the technology has on this process. This would largely need to consider how the learner interacts with the technology, and the impact that the technology has during the SLA process. The concept itself is not an entirely new one, as Levy (1997, p. 184) pointed out, the technology when used as a tool (as opposed to tutor) serves to "augment learner capacities," meaning that in many ways, it amplifies and enhances the capacities the learner has, or in some cases, making up for those capacities the learner may lack.

While there are several theories that relate to how humans interact with technologies, two theories that appear to be immediately applicable to the way in which technology may be used in language learning are distributed cognition and situated learning. These are by far the only theories that may be applicable, but for illustrative purposes, a brief overview of these two theories and how they may be used in language learning context is provided here.

Distributed cognition

The concept of distributed cognition was first conceived by Hutchins (1995a) as a means of examining the real-world flow of representations in cooperative work settings. Since then, the concept has been expanded to include the way in which cognition occurs as a process that combines both internal and external memory and processing functions. Hutchins's view emphasized the external nature of human cognition, and he argued that, "…a complete theory of individual human memory would not be sufficient to understand that which we wish to understand because so much of the memory function takes place outside the individual" (1995b, p. 286). That is to say, in many of the activities that take place in our daily lives, a large proportion of them occur as a combination of processes that take place within individuals and the tools that are used to facilitate these activities. While distributed cognition can also refer to sharing of information between individuals during processing (see Cole & Engström, 1993), the discussion here has been limited to the role that technology can play in sharing the cognitive load.

In a CALL context, the application of distributed cognition is immediately obvious. For instance, if we look at the process of learning vocabulary, it is evident that there are several ways in which the learning process may be somewhat different than learning through non-technological means. One example might be that rather than relying on the human memory to keep track of lists of vocabulary, the learner can have these stored in a place where they are easily accessible and then use them for self-study as they see fit. This particular use is perhaps not very different from what may be done using pen and paper methods, but there are some aspects where the affordances of the technology can be put into play. Learners may be able to input the vocabulary that they wish to learn into software that can automatically create questions for them, be they in context or using other tools. Links to dictionaries that provide the pronunciation of the word, or examples from corpora of actual use can be accessed very easily. Even the reading process itself can be affected by the technology, where pre-installed technology can remove the need to look up unknown vocabulary at all, rather allowing words to be automatically highlighted when touched or clicked on, with a list of information about the word being made available. In this way, the load on the learner is necessarily different from what it would be without the use of technology.

In the first example given here regarding the vocabulary

lists, the process of writing itself may have some differences. In the case of ideographic languages such as Japanese, using a keyboard/keypad removes the need to actually handwrite the character, with the device bringing up the suggested character from a list. This puts the focus on recognition rather than on production, requiring different skills than physical handwriting. Using a system that can automatically create questions for learners can often mean that the range of questions used can be more varied than might be the case with books or self-written lists, while the automatic showing of word meanings reduces the need to access sources such as a dictionary that are external to the activity itself. This may have the effect of decreasing the amount of time spent on looking up new words, but of course at the same time there is the danger of not giving due attention to new words as the meaning is available without cognitive load (see Nation, 2001, for a discussion). Thus, while the effects of the technologies may be viewed as either positive or negative, depending on what is being used for what purpose, suffice to say that there is indeed an effect, and this effect is something that needs to be taken into consideration when looking holistically at the language learning process.

Situated action

The underlying idea behind situated action is that people will behave differently depending on the situation and the options available (Suchman, 2006). If one were to imagine a large room with a single green button on the wall, labeled, "Push the green button." In such a situation, there may be people who happily push the button, and others who feel would be reluctant to do so. The reason for this difference is that many people are unlikely to take risks if they do not know what the outcomes of a particular are. Even when faced with the same circumstances, people will decide on rather different outcomes, depending not only on what the outcome is, but also on what the perceived outcome might be. Those who envisage that the green button might link to a door opening would likely be far less hesitant in pushing the button when compared to those who might imagine something terrible would happen like an explosion. The strength of the perceived outcome is not to be underestimated, as it can have play a role in determining actions and behaviors that occur.

The application of this theory to CALL design is also evident. Learners need to be aware of what the outcomes of actions that they are required to undertake will be so that they can make informed decisions about what actions to perform. For example, in the design of CALL applications, if learners do not know the functions of buttons or other features within the application, there is the chance that they will not be used in the way that is intended by the designers of the program. Options need to be clear and logical, and leave as small amount of doubt as possible for the learner so that they feel comfortable about navigating around the environment in the application.

The two theories described here are meant to be illustrative rather than exhaustive, but they do serve as an example of the field of CALL may benefit from the different insights that human-computer interaction (HCI) provides. While of course SLA theory should maintain a central role in the view of technology in second language learning, it is somewhat naïve to underplay the role that technology plays in the learning process. As Levy (2000) argues, "…technology always makes a difference; the technology is never transparent or inconsequential" (p. 190). This suggest that a knowledge of both theories that apply to learning as well as theories that apply to how humans interact with technology are essential in better accounting for the complex relationship between technology and language learning that make up the field of CALL.

Complexities of theory in CALL

While the discussion provided here into CALL theory is somewhat simplistic, it is intended to suggest that there is potentially far more to CALL than can be simply explained by theories of SLA that do not involve technology. This will very definitely depend, however, on the role that technology plays. When the computer assumes a more tutor role (see Levy, 1997, for a discussion), then the interplay between the learner and the computer will be completely different from what it would be when the computer is used as a tool. As a tutor, in addition to the cognitive aspects, we may also see psychological ones (and perhaps even social ones), with the computer taking on the "presence" of a teacher (see Hubbard & Bradin-Siskin, 2004). The simulated role of the teacher may include that of provider of various activities, feedback, and assistance, all of which may be perceived by learners in different ways.

As described earlier, the cognitive load of the learner may also be strongly affected by the technology, not only in what it can facilitate (as was seen in the discussion on distributed cognition) and in that it might make it possible for people who are geographically separated to communicate, but also in potentially more negative aspects. For example, as was discussed earlier, some learners become less inclined to learn certain elements as the technology has the potential to take over this task for them, but this may simply be a direction that we as humans are going in, and one that language teachers will need to adjust to in the future. Alternatively, when using tools such as videoconferencing, the high quality of sound and video give the impression that communication is as smooth as what takes place in face-to-face environments, but often there are minor glitches and pauses in these that can cause a different

meaning being transmitted or understood than what was originally intended.

Thus, technology will, as I have pointed out throughout this paper, make some difference, and there is a need to researchers in CALL to consider the entire range of complexities. This might mean that time will need to be spent on discussion of theories that go beyond the mainstream, and explore other areas of thought. When we look at what is happening in the field at present, as Hubbard's (2008) study suggested, many researchers in CALL appear to be dabbling in theories, without concerted attempts at investigating how they may or may not be applicable to the field. Such an outcome can only be achieved through following up on previous research, which may include walking down some tentative tracks that daring researchers in CALL have left behind, in an attempt to see if they lead anywhere that will be of value to the field.

Conclusion

The range of issues which could have been raised in a paper such as this are far too broad to be covered in sufficient detail, so this paper has aimed to provoke thought regarding the considerations that must be kept in mind regarding theory, research and practice in CALL. At the risk of oversimplifying the complexities, the paper has provided a basic overview of how there is a necessary relationship that exists between these three elements, and how these are further complicated by the introduction of technology.

As technologies change, the ways in which humans interact with the technologies and with each other are destined to change. Those who implement CALL are encouraged to keep a firm eye on the developments in SLA, but to not do so at the expense of the research which looks at the ever-changing relationship between humans and the technologies that have become almost ubiquitous in our daily lives.

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

5 Metaphors in Financial Analyst Reports

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Abstract: This study is part of a large-scale on-going research project that investigates financial analyst reports in terms of the discursive presentation of economic and investment content and the strategic deployment of expert discursive resources to achieve personal, organisational, institutional, professional, and socio-cultural goals. The project aims to achieve the goal by examining the language, content/topics and issues presented in the financial analyst reports for specific groups of audience. In the present study, a corpus of financial analyst reports of a bank was analysed in terms of the discourse field 'Emotions' and the use of metaphors in the constituent words. Findings are discussed with reference to both the corporate culture and the wider economic and business contexts.

Key Words: Metaphors; Corpus Linguistics; Financial Analyst Reports

Introduction

The corpus-based study (Cheng, 2012) reported in this article aims to critically examine the use of metaphors in a self-compiled corpus of financial analyst reports that describe and express the emotions relating to the description, analysis and prediction of the financial situation and investment environment during February 2011 and January 2012. This period was particularly important from the perspective of the financial analysts' discourse as the market situation, especially in Europe, was highly turbulent due to the on-going Euro crisis. The specialised corpus was compiled from online texts from the BNP Paribas (BNPP). The computer programs *Wmatrix* (Rayson, 2008) and *ConcGram* (Chris, 2009) were used to interrogate the corpus in terms of semantic categories and word meanings. The Metaphorical Identification Procedure (MIP) (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) was adopted to identify and describe metaphorical meanings related to emotions, underpinned by the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Financial services have increasingly become an important contribution to global economic growth in the 21st century. Among all the genres in the financial services industry such as annual reports, business reviews and SEC filings, financial analyst report is an important genre, which often contain an assessment of economic performance, earnings forecasts and stock recommendations, drawing from a wide range of information on industry, business, and economic trend (Financial Industry Regulatory Authority Guide, 2009). In times of financial fluctuations, stress, crisis and post-crisis, financial analyst reports perform more different communicative functions, enacting various discourses such as analyses, justifications and forecasts, and strategically deploying various expert discursive resources to achieve personal, organisational, professional, institutional, and socio-cultural goals (Huckin, 1997; Baker, *et al.*, 2008).

In a recent study, Burnes (2011) compared the deployment of metaphors between the British and French media in reporting the United States and Pakistan Parliamentary elections in February 2008. The greater variety of metaphors of ENTERTAINMENT (e.g. *step into the spotlight* on the Washington D.C. *stage*), JOURNEY (e.g. a country at the *crossroad*), and STORY (e.g. his *narrative* of better health care) identified in the news reports of Barack Obama's election construes a positive image. On the other hand, PHYSICAL COMBACT and DISASTER metaphors such as *battlegrounds* and *routed* negatively described the parliamentary election of Pakistan President Mr. Musharraf, reflecting interpersonal aggression. Soler (2008) and Burnes's (2011) findings show that metaphors are pervasive in news texts, and they have the functionalities of reconceptualization, expression, and explanation of emotional attitudes.

Methodology

The financial analyst reports were collected from the website of the BNP Paribas (BNPP) from

February 2011 to January 2012[1]. This period of study was crucial from the perspective of financial analysts' discourse because the market situation, especially in Europe, was highly uncontrolled due to the on-going Euro crisis. The BNPP was the world's biggest bank in 2011, providing services in Corporate and Investment Banking, Retail Banking and Investment Solutions. The BNPP Corpus (BNPPC) (567,191 words) comprises all the four online publications in the Economic Research section. The reports in the corpora were mainly written by the in-house teams of the banks.

The study combines corpus and critical discourse analytic approaches and methods. *Wmatrix 3.0* (Rayson, 2008), a semantic annotation tool, was used to assign a semantic tag to every word in the BNPPC. Since the study seeks to identify the metaphorical expressions which describe and express the emotions about the description, analysis and prediction of the financial situation and investment atmosphere in 2011-2012, the discourse field of 'Emotion' was analysed. The semantic categories in the discourse field of 'Emotion' include 'Worry', 'Violent/Angry', 'Confident', 'Fear/Shock', 'Emotional Actions, States And Processes General', and 'Sad'. The USAS tool of *Wmatrix* was used to find the words in each of these semantic categories. Frequently occurring lexical words in each semantic category were then generated to provide a better understanding of the contextual meaning of the semantic categories of Emotion in the BNPPC.

The concordances for some of the most frequent lexical words were generated with the use of *ConcGram* (Greaves, 2009). In each concordance line, the words that co-occur with the emotion word were examined by adopting the Metaphor Identification Procedure (Pragglejaz Group, 2007). An excerpt from the BNPPC illustrates the MIP procedure:

(1) Financial market tensions could spill over to the real economy.

In Example *(1)*, the agent for the action is the noun tensions. The contextual and basic (dictionary) meanings of 'spill' are shown to be different. The basic meaning of the word spill means 'flow or cause to flow over the edge of its container' (*Concise Oxford English Dictionary,* 2011, p. 1390), showing that the physical movement is involved. Concordance analysis of the verb *spill* indicates *widespread influence* because the spread of emotion looks like the water being flown out of a container. Therefore, the contextual sense of the word *spill* is interpreted to be more abstract than that of the basic sense, and hence *spill* in the BNPPC is regarded as metaphorical.

The next step is for the metaphorical expressions identified from MIP to be classified into various source domains, as suggested in Conceptual Metaphor Theory. In order to provide a stronger basis for the interpretations of metaphors, the METALUDE online database (Metaphor at Lingnan University, Department of English) (Goatly, 2011) was consulted as reference materials for both labeling the source domains and interpreting metaphorical meanings.

Findings are then interpreted and explained by adopting the approach of textually-oriented critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989). The use of metaphors in the financial analyst reports in the financial institute BNPP is examined as "discourse-as-social-practice" (Thornbury, 2010: 283) during the European credit crisis. Metaphors are regarded as linguistic realizations that function to describe and express the emotions relating to the description, analysis and prediction of the financial situation and investment environment.

Findings and discussion

The frequency distribution of various semantic categories of the discourse field of 'Emotion' (Table 1) and the top twenty most frequent words in each category (Table 2) in the BNPPC will be discussed, followed by the patterns of co-occurrence of metaphors and emotion words in the corpus.

- Semantic categories

Table 1 describes the relative frequencies (and percentages) of occurrence of different semantic categories of 'Emotion' in the BNPPC.

Table 1: Semantic categories of 'Emotion' in the BNPPC

Semantic category	**Frequency** (*Percentage*)
Worry	**704** (*0.13%*)
Confident	**595** (*0.11%*)
Violent/Angry	**469** (*0.09%*)
Fear/Shock	**326** (*0.06%*)
Emotional Actions, States And Processes General	**208** (*0.04%*)
Sad	**227** (*0.04%*)
Discontent	**161** (*0.03%*)
Like (++)	**102** (*0.02%*)
Calm	**68** (*0.01%*)
Like	**64** (*0.01%*)
Happy	**53** (*0.01%*)
Content	**24** (*0.004%*)
Dislike	**9** (*0.002%*)
Liking	**6** (*0.001%*)
Bravery	**6** (*0.001%*)

1 In the BOC Archives, only reviews of the past year were available. The same applies to most of the publications in the BNP Paribas Archives.

The most frequent emotion-related semantic categories are immensely negative, with 'Worry' topping the frequency list, followed by 'Violent/Angry', 'Fear/Shock', 'Emotional Actions, States And Processes General', 'Sad', and 'Discontent' in the third to seventh categories. The second semantic category 'Confident' seems to be at odds with most of the negative semantic categories, and this will be further examined when the constituent words are discussed. Table 1 shows that from the eighth position, almost all the semantic categories have positive connotation, namely 'Like (++)', ''Calm', 'Like', 'Happy', 'Content', 'Liking', and 'Bravery'.

In order to better understand the contextual meanings of the semantic categories, the most frequent words (up to twenty most frequent words) specific to each semantic category are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Semantic categories and words of 'Emotion' in the BNPPC

Semantic category	Up to 20 most frequent words
Worry	*tensions, stress, concern, concerns, concerned, worried, distress, under pressure, distressed, worrying, troubles, worries, worry, nervous, unbalanced, trouble, stressed, tension, anxiety*
Confident	*confidence, confident, reassure, reassuring, hawkish, reassured, trust, faith, reassuringly, reassures, reassurances, reassurance*
Violent/Angry	*hit, turmoil, threat, disturbances, force, in a mood, aggressive, threatened, hitting, toxic, riots, threaten, fierce, unrest, rampant, threatening, aggressively, disturbance, violent*
Fear/Shock	*shock, fears, shocks, alarming, fear, feared, quake, alarm, timid, afraid, panic, fearing, pent-up, formidable, alarmed, daunting, fear shortages, dazed, panicked, shied*
Emotional Actions, States And Processes General	*sentiment, tone, mood, morale, emotional*
Sad	*suffered, depressed, suffer suffering, suffers, depress, devastated, depressing, depression, cry, woes, tragic, tragedy, regret, in a state, traumatic, put a damper on, languishing, grim, depressive*
Discontent	*disappointing, discontent, disappointed, disappointment, frustration, unsatisfied, discontents, frustrations, disillusionment, disappoint, disappointments*
Like (++)	*preferred, favoured, prefer, favour, favouring, bias, preferential, preferable, favours, preference, prefers, preferences, preferring, preferably, biases*
Calm	*loosening, respite, dovish, calm, unwinding, calmed down, cool down, tame, relaxed, relaxation, relax, gentle, cooling down, cooled down, comforting, calming, calm down, winding down, take the heat out of*
Like	*popular, enjoyed, enjoy, going for, keen on, precious, go for, enjoying, soft spot, popularity, goes for*
Happy	*upbeat, high, relief, euphoric, fun, happy, looking upbeat, celebrated, funny, rejoice, jubilantly, in a good mood, cheeriness, cheered up, celebration, celebrates, celebrate*
Content	*satisfy, satisfying, please, satisfied, fulfilling, thankfully, satisfaction, pleases, fulfilled, content, complacency*
Dislike	*unpopular, objections, disapproval, hate, anathema, disapproves, objection, tolerating, tolerated*
Liking	*tolerate, tolerating, tolerated*
Bravery	*dares, boldness, face up to, boldly*

The words that express the semantic preference (Sinclair, 1996) of 'Worry' are nouns and adjectives (e.g., *tensions, stress, distress, trouble, anxiety*), followed by 'Violent/Angry' (e.g., *hit, turmoil, threat, disturbances,* etc.) and 'Fear/Shock' (e.g., *shock, fears, alarming, fear, quake,* etc.). The words that express 'Confident' are rather different; they include *confidence, reassure, reassuring, trust, and faith*. On the whole, the types, and frequencies, of words in positive semantic categories are much more that those in other categories. The other semantic categories of emotion include 'Fear/Shock', 'Emotional Actions, States And Processes General', 'Sad', 'Like', 'Happy', and 'Calm'.

- Metaphors

Following MIP, the study then identifies words in the most frequent semantic categories that carry metaphorical senses, by studying the words in KWIC (Key Word in Context). As an illustration, metaphors that are mapped onto the target domain of CONFIDENCE are presented in Table 3. The noun confidence is selected for metaphor analysis as confidence tops the word list in the semantic category of 'Confidence', which occurs among the intensely negative categories.

Table 3: Metaphors mapped onto the target domain CONFIDENCE

Source domain	Metaphors in BNPPC
CONTRACTION	erode confidence (23), eroding confidence (2), confidence erode (7), erosion of confidence (7),
LEVEL	confidence falls (11), confidence is falling (3), heighten confidence (2)

Source domain	Metaphors in BNPPC
BUILDING	confidence keep on building up
MOVEMENT	confidence is shaking
DIVISION	confidence is fragile
HUMAN	hurt confidence, confidence is on the mend
PLANT	confidence is growing, growing confidence
WATER	confidence evaporates, confidence spill-overs
Relative frequency	0.012%

Table 3 shows that a great variety of source domains are mapped onto CONFIDENCE in the BNPPC, with 64 instances of confidence in metaphorical use. The high frequency of metaphors is probably because confidence is regarded as essential in the corporate culture of the BNPP. As the CEO Jean-Laurent Bonnafé[2] points out, trust is especially important in the relationship between a bank and its customers. Hence, it is necessary for the bank to boost customer confidence especially during a financial and economic crisis. This observation is also revealed in the BNPP's annual report 2011 (p. 8):

> *To win back public opinion, it is crucial for us to fulfill our economic role as bankers and also to help people to understand that we can be a profitable bank, while also displaying good ethics and a strong sense of responsibility, in tune with the social challenges of our times.*

In the BNPPC, the word *confidence* tends to be associated with the CONTRACTION metaphor *erode* (CONFIDENCE IS CONTRACTION), indicating the slow decrease of investors' confidence. Confidence is also hyperbolically described by the WATER metaphors *evaporates* and *spill over*, exaggerating the weakening or the gaining of investor confidence. The confidence of investors worsened because of European debt crisis and other negative feelings, as manifested in the linguistic expressions, such as *pressures, high uncertainty,* and f*inancial market tensions*. This finding supports Oster's (2010) view that emotion words tend to cluster together. As commented by *International Business Times,* uncertainty is "still the dominant emotion among traders with regards the European situation" as the rating changes announced by Standard & Poor's depends on the results of discussions in the European Council Meeting (8 December 2011).

While confidence can erode and fall, a few metaphors in the BNPPC show growing confidence. Also shown in Table 3, confidence is conceptualized with LEVEL, BUILDING, and PLANT metaphors, as in *heighten, building up,* and *growing*. The BNPP emphasizes the efficiency of evaluating new situations, making decisions, and taking action. It also encourages commitment to the service of clients and collective accomplishment[3], hence the metaphors describing investors' confidence have the semantic prosody of 'regained'. These kinds of metaphors may also have a positive impact on the bank customers, encouraging them to engage more in market activities, and thus enhancing the trust between the bank and customers.

Conclusions

In analyzing the financial analyst reports of the BNPP, this study has revealed the recurrence of particular types of emotions, how the conceptualizations of emotion words reflect the market turbulence in 2011, and how the reports link to the news reporting of global economy. The study concludes that metaphors can help to portray emotions in the financial analyst reports. It also concludes that the corporate culture, often revealed in the statements of missions and core values and corporate annual reports, can also be reflected in the use of metaphors in one of their important genres: the financial analyst report.

Further insights can be gained when the metaphors in the BNPPC are examined in the KWIC to find out the semantic preferences and semantic prosodies associated with the metaphors in order to more fully describe the extended units of meaning (Sinclair, 1996) of the metaphors. In addition, the financial reports of two or more banks with different cultural backgrounds and at different points of time can be examined using corpus linguistic methods. Such comparative studies will contribute to culture-sensitive understanding of the kinds of, and how and when, metaphors are used by financial institutes in the discursive presentation of economic and investment content and the strategic deployment of expert discursive resources to achieve personal, organisational, institutional, professional, and socio-cultural goals.

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6 Fairness and Justice in Language Assessment: Principles and Public Reasoning

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Introduction

Fairness has been debated for the last 20 years; there is agreement regarding the concept, but conceptions of fairness have differed. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, NCME, 1999) have a section titled "Fairness in Testing"; Codes of ethics and practice (ILTA, ETS, ALTE, etc.). Scholars have written about this as well: from the point of view of situated ethics: Kunnan and Davidson 2000); how to investigate fairness: Xi, Kane, Kunnan, Davies (in *Language Testing, 27*) and the overlap and separation between these two concepts.

Different conceptions of Fairness

The concept of fairness has been interpretation to mean: "unbiased," "equal opportunity," "equitable treatment," "similar outcomes in terms of scores." Questions have been raised regarding the scope: Does fairness include validity or does validity include fairness? Or, are they two separate entities? And, does any action need to be taken: Should we do anything about it? (Kane, Xi, Davies from *Language Testing, 27*).

The concept of justice has been interpreted as follows: Distributive justice - institutions providing benefits are distributed to a society in a just manner; Retributive or corrective justice – punishments are just; and Compensatory justice - fair compensation for injuries.

Purpose of paper

The purpose of this paper is to provide principled bases for fairness and justice as applied to the institution of assessment:

Fairness as r*elating to persons* - how assessments ought to be fair to test takers

Justice as *relating to institutions* - how institutions ought to be just to test takers

Preliminary questions

Here are a few preliminary questions that can be raised to begin the discussion:

1. Does every test taker have the right to a fair assessment? Is this rule inviolable? Are rights of test takers to a fair assessment universal or only applicable in states that provide equal rights?
2. Is it adequate that most test takers are assessed fairly while a few are not? Would it be appropriate to use a cost-benefit analysis to evaluate whether assessments should be improved or not? And, if harm is done to test takers, does such harm need to be compensated?
3. Would the rights of test takers to a fair assessment be supported in authoritarian states that do not provide for equal rights? Would institutions in such states feel less compelled to provide a fair assessment?
4. Should an assessment be beneficial to the society in which it is used?
5. Should assessment developers and users be required to offer public justification or reasoning?

In order to offer clarity to the discussions of the abstract concepts and principles, a few real-world vignettes are provided.

Vignette 1: Pre-testing
Imagine a new staff member joined a large language assessment organization that develops

assessments for high-stakes contexts. After she had worked at the organization for three months, she began to be concerned about many of the practices: first, did not pre-test their test tasks; instead, they used the un-pretested tasks in a real administration and did not delete the scores from those tasks when they computed the scores for the test takers. The staff member approached her supervisor. He was at first disinterested in the staff member's concern but later admitted that pre-testing tasks would cost too much, and, if they conducted a pre-test, the assessment would also cost more to the test taker.

Reflection

Did the staff member do the right thing in bringing to the attention of her supervisor the lack of pre-testing? Is pre-testing of tasks for high-stakes assessments a requirement? Is the head's lack of understanding of the situation acceptable? Are his reasons for not conducting any pre-testing justified? Would people of any persuasion (teachers, test takers, business leaders, etc.) be able defend such practice? Is there a violation of an accepted Code of Ethics and Practice? Could this practice lead to an unfair assessment?

Vignette 2: Checks for bias

…The staff member also found that the organization did not conduct any review to examine whether the assessment was fair to all test takers in terms of content, dialect, test delivery, or test performance. She brought this matter up with her supervisor too. The supervisor said that while these are important matters, they did not have staff with expertise to conduct such investigations. He also reminded her that, once again, these studies would also cost the organization a lot of money and the final result would be that the assessment would cost more to the test taker.

Reflection

Did the staff member do the right thing by bringing to the attention of her supervisor the lack of any investigations regarding fairness? Are such investigations required in an assessment that is a high-stakes assessment? Are the supervisor's reasons for not conducting these investigations defensible? Is there a violation of an accepted Code of Ethics and Practice? Would this be an example of an unfair assessment?

Ethical dilemmas

Ethical dilemmas are not new to us as we grapple with these all the time. Here are a few: right and wrong; fair and unfair; equality and inequality; individual rights and the common good; just and unjust. More practical examples include abortion rights; taxes; affirmative action; torture of terror suspects; and differential pricing. In terms of assessment, quality of assessment v. cost-benefit analysis and Fairness of assessments v. maximizing utility are useful examples I will return to later.

Arguments from Philosophy

What are the main perspectives and who are the main proponents? From the Utilitarian point of view: outcomes-based philosophers like Bentham and Mill and from the Deontological point of view and duty-based philosophers like Kant, Rawls and Sen.

The main idea behind Utilitarianism is that it promotes the notion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people; majority rules. The utility principle trumps moral values such as individual rights. Another aspect is consequentialist thinking in which outcomes of an event are used as tools to evaluate an institution. In terms of assessment, decisions about an assessment would be made solely on the basis of utility and consequences of an assessment. This could also lead the view that minority members need not be protected.

Rawls' ideas and arguments are presented in "A Theory of Justice" (1971) and "Justice as Fairness" (2001) and Sen's non-parochialist approach for global justice in "The Idea of Justice" (2009).

Rawls' Fairness principles are expected to work for a "well-ordered society" with a "fair system of social cooperation" and "citizens who are free and equal persons." He puts forward two principles:

1st Principle: Each person has the same claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic rights and liberties.

2nd Principle: (a) Equal Opportunity principle: offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity;

(b) Difference principle: economic arrangements in which the least-advantaged members of society are better off when primary goods are unequally distributed than when primary goods are equally distributed.

Sen's views are somewhat similar to Rawls': he argues that his idea of justice would work in a democratic state (in the sense of "government by discussion" with political and personal freedoms) with free and equal persons (who are capable of challenging injustice) that would be able to safeguard principles of fairness through public reasoning. He also takes a non-parochial, global perspective view: each country may have parochial

practices that need to come under examination and scrutiny from others with distant judgments (as impartial spectators).

Public reasoning: critical component in advancing justice.

One of Sen's key points is that there should be public reasoning in the defense of institutions. Therefore, it would seem obvious that assessments as public institutions should be subjected to investigations of fairness and justice through public reasoning.

Based on the standards and codes of ethics and practice movements and the literature from philosophy, I put forward two principles and sub-principles that are relevant for assessment:

Principle of Fairness

An assessment ought to be fair to all test takers; there is a presumption of treating every test taker with equal respect.

Sub-principle 1: An assessment ought to provide adequate opportunity to learn the knowledge or abilities that are to be assessed.

Sub-principle 2: An assessment ought to be consistent and meaningful in terms of its test-score interpretation.

Sub-principle 3: An assessment ought to be free of bias against any test taker groups, in particular by assessing construct-irrelevant matters.

Sub-principle 4: An assessment ought to use appropriate access, administration and standard setting so that decision-making is equitable to test taker groups.

Principle of Justice

An assessment institution ought to bring about benefits to society and advance justice through public reasoning.

Sub-principle 1: An assessment institution ought to bring benefits to society by making a positive social impact.

Sub-principle 2: An assessment institution ought to advance justice through public reasoning of their assessment.

Here are a few vignettes that will help clarify some of the practical issues in assessment from the perspective of fairness and justice.

Vignette 3: Defective tasks

Imagine there were two forms of a paper and pencil assessment - Forms A and B. The forms were from a high-stakes university admissions assessment. It was known previously known through pre-testing that there were a few defective tasks in the two forms: 10 tasks in Form A and 5 tasks in Form B out of a total of 100 tasks in each. But the administrator went ahead and used both forms as a cost-benefit analysis conducted earlier showed that only 10% of the test takers who took Form A and 5% of the test takers who took Form B were misclassified as failed due to the defective tasks. She felt these figures were within the usual margin of error. The administrator also wrote in her report that the costs of replacing the defective tasks would be much higher than errors in misclassification.

Reflection

If we consider the two philosophical persuasions, each may support or criticize the actions of the administrator. From the Utilitarian view: cost-benefit analysis provided the basis for the administrator's decision, and that such decisions have to be made to run a business; the administrator should have preferred Form B to Form A as it had utility. From the deontologist view: the administrator did not act morally as she did not uphold the rights of all test takers to a fair assessment by using defective assessments.

So, what should the administrator have done? Which of these perspectives appeals to us? What is the right thing to do?

Vignette 4: Assessment quality

Imagine a high-stakes high-school exit examination that is conducted by the Ministry of Education for many years. After the examination, some students got together and exchanged thoughts on the examination. They concluded that some of the tasks and topics that were new to them. When the results were announced, it turned out these students had received low scores. The students could do nothing else (as there was no appeal process) but their parents complained to the Ministry of Education that something was wrong with the examination. Ministry officials said that there could not be nothing wrong as their examinations were written by expert teachers who had been doing this for many years. When pressed to show that the examination was an appropriate assessment, Ministry officials defended their examination by saying there were no prior complaints and therefore no prior analyses of the examination were conducted.

Reflection

Did the MoE have the motivation and expertise to provide the best possible examination?

Possible problems: Did some of the students not

have the opportunity to learn all the material? Did the MoE regulations not have any provision for appeal? Why were there no analyses of the examination tasks conducted although they were written by experts? Why were there no research studies that examined the quality of the assessments and the test performance? Was the examination providing a beneficial service to the community?
Did the MoE owe the students public justification? Did the MoE act responsibly? Why was there lack of provision for basic rights to the students?

Vignette 5: Public reasoning

…Imagine that the parents of the students who received low scores protested the Ministry's approach and demanded that they provide a public justification of the assessment. The Ministry replied with a firm NO as it had never responded to such a request before and did not consider it necessary to do so.

Reflection

Questions for Ministry officials: From the Deontologist view: Test takers were denied basic freedoms such as the basic right to be treated with respect and dignity, to have fair assessments and assessment practice. The Ministry did not have public reasoning (through public forums) would be the only way to ensure that the assessment is fair and the institution is just.

Vignette 6: Differential pricing

Imagine a testing organization had differential pricing for some aspects of testing. Higher prices for the following: Better assessments (reliability, fairness, valid), Detailed diagnostic feedback (individual not generic), Better graders (more experienced; not harsh), Front row seating (for listening assessments with speakers in front of the room), First in line for an interview, Faster turn-around time for results, Better heating, air-conditioner, seats, Multi-modal upgrades: color, video, better animation, No experimental section

Reflection

For which aspects are we willing to pay more? For which aspects are we not willing to pay more? Why? Is our thinking utilitarian or outcomes-based? Or is it deontologist or duty-based? Does the testing organization have an obligation to provide quality assessments? Ought these obligations required across borders? Across parochial lines?

Here is a real-world example from the Netherlands:

The Netherlands case

Immigrants to the Netherlands have to pass three stages of testing: admission to the country, civic integration after arrival, and naturalization to citizenship. The Law on Integration Abroad passed in 2006 requires immigrants to take a computerized phone test of the Dutch language called the *Toets Gesproken Nederlands* (using Versant's computer-scoring technology); and, a test of knowledge of Dutch politics, work, history, etc. This requirement is first in the modern world for family unification. It has been criticized on grounds of human rights: as discriminatory because it violates the right to marry and start a family.

Reflection on The Netherlands case

Is this institution's requirement that a spouse demonstrate a certain level of language ability prior to travelling and living in the receiving country a violation of human rights? Is it appropriate to relax this law for citizens of certain countries? How is this policy beneficial to the community? Is this an example of an unjust institution? What could language assessment experts or professionals do about this case?

Conclusion

A principled foundational basis for fairness and justice in language assessment drawing on the work of Rawls and Sen. Two principles, the Principle of Fairness and Principle of Justice were proposed. The principles help to help design and establish fair assessments and just institutions and to remove manifest unfairness and injustice that exists today

So, in conclusion, the two basic questions: How do we set up fair assessments and just institutions? How do we remove unfairness and injustice? One way is by using principles of fairness and justice to design, develop, administer, and analyze assessments so that assessments are beneficial to society. And, by using public reasoning to justify the benefits of assessment.

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

7 Innovation and Reciprocity in Applied Linguistics

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Abstract: Applied linguistics can be defined as a discipline of design: it solves language problems by suggesting a plan, or blueprint, to handle them. These designs are sometimes promoted as highly innovative. Yet, are innovative language courses and tests in all respects truly new in what they present to the applied linguistics community? This presentation will argue that most historically significant turning points in applied linguistic designs demonstrate a solid measure of continuity with previously designed solutions. This was so for communicative teaching as well as for earlier innovations like audio-lingualism. In testing, both interactive designs and socially responsible concerns have built on the past. Like innovation, reciprocity in design in applied linguistics is a foundational issue. How much reciprocity is there in the realms of language testing, language course design, and language policy making? Why do we not explicitly check whether the design of a course should be as responsibly and carefully done as a test? How can we learn more from language policy development about making tests more accessible and accountable? What can test designers learn from course developers about specificity? There are many useful questions that we never seem to ask. The paper will look at examples of how the humdrum solution can be pushed to its limits; how logistic constraints can stimulate imaginative designs; how, by looking across different levels of applied linguistic artefacts (language courses, language tests and language policies), we can enrich the principles of responsible design for each different level. We can continue to be surprised by innovation in the designed solutions that our profession provides, but we should also work on our understanding of what constitutes a responsible design framework. At least, then, we might gain a foundation from which to evaluate both the fleeting and the enduring in the new.

Is history destiny?

Will language teaching survive as a profession? A recent look into the future (Greene 2012: 75) confidently predicts that language teaching may by 2050 become unnecessary, since so many new technologies will make instant translation possible that there will be no more demand for learning a foreign language. In a similar vein, an article in *The Economist* of 12-18 January 2013 makes the point that new technologies and their global reach may well begin to threaten not only jobs that require low levels of skill, but also ones requiring higher skills levels:

> Pattern-recognition software is increasingly good at performing the tasks of entry-level lawyers, scanning thousands of legal documents for relevant passages. Algorithms are used to write basic newspaper articles on sporting outcomes and financial reports. In time, they may move to analysis... (2013: 22).

Not for the first time in the history of the design of language instruction, we are faced with a prediction that forecasts the obsolescence of our work, based on advances in technology.

The theme of innovation in applied linguistics is irrevocably tied to its historical origins in the mid-20th century endeavour to secure a rational, scientific basis for language teaching designs (Fries, 1945; Lado, 1964; Stevick, 1971: 2). Of course, applied linguistics has since that time gone much wider than that initial concern: apart from the range of forensic, lexicographical, translation and language recognition as well as other work that it also encompasses, it has in addition become established as a distinct discipline. It has achieved this especially through three prominent subdisciplines that concern themselves with language designs and plans. These three, which deal with designed solutions for apparently intractable language problems, are language

management, language instruction, and language assessment. Given my professional experience, I shall primarily be referring in this paper to the latter two. The point that I wish to begin with, however, is that, given that historical starting point for the fledgling discipline, it is hardly surprising that the expectation was that science and theoretical analysis would assist us in finding the correct ways of designing these plans, be they language policies, language teaching methods, or language tests. Or to put it differently: applied linguistics as a discipline has an unashamedly modernist origin (Weideman, 2013a). It is an origin that was from the outset reinforced by the combination of 'scientific' or theoretical analysis with technology, and nowhere was this more in evidence than in the elaborate machinery for listening to, recording, and monitoring speech that accompanied the audio-lingual method in the shape of "language laboratories". It is typical of a modernist bias, in fact, that no-one readily objected to the use of the term 'laboratory' in this regard, though the machines in question were little more than sophisticated language drill and control devices. There was nothing going on in them that could remotely be associated with experimentation, but, at least for those of us who toiled in them some 40 to 50 years ago, the term 'laboratory' seemed to reinforce the strength our discipline derived from such a connection with both science and technology. While technology offered the instructional intervention state of the art sound recording equipment the theoretical insights of American structuralist linguistics and behaviourist psychology provided the 'scientific' basis of audio-lingualism. It was therefore uncritically accepted as a good development, since we were thought to be making 'scientific' headway. If one has to give an account of where the quest for innovation in applied linguistics derives from, one answer would therefore certainly have to be that early applied linguistics provided the discipline with the expectation that innovation would flow from the best theory, combined with advances in technology.

It is a historical fact, however, that this starting point has not endured. Not only did the critiques emanating from transformational-generative grammar fundamentally undermine the credibility of the behaviourist theory supposedly underlying audiolingualism (cf. Carroll, 1971), but empirical analyses (e.g. Lamendella, 1979) had also begun to show its shortcomings as a language teaching method. If we skip forward a few decades in the history of the discipline we see that by the late 20th century several forms of postmodernism had replaced modernist paradigms and the expectations the latter had brought to applied linguistics. It is only in the last two decades that a serious alternative to postmodernism itself has arisen (Weideman 2009b, 2011a, 2013a). What is important to note for the current discussion, however, is that under the sway of a postmodernist paradigm, the "postmethod condition" (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Bell, 2003) called off the search for the best method of language teaching quite a while ago. To its credit, a postmodernist design approach in applied linguistics, such as that outlined in Kumaravadivelu's (2003) work, much more realistically conceptualises improvement in terms of incremental design gains, which are for the most part locally conceived as well as highly contextualised. In place of the search for a best method, we now have eclecticism of either refined or unrefined sorts.

Kumaravadivelu's (2003; 2006) milder version of what constitutes a postmodernist approach is not its only interpretation, however. We find a different and more radical answer when we consider its politically more acute interpretations, and ask the question: What has happened to the expectation of innovation that marked the beginning of the discipline of applied linguistics? Then we are confronted by Pennycook's (1989: 608; see also Pennycook, 1994, 1999, 2004) contention, that rather than presenting us with the results of steady, linear progress, reputedly innovative language teaching designs are merely a "different configuration of the same basic options", and that the causes for change in language teaching are mainly the effects of the workings of social, political or ideological factors. If Pennycook's observation is true, innovation is impossible unless, perhaps, we subscribe to the politically radical alternative of finding the transformation of language teaching practices in continuous critical engagement with the forces that have shaped language education, and that for others have promised innovation. Our discipline is thus caught between technocracy and revolution.

The focus of this paper will be less on proposing how innovation may be conceived in designs, and more on assessing the relative worth of previous and possible future design innovations against a conceptual framework for responsible applied linguistic designs. The aim of the paper is therefore to show that, as an alternative for the technocratic and revolutionary directions within our discipline, we should seek principles for responsible course and test design. Of course, how we do so remains the challenge, and the examples presented below are offered as an illustration of that. It will be the thesis of this paper that a good starting point is to begin with a conceptualisation of applied linguistics that remarkably is shared by modernist and postmodernist approaches alike: that it is a discipline concerned with design (Corder, 1972; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

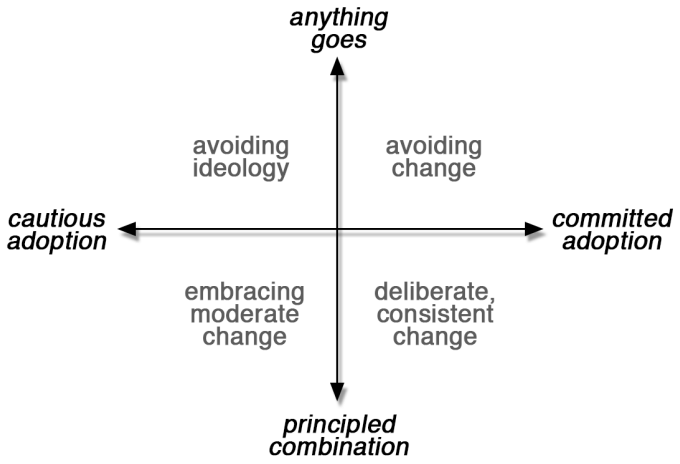
Will eclecticism inspire innovation?

If we do not quite wish to go along with the relativist interpretations of applied linguistics that characterise the politically more radical directions

within the discipline referred to above, it may be that our preference is for a more or less refined kind of eclecticism. If we subscribe to a sophisticated form of eclecticism, we might hope that it will yield innovation and novelty in course and test design. So a valid question to ask, in that case, would be: Can eclecticism itself not perhaps be the sought-after principle of innovation in design? While one of its initial results may be innovation, the irony of eclecticism is that it inevitably builds on the old. In time, especially in an unrefined adoption of eclecticism, it may in fact become an excuse for resisting change (Weideman, 2001, 2002, Weideman, Tesfamariam & Shaalukeni, 2003), and so undermine innovation.

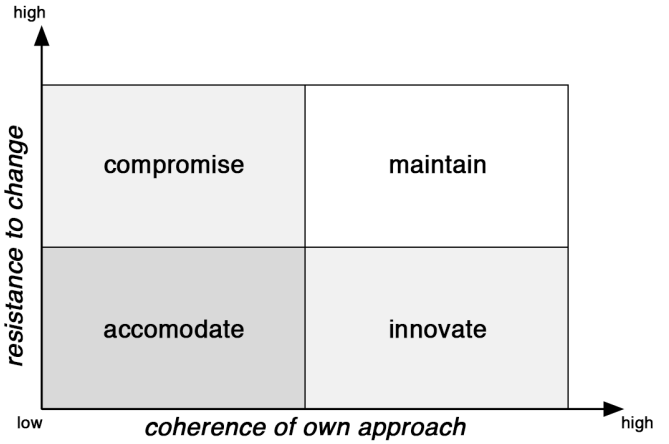
The various types of eclectic combinations we find can be summarised in a matrix (Figure 1, below), in which an "anything goes" style of accommodating whatever 'works' is contrasted with a principled, consistent and deliberate adoption of a plurality of methods and techniques, in combination with different motivations for the adoption of an eclectic approach (Weideman, 2001). The first of such motivations may be the wish to avoid ideology; the second the desire to avoid having to change one's teaching; the third the inclination to embrace a moderate degree of change; and the fourth the firm intention to make deliberate and consistent changes to one's teaching. The desirable quadrant is obviously the fourth, which combines a principled combination with the firm intention to see the change through, while the third, in which the adoption is cautious but still deliberate, may also embody some (moderate) potential for innovation in language teaching.

Figure 1: Different possible motivations in adopting an eclectic approach



Looked at from the angles of how resistant the individual language teacher is to change, and how coherent their approach is (Figure 2), it becomes clear that innovation is best served by having a highly coherent approach, combined with a low resistance to change:

Figure 2: Potential for innovation



In both characterisations, innovation is best served through deliberation and rationality in design. Put another way: to be a professional language teacher, one needs to know where one's methods derive from, as well as why their use can be justified. That postmodernism has declared the death of method is therefore doubly ironic. First, by subscribing to a method of language teaching, a teacher may have been able to find and critically engage with the theoretical justification of that method, in linguistics or in learning theory. The method might thus have provided a conceptual 'handle' to get to grips with the analytical undertow that supported it. To a certain extent, abandoning method deprives one of that kind of critical understanding. Second, before postmodernism declared the death of method on the basis of the reliance of method on conventional scientific and economic forces, some of the most innovative language teaching methods derived neither from mainstream, nor even from highly reputable theories. Good examples can be found among the fringe or peripheral language teaching methodologies, such as the Silent Way and Suggestopedia (and with the exception, perhaps, of Community Language Learning [CLL] with its Rogerian undertow). Yet each of them not only embodied a highly coherent approach, justifiable on its own terms, but they were also adopted more often than not by highly dedicated teachers: Stevick (1980; cf. too 1971) provides as good an example as any of such an inspiring language educator. If one is looking for exotic techniques, these so-called humanistic methods provide an illustration of the revolutionary edge that they represent in language course design. Inspired in our own design work by such integrators of method as Stevick, for example in designing courses for beginners (Weideman & Rousseau 1996), we included combinations of adult language learning techniques such as the Silent Way and CLL with communicative language teaching (CLT) and Natural Approach techniques, in a way that had never before been tried. To most, a method that was appropriate and intended for adult language teaching just could not be suitable for young learners of English as an additional language.

Yet an external evaluation by one of the leading language experts of the day (Kroes, 1991a, 1991b) found that the combination was highly successful, an opinion that was vindicated when the course that flowed from it was published by a highly reputable international publishing house. The integration in this case, however, was deliberate, committed, and consistent, with a clear rationale in order to advance its adoption by reflective, professionally-inclined language teachers.

This discussion of what kind of eclecticism (deliberate and principled) will assist in committing oneself professionally to an innovation leads us to ask another question: how novel can language course design really be? In historical advances in any field, are spectacular leaps the norm, or are incremental improvements? Is the incremental innovation, as implied by Kumaravadivelu's (2003) suggestions, not perhaps the more realistic alternative? As I hope to show in the next section, for those with revolutionary expectations, the history of language teaching is quite sobering on this point.

Continuity in teaching approaches and methods

The novelty in language course design referred to above is never new in all respects; as a rule, revolutionary design, if not an impossibility, then remains at least an improbability. As a case in point, we may consider the move towards a communicative approach to language teaching that began in the mid-1970's, gathered quite a bit of momentum in the early 1980's, and was (apparently) well established by the middle of the 1980's.

What made CLT different from what preceded it, first, was that it took its inspiration from a broader view of language; it adopted a functional rather than a structural perspective on language. On this depended the first of many misinterpretations as to how language should be taught, as well: that, where before, we would have taught a piece of grammar, say the present continuous tense, we now had to teach functions, such as the act of agreeing. The piecemeal method of instruction was simply transferred by some teachers to the supposedly new approach, and this created an immediate (though unjustifiable) continuity with the old. That this interpretation was theoretically at odds with CLT, and could therefore not be justified with reference to the theoretical underpinnings of the new approach, is a clear indication that pedagogical practice always takes precedence over theoretical considerations, a point that will be further explained below.

A second respect in which CLT was novel was that, again inspired by a broader perspective on language, discourse and text, it took another look at the so-called 'skills' identified by the methods preceding it, and chose to focus rather on the media (telephone, face to face, print, etc.) one uses and the communicative roles (interviewer, information-seeker, presenter, author of specialised text) involved. Once more, most teachers, and at times also syllabi and course designers who wanted to implement CLT stuck firmly with the divisions between 'listening', 'speaking', 'reading' and 'writing' – the skills that had been at the basis of language course design through the grammar-translation and direct methods in the last part of the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, and that had been 'scientifically' confirmed and reified by the behaviourist justifications for the audio-lingual method in the second half of the last century. Even today, in curriculum documents such as the curricula not only for English Home Language (Department of Basic Education 2011a), but also for others, one finds an ambivalent commitment both to CLT and to teaching 'structures' and separate skills. That this curriculum also calls for their 'integration' merely confirms the embarrassment: in the view of language associated with CLT they cannot in the first instance be separated (for a full discussion, cf. Weideman 2013b; also Kumaravadivelu 2003: 226, Bachman & Palmer 1996: 75f., Weideman & Van Dyk 2013: Introduction).

On both counts, what might have been innovations are undermined either by misinterpretation or lack of deliberation, of not thinking through the design implications of the new perspective. To imply, therefore, as Heugh (2013) does, that it is the approach that is somehow undesirable because of its geographical origin (north instead of south), its purported dependence on wealth, or the social class of the learners exposed to it, is to misrepresent the case. As Heugh (2013: 15) correctly observes, there is no administrative and intellectual support, "hardly anyone in the system understands what it entails, or how it ought to be used by teachers in the classroom", and "the approach is misunderstood to mean that the focus of language teaching is on spoken competence rather than on reading and writing". Given this level of misunderstanding, surely the best of approaches would be unlikely to succeed? To blame the approach when all the other ingredients that reasonably had to accompany its introduction, implementation and maintenance are missing can never be a responsible conclusion. In any event, the suggestion by Heugh (2013: 15) that an alternative approach should ensure "awareness of multiple genres of text" is exactly what the approach she contests in the South African case prescribes, as even the most cursory examination of CAPS (cf. Department of Basic Education 2011a, 2011b) would reveal.

What should never be underestimated, however, is the historical continuity in the technical designs of solutions that are introduced. That continuity in design lies behind most of the case studies of contexts that have been resistant to change and innovation in language

teaching, both in Africa and elsewhere (cf. Karavas-Doukas 1996; Weideman 2002; Weideman, Tesfamariam & Shaalukeni 2003). So, for example, in designing tests of the ability to handle academic discourse, such as those developed by ICELDA (ICELDA 2013), we find an instance of a skills-neutral approach that is consciously and deliberately undertaken, yet potentially neither intelligible nor relevant to those who wish rather to see it developing tests of listening, speaking, reading and writing, in the behaviourist mode.

A real novelty in CLT that is often overlooked is its reliance on an information gap technique, which causes the language produced in communicatively oriented classrooms to be unpredictable. One may well speculate that it is that unpredictability that puts off those whose own language capacity is insufficient for the task of teaching it. The fear of the unknown is a strong deterrent of innovation.

Apart from the misunderstandings of CLT, however, there is also a kind of technical continuity in its designs with what went before that is inherent in the techniques used. Thus, for example, if the litmus test for the implementation of CLT is the use of an information gap technique, we may find such techniques employed not only in pairs of language learners swapping information, but also in role plays, games and in Total Physical Response (TPR) activities. But in all of these – role plays, games, and verbal instructions from the teacher we have language teaching techniques that are associated with an earlier method, the Direct Method, in which a teacher, using 'realia', might instruct learners (as in TPR) to do certain actions. There is a difference, it is true, in that in the TPR classroom the non-threatening atmosphere associated with the Natural Approach (Krashen & Terrell 1983) makes non-verbal responses demonstrating understanding sufficient, whereas in the Direct Method classroom the teacher, while firmly controlling the language, would follow up the instruction ("James, walk to the door!") with an immediate question: "What is James doing?" which in its turn would demand an immediate answer from the class or from an individual learner. But the similarity is there for everyone to observe.

When one looks further back into the history of language teaching designs as they were embodied in various successive methods, one also finds a remarkable continuity. In line with the aesthetically driven language instruction of the late 19th century, the grammar translation method emphasised reading (to appreciate the canonical literature) and writing (understood as the composition of extended prose). This was apparently overturned when, under the influence of Gestalt theory, the Direct Method in the early part of the 20th century emphasised the other two 'skills', listening and speaking. Yet it did not take long – in fact one might speculate that it became inevitable – for the next method on the horizon, the audio-lingual, to come forward with more comprehensive solution: emphasise all four 'skills', listening, speaking, reading and writing, as if they are components of the overall language habit that according to behaviourist theory should be developed. It was nothing less, therefore, than an eclectic solution to a design quandary that had been many years in the making. If one looks at the influences on CLT, or the movement to take ourselves beyond method, discussed above, it was not the last time that such a solution would be taken up. The point, however, is that such deliberate continuity in design is and remains a strong influence. Our designed solutions align more with the old and the familiar than with what is genuinely new.

Continuity in the design of language assessments

If CLT is not limited to speaking, as we noted above, then surely testing communicative language ability cannot be restricted to testing oral proficiency either. Communication implies interaction amongst two or more individuals, and this interaction may even be displaced (non-simultaneous) and remote, depending on the communicative medium. In fact, interaction with academic texts is what is most commonly and justifiably thought to constitute the appropriate source that provides material for tests of academic literacy. It is incontestable, however, that in making tests of academic literacy that proceed from the underlying cognitive processes (comparing, categorising, contrasting, inferencing, extrapolating and the like) that are reflected lingually in functions (originally mistakenly called 'speech' acts as if they existed only in the spoken form of the language) such as distinguishing, defining, explaining, illustrating, exemplifying, concluding and the like, we have not only found a novel way of assessing competence, but one that relies heavily on the past. With very few exceptions the questions in tests of academic literacy resemble those of earlier test designs. Their design gains, for example in the case of adaptations of cloze procedure (Van Dyk & Weideman 2004), are incremental rather than revolutionary, as in the following (Weideman & Van Dyk 2013: 95):

In the following, you have to indicate the possible *place* where a word may have been deleted, and which *word* belongs there. Here are two examples:

> Charles Goodyear (1800–1860) invented the vulcanization of rubber when he was experimenting by heating a mixture of rubber and sulphur. The Goodyear story is one of either pure luck or careful research, but both are debatable. Goodyear insisted that it was i the ii, though iii many iv contemporaneous i accounts ii indicate iii the iv.

Where has the word been deleted?

A. At position (i).
B. At position (ii).
C. At position (iii).
D. At position (iv).

Which word has been left out here?

A. indeed
B. very
C. former
D. historically

Where has the word been deleted?

A. At position (i).
B. At position (ii).
C. At position (iii).
D. At position (iv).

Which word has been left out here?

A. historical
B. latter
C. now
D. incontrovertibly

This is recognisably cloze procedure, but the adaptation is such that it overcomes the logistical constraints associated with marking the answers by hand, and adds more dimensions to what may otherwise be another humdrum testing technique: that of testing not only textuality, but potentially also grammatical relations as well as (in some cases) communicative function. What is more, the format was not conceived by the designers of the tests that currently employ them to good effect: they derive from adaptations and modifications to a test task type of earlier South African tests of academic literacy. As the Schumpeter column in The Economist (2012:60) correctly observes, copying and imitation are much more prevalent (and successful) than innovation: nobody remembers White Castle, copied by McDonalds, or Chux, that conceded to Pampers. This echoes the research of Shenkar (2010), who notes that the Chery QQ imitation of the Chev Spark minicar came out within a year of the original, and that is now outselling the Chev sixfold. Nor is this limited to industrial and technical innovation: in investigating breakthroughs in science, Shenkar (2010: 1) also found in a good eight disciplines, "ranging from history to neuroscience… imitation to be a primary source of progress." The critical point, however, is that "good imitation is difficult and requires intelligence and imagination." To copy is not enough, therefore: an imaginative adjustment needs to be made to the design to be truly effective. Both opinions cited here make it clear, however, that adaptation and imaginative modifications in design are today the norm rather than the exception. The modification of the staid way of using cloze procedure to assess language ability through this "Grammar and text relations" subtest provides an example of how the humdrum and the conventional can be imaginatively altered and re-employed.

Where questions in these tests do constitute innovation, it is innovation that often is necessary as a result of logistical constraints. In at least two undergraduate tests of academic literacy, the administration and marking time available, as well as sheer numbers of test takers, necessitate the employment of a multiple choice format of question. How to test language subtleties such as metaphoric and idiomatic usage and irony in that format is a challenge to the imagination and technical ability of test designers, as is the ability to compare text with text, or assess the control of communicative function, referred to above. Since all of these – metaphoric usage, text comparison, and the comprehensibility of language functions are essential components of the construct, imaginative ways have been found to assess the ability of a candidate in every one of them. The novelty lies in the content of what is assessed, the technical continuity in the conventional format in which the assessment is accomplished.

Similarly, in seeking accountability for those designs (Rambiritch 2012; Weideman 2003a), we find a remarkable reliance on what has gone before: not only do we refine concerns with test consequences or their 'impact' on the basis of traditional distinctions, but we also use standard techniques of empirical analysis to counter stigmatisation of individuals whose test results may expose them to that, and to promote accountability of design (Weideman & Van der Slik 2007).

If the continuity in design looks almost inevitable, how does one then progress in language teaching and test designs? In the next section, I explore a way of potentially enriching our designs by looking across three sets of applied linguistic artefacts.

Reciprocity in design

If, as the preceding two sections have illustrated, there is continuity in design in the case of both instruction and assessment amidst the incremental changes and advances that are proposed and adopted for each kind of instrument, it appears that there may be a similarity in the conditions for their design. So we should ask: Can the design of one kind of applied linguistic artefact not perhaps be beneficially employed to inform that of another? Would comparisons of these designs not perhaps have reciprocal benefits?

Another set of foundational questions therefore presents itself. How much reciprocity is there in the realms of language testing, language course design, and language policy making? We know that tests are validated. A good illustration of this process of validation in South Africa is Van der Walt and Steyn's (2007) model example of the validation of an undergraduate test of academic literacy. Validity is considered one of the most important considerations in test design (Weideman 2011). What if we applied that to course design, so that we explicitly check whether the design of a course has been done as responsibly and carefully as a test? Starting with Baretta and Davies's (1985) evaluation of the Bangalore project, the last two decades of the previous century indeed saw many project and programme evaluations

(e.g. Kroes 1990a and 1990b; cf. Alderson & Baretta 1992; and, for South Africa, Macdonald & Burroughs What can test designers learn from course developers? Even conventionally general courses of language ability, such as first and additional languages at secondary school level (cf. Department of Basic Education, 2011a, 2011b), reveal a great deal of specificity, as is currently fashionable. The English First Additional Language and Home Language syllabi emphasise language use for a range of lingual spheres: aesthetic appreciation, through the study of literature, as well as using the language for business, academic, professional and social purposes. This is not yet adequately reflected either in the teaching in the upper secondary school, or in the final exit examination, as a recent report to Umalusi on the assessment of home languages makes clear (Du Plessis, Steyn & Weideman 2013). The point is, however, that language testing in South Africa remains general, and has much to learn from those who design courses for developing language for specific purposes, or within specialised fields. Within the academic world, for example, a language test that is geared towards the assessment of language competence in a specific discipline or field (financial planning, or nursing, or disaster management, to name but three) would be more attractive to their prospective users than a generic test of academic literacy.

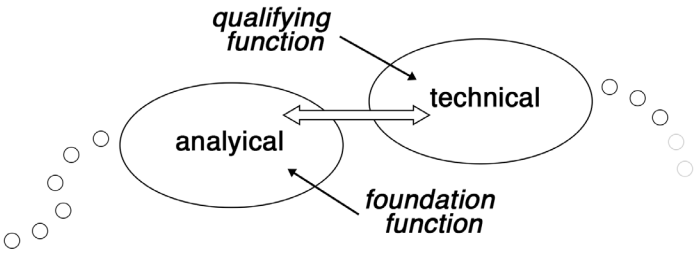
This reciprocity is not limited to language tests or language courses. We could just as well ask: How can we learn more from language policy making about providing tests that are more accessible and accountable? If there is any lesson to be learned from failed language policies, plans and strategies, such as those at some nominally multilingual South African universities, it must be that there must be sufficient participation by those who will be affected, which in turn means that the accessibility of information and the accountability of the language management solution proposed are crucial. Thus test designers will do well to make as much information available on the instruments they develop as is humanly possible, as well as to remain open to enquiry and discussion, not despite their technical expertise, but because they have made accountability a part of their professional approach.

It appears that there are many useful questions that we never seem to ask, but the examples I have given here provide a concrete way of promoting at least incremental innovation in our language teaching and testing efforts. Apart from these concrete comparisons (what can the design of artefact x teach us about the design of artefact y?), there are also more abstract considerations, when we ask the foundational question: How do we conceptualise applied linguistic design principles? The subsequent discussion links strongly to the preceding, since, if the argument is that there is continuity (and mutuality) in design amongst language courses, language tests and language policies, it might reasonably be argued that their design principles may show that same commonality.

A framework of design principles for applied linguistics

In several recent papers (Weideman 2012, 2013b) I have attempted to articulate what I consider to be a framework of design principles for applied linguistics. At least one (Weideman 2012; but cf. too 2009a, 2011b) refers specifically to principles of language test design. These are derived, for that paper, from an idea that conceptualises applied linguistics as a design discipline, which examines two terminal functions of applied linguistic artefacts, their qualifying and their foundational function (Weideman 2009a: 244):

Figure 3: Terminal functions of an applied linguistic design

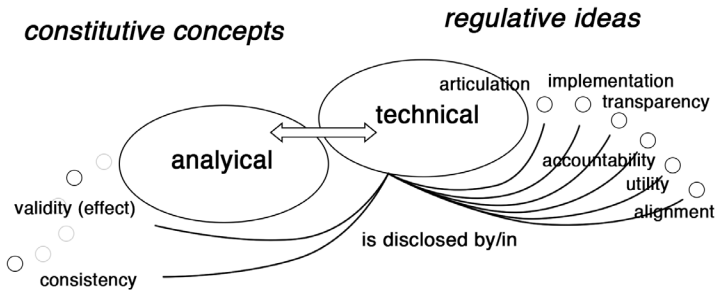


If the argument that design principles are common across different kinds of applied linguistic designs (language *courses,* language *tests* and language *plans*) is correct, that means that conceptually one should focus on the relationship between the two critical (foundational and qualifying) functions, considering especially the principles that emanate from the technical function of designing, shaping, forming or planning. In the connections that the technical aspect of reality has with all other dimensions, we potentially find the normative moments that might serve as applied linguistic design principles.

In its examination of the technical dimension of experience, a foundational perspective presents us with both constitutive technical concepts and regulative linguistic ideas. These emanate from the connections among the technical aspect and every other dimension of reality. Thus the connection between each of the constitutive concepts expresses the analogical conceptual link between each of the preceding aspects with the technical. The numerical analogy may be articulated as a technical *systematicity*, i.e. a unity within a multiplicity of technical norms (conditions for making a design) and technical facts (the actual designed artefact, be it a test, course or plan). The spatial link lies in the conceptualisation of the limits of the artefact and what it can accomplish, or the technical *range* of,

for example, its measurement of language ability in the case of a language test. An academic literacy test cannot measure proficiency to deliver a sermon, for example: its range is limited to testing ability within a specified sphere. The technical *consistency* or reliability of the instrument clearly echoes the link between the technical and the kinematic dimensions of reality, while the notion of technical *validity* derives, in turn, from the link between the technical sphere and the physical (Van Dyk 2010). Similarly, there are connections between the technical and the biotic, sensitive, and logical aspect of experience, and these respectively yield the concepts of technical *differentiation, appeal and rationality*. In disclosing the leading technical function of the design, we find ideas relating to its *articulation* in the form of a blueprint or set of specifications (the anticipation of the lingual mode), its *implementation* in interaction with end-users (the social anticipation), its technical *utility* (its analogical link with the economic dimension), the technical *alignment* of the design with the needs of the language learner (an aesthetic moment), its transparency and *accountability* (that echo the juridical), and also its *fairness* (the way that the leading technical design function connects with the ethical; cf. Rambiritch 2012). Figure 4 below (adapted from Weideman 2006: 241) shows some of these constitutive concepts and regulative ideas:

Figure 4: The disclosure of the leading technical function of an applied linguistic design



We may summarise the same analysis in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Constitutive and regulative moments in applied linguistic designs

Applied linguistic design	**Aspect / function / dimension / mode of experience**	**Kind of function**	**Retrocipatory / anticipatory analogical moment**
is founded upon	numerical	constitutive	systematicity
	spatial		range
	kinematic		internal consistency (technical reliability)
	physical		internal effect / force (validity)
	biotic		differentiation
	sensitive		intuitive appeal (face validity)
	analytical	foundational	design rationale
is qualified by	technical	qualifying / leading function (of the design)	
is disclosed by	lingual	regulative	articulation of design in a blueprint/ curriculum/ plan/
	social		implementation / administration
	economic		technical utility, frugality
	aesthetic		harmonisation of conflicts, resolving misalignment
	juridical		transparency, defensibility, fairness, legitimacy
	ethical		accountability, care, service
	faith		reputability and trust

From each of these analogical technical concepts emanates a normative appeal: each potentially yields, as I have outlined in Weideman (2012), a normative moment that provides a condition for the design of what I now believe is any applied linguistic artefact. In the formulations below, I therefore attempt to articulate these design conditions as a set of technically stamped design principles for language tests and language courses, while proposing that they may, with the necessary changes, also be applicable to language management policies and plans:

- Systematically integrate multiple sets of evidence in arguing for the validity of the test or course design.
- Specify clearly and to the users of the design, and where possible to the public, the appropriately limited scope of the instrument or the

intervention, and exercise humility in doing so.

- Ensure that the measurements obtained and the instructional opportunities envisaged are adequately consistent.
- Ensure effective measurement or instruction by using defensibly adequate instruments or material.
- Have an appropriately and adequately differentiated course or test.
- Make the course or the test intuitively appealing and acceptable.
- Mount a theoretical defence of what is taught and tested in the most current terms.
- Make sure that the test yields interpretable and meaningful results, and that the course is intelligible and clear in all respects.
- Make not only the course or the test, but information about them, accessible to as many as are affected by them.
- Present the course and obtain the test results efficiently and ensure that both are useful.
- Mutually align the test with the instruction that will either follow or precede it, and both test and instruction as closely as possible with the learning.
- Be prepared to give account to the users as well as to the public of how the test has been used, or what the course is likely to accomplish.
- Value the integrity of the test and the course; make no compromises of quality that will undermine their status as instruments that are fair to everyone, and that have been designed with care and love.
- Spare no effort to make the course and the test appropriately trustworthy and reputable.

This conceptual framework and the design principles that emanate from it do not lead us towards innovation, but show us that the origin of innovation lies in the first instance in the guiding technical fantasy and imagination of the applied linguist, rather than in the foundational analytical function of the course or test, important as that might be for giving a subsequent rational justification for the imaginative design of the applied linguistic solution that is proposed (Weideman 2006). The framework proposed here has the further purpose of allowing us to assess the relative merits of new developments in design, by providing the broad conceptual outlines (differentiation, consistency, validity, utility, accountability, reputability, and so forth) of the principles that might potentially underlie them. The concepts and ideas within this framework in turn make it possible for us to assess the blind spots of innovations: the over-reliance on rational justification of audio-lingualism, for example, which is the source of its accompanying modernist hubris. We would do well to remember that each new design fashion may have its weak spots. As Lillis (2003) has pointed out, the blind spot of critical, postmodernist approaches is they do not possess enough follow-through from critical analyses to the point that they affect the designed solutions. In short, according to her critique, revolutionary as their political intent may have been, critical approaches are weak on the design side. Though it is much too early to say, one may speculate that the emphasis on dynamic change that is characteristic of the paradigm (a dynamic systems approach) that in many important respects is beginning to replace postmodernism, has its risks. If change becomes the only principle, then differentiation and change in design may become the norm (Weideman 2009b, 2013a) to the possible exclusion of other principles.

Our hope, of course, is to be surprised by innovation in the designed solutions that our profession provides. This paper has suggested that we may continue to expect this, but it is more likely to happen in an incremental than in a spectacular fashion. How to evaluate what is offered and paraded as new is therefore more important. In order to accomplish such an assessment of the new, we should also work on our understanding of what constitutes a responsible design framework. At least, then, that might give us a foundation from which to evaluate both the fleeting and the enduring in the new.

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

8 Developing the Reflective Practice Capabilities of Pre-Service Trainees in TESOL Through Online Means

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Abstract: This study was an exploration and analysis of the online virtual learning environment (VLE) as a vehicle for developing the reflective practice of pre-service ESOL teacher trainees during practicum. The practicum period is an essential part of their training, as neophytes are encouraged, through reflection, to link theory and practice by applying the learning from their Bachelor of Education programmes to the dynamics of the classroom. The objective of this study was to facilitate the reflective processes by guiding participants to apply the 'double loop learning model' from Argyris and Schön (1978) and to share their reflections online through e-journaling and collaborative discussion forums. Using participatory action research methodology over eighteen months, three case studies were conducted, and a systematic training model scaffolding processes of thinking to facilitate the application of the Argyris and Schön (1978) model, constructed. Eleven forums were set up and moderated by this researcher for six to eight participants during each case study. Results suggest that pre-service ESOL teacher trainee deep reflection can be facilitated by exploiting the asynchronous and collaborative characteristics of the online environment.

Key Words: initial teacher education (ITE) programmes; practicum; reflective practice; virtual learning environment (VLE); double loop learning cycle; asynchronous, written collaboration (AWC).

Literature review

Practicum in student-teacher learning

ITE programmes have long considered practicum in schools as quintessential for teacher learning (Johnson, 1996; Richards, 1998; Derrick and Dicks, 2005; Imig and Imig, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Liston et al, 2006; Otero, 2006; Furlong et al, 2008; Black and Plowright, 2010; Melville, Bowen and Passmore, 2011). Richards and Crookes (1988) describe practicum as the 'major opportunity for the student teacher to acquire the practical skills and knowledge needed to function as an effective language teacher' (p. 9). During this time, neophytes are encouraged to reflect on practice and to carefully consider the teaching and learning provided by the tertiary institute to which they belong. Thus, they are encouraged to critically assess teaching strategies, how their own schooling experiences may affect their classroom techniques and beliefs, and to consider the wider social implications of classroom dynamics. It is not surprising therefore, that some (Derrick and Dicks, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006) have likened the teaching practicum experience to clinical placements for the medical profession.

Reflective practice in pre-service teacher training

In the last decade, reflective practice in teaching has been growing in significance in initial teacher education (ITE) programmes resulting in its establishment as a performance competency for teachers and an accreditation standard for teacher education programmes (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, 2013). Through the development of reflective practice in these programmes, it is surmised that trainees can construct links between the attributes that define quality teaching to form an increasingly complex mental schema. This was evidenced by Melville, Bowen and Passmore (2011) who report that reflection helped to build what they term 'alert novices': trainees who were better able to absorb course content, and to link this to their own personal experience as well as their classroom practice. However, despite its invaluable benefits (Weiner, 2001; Korthagen, 2001, 2004; McAdams, 2004; Brandt, 2006; Grant and Gillette, 2006; Ostorga, 2006; Davis and Wise, 2008; Furlong et al, 2008; Black and Plowright, 2010; Melville, Bowen and Passmore, 2011), it seems that current trends in school practice today seek not to enable reflection but to coerce trainees to implement prescriptive curricula and teaching methodology; what has been termed a

'predetermined standards-based instructional delivery system' (Weiner, 2001: 29). This trend led Furlong *et al* (2008) to condemn the Teaching Agency (TA) in England (linked to the National Partnership Project from 2001 to 2005, which professed to maintain innovative state-run educational training policies), as overwhelmingly practice-oriented. They (2008) state: 'the essential contributions of higher education to professional formation - the consideration of research, of theory and of critique - all of these have been expunged as important components of professional education' (p. 318).

This lack of reflective practice in novice teacher training is part of a continuing and widely-spread teacher education malaise reported in the academic literature, not only in the UK (Furlong et al, 2008), but also in America (Weiner, 2001; Etscheidt, Curran and Sawyer, 2012), Australia (Newhouse, Lane and Brown, 2007) and other developed educational systems in South-East Asia such as Hong Kong (Ng, 2012), which is the context for this paper. Two central tenets of the malaise are proposed. The first is that prescriptive curricula (in particular, pre-selected text books and heavy exam-syllabi) and generic training courses are limiting teacher-decision making in the classroom. This creates a uniformity which is in stark contrast to child-centered education methodologies as top-down mandates neglect the potential of individualized tailor-made education at the local level (Defalco and Weiss, 2005). The consequence of this is student disinterest and classroom deviance (Weiner, 2001; Coskie and Place, 2008, Jewett and MacPhee, 2012). The second tenet is that this system is not adequately supportive of teacher research, and this fundamentally removes teacher engagement from innovative practices.

Defining reflective practice in teacher education

To its detriment, the term 'reflective practice' is very broad and as Korthagen (2001, 2004) warns, lends itself to multiple interpretations. There are some shared notions of a cyclic process of planning, acting, assessing and planning again creating a spiral of change, however, the literature in the field differs greatly with regard to the exact praxis-oriented nature of reflective practice and to what should constitute the content of reflection. Two of the most prominent thinkers in this field, Dewey (1933) and Schön (1982), both advocate the importance of reflecting on experience as it occurs, using Schön's terms, 'reflection-in-action' and constructing post-event understanding through retrospection, or 'reflection-on-action'. However, as Van Manen (1977) argues, neither of these concepts considers 'anticipatory reflection' or the envisaging of experience prior to the event. Schön (1982) is further critiqued because his model portrays reflective practice as a solitary act and this belittles sociocultural perspectives of learning as participation in socially-constructed communicative acts (Bandura, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1983; Hawkins, 2004; Grant and Gillette, 2006), and growing work in the field of the social dimension in developing reflective practice in teacher education through online means (Murillo, 2002; Borko, 2004; Davis & Roblyer, 2005; Locke, 2006; Crawley, 2009; Yang, 2009; Salazar, Zenaida Aguirre-Munoz, 2010; Fox and Nuanez-Lucas, 2010; Gleaves and Walker-Gleaves, 2010; Brooke, 2012a, b, c).

In addition to the processes of reflection, diverse views exist regarding the content or main focus of reflection. Two prominent characteristics argued to be essential components of reflective practice are critical reflection and experiential reflection or 'assumption analysis' (Brookfield, 1995). According to a great number of teacher educators (Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Smyth, 1989; Sparks-Langer *et al*., 1990; Valli, 1993; Korthagen, 2001, 2004; Hatton and Smith, 1995; Brandt, 2006; Grant and Gillette, 2006; Pollard, 2008), critical reflection with the aim of improving society should be the goal of the reflective process. Reflectors should therefore be fully aware that what goes on in the classroom is inextricably linked to the social, political and cultural institutions of any particular society. Other teacher educators (Brookfield, 1995; McAdams, 2004) posit that the most important content of reflection should be the focus on one's own school life experiences as a student, on the grounds that processes of transference from schooling (for example, role model or bad teachers), are extremely significant in the construction of one's own identity, beliefs and subsequent practices as a teacher. Thus, the faculty to reflect on one's assumptions and ideologies is essential and it is argued that moving from this process of identification to entertain emerging and counter-intuitive ideas to these is possible and fruitful through reflective practice.

With this diversity, it is difficult to relay definitions of reflective practice. Black and Plowright's (2010) is an effective one as it can be interpreted to contain elements regarding both reflective processes and content as outlined above:

> *'Reflection is the process of engaging with learning and/or professional practice that provides an opportunity to critically analyze and evaluate that learning or practice. The purpose is to develop professional knowledge, understanding and practice that incorporates a deeper form of learning which is transformational in nature and is empowering, enlightening and ultimately emancipatory' (p. 246).*

Paper journaling as a vehicle for developing reflective practice

One effective, traditional tool for developing reflective practice is open book or paper journaling (Calderhead and Gates, 1993; LaBoskey, 1993;

Ballantyne and Packer, 1995a; Ballantyne and Bain, 1999; Daloglu, 2002; Borko, 2004; Uline, Wilson, and Cordry, 2004; Clarke and Jarvis-Selinger, 2005; Hussein, 2006; Chitpin, 2010, 2011). Traditionally used for humanistic and dialogic purposes, paper journaling provides first, a space in which users may express their thoughts, offering themselves, and restricted stakeholders, glimpses into their emerging beliefs; and second, to create dialogue, which is often quite personal, for the purpose of constructing significant understandings and developing beliefs through social, normally asynchronous, collaborative, discourse.

However, despite the apparent benefits, paper journaling is critiqued for its limitations. Three predominant reasons are provided. First, too often the personal journal is a closed space, neglecting opportunities for collaborative learning (Hatton and Smith, 1995); second, entries are product-oriented rather than process-oriented (Sparks-Langer, et al., 1990) as these tend to be read by tutors on submission of a reflective portfolio assignment for grading (as is the case in this researcher's context); third, training in reflection is seldom offered prior to paper journaling, and trainees are often not aware of how to go about undertaking processes of reflection (Daloglu, 2002).

The online environment as a vehicle for developing reflective practice

In response to the disadvantages of paper journaling, a new, more open and collaborative tool in teacher education has been increasingly utilized and researched (Murillo, 2002; Galanouli and Collins, 2000; Simonsen, Luebeck and Bice, 2009; Crawley, 2009; Yang, 2009; Salazar, Zenaida Aguirre-Munoz, 2010; Fox and Nuanez-Lucas, 2010; Gleaves and Walker-Gleaves, 2010; Brooke, 2012a, b, c). This is e-journaling (often referred to as blogging) and collaborative communication through online discussion forums. It is argued that asynchronous communication leads to a more reflective product as users have more time to compose their thoughts compared to face to face interaction. In addition, many users learn vicariously, through observing. These two significant features are summed up in the term 'transactional distance', which is the freedoms in time and space that the online environment provides.

In 2013, virtual learning environments (VLEs), in particular, Blackboard and Moodle platforms, were utilized in over four thousand tertiary institutions in more than sixty countries. Murillo (2002) along with Simonsen, Luebeck and Bice (2009) discovered that during block practice, a great number of postings were shared between online participants, constructing highly-focused topic-related dialogue and problem-solving offering important professional insights via this new medium. In addition, Yang (2009) found that teacher educators helped to raise student-teacher participants' levels of critical reflection through responding to online, asynchronous postings. In spite of these positive reports, however, as Salazar et al (2010) state, further work is needed in the field of developing reflective practice in this environment, particularly on increasing the depth of reflections.

The study

Context, researcher roles and trainee participants

Over eighty percent of Hong Kong's primary school teachers and thirty percent of its secondary school teachers are graduates of the Hong Kong Institute of Education. As part of the third year of the Bachelor of Education programme in English language education, teachers, training to work in both primary and secondary fields, are asked to spend a period of eight weeks' block practice in state schools. This researcher, in his dual capacity as Field Experience Supervisor and Senior Teaching Fellow in English language at the Department of Linguistics and Modern Languages, investigated how these trainees' reflective practice capabilities could be developed using the online environment. Three groups of six to eight trainees participated in each case study, and these took place over one semester (approximately twelve weeks). The entire collective case study approach was conducted over a period of eighteen months. The participants were selected randomly and were not acquainted with each other or this researcher prior to the study. Participants were aware of the intended objective and participated collaboratively to develop their reflective capabilities.

Research purpose, objective and question posed

One overall purpose framed this investigation: t*o analyze and enhance the reflective practice capabilities of student-teachers on block practice in Hong Kong primary and secondary state schools*. Proceeding from the study's purpose, the objective was: *to construct a process exploiting the online environment to develop reflective practice capabilities*. In order to meet this objective, the following research question was posed: *how can the reflective practice capabilities of pre-service teacher trainees be developed through online means?*

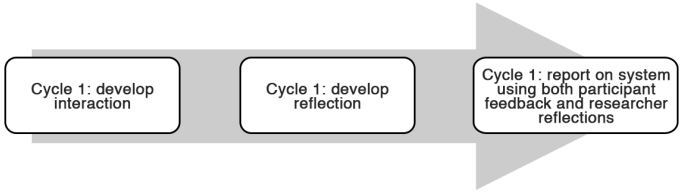
Research methodology design

There is a diverse understanding about what the term 'action research' actually signifies. Any definition of action research methodology will commonly be carried out by a participant as agent for change in a project through a systematic process of planning, action, and reflection on action creating a complex spiral of exploratory change. For this to occur, there is a constant interplay between the gathering of evidence about practice and reflection on this data, as the researcher seeks proof for planned change in the research design.

This evidence-gathering may involve multiple sources and methods.

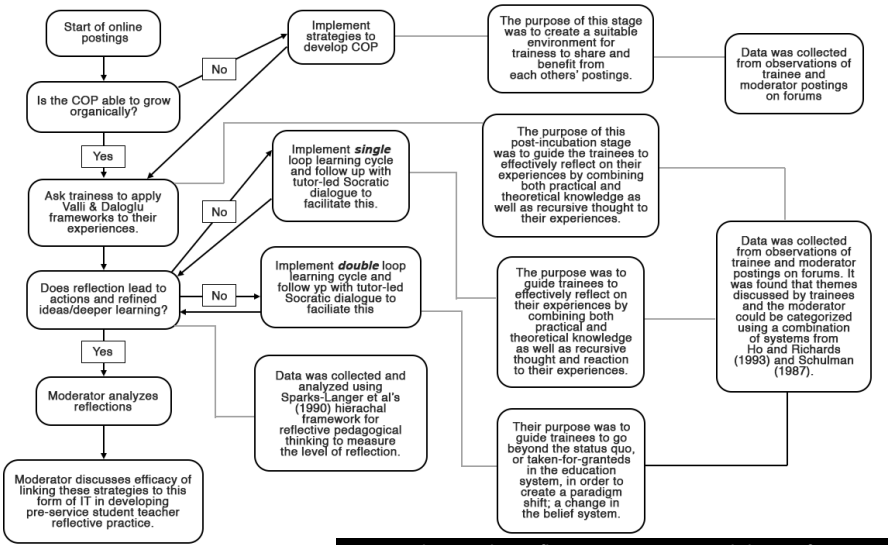
A diagram explaining the preliminary action research plan is given below (figure one). This is then followed, in figure two, by another explaining the final research process implemented by the end of case study three to achieve the main objective of the study. It can be observed that, although these processes embody the same fundamental stages, they appear quite different. This is because whereas cycles in figure one can be seen to represent the preliminary purpose and broad objectives at the outset of the research, figure two represents the strategies actually conducted in order to achieve these. Thus the differences that can be observed between figures one and two represent the learning journey of this researcher.

Figure 1: the initial action research plan



Cycle one in figure one is related to 'start of online postings' and 'is the COP able to grow organically?' in figure two. Cycle two in figure one is related to 'ask trainees to apply Argyris and Schön's (1978) double loop learning cycle', 'are trainees able to apply the double loop learning model?' and 'does reflection lead to refined ideas/ deeper learning?' in figure two. Cycle three in figure one is related to 'post-case study: interview participants to ascertain their perceptions with regards to the development of their reflective practice having used e-journaling and online discussion forums in this way' and 'moderator discusses efficacy of system in developing pre-service student teacher reflective practice' in figure two. Cycle one does not fall into the scope of this paper but can be read in another publication (Brooke, 2012c).

Figure 2: the final action research process



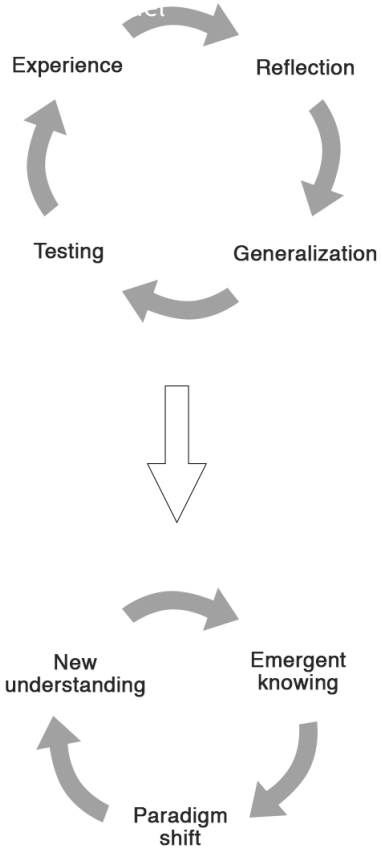
This action research process can be seen as a learning curve from 'unconscious incompetence' (more or less unaware of the knowledge required to achieve the aims) to 'conscious incompetence' (emerging awareness of requirements to achieve aims) to 'conscious competence' (a newly-found competence in achieving aims with a constant monitoring of these strategies) to relatively 'unconscious competence' (a use of strategies as naturalized or second nature). Through an ongoing process of action based on self-directed reading of literature in the field promoting structured mechanisms for facilitating reflective practice capabilities (notably work by Argyris and Schön, 1978; Kolb, 1984; Valli, 1993; Daloglu, 2002; Korthagen, 2001, 2004) as well as literature on the moderation of online virtual learning environments (notably Wenger, 1998; Salmon, 2002, 2004; Lewis & Allen, 2005), a conceptual framework (figure four) and a facilitator model was constructed which was found to effectively develop reflective practice capabilities. This model can be seen as the product of this research (see figure six).

Conceptual framework adopted to facilitate reflections

Argyris and Schön's (1978) reflective cycle model

By creating a visual representation of the stages of learning, it is said that learners can be guided through the processes of reflection moving from one cognitive structure to the next. The Argyris and Schön (1978) model was selected for this purpose (see below):

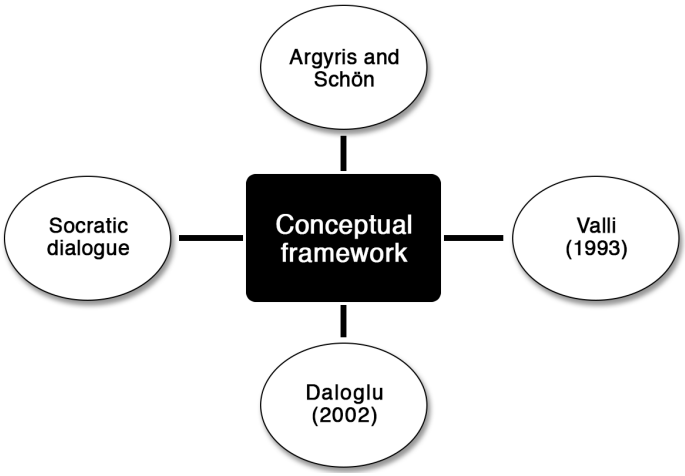
Figure 3: Argyris and Schön's (1978) double loop



The first stage of learning is the single loop learning cycle: this learning process is similar to an action research cycle which is attempting to improve the status quo. The second stage of learning is the double loop learning cycle. Reflection here is more fundamental, going beyond working with meaning within the present governing variables. This may lead to the changing of one's perspectives and the formulation of a 'paradigm shift' resulting in a 'new understanding' of an event. As its description suggests, this is commonly a notion that turns a way of thinking on its head, or, as the colloquial term puts it, 'a thinking outside of the box'. One clear example of a shift in perspective leading to transformative learning might be for a trainee to radically change her perspective to question what the students are doing rather than the teacher-supervisor during a classroom observation.

At the outset of the first case study, it was soon made evident that trainees found it difficult to apply the Argyris and Schön (1978) model. Feedback generated through its application made it evident that participants found it complex and that it required scaffolding. As a result, a conceptual framework was constructed to scaffold (see figure four).

Figure 4: final conceptual framework applied



Daloglu's (2002) questioning framework

Daloglu's (2002) framework was designed for pre-service teacher-trainees during block practice. She notes the success of her relatively simplistic four-category framework as guidance in paper journaling. These categories are:

> What did I already know but benefited from observing/ teaching in school?
>
> What did I not know but learnt from observing/ teaching in school?
>
> What would I like to implement in my own teaching?
>
> What are my comments on and reactions to the experiences I have had?

Daloglu (2002) reports that, by using this framework, trainees were able to conduct mini-action research projects and write about a diverse set of issues. In other words, this framework could enable participants to follow the single loop of the Argyris and Schön (1978) model. The inclusion of observations as an important aspect to the framework is also a reason why this model was chosen as it is believed that neophytes should be encouraged to observe peers and more experienced trainers, and share knowledge and experiences as often as possible during block practice in order to develop professionally.

Valli's (1993) typology of reflection

Valli (1993) proposes five characteristics of reflection: technical; in-action; on-action; dialectical (experiential); deliberative (conceptual and theoretical); and critical. From these, one was used for this conceptual framework because the others are present in the Daloglu (2002) framework and the Argyris and Schön (1978) model. This is 'deliberative reflection' in contrast to dialectical (experiential) reflection. This distinction is similar to that put forward by Korthagen (2001, 2004), who relates the Aristotelian terms 'episteme' and 'phronesis': 'phronesis' is 'theory with a small t' or dialectical, non abstract practical knowledge tailored to the specific needs and concerns of the teacher and the concrete situation under reflection; 'episteme' or 'theory with a capital T', is conceptual knowledge based on expert literature from the field constructed over time, and which can be generalized to help to understand diverse learning and teaching situations. In examining reflection content, Valli (1993) thus argues that it is quintessential for neophytes to synthesize both practical and conceptual content. Therefore, when analysing a practical problem in the field, the application of theoretical perspectives is required. Conversely, when examining an educational principle or theory, implications for practice must be generated and explored. With regard to the Argyris and Schön (1978) model, 'deliberative reflection' is associated with the notion of 'generalization' of the single loop learning cycle, thus the Valli (1993) construct was applied to facilitate this aspect of the cycle.

Socratic dialogue

For the scaffolding of the double loop learning process, a more interactive strategy, in the form of Socratic dialogue, was required. The term appears to have its origins in Ancient Greece through Plato in the Socratic Dialogues. The Sophists would seek the truth about a matter by rationally working to study each other's views so as to better understand the topic of discussion. The ultimate objective was thus to understand the truth of the matter not to persuade an opponent. This is a technique that has been used in distance education by Holmberg (see 'Theory and Practice of Distance Education, 1989), Laurillard (see the 'Conversational Model, 1993) and

more recently by Ros, Sol and Truman (2007) and Yang, 2009). Unlike the Argyris and Schön (1978) cycles and the Daloglu (2002)/ Valli (1993) hybrid, this strategy is applied after reflections have been recorded. It is thus an intertextual technique: comments and prompts are embedded into postings to enable collaborative interactions asynchronously. These are then responded to by the original author thus constructing dialogic communication. The 'discount categories' in the table below, represent an exploration of the different types of embedded communications that an online tutor may choose to use when engaged with trainees in Socratic dialogue. These are referred to as 'moves'. These moves are based on the DISCOUNT coding system developed by Pilkington (1999; 2001). In her research with student teachers, Walker (2004) found that the most common types of move were probe (asking questions to elicit more information from a student) and challenge (questions to encourage a student to justify an opinion or argument). She reports that 'probe' moves followed by 'challenges', used in sequence, were most effective in guiding students to develop an argument thread in their reflections. She also notes that 'counter', although used sparingly, might be effective in furthering discussions as long as students perceive this as a hypothetical 'game tactic' (2004: 181) rather than as a strong critique or even a correct answer.

Table 1: Walker's (2004) discount categories based on Pilkington's (1999, 2001) coding system

	Discount categories
Move	**Description**
Open	Start a new topic or sub-topic
Instruct	Provide information that constitutes a teaching point
Probe	Ask a question to elicit more information about a fact or opinion
Challenge	Ask a question to elicit a defense of a line of argument
Counter	State an opinion or ask a question containing an alternative line of argument
Inform-fact	State a fact
Inform-opinion	State one's personal opinion
Encourage	Monitor progress and give encouragement and/ or positive feedback
Critique	Give constructive criticism
Ask/clarify	Ask a clarification question
Metastatement	Ask a question or make a statement about the task (rather than the topic)

Yang (2009) and Davis (2003) report that interactions with instructors applying Socratic dialogue enabled trainee reflections to increase in depth. Similarly, Magee (2001) found that through empathizing with trainees' reflections online and gradually guiding trainees to a proper understanding of an issue through Socratic dialogue, there was a marked increase in in-depth analyses. Further, Yang (2009) demonstrates that instructor intervention created a shift from merely twenty percent to over forty percent of student reflection productivity, enabling more sharing and collaborative learning to occur.

Data collection and content analysis conducted

The total number of postings collected was three hundred and ninety seven. Postings ranged from fifty to three hundred words. The average posting was one hundred and forty words. Personal writings and more objective research notes based on observations in addition to analysis of salient textual material and interviews comprised the research instrumentation. The content analyses for reflections were conducted using a well-established instrument from Sparks-Langer et al (1990). This was selected because Hussein (2006), in a similar study, found it very suitable for grading reflections. There are seven levels to the reflective hierarchy. These are given below with examples from this researcher's data to facilitate conceptualization:

i. No descriptive language;

ii. A simple, layperson description: *"I brought up a website in class".*

iii. Events labeled with appropriate pedagogical terms or concepts: *"I brought up a concordancing website in class."*

iv. Explanations with traditional or personal preferences given as the rationale. The above plus: *"I have found that a concordancing programme can be useful for teaching collocations".*

v. Explanation of an event using pedagogical principle(s). The above plus: *"I tried to show my students how this software can be used for discovery-based learning strategies."*

vi. Explanation with principle/theory and consideration of contextual factors such as student characteristics or community factors. The above plus: *"Then, my students tried this method in one of the school's computer rooms. I found that they were very interested in this. We observed verbs such as 'suggest'; 'recommend'; 'require' to see if they were followed by a 'that-clause' or not. I am now striving to work out some activities in order to increase students' incentive to do this at home too".*

vii. Explanation with consideration of ethical, moral or political issues. The above plus: *"Also, next week, I want my students to learn to work cooperatively together in groups to do these activities. This way,*

they can also help each other in the discovery process and learn to value each other's work".

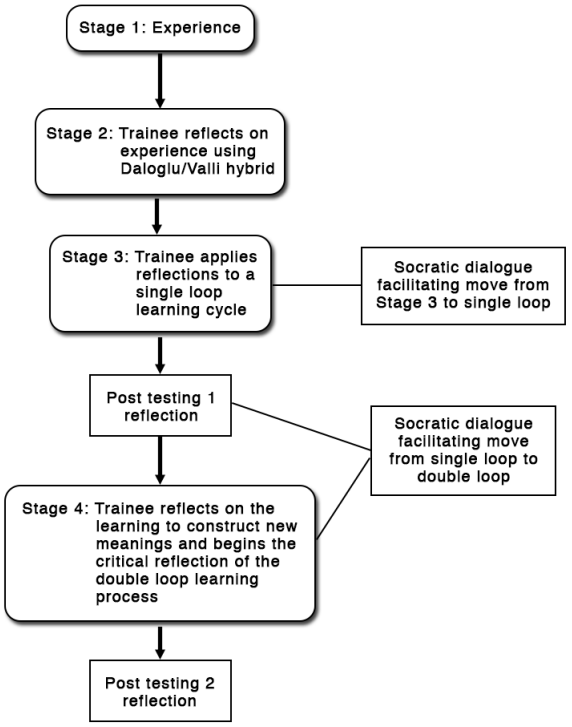
It can be observed that the levels presented by Sparks-Langer *et al* (1990) range from layman to professional descriptive reflection; from professional descriptive reflection with added personal value to the incorporation of a wider scope by elaborating contextual factors; and then finally, to wider implications and thus higher levels of critical reflection, implementing ethical, moral or political issues related to education.

As the data grouping for the thematic analyses conducted might be critiqued for objectivity, postings were subjected to inter-rater reliability. Inter-rater reliability is the degree to which raters share agreement. This demonstrates homogeneity and is useful in determining whether variables or scales are effective or deficient. An informed rater was asked to classify ten random samples for levels of reflection. The inter-rater reliability was high for this as agreement was reached for the coding of nine from ten decisions. The area of discordance was based on an interpretation of Sparks-Langer et al's (1990) terminology. Once this inter-rater variation had been discussed, the rater and this researcher agreed absolutely with the content analyses.

Results

The application of the conceptual framework resulted in the following reflective practice procedure which has been entitled the 'Model for developing reflective practice online' (see figure five below).

Figure five: 'Model for developing reflective practice online'



In the next section, a transcription of online postings is provided to illustrate how the model above was applied to facilitate reflective content at Sparks-Langer *et al*'s (1990) level 7.

Stages one, two and three (single loop learning)

Stage one, as indicated in the diagram, is the first stage. Trainees experience something during block practice that they perceive warrants further attention. Trainees are aware that they are agents for change at this stage. At stage two, students are asked to reflect on the nature of this experience using the framework from Daloglu (2002) and applying deliberative reflection (Valli, 1993) to it; in other words, they are required to search out readings about similar experiences or methods to deal with these from outside expert sources. In relation to the Argyris and Schön (1978) model, this is 'experience', followed by 'reflection' and 'generalization' on the single loop learning cycle. Using the Daloglu (2002) questioning framework as a scaffold, the 'reflection' stage became a period of time during which trainees were successfully comparing their knowledge or lack of knowledge about present and past personal educational experiences. This relates to Daloglu's (2002) questions: *What did I already know but benefited from observing/ teaching in school? What did I not know but learnt from my observations/ teaching in school* ('Reflection-in' and 'reflection-on-action')? An example of a reflective posting at this stage from Helen is provided:

> *"After the first week's teaching, my original teaching philosophy: making the students' learning as enjoyable and meaningful as possible, wavered a little bit. Under the pressure of frequent assessment, my teaching plans need to include quite a lot of vocabulary items and grammar exercises to prepare students for the exams"* (Helen).

The next question in the Daloglu (2002) framework is *'what would I like to implement?'* in response to this puzzle. Thus, a potential solution is imagined ('anticipatory reflection'). Interestingly, it was another student (Rain) who instigated this part of the reflections:

> *"I think we can still use interesting materials (e.g. songs, movies etc.) to teach our students. I think the problem is how we strike the balance between 'drilling' and 'meaningful tasks". Nunan (2004) has proposed a continuum of tasks - on one end is the very open, authentic communicative task whilst on the other is some "drilling" or rote learning tasks. In his opinion, it is possible to make 'drilling' tasks communicative and meaningful"* (Rain).

Rain answers Helen's posting by applying the Daloglu (2002)'s third question. She also aids Helen to move through the 'generalization' phase of the single loop by citing Nunan (2004) as useful further reading. Thus, the puzzle has now become a potential idea for collaborative investigation (collaborative reflection-on-action). Trainees followed on from this point to the 'testing' stage. Therefore, they applied interventions (reflection-

in-action) and considered their efficacy using Daloglu's (2002) last question: *'What are my comments on and reactions to the experiences I have had'* (reflection-on-action)? This makes up post testing one in the 'model for developing reflective practice online'. Helen writes several days later about how she developed an activity to make drilling more student-centered:

> *"In my class, I tried a new activity 'New Words of the Day' because some students showed me English words that they wanted to learn from our text book. I whisper the word to a student who takes the courage to describe the word in front of the class. If the class guesses the word, the describer gets one point. The reaction of the students to the game was great. They were motivated and attentive in class. A lot of students raised up their hands to answer"* (Helen).

Rain was very praising of Helen's effort in her response even stating that she too would trial this idea. Using this extract, there is thus a refinement of practice to improve the educational system in place (status quo) - this is the goal of the single loop learning model and it has been facilitated through a process of collaborative enquiry and a construction of knowledge about an aspect of practice.

Stage four (double loop learning)

Stage four marks the transition to the double loop learning cycle. This involves the development of a 'paradigm shift' through further reflection-on-action and a resulting 'new understanding'. It was found that embedded tutor Socratic dialogue could help to scaffold this shift. This researcher's comments are underlined below and are embedded in the posting as it was done online. The names later given to the communicative moves are in bold and in brackets.

> *In my class, I tried a game: 'New Words of the Day' because some students showed me English words that they wanted to know from our text book. They must feel at ease with you if they are able to do this so early on (comment). I whisper the word to a student who takes the courage to describe it in front of the class. If the class guesses the word, the describer gets one point. The reaction of the students to the game was great. They were motivated and attentive in class. A lot of students raised up their hands to answer" (Helen). 'I think it's important to find ways of making learning activities interesting (empathize). Engaging the learner is essential in teaching (restate). What conclusions might you draw from this? Why do you think this activity was so successful (Probe)?*

The *'comment', 'empathy'* and *'restating'* are designed to demonstrate a good understanding and appreciation of the issue. The *'restating'* also consolidates the process of 'generalization' adding to Valli's (1993) 'deliberative reflection' construct. Following this, the *'probe'* scaffolds the uncovering of potential deeper, underlying meanings implicated in this event, and these belong in the realm of the double loop learning cycle. In her reply the following day, Helen shifts her understanding away from interest and engagement to focus more on the student-centeredness of the learning activity. This demonstrates an 'emerging knowing' which is followed by a 'paradigm shift' and ultimately, a 'new understanding' of the event.

> *"I think students were very motivated and attentive in class because they chose the words we could learn from the textbook. This gave them more responsibility. In Hong Kong, students are too often given vocabulary lists to learn relatively passively, and these are commonly tested through whole class dictations. I will try to let students have more responsibility to choose what we learn. This is much more student-centered and I think more motivating"* (Helen).

To round off Helen's interactions, promote collaborative discussion and to offer some input as to why this might be in the realm of the double loop learning cycle, this researcher then posted the following:

> *"So this is a whole new way of looking at your teaching. We might say it is a 'paradigm shift' because we are moving away from a continuous teacher-centered and exam-oriented focus in which students are relatively passive (as you say), to one in which students take the lead and responsibility to choose a portion of the language syllabus to be learnt. This is very innovative; a characteristic of promoting learner autonomy, which is, I think, an ethical issue: our students should have a say in what they are expected to learn; after all, they must work very hard to learn the language (Inform/fact). Have the others had a similar experience? What do you all think about this (Eliciting other trainees' comments)?"*

From this point a brief discussion involving three other participants was held, reiterating the importance and difficulty of empowering students.

To sum up, through the data, it can be seen that the focus is turned on its head in the extract above. Rather than discussing how to make teacher-fronted activities more engaging, the interaction considers how to decrease teacher-control and increase student-responsibility in course content. The discourse shifts from existing assumptions, and structural norms, to challenge what is a fundamental issue: instead of a top-down, transmissive educational approach which focuses on pre-fabricated, exam-oriented language syllabi, teachers might strive to facilitate, at least in part, a more bottom-up, process-oriented approach to course design by encouraging student-participation. This may be transformative as its development could

aid in the growth of the child as a more responsible, critical and ultimately, more independent being.

Discussion

Less than ten percent of postings were effectively applying the double loop learning cycle. However, students revealed a great propensity for action research, with twenty-five percent of the postings based on an effective application of the single loop learning cycle, in particular, '*what have I learned from the intervention?'* Thus, the Daloglu (2002)/ Valli (1993) hybrid combined with the single loop learning graphic offered by Argyris and Schön (1978) was found by participants to be accessible and applicable. The overall objective of the research was to facilitate genuine, transformative, critical reflection. The double loop learning cycle was found to be difficult for trainees to apply as a graphic aid. In particular, the conceptual difficulty of the notion of a 'paradigm shift' was communicated as problematic by participants, some asking if it meant that they were required to describe their personal teaching philosophies and if these had changed during reflections. To scaffold the notion of a 'paradigm shift', it was found that offering concrete examples such as the one previously described about a shift in classroom observation practices was quite effective. However, in general terms, these results demonstrate the difficulty neophytes have in attaining this level of reflection. Indeed, Moon (1999) even goes as far as to propose that it might be an innate skill. She states (1999): 'whether or not the capacity to function in this manner can be coached is an interesting issue' (p. 145). In this researcher's opinion, it seems that explicit, extensive guidance over a longer time frame than that used in this context might prove more successful. In addition, the lack of related academic papers and empirical data in this field offers little research with which to compare these findings.

Future research

First, research facilitating paradigmatic shifts in neophyte reflections could be more prevalent to enable the field to evolve. This would particularly be useful in understanding the actual process of the paradigm shifts that occur, in particular, if these can be solely facilitated by the guide, or whether they require a form of personal "conversion" experience, and if the latter is the case, how this occurs as reported by the trainees. Second, future research might focus on increasing the forms of online Socratic dialogue by adding embedded hyperlinks to appropriate readings or other media, such as videos of trainers to construct a more sophisticated learning environment. Third, it might be more fruitful to implement a form of blended training in order to facilitate double loop learning cycle reflections. One disadvantage of the written tutor and peer asynchronous discourse online is that it is time consuming to conduct and therefore, there tends to be less content than there might be if a face to face conference was also conducted. In this way, the input might be more extensive. Evidently, this runs the risk of overloading trainees during practicum; however, an experienced trainer, based on an evaluation of the trainee's situation and level of expertise, should be able to judge what an adequate amount of input is.

Conclusion

It is evident that this project impacted on participants' reflective practice capabilities. Although, new understandings of classroom dynamics based on paradigm shifts were rare, the fact that trainees were able to conduct their own mini-action research projects (post-testing one) to improve the status quo, and to reflect on the efficacy of these interventions, demonstrates this. It is therefore believed that there is a strong case for this genre of online practice for training pre-service teachers on practicum. However, more research is required if these trainees are to become highly-adept reflectors and able to observe experiences from differing standpoints. It is thus hoped that further research in this field will be conducted to increase the benefits of the practicum experience.

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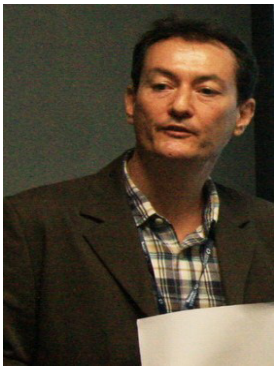

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9 Explorations on the Issues Involved in Classroom Emailing

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Abstract: The technical encroachments of information technology conveys impact on the English language learning as it seems to boost students' motivation, which leads to increased usage and proficiency. Globally, schools have embarked on the increasing use of Internet and information technology in the classroom because it has taken the center-stage of our lives. As a consequence, there are compelling reasons for incorporating email use in the classroom because of several reasons. Some of them include the following. Emailing is a good step to familiarize students with computer literacy. It is also another way to improve the teaching of writing because previous research (Bacha, 2000) has shown that "ESL writers are known to face problems in developing their writing skills at the university level", and to cope with the institution's literacy expectations and for their future use. Furthermore, despite the fact that research has shown emailing to be a very useful vehicle for teaching English (Lee, 1998; Warschauer, 1995), several elements of students' emailing etiquette have been disregarded in recent years. This paper will discuss the nature of and issues related to implementing email as an instructional tool. Specifically it hopes to present a collection of insights into the practice of emailing in the classroom, its handicaps as well as violations committed with regard to students' emailing practice. In the end, it hopes to demonstrate that email, as a useful and practical writing skill can provide students with various opportunities for communication, collaboration and information leading students to a new world of experience.

Introduction

Over the past 20 years, computers and sharing of information that they facilitate have penetrated nearly every aspect not only of American life, but of people's lives everywhere. Reliance on computers grows every day, from shopping at grocery stores and filing taxes to driving an automobile and communicating with friends, relatives and business associates. This explosion in the technology has increased efforts to equip every classroom with computers and "wire" every school to the Internet.

But are classroom computers delivering on this expectation? Does access to a computer or use of a computer in instructing students improve their academic achievement? Today people are talking about the use of tablets in the classroom, a leap up from computer age.

There is little doubt that email is changing how students communicate and learn. Students learn in many different ways and at different times. To support these different learning needs, ESL teachers will need different e-learning delivery methods. Additionally, ESL teachers will need a way to develop and manage e-learning in the classroom.

Several articles and reports on observations and experiments have been written regarding the application of technology in the classroom. Classroom email has been one of the recent popular issues. Unfortunately, to date, there has not yet been a systematic study done on the pedagogical aspects of email in the classroom. This paper attempts to discuss the nature and the issues involved in the implementation of email as a feedback and communication tool. In so doing, it provides a list of suggestions for incorporating email into the classroom to make the most of the medium's relative advantages.

My concern in this paper is not so much on the use of the hardware - not on the machine, i.e. the computer - but rather more on the software, meaning the content of what and how those machines deliver to our students in the language classroom.

By way of side-tracking, let me mention that in the US, for example, many school districts are taking the easy way out and denying school e-mail addresses to young people. Why? As with many issues in society,

the press has vastly exaggerated the dangers of e-mail and created a panic reaction that ends up widening the digital divide as students with home computers learn to communicate with digital tools and others are left behind. I believe this is not the case with most of our students. So I hope that in today's presentation we can show one way of illustrating the power of e-mail in students' hands.

In the first part of the paper, discussions will focus on the theoretical background behind email as an instructional approach. The second part will demonstrate classroom applications of email covering general pedagogical concerns as well as linguistic aspects particularly in ESL classes

I. Theoretical Framework Behind Classroom Email

Like other classroom approaches that use synchronous technologies and allows students to interact with peers, teachers, experts and other individuals, classroom emailing involves several theoretical discussions, some of which will be discussed here.

1. Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning in classroom E-mail

First and foremost among the theoretical framework involved in using email in the classroom is the notion of synchronous and asynchronous learning.

A. Synchronous Learning and online communication

Synchronous learning refers to a learning environment where everyone participates in learning at the same time and at the same place. Learning is conducted face-to-face.
The advent of technology has given a new dimension to classroom learning wherein classes can take place in different places at the same time. The advent of virtual classrooms has duplicated the capabilities found in a real classroom by providing a place to meet, to take attendance and to lecture. Students and teachers use their computers to go to a virtual meeting place instead of a classroom. Teachers can choose from a variety of synchronous technologies to teach and a list of participants is recorded. Many online educational programs started out as web conferencing tools.

The current use of instant messaging or live chat, webinars and video conferencing allows for students and teachers to collaborate and learn in real time.

More advanced synchronous e-Learning takes the form of virtual classroom, audio and video conferencing, shared whiteboard, instant messaging and the like. Web conferencing tools that have given rise to numerous online educational programs originated from sending and receiving instructional materials online. Certainly, e-learning has expanded and added new dimensions to the "old school" of synchronous learning.

B. Asynchronous learning and online communication

Based on the constructivist theory, asynchronous learning is a learning environment where learning takes place at different places, and at different times. It is a student-centered approach that emphasizes the importance of peer-to-peer interactions. The concept of asynchronous learning has to its advantage the benefit of flexibility and efficiency where learners can study at a time and place of their choosing. The barrier to its implementation tends to be much lower than the other instructional mode. The use of online learning resources to facilitate information sharing outside the constraints of time and place among a network of people has given a new dimension to the original theoretical concept of asynchronous learning. With regard to the application of email in the classroom, studies have shown that this approach combines self-study with asynchronous interactions to promote learning, and that it can be used to facilitate learning in traditional on-campus education, distance education, and continuing education.

Smith, Whiteley and Smith (1999) for example, over the course of three studies, conclude that email is a "viable alternative means of course delivery" (p.24). Debard and Guidara (2000) extol the need for better and more frequent use of asynchronous communication in the higher education classroom. They find that asynchronous communication, such as email, can be adopted to meet Chickering and Reisser's seven principals of effective teaching and learning. The work emphasizes the notion that email can increase faculty-student contact resulting in improved student involvement and motivation. Debard and Guidara (2000) made a similar assertion by pointing out "email as a source of more intensive student interaction that can lead to deeper, more active, and more

engaged learning". They cite research which shows "an average response in an electronic discussion was found (Huett & Huett, 2001). The combined network of learners together with the expanding electronic network in which they communicate has given rise to a new type of network: the asynchronous learning network (ALN).

Online learning resources used to support asynchronous learning include threaded conferencing systems, online discussion boards, wikis, blogs but most especially the email and the electronic mailing lists. The number of learning opportunities that email provides for students across all Learning Areas has been a key factor leading to the development of asynchronous e-Learning which comes today in the form of Self-paced Courses, Discussion Groups, Distance Learning, etc. Virtual communication in support of virtual online classes attests to the fact that asynchronous communication is by far the more popular model due to the absence of barriers to its implementation (Galusha, 1997).

2. Active and Collaborative Learning in classroom E—mail approach

Online communication in the past few decades has attracted research on the relation between online learning and cooperative and collaborative learning. For instance, Kutz & Roskelly's investigation (1991) indicates some of the major characteristics of active learning that provided a framework for research on the nature of classroom email and student involvement in learning. Some of these characteristics are described as follow.

1. Greater involvement of students in learning
2. Students are engaged in different types of activities
3. There is less emphasis on information transfer and more on development of students' skills
4. Increased student motivation
5. There is immediate feedback from instructor
6. Students are involved in greater and higher order thinking skills: analyzing, synthesis, evaluation and expressing the result of their findings.

In contrast to the passive approach to learning which Hiltz & Benbunan-FichBouton (1997) describe as "learning by receiving and assimilating knowledge individually, independent from others", Mead's research (1983) and latter investigations describe learning as "a social process which takes place through communication with others".

The concept of collaborative learning lend to recent research on cooperative learning. After more than 20 years of extensive research, Johnson, Johnson, & Smith (2007) define the classroom as a cooperative place and the teacher teaching cooperative skills. In describing how cooperative learning works, Johnson, Johnson, & Smith (2007) state that cooperative learning situations designed correctly have five key components:

1. Positive interdependence (each individual depends on and is accountable to the others—a built-in incentive to help, accept help, and root for others)
2. Individual accountability (each person in the group learns the material)
3. Promote interaction (group members help one another, shareinformation, offer clarifying explanations)
4. Social skills (leadership, communication)
5. Group processing (assessing how effectively they are working with one another)

Recent studies on emailing show that classroom email activities allow the learners to actively construct knowledge by formulating ideas into words, and these ideas are built upon through reactions and responses of others (Hiltz & Benbunan-FichBouton, 1997; Alavi, 1994). Therefore these studies lend support to the idea that learning is not only active but also interactive. Furthermore, Mansor (2007) discusses strategies on successfully implementing email in the classroom and suggests how classroom email provides "a host of possibilities to enhance students' learning, promote students' positive interest, and improve students' performance".

Harasim (2012) defines the use of classroom email as a collaborative or group learning method because it encourages students to work together on certain academic tasks. As with other forms of collaborative learning emailing is fundamentally different from the traditional "direct-transfer" or "one-way knowledge transmission" model in which the instructor is the only source of knowledge or skills.

In collaborative learning, instruction is learner-centered rather than teacher-centered and knowledge is viewed as a social construct, facilitated

by peer interaction, evaluation and cooperation. The role of the teacher changes from transferring knowledge to students (to being a facilitator in the students' construction of their own knowledge. This new conception of learning shifts away the focus from the teacher-student interaction to the role of peer relationships in educational success.

Like other forms of interactive online learning, the greatest merit given to classroom email is its collaborative, active and interactive nature. Kutz & Roskelly (1991) indicate some of the major characteristics of active learning as:

1. Greater involvement of students in learning
2. Students are engaged in different types of activities
3. There is less emphasis on information transfer and more on development of students' skills
4. Increased student motivation
5. There is immediate feedback from instructor
6. Students are involved in greater and higher order thinking skills: analyzing, synthesis, evaluation and expressing the result of their findings.

The very nature of greater learning involvement gives rise to cooperation and teamwork in the implementation of classroom email, challenges understanding and motivates learning. Glasser and Bassok (1989) describe the presence of a group structure as providing support and encouragement for individual student effort.

3. Email as a Feedback Tool

The concept of feedback is as old as the concept of education. Effective feedback has the following characteristics: (1) it directs attention to the intended learning, pointing out strengths and offering specific information to guide improvement; (2) it occurs during the learning, while there is still time to act on it; (3) it addresses partial understanding; (4) it does not do the thinking for the student; and (5) it limits corrective information to the amount of advice the student can act on. Chappuis & Chappius (2008) describe feedback as having two components. First, it provides a roadmap to learning; therefore it should be timely and relevant. Second, the feedback should not be solely about the task; it should provide the student with information on what they do well and how to improve content, process, or product.

Feedback is often subject to classification schemes outlining inherent characteristics. For instance, Carter (1984) describes feedback as having four characteristics: function, timing, schedule, and type. Brinko (1993) suggests that understanding feedback requires addressing the who, what, when, where, why, and how of feedback method. The classic Kulhavy and Stock model (1989) describes the feedback process as consisting of three cycles. In Cycle I, a task demand is presented and the learner receives information from the task, processes this information, and produces a response to the task. In Cycle II, feedback is presented and is processed by the learner to yield any response corrections. Finally, in Cycle III, the original task demand is presented again as a test item, which is processed and responded to by the learner to produce a posttest response. (Mory, 1992, p.7) Investigation on the effectiveness of email as an instructional aid supports the view that emailing has these four characteristics (Yu and Yu, 2002).

Currently, there has been extensive research into the role feedback plays in education. However, there is little research outlining practical advice on how best to use email as a feedback tool. Huett's detailed analysis (2004) is one of the rare investigations indicating several key points on email as an educational feedback tool. Huett's study refers back to Clariana, Wagner and Murphy (2000) who insist that learning "involves the interaction of new information provided by instruction with existing information already in the learner's memory" (p.5). Wees (2010) suggested that feedback's role in the learning process is not simply information processing, but a more complex milieu with feedback having an influence on the learner's affective and motivational processes.

Email can be a wonderful tool for delivering feedback to students. Once a basic understanding of feedback's role in learning has been established, one can begin to focus on how best to take advantage of the pedagogical functions of the communication medium. There is little doubt that email is changing how we communicate and learn. For example, in an investigation of the effectiveness of email as a communication and instructional aid between instructors and students, Yu and Yu (2002) found "empirical evidence supporting the usefulness of e-mail as a promising aid to promote student cognitive growth pertaining to computer knowledge and skills" (p. 123).

Tao and Boulware (2002) lend support to the idea by suggesting that email communication benefits teachers "by identifying instructional focus and taking advantage of instructional moments to

fit the developmental needs of their students in authentic situations" (p.288). They also find that email motivates learners, encourages authentic communication, and creates new learning opportunities. The ubiquitous use of email in the classroom is lending the medium a new level of credence as an effective educational feedback tool.

II. Language Learning in the context of classroom email

The basic premise on which all online teaching should begin is that the goal should be to build a learning community and to facilitate the exchange of ideas, information, and feelings among the members of the community. Every "e-lecture" (electronic lecture) should be designed to include questions for discussion or response, rather than simply representing one way transmission of "knowledge." The students, as well as the instructor, should be encouraged to raise new topics and ask questions of the class; and to respond to one another's contributions.

1. Unorganized in-class email activities

Although there are several ramifications of email use in the classroom, research on its application can broadly be categorized as individual, group and collaborative work. My concern is on how participants communicate via email in a collaborative writing process to facilitate writing tasks and writing performance. Huck (2001) outlines two main functions of email in the classroom, and one of them is known as interpersonal exchange. Because it can be done anytime and anywhere, emailing can immerse students in a three-dimensional environment to further enhance learning experience.

The types of email students write can vary from short notes to very long complicated essays and academic papers. Among themselves, students usually use email for very personal communications, although there can be much more to its use than just corresponding back and forth through "key pal" arrangements.

Student-teacher email correspondence can range from being informal, such as a quick reminder or memo, to being very formal, such as a business letter. It can contain a long or a very short simple note. Whatever form it may take, emailing can serve generally as a communication line between teacher and students, between student and student, and between teacher and parents.

2. Various Organized classroom-based email activities

Email provides a number of learning opportunities for students across all learning areas.
In particular, organized classroom-based e-mail activities can provide students with the same fast, economical, and global communication system.

Students can send e-mail to other students or to experts in the field outside of the school. As usual, dialogue with other students might be quite mundane ("my name is ..., what's your), or students can gain valuable insight by sharing information about culture and personal lives with students from other countries and with far different styles of living. There are many teachers who are looking to set up such correspondences.

The moodle is a class conference is an exchange of ideas and information. As with any group discussion, the moderator or leader needs to engage in several kinds of behavior that will facilitate the group's participation and productive collaboration actions such as Listserv for daily announcements.

The teacher can link students to other people outside the classroom through e-mail. For example, there are professionals who are willing to act as experts and will answer students' e-mail questions. Students could join various lists, and pose questions, enter into discussions, and share information. Some lists are designed just for students, but they could join any list if the topic interested them.

The teacher can link up with numerous Internet classroom projects, where classes from different parts of the globe work together in a joint project. Essentially, the classes conduct certain activities in their own school (e.g., collecting data, writing stories, doing research) and then share the results with others in the group by e-mail. These projects can range from simple to complex and in all sorts of subject areas. The teacher can subscribe to Internet Invitations listserv to get details and announcements of these projects. Some of the more popularly used sites are as follows:

1. **Book Raps**
   A Book Rap is a book discussion conducted via electronic mail. This oz-TeacherNet project provides links to current raps and instructions for participating or running a rap.
2. **OzProjects**
   Online curriculum projects provide

authentic structured curriculum activities for students, using the Internet (particularly web and email technologies).

3. **ePALS**
   ePALS provides a large worldwide database of teachers who are interested in establishing an ePALS email exchange project with other teachers.
4. **Travel Buddies**
   Travel Buddies are soft toys or puppets that travel the world as representatives of a class. The buddies communicate by email from the places they visit. This oz-TeacherNet project provides links to current travel buddies and instructions for participating or organising a buddy.

Many instructors seem to think that what they do in the classroom should be directly transferred to a digital form. However, the online lecture is deadly boring if it is simply a text version of a spoken lecture.

III. Classroom Email and Correct Writing Rules

Students use language to understand, develop and communicate ideas and information and interact with others. The use of classroom technology is a handy instrument that has proven to assist in the development of these skills. Whether students are asked to send short friendly messages, long reports or formal and authentic documents to comply with complex classroom email projects, it behooves the teacher to provide motivational and meaningful writing experiences. An evaluation of students' writing performance online reveals similar aspects with ordinary written works. It commences with the individual writer's performance focusing on three focal categories, namely; content, organization, and writing style (Mansor, 2006).

The "content" element incorporates the evaluation of the introduction, support, paragraph construction and conclusion, which is drawn from the marking scheme used for the evaluation. Introduction entails the thesis statement and the main ideas stated in the introductory paragraph. Support embraces the reasons or arguments with evidence or examples. Paragraph construction encompasses the topic sentences, supporting ideas, concluding sentences and conclusion and emphasizes a strong concluding statement for the argumentative essay.

The "organization" element focuses on coherence and the "writing style" element accentuates on writing style. Coherence covers the method of organization and transitions used to connect sentences and ideas.

Finally, writing style concentrates on the clear flow of sentence, correct grammar and sentence structure, generically appropriate descriptive language and argumentative language used. The analysis of the writing will be focused on the collaborative assignment via email discussion and the individual assignment.

Caution and Caveats of Email Approach in the language classroom:

1. Email teaches students basic computer skills. They learn how to type, to send messages, cut and paste typed sentences or paragraphs and attach documents or pictures. This is where the danger lies. Teachers need be cautious or teach students proper etiquettes of responding to email, cutting and pasting messages, and quoting online.
2. Although it may sound impossible, it behooves the teacher to make sure students use proper language, spelling and grammar in their email communication. Students often communicate using instant messenger programs or text messages on their cellphones, using shortened forms of language, such as "lol" for "laugh out loud" or numbers for certain words, such as "4" instead of "for." Using email in the classroom could help them to learn the correct forms of written language, especially if their teachers expect them to use proper spelling and grammar in their classroom emails.
3. As with any other forms of learning, the effectiveness of e-mailing depends on its delivery method and content to ensure its success. For this reason, e-mailing methods have to be interesting, interactive and informative in order to be effective. Because it is computer/software based however, classroom email has the capability of immersing its students completely within an environment most conducive to learning. This sets it apart from purely classroom-style learning.

Aside from focusing on particular language and writing tasks, side by side with skills in coping with digital tools - as discussed above- students need guidance on general etiquette and rules for email users. The section below discusses some commonly overlooked areas and violations when students write and send emails.

1. **Rules on subject headings.**
   - Never leave the subject area blank
   - Subject must be clear and meaningful
   - Vague subjects like "follow-up about Friday" should be avoided.
   - Avoid intriguing subjects: "Check already noted"
   - Avoid ambiguous subjects like "Just a

quick question". Such subjects will give the impression to "better do it by phone" instead of email

- Avoid strong and imperative subjects like IMPORTANT: read immediately

2. **Rules on messages.**
   - Messages should be focused.
   - Email containing multiple messages must be written in paragraph forms
     A. Separate messages are to be indicated in separate paragraphs
     B. Indenting in email is essential as in writing a paragraph to indicate change of topics. Since indenting is not mechanically possible, blank lines are most commonly used.
     C. Number your points
3. **Precautions on the text:**
   Keep text readable:
   - Keep text readable
   - Check for grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization
   - Watch out for proper language. Students should be regularly and consistently reminded to stay away from texting language when writing classroom email. Most commonly, texting messages look like this:
     "thns 4 ur help 3dys ago wd my speech"
4. **Rule for typing:**
   - Never type in UPPER CASE
   - It comes out too strong and/or gives the impression that the writer is angry
   - Students should be reminded that typing in UPPER CASE is only needed for emphasis at certain points
5. **Rules regarding emoticons**
   Avoid too much use of emoticons:
   - Avoid too much use of emoticons Emoticons have been proven useful to express the writer's emotional status on the topic. Too much use however weakens or destroys the overall meaning of an academic or classroom paper.
   - Aside from using emoticons sparingly, students have to be taught the right context and usage.
   - There is no strict rule on how many emotions to use. If guided on proper use, students will get into the correct habit.
6. **Rules on forwarding and attaching files**
   - Forwarding and attaching files is the most commonly neglected part of online writing in the classroom. Knowing the rules on forwarding and attaching files should be included in the initial stages of email writing in the classroom.
   - As in any other form of writing, the teacher should make sure students are informed about the following:
     A. Avoid forwarding long quotes
     B. Avoid forwarding personal message
     C. Avoid forwarding too large and / or too many files

Conclusion

With its ubiquitous nature, relative low cost, global reach, speed, and flexibility, email is becoming the communication choice of many. It seems only natural, given these features, that researchers are looking to email as a promising instructional and learning tool. However, its strength as an educational tool relies solely on constructing a solid email-based environment and a pedagogically sound message. If one is going to integrate email communication in the face-to-face or distant classroom in the hopes of delivering timely and valuable feedback to students, one needs to understand the concept of feedback and how it functions (Huett, 2004). Assuming that email will only continue to grow in popularity, it behooves the individual classroom teacher to develop some principles to guide the implementation of this medium in ways that are effective and relevant to the individual class...

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

10 Facebook Group in An EFL Grammar Classroom

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Abstract: Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) is considered the 4th revolution in the evolution of human communication (Harnard, 1991) and studies have shown that CMC could bring positive impacts to language learning (e.g. Chun, 1994; Warschauer, 1997; Payne & Ross, 2005; Kost, 2008). One of the most popular social networking websites where people could interact with each other is Facebook. With the fact that Facebook has become a significant part of students' life, there have been studies to find the pedagogical potentials of this online tool in L2 learning (e.g. Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Baran, 2010; Hew, 2011; Sumakul, 2012). This paper elaborates these potentials particularly in grammar learning, where EFL learners practise their English grammar lessons through communicative activities in a Facebook Group. The discussion is based on research conducted in an EFL grammar classroom in Indonesia. In a semester, blended with regular classroom activities, the teacher created a Group page on Facebook and the students were given extra assignments for them to do in the Facebook Group. In detail, this paper discusses the pedagogical aspects of the use of the Facebook Group in the grammar classroom by exploring the learners' experience in doing their online assignments and the features of their interactions. Another practical implication, which EFL teachers could also learn from this study, especially in designing online-based activities, is that of the difficulties and challenges the learners need to cope with when participating online.

Key Words: CMC, online learning, Facebook, grammar, communicative activities

Introduction

Grammar is an important element in language learning. Ellis (1992) argues that grammar teaching helps the acquisition of foreign languages. Therefore, despite the fact that there are still opponents to grammar teaching, within the scope of this paper, we need to agree that grammar teaching is important in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

One thing to consider in EFL teaching is the use of technology. For instance, in this era of information and globalisation where the Internet is a common medium for people to communicate with each other, social networking websites have been praised to have the potentials in language learning. One of those websites is Facebook.

Facebook was created in 2004 along with the development of Web 2.0 technology which adds interactional features in Internet communication. Started in the US, Facebook soon spread to all over the world, including Indonesia. In November 2010, Cutler (2010) reports that Indonesians have become the second largest group of users of Facebook (after the US). A more recent survey shows that there are currently more than 700 million users of Facebook around the world and about 39 million of them are in Indonesia (Gonzales, 2013). From this 39 million, about 67% of them are in the age range of 14-24 years old, our EFL students. Given the fact that Facebook is a universal phenomenon and is quite popular with EFL learners, teachers could try to see the potentials of integrating Facebook in their lessons.

The Internet and language learning

The technology brought by the Internet has brought a new medium in human communication. Traditionally, people use spoken and written forms of language to communicate each other. With the Internet now, particularly after the introduction of Web 2.0, people could easily connect to each other using various Internet tools such as emails, Instant Messages (IMs), and Social Networking Sites (SNSs), which have been widely known as Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). This new phenomenon in communication has intrigued some linguistic and educational researchers

to discuss its potentials in educational environment (e.g. Erlich, Erlich-Philip, & Gal-Ezer, 2005; Baran, 2010; Godwin-Jones, 2010; Hew, 2011; and Anderson, Fagan, Woodnut, & Chamorro-Premuzic, 2012), particularly in language teaching and learning (e.g. Lafford & Lafford, 2005; Grosseck, Branb, & Tiruc, 2011; and Sumakul, 2011), and really apply it in the language classroom (e.g. Blattner & Fiori, 2009; Mills, 2010; Shih, 2011; and Sumakul, Facebook in grammar teaching: A look at 3 EFL classrooms in Indonesia, 2012). Sumakul (CMC in ELT: Teories and Practices, 2012) provides more detailed examples from a number of studies and practices of how online tools are used in the language classrooms.

In implementing this technology into classrooms, Roth (2009) argues that online technologies could make the learning interactive, personalised, and holistic; which are in line with Plato's principles of education. Traditional classrooms are losing the ability to challenge and motivate our Internet generation students, who expect more from a class, not only lectures and books. Today's students are accustomed to living with the Internet technologies in their everyday life. They are considered as digital natives (Prensky, 2001), who would enjoy computer and Internet resources to be used in their classrooms (Luke, 2006). Bringing digital technologies in our teaching would make the class more interesting for the students. These Internet technologies have been embedded in our students' daily lives, and as Chapelle (2003) suggests that we, teachers, could make use of these technologies and explore their implications for language teachers and researchers. With the same sense, Pritchard (2007) argues:

> *With the growing awareness of the theory associated with learning and a growing interest in the ways that new technologies might change the way that teachers teach and children learn, there is scope, perhaps even a real need, to look at what is currently known about learning, especially in relation to the new possibilities afforded by Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs). (p. 2)*

Defining CMC

CMC exists not only in the form of text-based form but also in the form of video-conferencing, where people could talk like in Face-to-face (FTF) conversation. However, in linguistic studies, to distinguish it from traditional writing processes and FTF conversation, CMC is mostly related to text-based communication. Within that sense, CMC is defined as 'the direct use of computers in a text-based communication processes' (Miller & Sullivan, 2006, p. 2). Furthermore, CMC also comes in two different modes, synchronous and asynchronous (Hyland, 2003). Synchronous writing occurs when people interact in real time, while asynchronous writing occurs when people communicate in a delayed way.
In this era of Web 2.0 technology, CMC could be found, for example, in chats as synchronous, and in emails as asynchronous. In SNSs, such as Facebook or Twitter, CMC could occur both in synchronous or asynchronous forms. Incorporating the features of both spoken and written languages, CMC is considered as the 4th revolution in human communication and cognition after language, writing, and print (Harnard, 1991). Meanwhile, Crystal (2011), in describing CMC with the Internet as the medium, sees the Internet as the 4th medium of linguistic communication after the phonic medium for speaking, graphic medium for writing, and visual medium for signing.

Advantages of CMC

Research suggests that CMC could bring positive effects to EFL students. In terms of language learning, the first benefit can be seen from the perspective of linguistics. It has been found that CMC could help students produce a higher level of language complexity (Chun, 1994), amplify students' attention to linguistic forms (Warschauer, 1997), help the development of oral proficiency (Payne & Ross, 2005), trigger greater amount of language production (Kost, 2008; Promnitz-Hayashi, 2011), help pragmatic development (Blattner & Fiori, 2009), and have the potential for improving learners' cognitive skills in linguistic analysis (Sumakul, 2011).

From the psychological perspective, CMC could engage learners to the learning activities (Meskill & Anthony, 2007; Mills, 2010), create a positive effect on the student-to-student and student-to-teacher relationship (Mazer, Murphy, & Simonds, 2007), and provide a less stressful communicative environment (Kost, 2008), and develop a positive attitude towards learning (Grosseck et al, 2011). Referring back to linguistic perspective, these positive psychological conditions such as a less stressful and engaging environment and a positive attitude toward learning are important when it comes to language production, in particular if the language used is not the speaker's first or native language.

These advantages are actually the grounds why CMC is suggested as a good tool in language learning. Bringing CMC activities into EFL classrooms would provide learners with an effective and fun way in learning English. Kim (2009) states that compared to learning a language without CMC, students have better motivation with CMC.

The present study

The research was conducted in Structure 2 class, a grammar subject in Satya Wacana School of Foreign Languages. There were 16 weeks and along with the regular class meetings, and intended as a blended learning experience, the teacher created a group on Facebook for the students to do their assignments online.

Research Questions

In this study, the researcher tried to find out the pedagogical aspects and the learning experience of the students. For the pedagogical aspects, the researcher particularly wants to find out how the Facebook Group activities could facilitate the students' learning, while for learning experience, the researcher wants to know how the students find those activities, what the challenges are, and how they students cope with the challenges. Therefore, for these objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

- What are the pedagogical aspects of the use of Facebook Group in the Grammar Classroom?
- What are the difficulties and challenges faced by the students while participating in the Facebook Group of the Grammar Classroom and how do they cope with those difficulties and challenges?

Participants

37 EFL students, 26 males and 11 females, participated in this research. All of them were students of the Structure 2 Class in semester 2, 2011-2012 of Satya Wacana School of Foreign Languages. Their first language is Indonesian, except 1 student from India, whose first language is English.

Research instruments

The instruments used in this research are observation and questionnaires. The observation was done on the Facebook Group (the complete page of this Facebook Group can be seen in http://www.4shared.com/ file/xsVtlsXV/Str_2_FB_Group.html), whereas the questionnaires were distributed at the end of the semester.

Research procedure

The assignments were given after the discussion of a grammar topic and the students did the assignment anytime after the class meeting outside the classroom. They had the whole week before the next class meeting. For these assignments, the students were asked to post sentences on the Facebook Group and they were also asked to comment on their classmates' posts. To help the students, the teacher always provided his posts first as examples on how to do the assignments and the teacher was also involved in the conversations (comments) under the students' posts.

There were 5 Facebook assignments with 5 different grammar topics blended with the regular classroom meetings:

- Expressing Present: students were asked to write their weekend routines.
- Expressing Future: students were asked to write their future plan.
- Expressing Past: students were asked to write their most memorable, most interesting, best, worst, most disappointing, funniest, saddest, or embarrassing experience.
- Interrogative and Negative Forms: students were asked to write a riddle with clues containing at least one negative form. They were also asked to ask questions for more clues in their efforts to answer their friends' riddles.
- Participles: this was the final assignment and the final topic, and students were asked to describe this grammar class or express their opinions or feelings about the class. It could be about the teacher, the lessons, the classroom, or even their classmates.

During the week when the students interacted on the Facebook Group, the teacher, while also participating in the conversations, observed the interactions and took notes on important occurrences. All the posts and conversations were recorded as the Facebook Group page could be saved as a text file or could be printed.

Findings and discussion

Throughout this section, the researcher will present the findings of this research and elaborate the discussion on those findings. In general, based on the research questions, the discussion will focus on the students' learning experience with the Facebook Group to see its pedagogical potentials in language learning. At the end of this section the challenges of implementing this online technology in the grammar classroom will also be elaborated.

Pedagogical aspects

The pedagogical implications of technology in teaching and learning processes can be observed through its application in classrooms. Traditionally, classroom research is limited to the activities conducted inside classrooms. With the rapid growth of ICT, however, the term classroom needs to be redefined as learning environment (Nunan, 2005). Correspondingly, Warschauer (2006) argues that new technologies could change what, how, and where people learn.

However, applying new technologies in the language classrooms is not always easy and appropriate. Bringing new technologies into the teaching and learning practices needs careful thought and consideration. In relation to that, Roth (2009), by referring to Plato's advice in using technology in educational contexts, argues that a new technology can be implemented appropriately and effectively if it can make the learning interactive, personalised, and holistic. It means that, the technology should promote active interactions among learners, the interactions should generate personalised learning, and the learning should take place holistically, not just partially and passively. In this study, the

assignments were designed to meet those 3 required factors in implementing technology in the classrooms and fortunately, during the observation it was also found that the assignments on the Facebook Group could make the learning interactive, personalised, and holistic.

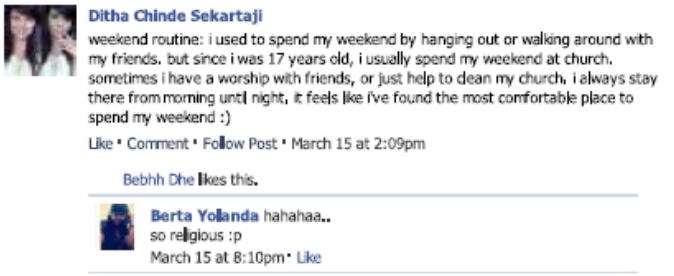
Figure 2 below is an example. It is an excerpt from one of the students' post when doing the assignment on expressing past.

Figure 2: A student's post on expressing past

The post could trigger other students' comments and make the grammar learning interactive. There were actually 23 comments following this post, and many of the students' posts were able to invite large number of comments. The longest discussion for a post recorded in this study had 47 comments. This kind of long discussion involving a great number of students was not found in any of their regular classroom meetings. Some factors might affect this, such as the time constraints in the physical classroom meetings and the students were afraid to make mistakes in their sentences. However, this is not the case in an online discussion. They have all the time in the world, since they could post their comment any time they wanted, and they could always check their sentence or even ask for help from a friend or consult their grammar books and dictionary before posting their comments.

The post in Figure 2 above also resembles the personalised learning. It was the student's personal experience, not just a sentence made up to fulfil the grammatical requirement of the assignment. From the observation, it was noted that most of the students' posts are related to their own experience, feelings, and thoughts. Particularly, the comments following a post all came from the students themselves. For example, when a student asked a question, it was a real, personal question. It was a referential question and not a display one. Another example of a post resembling personalised learning can be seen in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3. A student's post resembling personal experience



The students' experience in using the Facebook Group as their learning environment shows that they were not merely practising English grammar through their sentences. It was a whole learning experience. They were actively involved in each of the assignment and actively expressed and shared their life stories, feelings, and thoughts.

Figure 4. A student's post resembling holistic learning

In the excerpt above, a student posted about her saddest moment in her life. Interestingly, her friends showed their sympathy through their sentences commenting on the post. This shows that learning grammar cannot only be done through producing error-free sentences but also how to put the forms in appropriate contexts. Here the learning is personalised and at the same time contextualised. Moreover, as part of the lesson on participles as adjectives, the students were also invited to express their opinion about their learning experience in using this Facebook Group as part of their lessons (see Figure 5 for an example). Here, holistic learning process also took place. The students were involved actively in their own learning, by evaluating the learning process.

Figure 5. A student's post expressing her opinion on the Facebook assignments

In the questionnaires, when the students were asked what they like about the Facebook Group activities in their lessons, the answers of 16 of them are related to educational aspects. For example, they said that the online activities made them practise to make sentences in English, made them study more since they have to consult books, dictionaries and online resources so they could write good English sentences, they could get help from their friends and also the teacher and improved their English, and they could learn from their friends' posts. Some answers also related to social (10 students) and psychological (15 students) factors. For example, they said that the assignments could make them communicate with the teacher and other friends, even with those whom they rarely talk to in real life. Some also said that these online activities could make them talk much, unlike in class. They were shy in class, but not in the Facebook Group.

Grammar lessons are usually associated with forms. However, the influence of Communicative Language Teaching and later the introduction of Functional Grammar have changed the practices of grammar teaching and learning. Students are not only taught the correct forms of the language, but also how to use those forms in appropriate functions; their communicative functions and meanings. The same thing is applied in the grammar class observed in this research, the Structure 2 class. Although the syllabus is based on some grammatical forms, such as tenses, negative and interrogative forms, and participles, the assignments designed to be used on the Facebook group are intended for the students to use these forms in communicative contexts. By referring to different previous studies, Mills (2010) discusses that online interactions and discussions could facilitate learning. She points out, without the presence of native speakers, the learners' interaction only among themselves but in meaning-focused and engaging discussions could help them in their learning.

Difficulties and challenges

The students enjoyed their learning experience with the Facebook Group. In the questionnaires, all of them said they like this Facebook Group activity and when asked what they did not like about it, all of them said nothing they did not like about the activities.

Nevertheless, it does not mean this approach is flawless. Still from the questionnaires, many of the students admitted they still had problems in grammar and vocabulary when they were writing their sentences online. Although 5 students said that they had no difficulties with grammar in vocabulary, 15 said they had problems with grammar, 16 with vocabulary, and 6 with both grammar and vocabulary.

The difficulties, however, did not prevent them from participating in the Facebook Group. Despite the errors they made, they still understood each other. It was the difficulty they were facing that made them learn even more. As noted earlier, when asked in the questionnaires, the students said when they had difficulties they consulted their notes, grammar books, dictionary, friends, the teacher, and even went online for references. In relation to that, the nature of the CMC interaction, like the one in this Facebook assignment, is such that it is able to amplify learners' attention to linguistic forms (Warschauer, 1997) and provides the domain for grammatical analysis as it is part of learners' cognitive processes during online interactions (Sumakul, 2011). In addition, Yule (2010, p.192) explains that learners' communication that is based on errors and error-correction is not helpful in language learning. As long as the learning atmosphere could provide supports and encouragement for the students to use the target language, learning will tend to be more successful.

Besides those linguistic difficulties, there were also some other non-linguistic challenges the students needed to cope with. 5 of the students said they had no Internet at home, 5 said they had no money to go online, and another 8 said that their Internet was so slow. Some students said sometimes they had to borrow their friends' mobile phones or laptops to go online. Some said that they had to go to Internet cafes at night to do the assignments, and even worse, some of them said they needed to borrow money from their friends to pay for their time at the Internet cafes. They were willing to do that because they enjoyed this learning approach and wanted to take part in these online activities. Probably, these challenges could only be found in developing countries like Indonesia and are not common in developed countries where the welfare levels are much higher. However, these challenges need to be taken into consideration when designing courses online, particularly in developing countries.

Conclusion

The Facebook Group activities designed for the grammar classroom in this research could be considered successful in that it could promote active learning for the students. The assignments could invite

interactions among the students, the interactions are contextualised to reach the students personally, and the meaning-focused and engaging discussion in the Facebook Group could involve the students holistically in their learning experience. In addition, the answers from the questionnaires reflect that the students could learn better and had more fun in their learning with these online activities.

One important aspect also worth noting is the non-linguistic difficulties the students needed to cope with while completing their online assignments. Financial matters and slow Internet connection could prevent the students from attaining their successful online learning experience. Although these might not be a common phenomenon in many educational contexts, particularly the ones in developed countries, they are still significant factors to consider when designing courses online.

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

11 Teaching EAP in a Blended Environment: The MOODLE Experience

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Abstract: Abstract

The use of computers and the internet in education has significantly advanced the field of language teaching. Technology tools provide teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) with brand-new possibilities to enhance and diversify the teaching-learning process. Innovative teaching approaches coupled with specific web-based applications such as MOODLE have become ubiquitous elements of teaching languages in Israeli universities. The Tel Aviv University Division of Foreign Languages has developed and successfully employs blended MOODLE-based courses that integrate traditional face-to-face with online learning and teaching. Our aim is to share the experience of designing and teaching one of the English for Special Purposes (ESP)/English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses for the Health Sciences. The course is intended for advanced English level students of nursing who aim to improve their English for academic purposes in order to meet university language requirements and be able to apply their knowledge and skills in the academic and professional spheres. Compared to a traditional learning environment, a blended learning environment significantly promotes students' interest and facilitates active participation in numerous classroom activities (such as vocabulary enrichment exercises, quizzes, polls, forums, online tasks and video assignments) in addition to improving students' self-instruction skills. Evaluating the benefits of teaching EAP in a blended learning environment, we believe that the effective tools of the MOODLE software and its open and user-friendly nature enhance cooperation between teachers and students in their mutual efforts to improve academic achievements.

Key Words: language education, English for Academic purposes (EAP), MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment), blended learning environment, nursing

Introduction

In the 21st century, the discipline of nursing has greatly advanced not only in clinical expertise but also in the development of a sound nursing theory. At the same time, a nursing shortage remains a worldwide issue. According to Ben Natan and Becker (2010) the nurse–to–patient ratio in Israel is one of the lowest in the Western world. To remedy the situation, the Israeli Ministry of Health, in close cooperation with the university-based nursing schools, offers academic programs to young people willing to pursue a career in nursing.

In Israeli higher education settings, the medium of instruction and communication is Hebrew; however, "students are required to read content-course bibliographies in English" (Spector-Cohen, Kirschner, & Wexler, 2001, p.367) at the onset of their undergraduate programs. Therefore, reading comprehension courses in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) have become a necessity. Furthermore, English reading proficiency for nurses is considered a requirement "to health care professionals in order to communicate efficiently and share information in the world today" (Chang, Chan, & Siren, 2013, p. 584). The Tel Aviv University Division of Foreign Languages has developed and successfully employs EAP courses for registered nurses (RN). The student population is represented by undergraduate students and working nurses interested in continuing their professional development. As Israel is a multicultural and multilingual country, it is interesting to note that for the majority of the student population, English is their third language, with native languages including Arabic, French, Russian, Amharic and Spanish. The teaching staff is represented by ESP / EAP instructors, both native and non-native speakers

of English.

Our aim is to share the experience of designing and teaching one of the English for Special Purposes (ESP) courses for the Department of Nursing, the Stanley Steyer School of Health Professions. The course, which was designed using the MOODLE (Modular Object Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) platform, is intended for advanced level students of nursing who aim to improve their English for academic purposes in order to meet university language requirements and be able to apply their knowledge and skills in the academic and professional spheres.

The concept of a blended learning environment and the EAP advanced course design

Designing an academic profession-related course using the MOODLE platform necessitates defining the blended learning appropriate for our teaching purposes. Garrison & Kanuka (2004) suggest the following definition: "Blended learning is a student-centered approach to creating a learning experience whereby the learner interacts with other students, with the instructor, and with content through thoughtful integration of online and face-to-face environments" (p.96). Banados (2006) defines blended learning as:

> *A combination of technology and classroom instruction in a flexible approach to learning that recognizes the benefits of delivering some training and assessment online but also uses other modes to make up a complete training program which can improve learning outcomes and/or save costs. (p.534)*

According to Hodgson (2010), blended learning is "the concept of integrating face-to-face instruction with technology-infused environments that are geared towards constructive interactions among peers and student-to-teacher" (p.1).

When reflecting on these and many other similar definitions, two things become obvious: first, the term *blended learning* has become a buzzword and is to remain in the university setting, and second, the most important feature of the concept of blended learning is that it "tends to recognize the value of both technology and f2f teaching" (Torrisi-Steele, 2011, p.362). As there is no consensus regarding a universal definition of a blended learning environment, and the existing definitions range from rather broad statements to quite specific ones, we formulated the following definition: a blended learning environment in a university setting means the integration of traditional face-to-face classroom teaching and learning (with web-supported elements) supplemented by online individual learning activities.

This view of a blended learning environment served as the foundation for designing our EAP English Course for Advanced Students of Nursing. The course is composed of content-based units made up of academic professional materials, with an emphasis on academic reading.

In the process of designing this course we focused on how to blend a traditional face-to-face learning approach with online sources, instruction and learning, and what optimal amount of blending is necessary for the creation of an effective blended environment. Based on our experience, we believe the proportion between face-to-face and online interactions should remain flexible, and depends on the course instructor and the course objectives. For this particular course we decided each blended unit should include:

> **Assignments** learners can complete alone (reading articles, engaging in online activities).
>
> **Activities** that benefit from interaction (class discussions of concepts, interpreting written results of assessments and assignments, getting feedback on written work, demonstrations and personal feedback) (Mohammad, 2009).

Course assessment is based on summative and formative types of assessment; the formative assessment is conducted through learning activities (e.g. online quizzes, MOODLE vocabulary quizzes), where students are responsible for unassisted personal learning. All learning materials are available for download from the university MOODLE-based web site. The course is scheduled for two ninety minute classes per week for fourteen weeks (one semester). The English Course for Advanced Nurses contains more units, articles, related worksheets and various online tasks than can be covered in a single course in order to provide teachers with a variety of materials from which they may select the materials most suitable for their students' needs.

The suggested academic articles "require a high level of linguistic proficiency and presuppose extensive background knowledge" (Spector-Cohen et al., 2001, p.368). The course includes various text types, such as empirical researches, historical reviews, problem-solution articles, editorials, case studies, and overview articles, with a focus on empirical research articles. In order to integrate the educational and professional needs and aims, topics are chosen, revised and reviewed at the beginning of each semester through consultations with faculty members and students of the Tel Aviv University Stanley Steyer School of Health Professions.

The place of the MOODLE software in the course design is worth mentioning separately, as this educational

tool presents a valuable asset for language instructors. Its open nature, user-friendly navigation and variety of tools enable teachers to shape an efficient learning environment suitable for any given course. Various MOODLE resources (text files, Power point files, video and audio files, links to websites, etc.), activity modules (assignments, forums, choice / poll activities, quizzes, etc.) as well as blocks providing extra information (latest news, quiz results, etc.) were brought together and developed for the purposes of this course. Having designed the course under discussion, and with several semesters of experience in teaching it, we became convinced that the course effectiveness depends on the right combination of teaching and learning items available on MOODLE, together with traditional face-to-face interactions and students' motivation to work on unassisted assignments. The suggested range of online and face-to-face interaction for our course varies between 65%-35% accordingly (see the course syllabus).

Syllabus and description of a unit

We present here the syllabus of the Advanced English Course for Students of Nursing to illustrate an example of a blended learning environment. To suggest how to effectively employ MOODLE materials, face-to-face interactions and unassisted learning, it is important to clarify some of the course components and present one of the course units – the unit on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Syllabus for Advanced English Course for Students of Nursing

1. Course Objectives: The main objective of the Advanced English course for Students of Nursing is to develop students' language competence in their university studies as well as at work. English for nurses is taught from the broad view of medicine and health care, enhancing language application through vocabulary acquisition and grammar. The course mainly focuses on academic reading, with special attention to writing, listening and speaking. Specific objectives include:

- Expansion of general academic vocabulary.
- Acquisition and expansion of professional medical and nursing vocabulary.
- Identifying extra – textual information.
- Reading various types of academic and quasi-academic texts.
- Development of bibliographic skills.
- Practice of listening skills.
- Practice of speaking skills – dialogs, discussions, role playing (pseudo-immersion experience), etc.
- Practice of writing skills as feedback on reading comprehension and listening.

The Advanced English course for Students of Nursing is based on a blend of online and face-to-face instruction methods. The texts and the majority of text related materials (i.e. vocabulary exercises and quizzes, forums, reading comprehension worksheets) are downloaded from the MOODLE course web site. Topics for discussions on specific issues, worksheets for teacher-led sessions to consolidate main points from diverse sources, as well as reading comprehension quizzes are provided during face-to-face instruction.

2. Course Requirements:

Course requirements	Mode of fulfilling requirements (face-to-face / online / unassisted work)	Weighted grade
Class Assignments	Reading comprehension quizzes, vocabulary quizzes (including online quizzes), online assignments, forums and homework.	35 %
Midterm Unseen Exam – empirical research	'Unseen' exam: 1.5 hours, with dictionaries based on a theme and text type covered in course readings.	15%
Unassisted Learning Group Project (ULGP)	Power point presentations, webpages, written reports, oral presentations, etc.	15%
Final Unseen Exam	'Unseen exam': 3 hours, with dictionaries based on a theme covered in the course readings.	35%

3. Bibliography:

1. Texts and materials for the course: To be downloaded from the course web site: http://moodle.tau.ac.il.
2. Dictionaries: Any dictionary, including electronic dictionaries. It is recommended to have a good English-English Learner's dictionary as back up. **Note: Scanning devices (Quicktionaries, palm pilots, laptops and tablets) are not allowed during the midterm and final exams.**

Unassisted Learning Group Project (ULGP)

One of the course requirements – the Unassisted Learning Group Project (ULGP) – needs clarification, for unlike class assignments and tests that assess students' individual achievements, the ULGP encourages peer-assisted work, sharing ideas and group creativity. Our students (in groups of 3-5) prepare Power Point

presentations on profession-related themes, utilizing various media tools (animation, graphics, videos), creating web pages, and producing their own short video clips. Two weeks before the end of the semester, the projects are uploaded to MOODLE for peer-review and submission to the instructor. This collaborative work increases their interest in communicating in English and thus serves the purpose of improving language skills. In exceptional cases teachers may provide help to struggling students by recommending certain websites, lists of professional journals, and offering some other practical assistance.

Forum activity as a significant element of the course unit

When compiling the unit materials for this course, particular attention was paid to the students' participation in forums as one of the individual learning activities. Forums are a popular form of involving students into online communication, and thus serve the purpose of facilitating the learning process. It has been noted that students share their opinions and emotions freely in the forum environment (Balçı, 2008, as cited in Geçer, 2013), and this online activity has a positive effect on their communication with their teachers and peers. Course MOODLE forums are based on the topics being discussed, and invite students to express their ideas, encouraging them to share their opinions in written form. Forum participation requires certain writing skills and acquaintance with netiquette, so before posting on the forum our students are expected to review and improve their knowledge of English grammar (sentence structure, use of connectors), bibliography conventions, and more. For instructions and practice, students are referred to a separate unit entitled: "Resources." One of the advantages of the forum as opposed to face-to-face class discussion is that it enables "total" student participation, which is particularly important in multicultural groups and large classes where better versed students may dominate class discussions.

Assessment criteria for the Unassisted Learning Group Project and forum activities are clearly delineated to the students in advance and include the level of topic reflection, appropriate use of references and citation ordering, forum interaction, and language command (vocabulary, grammar). In this out-of-class learning process, students employ different learning styles and have more opportunities to present their past experience and knowledge than in the traditional classroom environment.

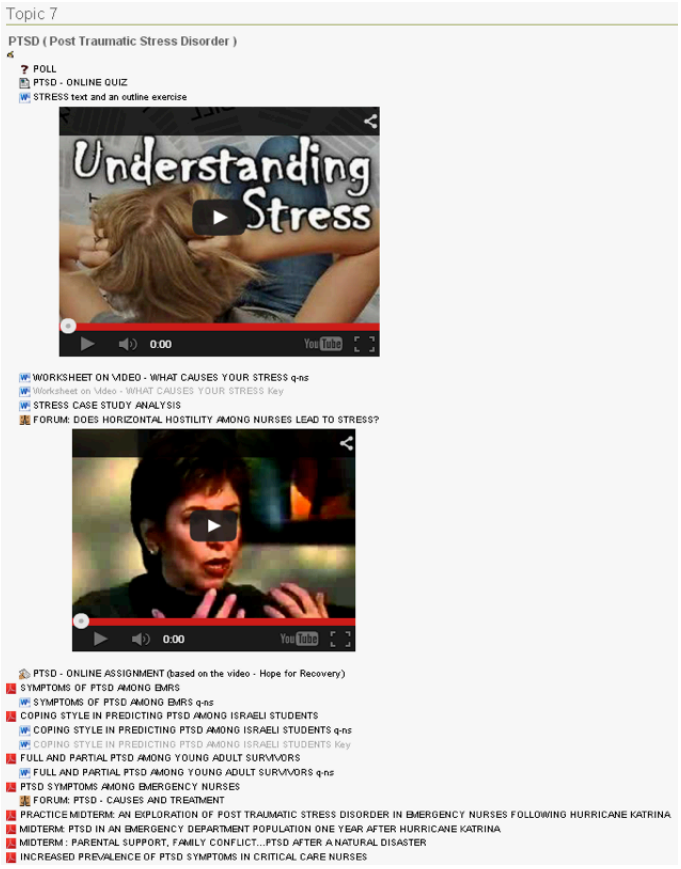
PTSD unit description

The PTSD unit consists of two parts: (1) general information on stress, including articles familiarizing students with the symptoms and consequences of stress (as stress is one of the primary causes of PTSD); and (2) information and articles on full-blown PTSD.

The following introductory activities are conducted in class: an online poll and a short article on stress and its causes. The video *What Causes Your Stress? Understanding Stress* with an online task is assigned for homework. A discussion forum entitled: *"Does Horizontal Hostility Among Nurses Lead To Stress?"* ends the first part of this unit.

An online individual activity – a PTSD quiz – precedes the second video *Hope For Recovery*, introducing the topic of PTSD. We recommend showing the video during the lesson, followed by another online learning assignment. After reading and discussing several articles on stress and PTSD, e.g. *Symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder among Emergency Medicine Residents* and *Copying Style in Predicting PTSD among Israeli Students*, a quiz is given to assess understanding of the research article structure, revise previously acquired reading comprehension strategies, and consolidate information from the online sources and course readings. Participation and posting on a PTSD forum is assigned for unassisted work. As this unit is studied in the middle of the semester, the Midterm Exam on PTSD concludes the first part of the course (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Screen shot of the unit on PTSD



Based on this detailed description and the suggested way of blending MOODLE resources, activities and face-to-face interactions for this unit, it may be seen that

effective teaching in a blended environment may be achieved by the appropriate selection, compatibility and combination of teaching materials and teaching methods together with the language instructor's perception of his/her new role and duties in such an environment.

Instructor's role in a blended environment

The role of an EAP course instructor in a blended environment deserves special mention as it dramatically differs from that of the traditional "sage on the stage" transmitting theories, facts and concepts to students who are mainly "information receivers" to a "guide-on-the-side" who is able to construct a stimulating blended environment and become their students' collaborative partner and adviser in searching for information and in their learning process. Our perception of the instructor's role in a blended environment discussed in this paper mostly supports previous research stating that "the nature of teaching, roles and workload distribution changes as instructors teach in blended and/or online courses" (Coppola, Hiltz, & Rotter, 2002; Young, 2002 as cited in Redmond, 2011). In addition to the requirements and duties of a language instructor in a traditional university teaching environment, this new concept of the instructor's role implies, among other tasks, deciding on the type and quantity of online resources to be included in each course unit, determining the appropriate blending of these resources with traditional in-and out-of-class activities, as well as assisting the student in orienting and navigating him/herself within the web space.

Developing and employing online course materials requires a sufficient level of computer literacy on the language instructors' side, which is a relatively new component in teaching as a whole. In general, Israeli students have a good command of computer skills. We have found it useful to provide university support of faculty training to support technology-enhanced learning. Thus, the Tel Aviv University Division of Foreign Languages conducts regular MOODLE workshops, with positive results.

One of the realities our language instructors face is that a blended learning environment demands an individualized approach, not only to each student but also to each student community (each community being a group of about 40 students) taught during the semester. Increased teacher flexibility in the lesson planning and task assignment is necessary for our students of nursing, since most of them are older than the general student population, work night shifts, and have families.

Although our students' intrinsic motivation towards their studies is embedded in the concept of nursing and is encouraged by the department members, a certain degree of compromise is appropriate when assigning large amounts of work for self-learning so as not to "overload" students, as this may sometimes lead to decreased motivation. Thus, language instructors should pay special attention when selecting assignments for homework.

Whereas some previous research has indicated that "faculty members tend to perceive a lack of student motivation in blended courses" (Ocak, 2010), our experience supports the view expressed by Derntl and Motschnig-Pitrik (2005, as cited in Mehmet, 2010) who argue that blended teaching increased students' motivation to participate in courses, compared to non-blended teaching).

At the same time, a "cookie-cutter" approach and a "wait and see" attitude seem unsuitable for this student population. Moreover, timelines in the blend of online and face-to-face environments may require flexibility, especially regarding assignment submission. However, the risk of procrastination by less disciplined students increases and should not be ignored. As the designers and coordinators of this course, we suggest that language instructors working with students of nursing do not underestimate these issues.

One of the major concerns of language course instructors in blended environments is the growing risk of academic dishonesty. It is obvious that students in these environments have more opportunities for seeking information and sharing which may lead to more cases of dishonesty. Furthermore, it is increasingly difficult for instructors to seek and apply methods to prevent cheating. Dishonesty in higher education settings seems to be on the rise, becoming a global problem, and the issue of the teacher's role in preserving academic integrity in the current technological reality is taking on new forms. Since nursing is considered to be one of the most honest professions, with the highest ethical standards (Saad, 2006 as cited in Arhin & Jones, 2009), "one would assume that academic dishonesty would be nonexistent in nursing programs" (Arhin & Jones, 2009, p. 711). However, as practice shows, a growing number of nursing students participate in different kinds of cheating behavior, even when realizing the moral wrongness of their deeds. So, to ensure integrity we suggest that language instructors in similar situations develop and administer multiple assessment methods, combining traditional forms of measuring performance along with alternative ones, suitable for specific blended course assignments.

It is widely recognized that teaching a language is much broader than simply improving students' language proficiency, for teaching a language means teaching a

culture. Course reading materials from various sources published in English include articles on cross-cultural aspects and ethical medical / nursing problems (e.g. organ donation dilemmas), acquainting students of nursing with culture-related health care and nursing issues in such countries as the USA, Canada, Great Britain, China, Singapore, Turkey and India. Thus, language instructors should be aware of the significant cultural differences in medical / nursing practices and display cultural sensitivity when teaching in a multicultural environment.

Conclusion

Compared to the traditional learning environment, which characterized the TAU EAP advanced course for students of nursing in the past, the new blended learning environment significantly promotes students' interest, facilitates active participation in numerous activities (vocabulary enrichment exercises, online quizzes, polls, forums, online tasks and video assignments) and improves students' self-instruction skills. Opinions on the blended environment expressed by our colleagues and anonymous student feedback received at the end of every semester over the past several years seem to demonstrate overall higher levels of motivation and satisfaction in both teaching and learning. However, this assessment requires additional research.

A blended environment based on the MOODLE platform provides language instructors with numerous significant advantages. The following is a list of the most effective and beneficial advantages pertaining to the EAP course:

- availability of numerous online resources
- provision of a simple, clear view of all learning activities and resources for every unit
- uploading new articles and newly developed activities during the course
- flexibility in assignment submission, task assessment and grading
- tracking student activity to see how much time students allocate to different tasks and activities online
- easier control over teaching and learning pace
- dealing successfully with the increased number of students
- 24/7 accessibility for students and instructors
- providing instructors with a better opportunity to know their students' stronger and weaker points, both online and in the classroom

Our experience of teaching a blended EAP course for students of nursing using MOODLE software shows that integrating traditional face-to-face classroom teaching and learning (with web-supported elements) with online individual learning activities can significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning, provide alternative modes of student involvement and enhance different aspects of the material studied by combining background knowledge and reflection, action and theory. Evaluating the benefits of teaching EAP in a blended learning environment, we believe that the effective tools of the MOODLE software and its open and user-friendly nature contribute to the cooperation between teachers and students in their mutual efforts to improve academic achievements.

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12 Online Resources for Teaching Critical Thinking Skills to ELLs: A Pilot Study

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Abstract: A major problem that has been observed by administrators and faculty at international colleges in Thailand is that many students coming from high schools in Thailand have neither the English ability nor the critical thinking skills necessary to be successful university students. As Facione (2013) reports, there is not only a "significant correlation between critical thinking and reading comprehension," but also that college student's GPA is similarly correlated with the scores of critical thinking assessments (p. 21). This pilot project sets out to develop both of these skills among students at an international college preparation center using online teaching tools. The participants are between the ages of 17-20, are both male and female, and the overwhelming majority are of Thai ethnicity. We aim to look at the practice of discretely teaching critical thinking skills, at the same time as teaching basic to intermediate English skills, to see whether students learned how to communicate successfully and meaningfully. Communicating meaningfully requires students to be able to find data, analyze and evaluate it, come to a reasoned decision about that data, and be able to clearly communicate this process to others both verbally and in writing. This pilot project is the first step in examining the practice of teaching the multiple stages of critical thinking through an online platform. After further refinements and piloting, we expect to see a demonstrable increase in meaningful communication after the addition of discrete critical thinking skills in the curriculum.

Key Words: critical thinking, EFL, online learning, Thailand

The concepts of what is now called critical thinking can be traced back to ancient philosophy, and specifically, the Western tradition of Socratic questioning. In recent years, there has been a renewed interest by researchers and educators on how to better define, teach, and analyze critical thinking skills. This paper provides the results of a pilot study in which the researchers set out to discretely teach critical thinking to English language learners using an online interface. Questioning and expressing doubt are the foundations of critical thinking, and as Lopate explains, "The exercise of doubt is something an individual has to cultivate on his or her own, in private, before summoning the courage to air it" (2013, para. 4). Using online tools, students are encouraged to cultivate and embrace the practice of thinking critically away from the classroom. This is done by introducing the concept of critical thinking and the skills that are used when thinking critically. Additionally, the students are given instructional materials on the topics of intellectual standards, logic, and logical fallacies. Finally, students are asked to demonstrate their critical thinking skills through individual writings and group discussions.

Critical Thinking Defined

There has been much debate over how to best define critical thinking (Petress, 2004; Mulnix, 2010). For the purposes of this research, we required a definition that not only fully explained what critical thinking is, but that was also comprehensible enough for lower-intermediate to intermediate level English students. However, finding a definitive definition for the term has proved problematic. One of the problems is that the term is used inconsistently (Lewis & Smith, 1993; Petress, 2004). Facione tried to standardize a definition for critical thinking by asking 46 experts on critical thinking in order to come to a consensus on what critical thinking is. The panel of experts agreed that critical thinking is "purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological,

or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based" (Facione, 1990, p. 2). While this definition is one that the majority of experts asked by Facione were able to agree with, most of the language used in the definition would be difficult for intermediate learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to understand.

In order to try and find a more adequate definition for our students we looked at a number of the other definitions for critical thinking. Ennis, in one of the earliest, and often cited, definitions of critical thinking says that "Critical thinking is the correct assessing of statements" (1963). However, Ennis himself later admits that this definition was too "vague" and that it did not account for what he calls the "creative aspects of critical thinking" (1993). Additionally, definitions on critical thinking are often influenced in large part by the specific domain of the researcher. Petress (2004) finds striking differences in the definitions proposed by psychologists, philosophers, and education scholars. Mulnix (2010) eases some of the confusion around defining critical thinking when she states that "critical thinking has little to do with what we are thinking, but everything to do with *how* we think" (italics in original, p. 3). By viewing critical thinking as a process that describes *how* we become good thinkers, we have been able to give our students a series of steps that break down the different activities encapsulated by the term critical thinking. Both Mulnix's ideas on critical thinking and the process steps laid out by Paul and Elder (2005, see appendix A) provide our students with an easily understandable concept of what critical thinking is all about.

Context

Our approach to the teaching of critical thinking is inextricably linked to our context. Although many materials for the teaching of critical thinking are readily available, few fit the cultural, linguistic, and academic needs of our students. The context of this research can be subdivided into three levels: national, institutional, and departmental. Factors at each level shape the research and guide its course. At the national level, reforms in education drive the interest in critical thinking. These reforms are largely the result of the National Education Act of 1999, which sparked systemic changes that are still ongoing. At the institutional level, Mahidol University International College's commitment to the ideals of the liberal arts education is a central factor. This commitment is partially due to the internationalization of education. At the departmental level, interest in critical thinking is closely tied to a review of the curriculum in 2009. Current EFL and pedagogical theory guided the curriculum review.

National level

The Thai government has initiated several educational reform initiatives in the past two decades. As of 1996, the government has already announced certain goals, including the modernization of teaching methods and decentralization of the school system; however, none of these goals had yet been implemented (de Segovia & Hardison, 2009).The Asian economic crisis of 1997 provided the impetus for deep changes in the educational system. In fact, several explanations for the crash cited the system's failure to prepare graduates to cope with the rigors of the modern economy. For example, an official in the Ministry of Education blamed "people's insufficiency of educational attainment and the deteriorating moral and social values that led to selfishness and corruption" (Sangnapaboworn, 2003, p. 3). A further explanation for the crash was the loss of "Thai wisdom" and the ability to think strategically (Jungck & Kajornsin, 2003, p. 27), while others explained the crash in purely economic terms (Terwiel, 2011). Whatever the true causes for the crash were, it did precipitate change on many levels of the Thai administration.

After the crash, the government promulgated a new constitution. Among the 300 clauses detailing changes throughout the government were several clauses meant to reform the educational system (Terwiel, 2011). These clauses led to the release of an additional educational reform bill in 1997 that called for the cultivation of graduates who were capable of thinking critically to solve local problems (Hallinger, 2010, p. 404). Further change came with the passing of the National Education Act of 1999. This act called for a reorientation of education in Thailand. Among other changes, it called for a shift to student-centered learning that was tailored to individual contexts: "[The National Education Act] provided that educational institutes and agencies concerned need to provide substance and activities in line with the learners' interests and aptitudes bearing in mind individual difference" (Sangnapaboworn, 2003, p. 7). In a major policy shift, the government permitted schools to dedicate up to 20% of their curriculum to locally relevant materials (Jungck & Kajornsin, 2003). Previously, the national curriculum had been standardized throughout the country.

Many researchers (for example Jungck & Kajornsin, 2003; Kirtikara, 2001; Sangnapaboworn, 2003) expressed optimism about the successful reform of the Thai educational system; however, initial changes were largely superficial. Governmental policy had changed significantly, but change "[had] not reached the school and classroom levels in significant ways" (Kantamara, Hallinger, & Jatiket, 2006, p.3). The public recognized the "gap between 'rhetoric and reality'" (de Segovia & Hardison, 2009, p.161), resulting in frustration (Hallinger, 2010). Some change did occur, but it was "fragmented, lacking in deep integration, and well below the content level … envisioned in the education review framework" (Hallinger & Lee, 2011, p. 154). To date, most of the stated

goals have not been reached. One explanation is that the goals were simply too ambitious: "The past decade of educational reform in Thailand is more accurately framed within the metaphor of the 'impossible dream' than as a 'broken promise'" (Hallinger & Lee, 2011, p. 156).

The reform set in motion by the National Education Act of 1999 inspires the current research on the integration of logic and critical thinking into the curriculum at the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics. Reform is still ongoing in the Thai educational system, particularly at the high school level; however, many high schools have not yet implemented student-centered learning, nor have they added critical thinking to the curriculum. Thus, the cultivation of active learning and critical thinking in incoming students is a key role of the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics.

Institutional level

Mahidol University International College is an English-medium liberal arts college within Mahidol University. It was founded in 1986 with the mission to "produce well-rounded graduates and to excel in broad international education research and academic services" ("About MUIC," 2013). Throughout the years, the college has maintained its focus and reaffirmed its goal of "[preparing] its students to meet the challenges of living and working in the 21st century" through a liberal arts education ("A Liberal Arts Education in an Asian Setting," 2012).

Critical thinking is a key component of a liberal arts education. One of the goals of a liberal arts education is to impart "the ability and desire to adopt a critical perspective on one's and other's beliefs, behaviors, values, and positions, whether this perspective leads one to a reaffirmation or revision of one's current position" (Blaich, Bost, Chan, & Lynch, 2004). This being said, no comprehensive definition of a liberal arts education exists. Furthermore, certain dangers are inherent in adopting a particular approach based on its success in another context. As Green (2012) warns, "In education, as far as student learning is concerned, it is a mere step from 'best practice' to 'one size fits all', an approach that threatens to silence a multitude of alternative (even complementary) approaches, especially in a multi-cultural setting" (p. 2). Thus, Mahidol University International College must adapt the liberal arts education to its own context rather than accepting an existing approach in its entirety.

The current research is part of the movement to adapt the liberal arts education to the Thai context. Although extensive materials for teaching critical thinking exist, the majority were written for students with different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, including critical thinking and logic in the curriculum of the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics will prepare students for their liberal arts studies at the college.

Departmental level

Applicants to Mahidol University International College who meet all criteria (e.g., entrance test scores, high school GPA) for admittance but lack the requisite English proficiency have the option of enrolling in the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics. The primary role of the center is to develop students' language skills to the necessary level in as short a time as possible. Additional goals include the cultivation of study skills and general knowledge.

In 2009, the curriculum at the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics underwent a thorough review. Until the time of the review, grammar was the main focus of the curriculum. After the review, the curriculum was more closely aligned with the communicative paradigm. An emphasis on effective communication replaced an emphasis on sentence-level grammatical accuracy. In many instances, formative assessment replaced summative assessment. Also, the revised curriculum replaced presentations with small-group discussions. The curriculum review represented a radical change in the orientation of the program.

The curriculum at the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics continues to evolve in response to students' needs. The immanent integration of the ASEAN Economic Community is making the need for critical thinking skills ever more apparent. Because of the lowering of barriers to international trade and international employment, students who are now studying at the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics will enter a competitive job market upon their graduation from Mahidol University International College. Graduates must be flexible to face such competition, and critical thinking skills are essential to such flexibility.

The current research into approaches to teaching critical thinking is compatible with the communicative approach to language teaching. The study of critical thinking is by nature thought-provoking, and it can provide fruitful topics for discussion among groups of students and for essay writing. Such cognitively challenging material may enhance the communicative approach. As Dewey (1915) observed, "There is all the difference in the world between having something to say and having to say something" (p. 39). Students of critical thinking will not lack for "something to say" and will not be reduced to discussing trivial topics.

Factors at the national, institutional, and departmental levels drive the current research in critical thinking and logic. Developing a culturally relevant and pedagogically

sound approach to teaching critical thinking will be instrumental in achieving several related goals: at the departmental level, preparing students for the rigors of a liberal arts education; at the institutional level, supporting Mahidol University International College in preparing students to take their places as productive members of society and of the economy; and at the national level, of developing critical thinking skills in the spirit of the National Education Act of 1999.

Goals

The purpose of this project is to create a series of lessons and activities on the different aspects and skills of critical thinking that students will be able to work through independently. As mentioned before, critical thinking skills are desirable because they allow students to communicate in English in a meaningful way; however, it is often difficult to get students to demonstrate these skills in the classroom using either oral or written communication. The idea to put these lessons and activities online came in large part from the Google Course Builder project. Google calls this product their "experimental first step in the world of online education" (Google, Inc., n.d.a). Google demonstrates many facets of the Google Course Builder project with two courses they designed in-house. These courses, called "Power Searching" and "Advanced Power Searching," are meant to teach people how to search the Google website more effectively (Google, Inc., n.d.b).

Teachers can use Google Course Builder to create a website for a specific course. They are able to create a series of classes within each course, and each class can be broken down in separate lessons. The project allows teachers to embed video files that contain the instructional material. This can be done with a simple video of a lecture, a screen capture of an instructor's computer, or video presentations with an accompanying audio from the instructor. At the end of the video, the students are prompted to answer questions about the lesson, or complete an activity before they are able to advance to the next lesson. At the end of the class, students are able to go back, re-watch, and review any of the lessons at their own discretion. Instructors are also able to give timed assessments online at different points during the course (for instance, after the student has completed half of the classes).

It is our desire to create a series of lessons for specifically teaching critical thinking skills to intermediate English language learners while they are concurrently enrolled in the English Program at the Preparation Center. Our courses will introduce students to specific areas of critical thinking, such as logic (and logical fallacies), intellectual standards, types of questions, source selection, evaluating arguments, analyzing assumptions and prejudices, being fair-minded when making judgments, and being able to effectively communicate a judgment. By engaging in these topics away from the classroom, students are able to choose a comfortable environment to test and practice critical thinking skills. After learning these skills and thought processes outside of the classroom, we want students to be able to confidently use the skills in their English classes during general class instruction times, while creating research papers, writing argumentative essays, and during formal, organized discussions.

Materials and Technology

Materials are made available to students at home through a number of different online platforms. Edmodo is a social website designed specifically for students and teachers. Using it, teachers create online "classrooms" which require unique passwords for students to enter. Teachers can create assignments, make comments on individual assignments that have been turned in, send messages to the entire class, share electronic documents, and embed materials right into the class page. Once the students have joined the class, they are able to send and receive private messages with the teacher, post comments and ask questions to everyone in the class, share and receive electronic documents with the teacher, and view their grades.

Google Drive is a platform that allows users to create text documents, spreadsheets, presentation slides, and "forms". Students are able to create text documents that they can then share with others using Google. This tool facilitates peer editing since editors can easily view a document and make comments without disturbing the original text. However, the most useful Google product for this project is the Google Forms. Google Forms is a tool that gives users the power to create online questionnaires that can then be shared with others. Once the Form has been completely answered, the information is then automatically transferred to a separate spreadsheet within Google Drive. Google Forms has proven to be a valuable tool for both creating assignments based on the lectures, as well as getting feedback and comments about the lectures themselves.

Finally, Powerpoint is a software package for creating slideshows. These slideshows can be loaded into a separate program, Camtasia, which enables users to record an audio file on top of the slideshow, combine both the slideshow and the audio file into a single movie file, and then upload and share the movie through YouTube. All of these technologies were central in our efforts to make critical thinking content accessible to our students.

Pilot

In our first semester of piloting this program, we created content for three of the specific areas that we

wanted to teach: intellectual standards, logical fallacies, and types of questions. These topics were chosen because they provide the students with some of the most fundamental aspects of critical thinking. During the "Types of Questions" lesson, students learn about three different systems that can be used to define question and answering: the one system question (that has either a correct or incorrect answer), the no system question (a question that elicits an opinionated response that cannot be assessed), and the multiple system question (a question that requires pulling together information from multiple fields to come up with an answer that can be assessed as either "better" or "worse" than other responses based on the validity of support used in the answer) (Paul & Elder, 2009). In the second lesson, intellectual standards are taught to students as a guide to help them understand what quality thinking is comprised of, and the topics introduced include: clarity, accuracy, precision, relevance, depth, breadth, logic, significance, and fairness. Finally, we also dedicate a separate lesson to logic. This lesson teaches students about the different parts of an argument (premise and conclusion), and some common logical fallacies that students are likely to encounter.

Using Camtasia, we were able to record five videos that combined a slide presentation of the material and the instructor's voice narrating over the slideshow. The videos ranged from just over seven and a half minutes to a little over seventeen minutes long. The videos were then uploaded to YouTube and shared with students by embedding them in the Edmodo digital classrooms. In addition to watching the videos, students were asked to complete assignments based on the topics in the lecture. Some of the assignments included creating transcripts based on in-class student discussions in order to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of arguments based on the intellectual standards and logic. Others involved analyzing outside texts that contained a mixture of errors in both intellectual standards and logic. Finally, they were asked to analyze arguments from their own writing assignments that were produced both before and after the critical thinking lessons.

Implications for Research

After running the critical thinking pilot program for one semester (ten weeks), we asked the students to fill out an anonymous questionnaire using Google Forms. A total of 49 students in two different classes responded, giving a response rate of 92%. The forms asked both Likert and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was not an assessment item at all; rather, the document asked students to give feedback on their experience watching the specific lessons (see appendix B). The Likert responses tended to rate the videos favorably. Overall, students indicated that they were able to understand the presenter's language (5.52 out of 7), understand the presenter's vocabulary (5.10 out of 7), and understand the content of the lecture (5.29 out of 7). They also indicated that they would be likely to view one or both videos again (5.23 out of 7) and to a lesser extent that they would recommend the videos to someone in a different class covering the same topics (4.98). The open-ended responses gave us a more critical insight on the lessons. Several students commented favorably on the clarity of the language used in the videos (n= 11) and the clarity of the content (n= 19). This is an encouraging result, as providing cognitively challenging material using simple language was a primary goal of the pilot. While many of the students commented on the clarity of the lectures, a number of others commented that some of the lessons would benefit from including more examples of the concepts (n=9). While each of the lessons contained at least one to two examples of each concept, additional examples could be provided to the students using supplemental materials. As more lessons are planned, instructors need to remain cognizant of the abstract nature of the issues surrounding critical thinking and provide numerous examples of the material during the lecture videos as well as supplemental material to ensure that critical thinking concepts are accessible to learners.

During the piloting of this program, no formal assessments were given concerning critical thinking skills. Instead, instructors and students informally assessed whether or not critical thinking skills were learned, retained, and being demonstrated. This assessment generally occurred through verbal feedback during discussions and written feedback on essays. Searching for critical thinking assessments presented instructors with problems similar to those that they faced when looking for materials for teaching critical thinking; mainly that the language used in many assessments is not written with intermediate to upper-intermediate English language learners in mind, and many of the materials are vastly out of context at the Preparation Center.

Conclusion

Lack of critical thinking skills remains a major problem at international colleges in Thailand. This pilot study has provided insights into the effective use of online materials in teaching discrete critical thinking skills in an English curriculum and has clarified the steps necessary for the cultivation of our students' critical thinking skills. A definition that is comprehensible for EFL learners needs to be agreed upon, materials need to be developed so that students are able to engage them in a non-threatening environment, and abstract concepts need to be thoroughly reinforced with concrete examples.

Overall, we judge this project to be a small but important step towards improving our students' education. In the spirit of the National Education Act of 1999 and mindful of the upcoming integration of the ASEAN Economic Community, we will strive to provide our students with the skills necessary to succeed at university and beyond. Through this process of continuous improvement, we will learn alongside our students.

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Appendix A: Paul & Elder (2005)

1. Raise vital questions & problems that are clearly and precisely formulated
2. Gather & assess relevant information
3. Come to well-reasoned conclusions, then test these against relevant criteria & standards
4. Think open-mindedly
5. Recognize and assess assumptions, implications, & consequences
6. Communicate effectively with others

Appendix B: Reflection / Response Form

1. Were you able to understand the presenter's language? (Likert scale 1-7)
2. Were you able to understand the vocabulary that the presenter used? (Likert scale 1-7)
3. Were you able to understand the content of the lecture? (Likert scale 1-7)
4. How likely are you to rewatch one or both of the videos? (Likert scale 1-7)
5. How likely would you be to recommend one or both of these videos to someone in a different PC3 class? (Likert scale 1-7)
6. In your opinion, what are the strengths of these specific videos? (Open-ended)
7. How could these specific videos be improved? (Open-ended)
8. Please share any additional thoughts that you may have. (Open-ended)

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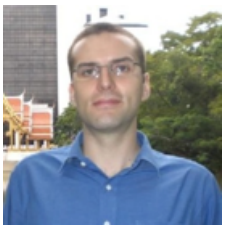

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

13 Use of Gamification in Vocabulary Learning: A Case Study in Macau

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Abstract: The power of gamification has widely been acknowledged in education to engage and motivate learners when used properly in classrooms (Hammer & Lee, 2011; Muntean, 2011). More specifically, games can increase students' level of attention and persistence in learning. In order to win, students typically experience repeated failures when playing games, but through such repeated failures, learning takes place. This is particularly important for vocabulary learning. According to Nation (1990), learning new vocabulary in a second language requires 5 to 16 exposures. In this sense, games help provide such exposures as they involve repeated failures. This study investigated the usefulness of using Web 2.0 games to help students learn vocabulary in a tertiary institution in Macau. In this study, students learned and reviewed vocabulary through two online games, namely "Fling the Teacher" and "Jeopardy". Then an online survey was conducted to collect feedback from 91 freshmen. The aim of the survey was to find out students' opinions and attitudes towards using online games in learning vocabulary and its effectiveness. The results showed that students preferred using technology to learn vocabulary not only because it was more fun and exciting but also because it facilitated vocabulary retention. Gamification improved students' attitudes towards language learning. This study confirms that the appropriate use of gamification can enhance learning.

Key Words: gamification, Web 2.0, vocabulary learning, online games

Introduction

This paper focuses on the effectiveness of two online flash games in helping undergraduate students at a medium-sized university in Macau retain new vocabulary learned. The university is the main tertiary institution in the local region with a 32-year reputation where English is used as the medium of instruction. The majority of the students are L1 speakers of Cantonese while the rest are from mainland China who use Mandarin as their L1. Most of the students attended Chinese-medium schools throughout their primary and secondary school education.

Students are placed into different English courses according to their English proficiency level. However, there is one common problem among students irrespective of their English levels. They claimed that it is difficult for them to remember and retain English vocabulary that they have learned. The traditional way is to complete exercises such as multiple-choice questions, blank-filling, and cloze on worksheets to enhance and review the vocabulary learned, but students are not motivated. They are also shy to ask questions to clarify the meaning of words or phrases which they are not sure of. Doing vocabulary worksheets is boring and painful for them. In view of this, the researcher created online vocabulary games using Web 2.0 tools to help students review vocabulary in an interesting and interactive way. Besides, Chinese students tend to be passive learners, relying heavily on teachers to help them in their study. In order to guide them to become active learners, students are required to collaboratively produce their own games to challenge their peers.

The aim of this study is to identify the effectiveness of using online flash games in learning and reviewing vocabulary. The study attempts to answer the following two research questions:

1. Can interactive online games help students learn and retain vocabulary?
2. What are students' perceptions of using online games to review vocabulary?

It is hypothesized that the use of online flash games will enhance students' ability in retaining vocabulary. It is also expected that there will be positive feedback about the usefulness of interactive online games from students. This study should help gain insights into the students' attitudes towards incorporating technology into the course. If their attitudes are positive, more Web 2.0 tools can be integrated into the language courses. Furthermore, if students share the same positive views towards the effectiveness of using games in teaching, then it may show that gamification can improve students' learning across disciplines as the participants are from different courses. Therefore, the researcher would like to conduct this research project to test these hypotheses.

Literature review

Knowing and memorizing vocabulary of a foreign language is essential if one wants to learn that target language, and repetition is necessary to help retain new knowledge. According to Nation (1990), learning new vocabulary in a second language requires 5 to 16 exposures. However, if learners rely on drilling alone, which is a popular way for most Chinese students when learning English vocabulary (Dai & Gao, 2011), it is very boring and will eventually decrease students' interests in learning (Yue, 1991; Deng & Hu, 2007). Therefore, it is imperative for teachers to find ways to help students remember new words in a more interesting and interactive manner.

Gamification and motivation

Motivation is crucial in learning. If students are not motivated, even if they have the ability to solve a problem, they may not end up solving it. Conversely, if they are highly motivated, even though they have limited ability, motivation will help them to find the means to accomplish a task and eventually enhance the ability. However, according to Fogg (2002), motivation and ability alone are not enough; a 'trigger', which is like a call for action, is also required so as to tell the user to achieve a certain behavior. Software applications can serve as such 'trigger' to change people's attitudes and behavior.

Gamification has been shown to engage and motivate learners when used properly in the classrooms (Hammer & Lee, 2011; Muntean, 2011). Gamification is the application of game elements in non-gaming situations, that is, to convert useful activities into games (Deterding et al., 2001). Its aim is to combine extrinsic and intrinsic motivations to raise the engagement of users by using game-like techniques such as scoreboards and personalized fast feedback, and thus to motivate or influence their behaviour (Flatla et al., 2011). Intrinsic motivation is an internal desire to perform a task and results in high-quality learning and creativity while extrinsic motivation occurs when external rewards not related to the task itself drive the user to take an action, for example, money, good grades, awards (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The use of games increases students' motivation because when faced with a challenging task, they will become fully engaged. Therefore, in order to enhance motivation, teachers can incorporate game elements into work activities (Shneiderman, 2004).

In order to make learning more engaging, a game should have the following characteristics (Jones 1998, as cited in Kirriemuir & McFarlane, 2004): (i) It is something learners can complete; (ii) it is something learners can concentrate on; (iii) it has clear goals; (iv) it provides immediate feedback; (v) it encourages deep but effortless involvement; (vi) it helps learners exercise a sense of control over their actions; (vii) concern for self disappears during flow, but sense of self is stronger after flow activity; and (viii) sense of duration of time is altered. Malone (1980) and Csikszentmihalyi (1990) describe this flow of experience as the enjoyment of playing games. Prensky (2001, p. 124) summarises this kind of experience as a state when the challenges presented and your ability to solve them are almost perfectly matched, and you often accomplish things that you didn't think you could, along with a great deal of pleasure. There can be flow in work, sports, and even learning, such as when concepts become clear and how to solve problems obvious.

Games have also been shown to help learners learn better when they are participating and having fun. The colourful and interactive online games attract players because they can stimulate more than one sense at a time. Hoogeveen (1995) pointed out several benefits in using multimedia to learn a language: (i) learners respond to multimedia in a complex way and give the feeling of experiencing information instead of simply acquiring it; (ii) the man-machine interactions are more friendly interactions than face-to-face ones; and (iii) students feel more engaged with multimedia, and learning thus becomes an enjoyable experience (as cited in Deng and Hu, 2007).

Benefits of educational games

Educational games can facilitate learning experience, and the use of games in the classroom is very beneficial for students (Barab, Gresalif, & Arici, 2009). Students may give up easily when they experience failures but they react differently when playing games. The essence of video games involves perseverance, intelligence, practice, and learning in order to succeed (Gray, 2012). Lee & Hammer (2011) pointed out in their study that educational games are able to meet three types of learners' intellectual needs (namely, cognitive, emotional and social needs), thus creating positive emotional experiences. Cognitive benefits include the

development of problem-solving skills. Players must successfully complete one level before moving on to the next level. The rewards obtained for each level provide constant motivation and also develop players' skills at the same time. Gamification can also address students' emotional needs. In order to win, players must experience numerous failures, and each time they fail they learn something. The satisfaction of completing a level and advancing to the higher level offsets the negative feelings of repeated failures. Moreover, the immediate feedback provided about players' performance can be motivating and encouraging and through repeated attempts, results are improved. Students learn that making mistakes or even failure is not the end but provides an opportunity to learn and improve their skills and knowledge. However, if students experience failure in a traditional classroom, it is difficult to turn this negative emotion into a positive one. Gamification does offer the opportunity to turn negative emotions into positive experience.

In view of the popularity of video games among people of all ages and their power to engage players to hold their concentration for long periods of time, it is worth bringing this engaging and stimulating tool into the classroom. Moreover, with the availability of computers and Web 2.0 online tools, it is possible for teachers to create their own games and make learning fun.

Digital natives

The participants in this study are digital natives who were born after 1980, and the perfect learning environment for them includes computers, iPads and cell phones; online videos and games; courseware, a variety of search engines; and anything animated, interactive, and musical (Carlson, 2005; Prensky, 2003, 2004). Digital natives tend to become bored quickly in a traditional classroom because they expect a high level of interactivity (Johnson, 2012). When provided with a challenging environment, with immediate feedback and short-term goals, they experience motivational factors which are important in learning (Blumenfeld, Soloway, Marx, Krajcik, Guzdial, & Palincsar, 1991; Pintrich & Schunk, 1996). Games are considered effective both as motivation tools and as learning environments (de Freitas, 2006; Kirriemuir & McFarlane, 2004). Therefore, the goal of gamifying activities in class is to motivate students to learn and help them remember the content and materials they need to advance well through the course in a fun and relaxed way.

Methodology

Participants

Five groups of students were involved in this research. They were all aged between 18 and 20 from different faculties who had to take English I or Business English in the second semester of their first year of the undergraduate programme. There were a total of 31 students distributed in two English I classes and 70 in three Business classes. 72.3% of all the participants were local students and the rest (27.7%) were from mainland China. Of the 101 participants, 61 (60.4%) were female and 40 (39.6%) were male. The majority of the student respondents (82%) were from the Faculty of Business Administration, with 13% from Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, 3% from Faculty of Science and Technology and 2% from Faculty of Education.

This study was conducted in the spring semester, 2011-2012. Participants gave their consent for using the data collected from class for research, scholarly publication and/or conference presentation. After having tried the two games, students were invited to complete an online survey about their opinions on and attitudes towards using online games in learning vocabulary and its effectiveness (see questions in Appendix A). The survey was posted on Moodle, a Learning Management System (LMS) that students used in their English course. The survey completion rate among students was 91/101 (90%).

Procedures

The first step was to select a list of vocabulary words from students' textbooks. The researcher used Content Generator (http://contentgenerator.net) and Jeopardy Labs (http://jeopardylabs.com) to create interactive online vocabulary activities to review the target vocabulary with students. Both games are available free online.

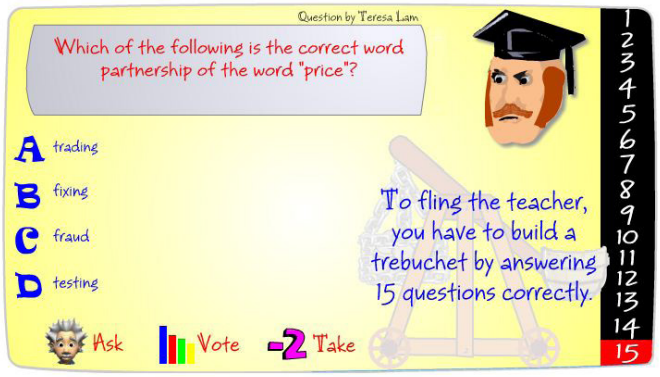
Content Generator: Fling the Teacher

Content Generator is an open-source online programme that provides games templates which allow users to create their own e-learning quizzes and flash games. The games are in flash format, and flash is freely downloadable and is installed on over 90% of the computers on the University campus. It means the games can be used on webpages, learning environments like Moodle, intranet or personal computers. There are 15 flash games templates available, and "Fling the Teacher" was selected to create the online vocabulary activity because it is similar to the television quiz show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* In the show, contestants are required to answer multiple-choice questions. They may use "lifelines" or "helplines" such as "Take two away", "50/50" and "Ask the expert". Students have seen this game show before so they are familiar with the rules and can start playing the game right away without spending time exploring the instructions of the game.

Students were taken to the computer lab to play this game to review the vocabulary words that they had learnt. Each student occupied a work station as this

game was intended for one player only, but students were also allowed to work in pairs. Before students started playing, they had to create a cartoon "teacher". The goal of the game was to build a trebuchet with 15 pieces of wood and then fling the "teacher" that students had created. One piece of wood would be rewarded for one correct answer. For each question, four answer choices were given (see Figure 1). To fling the teacher, students had to answer 15 questions correctly. Students might use the "helplines" but sometimes the hint might be wrong, which made the game more exciting. If an answer was wrong, they had to start from the beginning and the questions would be jumbled up and selected randomly. Therefore, it was advised to have a large question bank so students would not get bored easily answering the same question again and feel that the game was not challenging enough. In this study, 45 questions were prepared. Students were given 10 minutes to complete the game and those who finished before the time limit were encouraged either to help other classmates or play the game again because the questions might be different the second time they played it. The game would then be posted on Moodle for practice outside class.

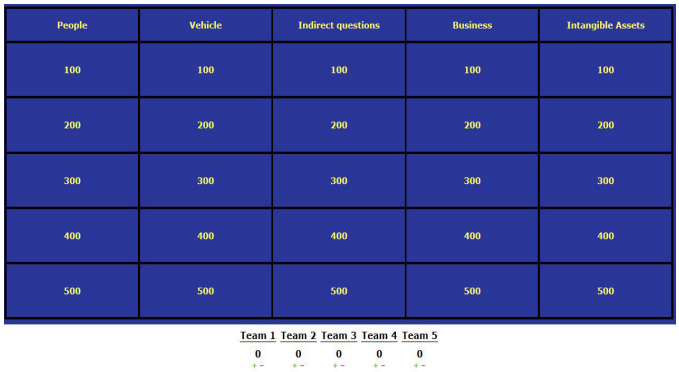
Figure 1: Layout of the game "Fling the Teacher".



Jeopardy

After playing "Fling the Teacher", students formed into groups of 4-5 to play the Jeopardy game. Jeopardy Labs is a free, online tool for creating an answer-and-question game like the popular American television quiz *Jeopardy!* The game was slightly adapted in which contestants were asked a question and had to provide an answer rather than being presented with clues in the form of answers and phrasing their responses in question form. Questions were divided into five categories with five questions each (see Figure 2). Each team took turns to select a point value from any category. Each question carried different marks according to the level of difficulty of that question. If students gave the correct answer, they gained the corresponding point value. If their answer was wrong, points would be deducted from the team. The team who obtained the highest mark won.

Figure 2: Jeopardy game created by students



To help students experience the thrill of the game before they were asked to produce one by themselves, they played the game prepared by the teacher in class which served as a demo. Then students were invited to create their own jeopardy quiz to challenge their classmates the following class. The programme is user-friendly, and a jeopardy quiz is easily done with a few clicks.

Before creating the quiz, students checked the questions and answers with their teacher to ensure accuracy. Asking students to actually create the quiz themselves has two obvious advantages: first, it serves as a good opportunity for them to clarify any misunderstanding of the new vocabulary and concepts; and second, the level of difficulty of the questions would be suitable for them too. After the game was saved, an URL was generated, and students sent the links of their jeopardy games to their teacher to be posted on Moodle.

In the following class, the teacher randomly selected a jeopardy game created by students from another class and projected it on the whiteboard for the whole class to play. As students were playing the games, they were subconsciously drilling the vocabulary.

Results

Data from the survey were converted so as to analyze descriptive statistics. Frequencies, means and standard deviations were calculated. A t-test was run to test if students from the two groups, that is, students who took English I and students from Business English classes, had different perspectives towards the usefulness of online games in helping them learn vocabulary. The data obtained correspond to the research questions listed below:

1. Can interactive online games help students learn and retain vocabulary?
2. What are students' perceptions of using online games to review vocabulary?

When students were asked to choose whether they preferred using online games or worksheet to review

vocabulary, 100% of students from English I classes and 85.5% of Business English students expressed their preference for the former (Table 1). This might be due to the fact that this was the first time interactive online games were introduced in class; thus, compared with the traditional way of revising vocabulary on paper, students found it interesting. Furthermore, all the student participants were digital natives who like the excitement that video games bring.

Table 1: Preference of using online games to review vocabulary.

	English I (N=29)		Business English (N=62)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you prefer revising vocabulary using online games more than worksheet?	29 (100%)	0 (0%)	53 (85.5%)	9 (14.5%)

When asked whether they think the use of online games can help them remember new words, 87.9% (80 out of 91) of the students commented that they could remember new words more easily when revising them through playing the two games – "Fling the Teacher" and "Jeopardy" (Table 2). In fact, students were actually drilling the vocabulary without realizing it because when they failed to answer one question in the game "Fling the Teacher", they had to start the game all over again. However, when they made mistakes working on the worksheet, the chance of them reviewing the mistake was minimal. On the other hand, when students prepared the jeopardy quiz to challenge their classmates, key ideas were being reinforced through the discussion and interaction among their group members, at the same time clearing out doubts that students might have and thus contributing to their ability to remember new words well. On the other hand, as Table 2 indicates, 18% of the students from Business English class held a different view. This might be because the vocabulary involved more difficult business terminology and complex concepts which required more detailed explanations, but the nature and format of both online games were not suitable for providing such explanations.

Table 2: Ability of online games to help remember new vocabulary

	English I (N=29)		Business English (N=62)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you think using online games to revise vocabulary can help you remember new words more easily?	29 (100%)	0 (0%)	51 (82%)	11 (18%)

Regarding the usefulness of the two online games in learning vocabulary, students considered it "quite useful" (3.6 out of 5), which implies their acceptance of incorporating educational technology into the classroom (Table 3).

Table 3: Usefulness of online games to learn vocabulary.

	English I (N=29)		Business English (N=62)		Significance level (p = 0.05)	t test
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
How useful do you think online games help you learn vocabulary? (1=not useful; 5=very useful)	3.59	0.87	3.52	0.88	0.92	0.72

Key: 1 = not useful, 2 = somehow useful, 3 = quite useful, 4 = useful, 5 = very useful

When asked to compare the two online games, 53.8% of the students (42 out of 91) preferred "Fling the Teacher" to "Jeopardy" (Table 4). Compared with "Jeopardy", "Fling the Teacher" has a colourful flash interface and is not just text based. Students preferred to have answer choices which made the games easier. Moreover, students commented that they enjoyed designing and dressing up the victim and seeing him being flung when they won the game. On the other hand, "Jeopardy" required team spirit, which contributed to more interaction and discussion among group members. The results showed that about half of the class preferred collaborative work. Thus, communicative approach should be used more often in class to motivate students.

Table 4: Preference between "Fling the Teacher" and "Jeopardy".

	English I (N=29)		Business English (N=62)	
	Fling the Teacher	Jeop-ardy	Fling the Teacher	Jeop-ardy
Do you like "Fling the Teacher" or "Jeopardy"?	16 (55%)	13 (45%)	33 (53%)	29 (47%)

The majority of students (82 out of 91) reported that they were willing to learn and practice vocabulary using other online games (Table 5). This shows that this new initiative was successful and that there was a lot of potential for integrating more Web 2.0 tools to engaging students in learning. The small percentage of students who expressed dislike of the online games might be those who were less tech-savvy and felt intimated when

using computers.

Table 5: Willingness to learn and practice vocabulary using other online games.

	English I (N=29)		Business English (N=62)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Would you like to learn and practice vocabulary using other online games?	28 (97%)	1 (3%)	54 (87%)	8 (13%)

Table 6 indicates the perceptions of students towards using online games to learn and revise vocabulary. From the data, it shows clearly that students preferred using online games to using worksheets because it was more fun, interesting and motivating. However, it was difficult to come to the conclusion whether this approach of learning was considered more intimidating, challenging, and/or frustrating by students as the number of "No response" was close to or over 50% (Table 6).

Nearly half of the students in English I classes felt intimidated and frustrated. The possible reasons were that they were not familiar with using technology and that both games were timed. The Internet connection in the computer lab might slow down if all students were using the wireless network at the same time, and computers might become unresponsive. Therefore, the speed of the Internet connection is a consideration when designing online games in the future.

Table 6: Perceptions towards using online games to learn and review vocabulary.

	English I (N=29)	Business English (N=62)
More challenging	18 (62%)	28 (45%)
Not challenging	0 (0%)	5 (8%)
No response	11 (38%)	29 (47%)
More fun	27 (93%)	60 (97%)
Not fun	1 (3.5%)	2 (3%)
No response	1 (3.5%)	0 (0%)
More interesting	23 (79%)	49 (79%)
Not interesting	0 (0%)	3 (5%)
No response	6 (21%)	10 (16%)
More motivating	20 (69%)	36 (58%)
Not motivating	1 (3%)	9 (15%)
No response	8 (28%)	17 (27%)
More intimidating	13 (45%)	20 (32%)
Not intimidating	1 (3%)	9 (15%)
No response	15 (52%)	33 (53%)
More frustrating	13 (45%)	15 (24%)
Not frustrating	1 (3%)	11 (18%)
No response	15 (52%)	36 (58%)

There were positive and negative comments about the usage of online games to learn and practice vocabulary. The overall feedback was very positive, as many students claimed that they remembered the words better than by merely completing vocabulary worksheets. Students also gave constructive feedback in improving ways of designing games in the future. The responses were categorized in Table 7.

Table 7: Students' feedback regarding the use of online games to learn and practice vocabula

Positive feedback	**No. of responses**
It is good.	6
It is fun.	9
It is exciting.	3
It is interesting.	11
Practice vocabulary using online games is better than doing worksheet	6
Learning through online games helps us remember vocabulary easier	10
Negative feedback	**No. of responses**
Lost a lot of time playing games in class	1
It is fun but it can't help in remembering vocabulary	2
Can't review a lot of vocabulary at a time	1
Suggestions	**No. of responses**
Include more questions with different levels of difficulty and quiz types	4
Include spelling quiz	2

The results agreed well with the data in Table 6 that students preferred using online games to learn vocabulary not only because it was more fun and exciting but also because it facilitated vocabulary retention. The data also provided clue as to why some students might not feel challenged, as some of them commented that the questions were easy. Nevertheless, the difficulty level of the questions was intentionally set lower, in order to enhance students' interests and boost their confidence since it was the first attempt to adapt interactive online games in class.

Overall, the data obtained showed that the majority of students preferred to use interactive online games as a tool to review vocabulary.

Discussion

Using online games seems very promising but there are possible dangers of using gamification in learning. Firstly, if the design is not suitable for

the purpose of motivating students to engage in the targeted activities, students will not benefit from it, and it will become more like a gimmick than a tool to help students learn. Secondly, rewards of most gamified activities are usually external motivating factors, such as badges, status, money, fame and praise, so students may assume that they should learn only when they are motivated extrinsically. Thirdly, gaming is seen to be an antisocial activity because most games are often played alone.

The results of this study show that gamification can help build up students' competitive spirits and can increase their cognitive and social growth. When they are given the task of creating their own game, they have to apply many different skills and use prior knowledge in order to accomplish the task. At the same time, they start to take control of their learning through the process of trial and error. This will help students become competent and independent learners.

It is worth noting that some students may not be interested in games and are not tech-savvy, so they may feel intimidated. Teachers should provide guidance by demonstrating how to play the game so students do not have to spend a lot of time experimenting with it, which may be a deterrent for them. Technical support is essential to reduce students' frustration especially if they have to create their own video games.

Gamification also helps students become active learners. Students' feedback shows that many students tend to focus only on the fun and usefulness of online games in helping them learn and retain vocabulary, but they overlooked one important aspect in this experience. They were engaged and motivated during the production process of the online game. While creating their own games for their peers, they took the initiative to clarify any misunderstandings and misconceptions they had about the terminology and explored the different usages and applications of the new words. Through this process, student-centred learning was promoted. Students did not rely on their teachers in learning. They no longer have to merely complete worksheets provided by their teachers in order to check their understanding of what was learned. They can take the initiative to ask questions, rethink, internalize the knowledge, and become active learners.

Conclusion

Gamification has been shown to make education more interesting and engaging. It helps students to become more motivated towards learning because of the positive feedback they get from the game which then stimulated them to learn. However, when a course or even an activity is gamified, a clear goal must be set. If a game is well-planned, it can increase students' motivation, engagement, and cognitive development. From this study, it is shown that gamification could improve students' attitudes towards language learning and that the appropriate use of gamification can enhance learning.

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Appendix A: Survey about the effectiveness of "Fling the Teacher" and "Jeopardy"

1. You prefer revising vocabulary using online games than worksheet.
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. You think using online games to revise vocabulary can help you remember new words more easily.
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. From 1 to 5, rate how useful do you think online games help you learn vocabulary.
   1= not useful; 2 = somehow useful; 3 = quite useful;
   4 = useful; 5=very useful
   ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3
   ☐ 4 ☐ 5
4. Do you like "Fling the Teacher" or "Jeopardy"?
   ☐ Fling the Teacher ☐ Jeopardy
5. Would you like to learn and practice vocabulary using other online games?
   ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Learning and revising vocabulary using online games rather than worksheet is:
   ☐ more challenging ☐ more motivating
   ☐ not challenging ☐ not motivating
   ☐ more fun ☐ more intimidating (frightening)
   ☐ not fun ☐ not intimidating (frightening)
   ☐ more interesting ☐ more frustrating
   ☐ not interesting ☐ not frustrating
7. Do you have any comments about the use of online games to learn and practice vocabulary?

About the Author

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

14 Using Unconventional Genres For University Writing Courses

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Abstract: Mainstream university language courses in Hong Kong are mostly academic or discipline-related (e.g. Academic English, Workplace English, English for Specific Purposes). They aim to develop essential language skills for work and study. However, learning about these academic and workplace genres may not result in immediate improvement of writing ability, which requires continuous exposure and practice to develop. With the change of the university curriculum from three to four years starting from 2012, students will have more time to develop their language proficiency. The new curriculum will also be more inclusive of a variety of other non-language educational outcomes related to all-round development, such as lifelong learning, critical thinking skills, cultural understanding, global outlook, social responsibility and ethical conduct. There is a need to go beyond the conventional university writing genres with an academic or practical orientation to include other genres which encourage more personal, subjective or creative expressions. This paper discusses the rationale and benefits for using more unconventional journalistic and literary genres in designing elective writing courses for the new university language curriculum, with reference to two new courses being developed. Using these genres can facilitate the development of students' writing ability and general proficiency through a more content-based and integrated approach to language learning, and encourage students to develop an extensive reading habit. Data were collected from the process of piloting one of these courses to examine whether these unconventional genres help to scaffold the writing ability of students and cultivate their interest in writing.

Key Words: curriculum development; materials design; genre pedagogy; writing skills; extensive reading

Introduction

In most of the universities in Hong Kong where English is both a second language and a medium of instruction, much emphasis is often put on language courses to enhance students' ability in using English. They are mostly Academic English (e.g. English for Academic Purposes (EAP)), or Workplace English/ Discipline-related English courses (e.g. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)) with the aim to develop essential language skills for work and study. Usually, they have either an academic or practical orientation, covering writing genres/text-types such as academic essays, workplace reports or business correspondence. However, acquiring knowledge about these academic and workplace genres in English courses may not result in immediate improvement in language ability. Mastering these genres and writing them correctly, appropriately and expressively require continuous exposure and practice. It also requires the development of high language proficiency, with good ability to make use of a wide range of expressions and structures.

According to language learning theories, acquiring declarative knowledge of language forms may not immediately result in successful language production. Continuous opportunities to practise using the forms are required to proceduralise the knowledge before automatisation in language production is achieved (DeKeyser, 1998). Students need to take language courses not only for the purpose of learning about major academic and workplace genres, but also to be continuously exposed to the language in order to enhance their general proficiency. After taking the core university language courses, students may still need to take other language courses which do not repeat similar academic and workplace content in order to maintain learning motivation for developing their language ability.

Writing in the university curriculum

With the change of the Hong Kong university system from a three-year to a four-year curriculum, the development of generic and language skills has been receiving more attention in the curriculums of most of the universities. In the university where this study took place, the development of reading and writing skills, in particular, has become a major focus in the new curriculum. In response to the new developments, a number of reform initiatives have been implemented. One example is a common reading programme which is conducted by this university library to encourage first-year students to read a common book and share ideas in small-group discussion sessions. Another initiative is a writing-across-the-curriculum project which aims to integrate writing activities in courses of different subject areas.

The development of writing ability has also become more important with the increasingly inclusive curriculums in universities nowadays. Aside from learning about their own subjects and developing good language skills, university students are also expected to attain a wide array of non-language generic learning outcomes such as all-round development, creativity, sense of ethical and social responsibility, cultural understanding and global outlook (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2013). Writing has an important role to play in facilitating the attainment of these learning outcomes. As a means of communication and presentation through effective use of language, writing involves inquiry, discovery and meaning-making (Hillocks, 1995). It is closely related to the dialectical skills of interaction and discussion (Vygotsky, 1978), which can facilitate the development of critical thinking – an essential skill for university studies.

Writing, in particular, is a core ability that students need to develop in order to attain high academic performance. As one of the core language production skills, it is more often featured in academic assessments compared to speaking. Written papers, reports and examinations are often the mainstay for universities to evaluate the achievements of their students. As an integrated approach is usually adopted in current practice for teaching and learning English, the development of writing skills is often connected to the development of the other core language skills. It is most closely related to the development of reading skills, as the exposure to reading materials helps students to gradually acquire the language structures and expressions they need to use in writing. Some researchers even believe that reading is the backbone for the development of language proficiency. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985), being continuously exposed to "comprehensible input" in reading which contains structures that are a little beyond the learner's current level of competence facilitates gradual language development.

In response to the changing needs of the new curriculum, Hong Kong Polytechnic University Language Centre has introduced a number of new courses to enhance students' language skills, aside from revamping the conventional Academic English courses. One of these is an advanced reading and writing course which targets advanced English learners who have a relatively higher language proficiency than the average students and who have completed the required EAP course for all the first year students of the university.

The next section will discuss current approaches to university writing. This will form the basis for exploring the rationale for using unconventional genres such as literary and journalistic writing in designing the reading and writing course launched in the first semester of 2012-13.

Current approaches to teaching writing

The process approach has been a popular approach for teaching second language writing in the past two to three decades. This approach emphasises the importance of the writing process over the writing product. Learners are expected to engage in the various stages of planning, drafting, editing and revising their writing for continuous improvement (Seow, 2002). It is often believed that this inductive and learner-centred process of discovery and reformulation will help learners develop their writing skills gradually. In recent years, some researchers and practitioners have questioned the adequacy of this approach in helping learners to develop their writing ability. Hyland (2003), for example, believes that the process approach over-emphasises the writer's internal cognitive processes and neglect the underlying social contexts for effective written communication.

To redress these inadequacies in facilitating the development of writing ability, a genre approach has been proposed for teaching writing. As defined by Swales (1990), an early researcher on genre pedagogy, a genre comprises a class of communicative events, where participants share the same set of communicative purposes within a discourse community. Examples of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. Learning about the special features of different genres helps students to understand the social and cultural contexts in which genres occur for making appropriate linguistic choices in their writing.

With reference to Halliday's (1985) ideas on field, tenor and mode, Macken-Horarik (2002) stresses the importance of context in communication and in language production, and the need to use genre-

based pedagogy for scaffolding students in making use of unfamiliar genres. Other researchers have also advocated the advantages of using the genre approach in different areas of curriculum design and instructional strategies (Bhatia, 1993; Cope and Kalantzis, 1993; Johns, 2002; Paltridge, 2001). Hyland (2003) further suggests synthesizing different approaches to promote a more complete understanding of the nature of writing and learning to write. The genre approach and the process approach can be used complementarily for this purpose.

Advocates of genre pedagogy believe that learning should be based on explicit awareness of language, rather than through experimentation and explanation; teachers need to provide students with opportunities to develop their writing skills through analyzing 'expert' texts which serve as models (Hyland, 2003). Using writing models helps to support the development of writing skills making use of scaffolding strategies, when the teacher provides temporary assistance to learners with a view to helping them develop the abilities to write independently later. Through a process of "gradual approximation" described by Widdowson (1978, 91-93), involving the provision of a language model and a communicative context to support language development, the teacher can guide the learners to understand and create new texts based on sample texts. For the millennial students of today who are often exposed to writings of varying styles and qualities and may feel confused about standards, deductive instruction or guidance for writing development based on explicit models is likely to be beneficial.

Among the genres that can be exploited are the more unconventional journalistic and literary genres. The benefits of using these in the teaching materials for the reading and writing course will be discussed in the following section.

Using journalistic and literary genres in language courses

Two major types of unconventional genres have been used in the course materials: literary and journalistic genres. Literary writing is used mainly to arouse students' interest in extensive reading by exposing them to common literary genres like short poems and fictional writing (e.g. short stories and extracts from novels). Journalistic writing, such as feature articles, is used to support students' writing development. Students are exposed to various types of writing models and guided to analyse different strategies for use in writing their own feature article.

Journalistic and literary writings are more often used in courses which specifically focus on English literature or journalism. They are less often employed in language enhancement courses which aim to develop students' language skills for work and study. The type of expressive writing strategies used in both journalistic and literary writing are often less formal and more personal and creative compared to the more factual and objective writing strategies usually employed in academic writing. These expressive writing strategies can help to enrich the use of vocabulary and language structures and cultivate students' interest in reading and writing These in turn can support students' long-term language development to achieve higher competence for work and study.

Journalistic writing, especially the feature article, receives particular attention in this course, as students are introduced to different types of feature articles and they need to write a feature article making use of strategies employed in the sample articles for one of the assessments. Although the writing style of feature articles is not as formal as that of academic writing, it is often based on facts and actual experience, and the use of expository and discursive strategies are similar to those often used in academic writing. As a type of content-based writing, it also provides opportunities and meaningful contexts for students to practise and consolidate the skills they have learned previously in the more conventional university language courses.

The feature article is also a suitable genre for achieving non-language learning outcomes advocated in the present-day inclusive university curriculums, such as all-round development, creativity, sense of ethical and social responsibility, cultural understanding and global outlook (The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 2013). The need to analyse and imitate models of writing may stimulate students' interest in extensive reading of different feature articles, which cover a wide array of topics and employ different types of presentation formats and writing styles. As suggested by Garrison (2010), feature articles may vary from the more descriptive and personal human interest stories, personality sketches and profiles, to the more factual and objective travel writing, how-to-do-it articles, and the more technical and specialised features.

The following section will give a brief description of design of the new reading and writing course which makes use of these unconventional genres. The methods for collecting data from piloting the course on two classes of first-year students will also be presented.

Course description and data collection

The reading and writing course covers three major focuses, extensive reading, critical reading and expressive writing. Literary and journalistic writing materials are used throughout the course, especially for the extensive reading and expressive writing focuses.

Sample feature articles from popular general interest magazines such as Time, Newsweek and National Geographic are used as writing models for students to analyse and imitate. Activities are designed for guiding students to write different parts of the feature article, such as the title, the introductory and closing paragraphs, and the body paragraphs. Relevant sample articles are used to illustrate the following types of text organisation and writing strategies.

A. General principles of text organization such as narration, description, exposition, argumentation

B. Common types of analytical or expository writing strategies such as using facts and statistics, reference to other sources, definition, comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and examples

C. Creative writing strategies making use of literary and rhetorical devices, such as simile, metaphor, pun and anecdote.

To find out whether the materials suit the needs and interests of the students, a small-scale action research study was conducted on two first-year classes of a total of 38 students. Data from the implementation of the course were collected from

- students' written work for practice
- their graded assignments
- their feedback from a questionnaire survey
- field notes taken from observation of their performance and responses in classes and the writing tutorial.

Findings and discussion

A. Observation of performance and writing analysis

The following analysis will examine students' participation and performance in their in-class and out-of-class writing practice and assessment in three areas: the degree of engagement and interest students have shown in participating in the writing activities; evidence of learning from writing models in their written work; and their ability in reflecting on and improving their own writing.

(a) Engaging participation

Students' practice and performance demonstrated their engagement and participation throughout the course. The following are three major types of practice and activities they have accomplished. These do not contribute to course grades but are mainly voluntary contributions to class activities or additional practice students do outside of class.

- Class writing practice (e.g. picture captions and descriptions)
- Additional writing practice (short writing practice in response to teachers' prompts, e.g. limericks; paragraph writing practice on e-learn platform, which is an online learning platform providing supplementary learning resources for students to carry out further practice on their own or according to the instructions of the teacher)
- Extensive reading on e-learn to prepare for sharing sessions of around 20 minutes, for which each small group of two to three students needs to give a short presentation and lead a class discussion on some reading materials.

Students wrote short interesting and creative pieces of writing in the class writing activities. One example is the picture captions and descriptions they wrote in small groups for one of the sample feature articles, 'Time for a Sea Change'. The captions and descriptions are relevant to the pictures and the article, although with different focuses compared to the original captions and descriptions. Two examples of students' writing are included in Appendix 1. Students' writing in Example A provides less factual detail compared to the original version, but it captures the gist of the issue and conveys the impact of the problem clearly. Example B also conveys the main focus of the photo well. Writing a caption from the perspective of the fish rather than that of the author deviates from the approach of the original version, but it demonstrates the students' creativity and autonomy in writing feature articles.

Aside from class activities, a small number of students participated in the e-learn activities put on the e-learn platform for students' voluntary practice, or they did additional writing in response to the teachers prompts for additional practice. For example, one student wrote an ending for the science fiction short story written by Phillip K. Dick, and another student wrote a limerick (Appendix 2). These additional practice works also demonstrate interest and creativity. While the ending of the short story follows the original story smoothly and logically, the limerick expresses clear and meaningful ideas following the rhyme scheme used in the sample limericks the student read on the e-learn platform.

(b) Modelling on writing samples

Students' works also demonstrate evidence of following models according to the genre pedagogy of scaffolding students' writing ability (Hyland, 2003). In both the e-learn writing activities and the feature article assessment, there is evidence of influence by the writing models provided in the course. Students' writing clearly demonstrates attempts to model on the writing skills used in the sample articles the teacher analysed with them. For

example, after they learnt about creative writing strategies such as the use of similes and metaphors, student were asked to use at least one metaphor in writing a paragraph of a feature article. They were given details in the paragraph to re-construct the paragraph in their own language. After they completed the task, they were asked to compare their paragraph with the original paragraph to analyse the writing techniques. Appendix 3 gives examples of students' writing. Although the metaphors they used may not be as vivid and appropriate as the ones used in the original feature articles, they suit the contexts of the writing and convey the main ideas quite clearly.

Another example is writing the leads (introductory paragraphs of feature articles) which often include narrative and descriptive details different from the largely expository or discursive introductory paragraphs they have often written for academic essays. Appendix 4 includes two examples of leads for articles. These are based on students' own choice of topic for the feature article writing assessment. They are quite similar to the writing style of the lead for the sample article, 'Time for a Sea Change', in putting more emphasis on narrative and descriptive writing instead of expository or discursive writing.

(c) Critical reflection and improvement on writing draft

To provide scaffolding for writing improvement, the course requires students to attend a tutorial for their writing draft. With the help of a tutorial guidance sheet, students in the two pilot classes reflected on their own writing at the beginning of the tutorial, focusing on the areas of language, content and organization. They had to refer to their strengths and weaknesses in the three areas, and give examples of language problems that might occur in their article.

Most of the students could suggest at least one or two problems in the three areas similar to what the teacher had identified in their writing, such as:

- The content of my essay is quite rich, but some of the paragraphs are not too well-oganised.
- My article looks like an academic essay; it does not seem very special or interesting.
- My draft is not complete; I am not sure how I can develop my ideas further.
- My ideas are quite well-organised, but I am not sure if have enough ideas for the whole article.
- I have not used a good range of vocabulary in my article.
- There may be quite a number of tense mistakes in my article.

They were also able to ask pertinent questions which could help to further improve their writing. Examples of these questions are:

- Is there sufficient content for my article?
- My ideas do not seem too special. How can I further enrich the content of my article?
- My feature article looks like an expository academic essay. Is this acceptable for this assessment?
- How can I improve the structure/organization of my article?
- Are my sub-headings suitable? Do they help to better structure my article?
- How can I make my article look more creative?

Students were also able to improve their writing by following prompts or suggestions from the teacher (both verbal and written) for improving the language, content and organization of their writing. Appendix 5 gives examples of improved writing compared to their original writing. Improvements in areas of language, content and organization were evident. For example, in Example A, a verb is added to improve grammar; more appropriate and precise words are used to convey the intended meaning; distracting words and ideas not focusing on the topic are deleted. In Example B, more information to contextualise the topic is given by moving insufficiently discussed ideas at the end of the introductory paragraph to another paragraph for further elaboration.

B. Student feedback from questionnaire survey

Section A

Students' feedback from a questionnaire survey on the course shows their views regarding the course in various aspects of interest and usefulness. In section A of the questionnaire, students were asked to indicate the extent that they agree with the statement regarding five areas on a Likert scale of 1 to 5. The following are the average scores for the five investigated areas:

Table 1: Summary of scores for Section A of feedback questionnaire

Investigated areas	Relevant questions	Average scores
Feedback & tutorial	Q.9. 10	4.23
Extensive reading	Q.12, 13	3.84
Usefulness of skills learned	Q.1, 3, 4, 5, 11	3.82
Interest in writing	Q.2, 6, 7, 8	3.67
Web work	Q.14, 15	2.98

In general, the scores show fairly positive response in all the five areas. The areas with the closest scores are interest in writing, usefulness of skills learned and attitude towards extensive reading, which are all above 3.6. While students' attitude towards the tutorial and the teacher's feedback on their writing drafts is most positive with the highest score of 4.23, they did not seem to be too enthusiastic about the web work activities, which have the lowest score of 2.98.

Section B

Students' responses to the open-ended questions in section B of the survey give details relating to students' perceptions of interest and usefulness about different aspects of the course.

The following are the major factors concerning why they consider the course as interesting and useful:

- They like the course because it is different from the formal academic English course they have taken previously
- They like extensive reading as they can be exposed to different genres which they have not learned before
- The course (e.g. the feature article writing assignment) allows more personal and creative expression
- They enjoy learning about and writing feature articles as they are different from academic essays (not so formal)
- They learn about different types of writing skills and strategies, e.g. simile and metaphor (more creative)

Activities they enjoyed most

- The task on writing captions (creative) and descriptions for pictures in a feature article
- Sharing session to research for reading texts they enjoy and to listen to their classmates' presentations
- Guessing the titles of feature articles
- Writing short paragraphs for posting to a blog or forum: e.g. writing the lead for a feature article
- Analysing different genres in class
- Writing online feedback in class: e.g. to respond to limericks written by teacher and classmates; to respond to classmates' writing (e.g. paragraphs for feature articles)

Reasons why they liked extensive reading

- Exposure to other genres different from academic essays
- Reading texts are good models to demonstrate different language features
- Can learn creative writing strategies and vocabulary in order to write better pieces

Reasons why they liked the tutorial

- Face-to-face interaction with the teacher and individual attention from the teacher
- Useful feedback/advice for improving the draft
- Able to ask relevant questions for improving their writing skills
- Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of writing helps to develop awareness and improve writing skills

Reasons why they did not do much web work on their own

- In-class writing and sharing of writing on the web are already sufficient
- Too busy to do additional voluntary practice due to their heavy workload
- Not very useful activities
- Web work can feature more interesting activities, e.g. include more visual and more interactive material(provide answers for self-access and more interaction with teacher, and indicate the progress or completion of activities)
- Technical problems, e.g. system is not user-friendly

Their suggestions for further improvement

- Include a wider variety of reading texts (e.g. feature articles) to suit different interests (e.g. more classic, more contemporary texts)
- Improve the assessments, e.g. for Assessment 2 so that they know more clearly what to do
- Improvement of the e-platform to make it more user-friendly and interactive

Discussion

Data from this study show that the use of the unconventional genres of journalistic and literary writing helps to engage students' interest in extensive reading of works different from the formal academic writing they are expected to learn well at university. Writing on topics of their own choice, while making use of more personal and creative writing strategies, is also motivating. So is the opportunity to share one another's works and ideas in class and on the e-learn platform.

Students also perceive the writing skills they learn from these unconventional genres as useful for their day-to-day communication and future writing development. They consider analysing writing models as beneficial for developing their writing skills. Scaffolding of writing development in a tutorial where they can discuss their writing draft with the teacher face-to-face and

individually is particularly useful.

Students also pointed out the problems in the e-learn system of delivering the web work materials. The interface design needs to be more interactive and user-friendly. More materials which better suit students' interest can also be included.

Conclusion

The experience of piloting the new writing course shows that unconventional genres like literary writing and feature articles can be used beneficially in language courses for university students. Students enjoy learning about a variety of different genres different from formal academic writing. They find that the feature article allows more personal and creative expression which is closer to communication in their daily life. It also helps them enrich their vocabulary and language structures which are useful for their future writing development. Learning from these genres also encourage students to develop their interest in reading extensively.

Students' writing performance also shows the benefits of modelling on sample feature articles. They are able to apply the creative writing strategies they have learned in their writing and they enjoy the experience of writing less formally and more personally. Reflecting on their own writing and discussing their writing drafts with the teacher also help to scaffold their development of writing skills. The process and genre approaches can be best used complementarily to facilitate writing development.

Well-designed e-learn platforms have a potential to facilitate the sharing of students' works and learning from writing models, especially if they are user-friendly and interactive. Students can be both readers and writers in sharing their own writing or responding to others' work. This will help to cultivate students' interest in reading and discussing their works and to sustain their long-term language development. However, technical problems need to be overcome and the design of activities needs to be improved in order to provide a more favourable environment for students to share their works conveniently.

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Appendix 1: Samples of students' writing on caption and description activity

Example A

Caption: High-level fish for high-level people only

Description: The seafood deficit keeps worsening. If the situation continues, only the wealthy can enjoy salmon and tuna which are at the top level of food chain while the poor have no choice at all. The problem should be solved immediately.

Original caption and description for Example A

Caption: What We Eat makes a Difference

Description: A top predator requires exponentially more energy to survive than does a fish at a lower level of the food chain. When wealthy nations catch or buy top predators, they increase their impact on the ocean compared with poor nations, which tend to eat smaller fish.

(Adapted from Greenberg, P. (2010). Time for a sea change. National Geographic, October 2010. http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/print/2010/10/seafood-crisis/greenberg-text)

Example B

Caption: Keep us alive.

Description: The workers are spraying water into the fishing net to keep fishes fresh and alive

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Original caption and description for Example B

Caption: Fish don't stand a chance nowadays

Description: Factory ships like this Lithuanian trawler off Mauritania roam the world, hauling in massive amounts of fish and freezing the catch along the way.

(Adapted from Greenberg, P. (2010). Time for a sea change. National Geographic, October 2010. http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/print/2010/10/seafood-crisis/greenberg-text)

Appendix 2: Voluntary out-of-class writing practice on e-learn platform

Example A: Ending to the short story Beyond Lie the Wub by Philip K. Dick

No moans, no struggles, the wub stopped breathing, with its eyes open. The Captain quickly turned around and walked towards the door, looking for the cook. A moment later the cook came and dragged the wub away. While this is going on, Peterson justed remained silent. He numbly watched the wub shot and dragged away, and then said to himself, at which time the Captain passed him, that" What myth is it? What is it going to tell me?" "Don't bother yourself any more, young man. One that always speak like a philosopher rather than live down-to-earth can never make a difference in the world. Come with us and enjoy our meal!" The captain walked out of the door while speaking.

Example B: Limerick in response to reading on e-learn and prompts from the teacher

I've been left completely alone,
With a smart but lifeless phone.
All my friends are separated away from me,
Leaving my heart drowning in the sea.
How happy I am now to be back "home".

Appendix 3 Use of metaphor (underlined in the paragraphs below)

Example A

Today, Zhou is about 27 years old (he doesn't know for sure). Using the name Huang Jie, Zhou is now an enterpreneur in Lanzhou. He gains profits through buying building materials from mines on the Tibetan Plateau in West China and selling them to the east coast of China for construction projects. He pushes the steps of China's fast developing economy greatly, but who has ever thought that he was one of the victims of Chinese kidnapped children who were sold to unknown families? As a severe tragedy in China, the kidnapping phenomenon is a result of China's moving towards modernity.

Example B

Today, Zhou is about 27 years old (he doesn't know for sure), using the name Huang Jie. He works as an entrepreneur in Lanzhou, a city in Western China, purchasing building materials such as granite and marble from mines on the Tibetan Plateau and supplying them to projects along the East coast. His business contributed to the adrenalizing of the country's fast-developing economy. Who would have guessed that a successful business owner like Zhou is in fact, one of the numerous victims of kidnapping- he was abducted and sold to unknown families, leaving his childhood an irrecoverable wound? Not only is the phenomenon of kidnapped children a tragedy, it is a part of China's development as it moves towards modernity as well.

Original paragraph by Ramzy, A. (2010). The searchers. In Time, November 2010.
http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2030782,00.html#ixzz2ZhUxQaQQ

Today, Zhou is about 27 years old (he doesn't know for sure), goes by the name Huang Jie, and is an entrepreneur based in the western Chinese city of Lanzhou, where he buys building materials such as granite and marble from mines on the Tibetan Plateau. He spends part of each year in Shanghai, selling the materials for construction projects along China's central east coast. Zhou has made a life for himself feeding China's voracious economic engine, but he suffers from memories of a lost past: he was one of countless young Chinese children kidnapped and sold to strangers to be raised as their own. Zhou's story is a human tragedy, but it's also emblematic of a country in the throes of rapid change, torn between tradition and modernity, challenge and opportunity, morality and corruption.

Appendix 4 Modelling of the lead paragraph

Example A: Topic on an incinerator project in Hong Kong

Foaming waves were hitting the rocks, salty winds were touching the glassy sea, and birds were floating in the air, while Kwok Pak Chai and his brother were sailing on their small boats to catch fish. After the trip, they divided their share and sold them in their village market on Shek Kwu Chau- an island two miles away from Cheung Chau- as dozens of villagers were fed by their daily yield. Being the fifth generation living on this island and having fishing as their only occupation, the Kwoks would almost face a massacre. "How would it be possible for fish to swim across this area, if a huge block of reclaimed land stands here?" exclaimed Pak Chai. As he was pointing at an adjacent realm to Shek Kwu Chau, he realised their small boats would be obstructed by the "new land"; exploring new fishing area would be impossible, too, because their boats were not for long fishing trips. In fact, the culprit was an incinerator construction project.

Example B: Topic on public exam in China

It's quite hot in June yet no one seemed to mind that. The gate of the school was blocked by hundreds of students and teachers. Some were talking and laughing loudly some were standing so still as if they saw a ghost. Some were smiling or faking smiles some were thinking or pretending to be thinking. However, despite all that you can still feel a strong anxious atmosphere around here because it's the day The Exam.

The lead in Greenberg, P. (2010). Time for a sea change. In National Geographic, October 2010. http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/print/2010/10/seafood-crisis/greenberg-text
(The article is mainly about over-fishing and the depletion of marine life.)

Just before dawn a seafood summit convenes near Honolulu Harbor. As two dozen or so buyers enter the United Fishing Agency warehouse, they don winter parkas over their aloha shirts to blunt the chill of the refrigeration. They flip open their cell phones, dial their clients in Tokyo, Los Angeles, Honolulu--wherever expensive fish are eaten--and wait.

Soon the big freight doors on the seaward side of the warehouse slide open, and a parade of marine carcasses on pallets begins. Tuna as big around as wagon wheels. Spearfish and swordfish, their bills sawed off, their bodies lined up like dull gray I beams. Thick-lipped opah with eyes the size of hockey pucks rimmed with gold. They all take their places in the hall.

Appendix 5: Improvements in writing based on teacher feedback

Example A

(a) Draft paragraph

In front of the mirror, here is a couple. The young lady is posing in front of the mirror and her husband, feeling pleased with her beautiful slender figure. She is planning to have the further stage of slimming diet in order to lose weight. Besides her, the young man was sitting with his upper body naked. He seems to be appreciating with his strong arms and strapping upper body. Both of them consider themselves as healthy. Is this really true? In our society, health has become one of the major concerns of the general citizens. Exercise, which easy to be performed becomes the major tool of keeping fit. However, with exaggerated advertisements from the commercial sector, people seemed to have a poor understanding of health, which leads them to have wrong plans of exercise. For example, the concept of "slim beauty" is embedded to citizens' mind. In the following, the importance of exercise to people with different body build will be illustrated.

(b) Revised paragraph

In front of the mirror, here is a couple. The young lady is posing in front of the mirror and her husband, feeling pleased with her beautiful slender figure. She is planning to have the further stage of slimming diet in order to lose weight. Besides her, the young man was sitting with his upper body naked. He seems to be satisfied with his own strapping upper body. Both of them consider themselves as healthy. Is this really true? In our society, health has become one of the major concerns of the general citizens. Exercise, which is easy to be performed becomes the major tool of keeping fit. However, with exaggerated advertisements from the commercial sector, people seemed to have a poor understanding of health, which leads them to have wrong plans of exercise. For example, they may think that exercise is used to lose weight and only fat people need it. In the following, the importance of exercise to people with different body build will be illustrated.

Topic: Exercise – a need for different body build

Changes made: a verb is added to improve grammar; more appropriate precise words are used to convey the intended meaning; distracting words and ideas not focusing on the topic are deleted

Example B

(a) Draft paragraph

After our graduation, we have to find a job to earn our living. Everybody wants the "best job", but everyone would his own definition of a "best job". A best job can be a job with very high salary, or a job that satisfies your dreams. You may also find a job that is unique, or a job that you can make quick cash. In Australia, there is the "Best Jobs in the World" competition for people from all around the world to compete for 6 dream jobs.

(b) Revised paragraphs

After our graduation, we have to find a job to earn our living. Everybody wants the "best job", but everyone would his own definition of a "best job". A best job can be a job with very high salary, or a job that satisfies your dreams. You may also find a job that is unique, or a job that you can make quick cash. There are a lot of job opportunities for us, not only in Hong Kong, but also around the world.

If you want to be unique and find an extraordinary job with a high salary, they might possibly be your cup of tea. In Australia, there is the "Best Jobs in the World" competition for people from all around the world to compete for 6 dream jobs. Why are these jobs called the "best jobs"? That is because they have big difference with our "usual jobs" in our society. For most of the ordinary jobs like in the commercial sector or industrial sector, they are repetitive work and require working indoors like inside offices which are usually full of stress and pressure, either from peers and superiors. However, the six "best jobs" requires the employee to go to different places to seek for discoveries or interesting facts. The employees' jobs are to gather what they have seen that day and then upload and share their joy to blogs and social networking websites, so as to promote different sceneries to foreigners to attract them to travel to Australia. This also means that they are paid to travel and enjoy their lives while doing some comparatively easier jobs.

Topic: Best jobs ever

Changes made: The topic is better contextualized by more elaboration concerning why the competition is attractive. This is achieved by adding another paragraph after the introduction to give more information about the competition. Unnecessary details in the first draft were deleted while main ideas to give further information about the competition are added to the revised draft.

About the author

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

15 A Case Study of Hong Kong Undergraduates Undertaking Their Disciplinary Writing Tasks and its Implications for EAP Pedagogy

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Abstract: This paper presents the results of a two year long case study on how university students cope with assessed written assignments in their discipline. Through such writing tasks assigned by their professors, students are enculturated (Berkenkotter, Huckin & Ackerman, 1991) into the discipline. The study shows that the students struggled to accomplish the tasks and that they were not able to transfer the writing skills taught in their general EAP course to their disciplinary writing tasks. It was also found that the participants lacked the genre knowledge of their assigned tasks, resulting in their inability to draw on the disciplinary context as a resource to help them interpret their tasks and to construct the appropriate texts with the right form and content to meet the expectations of the discipline. This paper argues that since genre knowledge "embraces both form and content" (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995: 4) it is important that writing courses that aim at helping undergraduates cope with the writing demands in their disciplines should focus on both form and content. In other words, a discipline- specific, genre-based pedagogy is more effective and can better engage students in their learning process as the course would be more relevant to their needs.

Key Words: disciplinary writing, EAP, discipline-specific, writing processes, genre-based pedagogy

Introduction

English has been widely used as the medium of instruction (MOI) in higher education for many countries (Crystal, 2003:112). One of the reasons is that English has become "the medium of a great deal of the world's knowledge" (Crystal, 2003:110). As Swales (2004) points out, English has been the pre-eminent language of research and publication, especially for research articles that aim at publication in international forums. Since higher education is concerned with access to knowledge in various disciplines, English is often adopted in advanced courses as the medium to acquire the knowledge of that discipline. Another reason, according to Crystal (2003), is the presence of international students in many universities, which makes English as the best choice of a *lingua franca*. This means that many non-native English speaking (NNES) students pursuing their overseas studies have to use English to learn and particularly to cope with the different writing demands in their disciplinary courses.

Findings from previous studies have indicated that NNES students in universities encountered different types and degrees of difficulty in coping with the writing demands in their disciplinary courses. For example, in a case study of four international students in their first year of studies at a US university, Angelova and Riazantseva (1999) found that these students encountered a range of problems in coping with the writing demands in the disciplinary courses, including cognitive and social problems. Connor and Kramer's (1995) study showed that NNES graduate students experienced difficulties in writing business case reports. Leki (1995) reported the strategies NNES students at a US university developed to cope with the writing demands they encountered in their disciplinary courses. In her longitudinal case study of the reading and writing strategies of an NNES undergraduate at a US university, Spack (1997) reported the "failures and struggles" (p.47) of the student

participant in dealing with the reading and writing tasks in the student's disciplinary courses. She also pointed out the inadequacies of English courses in helping the student cope with disciplinary writing: "she [the student] had extensive practice in paraphrasing and quoting course material in English 3 and 4 [English courses she took in her first year]…but in the second year those skills collapsed under the weight of confusion about how to write for PS 160 [a political science course]" (1997:50).

Such difficulties faced by NNES students in the US are also experienced by undergraduates in Hong Kong, where the present study was conducted. In a large-scale (involving around 5,000 undergraduates) investigation into the language problems experienced by local Cantonese-speaking students at a university in Hong Kong, Evans and Green (2007) found that these students experienced various degrees of difficulties in using English to study. Of all the different areas of difficulties, *academic writing* was found to be most difficult area for students. In another study on the perceptions of business lecturers about the language problems encountered by their Chinese students in five universities in Hong Kong, Jackson (2005) found that students "had generally weak language skills, especially writing" (p.299) and that these lecturers "had felt compelled to lower their standard of assessment…" (p.301).

Almost all universities in Hong Kong require undergraduates to take one or several English courses usually in their first or second year. Such courses aim at equipping students with English skills needed for university study and focus primarily on generic academic skills, i.e. English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP). The effectiveness of the writing component of such EGAP courses in helping students cope with writing in their disciplinary courses was questioned by Leki and Carson (1997). In their study conducted in the US, they found that, among other things, there was a disparity between "what is valued in writing" for EGAP writing classes and that valued in writing for disciplinary courses (1997:64). In another study of writing in business courses in a university in the US, Zhu (2004) also found that the skills required for writing tasks in business courses are different from those taught in EGAP courses. In my own experience of English language teaching in universities in Hong Kong, most EGAP courses I have taught are primarily form-focused with a deficit or remedial orientation (Mitchell & Evison, 2006). My students often told me about their difficulties in undertaking the writing tasks in their disciplinary courses and that what they learnt in their EGAP courses was largely not related to what they had to write in their disciplines. However, little is known regarding the extent to which the current EGAP courses in Hong Kong universities are effective in helping students to cope with the writing demands in their disciplinary courses.

The study

This study aims at finding out how non-native English speaking (NNES) business undergraduates in Hong Kong undertake their assessed writing tasks in their discipline. Specifically, it seeks to find out: (1) how they interpret the writing tasks, (2) what sources they use and how they use such sources in their writing, (3) what difficulties, if any, they encounter in their writing processes, and (4) what strategies they employ in accomplishing their writing tasks. These form the main specific research questions of the study.

Research design and method

To investigate how students undertake their disciplinary writing tasks, a case study approach was employed. As mainly an interpretive and inductive form of enquiry, case study, with data collected from multiple sources, enables me to explore in depth the behaviour of the participants in response to their writing demands drawing on the resources available to them. The data sources for this study were mainly from questionnaires (to elicit the background information of participants), text-based interviews (Prior, 1995), participant diaries and various documents relating to the writing tasks under study. In order to increase the validity of the findings of this study, a prolonged engagement with extensive field contacts is essential (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus, I adopted a longitudinal case study approach that covered several written assignments from the participants over a period of four semesters (two academic years). Data collected went through processes of organizing, coding and categorizing (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994) before interpretations were made.

The research site

This study was carried out in one of the seven government-funded universities in Hong Kong. Almost 90% of the students are local Chinese with English as their second language (L2). All universities in Hong Kong adopt English as the main medium of instruction and assessment (except for Chinese-related subjects) against the backdrop of biliteracy (Chinese and English) and trilingualism (Cantonese, Putonghua and English) promoted by the government. (Note: Putonghua is also known as Mandarin.) The study was conducted in the Department of Marketing within the Faculty of Business. This university adopts a semester-based academic calendar. Each academic year consists of two semesters, each of which has 14 teaching weeks. Semester one usually starts in September and ends in early December; semester two starts in mid-January and ends in late April or early May. This study was conducted over four semesters in two academic years; the study carried out in the first semester was treated as

a pilot study.

The business administration field was chosen for this study for two reasons: (1) business administration has been one of the most popular programmes for Hong Kong students' undergraduate and postgraduate studies, and (2) students are expected to have relatively higher English standards to meet the language demands in their future workplaces in the business world.

Participants

The participants, Joan and Susan (pseudonyms), were studying for a 3-year bachelor degree in marketing and had just completed their first year. Although they were studying in the same programme, they belonged to different seminar groups. Data collection started with a self-completion questionnaire, which is composed of two parts: part 1 was designed to elicit information on their personal and education background (language in particular); part 2 was about their own evaluation of their English proficiency and their experiences of learning/using English in an academic context. To ensure confidentiality of information collected and to preserve participants' anonymity, pseudonyms are used to refer to the two students in this paper; also, the name of the university is not mentioned. Based on the data from the questionnaires, I present their general background information in Table 1 and briefly describe each participant below. [Note: The self-rating part of the questionnaire uses a five-point scale: Excellent (highest), very good, good, fair and poor (lowest)].

Table 1: Background information of participants

Names of Participants (pseudonyms)	Joan	Susan
Gender	Female	Female
Native language	Chinese (spoken: Cantonese[1])	Chinese (spoken: Cantonese)
Programme of study at university	Bachelor degree in marketing	Bachelor degree in marketing
HKALE: Use of English result[2]	E	E
IELTS score	Overall score: 6.5 (academic module)	Overall score: 7 (academic module)
	Sub-scores:	Sub-scores:
	Writing: 6	**Writing: 6**
	Reading: 6.5	Reading: 6.5
	Speaking: 6	Speaking: 7
	Listening: 7	Listening: 7.5
EAP result[3]	B	B

Joan

Like most local Chinese, Joan started to learn English in her kindergarten. This effectively means she had been learning English for more than 17 years. She rated her overall English proficiency as just 'fair' and her writing skill as 'poor' compared with 'good' for both listening and speaking skills; her rating for reading was 'fair'. Among the four skills, she found writing the most difficult skill to master, which is consistent not only with her own proficiency ratings but also with her IELTS scores. This shows that she knew her own strengths and weaknesses in her English proficiency.

Writing was difficult for her because she found it difficult to express her ideas in a grammatically correct way. On the other hand, she realised that writing was the most important skill for her study because all the written assignments were in English.

Susan

Susan also started to learn English in kindergarten and had been learning the language for more than 17 years. Like Joan, she rated her overall English proficiency as 'fair'. Her rating for writing, which was 'fair', was slightly better than Joan's 'poor' rating. She also rated her reading skills as 'fair' compared with 'good' for both listening and speaking. Her self-ratings were again consistent with her IELTS scores: writing was the weakest while speaking and listening were the strongest.

Again similar to Joan, she found writing the most difficult skill to master; however, the reasons she gave were different from those given by Joan. She attributed her 'fair' writing skill to not having developed a "good foundation" and little chance of writing after secondary school. The main difficulties she encountered in writing were the use of the right format, right words and correct sentence structure. She also believed that writing was the most important skill for her study because it is the language used in all "paper work" (assignments) and written examinations.

Like most local students in Hong Kong, both Joan and Susan only use English in class: they rarely use it as their daily means of communication.

Findings

The findings of this study have shown that the operations the student participants undertook in their writing process to produce academic writing

1 Cantonese, widely spoken in Hong Kong, Guangzhou and Macau, is regarded as one of the major dialects of the Chinese language. It is mainly used in speaking but its written form is often used informally.

2 *Hong Kong Advanced Level Exam,* similar to UK's GCE A-level Exam, is normally taken by students after completion of Form 7. The results are expressed in 6 grades (A is the highest and F is the fail grade; E is the minimum grade for university entrance). It was abolished in 2012 after the introduction of the 4-year curriculum and is now replaced by the *Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education.*

3 *English for Academic Purpose* (EAP) is a generic English course for all first-year students in the participants' university. It focuses mainly on writing and speaking skills in an academic context.

tasks in their disciplinary courses were complex and influenced by the contexts in which the writing took place. A seemingly ordinary, tidy task turned out to be complicated when students attempted to interpret the task specifications according to their own knowledge and background. Their task representation, defined by Flower (1987) as "an interpretative process which translates the rhetorical situation – as the writer reads it – into the act of composing" (Flower, 1987: 7, quoted in Connor & Kramer, 1995: 156-157), then triggered a series of operations that turned their multiple representations into the final written products. These operations or processes are not independent; instead, they are all closely intertwined and are also influenced, to different extent, by the disciplinary, institutional and students' local/immediate contexts. Nine essential processes were identified and categorised into the three traditional stages (Zamel, 1983):

1. PREWRITING includes *task representation, setting direction, task allocation* (for group work), *searching for and collecting information,* and *planning/outlining.*
2. WRITING involves *drafting* and *collecting and integrating parts* (for group work).
3. REVISING involves *proofreading* and *final checking.*

It was found that the participants, in response to a given task, would firstly go through the process of *task representation*, in which they interpreted the given task instructions or specifications to find out as precisely as possible what they were required to do and how they should present it. This process was found to be complex and often problematic but important in that it determined their direction. A perceived misinterpretation would mean they had to go back to this first process again and adjust or readjust their direction.

The next process was *setting direction*, in which they decided which way to go. This was especially important for group work, in which each member had to agree on the direction before *allocating task* among members. It was then followed by *searching for* and *collecting information*, in which they engaged in a process of seeking and gathering information needed for the task as they interpreted it. When they had gathered what they believed to be sufficient information, they progressed to *plan* their writing by outlining or sketching the content and organisation of the paper. Based on this outline, they started actual writing (or *drafting*) mainly using computer. They often revised their writing while they were in the process of drafting. Once they had completed their part (for group work), one group member collected different parts from other members and put the parts together to form the entire paper. Some *proofreading* and *final checking* was done only if they were not in a rush to hand in their papers.

The three stages were found to be not exactly linear but recursive, which is consistent with the findings from previous writing process studies (e.g. Flower & Hayes, 1981; Zamel, 1983). The nine main processes identified in this study, however, were found to be generally linear in that the participants had to complete a particular process before progressing to the next one. Some processes were recursive, which means the participants often had to move back and forth until they finished their final written products. This recursive act was mostly triggered by *task representation*. If the participants found that they might have misinterpreted the task instructions, they would go backward to adjust their representation, which meant they would have to reset their direction, re-allocate the tasks and so on. This shows the overarching function of *task representation* in the entire processes. This process, however, was never straightforward and involved a great deal of guess work.

Of all the three stages, *prewriting*, which involved five processes, took up the majority of their time (around 80%). The *writing* stage took up much less time compared with *prewriting*. The *revising* stage often took place simultaneously with the writing stage while the overall revising (when all parts of the assignment had been collected and put together) was often skipped because of the approaching deadline for submission. This is in stark contrast with findings from a recent study of time allocation to writing processes of L2 writers, which showed formulation (converting ideas into language) was the dominant process (Roca de Larios, Manchón, Murphy & Marín, 2007). Roca de Larios et al.'s (2007) study, however, was carried out in a laboratory setting, where the participants were given an argumentative task to write without the need to collect any information from sources. With writing tasks situated in the participants' disciplinary courses that involved multiple task representations, group interaction, and collecting information from sources, the *prewriting* stage in this study was far more complex than artificial tasks done for experimental purpose and thus it was the dominant stage. Having presented the findings of their writing processes, I will then move on to the more specific findings that address the specific research questions.

(1) How do they interpret writing tasks?

The findings of this study suggest that *task representation* was an interpretative process (Flower, 1987) that was set in motion when the participants tried to translate the task specifications or instructions into a series of actions that turned the given task into the final written product. The data show that *task representation* was the first and crucial process in accomplishing their writing tasks. It is crucial in that it determined how they set

their direction, searched for the right information and organised the content. This interpretive process was found to be complex, multiple and often problematic. Since they were never certain that a particular representation was accurate, they often kept re-evaluating their representations throughout the entire writing process. It was found that their representations were also subject to many influences from, for example, classmates, a word said by the lecturer in a lecture, and further information from the lecturer. This finding is generally consistent with what other researchers have found in their studies (e.g., Allen, 2004; Flower, 1990).

Data from this research also reveal that different lecturers had different ways of encoding their task specifications, some of which were very detailed while others were fragmented and far from clear. This situation made the interpretive process complicated and confusing. To come up with the written products that could best meet the lecturers' expectations and thus get the best possible grades, Joan and Susan employed the following means:

- Adhering to the assessment criteria or marking scheme (if given)
- Clarifying with and seeking information from other classmates
- Looking for hints during lectures
- Guessing the reader's expectations
- Consulting with lecturers

The last means "consulting with lecturers" was often used as a last resort because both Joan and Susan found it difficult to consult their lecturers after class and most consultations they managed to get were not found to be very helpful.

(2) What are the sources they use and how do they use such sources in producing their writing tasks?

The findings revealed that they relied heavily on information obtained from the Web to accomplish their writing tasks. Although they mainly used figures from various web sites to support their arguments, occasionally they copied chunks of texts from the source materials without providing proper in-text referencing. There was no evidence from this study to suggest that they deliberately engaged in the act of plagiarism; rather, they seemed to lack (1) the English proficiency to paraphrase and synthesise source texts, (2) the awareness of the conventions relating to using source texts in academic discourse, and (3) the feedback from teachers pointing out their inappropriate textual practice, which could amount to plagiarism in academic work. As Currie (1998) and Pennycook (1996) point out, the whole issue of plagiarism or "textual borrowing" is complex, especially for NNES students; penalty alone cannot tackle the issue.

In the process of *searching for and collecting information*, they spent a great deal of time using search engines such as Google to get the information they needed. It was found that the Web sites where they often sourced their information might not be as reliable and trustworthy as conventional sources such as books and peer-reviewed journals. However, the data suggested that both Joan and Susan were totally uncritical of the information provided by these Web sites. Also, the lack of feedback from teachers regarding this aspect could serve to reinforce their practice of writing from sources.

(3) Do they encounter any difficulties in their writing processes? What are those difficulties?

The findings show that they encountered a number of difficulties in their writing processes. These difficulties were primarily related to the areas of (1) application of theories/concepts, (2) readers' expectations, (3) lexicogrammar, (4) skills of writing from sources, and (5) group work.

As the findings also show, marketing discipline emphasises application. Thus, the faculty and the department, in translating the practices of the discipline into a programme of study, emphasised the understanding and application of theories/concepts in their learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Both Joan and Susan, however, found it difficult to apply theories to solve problems or explain issues arising from given situations.

As shown in the findings to the first research question, knowing exactly what they were expected to write in terms of content and organisation was a daunting task to Joan and Susan. When they started to write (the *drafting* process), they found it difficult to translate their ideas, mostly formed in their L1, into English mainly due to their lack of vocabulary and weak grammar. Their final written products were also weakened by their lack of skills in using information from source materials as evidence to build up convincing and cogent arguments.

It was found that almost 90% of their writing tasks were done in groups of three to six. The findings of this study show clearly that Susan (but not Joan), without any instructional support from the department, found it distressing and frustrating working with her group mates. Her problems mainly stemmed from the conflict and disagreement within the group, which were found to be caused by (1) leadership (who is in charge of the project?), (2) individual responsibility or commitment (such as participating in meetings and completing their parts in time), and (3) task allocation (who does what?). This supports the findings from Leki (2001) and Ho, Chan, Sun and Yan (2004). Leki (2001), in her study of the experiences of two NNES students in course-sponsored group projects, found that her participants had similar

problems working in a group. In their investigation into university students' learning difficulties, Ho et al. (2004) found that students encountered various problems in doing group projects, some of which such as leadership problems were also shared by the two students in this study.

(4) What strategies do they employ in accomplishing their writing tasks?

The results indicate that the participants employed eight strategies to cope with various difficulties they encountered in accomplishing their writing tasks. These strategies were devised in response to four main demands of their writing tasks: (1) group work, (2) task-related information (mainly content and structure of the paper), (3) workload and (4) vocabulary.

As mentioned above, effective group work was essential in accomplishing the tasks on time but Susan experienced difficulties to harness the group dynamics, resulting in her strong dislike for group work. By contrast, Joan was able to collaborate with her group mates in such a way that she enjoyed group work. This was mainly due to her strategy of forming a group with her good friends. However, her carefully devised strategy had in a way defeated the institutional purpose of cultivating team work, i.e. the abilities to work with people (not just friends) in a team.

Their strategy of using an online translation dictionary to cope with the vocabulary demand of the tasks brings up the issue of using L1 in the writing processes. The results reveal that they used quite heavily their L1 mixed with some L2 in the planning/ outlining process, in which they formulated and organised their ideas. This means that they had to go through a translation process to turn those ideas formulated in their L1 into English and they relied, to different degrees, on an online dictionary to assist their translation. Previous studies of NNES students' writing process (e.g., Gosden, 1996; Li, 2007; Shaw, 1991) also found that L1 was used at different stages of the writing process with mostly positive results. However, the findings in this study show that using an online dictionary was fraught with problems as the newly found words are often wrongly used in context.

Conclusions

Together with previous studies on second language writing, particularly academic writing in disciplinary courses (e.g., Allen, 2004; Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999; Casanave, 1995; Chin, 1994 ; Connor and Kramar, 1995; Currie, 1993; Faigley & Hansen, 1985; Horowitz, 1986; Lea & Street, 2000; Leki, 1995; Prior, 2004; Riazi, 1997; Tardy, 2004; Yang and Shi, 2003), this study has provided a detailed account of the processes the two NNES business undergraduates (participants in this study) at a Hong Kong university went through to accomplish their disciplinary writing tasks. It has shown that writing in the marketing discipline is not "a strictly cognitive activity" (Leki, 2007:3) but, rather, entails multiple interpretations of given tasks and texts, interactions with group mates and professors, and searching for and exchanging task-related information before production of texts. An informed awareness of these processes would allow teachers, especially EAP teachers, to better understand students' situated needs so that timely and appropriate assistance could be given. With the increasing number of NNES students from not only the secondary school system but also from other institutions (such as community colleges and vocational institutes) entering English-medium universities in Hong Kong, they all have to cope with their studies and assignment writing in English. The contributions of situated studies of academic writing in higher education are significant in that they can add to our existing body of knowledge in this ever-expanding and increasingly complex area. Based on knowledge gained from research, EAP teachers can improve their practices to better address the needs of this large group of NNES students. In the following section, I will put forth some pedagogical implications of this study and suggest some ways to improve practice.

Pedagogical implications for writing instructions in higher education

This study has revealed that the participants encountered different degrees of difficulty at the prewriting and writing stages. To better help students cope with the writing demands in their discipline, I would put forward the following suggestions for teaching.

(1) The results of this study show that the prewriting stage was the dominant stage in the participants' writing processes. Of all the five processes in this stage, task representation and information searching were found to be the most challenging. Task representation has at least two aspects: (a) the degree of explicitness of the task specifications, and (b) students' knowledge of the disciplinary and institutional contexts in which the writing takes place.

For the first aspect, content teachers should be aware of the common problems encountered by students during their interpretation process and, based on this awareness, construct the task specifications in such a way that their expectations can be more explicitly stated.

For the second aspect, EAP course developers and teachers may consider adopting the genre-based approach in which disciplinary writing is seen as embracing "both form and content" (Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1995:4). The form, i.e. the use of language, and content occur in "a social context that conditions them" (Bizzell, 1982: 217). This study also shows that

the participants' lack of knowledge of the disciplinary context resulted in their inability to draw on it as a resource to interpret the tasks and produce the written assignments to best meet readers' expectations. In order to construct assignments that can demonstrate to their readers (subject lecturers) an adequate knowledge of that discipline (Faigley & Hansen, 1985), students have to be aware of the expectations, in both form and content, of the disciplinary community into which they are being enculturated. Although this enculturation should best be done by the content teachers being members of that disciplinary community (Spack, 1988), EAP course developers and teachers, nonetheless, have the responsibility to help students better cope with the writing demands they will face beyond the EAP classrooms (Leki & Carson, 1994). As the findings of this study show, the participants' marketing subject lecturers seldom commented on the language aspect of their assignments. It would be almost impossible that they can learn the disciplinary writing skills from their content teachers (Spack, 1988). Furthermore, as Lea and Street's study reveals, content teachers know what a good assignment is but "cannot describe how to write it" (2000:40). Thus, it seems that EAP courses should be going in the direction of discipline-specific to better prepare students to cope with the discipline-specific writing demands they face in universities (Hyland, 2002). This would require materials and teaching methods that are underpinned by research with closer collaboration with content teachers.

(2) To help students use sources in their writing more effectively, the writing component of EAP courses should place more emphasis on writing from sources, especially the more critical use of Web sources. Based on the findings of this study, I suggest that EAP courses, generic or discipline-specific, should cover the following areas:

1. information search skills, particularly using popular Internet search engines;
2. critical Internet literacy: raising students' awareness of being more critical in using Web sources as a research tool for academic purposes;
3. writing skills for synthesising information and ideas from sources to construct convincing and cogent arguments; and
4. paraphrasing and summarising skills to avoid copying chunks of text from Web sources.

As explained in the preceding paragraph, these skills would be more effectively acquired if they are taught and learned in a discipline-specific EAP course.

(3) The findings of this study clearly show that the participants had problems with using a dictionary to help them find the right words in translating their ideas formulated in their L1 into English. The skills of using dictionaries (particularly monolingual dictionaries for advanced learners, collocation dictionaries and thesaurus) are often ignored in regular curricula in universities; however, such skills are essential to foster independent language learning. With the advent of the Internet and the development of online corpora, students should learn how to use a free online concordancer to check the common usage and collocations of a particular word. Adding this element to English courses can, to a certain extent, help them encode their ideas more accurately and correctly.

To conclude, in the 25 hours of interviews with the two student participants, only Susan mentioned once using something learned from their university EAP course in her disciplinary writing when she talked about "the use of thesis statement [in paragraph construction]; organisation of essay…" (Interview number 7),. This seems to imply that the general EAP course they completed in their first year at university had little impact on their disciplinary writing. The findings in this study show that the skills taught in the EAP course did not transfer well to their assignment writing in their disciplinary courses. This seems to indicate that they were not able to connect such general skills with the actual academic writing they had to undertake in their discipline. A comment made by Joan in her last interview suggests that the general EAP course did not serve her well:

> *"I think EAP writing [course] should make use of students' assignments [in disciplinary courses] for practice and feedback. This is far more motivating and effective than asking us to write essays of some artificial topics for practice. We dislike writing such essays because we've already had our heavy workload; why not using our assignments [in disciplinary courses]…" (Interview number 16)*

The findings in the present study support findings from previous research that general ESL or EAP courses are not effective in preparing students for their disciplinary writing tasks. Therefore, EAP courses should be more discipline-specific, as advocated by Hyland (2002), in order to improve students' motivation and, more importantly, to prepare them for the writing they would encounter in their disciplinary courses. However, there can be potential practical difficulties in implementing this suggestion. Because of the differences in teaching philosophy and practices between the English department/language centre and the faculties as well as workload issue, there can be difficulties in, for example, involving content teachers in designing or team teaching writing courses (see, for example, Barron, 2002).

Given such potential difficulties, recent development in *Writing in the Disciplines* (WiD) is encouraging

(Deane & O'Neill, 2011). In her case studies of two dissimilar approaches to teaching disciplinary writing in a UK university, Wingate (2011) finds that the "embedded approach" in which writing instruction is integrated into subject lessons was "clearly effective in involving and engaging all students and developing their understanding of academic writing" (Wingate, 2011:83). One challenge of the embedded approach, as observed by Wingate (2011), is the high involvement of subject lecturers resulting in heavier workload for these lecturers. This would make them reluctant to voluntarily collaborate with EAP teachers in this regard. Although such reluctance "may be gradually reduced through dialogue and staff development measures" (Wingate, 2011:83), it would be further reduced if senior management of universities understands the situation and the potential benefits of discipline-specific writing instruction; as a result support is given and resources are allocated to enhance students' English abilities in their disciplinary writing.

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

16 A qualitative study of second language writers' response to and use of teacher and peer feedback – a proposal

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Abstract: With increasing evidence that peer feedback could be a viable complementary tool to teacher feedback in the L2 writing classroom, there arises the question as to how both types of feedback may be used judiciously in L2 writing instruction. This is a conceptual paper which proposes how a study may be set up to understand how an L2 writer responds to and decides whether to act on feedback (whether from teacher or peers) on his writing, so as to understand the whole issue of feedback on writing in a more holistic way, not just looking at student attitudes (Liu and Chai, 2009; Tsui and Ng, 2000), the nature of comments (Caulk, 1994) and whether changes in drafts could be traced to teacher or peer comments (Tsui and Ng, 2000; Yang et al, 2006). A multiple instrumental case study to understand the L2 writer's response to and use of feedback is proposed. The two key factors in the study of peer feedback identified in the literature - the L2 factor and the cultural factor (Hu & Lam, 2010) are put in focus in the set-up of the case study so they could be investigated in relation to contextual factors which affect the effectiveness of teacher feedback. This paper discusses how the multiple case study could be set up and the proposed method of data collection and analysis.

Key Words: peer and teacher feedback, L2 learner

Introduction

Writing teachers, not least Asian writing teachers, have the unenviable task of ploughing through reams of students' writing, not just for the purpose of awarding a grade, but also to give feedback which will help students to improve on their writing. Hours are often spent in the hope that our labour would amount to something of long-term value to students apart from the immediate need to assign a particular grade to their endeavours. However, we are often perplexed, if not discouraged, when students simply look at the grades awarded and disregard the feedback given or in the situation where no grades are required, we wonder what students have done with the feedback given when there is no perceptible improvement in their writing subsequently.

Hence, when an alternative form of feedback in the form of peer feedback appeared on the scene not too recently, we were more than happy to try it out with our students as it appeared to offer some relief from the burden of providing timely enough feedback which can be of help to students in the process of writing. At least, with the help of peers, students can get more immediate and a greater amount of feedback on their writing compared with only teacher feedback which often comes rather too late, as the teacher, understandably, needs time to get through the sheer number of scripts, given the norm of large class sizes in the Asian context.

However, we soon discovered that our Asian ESL students, while receptive towards this novel way of receiving feedback from peers, seem to prefer teacher feedback most of the time. This is not surprising as it is commonly observed that Asians have a teacher-centred tradition in the classroom. This thinking is probably changing but it has not reached the point where peers are put on a par with teachers.

The research problem

Hence, as an ESL writing teacher, I am immensely interested in understanding how an L2 learner responds to and uses both teacher and peer feedback, given the

strengths and weaknesses of both types of feedback and the history of the relative lack of engagement with teacher feedback for various reasons, and the hesitant reception of peer feedback among ESL learners, in particular those from Asian backgrounds, despite the benefits of peer feedback that we read from literature on L1 learners.

Literature Review

Studies on Teacher Feedback

The main problem with teacher feedback is that it suffers from the multiple roles that the writing teacher plays and the subsequent 'confusion' that students might experience from receiving feedback from a source that is undecided in its stance/focus. As mentioned by Reid, the ESL teacher "plays several different roles, among them coach, judge, facilitator, evaluator, interested reader, and copy editor" (1993, p. 217, cited in Ferris 1995). Similarly, Muncie highlights the conflicting roles of "audience", "assistant", "consultant", "reader", "evaluator" that the teacher plays (2000, p. 48). As a result, students might be encouraged by praise or affirming comments at one point, and 'assaulted' by prescriptive advice about what to remove or add or what language errors to correct, at another, which may lead to teacher comments being ignored altogether. This explains why educators are faced with the perennial question as to whether teacher comments lead to student revisions, let alone successful revisions.

On the other hand, it has also been noted that, because of the role of the teacher as evaluator/judge, students also tend to accept teacher suggestions passively and blindly (when they do respond to them), incorporating them without question nor reflection (Zhao, 2010), which minimizes the chance of students learning from the recommendations and subsequent revisions and progressing towards being independent writers. It also raises the issue of text appropriation, the danger of the student relinquishing control and ownership of his text as he responds dutifully to the teacher's comments (Hyland, 2000). This issue is especially pertinent in many L2 classrooms which are teacher-centred and examination-oriented, and where students place a lot of premium on the teacher's evaluation.

However, in Reid's view, this fear of appropriation in ESL classrooms, is 'largely a mythical fear' (1994, p. 275). She further argues that, in response to this fear, ESL teachers have deprived L2 learners of the help they need. This view is echoed by Hyland (2000) who asserts that "they [teachers] are confusing intervention with appropriation" (p. 35). Reid highlights ESL teachers' roles as "cultural informants and facilitators for creating the social discourse community in the ESL writing classroom" (1994, p. 275). In other words, she is saying that, unlike the L1 writer, the L2 writer is more in need of specific guidance from the teacher, especially with regard to the rhetorical conventions and cultural values of the discourse community of the target language. This leads us to the question of how teacher feedback can be used judiciously – the teacher acting as a guide as to the linguistic and rhetorical conventions of the discourse community that the L2 learner is seeking to be part of.

Despite these issues with teacher feedback, research shows that ESL learners "greatly value teacher written feedback and consistently rate it more highly than alternative forms such as peer and oral feedback" (Hyland, 1998, p. 257). Some studies which show this preference are Hu & Lam (2010), Saito
(1994) (cited in Hyland, 1998) and Zhang (1995). This finding may be explained by the two factors mentioned in Hu & Lam (2010) termed 'the 'L2 factor' and 'the cultural factor'. The first explains such student preference from the perspective of the L2 learner in the process of mastering the target language and hence, clearly seeing the teacher as the authority in matters of language and therefore expecting and appreciating guidance from the teacher in this aspect. The latter explains it from the perspective of students coming from a culture which exalts the status of the teacher (most Asian cultures) and hence, students tend to defer to the teacher in most matters of judgment.

Studies on Peer Feedback

Peer response can be defined as the "use of learners as sources of information, as interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing" (Liu & Hansen, 2002, p. 1). The result of the peer response activity is peer feedback on one's writing, an alternative form of feedback from the traditional one of teacher feedback.
Over the years since peer feedback has been adopted by L2 writing teachers, the strengths of peer feedback have been acknowledged by various researchers. Some of them include:

- Peers act more like 'normal readers' (Caulk, 1994, p. 185) and enhances a sense of audience. A subject in Tsui and Ng's study acknowledged that "because he knew his peers would be his 'readers', he became more conscious of his audience when writing" (2000, p. 161).
- Peer comments and peer response sessions promote a sense of ownership of text (Tsui & Ng, 2000; Yang, Badger & Yu, 2006)

  Because peers are seen as equals, students do not feel obliged to incorporate suggestions that they do not agree with. The data in Yang, Badger

& Yu's study suggest 'a stronger tendency for self-correction in the peer feedback group…The more they doubted the feedback, the more likely it was they would develop their own independent ideas they had for revision" (p. 192). Having control over one's writing is certainly crucial to the student's development as an independent writer.

- Peer response activities promote reflection and critical reading on the part of both the student-writer and student-reviewer (Berg, 1999; Mittan, 1989; Rollinson, 2005; Tsui & Ng, 2000). This promotes a greater awareness of the writer's own problems, which is a step towards being an independent writer.
- Peers tend to give a different kind of feedback from that of the teacher. As mentioned above, Caulk (1994) found that teacher feedback tended to be general while peer feedback was more specific. Also, having teachers and peers comment on the same problem gives students more than one perspective on it and may make it easier for him to understand the point. Hence, student and teacher comments combined might give a fuller picture of the problem/suggestion.
- Learners can receive social support from peers instead of feeling isolated as a writer (Jacobs, Curtis, Braine & Huang, 1998, p. 308).

Despite the great potential of peer feedback, it has been reported in the literature that L2 students still prefer teacher feedback to peer feedback (Hu & Lam, 2010; Liu & Chai, 2009; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Saito, 1994; Yang, Badger and Yu, 2006; Zhang, 1995). This may have stemmed from some reservations that both teachers and students have about the use of peer feedback. The reservations may be summarized in what Hu and Lam have termed 'the L2 factor' and 'the cultural factor' (Hu & Lam, 2010, p. 374). The first refers to "L2 learners' limited knowledge of the target language and its rhetorical conventions" as they are in the process of mastering the target language and do not have the implicit knowledge of the language like native speakers do (Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Villamil & Guerrero, 1998), while the latter refers to "a complex of cultural and social differences" between L1 and L2 learners, which may impede the productive use of peer response in L2 contexts. Such differences include those in sociolinguistic rules of communication (Allaei & Connor, 1990; Carson & Nelson, 1994, 1996) and cultural beliefs about the different statuses of the teacher and students which will cause students to put more value on the teacher's feedback and distrust their peers' recommendations (Hu 2002, 2005a; Jacobs, 1987; Sengupta, 1998; Zhang, 1995).

Despite these two major potential drawbacks, peer feedback continues to be widely used and researched in the L2 writing classroom. More recent studies with Chinese learners (Hu & Lam, 2010; Liu & Chai, 2009; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Yang, Badger & Yu, 2006) have found that these L2 learners do see value in peer response even though they prefer teacher feedback and pay more attention to it in revising subsequent drafts of their writing. Their preference for and the greater impact of teacher feedback can be easily explained by the cultural factor mentioned above, as these learners come from a teacher-centred culture. However, it is interesting to note that, contrary to some skeptical opinions about students' receptiveness to peer feedback in L2 contexts voiced in the literature, they acknowledge the usefulness of peer feedback as well.

Hence, it is not surprising that some researchers have highlighted the complementary roles that teacher and peer feedback can play in the teaching of L2 writing. Findings from studies by Yang, Badger & Yu (2006) and, Tsui and Ng (2000) seem to reinforce the earlier claim by Villamil and DeGuerrero that "peer revision should be seen as an important complementary source of feedback in the ESL classroom" (1998, p.491). Caulk had also earlier concluded that his case study of teacher and peer feedback to student writing suggests that "each serves important and complementary functions in developing writing abilities" (1994, p. 187). Therefore, it is pertinent to investigate how an L2 learner responds to and uses both types of feedback so that one might arrive at what Zhang calls "a judicious use of a combination of feedback sources so that the affective disadvantage of peer feedback relative to teacher feedback may be addressed responsibly and effectively in the ESL writing class" (1995, p. 325).

In the light of the above literature review, the following research questions have been drawn up:

1. How do second language learners respond to and use peer and teacher feedback on their writing?
   a. Are there differences in the way L2 writers respond to and use teacher and peer feedback? If so, in what ways do they differ?
   b. Is there indeed a preference for teacher feedback as reported in the literature among second language learners? If so, does this preference translate to a greater use and effectiveness of teacher feedback?
2. What contextual factors are at play in L2 writers' use of teacher and peer feedback?

The proposed study

Why a case study?

While there have been some positive findings about the impact of peer feedback in the L2 context, previous

research has tended to focus on peer feedback per se, rather than how it stands *in relation* to the traditional form of teacher feedback. Studies which have compared teacher and peer feedback have also surfaced a preference for teacher feedback, especially among Asian students (Hu & Lam, 2010; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Zhang, 1995). Does this mean that though peer feedback is seen as acceptable by L2 students, it is less effective compared with teacher feedback? Clearly, it seems that peer feedback should not be understood in isolation. Any meaningful discussion of the use of feedback on writing in the writing classroom has to consider *both* types of feedback. This leads us, then, to the question of how a *holistic* view of how an L2 learner responds to and uses both teacher and peer feedback might be a more helpful approach in understanding the whole issue of feedback in the teaching and learning of L2 writing, rather than focusing on piecemeal aspects such as student attitudes (Liu & Chai, 2009; Tsui & Ng, 2000), the nature of comments (Caulk, 1994), and whether changes in drafts could be traced back to teacher or peer comments (Tsui & Ng, 2000; Yang et al, 2006), which past studies have tended to do.

Additionally, research designs employed so far are such that in most cases, either form of feedback was investigated on its own, with little connection with the other. There have been numerous studies focusing on teacher feedback alone, it being the more traditional form of feedback and a fair amount of knowledge regarding the characteristics and impact of various types of teacher feedback has been established (e.g., location and form of the feedback; Conrad and Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1997b; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998 in Goldstein, 2004; Goldstein, 2004). On the other hand, studies on peer feedback have focused on issues like peer interaction, the impact of peer feedback on subsequent drafts and student attitudes towards this pedagogical tool (Lockhart & Ng, 1995; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1998; Zhang, 1995). Finally, comparative studies which looked at both types of feedback (e.g., Caulk, 1994; Tsui and Ng, 2000; Zhao, 2010) have not managed to capture the larger *context* in which both types of feedback are received, one reason possibly being the fact that in most cases, only one type of feedback is offered at one point and hence, any comparison between the two is less than fair. In some cases, only one type of feedback is given, but students are asked about their opinion about the other type of feedback (Yang et al., 2006).

Hence, it seems that past research has tended to focus on students' attitudes and the impact of either form of feedback in terms of revisions made traced back to the feedback given, but little attention has been focused on understanding the L2 learner's *process* of responding to and deciding whether to act on the feedback given. As already hinted at in some research on teacher feedback (e.g., Goldstein, 2004; Hyland, 2000), *contextual factors* play a huge role in influencing students' response to feedback given on their writing. Goldstein highlighted a host of contextual factors that can influence teacher commentary and student revision which includes teacher factors such as "attitudes towards particular students or the content of their texts" and student factors such as "reactions to teacher feedback, outside commitments, and investment in the course content" (Goldstein, 2006, p. 185 in Hyland & Hyland, 2006b). In other words, it is untenable to seek to understand either type of feedback without due consideration given to the *context* in which the feedback takes place.

In light of the above discussion, it seems that the case study approach which emphasizes thick description incorporating various sources of data on the phenomenon as well as the context of each case, is eminently suited for arriving at a more in-depth understanding of the issue of feedback with L2 learners.

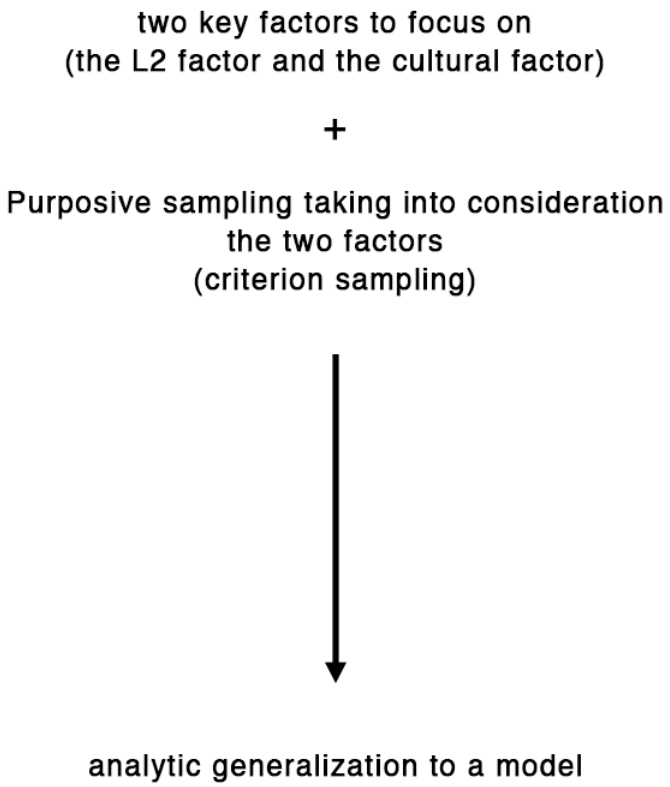
Why a multiple case study?

The "multiple instrumental case study" (Creswell, 2012) offers the possibility of "analytic generalizability" (Duff, 2008) to theoretical models more so than a single case study. The use of more than one case is a strong counterargument for critics of the case study method who point out the limitations of case studies in terms of the generalizabiltiy or rather the lack thereof of the findings of one idiosyncratic case/context. The instrinsically comparative nature of multiple case studies augments its instrumental value in throwing light on the phenomenon under investigation. Yin (2003) likens the strength of multiple cases to multiple experiments where there can be literal or theoretical replication. Having more than one case can allay the fears of the critical reader that the findings he reads about are peculiar to that particular context only.

Combined with the strength of a thick description that a case study method offers (drawing from multiple sources of data), and set in the context of the phenomenon, "case studies display a high degree of completeness, depth of analysis and readability and they are effective in generating new hypotheses, models, and understandings about the target phenomena" (Duff, 2008, cited in Dornyei, 2007, p. 155).

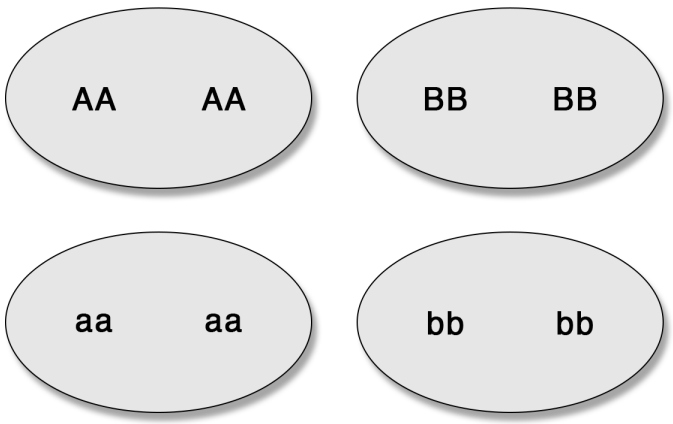
Given the two key factors in the study of feedback on L2 writing that have surfaced in the literature review (the L2 factor and the cultural factor), it seems that the multiple case study set-up is ideal for putting these two factors into focus for the investigation even as a qualitative approach is espoused in this study. These factors may be "operationalized" using purposive sampling, and in this case, criterion sampling specifically, that is, in the selection of cases (please refer to Figure 1).

Figure 1: Rationale for adopting the "multiple instrumental case study" (Creswell, 2012)



It is proposed that the multiple case study be set up in the following way: Each case comprises two subgroups which, in turn, are made up of a pair of students of the same proficiency level – either Advanced or Intermediate (i.e., the L2 factor). There will be four cases, two cases of the same proficiency level but with one case of two pairs declaring a preference for teacher feedback and the other, without such a preference. In other words, there are a total of sixteen participants, with four pairs of the same proficiency level in two cases distinguished by whether there is a preference for teacher feedback or not (i.e., the cultural factor). (Please refer to Figure 2 for a graphic presentation of how the cases are set up).

Figure 2: Set-up of the cases in this multiple case study



- AA – advanced level proficiency, with preference for teacher feedback
- aa – advanced level proficiency, without preference for teacher feedback
- BB – intermediate level proficiency, with preference for teacher feedback
- bb – intermediate level proficiency, without preference for teacher feedback

The reason for selecting these two levels is that it is reasonable to surmise that peer feedback cannot be productively done when the proficiency level of the student is so low (as in Elementary level) as to impede effective communication of ideas and the student's grasp of the target language is not strong enough for meaningful feedback to be given. Two pairs of the same proficiency level are included in one case so as to increase the reliability of the findings. If the findings of these two pairs of students of the same proficiency level are similar to the other case with two pairs of students with the same proficiency level but are sufficiently different from the other four pairs with a different proficiency level, then there may be the possibility of "analytic generalization" (Duff, cited in Dornyei, 2007, p. 153), that is, generalizing to "theoretical models" rather than population. The two pairs of the same proficiency level in each of the two cases (AA, AA and aa, aa in Figure 2) are chosen for the purpose of "literal replication" and another four pairs of a different proficiency level (BB, BB and bb, bb in Figure 4.2)are chosen for the purpose of "theoretical replication'' (Yin, 2003). In Yin's words, " … the study should … have at least two individual cases within each of the subgroups, so that the theoretical replications across subgroups are complemented by literal replications within each subgroup" (p. 52).

The theoretical replications are also made possible with the inclusion of the preference of feedback factor in setting up two of the cases as these two cases will be the same in terms of proficiency level but different only in terms of whether the participants prefer teacher feedback or not (AA, AA versus aa, aa; or BB, BB versus bb, bb). Hence, if these two cases with two pairs each yield different patterns in terms of the data, one can infer that preference of feedback may be an important factor influencing how the L2 writer responds to written feedback on his writing.

To reiterate, the cases in a multiple case study should be selected so that they replicate each other. When they are expected to yield similar results, then there is literal replication while theoretical replication takes place when contrasting results are predicted. As proficiency level and preference of feedback have been shown in the literature on peer feedback to be *key factors* in students' attitude towards the use of peer feedback and also an important consideration in understanding students' attitude towards peer feedback *in relation* to teacher feedback (see "the L2 factor" and "the cultural factor" in Hu & Lam, 2010, p. 374), they are suitable criteria to use in setting up the cases for theoretical replication.

Certainly, there may well be other factors that may surface in the investigation, given the qualitative approach that informs this study; however, some form of rigour is introduced through the incorporation of these two factors in setting up of these multiple cases so as to put a spotlight on what has been considered of importance in the literature, without ruling out the possibility of other factors (foreseen or not) surfacing in the data collection. This is possible through the method of data analysis to be adopted – that of grounded theory. Also, the different kinds of data to be collected ensure that the approach is sufficiently "open-ended" to allow for factors other than the two highlighted above, to surface.

To sum up, the choice of a multiple case study over a single case study stems from my desire to achieve some measure of theoretical generalizability from the findings. According to Yin, "Analytic conclusions independently arising from two cases…will be more powerful than those coming from a single case…alone." Additionally, "the contexts of the two cases are likely to differ to some extent. If under these varied circumstances you still can arrive at common conclusions from both cases, they will have immeasurably expanded the external generalizability of your findings" (2003, p. 53). Duff (2008, p. 113), echoing Yin, concurs that "[having] two or more cases can help assuage concerns that cases are unique in unforeseen ways." I believe, in my proposed project of four cases, I have a good chance of generating some theoretical model of how an L2 writer responds to and uses peer and teacher feedback on his writing.

Context and participants

The investigation will take place with a group of PRC learners, of a range of English proficiency. A culturally homogeneous group is selected as there is some evidence (Allaei & Connor, 1990; Leki, 1990b; Nelson and Carson, 2006) that peer feedback with L2 learners may be more effective when carried out in culturally homogeneous groups.

The intention to focus on Chinese learners stems from two reasons: first, Chinese learners, especially learners from China, form an increasingly significant proportion of ESL learners of English in the world today (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996); second, they come from a culture which clearly accords a high status to teachers. It would be significant to investigate how peer feedback can still be productively used together with the more traditional practice of teacher feedback with these learners. If findings about the use of peer feedback *in relation* to teacher feedback with such learners are positive, then the prospect of combining both teacher and peer feedback in second language writing instruction with L2 learners with cultural backgrounds which put a premium on the teacher's input, will hold much promise.

The students should be enrolled in a course that provides writing instruction, the classroom context of which should allow for a process-oriented approach to the teaching of writing. The investigation will take place over the course of a semester, to allow for room for some training in peer response and multiple drafting with opportunities for teacher and peer response to drafts in between, to take place. A minimum of two writing - and - revision cycles (from which data will be gathered) should be available. This is meant to increase both the richness and trustworthiness of the data, as according to Dornyei (2007), "case studies are often at least partially longitudinal in nature" (p. 152) because of the detailed information that the researcher seeks to gather about the case. Hence, a minimum period of one semester of engagement is necessary.

Data collection

In line with the holistic nature of inquiry that the case study approach affords, the researcher will focus on the following aspects of the phenomenon of responding to feedback on one's writing, in gathering data:

- The features of the feedback given
- How the participant processes/understands and responds to the feedback given
- The mental and social aspects of processing feedback
- The changes made in the revised drafts as documents of decisions made in response to feedback given

The sources of data which will enable the researcher to capture the above are:

- A semi-structured questionnaire
- Semi-structured interviews
- Retrospective interviews (based on feedback sheets by teachers and peers; first and revised drafts)
- Documents in the form of first and revised drafts, feedback sheets by teachers and peers

Stimulated recall / retrospective interviews (Gass & Mackay, 2000) will be the key methodology used in investigating in-depth the subjects' response to and use of peer and teacher feedback. This method is chosen as it is "the least reactive of all the introspective techniques, because the targeted thought processes are not affected by the procedure in any way" (Dornyei, 2007, citing in Ericsson, 2002). Brown and Rodgers (2002) also highlight that "If the process is quite deliberate…, then these may be language use tasks which are deliberate enough and conscious enough for reporting the steps of mental processing to be realistic." Learners' response to and use of peer and teacher feedback may be considered one example of such language use tasks.

Ideally, participants will be interviewed within 48 hours after they have responded to the feedback given and made changes to their first drafts. At the interview, interviewees would be shown the initial and final written products as stimuli, and asked about their responses to the feedback they received on the first drafts of their writing, including their reactions (acceptance / rejection), their decisions about whether to use the feedback in their second drafts and the reasons behind those decisions and the changes they made.

A **semi-structured questionnaire** will be conducted at the beginning of the semester with the entire class of students from which the potential subjects of the study are taken, before peer and teacher feedback activities are carried out. This serves a two-fold purpose – to sieve out suitable subjects for the two cases of the project, and to arrive at a profile of the group from which the sample is taken, so as to set the investigation in context. Respondents who hold negative views towards peer feedback will not be suitable subjects for the case study as one would expect from them, a skeptical attitude which militates against any active engagement with peer feedback. This scenario would then render the comparison between peer and teacher feedback invalid.

Semi-standardized interviews (Berg, 2004, p. 79) will be conducted with the eight participants at the beginning and end of the study to investigate attitudes towards and experience of peer and teacher feedback. These interviews are different from the retrospective interviews mentioned above and serve a different purpose. Interviewees will not be questioned about specific decisions in their revision process, but rather more general questions exploring their experience of and attitude/opinions about the use and potential of both teacher and peer feedback in the teaching and learning of writing and even their views about learning and writing in an L2, will be posed. The interviews at the end of the study are meant to see if respondents have changed in their views after one semester's experience of having both teacher and peer feedback on their writing. They should also allow the researcher to gather a fuller picture of the context of the study.

The **examination of drafts** is meant to answer the following questions: What changes are made from draft one to draft two in each writing-revision cycle? How are the changes made (i.e., the source of the change)? Is there any improvement? What changes are facilitated by peer feedback and what changes by teacher feedback? Some of the data may be subjected to statistical analysis so as to establish statistically significant relationships, if any, between factors. Some form of "data triangulation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) is possible with the examination of drafts, as information regarding participants' response to peer and teacher feedback garnered at the interviews may be corroborated by the actual changes made on the drafts.

Data Analysis

The proposed method of data analysis is Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), as the researcher plans to adopt the systematic coding system with the three phases – open coding, axial coding and selective coding, in an attempt to arrive at some theory as an outcome of the case study. According to Dornyei (2007, p. 258), these (systematic coding and theory building) are two criteria for calling one's study 'grounded theory'. This method is chosen as it provides tools for an in-depth analysis of the thick description that a case study offers in terms of data. In Charmaz's words, "the focused inquiry of grounded theory, with its progressive inductive analysis, moves the work theoretically and covers more empirical observations than other approaches" (cited in Dornyei, 2007, p. 262).

Conclusion

Finding answers to the research questions set out in this proposal will definitely enlighten the L2 writing teacher as to how best to combine both types of feedback on writing in the L2 writing classroom. It will also throw more light on some questions of perennial concern to both writing teachers and L2 acquisition researchers such as: Does feedback play a role in writing development? What is the best way of giving feedback? What factors affect student responses to feedback? How shall the apparent affective advantage of peer feedback with L2 learners be accounted for in L2 writing instruction? Finally, finding the answers to these questions with a particular group of L2 learners, such as Chinese learners who form an increasingly large proportion of L2 learners in English, not just in their own country but also in tertiary institutions worldwide, will surely yield considerable practical benefits for all involved in teaching this group of learners.

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

17 Effects of Genre-Based Framework On Students' Writing

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Abstract: According to Hyland (2004) genre has become "one of the most important and influential concepts in language education (p 5). Several approaches to teaching genre have been advocated by Hyon (1996), Paltridge (2001), Johns (2002); however the ESP approach has been widely used, especially with advanced L2 graduate students as claimed by Johns, (2003). Even though one of the important goals of genre analysis is to improve students' writing, few studies have focused on how students analyze and produce genres in genre-based writing classes according to Cheng, (2006) and provided in depth insights into how the students analyzed the target genres before they engaged in the writing tasks (Cheng, 2007).

This teacher researcher decided to explore the effect of a genre analysis teaching learning (TL) approach used in the classroom to raise students' awareness about organization of the Conclusions chapter in a thesis The objectives of this study were to explore students' awareness of the organization of the Conclusions chapter before and after the TL approach, obtain insights into students' learning and to examine if their learning was represented in their writing.

Data was collected in the form of questionnaires before students were given any pedagogical input on writing the Conclusions assignment and after they wrote their first drafts. They were asked to rate their awareness of the organizational and language elements on a scale of 1-5 (very poor, poor, average, quite good and very good respectively). Similar post-training data was collected after they had written the first draft of each of the assignments. They were also asked to comment on the learning they had acquired. Students' writing samples were also analysed for their understanding, using the genre framework taught to them. Based on the findings, implications for teaching and learning will be discussed.

Introduction

In academic writing, research article (RA) introductions have been the focus of genre analysis by Posteguillo (1999), Samraj (2002b), Yang and Allison (2004), while 'Conclusions' have generally been discussed as part of the discussion both in RA and MSc dissertations claims Dudley- Evans, (1994). It was Yang and Allison (2003) who analysed a section in research articles called 'Conclusions and Pedagogic Implications' in the area of Applied Linguistics. There has been less focus on thesis and dissertation chapters as compared to RA's according to Bunton (2002), and even less focus on the analysis of 'Conclusions' chapter in theses.

Paltridge (2002) confirmed the status of 'Conclusions' as a separate chapter in a thesis. Bunton (2005) identified the generic structure of Conclusion chapters in PhD theses or dissertation, based on the concept of 'moves' by Swales. However, there is still hardly any published research on using this genre framework as a pedagogical tool and much less on its effect on students' writing of the Conclusions chapter.

Genre analysis, as a form of discourse analysis, has been effectively used by classroom teachers in the contexts of both English for specific and English for specific academic purposes. The applied nature of the field has enabled teachers to devise innovative ways of incorporating genre analysis in their teaching. The objective of this study was to explore one such approach used on an Advanced Writing Module (ES5002) at the National University of Singapore to raise international graduate students' awareness of the organizational features of Conclusions chapter of a thesis. It will also explore its effect on students' learning.

Pedagogical and Theoretical Concepts

Two concepts from the literature provided the basis for this study. One is the pedagogical concept of

Genre Analysis and the other the concept of Self Efficacy in learning.

Genre Analysis

According to Qin (2000), Genre analysis, a recent development of discourse analysis, has concerned itself with describing the higher level organization and structure of written or spoken texts. In genre analysis, texts typically consist of a series of 'moves'. These 'moves' are functional units contributing to the communicative purpose of the genre. Such a move is semantically determined and contains a proposition. These moves are referred to as 'steps' by Swales (1990).

Drawing on the generic organization of the Conclusions chapter from Weisberg and Buker (1990) and Bunton (2005), a pedagogical framework was adapted for classroom teaching. Represented below are the different organizational features from Weisberg and Buker (1990) and Bunton (2005) which were adapted for the Teaching/Learning (TL) Approach used in the classroom.

Table 1: Pedagogical basis from Literature

Weissberg and Buker (1990)	Bunton (2005)	The Adapted Teaching/Learning Approach
Experimental Report: Informational Elements	Thesis Conclusions: Organizational Elements	Thesis Conclusions: Organizational Elements
Purpose/ hypothesis	Move 1: Introductory segment-, work carried out, purpose, research questions, hypothesis	RESTATE-AIM: Restate the aims to show research questions ADDRESSED.
Findings/ Explanation of findings/drawing generalisations	Move 2: Consolidation of research space- Methods/ Findings/ Results	RESTATE-RES: Review key results RELATE your work to broader research areas (move from specific to general) - Comparison (CP) - Explanation (EXP) - Generalization (GEN)
Limitations that restrict generalizations Practical applications	Move 3: Practical applications and Limitations	EXTEND discussion further to show research questions addressed, but also emphasize contributions to your research area SIGNIFICANCE: Evaluate the significance of your results/study and practical/theoretical contributions of your study
Recommendations	Move 4: Future research and recommendations	LIMITATIONS: Acknowledge limitations of your study RECOMMENDATIONS: Recommend further research or applications.

It can be seen from the above Table that organizational concepts from Weissberg and Buker (1990) and Bunton (2005) were identified more explicitly in the Teaching and Learning Approach adapted for pedagogy. The concept of 'drawing generalizations' from Weissberg and Buker in relation to discussion of results was modified and extended to include Comparisons and Explanations. 'Practical applications' mentioned by both Weisberg and Bunton has been modified to explicitly subsume 'Significance' and "Contributions' of the study. This is one example of how the applied nature of the field of Genre analysis has enabled teachers to modify existing suggested pedagogy in literature and adapt it in their teaching.

Students' Perceived Self Efficacy

As stated in literature, Self Efficacy is primarily concerned with cognitive judgements of one's capability and relates to perceptions and assessment of self. Bandura (1994:71) defines self efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capabilities…." Perceived self efficacy is believed to influence students' learning outcomes according to Yang (2004) and Wong (2005). As such, this researcher believed that getting students to assess their own awareness in terms of their improvement before and after the T/L approach could provide insights into students' "beliefs about their capabilities", about how they perceived their improvement. These perceptions can to some extent also attest to the effectiveness of the teaching approach from students' point of view about their improvement. Towards this end students were asked to share their perceptions about their understanding and learning.

Rationale and Objectives of the Study

Research on post graduate students' academic writing attests to the fact that students have problems organizing their thesis chapters as shown by Casanave & Hubbard, (1992). The Conclusions chapter is no exception. Genre-based pedagogy, in particular the ESP approach, was seen to be an effective tool for teaching purposes, and relevant to students' needs. Besides, very few studies have focused on how such a pedagogy helps students analyze target texts and how it impacts their writing.

This teacher researcher decided to explore the effect of a genre analysis teaching learning (TL) approach used in the classroom to raise students' awareness about organization of thesis conclusions chapter. The objectives of this study were to

- explore students' awareness of the organization of the Conclusions chapter before and after the TL approach
- obtain insights into students' learning
- examine if their learning was represented in their writing.

Towards this end, the questions that this classroom-based study addressed were

- to what extent are students aware of the organization of the Conclusions chapter before and after the Teaching Learning (TL) approach?
- what are students' perceptions about their learning?
- to what extent has this learning filtered into students' writing?

As can be seen, the focus of this study is mainly on organizational aspects.

Methodology

The module

This advanced level writing module (ES5002) is designed for international students who are pursuing their doctorate at the National University of Singapore. All international PhD students who are not exempted from the Graduate English Courses (based on their results for the Diagnostic English Test) are required to take ES5002 offered by the Centre for English language Communication. It is a 48-hour module taught over 12 weeks with 2 two-hour tutorials per week.

The focus of the module is on the organizational structure and writing conventions of the different thesis chapters. A text book produced by the previous lecturers of the module at the Centre titled 'Research Writing: A workbook for Graduate Students (Lee, Ho and Ng, 2009) formed the course text.

Participants

The 38 participants in this study consisted of students from diverse disciplines such as Engineering, Science, Medicine, Math and Pharmacy. They were all in the fourth year of their 5-year PhD candidature. Students from similar disciplinary backgrounds were assigned the same group for class activities. 38 students from three tutorial groups participated in this study.

Teaching and learning (TL) approach

As a first step in the pedagogy, students were introduced to the organization elements represented in Table 1 through a mini lecture, followed by application tasks from the course text book. Students analyzed the Conclusions extracts in the book for their organizational elements introduced to them in the mini-lecture. Next, in groups consisting of 3-4 students from similar disciplines, students analyzed a longer thesis extract from a Conclusion chapter of a thesis in their discipline for all the organizational elements that they were introduced to. Students were given a set of guiding questions for this purpose in the form of a worksheet. This would be followed by a group discussion of their analyses in the classroom in a two-hour workshop. The session generated a lot of discussion and also raised their awareness about the conventions specific to their discipline. They then moved on to writing the first draft of the Conclusions assignment.

Data Collection and Analysis

Questionnaire data was collected at the beginning of the mini lecture before students were given any pedagogical input on writing the Conclusions assignment and after they wrote their first drafts. They were asked to rate their awareness of the organizational elements on a scale of 1-5 (very poor, poor, average, quite good and very good respectively). Similar post-training data was collected after they had written the first draft. They were also asked to comment on the learning they had acquired. Students' writing samples were also analyzed for their understanding, using the genre framework taught to them.

Data from the questionnaire about their levels of improvement was identified and also quantitatively analyzed in terms of percentage scores to answer research question 1. Students' comments about their learning will provide answers to question 2, while samples of students' writing should provide answers to question 3.

Findings and discussion

The findings of the study will be presented with reference to the three research questions.

1 To what extent are students aware of the organization of the Conclusions chapter before and after the Teaching Learning (TL) approach?

The answer to the above research question can be explained with reference to Table2. The pre-training awareness about the organization elements of the Conclusions chapter ranges from an average awareness to that of very poor, as seen in Table 2. However, if one looks at students' qualitative comments in Table 4, the average level of awareness indicated by the first two comments such as "summarise main results in a general level " and " should answer whether objectives are fulfilled", only indicate a superficial understanding of the organization before the training.

The post-training data in Tables 2 and 3 show that 95%

(Table 2: 36.8% by two levels and Table 3: 58% by one level) of the students perceive that their understanding about the organization of the Conclusions chapter has improved. Only two students perceived that they had made no improvement. It can be concluded that almost all the students had improved but that their levels of improvement as per their perception varied across this cohort.

Table 2: Students' awareness rating and improvement by 2 Levels (N = 38)

Students' Ratings Pre- and Post	No of Students	Percentage Scores
3 to 5 Average to Very Good	7	18.4
2 to 4 Poor to Good	3	7.9
1 to 3 Very Poor to Average	4	10.5
Total	14	**36.8**

Table 3: Students' awareness rating and improvement by 1/0 Levels (N = 38)

Students' Ratings Pre- and Post	No of Students	Percentage Scores
3 to 4 Average to Good	20	52.8
2 to 3 Poor to Average	2	5.2
3 to 3 Average to Average	2	5.2
Total	22	**58**

Table 4: Pre- and Post-Qualitative Comments (N=38)

Pre-TL Comments	Post-TL Comments
• Conclusion should summarise main results in a general level • It should answer whether objectives are fulfilled • I was not clear about how to organize the Conclusion chapter • I was not sure about the organization. • No special knowledge of how to write conclusion for the thesis.	• Now that my understanding has improved, I remembered to use the different organizational elements. • I have a better under standing of the six different organization categories and to connect them properly • I have learnt what other aspects to include in the conclusion, and to further generalize the findings. • Now I know I have to start with the aims of the study. Sometimes we can mention gaps. The key findings should be stated along with implications. Limitations of the study should be followed by recommendations.

2 What are students' comments on their learning?

To answer this question, students' pre- and post training comments about their learning reproduced in Table 1 can be said to be generally indicative of the comments made by all students. Those who perceived that they had 'average understanding' before the training indicate that

> *Now that my understanding has improved, I remembered to use the different organizational elements;*
>
> *Now I know I have to start with the aims of the study. Sometimes we can mention gaps. The key findings should be stated along with implications. Limitations of the study should be followed by recommendations;*

thus implying a more enhanced understanding with regard to the specific organizational elements.

Those who at the Pre-TL Approach stage said that they were not clear or had no idea about how to organize their Conclusions chapter now claim

> *I have a better understanding of the six different organization categories and to connect them properly*
>
> *I have learnt what other aspects to include in the conclusion, and to further generalize the findings*

It can be concluded that students' perception about their learning is generally positive.

To address the third research question

"To what extent has this learning filtered into students' writing?", a sample of student's writing indicative of all students in general is reproduced below.

TITLE: Enhanced Heat Transfer in Micro/Minichannel Heat Sink using CylindricalOblique Fins

***(AIM)** A novel cylindrical oblique cut minichannel heat sink was proposed to fit over cylindrical heat sources in the form of an enveloping jacket. Temperature and fluid field studies were conducted for the two minichannel heat sinks. Secondary' channel flow distribution was investigated based on simulation studies. **(RES)** The studies showed that the repeating cylindrical oblique fin causes the hydrodynamic boundary layer development to reinitialize at the leading edge of the next downstream fin and improve flow mixing. This decreases the average thermal boundary layer thickness and enhances the heat transfer performance and results in an overall lower surface wall temperature. **(RE-RES)** Interestingly, a flow recirculation zone will form at larger Reynolds number in the secondary channel albeit this recirculation is insignificant in the present*

low Reynolds number study. The motion of the particles in the secondary channel fluid is orderly with all particles moving in straight lines parallel to the boundary wall and the streamline flow in main channel is broken and thinned at each entrance of the secondary channel. ***(SIG)*** *This phenomenon may provide insights to the flow mechanism of enhanced heat transfer on the novel cylindrical oblique cut minichannel heat sink.*

(AIM) *To optimize and analyze the heat transfer performance of the heat sink, a parametric study on the geometric dimensions of the heat sink was performed. The studies were conducted by varying the oblique angle from 20° to 45°, secondary channel gap from lmm to 5mm and Reynolds number from 200 to 900. The flow distribution was also investigated and reported, as the secondary channel gap, oblique angle and Reynolds number were varied.* ***(RES)*** *It was found that the flow is main-channel directed and the recirculation zone in secondary channel is increased along the flow direction as Isc increases from Imm to 3mm. The flow pattern becomes more and more secondary channel directed and recirculation moves upwards from oblique face 02 to M2 and disappears at the downstream by compromised heat transfer area reduction as Ise increases I from 3mm to 5mm. Based on 259 numerical data points, multiple correlations for the average Nusselt number and apparent friction constants in term of appropriate dimensionless parameters were obtained. The average deviation for the 259 data for the approximation of average Nusselt number is from -5.8% to 7.0% while it is -5.1% to 7.1% for the apparent friction constant.* ***(SIG)*** *Therefore, the heat transfer and apparent friction constant could be obtained accurately even when the parameter values are beyond those used in the parametric computations. The proposed correlations may provide the basis for optimization and design guidelines of the cylindrical oblique fin heat sinks.*

(AIM) *The cooling effectiveness of cylindrical oblique fin mini channel heat sink was compared with conventional straight fin mini channel heat sinks through experimental investigations and numerical simulation studies. The test pieces were manufactilred from copper and thermal measurements on the heat transfer characteristics were performed for flow rates in the Reynolds number ranging from 50 to 500.* ***(RES)*** *It was found that numerical simulation studies are validated for the experimental prototype tests since the deviation between experimental and numerical results is less than 6% under all conditions when the mass flow rate is 400mllmin.* ***(RES&COM)*** *The averaged Nusselt number, Nu,v" for the cylindrical oblique-cut fill mini channel heat sink increases up to 75.6% as compared to the conventional straight fin minichannel heat sink. The average total thermal resistance for the cylindrical oblique cut fill minicharmel heat sink reduces to 59.1% in comparison with the conventional straight fin heat sink.* ***(RES)*** *For a heat flux of 6.1 W/cm2 and Reynolds number of 300, local wall temperature distribution shows that the surface temperature of cylindrical heat sink was reduced by 4.3°C overall.* ***(EXP)*** *The rationale behind this phenomenon is that the repeating cylindrical oblique fins caused the thermal boundary layer development to be periodically reinitialized at its leading edge. The uniform secondary flow generated by the oblique fin decreases the thermal boundary . layer thickness, enhances the heat transfer performance and results in a lower overall surface wall temperature. Pressure drop analysis showed that the cylindrical oblique cut klf fin heat sink maintains a comparable pumping power comparing with the conventional heat sink.*

(AIM) *In addition, edge effects, which are present in the planar oblique fin configuration resnlting in spanwise temperatnre variation across the heat sink, were examined. These edge effects could cause the formation of localized hotspots.* ***(RES)*** *It was found that the use of the cylindrical oblique fin configuration is able to eliminate this edge effect, the associated temperature variation and hotspots as the oblique channels are communicating circumferentially. Heat transfer enhancement (ENu) and pressure drop penalty (Er) showed that a significant advantage of the cylindrical oblique fin minichannel over conventional straight fm minichannel overall.* ***(LIM)*** *Nevertheless, the present fluid field findings are limited by the numerical simulation due to the difficulty in accessing experimental facilities. There is no qualitative flow visualization study to validate the present numberical study.* ***(REC)*** *In future, a flow visualization study preferably with particle image velocimetry technique is needed to demonstrate the flow field in the cylindrical oblique fin heat sink*

Analyzing the above piece of writing, based on the genre-based framework used for classroom pedagogy to teach the organizational elements for the Conclusions chapter, it can be generalized that students have learnt to use these elements to give their research content a logical and coherent flow in their writing. The sample above shows that based on the four aims of his/her study, the student is able to organize the Conclusions chapter, and subsume the other organizational elements such as RESULTS, SIGNIFICANCE under each of the aims. He/she provides Explanation where necessary (paragraph 3) and combines Limitations and Recommendations (last paragraph).

That students' understanding of the organization

can filter into their writing augurs well for the genre approach used for pedagogy.

Implications for teaching and learning

The study has shown that using the genre-based ESP approach for teaching graduate students to organize their writing for the Conclusions chapter can be effective. It is also one of the few classroom-based studies that have explained the framework, shared students' perceptions about their understanding based on the approach and showed with evidence how the understanding can filter into their writing. It has proved that such an approach can be an effective teaching and learning tool.

The study augurs well for genre frameworks that teachers can adapt from literature for their own classroom teaching. More importantly, gathering classroom evidence for such approaches can further reinforce and strengthen the confidence of the classroom teacher for experimenting with and for advocating such approaches.

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18 Test Takers' Strategy Use and Reading Test Performance: A Structural Equation

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Abstract: This study examines the relationships between test takers' strategy use and their reading test performance. Two hundred ninety-six Chinese college test takers responded to a 38-item strategy use questionnaire and a 50-item reading test. Three models of strategy use and test performance were hypothesized and tested. Results showed that college test takers' strategy use affected their lexico-grammatical reading ability (LEX-GR) significantly. Findings are discussed for insights into pedagogical practice.

Key Words: Metacognitive and cognitive strategy use; reading test performance; Chinese test takers; structural equation modeling

Introduction

Language testing researchers have been interested in identifying and characterizing individual characteristics that influence performance on language tests in recent years (Kunnan, 1995). Bachman and Palmer (2010) stated explicitly that test takers' strategy use determines how language ability is actualized in language use.

Similarly, reading researchers have paid increasing attention to the role of strategy use in reading comprehension (Pearson, 2009; Pressley & Afflerbach, 1995; Zhang, 2010). The general consensus is that strategic awareness and monitoring of comprehension, both important aspects of metacognition, distinguishes skilled readers from unskilled ones (Carrell, 1989; Grabe, 2009; Paris & Jacob, 1984; Paris & Winograd, 1990).

Although this line of research has provided useful insights into effects of learners' strategy use on their reading performance, none of the studies have validated the results across samples. Thus, the goal of the current study is to investigate the effects of students' strategy use on reading test performance and validate the results across two samples of similar characteristics.

Strategy Use and Reading Performance

Metacognition is "knowledge and cognition about cognitive phenomena" (Flavell, 1979, p. 906). It is argued that metacognition comprises three components: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experience, and strategy use (e.g., Vandergrift & Goh, 2012; Wenden, 1998). This study focuses on test takers' strategy use in a reading comprehension test. Research shows that strategy use plays an important role in many cognitive activities regarding language use (e.g., Goh, 2008; Mokhtari, Sheorey, & Reichard, 2008; Song & Cheng, 2006). For example, Bachman and Palmer (2010) argued that metacognitive strategies determine how language is realized in actual language use. Furthermore, Cohen and Upton (2006) and Cohen (2006) suggested that test takers manage and control their test-taking processes through planning, evaluating, and monitoring.

Similarly, much research has shown that strategy use is closely related to students' reading comprehension performance (e.g., Alderson, 1979; Anderson, 1991; Anderson, Bachman, Perskins, & Cohen, 1991; Brown, 1980; Baker & Brown, 1984; Carrell, 1989; Jacob & Paris, 1987; Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983; Wen & Johnson, 1997; Zhang, 2010). Researchers have employed a variety of methods to examine the relationship between readers' strategy use and their reading comprehension performance. The studies using questionnaires have addressed the correlational or causal relationship between readers' strategy use and reading performance (e.g., Block, 1986, 1992; Carrell, 1989; Mokhtari &

Reichard, 2002; Phakiti, 2003, 2008; Sheoery & Mokhtari, 2001). The general conclusion is that skilled readers are distinguished from the unskilled readers by their conscious awareness of the strategic reading processes and the actual use of reading strategies.

Based on the relevant literature, we hypothesized three models (i.e. unitary model, higher-order model and correlated model) to examine the relationships between test takers' strategy use and their reading test performance. First, it was hypothesized in the unitary model that test takers' metacognitive and cognitive strategies play a unitary role in enhancing their reading test performance. According to the higher-order model, test takers' strategy use was hypothesized to have direct effects on students' test performance. In the correlated model, it was hypothesized that test takers' metacognitive strategy use is correlated with their cognitive strategy use. In addition, metacognitive and cognitive strategy use were hypothesized to have direct effect on students' test performance respectively.

The current study addresses the following two research questions:

1. Which model of strategy use and reading test performance fits the data best, the unitary, higher-order or correlated model?
2. What are the relationships between Chinese college test takers' strategy use and reading test performance?

Method

Participants

296 Chinese college students were invited to participate in the study by filling out the consent form, answering the questionnaire, and sitting for the reading comprehension test. There were 130 (43.9%) male and 162 (54.7 %) female students between the ages of 18 to 24 (M= 19.36; SD=0.92).

Instruments

There are two majors instruments used in the current study: the reading strategy use questionnaire and the CET-4 reading subtest.

The Reading Strategy Questionnaire. This questionnaire has 38 items measuring test takers' metacognitive and cognitive strategy use comprising seven subscales, i.e. planning (PLA), evaluating (EVA), monitoring (MON), initial reading (INI), identifying important information (IDE), integrating (INT), and inference-making (INF) strategies. Metacognitive strategies consist of *planning* (for achieving pre-established goals), *evaluating* (for assessing tasks and personal cognitive abilities), *monitoring* (for checking and regulating performance) strategies, while cognitive strategies are composed of *initial reading* (for engaging in general reading of the text), *identifying important information* (for refining understanding of the text), *inference-making* (for bridging information gaps in the text), and *integrating* (for manipulating the text to fit information across the text) strategies. The reliability estimate for the questionnaire is .89 (Cronbach's alpha).

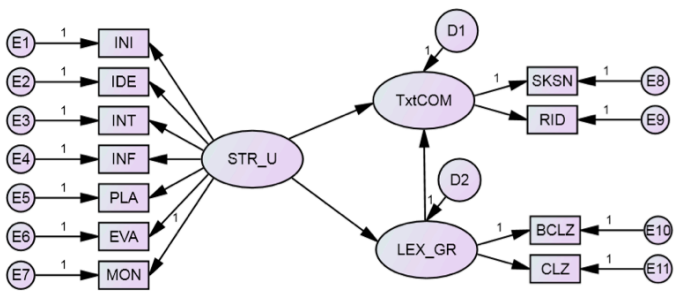
The CET-4 Reading Subtest. A published version of the College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) reading subtest was used to measure test takers' reading test performance. As a nationwide standardized test, the CET is administered by the National College English Testing Committee (NCETC) on behalf of the Chinese Ministry of Education (see Jin, 2008; Yang & Weir, 1998; Zheng & Cheng, 2008). It includes CET-4, CET-6, and CET-Spoken English Test. The CET-4 reading test in this study comprises 50 items and four sections, i.e., 10 skimming and scanning items (SKSN), 10 banked cloze items (BCLZ), 10 items measuring in depth reading (RID), and 20 multiple choice (MCLZ) cloze items.

Data analysis

Preliminary statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics and reliability of the questionnaire and the reading test were calculated. Assumptions regarding univariate normality and multivariate normality were examined. Values of sknewness within ±3 and kurtosis within ±10 indicated univariate normality (Kline, 2011). Multivariate normality was evaluated using Mardia's coefficient. A value of 5.00 or below showed multivariate normality (Byrne, 2006).

Structural equation modelling (SEM). A growing number of studies in language assessment have adopted the approach of structural equation modeling, especially in investigating learners' strategy use and test performance (In'nami and Koizumi, 2011; Kunnan, 1998). Based on the literature, three models of strategy use and reading test performance were hypothesized and tested: (a) a unitary model (see Figure 1); (b) a hierarchical trait model (see Figure 2); and (c) a correlated model (see Figure 3).

Figure 1: The unitary model



Note. INI = initial reading strategies;
IDE = identifying important information strategies;
INTE = integrating strategies;
INF = inference-making strategies;
PLA = planning strategies;
EVA = evaluating strategies;
MON = monitoring strategies;
STR_U = strategy use;
TxtCOM = text comprehension reading ability;
LEX-GR = lexico-grammatical reading ability;
SKSN = Skimming and Scanning;
RID = reading in depth;
BCLZ = banked cloze;
CLZ = multiple-choice cloze

Figure 2: The higher-order mod

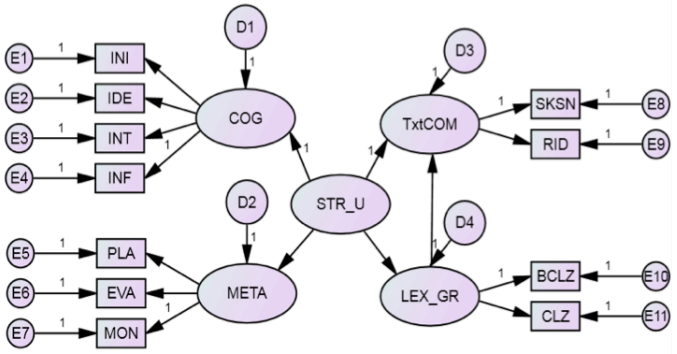
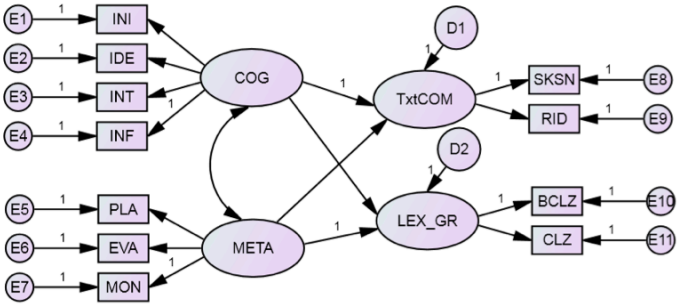


Figure 3: The correlated model



To investigate the model fit, we calculated multiple fit indices. The non-significant chi-square (χ^2) value indicates good model fit. Due to its sensitivity to sample size (Kline, 2011), we calculated the chi-square to degree of freedom ratio (χ^2/df) and an ideal value should be less than three. The comparative fit index (CFI) is required to be equal to or greater than .90 for a reasonably good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Byrne, 2011). The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) should be less than .08 indicating reasonable error of approximation (Browne and Cudeck, 1993). The narrow interval of the RMSEA 90% confidence interval is an indication of better model fit. The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) below .10 is indicative of good model fit (Kline, 2011). The lower value of the Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) and the Consistent Akaike Information Criteria (CAIC) shows good model fit.

We used IBM SPSS AMOS computer program Version 20.0 (Arbuckle, 2011) to perform the analyses. Maximum Likelihood (ML) was chosen as the method of parameter estimation.

Results

Preliminary statistical analyses

Descriptive statistics of the questionnaire and reading test were calculated. All values of skewness and kurtosis were within the accepted range for the univariate normality. Mardia's coefficient was 3.14 smaller than 5.00, representing multivariate normality. Reliability estimates for the reading strategy use questionnaire and the reading test were .89 and .90 (Cronbach's alpha), showing that the questionnaire and the test are reliable measuring instruments

Structural equation modelling (SEM)

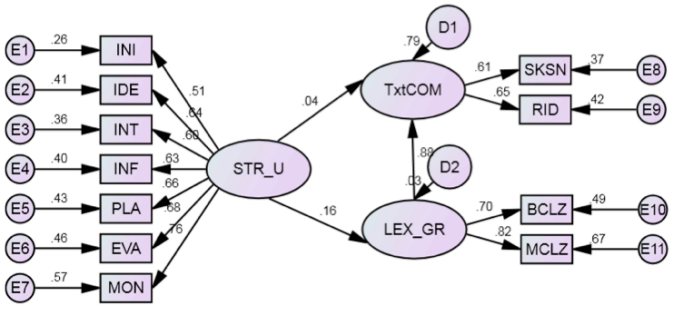
We tested the three hypothesized models. As shown in Table 1, the unitary model fit the data well. Although the chi-square statistic was significant (χ^2 =109.74, df= 43, p < .05), the other fit indices showed a good model fit : CFI=.92, RMSEA=.073[90% confidence interval: .056, .089], and SRMA=.057. In addition, although the higher-order model also seemed to fit the data well, it had a negative error variance for the metacognitive strategy factor. If the problematic variance is fixed to zero to solve the problem, the model becomes meaningless and not interpretable. The correlated model had also the similar problem of a negative error variance associated with RID and MCLZ. Additionally, its model fit is not satisfactory. Based on these, the unitary model appears to fit the data best both statistically and substantively.

Table 1: Fit indice for the three models

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	CFI	RMSEA	RMSEA 90% CI	AIC	CAIC	SRMR
Unitary model	109.74*	43	2.55	.92	.073	.056 to .089	177.74	278.06	.057
Higher-order model	111.31*	40	2.78	.91	.078	.061 to .095	185.31	300.85	.071
Correlated model	202.58*	41	4.94	.80	.116	.100 to .132	274.58	368.66	NA

Note. df = degree of freedom; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation; RMSEA 90% CI= RMSEA 90% confidence interval; AIC= Akaike Information Criteria; CAIC= Consistent Akaike Information Criteria; SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual. NA=not available *p < .05

Figure 4: The final SEM model



Discussion

In this study, the relationships between Chinese college test takers' strategy use and their reading test performance were investigated using structural equation modeling approach. This section discusses the results in relation to the two research questions.

RQ 1: Which model of strategy use and reading test performance fits the data best, the unitary, higher-order or correlated model?

Based on the relevant literature, we hypothesized, tested and compared the unitary, higher-order, and correlated models. Our analyses showed that although the higher-order model yielded good model fit indices, it is impossible to solve the problem of negative error variance, we decided not to select it. Therefore, the unitary model proved to be the best fitting model.

Based on our analysis, the good fit of the unitary model backs up researchers' earlier views (e.g., Baker, 1991; Chapelle et al., 1997; Paris et al., 1991) that metacognitive and cognitive strategies are not distinguishable in that the distinction of the two types of strategies depends on the variation of topic, task, and individuals. In other words, if strategies are set in a complex series of behaviours or decisions, it is difficult to make a distinction between metacognitive and cognitive strategies. A case in point is the strategies used in the test context in which students employ multiple strategies concurrently to deal with the language and test tasks demands to enhance their test performance. Thus, metacognitive and cognitive strategies function collectively, accounting an important portion of variance of test performance.

RQ 2: What are the relationships between Chinese college test takers' strategy use and reading test performance?

As showed in our analyses, STR_U was well measured by the seven measured variables of strategies (i.e., β varied from .51 to .76). In addition, it was found that the CET-4 reading subtest had two underlying factors: lexico-grammatical reading ability (LEX-GR) and text comprehension reading ability (TxtCOM). Furthermore, LEX-GR affected TxtCOM directly and significance with β=.88. This finding is consistent with relevant established theories as well as empirical studies (see Alexander & Jetton, 2000; Anderson & Pearson, 1984; Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Grabe, 2009; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Phakiti, 2008b; Purpura, 1997; 1998; 1999; 2004; Zhang & Zhang, 2013).

With regard to the relationship between test takers' strategy use and reading test performance, it was found that test takers' strategy use affected their LEX-GR significantly (β=.16, $p < .05$) while the effect of strategy use on TxtCOM is relatively weak (β=.04). This finding can be interpreted with Rummelhart's (2004) and Stanovich's (1980) information processing model. According to this model, readers use strong skills to compensate for their weak skills in constructing meaning from the context. In other words, as English language learners, the test takers in the current study would make up for their lack of English proficiency by employing strategies. However, strategies appear to play a more important role in responding to the items which tap into learners' lexico-grammatical reading ability. But the compensating role of strategies seemed to be limited in answering the items which tap into learners' text comprehension reading ability which requires higher level skills. This finding is backed up by Bachman's (1990) argument that in contrast to language ability, the dominating contributor to test takers' test performance, strategy use can only account for a small portion of variance of test performance as it is only part of test takers' characteristics that affect language test performance.

Furthermore, the good fit of the unitary model with the data lends support to researchers' earlier views (Baker, 1991; Chapelle et al., 1997; Paris et al., 1991) that the distinction between metacognitive and cognitive strategies hinges on the variation of topic, task, and individuals involved. This appears to show that when language users are faced with a series of complex behaviours or decisions, the strategies they employ to deal with the required tasks are not clearly distinguishable. In the test context, a wide range of sources of information and task demands are presented to test takers under time constraints. Therefore, they tend to use multiple strategies simultaneously to deal with language and test tasks demands in order to maximize their test performance. This is substantiated by the unitary model in which metacognitive and cognitive strategies function in synergy and collectively explain a significant portion of variance in reading test performance in a unitary manner.

Conclusions and Implications

This study investigates the relationships between test takers' strategy use and reading test

performance. Results showed that the unitary model is a better fitting model than high-order model and correlated model. In addition, we found that strategy use affected test takers' lexico-grammatical reading ability significantly but had limited effect on their text comprehension reading ability.

Our findings suggests that instructions on strategy use can influence test takers' reading performance but its function appears to be limited. In other words, to enhance students' test performance, teachers would need to focus more on how to improve students' language proficiency. Additionally, test takers should attach emphasis to improving their comprehensive language ability as well as practicing employing strategies on the test.

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

19 Rubrics for Assessment: Their Effects on ESL Students' Authentic Task Performance

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Abstract: Alternative assessment or authentic assessment has gained popularity in the field of second language teaching during the past few years. The main purposes of alternative assessment include assessing students beyond the traditional testing and encouraging students to participate in open discussions about standards and criteria of successful performance (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010). Anecdotal evidence of ESL teachers who try out alternative assessment shows that students' performance in authentic speaking and writing tasks is well below their expectations. Some teachers also claim that most students are not satisfied with the score or grade they receive for an assignment. The present study thus attempted to address this problem by studying the effects of provision of rubrics used for assessing to students before they do their assessment tasks. The study was done using secondary school students in a government school in Sri Lanka. A questionnaire was administered to students and a sub-sample of students and the respective teachers were interviewed to collect data on their perceptions of provision of rubrics prior to authentic assessment. Students' performance at pre-test (without knowledge of rubrics) was compared with that of the post-test (with prior knowledge of rubrics). The performance of students was also compared according to the level of exposure to rubrics.

Key Words: rubrics; alternative assessment; authentic assessment; ESL, task performance

Introduction

The term 'rubrics', has been used in the field of assessment for more than two decades now. However, the meaning of the term is not clear to many teachers and they misunderstand that a rubric is any scoring criterion. How does a rubric differ from general scoring criteria? Andrade (2000) defines a rubric as 'a scoring tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work' and one that 'articulates gradations of quality for each criterion, from excellent to poor' (p.1). According to Andrade, rubrics are useful for teachers and learners for five reasons:

1. They are useful as tools of teaching and assessment.
2. They help students become more thoughtful judges of the quality of their work and those of their peers.
3. They save teachers' time spent on evaluating student work.
4. They accommodate heterogeneous classes.
5. They are easy to use.

Assessment in schools and higher education institutions is facing a shift from traditional testing practices towards more authentic assessment of students' learning (Dochy, Gijbels, & Segers, 2006). In authentic assessment, the test-takers are required to demonstrate that they are able to complete a particular task that resembles something that they are likely to have to perform in the target situation (Mueller, 2003; O'Malley & Valdez Pierce, 1996). As rubrics are often used to assess students' performance in such authentic tasks, Jonsson and Svingby (2007) stress that "effective design, understanding and competent use of rubrics is crucial, no matter they are used for high-stake or classroom assessments" (p.131).

A major problem that arises when carrying out authentic assessment is the maintenance of validity and reliability (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). The reliability of a detailed analytic scoring rubric for writing was determined by

East (2009) in a study which used 47 high school students (17-18 year olds) from 11 schools in New Zealand. The participants wrote two argumentative essays in German and these essays were scored by two independent raters using a scoring rubric specifically designed for this task. Inter-rater consensus and inter and intra rater consistency were calculated. The findings revealed that the analytic scoring rubric was highly reliable in measuring writing proficiency of foreign language learners. The placement test and the scoring rubric were found to be useful in differentiating well between ability levels of students. The scoring rubric was specifically designed for German and the reliability was decided based on the marks of two raters. The study discusses the transferability of scoring rubrics across different languages and claims that it is more successful when languages are similar but is less successful when the languages have marked differences.

The importance of rubrics in enhancing students' ability to communicate their ideas effectively, especially in writing, is stressed by Jaidev (2011) and according to Jaidev, 'knowledge of writing rubrics also helps students become more accountable for their own writing, and it allows them to gain a greater sense of ownership of what they have written' (p.1).

Value of instructional rubrics in teaching, learning and assessment is stressed by Andrade (2005), who shows that if carefully designed, rubrics help students to understand the goal of an assignment and support teachers in unbiased grading, giving feedback and assigning more challenging work to students. However, as 'rubrics are not self-explanatory' teachers need to explain those to students (Andrade, 2005, p.29). A study by Schafer, Swanson, Bené and Newberry (2001) investigated the effects of teacher knowledge of rubrics on students' achievement in biology and algebra and showed that when teachers clearly explain the expected achievement levels in their instruction it leads to higher performance on tests. The importance of students' understanding of rubrics is stressed again in a study by Andrade, Du and Wang (2008) which tested the effects of a scoring rubric on self-assessment of students' writing. The sample consisted of 116 volunteer participants in seven public elementary schools in the northeastern United States. The study found that the quality of students' writing was positively related to their use of a rubric for self-assessment. It stressed the value of involvement of students in generating criteria for assessment using model papers. The studies reported above show positive effects of rubrics on student's performance.

As Andrade, Du and Wang (2008) point out, there is a dearth of studies done in the area of rubrics and hence there is 'limited empirical evidence' to support the claim that rubrics can promote learning and achievement. The number of empirical studies that can be found is limited to three (Andrade, 2001; Cohen, Lotan, Scarloss, Schultz & Abraham, 2002 cited in Andrade et al., 2008; Andrade et al.; 2008) and these studies are also limited to the skill of writing. No study to the researcher's knowledge has focused on the effects of knowledge of rubrics on the performance of students' speaking. Hence, empirical research on the effects of the knowledge of rubrics on speech performance is necessary to address this gap in research. Research done in English as a second language contexts is also rare and hence how far the secondary school students of English as a second language could make use of rubrics for self-assessment and the effects of rubrics on the development of language skills, mainly the productive skills i.e. writing and speaking, are worth investigating.

The present study

The objectives of the present study were to determine the effects of rubrics on ESL students' performance in authentic writing and speech tasks, to evaluate the effects of level of exposure to rubrics on students' speech and writing performance and to explore the effects of exposure to rubrics on students' self-assessment.

Research Questions

What impact does the extent of exposure to rubrics have on ESL students' speech and writing performance?
Does their understanding of rubrics have an impact on their self-assessment?

Methodology

The study adopted a pre-post quasi experimental design. The sample consisted of 70 secondary school students in a national school in Sri Lanka. Two classes were selected for this purpose and students and their teacher of English were briefed about the study. A pre-test was conducted which tested students' speech and writing performance prior to their exposure to rubrics (see Appendix C for tasks).

The rubrics for speech and writing were used by two markers who are graduate teachers of English with over 10 years of experience in teaching to score tasks done by a sample of 30 students and inter-rater reliability was calculated. The inter-rater reliability was high for both Speaking and Writing. Pearson's correlation coefficient for Speaking scores was .91 while it was .93 for Writing.

The pre-test was then assessed by the teacher and the students were also asked to self-assess their work. Focus group interviews were held with the two classes and an open-ended questionnaire was administered to check their understanding of criteria for assessing writing and speech. Class A was then given the rubrics used to assess the tasks and the rubrics were explained to students. Students were encouraged to ask questions to clarify their doubts about the rubrics. They were

asked to recall and write down the assessment criteria (rubrics) before they did the tasks. Then the tasks (post-test) were done in class and were evaluated by the teacher and self-assessed by the students.

Class B was also given the set of rubrics prior to their writing and speaking tasks but the rubrics were not explained to them. They were then assigned the same tasks that were given to Class A and were scored by the same teacher using the rubrics and the students self-assessed their work.

Data Analysis

Students' pre-post scores in the two groups were compared using the statistical package SPSS Version 16 and the open-ended questionnaire and Class A students' notes on how they were scored prior to the post-test were analysed for evidence of knowledge of rubrics. Correlation coefficients were calculated for teacher assessment and students' self-assessment. Since the data showed non-normal distribution ($p<0.05$ in Kolmogorov- Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests), non-parametric statistics were used for data analysis.

Findings

As shown in Table 1, Class A (Rubrics+ Explanation) which received more scaffolding on rubrics than did Class B (Rubrics- Explanation) performed better in both writing and speaking tasks at the post test.

Table 2: Frequency Counts for References to Contents of the Rubric in the Answers to the Open Ended Questionnaire at the Post-Test – Writing

Criterion	Frequency Class A (Rubrics+ Explanation)	Frequency Class B (Rubrics- Explanation)
Relevance and Content	27	7
Organisation	13	5
Vocabulary	8	3
Grammar	28	9
Spelling	12	0
Mechanics	12	4
Presenta-tion-Handwriting	4	9
Presenta-tion-Neatness	16	7
Writing Style	1	0

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Task Performance of Class A and Class B

Condition	Task	N	Mean Pre (SD)	Mean Post (SD)	Mean Gain	Cohen's d (Within Subject)
Class A Rubrics+Explanation	Writing	34	10.76 (2.20)	13.82 (2.75)	3.06	1.23
Class B Rubrics-Explanation	Writing	36	9.69 (3.63)	9.88 (2.90)	0.19	0.06
Class A Rubrics+Explanation	Speaking	34	11.97 (3.38)	13.05 (3.69)	1.08	0.31
Class B Rubrics-Explanation	Speaking	36	10.55 (2.88)	8.50 (3.26)	-2.05	-0.66

A Mann-Whitney U test on the pre-test data showed no significant difference between the Rubrics+Explanation (R+E) group and the Rubrics-Explanation (R-E) group in writing task performance ($Z= 1.41$, $p>0.05$, Cohen's $d =.36$) A Mann-Whitney U test on post-test data showed significantly higher writing task performance ($Z= 4.81$, $p<0.01$, Cohen's $d = 1.39$) for the R+E group than that for the R-E group. The effect size Cohen's d between the R+E and R-E groups at pre-test was .36 while it was 1.39 at post-test.

A Mann-Whitney U test on the pre-test data showed no significant difference between the Rubrics+Explanation group and the Rubrics-Explanation group in speaking task performance ($Z=1.72$,$p>0.05$ Cohen's $d = .40$). A Mann-Whitney U test on post-test data showed significantly higher speaking task performance ($Z= 4.6$, $p<0.01$, Cohen's $d = 1.31$) for the R+E group than that for the R-E group. The effect size Cohen's d between the R+E and R-E groups at pre-test was .4 while it was 1.31 at post-test.

As answers to the question 'What do you think your teacher takes into consideration when marking your essays?' students listed different criteria and they were categorized under the areas given above. Another question in the open-ended questionnaire asked them 'What do you think are the qualities of an essay which will get the highest marks/lowest marks from the teacher? Given below are some excerpts from students' answers.

> *If the essay has been written using correct hand writing and language that will be a successful essay. The most important thing is the vocabulary used in that essay. It is necessary to use correct language at the correct place. And also the starting of that essay should be very creative. We should end the essay*

creatively too. If the word range is given we should not exceed that range' –Student 1 from Class A

The writer should write only about the topic. He shouldn't write all the things he knows but he should summarize the facts he knows and limit it to the number of words. He should write the sentences grammatically and make meaningful sentences. The writer should think about the content and order and have a good start, body paragraphs and a good ending. The writer's spelling mistakes and mechanisms (mechanics) of writing should be good enough for a perfect essay. –Student 4 from Class A

Study the essay topic well and use correct grammar and write within the given word limit. –Student 6 from Class B

'I think most of the teachers concern more about grammar when marking an essay. Although teachers show concern about grammar think teachers should show concern to the related points than grammar'. –Student 14 from Class B

To the open ended question 'What do you think your teacher takes into consideration when marking your speech?, most of the students in Class A who were given explanation of the rubrics, mentioned most of the criteria in the rubrics while the group which received no explanation had only a few students mentioning the contents of the rubrics.

Table 3: Frequency Counts for References to Contents of the Rubric in the Answers to the Open Ended Questionnaire at Post-Test – Speaking

Criterion	Frequency Class A (Rubrics+ Explanation)	Frequency Class B (Rubrics- Explanation)
Content and Relevance	15	8
Structure	11	7
Audibility	20	12
Gestures	9	3
Eye Contact	8	1
Confidence	6	3

Correlation between Students' Self-Assessment and Teacher Assessment

At pre-test, Spearman's correlation co-efficient was calculated for students' average self-assessment scores and teacher's scores. For Rubrics+Explanation group it was .56 and p<.01 for writing and .27 and p=.12 for Speaking. For Rubrics-Explanaton group, it was .11 and p=.56 for writing and .03, p=.85 for speaking.

At post-test, Spearman's correlation co-efficient for R+E group writing was .88, p<0.01 while it was .76, p<0.01 for speaking. For R-E group, correlation co-efficient was .03 and p>0.05 for writing while for speaking it was .30, p>0.05.

Discussion and Conclusion

The data analysis given above showed that the group which received rubrics plus explanation of what is meant by each criterion and how the grading is done performed significantly better than the group which received the rubric without any explanation. The R+E group showed a high positive effect of the knowledge of rubrics on students' speaking and writing performance at post-test. As Andrade (2005) points out, 'rubrics are not self-explanatory. Students need help in understanding rubrics and their use'. The findings of the present study support this view. The teachers who were interviewed also claimed that students (especially the low achievers) do not show any interest in any novel practice like using rubrics for self-assessment unless they are specifically trained to do so. According to the teacher who taught the R+E group, the students showed high interest in using the rubrics and they seemed to be aiming for the highest level in the rubric. This shows that rubrics help students in goal-setting and planning which are crucial metacognitive strategies (Anderson, 2003) which support students' learning. The decrease in the mean scores for speaking in the R-E group at post-test may be a result of overuse of rubrics by some of the students in the group. As the teacher pointed out, some students overused gestures and their eye contact was not natural and some tried to speak very loudly.

Another important finding of the study was that students' self-assessment which was far different from teachers' assessment of their work at the pre-test, changed considerably in the R+E group at the post-test. The self-assessed scores of this group which received detailed explanation of the rubrics showed a high correlation with the scores of the teacher at the post-test. The R+E groups' written products and speech had evidence of their attempts to use the rubrics given and the group became more motivated and more focused than did the members of the R-E group in their activities in the English as a Second Language classroom. This finding supports the findings of Andrade et al. (2008) which claim that students' self-assessment using a rubric leads to improvement in writing. Hence, the study shows that careful designing of rubrics and thorough explanation and constant scaffolding and guidance given to the users of rubrics are necessary if they are to bring positive outcomes in teaching, learning and assessment. However, there are some limitations to this study. The study included only one secondary school and the participants were all girls and hence the influence of gender could not be gauged. Students' performance was measured based on a single type of task (an informal letter for writing and a public speech). Further research should focus on other language skills and different types of tasks. Longitudinal studies with

students at primary and tertiary levels and at different achievement levels would also be of utmost importance. Such studies with diverse populations and in different subjects and skill areas are necessary to support the claim that knowledge of rubrics and using rubrics for self-assessment have the potential to improve learning and achievement.

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Appendix A: Rubrics for Assessing Writing

	4	3	2	1	0
Relevance and Content	Fully satisfies the requirements of the given task. Includes all relevant information.	Mostly covers the requirements of the given task. Includes most of the relevant information.	Addresses some of the requirements. Includes some relevant information but not clearly focused.	Attempts to address the topic but few relevant information. Digresses often from the topic.	Does not attempt the task/ the answer is completely irrelevant.
Organisation	Includes an inviting introduction and a satisfactory conclusion. Skillfully manages paragraphing. Logical arrangement of ideas. Manages all aspects of cohesion well.	Includes an introduction, body and conclusion. Uses paragraphing successfully. Uses a range of cohesive devices but may look mechanical.	Attempts to include an introduction, body and conclusion. Main idea is not clearly supported with details. Less attention given to organization. Rare use of transitions.	Begins abruptly. No paragraphing or inappropriate paragraphing. No attempt to maintain logical arrangement of ideas.	No clear message is communicated.
Vocabulary and Word Choice	Uses a sophisticated range of vocabulary which is appropriate for the purpose and audience. May use figurative language.	Uses accurate vocabulary which suits the audience and purpose with a mixture of precise and general words. Occasional errors in word choice.	Uses a fair range of vocabulary to express ideas. May be inappropriate for the audience and purpose at some occasions.	Uses a limited range of vocabulary. Mostly inaccurate for the purpose and audience.	Inappropriate and inaccurate vocabulary.
Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation	Uses a variety of grammatically correct sophisticated sentence structures. Perfect spelling and accurate punctuation.	Uses mostly correct sentence structures with 1-2 mistakes. Correct spelling and appropriate punctuation with occasional errors.	Uses basic sentence structures with some errors. Uses spelling and punctuation with some errors.	Uses mostly sentence fragments with frequent errors. Frequent errors in spelling and punctuation.	Writing incomprehensible.
Presentation	Neat, easy to read, error free	Mostly readable, neat, minimum errors	Fairly readable. Some strain on the reader.	Not clear. Considerable strain on the reader.	Illegible.

Appendix B: Rubrics for Assessing Speech

	4	3	2	1	0
Content and Relevance Support Focus	Fully satisfies the requirements of the task. Understands the audience. Supports the points with enough examples. Clear focus is maintained throughout the speech.	Mostly covers all the requirements of the task. Understands the audience. Supports most of the points with examples. Clear focus.	Addresses some of the requirements of the task. Some points are supported with examples. Some digression from the topic.	Attempts to address the requirements but fewrelevant information. Digresses often from the topic. Structure not clear.	Does not attempt the task/ Insufficient and irrelevant information
Structure	Clear structure starting with an attention getter, introduction to the topic, body which supports the topic and a conclusion which summarises the main points.	Uses an introduction, body with some supporting examples, and conclusion but there may not be an interesting attention getter.	Attempts to structure with an introduction but fails to maintain structure.	Attempts an introduction. No clear structure.	No structure
Delivery Eye contact Audibility Pace Gestures	Maintains good eye contact. Speaks with appropriate volume and pace. Uses appropriate gestures.	Maintains eye contact. Audible. Uses appropriate gestures.	Audible but there may be little eye contact.	May have considerable strain on the listener. Lot of pausing and hesitation.	Speech incomprehensible
Word Choice	Word choice appropriate to the audience.	There may be occasional inappropriacies in word choice.	Some inappropriacies and inaccuracies in word choice.	Inappropriate and inaccurate word choice.	Totally inappropriate.
Preparedness and confidence	Appeared well prepared, confident and comfortable.	Seemed fairly comfortable and confident but needs a bit more practice.	Seems somewhat prepared but needs more practice to build confidence	Inadequate preparation. Needs practice to build confidence.	Not prepared

Appendix C: Tasks –Post-test

Writing Task

Your friend who left school three years ago and migrated to another country is interested in what happened in your school during the past three years. Write him/her a letter describing

- the present situation in the school
- events that took place during the past three years
- asking information about his/ her experience abroad

Your letter should be limited to 300 words and follow the appropriate format.

Speaking Task

The dengue menace is on the increase with the monsoon rains. Give a speech at the school assembly on the Role of School Children in Prevention of Dengue Fever. Your speech should be 5 minutes long and it should include

- a description of the problem
- steps that can be taken in prevention and control
- role of the school in prevention and control of Dengue fever.

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

20 Authenticity in Task Design for Vocational English Teaching and Learning: A Case Study of a Project-based Learning Module

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Abstract: *Authenticity* has been viewed as an important issue for ELT and particularly for vocational English (as a branch of ESP) in creating a communicative language environment – in order that learners are exposed to 'real English' with 'intrinsically communicative qualities' (Lee, 1995) and rehearse the real-world target communication tasks they will have to perform in their workplace contexts. This study explores the theoretical and practical issues concerning the notion of authenticity through a case study of a project-based learning (PBL) vocational English module in a Hong Kong vocational institution, and derives from the research findings a ***3-level authenticity model*** applicable for ELT task design.

This study has drawn on Bachman's (1990) *dual notion of authenticity* (situational and interactional authenticity) in conjunction with Halliday's triad construct of *context of situation* in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1978) as a conceptual framework. It examines the design features of the case PBL tasks through documentary analysis of the project brief and semi-structured interviews with practitioners in the specific purpose field to ascertain the extent to which the tasks are situationally authentic. It also investigates the authenticity of the learners' interaction with the task features (i.e. the interactional authenticity) by eliciting the learners' accounts of their engagement with the tasks through retrospective focus group interviews, alongside an analysis of the discourse produced by the learners in performing the tasks. The findings show that authenticity in task design is essentially the ***construction of a Context of Situation*** aligned with the learner's Target Language Use (TLU) domain. This provides a rationale and direction for the collaboration between the ESP teacher and the trade specialists in the English-across-the-curriculum approach for vocational education.

Key Words: rubrics; alternative assessment; authentic assessment; ESL, task performance

Introduction

Authenticity has been viewed as an important issue for English Language Teaching (ELT) and particularly for Vocational English[1] for creating a communicative language environment (Widdowson, 1978; van Lier, 1998; Amor, 2002; Breen, 1997; Lee, 1995; Mishan, 2005; Dudley-Evan & St John, 1998; Harding, 2007) – in order that learners be exposed to 'real English' with 'intrinsically communicative qualities' (Lee, 1995, p.324) and rehearse the real-world target communication tasks they will have to perform in their prospective workplace (Nunan, 2004, p.20). Thus, the issue of authenticity is highly pertinent in the context of Vocational English in that it brings into the second language classroom the use of authentic trade materials and real-world workplace communication tasks. Theories of language acquisition also emphasise the need for practice in the context of 'real operating condition' (Johnson, 1988), i.e. 'Learners need the opportunity to practice language in the same conditions that apply in real-life situations.' (Ellis, 2003, p.113).

Studies on authenticity have traditionally been confined

1 Vocational English is a branch of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and it aims to meet the learners' workplace language needs.

to the discussion of texts (Swaffar, 1985, Little et al., 1998, Wong et al., 1995), but recent studies focus on the authenticity of tasks (Guariento & Morley, 2001; Mishan, 2005). As McGrath (2002) puts it, 'the narrow concern with text authenticity that characterized the early years of the communicative movement has since given way to a concern for the nature of tasks' (p.12).

Lewkowicz (2000) points out that 'despite the importance accorded to authenticity, there has been a marked absence of research to demonstrate this characteristic,' (p.45) and that 'such discussions [on authenticity] need to be empirically based to inform what has until now been a predominantly theoretical debate' (p.53). To fill this gap, the present study explores the way and the extent to which authenticity is achieved in practice by means of a series of tasks designed for a project-based learning (PBL) Vocational English module, as projects are often seen as 'a collection of sequenced and integrated tasks' (Nunan, 2004, p.133) that are designed to maximize authenticity (Beckett & Miller, 2006). PBL is a form of task-based learning which 'entails elaborate sets of sequenced tasks during which students are actively engaged in information gathering, processing, and reporting, with the ultimate goal of increased content knowledge and language mastery' (Beckett & Miller, 2006, p.21).

Conceptual framework

The present study has drawn on Bachman's (1990) dual notion of authenticity in conjunction with Halliday's triad construct of context of situation in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1978) as a conceptual framework.

1). Authenticity and Context of Situation in Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday 1978) – Language and context

In defining authenticity, it is important to note that where authentic communication takes place, there is always a **context of situation** (Halliday, 1978). Halliday explains linguistic phenomena in terms of the social system. He views the linguistic system as a potential from which linguistic choices are made according to the context of situation in which the speaker, or writer, finds him/herself. Language assumes meaning when seen in relation to the *Context of Situation*, which has three parameters: ***field***, ***tenor***, and ***mode***. Field refers to the ongoing activity in the context of situation, or the subject matter in which the participants are involved, and the nature of the social action that is taking place. ***Tenor*** refers to the interrelations among the participants (status and role relationships). ***Mode*** refers to the role that language is playing in the situation, its function in the context, including the channel (whether it be spoken or written or some combination of the two) and also the rhetorical mode, what is being achieved by the text in terms of such categories as persuasive, expository, didactic, etc. (Halliday & Hasan, 1985, p.12) Together these three parameters or dimensions of the context of situation determine the type of language that is likely to be used in the text.

2). Authenticity as a dual notion: Situational authenticity and interactional authenticity

Bachman (1991) proposes a dual notion of authenticity for language testing. He maintains that for a test task to be authentic, it has to achieve both situational as well as interactional authenticity. For a test task to be situationally authentic, it has to correspond to the features of a target language use (TLU) situation. On the other hand, interactional authenticity resides in the interaction between the test taker and the test task. Ellis (2003), in discussing task-based language learning, borrows this dual notion and defines authenticity as follows:

> *A pedagogical task is situationally authentic if it matches a situation found in the real world and it is interactionally authentic if it engages the learner and results in patterns of interaction similar to those found in the real world. (p.339)*

The present study draws on this dual notion in its investigation into authenticity in Vocational English task design.

Research questions

The main research question is formulated as follows:

> *To what extent is authenticity achieved in the tasks designed for the Vocational English project-based learning (PBL) module under investigation? What is the nature of the authenticity that is manifested? What implications does this authenticity have for Vocational English (ESP and ELT in general) task design?*

In the light of Bachman's dual notion of authenticity (that for a task to be authentic, it has to achieve both situational as well as interactional authenticity), the main research question is fractured into two specific research questions:

1. To what extent are the PBL tasks situationally authentic? How is situational authenticity realized in the design features of the PBL tasks?
2. In what way in practice do the features of the PBL tasks engage the learners? To what extent is the learners' interaction with the PBL tasks authentic? What is the nature of the interactional authenticity manifested, and what implications does it have for Vocational English task design?

Research design

To address specific research question 1 on situational authenticity, the following research methods were employed:

i. Documentary analysis of the Project Brief of the PBL task series (see appendix) – to characterize the task design features in terms of situational authenticity

ii. Semi-structured interviews with two fashion designers (practitioners in the TLU domain for the PBL tasks under investigation) – to ascertain the extent of correspondence between the task features of the PBL task series and those of the TLU tasks

For specific research question 2 on interactional authenticity, the following research methods were employed:

i. Discourse analysis of the PBL task outcome products, i.e. the written project report and oral presentation produced by two sampled groups of learners – to characterize the learners' interaction with the task features in approaching the written project report and oral presentation tasks

ii. discourse analysis of the team discussion session – to characterise the learners' interaction with the task features in approaching this project process task

iii. retrospective focus group interviews with the two sampled groups of learners – to triangulate with the data collected from the above mentioned sources and to look into their experience of engaging with the PBL tasks

Background information regarding context of study and profiles of learner participants

The case Vocational English PBL module chosen for the present study is one run by the Language Centre for students from the Department of Fashion and Textiles undertaking a Higher Diploma programme in Fashion Design and Product Development at a vocational institution in Hong Kong. The programme required the students to take four Vocational English modules, and the case PBL module was run during the final year of the programme, which allowed students to consolidate the language skills acquired from earlier modules in the Vocational English curriculum. Since the PBL task series under investigation required learners to work in groups of four to carry out a team project, the present study sampled two of the groups to be the participants of the research. In order to select cases that are likely to be information-rich with respect to the purpose of the research, sampling for the present qualitative study was purposive. The two teams of subjects were selected for the present study for the following reasons:

a. These two teams of learners had a track record of good class attendance and they participated in all the PBL tasks under investigation.

b. Although there are individual variations of English language standard among the team members, the general English language proficiency of these two teams of learners is considered average or slightly above average among the student cohort. The present study purposively sampled typical cases (learners of average and slightly above average language ability) instead of extreme cases (learners of the lowest or the highest language abilities in class) so that the data yielded will be typical of ELT/Vocational English learners.

The first group comprises the members (pseudonyms are used here) Carrie, Christine, Chai Chi and Yan, while the second group comprises Carmen, Louis, Rachel, and San.

Findings and discussion

1). Situational authenticity

1.1. Situational authenticity in the form of constructed Context of Situation

An examination of the project brief shows that the learners are required to perform a series of language tasks (referred to as the PBL task series in subsequent discussions):

a. reading and listening to trade-related texts from various sources;

b. group discussions to share research findings and collaborate to come up with the design of a new fashion collection;

c. writing up a project report;

d. giving an oral presentation of their proposed new collection

An analysis of the design of the PBL task series shows that a *workplace scenario* (Chic Fashion House calling on its Product Design and Development Team to conduct research and propose new designs for the forthcoming season) is given here to serve as a *skeleton context* on which to hang the series of language tasks the learners have to perform (reading and listening to trade-related texts, group discussions, writing a project report, oral presentation, etc.). In this way, by means of this 'skeleton context', one task leads realistically to the next. Learners are informed of the key features of the communicative event including the subject matter, their role, role functions, the various tasks, etc. through the use of *'intrinsic documents'* (Bambrough 1994), i.e. documents presented

within the simulated world to achieve social and communicative reality (e.g. the e-mail message from the Project Manager to the Product Design and Development Team). (see appendix)

Through being presented with this workplace scenario, students are given a realistic purpose of the whole series of language activities in the PBL tasks series. The construction of this 'skeleton context' for the PBL tasks echoes Halliday (1978) that where authentic communication takes pace, there is always a ***context of situation***, whose three parameters are field, tenor, and mode. Thus, the context of situation constructed for the case PBL tasks under investigation is as follows:

Table 1: Context of situation constructed for the PBL task series

Field (subject mater, activities taking place)	Researching and developing new fashion products for Chic Fashion House – team discussions, project report writing, oral presentation
Tenor (Participants)	as members of Product Design and Development Team (reader(s) of written report and audience of oral presentation: company management; interlocutors in team discussion: fellow team members)
Mode (channel, role of language)	Written (project report); Spoken (team discussions, oral presentation) To explain design concepts and product details and persuade readers/audience to accept the proposed ideas team discussion: to share information and exchange ideas

1.2. Correspondence between features of the constructed Context of Situation (CoS) and those of the specific purposes Target Language Use (TLU) domain

1.2.1 Correspondence in terms of the field (Subject matter, ongoing activities)

Two semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with two practitioners in the fashion industry. The first interviewee, Kelly, first worked as Fashion Merchandiser for a medium-scale garment firm and then as Fashion Designer for an international fashion company. The second interviewee, Joyce, was a fashion designer in a small-scale local fashion company. In the interviews, they were asked to review the PBL task series under investigation in terms of the features of the constucted CoS in relation to the real world target tasks in the fashion industry, i.e. the specific purposes TLU domain.

The interviewees revealed that, in the TLU context, fashion designers and product developers have to submit written research reports/proposals of new fashion products every season. More often, they are required to present their proposed design orally to their boss or clients.

There is also correspondence between the task input texts used in the PBL task series and those that fashion designers have to process in the specific purposes TLU domain, and the procedures that the learners have to follow in interacting with the input texts resemble those expected in the TLU domain. This is, for example, illustrated by the comments from one of the interviewees:

> *As fashion designers, we have to regularly watch fashion shows and review fashion magazines and manuals in order to gather information about fashion trends and consumer preferences. (Kelly)*

1.2.2. Correspondence in terms of tenor (Participants)

The interviewees confirmed that there is a correspondence between the real world target tasks in the fashion industry and the PBL task series in terms of the participants and their relative statuses and roles. For example, they commented on the tone and formality of the language used for different tasks as follows:

> *Our team meetings are usually not very formal, even with our immediate boss as the team leader. Usually, they're like brainstorming sessions.*
>
> *Of course, we're a lot more alert and businesslike when presenting our proposal. They are our big bosses and clients. Our proposals need the green light from them. (Joyce)*

Their comments on the job duties of fashion designers also shed light on the participants (and thus the ***Tenor***) of the communicative events in the workplace:

As fashion designers, we often have to confer with management executives to discuss design ideas. We also have to collaborate with other designers to coordinate special products and designs. (Kelly)

1.2.3. Correspondence in terms of ***Mode*** (Channel, role of language)

Both interviewees emphasised the ***expository*** (to explain clearly the design features and uniqueness) and ***persuasive*** (to get across the selling points of designs) illocutionary functions of language in the TLU context and that communicative performance is an integral part of their professional performance.

For example, one of the informants clearly pointed out the role of language in the TLU context in relation to the PBL tasks under investigation:

> *To be a successful fashion designer or product developer, not only is it important for us to be able to do good designs and develop fashion products that suit the needs of the clients and the market, we also have to be able to communicate the uniqueness of our designs to them. Thus, being able to verbalise the selling points of our product designs is crucial. (Kelly)*

They also stressed the importance of using language to express emotion and visual effects associated with different aspects of fashion product design:

> *For instance, you don't just say 'We have chosen black as the main colour tone for our collection'. You don't just say what colour, or what fabric you use for your design. You also have to be able to express the feeling, mood and visual effect associated with the use of different colours and fabric textures, like 'Black gives a sense of mystery and makes you look more elegant; Sky blue expresses a peaceful and tranquil feeling; lycra is highly elastic and allows good movement. (Joyce)*

Thus, the role played by language in the TLU tasks, as suggested by the practitioners in the TLU domain, corresponds to that of the PBL tasks under investigation.

1.3. Two levels of situational authenticity conceptualised from the PBL task series

For specific research question 1, it is concluded that situational authenticity in task design is essentially the *construction of a context of situation (abbreviated as CoS in subsequent discussions)* within which the learner(s) communicates using the target language. Two levels of situational authenticity are conceptualised from the PBL task series:

Level 1: Provision of a constructed CoS (as *context of situation* is a necessary condition for any real life communication event)

The kind of authenticity manifested in the design of the PBL task series is essentially the provision of a *constructed CoS* through an intrinsic document (an e-mail giving information about *Field, Tenor* and *Mode*). This *constructed CoS* serves to engage the language learner's *discourse domain* (which refers to 'the learner's internal interpretation of context' (Douglas, 2000, p.46). Thus, by means of the provision of a *constructed CoS*, the PBL tasks correspond to real world communication tasks in the sense that (as the basis of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistic model) *where authentic communication takes place, there is always a context of situation,* which determines the linguistic choices that are made. Thus this level 1 situational authenticity is the *provision of a constructed CoS to correspond to any real world communication event where a context of situation is a necessary condition.*

Level 2: Alignment of the constructed CoS with that of the specific purposes TLU domain

The second level of situational authenticity manifested in the PBL task series under investigation has to do with the *alignment of the constructed CoS with that of the specific purposes TLU domain.* As verified in the interviews with the practitioners in the fashion industry, the constructed CoS of the PBL tasks to a large extent corresponds to that of the specific purpose TLU domain in terms of *field, tenor* and *mode.*

Therefore, on top of providing a constructed CoS to resemble the necessary condition of any real life communication as suggested by level 1, the features of the constructed CoS have to be aligned with those of the specific purposes TLU domain in order to achieve this level 2 situational authenticity in task design. This is exactly where needs analysis for ESP (Munby 1978) and verification by practitioners and subject specialist informants (Wu and Stansfield 2001) can facilitate this alignment in the task design process. This level of authenticity is especially relevant to ESP, where needs analysis aims to arrive at a sociolinguistic profile of the learner's prospective language use, and from there to develop a profile of their present learning needs. It seeks to find out about the language-using communities that the learner wishes to join and what their roles and purposes within that community are likely to be. Such information can be the basis for the design of tasks in terms of their linguistic and pragmatic authenticity.

Thus, the two-level model of situational authenticity conceptualized from the analysis of the task design of the case PBL task series can be represented as follows:

Figure 1: Two-level model of situational authenticity

Situational Authenticity

Level 2
Constructed CoS aligned with that of the specific purposes TLU domain

Level 1
Provision of Constructed CoS (as a necessary condition for any real life communication)

Within this 2-level model, level 2 of situational authenticity is implicational of level 1, i.e. this 2-level model is an implicational hierarchy where level 2 of situational authenticity also subsumes features of level 1.

2). Interactional authenticity

Specific research question 2 examines the nature of the learners' interaction with various features of this level 2 situationally authentic PBL task series and gives a characterization of this interactional authenticity manifested.

From the analysis of the project outcome products (i.e. the written project report and the oral presentation), it was found that the learners indeed demonstrated awareness of and interacted authentically with the three parameters of the constructed CoS in various ways, but some 'inauthenticity' was at the same time manifested.

2.1. Authentic interactions with the contextual features

2.1.1. Learners' interaction with the field of the constructed CoS

The learners' interaction with the field of the constructed CoS is mainly demonstrated by the engagement of their specific purpose background knowledge. The analysis of the written project report and the oral presentation produced by the learners shows that the learners did make reference to the context of the real world Hong Kong fashion market, engage their fashion design creativity in their proposed designs, and make reference to and process trade-specific authentic texts (They chose and used as task input genuine sources used in the professional fashion field, such as the Pantone Colours website and the WGSN website, etc.).

The interaction between the learners' specific purpose background knowledge and language ability is also evidenced by the learners' use of trade-specific lexical items and language expressions in the project report and oral presentation. For example, numerous vocabulary items related to elements of fashion design such as colours, lines, fabrics, silhouettes are present in the discourses analysed. Some instances are quoted as follows:

Fashion Design Elements	Trade-specific Lexical Items
Colours	Pastel colours, earth tone, green, shocking pink, white, golden olive, silver grey, croissant, snorkel blue, different shades of blue, monochrome, etc.
Lines and patterns	floral prints, animal prints, vertical and horizontal stripes, geometric patterns, checks, paisley, etc.
Fabrics	lightweight, breathable, quality natural fabrics such as organic cotton and silk, lycra, spandex, polyester, linen, nylon, rayon, etc.
Silhouettes	Balloon silhouette, loose-fitting, high waistline, etc.
Others	Ensemble, casualize

Language expressions describing the feelings and moods associated with colours can also be found in the project report and oral presentation. Some examples are:

Pastel colours and earth tones use for maternity clothes give a comfortable feeling and a sense of peace. Sharp colours stand for happiness.(Carmen's group)

Cheerful colours will be a trend. Dynamic and energetic colours such as yellow, red and shocking pink play an important role in the coming season. (Carrie's group)

As expressing emotion and visual effects associated with different design elements is a language feature specific to the

field of fashion design, the presence of these language expressions describing the feelings and moods associated with colours in the learners' discourse is also a manifestation of the interaction between the learners' language ability and specific purpose background knowledge (in this case, the learners' professional sense of colours) activated by the *Field* parameter of the constructed CoS.

2.1.2. Learners' interaction with the contextual parameter mode

The learners' awareness of and interaction with the Mode of the constructed CoS are illustrated by the learners' attempt to achieve the illocutionary functions of *explication* and *persuasion* to fulfill the communicative goal of the discourse. Indeed, the learners' attempt to *explicate* and to *persuade* is manifested in different parts of their project report. For example, immediately in the introduction section of the report, both groups tried to justify the choice of their project topic. Carmen's group, for instance, tried to do so by quoting from famous fashion magazines, which gives more authority and thus persuasiveness to their choice of designing a maternity wear collection:

> *Pregnancy is often regarded as 'one of the happiest times in a woman's life' but it can also be 'the most sartorially frustrating' period since 'it's tough to feel beautiful when you're swollen up, and there are diminishing choices in your wardrobe' (InStyle 2003, p.166). (Carmen' group)*

This illustrates the learners' awareness of the communication goal of the text to persuade and their attempt to convince the reader of their sensible choice of the topic.

The learners' attempt to *persuade* is especially evident in the section 'Recommendations: Proposed New Collection' of their project report, where the learners tried to justify their proposed design based on the research findings. They refer to their research findings using phrases such as 'in view of the survey results', 'according to the findings above', 'with reference to the survey report', 'based on the findings of the survey', 'in the light of the market research findings', etc. to give more credibility to what they are proposing by showing that it is well-informed by research findings. There are also an abundance of instances where the learners used cause-and-effect phrases (as highlighted in italics below) in giving reasons to support their proposed collection, and thus to *persuade.* Some examples are quoted as follows:

> ***As*** modern women have a high purchasing power, they are willing to buy trendy and high quality pregnant clothes when they are pregnant.
> A majority pregnant women do not buy pregnant clothing ***due to*** they need to wear formal dressing when they are working.
> ***Since*** the survey shows….., ***therefore*** the price of our maternity collection can be middle-high.
> (Carmen's group)

> With reference to the Pantone Fashion Color Report for S/S 2008, cheerful colors like blue, yellow, red will play an important role in coming season. ***Therefore***, these colors will be included in our collection.
> The survey shows that the majority of respondents were in favor of …. ***Hence***, it is proposed that our color palette of our collection would include blue, yellow, red, pink, ….
> …***Thus***, it is suggested that floral prints, animal prints, checks, dotted prints and vertical stripes will be adopted in our collection.
> (Carrie's group)

To achieve the *persuasive* illocutionary function for the discourse, clear explication of ideas and arguments plays an important role. In the project reports, there are instances demonstrating the learners' strategies to explain ideas clearly such as making use of various discourse markers to sequence ideas and mark the change of topics:

> Several methods were used to obtain findings of this research. ***First***, …. ***Second***, … ***Third***, …. ***Finally***,….
> (Carmen's group)

> ***Regarding*** the Pantone Fashion Color Report, …
> ***With regard to*** their monthly income, one-third of the respondents earned….

As far as their shopping habits are concerned, …..
(Carrie's group)

It is interesting to note that, although the learners made frequent grammatical mistakes in their written project report and oral presentation, the examples discussed above nevertheless illustrate the learners' illocutionary competence to *explain* and to *persuade*, the role expected to be played by language governed by the *Mode* of the constructed CoS. This shows that the constructed CoS indeed established the discourse domain for the learners and engaged their communicative language ability (CLA) (Bachman and Palmer 1996) in terms of their grammatical, textual and functional knowledge. The learners were well aware of the *Mode* of the constructed CoS (and this was confirmed in the triangulation with the data from the retrospective focus group interviews) and attempted to achieve the illocutionary functions required in the constructed CoS. Thus, *task design as the construction of CoS* has significance for both pedagogical and assessment purposes. For assessment purposes, as the constructed CoS establishes the discourse domain for the learners and thus informs them of the illocutionary functions they are expected to achieve in the discourse, this engages the learners' CLA and thus can distinguish learners of higher grammatical competence from those of lower grammatical competence attempting to achieve the expected illocutionary functions. Pedagogically, this shows what lexical and grammatical areas the learner is weak in for achieving certain illocutionary functions, and therefore sheds light on those particular language items to be focused on at a post-task stage. Thus, the CoS model can indeed complement Willis' Task-based Learning (TBL) framework (Willis 1996), where a language focused component is needed at the post-task stage.

2.1.3. Learners' interaction with the contextual parameter tenor

A major linguistic feature associated with Tenor is the formality of tone of the discourse, as the tone reflects the interpersonal relation of the participants. From the analysis of the project report and oral presentation and also from the retrospective interviews, it was found that the learners were well aware of the tenor set up in the constructed CoS and they did try to employ an appropriately formal tone in the discourse they produced. The inconsistencies found such as the use of informal expressions like "by the way", "a little bit", etc., contracted forms and sentence fragments in their written report were due to their failure to master the correct usage rather than a lack of awareness of the tenor of the constructed CoS.

2.2. Inauthenticity manifested

Despite the learners' authentic interactions with the features of the constructed CoS discussed, there is nevertheless inauthenticity manifested.

2.2.1. Learners' unauthentic interaction with the field

Despite evidence showing that the learners have made use of their specific purpose background knowledge and that their proposed designs are well justified with reference to the real world Hong Kong fashion market, they nevertheless admitted that the contents of their PBL product outcomes, i.e. the written project reports and the oral presentation, are inadequate for a real life trade project. When asked how they would have approached the project differently if it were a real life fashion development project, the learners commented that much more research would have to be done:

Of course, we would have to do a lot more research, like more detailed market research, budget estimations …. (Louis)

And, we would also have to verify the information we got from the web. There're so many inaccuracies …. (Rachel)

The content is not adequate for a real fashion design project. More details on the proposed new collection are needed. (Christine)

They also indicated that they were also very conscious about this project as an English language project in which they had to fulfill the language requirements stated in the Vocational English project brief.

2.2.2. Learners' unauthentic interaction with the mode

While the learners did demonstrate attempts to *explain* and to *persuade*, which illustrates their awareness of and interaction with the Mode of the constructed CoS, they nevertheless considered *content* to be peripheral. This was evident particularly when they admitted that the content is 'inadequate' in comparison with that required in a trade project.

When asked how they would have approached this project differently if it were a project for a trade subject, they made comments such as the following:

> *Well, for this project, we were more concerned about grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. We tried to proofread the report and checked the language we used after we finished. For trade subjects, like Fashion Design, Visual Merchandising, Fashion Business and so on, well, the projects and assignments are also in English. So, the difference may not be big. But for trade subjects, we are not as concerned about the language thing. We focus more on content for these content subjects. (Chai Chi)*

This shows that the learners view content and language as largely discrete and they have different focuses for projects of vocational and language subjects. This sheds light on the difference between how the learners approach this Vocational English project and how they approach a real life workplace project as far as the roles of content and language are concerned.

2.2.3. Learners' unauthentic interaction with the tenor

Although the learners were well aware of the *Tenor* (the participants and their role relationships) of the constructed CoS, they mainly approached the written project report and oral presentation tasks as language assignment tasks, focusing on displaying 'good language' to the language assessor, instead of presenting a trade project to their bosses and clients.

This is particularly evidenced by their strategy of a pre-arranged scripted question-and-answer (Q&A) session at the end of the oral presentation. The Q&A part at the end of the oral presentation was almost the only interaction found between the learners and the audience throughout the whole presentation. It was observed that the interactions are not at all authentic or spontaneous, in that the learners were able to answer the 'on-the-spot' questions instantly without having to take time to consider as in real life situations. They were able to give their answers very fluently without hesitations. The authenticity of their interactions in the Q&A session was further investigated in the retrospective focus group interviews, where the learners admitted that their Q&A interactions were indeed scripted.

> *Yes, we arranged with a classmate in the audience beforehand. We gave her the question and rehearsed the answer, so that we could answer the question fluently. (Rachel)*

> *Of course, we'll be more confident if the Q&A is pre-arranged. If somebody really asks a question on the spot, we may not be able to respond in English correctly and fluently…. (Chai Chi)*

Here, the learners pre-arranged the Q&A session to avoid demonstrating their language weaknesses and to display their 'fluency'. This again shows that they approached the task as a language assignment rather than authentic interaction in a real life workplace project.

2.3. Characterising the interactional authenticity in team discussion

The nature of the team discussion task is different from both the written project report and the oral presentation. While both the tasks of the written project report and the oral presentation carry an element of assessment (each carries 50% of the module mark), the team discussion session is not assessed. It is among the process of the project that the learners had to go through before arriving at the *products* of the project, i.e. the written project report and the oral presentation.

In the team discussion session under investigation, the constructed CoS governs that the purpose for which the team members seek to use language is to ***cooperate*** (to share information and exchange ideas) so as to come up with a new design collection to be proposed to the company top management.

An analysis of the discourse of the team discussion session will shed light on the extent to which the learners interacted to achieve the purpose of communication, i.e. to *cooperate*.

In analyzing learner interaction, Jacobs and Ward (1999) suggest that, of Halliday's (1978) three metafunctions, the one most relevant to learner cooperation is the *Interpersonal* metafunction, which realizes the *Tenor* of the context of situation, and one area of grammar most closely associated with the interpersonal metafunction, and thus Tenor, is *mood*.

Mood refers to whether the piece of language under focus is a statement, an imperative, or an interrogative. Jacobs and Ward (1999) argue that mood relates to the interpersonal metafunction as, for example, 'the interrogative reverses the roles in a statement – In a statement, the speaker seeks to give information, while in a question, the speaker seeks to receive information or ask for others' opinions' (p.8). They argue that 'imperatives tend to suggest domination, while interrogatives suggest *cooperation*' (p.8).

From the transcription of the team discussion, an abundance of interrogatives are found, and the language functions of these interrogatives are mainly to seek information, clarifications, agreement, and opinions from others. Some instances of the interrogatives found in the team discussion and the language functions they serve are quoted as follows:

Table 2: Instances of interrogatives in the team discussion session and the language functions they serve

Examples of interrogatives found in the data:	**Language functions:**
Which one do you like best? (Chai Chi)	Seeking opinions
What do you think? (Carrie)	Seeking opinions
Do you mean to create two different collections, one for the younger customer group, one for the more mature group? (Rachel)	Seeking clarification
So, shall we base the design on Alexander McQueen? (Louis)	Making suggestions
Do you agree with this idea? (Yan)	Asking for agreement
How are we going to attract the customers? (Louis)	Seeking opinions
San, did you find out about the latest fabric trend? (Carmen)	Asking for information
Shall we vote on this? (Carrie)	Making suggestions

The abundance of sentences in the interrogative mood found in the spoken discourse, which mainly serve the functions of asking for information, seeking clarifications, asking for agreement, asking for opinions from others and making suggestions, indeed suggests cooperation among fellow group members.

Despite the plentiful interrogatives in the discourse of this team discussion session, the indicative mood, or the statement, is nevertheless predominant in the discourse. Jacobs and Ward (1999) argue that the preponderance of statements in a discourse 'suggest that there is little in the oral interaction that would encourage the [participants] to cooperate with each other' (p.9). However, an examination of the language functions served by the statements in the team discussion reveals that this is not the case. Rather, apart from stating some facts and personal opinions, the speakers were using these statements to show agreement with others, to clarify oneself for others, to respond to others' point, to make suggestions, etc.

I think you've made a good point here. (Carmen)

I mean that we can add a ribbon to make the style more feminine. (Rachel)

Yes, that is what I mean. (Christine)

Yes, you're right. But I don't think there's a big difference between the two designs. (Chai Chi)

I suggest we add some lace near the waistline. (Louis)

Even when the speakers were stating personal opinions, these statements are very often followed by interrogatives either to seek opinions or agreements from their fellow members:

I think this style is more comfortable and trendy. What do you think? (Rachel)

The point is, organic products, that's their lifestyle. Don't you agree? (Louis)

So, the price is about $150 to $200. Is that right? (San)

There are also some tag questions, which form 'a halfway position between bald statements of opinion and requests for such information as another's opinion' (Halliday, 1985, p.69) and thus

also suggest cooperation:

This one is very lovely, isn't it? (Christine)
Synthetic fabrics will cause skin allergy for the pregnant women, will they? (Carmen)

On the other hand, the imperative mood is rarely found in the discourse of the team discussion, except for what Halliday (1985, p.347) calls the imperative 'we', i.e. the 'let's' construction. Examples found in the team discussion are:

Let's take a look at the photo here. (Louis)
Let's have two separate collections for this line then. (Carmen)
OK. Let's talk about our target customers. (Carrie)
Perhaps let's have a closer look at the colour trend … (Chai Chi)

Here, the speakers were not using the imperatives to give commands or orders that suggest domination. Instead, they were making suggestions that include the others (that is why Halliday calls this the imperative 'we'), thus giving a sense of cooperation.

3). Internal and external Context of Situation (CoS)

An examination of the concept of CoS shows that there are *internal* as well as *external* CoS. The internal CoS is the CoS internal to the simulated world, i.e. the world of the Product Design and Development Project for Chic Fashion House, while the external CoS is the world external to the simulated world, i.e. the immediate context for the learners – the second language classroom, where the learners have to fulfill the language requirements as stated in the Vocational English project brief.

The dichotomy of the *internal and external CoS* can be utilized here to account for the unauthentic aspects of the learners' engagement with the PBL tasks. It was found that, although the learners were well aware of the features of the internal CoS, it is evident that the learners did not always operate within the internal CoS, i.e. the scenario created. Instead, they shifted between the internal and external CoS. For example, while the learners did engage their specific purpose background knowledge and made reference to the real world Hong Kong fashion market, which resembles the process of a real life trade project as governed by the *internal CoS*, it is also obvious that they were very conscious about this PBL project as a language assignment in which they had to fulfill the language requirements governed by the *external CoS*. This kind of 'conflict' between the internal and external CoS becomes more obvious when it comes to the *Tenor* where the audience of the written report and the oral presentation is the company management of Chic Fashion House in the internal CoS whereas that in the external CoS is the language assessor. This 'non-correspondence' has thus resulted in the learners focusing on displaying 'good language' to the audience at the expense of authentic interaction, as exemplified in the learners' pre-arranged, scripted Q&A interactions. This kind of conflict between the *internal CoS* (a fashion design project) and the *external CoS* (an English language assignment) has led to the learners' perceived separation of content and language in their engagement with the tasks, resulting in an 'inadequate' content and a preoccupation with form rather than meaning. In contrast, in the team discussion session, instead of being preoccupied with form rather than meaning, the learners demonstrated authenticity in their cooperative interactions to achieve a common goal. While there is a conflict between the internal CoS and the external CoS of the written project report and oral presentation tasks, which has led to the inauthenicity discussed, there seems to be more harmony between the internal CoS and the external CoS of the team discussion task – Here, the *Field* of both the internal and external CoS governs that the subject matter is 'an informal meeting' and the purpose is to 'come up with details for a new collection'. In terms of the Tenor, both the external and internal CoS involve fellow team members cooperating in their discussion towards achieving the same goal. The harmony of the *Field* and *Tenor* between internal and external CoS also suggests harmony of the *Mode* – that the role of language in both the internal and external CoS is to *explain, share* and *exchange information and ideas* in order to arrive at an agreed new fashion collection.

4). A third level of situational authenticity

Thus, the dichotomy of *internal and external CoS*, the harmony of which leads to authenticity of the learners' interaction and the conflict of which leads to inauthenticity, indeed sheds light on a *third level of situational authenticity*, which complements the *2-level model of situational authenticity* discussed earlier. This third level of situational authenticity has to do with the alignment between the internal and external CoS. Thus, this three-level authenticity model for task design can be represented as follows:

Figure 1: Three-level authenticity model for task design

Situational Authenticity

Level 3 Internal CoS aligned with external CoS
Level 2 Constructed CoS aligned with that of the specific purposes TLU domain
Level 1 Provision of a Constructed CoS

Implications: Integration of vocational English projects with trade projects – Collaboration between the Language Centre and parent departments

The establishment of the Level 3 authenticity in the CoS model for task design, which calls for the alignment of the internal and external CoS in maximizing authenticity, provides the rationale for the English-across-the-curriculum approach to learning and teaching with the collaboration between the trade departments and the language centre. (The need for the collaboration between the ESP teacher and the trade subject specialists has been advocated by ESP academics such as Hutchinson and Waters (1982), Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), Almagro and Vallegro (2002), etc., and the present study has further provided a rationale for this advocation.) English-across-the-curriculum refers to the practice of integrating the learning and use of English throughout the vocational curriculum. In integrating a vocational English project with a trade one, of which language and communicative competence is an integral part, there will be minimal distinction and thus enhanced harmony between the internal and the external CoS. In this connection, in the light of the present study, further research should be done on the actual interactional authenticity as manifested in this kind of tasks at Level 3 authenticity, the findings of which can further inform the modifications of and thus enrich the CoS model derived from the present study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study has explored how authenticity is a potentially useful notion for the conceptualization and realization of practical Vocational English task design and has both theoretical and practical significance for the field of ELT (and Vocational English in particular). This study is a response to the incompleteness of previous discussions on the 'elusive' definition of authenticity in terms of language learning tasks (Mishan, 2004, p.1) and the lack of empirical research done on the extent to which authenticity is achievable in the second language classroom (Beckett & Miller, 2006, p.28) despite the wide recognition of the vital role of authenticity in ELT and ESP discussed in literature. It has provided a logical link between Halliday's triad construct of Context of Situation within the Systemic Functional Linguistic model and Bachman's dual notion of authenticity. It has added to the body of knowledge concerning authenticity by establishing that authenticity, apart from being a dual notion as suggested in literature, is also a three-level construct as far as ELT task design is concerned. This three-level authenticity model derived from the present study is also of practical value to teachers of ELT, ESP, and Vocational English in particular for designing authentic language learning tasks to meet the specific needs of their learners.

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Appendix: Project Brief of Case PBL Module

Project Brief: Notes to Students

Project Task 1: Written Project Report

In this project, you need to form groups of 4 and write a project report of 2000 words. To prepare for the report, your group has to carry out some research and, based on the findings of the research, design and propose new fashion products for Spring/Summer 2012. For details, please refer to the Project 'Situation Brief'.

This written project report takes up 50% of the total marks of the project.

Objectives of the Written Project Report:

1. To describe the background, rationale and purpose of the research
2. To present findings including fashion trends, market scope, target customer profile, design inspiration, colour and fabric selection, etc.
3. To make recommendations based on findings and explain design details

Deadline for Submission
You team has to submit your proposal by _____.

Project Task 2: Persuasive Oral Presentation

For details of situation of this oral presentation, please refer to the 'Situation Brief'.

The oral presentation will be conducted as detailed below.

Date	Time	Venue	Duration	Weighting
				50%

Preparation
This is the Persuasive Oral Presentation task of the Product Design and Development Project. You are given the Project Brief 10 weeks before the oral presentation.

In this task, you will be required to work with your team members and give an oral presentation of your research and proposed fashion products/ collection for 15 minutes to persuade the audience (i.e. the senior management of your company) to accept your proposal. The presentation will be followed by a 3-minute question-and-answer session in which your team invite and answer questions from the audience. Prepare the presentation as a team. Divide the presentation among team members so that each member will have around 4 minutes for presentation.

Objectives of the Oral Presentation Task:

- To organize information from a written text into spoken discourse for a particular audience and purpose.
- To use persuasive language and communication techniques
- To handle questions from an audience

You will receive an individual mark based on your performance in the overall group presentation.

Team Discussion Task (to be held in Week 5)

After your group has decided on a research topic, divide up the research work among your members. In Week 5, group members have to attend a team discussion session. In this session, members have to share their research findings and work together to come up with details of the new product line/collection your group is to propose.

Project Brief: Situation Brief

You are a member of the Product Development Team (consisting of 4 members) of Chic Fashion House, which specializes in menswear, womenswear, as well as children's wear. Read the following e-mail from the Product Development Manager. Then carry out some investigative research and work out a product development proposal as requested.

To: Product Development Team <product_dev_team@chic.com>
From: Product Development Manager <product_manager@ chic.com>
Date: 21 October 2011
Subject: Product Development Proposal for S/S 2012

Dear Team Members

Our company would like to develop a new product/product line for the coming season, and I would like your Team to do some research and work out a proposal for the development of new fashion products for Spring/Summer 2012. To carry out the research, your team has to:

1. Identify a problem/a need/ an opportunity related to the Hong Kong/ China / international fashion market.
2. Make sure that the merits and potential of your proposed product(s) are well justified by research findings.
3. Carry out an initial Internet search on your chosen topic to see if you can find substantial information about it.
4. You have to investigate the market needs as well as the fashion trend (including colour, fabric, silhouette trends etc.)
5. Based on research findings, your proposal should detail the design of the proposed product/ collection (including the special features, colour selection, choice of materials, lines, patterns and silhouettes, and technical information) and the target market.
6. You should also present your strategies for the new product/ collection. For example:

- Branding, packaging, other product features
- Pricing strategy
- Promotion (What advertising, product launch and sales promotion?)

7. Prepare a written project report of about 2000 words (excluding references and appendices) which include details of your research as well as your proposed product/ collection. (Project Task 1)
8. Give an oral presentation of your proposal in the next staff meeting to persuade the senior management to accept your proposed product/ collection. (Project Task 2)

Peter

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

21 Input Modification and Self-Questioning: Effect on Level 7 Students' Comprehension of Science Texts

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Abstract: To investigate the effects of simplification and elaboration as well as self-questioning active reading strategy on level 7 students' reading comprehension of science texts, a research investigation was conducted. Following a quasi-experimental research design, 120 level 7 students were assigned to 12 experimental groups, namely High Proficiency-Baseline-self questioning (HP-B-SQ), HP-Baseline-without self-questioning (HP-B), HP-Simplified-self-questioning (HP-S-SQ), HP-Simplified-without self-questioning (HP-S), HP-Elaborated-self-questioning (HP-E-SQ), HP-Elaborated- without self-questioning (HP), Low Proficiency-Baseline-self questioning (LP-B-S), LP-Baseline-without self-questioning (LP-B), LP-Simplified-self-questioning (LP-S-SQ), LP-Simplified-without self-questioning (LP-S), LP-Elaborated-self-questioning (LP-E-SQ), and LP- Elaborated-without self-questioning (LP-E). T-tests and analyses of variance conducted revealed that elaboration and self-questioning active reading strategy have significant positive main effects on high proficiency and low proficiency students' reading comprehension of science texts. However, the absence of significant interaction effect of input modification, self-questioning active reading strategy, and readers' reading proficiency level on the students' reading comprehension of science texts indicates that self-questioning active reading strategy has a positive main effect on students' comprehension regardless of readers' proficiency level and the type of text presented to the students. Hence, based on the data from this study, it is concluded that reader input would have more significant effect on readers' comprehension than text input.

Introduction

A considerable number of articles showing the positive relationship between reading comprehension and science learning have been published (Vacca & Vacca, 1996; Jacobson, 1998; Bowers, 2000; Carnine & Carnine, 2004; Roe, Stoodt-Hill & Burns, 2004). Yet, it is not clear whether such relationship between reading comprehension and science learning can be attributed to the nature of science texts or to the reading strategies that the students use as they read the science texts.

Because reading is a process that can be understood by looking at the interaction between the reader and the text as well as the interaction among the different component skills involved in the reading comprehension (Grabe, 1991), a better understanding of the relationship between reading comprehension and science learning necessitates the investigation of how text input and reader input affect the comprehension of science texts.

A review of literature on text input and reading comprehension reveals that there have been a number of studies conducted to investigate the effect of text modification in the form of simplification--denominalization, transformation of passive constructions to active ones, and replacement of difficult or low-frequency words with more common synonyms and elaboration--presenting synonyms and appositives vis-à-vis difficult or low-frequency words as well as adding clearer signaling of thematic structure in the form of examples and paraphrases on reading comprehension (Yano, Long & Ross, 1994; Tweissi, 1998; Yeung, 1999; Young, 1999; Urano, 2000; Donovan & Smolkin, 2001; Oh, 2001; Brantmeir, 2005; Li, Xu &

Wang, 2005; Hsu & Yang, 2007; Mayor, 2007; Khan, 2007). Interestingly, while the results of the said studies indicate that input modification generally results in better comprehension, whether elaboration is better than simplification or vice-versa remains a debatable issue. Moreover, it is worth noting that only a few studies investigated the effect of input modification on comprehension of science texts; thus, suggesting a need for more research on how input modification either by elaboration or by simplification could improve science text comprehension.

Correspondingly, there has been a substantial body of research on the effect of reader input in the form of using active reading strategies on reading comprehension; and it appears that the most studied strategy is self-questioning because this strategy is believed to be a necessary condition for readers to comprehend written texts (Wong, 1985; Parker & Hurry, 2007). In fact, according to Janssen, Braaksma & Couzijn (2009), a little less than a hundred research studies on self-questioning and reading comprehension have been conducted from 1965 to 2000. In self-questioning studies, participants were asked to generate their own questions about the given reading text before they were asked to answer the subsequent comprehension test. Results of the said studies generally indicate that self-questioning significantly results in better comprehension. Notably, despite the plethora of studies on self-questioning and reading comprehension, it seems that most studies involved narrative texts while only very few investigations dealt with expository science texts. Unfortunately, while some research data suggest that self-questioning significantly promotes comprehension of science texts (André and Anderson's ,1978-1979; King, 1992), other research data indicate that self-questioning does not significantly affect comprehension of science texts (Miciano, 2002). Apparently, there is a dearth of literature on self-questioning active reading strategy and comprehension of science texts.

Thus, in the light of these research gaps, this study on the effects of input modification in the form of elaboration and simplification as well as of self-questioning active reading strategy on the students' comprehension of science texts was conceptualized.

Specifically, this study was intended to answer the following questions:

1. Does input modification affect the students' comprehension of science texts?
    1.1. Is there a significant difference in the reading comprehension performance of the students who read modified science texts and those exposed to baseline science texts?
    1.2. Is there a significant difference in the reading comprehension performance of the students who read simplified science texts and those who read elaborated science texts?
2. Is there a significant difference in the reading comprehension performance of the students engaged in self-questioning reading strategy and those who were not?
3. Is there a significant interaction effect between self-questioning reading strategy and input modification?
4. Is there a significant interaction effect of students' level of reading proficiency, the type of input modification, and the use of active reading strategy on the students' reading comprehension?

Method

Research Design

This study employed the quasi-experimental research design as it aimed to investigate the effects of manipulating text (by simplifying and elaborating science texts) and active reading strategy (self-questioning) on the reading comprehension performance of the high reading proficiency (HP) and low reading proficiency (LP) Level 7 (first year high school) students of De La Salle Lipa Integrated School

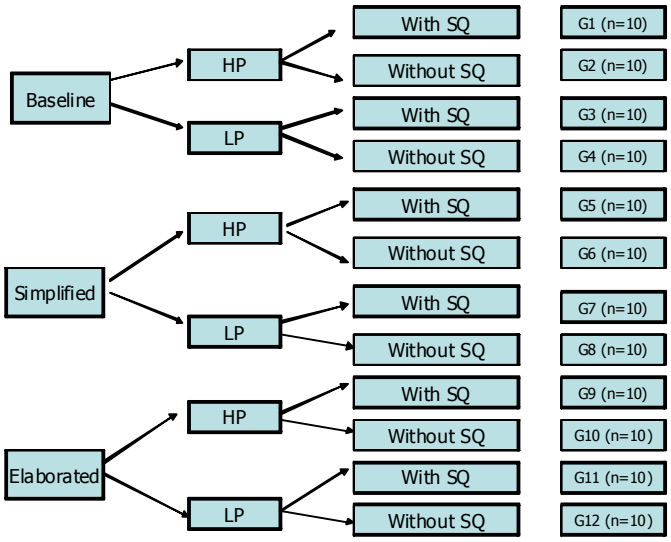
Participants

Level 7 students coming from nine level 7 classes were included in this study. Adopting Oh's (2001) methodology, this study divided the participants into High Proficiency (HP) and Low Proficiency (LP) groups based on the participants' stanine score in the reading component of the Metropolitan Achievement Test (the standardized test administered to all incoming Level 7 students).

Of the nine classes that participated in the main study--three classes were assigned to each of the three text type groups and were given 2 passages of one type to read: Baseline (B), Simplified (S), and Elaborated (E). There were 6 groups of participants based on reading proficiency and type of text: HP-B, HP-S, HP-E, LP-B, LP-S, and LP-E. To test if active reading strategy in the form of self-questioning would have a significant effect in facilitating comprehension of science text, each of the six groups was further divided into two subgroups namely with self-questioning and without self-questioning. Thus, there was a total of 12 groups of participants: HP-B-self questioning (HP-B-SQ), HP-B-without self-questioning (HP-B), HP-S-self-questioning (HP-S-SQ), HP-S-without self-questioning (HP-S), HP-E-self-questioning (HP-E-SQ), HP-E- without self-questioning (HP), LP-B-self questioning (LP-B-S), LP-B-

without self-questioning (LP-B), LP-S-self-questioning (LP-S-SQ), LP-S-without self-questioning (LP-S), LP-E-self-questioning (LP-E-SQ), and LP- E-without self-questioning (LP-E). For the schematic presentation of the participants' distribution to experimental groups, see Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Diagram of the Participants' Distribution to the Different Experimental Groups



Those with moderate reading proficiency (stanine 5, determined in consultation with the DLSL IS' Admission and Testing Head) also became part of the experimental groups as the experiment was conducted during the regular one-hour English sessions and excluding them would have disrupted the natural classroom setting. To maintain clear distinction between the performance of HP and LP groups, the performance of the moderate proficiency group was excluded from the statistical analysis.

Data for the statistical analyses were collected from 10 students randomly chosen from each of the 12 experimental groups. Thus, 120 students provided the reading comprehension scores that were used for the statistical analyses.

Data Gathering Procedures

To ensure the uniform implementation of the data gathering procedure, the researcher was the one who administered the reading test. Within each class, the same procedure was observed. Each class was randomly assigned to elaborated, baseline, or simplified condition. The students in each class were assigned to with self-questioning or without self-questioning condition based on their seating arrangement. Upon completion of the initial class routine such as greetings and checking of attendance, the researcher introduced herself and oriented the class regarding the conduct of the reading comprehension test. Following that, instructions on how each group would accomplish the task were given separately. To ensure that the students understood the instructions, pre-written instructions were posted on the board, and the researcher went around the classroom to check if the instructions were correctly followed. In order to ensure that the without self-questioning group was preoccupied as the other group accomplished its task, the members of the without self-questioning group were asked to write a 5-sentence paragraph describing their new class. On the other hand, the members of the self-questioning group were asked to generate questions about the passages read by completing five of the content-free general questions adopted from King (1992).

Question Stems

The students were instructed that of the five questions that they were to generate, the first three should contain the three compulsory question stems while the last two may contain any of the free-choice question stems. This procedure was followed in order to ensure that students in the self-questioning group were guided to generate types of questions that were congruent to the types of questions that were asked in the comprehension test (i.e. general comprehension questions, literal questions, inferential questions). In addition, the students under the self-questioning group were asked to provide answers to their own questions.

Table 1: presents the question stems the students were instructed to use in generating questions.

Compulsory Question Stems
1. What is the main idea of_____?
2. What is another example of _____?
3. What would happen if _____?
Free-Choice Question Stems
1. Explain how _____.
2. What is the difference between _____ and _____?
3. What conclusion can you draw about _____?
4. How does _____ affect _____?
5. How is _____ related to _____?

After clearly explaining the task of each group, questions clarifying the instructions were entertained. Thereafter, the test materials consisting of the questionnaires and the answer sheets were distributed to the students. The students were asked to read and understand each of the two short passages and to answer each of the two sets of nine multiple-choice questions that appeared immediately after each passage. The test materials were collected only when the whole class had completed the task. The researcher was the one who checked the students' answers to the comprehension tests.

Instrument

To ensure the content validity of the instrument, the selection of the reading passages as well as the

construction of the reading comprehension test was done by the researcher in consultation with experienced science teachers and experienced reading teachers from the De La Salle Lipa Integrated School. They were considered experienced because they had obtained an advanced degree, had rendered at least ten years of teaching at De La Salle Lipa, and had assumed an administrative position. In addition, a pilot study was conducted to ensure the face validity of the instrument.

The reading passages were selected among science passages in Irmark's (1976) Beginning Scientific English. The passages from which the reading passages in this study were chosen consist of 200-400 words. Any science text whose baseline or elaborated version falls outside the 200-400 word range were not considered because according to the level 7 science teachers, reading passages that exceed 400 words are already confusing for the level 7 learners while reading passages with less than 200 words do not usually provide sufficient information that could be the basis of formulating literal, inferential or interpretive, and general comprehension questions.

Baseline Passages

The two reading passages were lifted from Beginning Scientific English by Irmark (1976). The content of this book had been previously judged by the level 7 teachers as authentic science texts and appropriate to the level of understanding of level 7 students because the topics contained in the book are "advanced" versions of the topics that were already introduced in levels 4, 5, and 6.

Modified Reading Passages

The researcher constructed the simplified texts by adapting the baseline texts (from Irmark, 1976) through the reduction of the embedded clauses that students perceived to be difficult to understand into sentences with simpler syntax. Likewise, some passive sentences were transformed into active sentences. Furthermore, words perceived by the pilot study participants as difficult or uncommon were replaced with synonyms that students considered easier to understand.

On the other hand, the researcher constructed the elaborated texts by adapting the baseline texts (from Irmark, 1976) through the addition of redundancy and clearer signaling of thematic structure in the form of examples, paraphrases, and repetition of the original information. Synonyms and definitions of unfamiliar words were also juxtaposed with the unfamiliar words. Thus, the elaborated texts resembled the integrated vocabulary format of Yeung (1999).

Reading Comprehension Test

The students' comprehension of the information in the passages was measured with an 18-item multiple-choice test consisting of nine items for each passage--three for general comprehension (giving title, identifying main idea, summarizing), three for literal comprehension (identifying information explicitly stated in the text), and three for inferential comprehension (drawing implications by applying the message of the text). Hence the 18-point multiple-choice type of test featured six questions measuring general comprehension, six questions measuring literal comprehension, and six questions measuring inferential comprehension. One point was given for each correct answer that each participant gave. The passing score for the reading comprehension test was set at 9, which corresponds to 50% of the expected perfect score of 18 points.

Data Analyses

The data set for this study consisted of scores of 10 students randomly drawn from each of the 12 experimental groups. Thus, the data set that was subjected to statistical analyses was composed of 120 scores.

T-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to analyze the data set.

Results and Discussion

Input Modification and Reading Comprehension

To ensure that the mean score difference could be attributed mainly to input modification, only the scores of the participants from the Without Self-questioning (WSq) groups were considered. The mean reading comprehension scores of the WSq High Proficiency (HP) and Low Proficiency (LP) participants assigned to the three text-type-groups appear in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Participants Assigned to the Three Text Types

Text Type	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
High Proficiency (n=30)		
Baseline	7.7	1.57
Simplified	8.7	2.16
Elaborated	9.6	1.43
Low Proficiency (n=30)		
Baseline	5.4	1.5
Simplified	5.2	1.75
Elaborated	6.7	1.34

As can be seen in Table 2, the HP and LP participants assigned to the elaborated science texts obtained higher mean scores compared to their counterparts assigned to either baseline science texts or simplified science texts. In the HP group, the reading comprehension performance of the participants assigned to the simplified science texts appears to be better than the

reading comprehension performance of the participants assigned to the baseline science texts.

On the other hand, in the LP group the mean reading comprehension score of the participants assigned to the simplified science texts seems to be slightly lower than the mean score of those who were assigned to the baseline science texts. This observation runs counter to the findings of previous studies which suggest that simplified texts generally yield better reading comprehension performance than baseline texts (Yano, Long, & Ross, 1994; Tweissi, 1998; Urano, 2000; Oh, 2001; Li, Xu, & Wang, 2005; and Khan, 2007). However, this unexpected finding could not just be ignored because it corroborates the observation of Young (1999) that simplification through the replacement of low frequency words with high frequency ones and the transformation of passive sentences into active ones sometimes yields lower reading comprehension scores compared to baseline texts. Moreover, this statistically insignificant but interesting finding seems to support the contention of Long and Ross (1993, p. 29) that simplification "dilutes the semantic content of the original"; thus, simplification sometimes hinders the comprehension of science texts.

ANOVA revealed that the observed difference among the mean reading comprehension scores of the HP and LP participants across text types is significant at alpha level .01 [F_{stat}=5.10, $F_{crit\ (df=2)}$= 3.17]. The results suggest that generally, there is a significant difference in the reading comprehension performance of the students exposed to modified science texts and those exposed to baseline science texts.

To investigate where the significant difference revealed by the ANOVA lies, the mean scores were compared using t-tests. Correspondingly, the comparison of the mean scores within each proficiency level revealed that in the HP group, the observed difference between the reading comprehension performance of the participants assigned to the simplified science texts and the reading comprehension performance of those assigned to baseline science texts is not significant at alpha level .05 [t_{stat} =1.18, $t_{(crit\ df\ =29),}$ =1.73]. Similarly, t-test indicated that the observed difference between the reading comprehension performance of those assigned to elaborated science texts and those assigned to simplified science texts is not significant either. Conversely, the comparison of means showed that the observed difference between the reading comprehension performance of the participants assigned to elaborated science texts and the reading comprehension performance of those assigned to baseline science text is significant. Hence, based on the limited data obtained from this study, it could be stated that HP students benefit more from the facilitative effect of the elaboration of science texts. This finding is consistent with the assertion of Oh (2001) that elaboration facilitates reading comprehension because elaboration allows readers to construct meaning through linguistic context provided by the elaborative text.

In the LP group, t-tests revealed that the observed difference in the mean reading comprehension scores of the participants exposed to simplified and baseline science texts is not significant [t_{stat} =.27, $t_{(crit\ df\ =29),}$ =1.73] while the observed difference in the mean reading comprehension scores of students exposed to elaborated and baseline science texts is significant [t_{stat} =2.04, $t_{(crit\ df\ =29),}$ =1.73]. In addition, comparison of the mean reading comprehension scores of the participants exposed to elaborated science texts and those exposed to simplified science texts indicated that the observed 1.3 unit difference (in favor of the elaborated science texts) is significant at alpha level .05 [t_{stat} =2.15, $t_{(crit\ df\ =29),}$ =1.73]. That elaboration yielded significantly higher mean reading comprehension score compared to simplification is contrary to the observation of Oh (2001) and Yano, Long, and Ross (1994). This difference in findings may be due to the fact that this study used science texts while non-science texts were used in the studies of Oh (2001) and Yano, Long, and Ross (1994). As posited by Wood (1982), simplification of science texts by breaking down complex sentences into simple sentence constructions disrupts the close connection between the communicative fields that is very important in the comprehension of science texts.

Self-questioning active reading strategy and Reading Comprehension

The mean scores of the participants in the self-questioning (SQ) and without self-questioning (WSq) groups were compared to see the effect of self-questioning on the reading comprehension of science texts. Table 3 presents the reading comprehension performance of the HP participants in the SQ and WSq groups.

Table 3: Reading Comprehension Performance of the HP Participants in the Self-questioning and Without Self-questioning Groups

Reading Strategy	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Self-Questioning (n=30)	10.33	1.83
Without Self-Questioning (n=30)	8.67	1.86

Table 3 shows that the HP participants assigned to the SQ group obtained a mean reading comprehension score that is almost 20% higher than the mean reading comprehension score obtained by the participants assigned to the WSq group. Moreover, the data that appear in Table 3 indicate that the SQ and the WSq

groups have almost similar standard deviations, thus suggesting that the observed difference in the reading performance of these two groups could not be attributed to the individual differences of the members in each group but to the treatment applied to each group. T-test revealed that the observed difference in the mean scores of the SQ and WSq groups is significant at alpha level .05 [t_{stat} =3.50, $t_{(crit\ df\ =58),}$ =2.00]. This result suggests that self-questioning active reading strategy enhanced the HP students' comprehension of science texts regardless of the text type the students were exposed to.

The effect of self-questioning active reading strategy on the LP students' reading comprehension performance is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Reading Comprehension Performance of the LP Participants in the Self-questioning and Without Self-questioning Groups

Reading Strategy	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Self-Questioning (n=30)	8.13	1.66
Without Self-Questioning (n=30)	5.77	1.63

As can be seen in Table 4, there appears to be a considerable difference in the mean reading comprehension scores of the participants who engaged in self-questioning active reading strategy and the participants who did not engage in self-questioning active reading strategy. The SQ participants outperformed the WSq participants by almost 41%. Comparison of these mean scores revealed that the observed difference in the performance of the LP participants in the SQ and WSq groups is significant at alpha level .05 [t_{stat} =5.57, $t_{(crit\ df\ =58),}$ =2.00]. This information suggests that like their HP counterparts, LP participants benefitted from engaging in self-questioning active reading strategy.

Interaction Effect of Factors Contributing to Reading Comprehension

The data in Table 5 were used to test the interaction between self-questioning active reading strategy and input modification.

Table 5: Mean Scores of HP Students in the Self-questioning and Without Self-questioning Groups Across the Different Text Types

Reading Strategy	Baseline		Simplified		Elaborated	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Self-questioning	10.1	1.37	10.5	1.9	10.4	2.27
Without Self-questioning	7.7	1.57	8.7	2.16	9.6	1.43

Table 5 reveals that regardless of text type, the participants in the SQ group noticeably outperformed the participants in the WSq group in the multiple-choice-type reading comprehension test. Worth noticing also is the fact that despite the participants' apparent lack of knowledge regarding the contents of the science texts, all of the participants who engaged in self-questioning active reading strategy obtained passing mean scores or scores equivalent to at least 50% of the total number of multiple-choice-test items. On the other hand, in the WSq group, only the participants exposed to elaborated science texts obtained a passing mean score. Similarly, when subjected to t-test, the mean reading comprehension score of the WSq participants exposed to the elaborated text was found to be not significantly different from the mean reading comprehension score of the SQ participants exposed to elaborated science texts. This finding suggests that in the absence of deliberate engagement in self-questioning active reading strategy, elaboration may also enhance the reading comprehension of HP students.

To test whether there is a significant interaction effect of self-questioning active reading strategy and input modification, the scores of the HP students in the SQ and WSq groups across different text types were subjected to an ANOVA--the results of which are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of the ANOVA for the HP Students in the Self-questioning and Without Self-questioning Groups Across the Different Text Types

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between						
Column (Text Type)	12.4	2	6.2	1.876682	>.05	3.17
Row (Active Reading Strategy)	41.67	1	41.67	12.61312**	<.01	4.02
Interaction	6.53	2	3.265	.988285	>.05	3.17
Within	178.4	54	3.303704			
Total	239	59				

Table 6 shows that the main positive effect of self-questioning active reading strategy on the HP participants' reading comprehension of science texts is significant while the main effect of input modification is not significant. In addition, it can be seen in Table 8 that the interaction effect of input modification and active reading strategy on the reading comprehension performance of the HP participants is not significant either. This suggests that self-questioning active reading strategy yielded significant positive effect on the HP participants' reading comprehension of science texts regardless of the text type to which the participants were exposed.

Equally interesting are the statistics from the LP group presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Mean Scores of LP Students in the Self-questioning and Without Self-questioning Groups Across the Different Text Types

Reading Strategy	Baseline		Simplified		Elaborated	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Self-questioning	8.4	1.51	7.8	1.75	8.2	1.81
Without Self-questioning	5.4	1.51	5.2	1.75	6.7	1.34

Table 7 indicates that the reading comprehension performance of the LP participants assigned to the SQ group appears to be better than the reading comprehension performance of LP participants assigned to the WSq groups. Worth noticing is the fact that the greatest mean score difference (3 points in favor of SQ) between SQ and WSq groups comes from the participants exposed to the baseline science texts while the least mean score difference comes from the participants exposed to the elaborated texts. This observation seems to suggest that the use of self-questioning active reading strategy enhances the LP participants' comprehension of science texts more than input modification.

The results of the ANOVA performed on the reading comprehension test scores of the LP participants assigned to SQ and WSq groups across the different text types can be seen in Table 8.

Table 8: Summary of the ANOVA for the LP Students in the Self-questioning and Without Self-questioning Groups Across the Different Text Types

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between						
Column (Text Type)	9.1	2	4.55	1.733945	>.05	3.17
Row (Active Reading Strategy)	84.02	1	84.02	32.01891**	<.01	4.02
Interaction	6.03	2	3.015	1.148977	>.05	3.17
Within	141.70	54	2.624074			
Total	240.85	59				

Table 8 indicates that self-questioning active reading strategy has a significant main effect on the reading comprehension performance of LP participants. Moreover, the data in Table 8 highlight the fact that the main effect of input modification as well as the interaction effect of the self-questioning active reading strategy and input modification on the reading comprehension performance of the LP participants is not significant. These findings which are similar to the results of the ANOVA for the HP participants suggest that the main beneficial effect of self-questioning active reading strategy on the Level 7 students' comprehension of science texts does not vary as a function of the text type to which the students are exposed.

Finally, to test if there is a significant interaction effect of students' level of reading proficiency, the type of input modification, and the use of self-questioning active reading strategy on the students' comprehension of science texts, the data in Table 9 were analyzed.

Table 9: Mean Scores of Students Exposed to Different Types of Texts Across Active Reading Strategy Groups and Reading Proficiency Levels

Text Type	Self-Questioning		Without Self-questioning	
	HP	LP	HP	LP
Baseline	10.1	8.4	7.7	5.4
Simplified	10.5	7.8	8.7	5.2
Elaborated	10.4	8.2	9.6	6.7

Table 9 illustrates that the HP participants performed better than the LP participants in the 18-point multiple-choice-type science reading comprehension test regardless of variation in text type and engagement in self-questioning active reading strategy. However, it is noticeable that the difference in the mean scores obtained by HP and LP participants is lower in the SQ group (average mean scores difference = 2.2) than in the WSq group (average mean scores difference = 2.9). It is also interesting to note that the t-test revealed that the difference between the mean score of the LP participants assigned to SQ group and the HP participants assigned to the WSq group is not significant at alpha level .05 [t_{stat} =1.17, $t_{(crit\ df\ =58),}$ =2.00]. This observation seems to imply that given a science reading comprehension task, LP students may compensate their reading deficiency by engaging in self-questioning active reading strategy. A careful consideration of the data in Table 9 further reveals that the mean reading comprehension score of the LP participants in the SQ group exposed to baseline science texts is almost 1% higher than that of the HP participants in the WSQ group exposed to baseline science texts. Hence, it could be deduced that when tasked to read baseline or authentic science texts, LP readers may use self-questioning active reading strategy to facilitate their comprehension.

ANOVA revealed that the main effects of reading proficiency level and engagement in self-questioning active reading strategy on the participants' performance in the reading comprehension test are significant at alpha level .001 [Fstat=36.07402, Fcrit (df=3)= 2.70]. Conversely, the main effect of the input modification is not statistically significant. The observation that input modification does not have statistically significant effect on reading comprehension of science texts may be due to the fact that only elaboration appears to have considerable effect on the participants' performance. Likewise, the interaction effect of proficiency level,

self-questioning active reading strategy, and input modification on the participants' comprehension of science texts is not significant. These results appear to imply that while reading proficiency is certainly an important factor that contributes to the students' comprehension of science texts, LP readers are not doomed to fail in reading comprehension tasks because they could benefit much from engagement in self-questioning active reading strategy which is very likely to facilitate their comprehension (Spence, 1995).

Conclusions

Based on the results of this study, the following conclusions were drawn.

First, only elaboration results in significant gains in the HP and LP students' reading comprehension of science texts. This conclusion supports Kim and Van Dussen's (1998) contention that elaborations provided in the text could enhance the reading comprehension of readers with low prior knowledge regarding the content of the reading texts. Likewise, this conclusion appears to confirm the finding of Oh (2001) that elaboration yields significant positive effect on HP and LP learners' reading comprehension performance. However, it runs counter to the findings of Li, Wang, & Xu (2005), Mayor (2007), and Khan (2007) which suggest that simplification generates significantly better effect on learners' reading comprehension compared to elaboration. The apparent discrepancy in these observations could be attributed to the fact that the texts used in this study are science texts. The opportunity to deal with "text information" through redundancy and clear thematic signaling provided by text elaboration seems to be more beneficial to the comprehension of science texts than to the comprehension of non-science texts (Oh, 2001, p. 91). Thus, the results of this study suggest that elaboration of science texts could help students understand difficult texts because elaboration encourages the readers to engage in metacognitive strategies which in turn results in better comprehension (Russell, 1974).

Second, self-questioning active reading strategy yields significant positive effect on the science reading comprehension performance of the students. This conclusion supports the findings of Duell (1975, as cited in Wong, 1985), André & Anderson (1978-1979), and Singer & Donlan (1982) which imply that the engagement in self-questioning active reading strategy results in significantly better reading comprehension of both narrative and expository texts. Thus, this conclusion highlights the apparent benefit that learners could derive from actively engaging in self-questioning as they construct meaning from science texts and understand science reading materials. Consequently, the results of this study suggest the importance of establishing a classroom environment that promotes students' questioning and encourages the students' inherent eagerness to ask questions and persistence to seek answers to their questions.

Third, there is no significant interaction effect between self-questioning active reading strategy and input modification, thus indicating that the main positive effect of self-questioning on the students' reading comprehension of science texts does not vary as a function of the type of science texts the students are exposed to. This conclusion supports the contention of metacognitive theorists that self-questioning results in better comprehension and learning of content area texts because self-questioning enhances both the readers' metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation (Janssen, 2002). Hence, in the absence of elaboration of texts, readers could engage in self-questioning active reading strategy to enhance their reading comprehension.

Fourth, there is no interaction effect of students' level of reading proficiency, the type of input modification, and the use of self-questioning active reading strategy on the students' reading comprehension. This conclusion implies that teaching students to engage in self-questioning active reading strategy may help "close the achievement gap and lessen the inequity created by ability grouping" (Futrell & Gomez, 2008, p. 74). Some schools have been guided by ability grouping in determining the type of instruction delivered to the learners. Unfortunately, instead of helping low proficiency learners to cope up with the seemingly difficult demand of education, ability grouping has deprived the low proficiency learners of equal opportunity to be exposed to authentic, enriched, and challenging content that could prepare them for the demands of national and international assessments as well as of the global workplace. Most of the time, the low proficiency learners are exposed to a relatively "watered-down curriculum" which tends to simplify the lessons and lessen the LP learners' opportunity to engage in metacognitive strategies that would teach them how to learn and apply what they have learned (Futrell & Gomez, 2008, p. 75). The results of this study indicates that exposing LP learners to authentic texts with elaboration and encouraging them to engage in metacognitive strategies such as self-questioning could improve their performance not only in content area reading comprehension but in other aspects of learning as well.

Finally, based on the results of this study, it could be concluded that reader input appears to have more significant effect on students' reading comprehension than text input. As revealed by the data obtained from this study, self-questioning active reading strategy yielded statistically significant positive effect on the

level 7 students' reading comprehension of science texts regardless of the text input presented to the students. Hence, the use of varied teaching strategies that would encourage students to actively engage in the process of reading to learn could greatly help especially the students who have low reading proficiency level.

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22 A Prelude to Practice: Interactive Activities for Effective Communication in English

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to give suggestions for motivating, engaging and creating interest in learning English among college students in order to encourage them to interact and participate in classroom practices. Motivating and involving students to participate in classroom practices or activities is a Herculean task for English teachers in Tamilnadu colleges because students do not give due attention to English as a subject nor see the importance of the English language. They are unresponsive and reluctant in learning English either because they think they already have mastery over it or they are tongue-tied as they have not learnt it properly. As a result, they are unenthusiastic and unwilling to participate in classroom activities and ineffective in communicating in English. In this situation, reflecting on Thorndike's laws of learning (year?) enabled me to think of alternative pedagogies and different ways of motivating students and making them communicate effectively in English at the college level. Hence, this paper is an attempt to explore the issue of active participation in the second language classroom through promoting communication skills and developing interest among students in learning English. Furthermore, it seeks to discuss how interaction takes place in formal instructional settings by incorporating the views of researchers, my own teaching experiences and classroom observations.

Key Words: classroom interaction, practice, prelude, motivation, active participation

The main objectives of teaching English as a second language at the college level in India, especially in Tamilnadu, are:

- to develop skills for oral presentations, group discussions and debates
- to solve problems
- to improve negotiation skills
- to provide opportunities for exercising initiative
- to develop leadership skills and participation in group activities

Despite the fact that some students who have learnt the English language for more than ten years, they are unable to use the language fluently and effectively and reach the above objectives of learning English. It can be observed that some students have no experience in exercising initiative and participating imaginatively in activities and purposeful learning because of past rigid formal training in language learning. Most of these English language learners, particularly in Tamilnadu, are passive and shy in using English in real communication due to various factors like

- students' motivation in learning
- attitude and interest
- the competence of English teachers
- learning facilities, methods and effective use of techniques
- approaches

These factors influence students in developing knowledge of the language, and it is observed that English language learners at college level suffer from a lack of motivation and actual practice in using the language. This is due to various perceptions that: (1) they have reached a 'plateau'; (2) they are no longer learning so much that is essentially new; (3) they will commit many mistakes when they communicate in English; and (4) consequently, they are reluctant to participate, involve themselves, interact and improve their knowledge of the target language.

This situation also indicates that the teachers of

English may not have provided enough opportunities to students for improving their communication skills. Besides, the teachers may not have properly used the concepts of classroom techniques or strategies in developing English for communication. They are very particular about exposing learners to a large amount of linguistic input by explaining grammar rules, elaborating ideas, giving instructions and emphasizing accurate reproduction of the language. Thus, the second language learners are not trained to take initiative and participate in classroom practices. Though the massive teacher talk has its pedagogic value, it indirectly limits the opportunities for second language learners to produce output, learn how to negotiate meaning and communicate spontaneously and use authentic language in the language classroom. Therefore, for many students, language learning becomes irrelevant, boring and sometimes a burden too.

Classrooms are considered the important sites of intellectual and individual development because many classroom activities created through classroom oral interaction that occurs between teachers and students and among students will ultimately shape individual learners' development. This is best achieved when the learners are properly motivated by adopting interactive activities. The importance of motivation as a factor in learning language is crucial for the learner. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have pointed out, it is essential foundation for the initiation of the cognitive process. The higher the motivation of the teacher and learner, the better will be the achievement in language learning.

These observations made me reflect on my own teaching practice, think of alternative pedagogies and different ways of motivating students, and implement different interactive activities to make them communicate fluently and effectively in English. In the light of this, an attempt has been made to implement some interactive activities to find out their effectiveness in enhancing the fluency level of language learners. Hence, this paper aims to highlight the importance of interactive activities, discuss the related concepts and aspects, and their practical implementation in the classroom.

What is interaction in the language classroom?

Interaction is an elicitation of willing student participation and initiative which requires a high degree of interpersonal communication skills (Rivers, 1987, p. 10). It refers to the exchange of information between the teacher and the students or among the students. It has long been considered important in language learning. "It may be quiet; it may be noisy; it may be alert and dynamic; it may take place in large groups, small groups or pairs" (Kramsch, 1987, p. 18). It will make students deeply involved in activities that draw on their creativity. Teachers should demonstrate these qualities to students to help them overcome their inhibitions and fear of embarrassment. According to Swain (1985), "interaction allows the learner to practice the target language, thus enhancing fluency; to notice or trigger a particular structural form that needs modifying; to test hypotheses about structural points and to reflect metalinguistically" (p. 223). Similar to Swain, Brown (1991) and McLaughlin (1987) point out that interaction provides opportunity for the non-native speaker (NNS) to practice structural components, increasing the likelihood of automacity of such components.

Interaction and its importance in language teaching situations

Brown (1994) indicates that interactive classes have the following beneficial features:

- there is a large amount of pair and group work
- students engage themselves in spontaneous and authentic conversations
- students work for actual audiences and purposes, not artificial ones
- the task-based activities prepare students for the real world outside of the classroom

Through interactions, students can increase their language repertoire as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even the output of their fellow students in discussions, skits, problem-solving tasks or conversations. At the time of interaction, students can use all they have learnt of the language or have casually absorbed in real life exchanges where expressing their real meaning is important to them. Thus, they will have experience in creating messages from what they hear or read, since comprehension is a process of creation (Rivers, 1981, pp. 160-2). It is also underscored by Richards (2001) that second language learning is facilitated when learners are engaged in interaction and meaningful communication.

Reasons for using group work

I have found group work to be highly effective with second language learners as it provides increased interaction and develops the oral language proficiency of students. Further, Nunan (1991) advocates that learning to speak in a foreign language will be facilitated when learners are actively engaged in attempting to communicate in groups. Similarly, Brown (1994) says that group work creates a favorable climate for communication by relieving students of the anxiety of having to talk in front of the whole class. Moreover, it is an effective technique for producing active learning and for providing simultaneous opportunities for all class members. It also helps learners carrying out their task without direct and immediate supervision of a teacher. Also, Cohen (1994) identifies group work as a strategy

for solving two common classroom problems:

- keeping students involved with their work
- managing instruction for students with a wide range of academic skills

In addition, group work has the following advantages:

1. Collaboration -- it provides a social aspect when students work together
2. Peer teaching -- group work provides us with a natural context for peer teaching and it has many advantages such as:
   a) It is not threatening
   b) Sometimes pupils find it difficult to grasp a specific point from the teacher but among themselves they can help and understand one another
   c) It develops social skills -- students learn to speak with conviction; they also learn to receive help because asking for help is a good skill to learn
3. Effectiveness in mixed ability classes
4. Prevention of discipline problems -- order is maintained in the class while the teacher monitors the students working in groups
5. Opportunities for learners to use both comprehensible output and input in an authentic manner because when learners are thinking or writing, they are doing this for the sake of completing a task
6. Less teacher dominance

Different patterns of interaction

On reading various works and studies of researchers, I learn that there are different patterns of interaction which can be employed as circumstances demand in the language classroom. Specifically, in this study, patterns of student-student interaction and student-text interaction are exploited for appropriate use of the pedagogy. Allowing various patterns of interactions in the classroom means that a teacher helps students achieve three types of competence, namely (1) participative competence -- the ability to respond appropriately to reading tasks; (2) interactional competence -- the ability to interact appropriately with peers while sharing information about what they read; and (3) academic competence – the ability to acquire reading skills. The two patterns of student-student interaction and student-text interaction employed in this study are discussed briefly in the following paragraphs.

Student-student interaction:

This pattern of interaction in the second language classroom is used so that it can create opportunities for students to participate in less structured and more spontaneous language use: to negotiate meaning, self-select when to participate, control the topic of discussion and, most importantly, draw on their own prior knowledge and interactional competencies to actively communicate with others.

Student-text interaction:

In the pattern of student-text interaction, reading experiences enable the students to develop control over the language. It would help them develop confidence in themselves. They may read around words that they do not know and make use of the available information to comprehend the unfamiliar words and identify their grammatical function.

Role of interactive activities (IA)

Interactive activities provide opportunities for learners to use the target language in a communicative way for meaningful activities (giving importance to messages being created or activities being completed) rather than form (correctness of language and language structure). It will lead students to acquire what they need and what they want actually to be used in real life situations. Thus, interactive activities include any activity in which a participant addresses an audience orally.

The two types of interactive activities employed in the classroom and focused on in this paper are:

- Group Discussion and Presentation
- Mock Association Meeting

Both are interactive activities because they require learners' participation and involvement and provide opportunities to produce the target language to become effective communicators. Swain (1985) highlights the observation that interaction also makes learners really use the language.

Ways of promoting Interactive Activities

Lee (2004) says that promoting interactive activities seems to be an alternative means to help the second language learners to acquire the target language in a meaningful way. It is believed that by means of interaction, second language learners can stretch their linguistic competence and use appropriate strategies to modify and negotiate meaning in spite of their inaccurate and incomplete utterances.

In promoting interactive activities, comprehension and production retrieve their natural relationship as an interactive duo. To achieve this:

- Teachers must promote the desirable ambience and good relations among students for them to

know one another
- Individuals must appreciate the uniqueness of others by encouraging and educating one another
- Both students and teachers must build up their confidence and enjoyment in what they are doing
- Classrooms should not be teacher-directed and dominated
- Classrooms should be interactive by nature and never one-way

Role of teachers and students in the interactive classroom

Real interaction in the classroom requires a teacher (1) to facilitate students and be in the background; (2) to monitor students closely; (3) to provide complete authority to students in developing and carrying out activities; and (4) to accept all kinds of opinions and be tolerant of errors made by students while they are attempting to communicate. At the same time, teachers should not be afraid and reluctant to carry out interactive activities that could be chaotic and impractical. Brown (1994) points out that teachers must organize, provide security, motivate, instruct, be a model, be a guide, inform, give feedback, encourage and evaluate the language learners.

From the literature, research findings and my own experience, I perceive that teachers are considered to be the experts in their classrooms. Using interactive activities, teachers shape the learners' developmental paths in the following ways:

- They show ways to go about conducting those activities as they do
- They provide opportunities for students to participate in and learn from the activities. In doing so, they express their own attitudes toward the activities and towards the students' involvement in them. This in turn shapes the degree of individual learning
- They make apparent the standards against which students' performances are measured

Similarly, students also must have strong personal motivation to learn the target language, confidence, a positive attitude, the willingness to express themselves even when they do not know how to express it correctly and the willingness to take the risk of making mistakes and learning from the mistakes. It is in their interactions with one another that both teachers and students work together to create the intellectual and practical activities that shape and advance their knowledge in the target language as well as the processes and outcomes of individual development.

Implementation of Interactive Activities

Consistent with the principles and notions presented in the theoretical background section in this paper, I will briefly illustrate in the following section how the interactive activities were implemented empirically.

Interactive Activity 1 – Group Discussion and Presentation

Time taken	: nearly 2 hours
No. of class hours	: 3 classes
No. of days conducted	: 3 consecutive days
Material used	: articles from Opportunity Column in *The Hindu Newspaper*

Pedagogical features considered while employing interactive activities

The pedagogical features that were taken into consideration are as follows:

- Authentic material (newspaper articles) as given in Appendix A was used as the texts for the activity
- Selected topics should match students' level of understanding, knowledge of the world, and interests while enabling more fruitful interaction
- The requirement for students to talk about rather than to read their presentation
- Ample opportunities for the students to improve their proficiency in English language by interacting either with the teacher or among group members.
- Comprehension of ideas and fluency was viewed as more important than accuracy among students in order to increase their level of involvement and interaction. However, the importance of accuracy was also gradually stressed to enhance their proficiency.
- Teacher as facilitators monitoring the process of the activity by providing students with the necessary scaffolding. This concept was based on the principles and assumptions of Communicative Language Teaching.
- Seating arrangement where each group of students was asked to sit in the form of a circle.
- Students treated with due respect which made them express their expectations and opinions on how they had coped with certain difficulties. Their views and feedback are given in Appendix B.

In short, the class was tailored for facilitating second language speaking skills among students using interactive activities.

Day 1 Procedure

- The whole class was divided into groups based on the students' strengths in the class
- Different text articles were distributed to each group
- Time limit was fixed (20 minutes in total for reading, interpretation, expansion, discussing alternative possibilities, comprehension, clarification and preparation for presentation)
- Each member in each group should decide what points he/she was going to highlight
- All members in every group should come to the front, face the members of the other groups and deliver their points
- At the time of discussion and preparation, the teacher moved around the classroom and facilitated each group in turns, and asked each member to give some points from the text. Thus, there was discussion between the teacher and individual students on the text

Instructions followed in the activity are:

- Students should not take notes and read out points
- Students should listen to the presentation while a student from each group gave a short summary about the topic
- All discussion should be carried out only in English
- Everyone in groups should be involved, interact and work together
- No one should reproduce any sentences verbatim except for some technical words
- All members of a group should be ready to tell and discuss any points in the text

In this way, Day 1's activity was completed. In fact, I could not carry out the presentation session due to lack of time as the class hour was over before it could take place.

Day 2 Procedure

In order to promote equal participation, to make the activity interesting, to motivate and involve students in interaction, the articles used on Day 1 were interchanged among the groups. The same procedure and instructions were followed. At the end of 20 minutes, Group 1 was asked to present the points on that day's article whereas the other group which discussed the same article the previous day observed the presentation along with other groups. At the end of their presentation, the latter group had to give the points omitted, if any, their views and their feedback. This method was followed for all other groups in order to keep students involved in the activity. The teacher observed healthy competition among the groups and within each group to offer the best performance. Members in each group also encouraged one another to perform better. Thus, the meaning-based activity drove the motivated students to learn better and help others also to learn.

Interactive Activity 2-Mock Association Meeting

For this activity, first, students were made to work out how to organize a Literary Association Meeting. They were asked to fix the date, time, venue and chief guest and other speakers from among themselves, topics to be presented, comperes and other aspects of the meeting. Next, they were asked to select or assign roles and duties to be performed. The majority of the students volunteered themselves to take up different roles. Finally, chances were given to both advanced language learners and less advanced language learners equally with a view to motivating them. Some students involved themselves in preparing the invitation and agenda. A few of the students engaged themselves in preparing content for compering. Each and every task or role was executed by students with the facilitation of teacher. Students were motivated, guided and had their doubts clarified if necessary. They were also instructed to prepare and perform to their best ability since the activity would be video recorded. On the day fixed, students themselves organized and conducted the activity without any problem. The programme was held for one and a half hours. The last half an hour was allotted to the students who took up the role of the audience for a feedback session with a view of involving the 15 non-participant students. Out of 35 students, almost 20 of them participated actively in this Mock Association Meeting activity. The next few classes were allotted for students to review, re-examine and assess their performance and language skills.

Classroom findings

The classroom research was conducted in 3 class periods consecutively. During these periods, I performed different roles as facilitator, non-participant observer as well as a participant observer. Flippo (1997) specifies that the practice of observing students in class as they do their work, assignments, and other activities, in a natural, authentic manner can provide the teacher valuable information regarding students' current and developing interests, motivation, use of strategies, and work habits. So after every class period was over, I noted down what had happened and been observed in the classroom. It was found that creating a motivating and interacting classroom environment would improve teaching-learning outcomes, especially the proficiency in the English language learning among students. It could be studied from the students' feedback given in Appendix B. It was also noticed that group work, discussion and sharing with the peers, with

the teacher and with the whole class made the students active and maximized their interest and involvement in interactive activities, resulting in the enhancement of speaking skills. As students became engaged with one another in speaking skills, they paid due attention to their peers as well as the presenters. This indicated that group work placed responsibility upon each of the members in the group equally. This is in consonance with the findings of Day and Bramford (2002) that various kinds of sharing help students (1) discover what they understand and experience from reading; (2) keep track of what they read; and (3) monitor their attitudes toward reading. Indirectly, a perceptible change was found in the students' style of presentation and style of interaction. Also, students were able to appreciate their own competence to use language when they presented the topic rather than reading it, except for very few presenters who had come from mother tongue medium of instruction.

The ideas listed below summarize the benefits experienced by me while adopting interactive activities:

- Real communication occurred in the second language classroom
- Students organized their own ideas and contributed to the discussion
- The activities paved way for developing their reading comprehension and conversational skills
- They also enhanced the students' questioning and retention skills
- All students were motivated; they participated and presented
- Students' tolerance and empathy towards their peers were increased
- The activities created self-awareness and self-motivation

Providing feedback about the activities, all students expressed that these two interactive activities had made them feel more interactive and confident, become self-aware and self-motivated, enthusiastic and develop initiative in the learning. They also recommended that the teacher conduct many such activities in the forthcoming classes. "The activities enabled us to learn English with interest and enthusiasm" proclaimed the students.

Conclusion

I have tried to demonstrate that exploring alternative ways of teaching can help a teacher to shift from the traditional way of teaching and learning English to an innovative and interactive way. Alternative pedagogies will enable teachers to create a more interesting and interactive classroom and will definitely make students more active and involved. Moreover, by keeping abreast of new developments in ELT and by bringing a change in the way English is taught, teachers can improve their practices and their students' communicative competence that would demonstrate positive results. This view and attitude helped me to hold the attention of my students in classroom interaction which in turn increased the degree of their motivation and participation. I believe that the Laws of Learning as formulated by E.L. Thorndike (year?), one of the pioneers of Educational Psychology in the early 20th century, hold good even today and enable teachers to create more interesting and interactive classrooms. The law of exercise, the law of effect and the law of readiness are the three principles or the laws of learning, designed by Thorndike, which together are considered as a necessary precondition for learning. This theory puts more emphasis on motivation of students in the classroom. The laws of learning are universally accepted and applied to all kinds of learning. In brief, some of the implications of the theory of laws of learning which are relevant to this study are given below:

- practice leads a man towards maturity
- practice is the main feature of the trial and error method and
- practice helps in reducing the errors committed by students in learning any concept

The effect of this theory will also help teachers to improve their teaching methods and observe the effects of their teaching methods on students and to make necessary changes in them, if required. Besides, the theory may be found quite helpful for the teachers to conduct experimental research in the English classroom to achieve the goal of maximum participation on the part of the students with minimum guidance from the teachers. It will certainly provide a prelude to practice.

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CELC SYMPOSIUM

23 Visual Language Retention: Cross Cultural Study

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Abstract: This paper explores the visual perception retention rate in PowerPoint presentations varying only one variable, background color. This research was also carried out in Japan and the USA to determine if perceptual differences occur based on retention rates across cultures. This research topic is the result of the instructor's, an American based in Japan, noting of a consistent pattern in the difference in instructor's evaluations and student's peer evaluation of in-class presentations. In this research, 358 Japanese university and 111 American university students were shown one of 5 different background color presentations (white, yellow, blue, dark blue and green). After viewing the presentation, they were then given a survey to test for retention rates. After analysis of this data, an intra-cultural retention rate difference was noticed. In addition, a retention difference was also observed for different background colors inter-culturally.

Introduction

Presentation software is widely used in many academic and business settings around the world. Some have negatively called it "no golden bullet" (Rowcliffe, 2003); others have called it the "Viagra of the spoken word" (Blokzijl & Naeff, 2004). One of the most popular packages is PowerPoint (PP) made by Microsoft Corporation. Even though it has been ridiculed and negatively joked about, presentation software or PowerPoint has more than 500 million users with an average of 30 million presentations performed in one day and an estimated 1.25 million presentations taking place every hour (Parker, 2001; Mahin, 2004). Approximately six million educators in this world use this software in the classroom (Panjwari, Gupta, & Toyama, 2010). The average PowerPoint presentation runs 250 minutes, and each slide has about 40 words (Atkinson, 2009).

Academic research has been slow to record the effects across a wide breadth of factors as to the use of presentation software in the classroom. A student in a PowerPoint presentation has visual and aural information to understand and retain, in addition to note taking. The ultimate goal of a presentation is to present as much information as possible that can be retained when the student leaves the classroom. This overload of information has been the argument for PowerPoint's non-use, especially by Dr. Tufte of Yale university in his booklet "The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint: Pitching Out Corrupts Within" (2006). According to Tufte (2006), this software confuses, bores and ultimately puts observers to sleep due to cognitive overload. However, PowerPoint is almost indispensable today in the classroom and is a most promising application of educational technology.

This paper analyzes one of PowerPoint's visual attributes, background color, and its effect on retention. Most literature and research within the past 15 years do not even mention the background color of test presentations. However, Salomon (1994, p. 62), in his book "Interaction of Media, Cognition, and Learning" observed that a meaningful media attribute should make some discernible difference in "information processing." He goes on to report that these "symbol systems" seem to play differential roles in cognition and learning. (p. 103). Presentation slides therefore must "center on how such slides symbolically convey instructional messages and on how such symbols alter information processing." (Levasseur &Sawyer, 2006, p. 103). This research will show that the semiotic characteristic of background color in presentation slides is an important piece of the cognition puzzle and a physiological construct that correlates to retention in the brain.

Literature review

In order to explore these basic design factors, we need to build on previous work in the areas of perception theory and cognitive overload theory.

Basic perception theory is separated into three parts: aural, haptic and visual. Visual perception provides 80% of our perceptual information (Wood, 1999). When viewing a PowerPoint presentation, perceptual factors such as how pictures are presented, number of words per slide, colors used, and font styles have a direct effect on retention.

Color perception theory for instructional technology was analyzed by Pett & Wilson (1996). They define color perception by using three categories, "color as physiological, color as psychological and color and learning." I will address these topics one by one.

Color as physiological: How we physically see color

Defining a color in terms of its wavelength is only part of how we define color. Humans see color according to 5 factors: hue, saturation, value, arousal and acuity. Hue is defined as the color we actually see - red, green, etc. A color hue is determined by the wavelength it emits in nanometers. The CIE Chromaticity standard was designed in 1931 to determine a hue and saturation of a color in numerical terms (Diagram 1). The design of this human color perception diagram is in 2 dimensions.

Diagram 1: Light emitting diodes (taken from Schubert, 1987, p. 248).

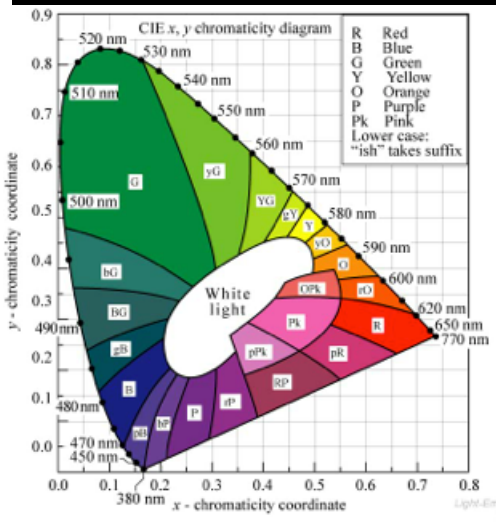

Fig. 17.3. 1931 CIE chromaticity diagram with areas attributed to distinct colors (adopted from Gage *et al.*, 1977).

The middle of the diagram represents white with no saturation of any color. As the saturation of a color deepens, it moves out toward the boundary. The outline of the triangular shaped image is the hue of a color (wavelength, in nanometers), which represents 100% saturation. A value of a color is represented by how much white or other color is mixed into that color. Pastel versus brilliance of color determines this characteristic.

Another factor is arousal. Some colors have an effect on a person's heart rate or thoughts. A psychological reaction brings about a physical response. Mackiewicz (2007, p. 147) stated:

> "It is important to consider color choice when designing PowerPoint slides because warm colors generate quite different psychological responses than cool colors. Warm colors are considered arousing and active, and lead to higher levels of anxiety. This perceived response is likely related to warm colors' greater ability to draw attention than cool colors' ability to do the same, which is the reason behind guidelines to use warm colors to emphasize and to make main points. Cool colors, on the other hand, are perceived to be peaceful and calm and relaxing and pleasant. Such responses to cool colors are likely part of the reason that cool colors were found to be more attractive than warm colors in retail environments. Physiological research correlates with people's psychological perceptions of color. Measures of palmar conductance as well as blood pressure, respiratory rate, eye blink frequency, and galvanic skin response show that yellow and red, warm colors, generate a less relaxed state than blue."

But Mackiewicz (2007, p. 148) continues with a very important aspect concerning color later in this paper: "cross-cultural research on color perception must be considered when examining preference for meaning associated with warm and cool colors preferences." This statement is the basis for the hypothesis of this research.

A final characteristic to be noted is acuity, the ability to read a color legibly. This is an important factor contributing to the ability to read colored letters on certain backgrounds or surrounding objects in a presentation slide.

Color as psychological: How we think and feel about color

Pett & Wilson (1996) state that the psychological aspects of color that are of interest to instructional designers can be divided into three broad areas: preference, meaning and harmony.

Color preference

Color preference research can be dated back to as early as 1894. Overall, many studies from 1941 to 1963 concluded that blue was the most preferred color across races and gender (Guilford & Smith, 1959; Karpowicz, Lazreg, & Mullet 2001 as cited in Mackiewicz, 2007).

Hurlbert & Ling (2007) analyzed color preference data in terms of the two dimensions of opponent cone-contrasts: the Long and Medium wavelength axis (Long-Medium wavelength (L-M)) that runs from red to blue-green and the Short wavelength ((S)-axis [S-(L+M)]), that runs from violet to yellow-green, where "S," "M," and "L" refer to the outputs of short-, medium-, and long-wavelength cone types, respectively. The cone-

contrast model explains 70% of the variance in Hurlbert & Ling's (2007) preference data on a limited amount of colors. Both males' and females' preferences weighted positively on the S-axis, meaning that both sexes preferred colors that were more blue/violet to colors that were more yellow-green.

Color meaning

Color meaning is a culturally based interpretation and cannot be generalized (Pett & Wilson, 1996). Experiments revealed in Pett and Wilson (1996, pp. 22-23) showed a preference for cool colors versus warm colors. Warm colors were defined as reds and yellows whereas cool colors are defined as greens and blues. Additional research defined colors that were heavy (somber, dull) and light (airy, less heavy). Heavy colors are defined as dark and light, for example, yellow. Some colors were also defined with words like "comedy" or "happiness" versus "tragedy" or "sadness" (Huchendorf, 2007). The list of characteristics associated with the meaning of colors is long and varies widely across cultures. For example, Adams & Osgood (1973), in their study of 23 cultures, used semantic scales to measure evaluation, potency and activity and determined that perceived warm colors were red and yellow and cool colors were defined as blue and green. To determine a meaning of a color, a culture must first be specified and these attributes can then be defined and analyzed. Most research is deficient in this area.

Color and learning

Color and learning can be defined into 5 categories that should be considered when designing slides for lectures. These qualities are defined as attention, readability, preference of color, preference related to retention, and retention (Pett & Wilson, 1996).

a. Attention: This characteristic has been noted to have positive research results pertaining to the use of font color for key concepts which promoted better attention and resulted in better retention (Wehr & Wippich, 2004).

b. Readability: This concept can be connected with the physiology of the human eye. Using red lettering can distract or make a word unreadable when used with certain background colors, for example, green. Many times what looks good on the computer display may not be easily readable or difficult to read when projected. Consideration should also be made as to how the presentation will be displayed. A large LCD display or a projector changes the way colors are displayed in a large room and affects the readability.

c. Preference of color has been shown to affect retention or distract from the message of the presenter. Cultural components to the meaning of color and how it is used can distract from the message or concepts the educator is trying to teach. Concerning background colors of PowerPoint presentations, Apperson et al. (2008) found students slightly preferred a colored background (pastel, bright or dark) to a white background presentation. The reader of this research can assume that the tested subjects were in the USA. However, even if the tested subjects were at an American university, could there have been any foreign exchange students? If so, how long have they been in the United States? These are important variables that need to be considered.

d. Preference and retention has been shown to be related in many examples from research before the computer usage in the classroom. These pertained to transparencies and affective meaning of pictures in aiding young learners. Later, colors used in displays/ textbooks were determined to capture attention and help students organize material cognitively (Seaman, 1998), which leads to better retention. Students used these color codes to organize complicated concepts or make relations between new and old information.

e. Retention: Savoy et al. (2009, p. 860) stated that "students pay attention to the material presented visually on the slides and not what the presenter is saying." Szabo & Hastings (2000) also proposed that the PowerPoint package features (color, graphics, animation, bullets, etc.) may benefit retention of information. Currently, research is leaning toward the use of PowerPoint versus Chalk and Talk lectures (Gurbuz et al., 2010).

Cognitive principles and media learning

Cognitive Overload theory is not new to computer software presentations. Chandler & Sweller (1991) introduced this theory in formats of interaction. They stated that "Traditional methods of instructional design based on visual elegance, common sense and convenience are inadequate" (pp. 293-294). Cognitive load theory is "concerned with the manner in which cognitive resources are focused during learning" (p: 294). Chandler & Sweller concluded that there are two main types of cognitive load: intrinsic and extraneous. Intrinsic cognitive load is defined as how inherently difficult something is. Extraneous cognitive load is the extra work imposed by the thinking and learning environment. For PowerPoint usage, this theory can be applied to the design of slides created by educators. Complicated color schemes, background pictures or other visual accoutrements that do not have any connection with the subject presented can

be a distraction and add to the brain processing of information and concepts being taught. In addition, designing presentation slides into smaller chunks of information that can be easily processed by the brain should also be considered when designing a lesson. The processing in the auditory cortex (listening to the presenter) and the over stimulation of the visual cortex can also lead to boredom and less retention.

Do educators consider the limitations of working memory with background color? Research indicates that 3-5 chunks of information can be retained by the human brain (Cowan, 2000). Though not directly mentioning PowerPoint as a device for learning, this question should be applied on how we design our instructional material in the classroom. Isarida et al. (2012) stated that episodic memory consists of 2 parts, one of which is context. This part of memory can be the spatial contexts or 'environmental contexts" such as visual features that include features on a computer screen (combinations of foreground color and background color). Do we, educators designing our own computer generated slides, consider the effects of using this method of teaching as an enhancement to learning or a convenience to ourselves? Of course, the well-known theory that relevant pictures to a topic being presented enhance learning has been shown (Wehr & Wippich, 2004), but when educators use data tables, charts or graphs in addition to the lengthy descriptions, is the amount of information put on one slide being considered in the design of these materials? Basic design factors, such as background color for example, has to be the basic building block of research on the effectiveness on retention of the information we hope, as educators, to impart to our students.

In summary, physiological, psychological and the cognitive loading of visual input are factors that have to be considered when designing media to use in the classroom. This study has considered color perception and its use in computer generated slides as a factor that effects retention.

Method

Participants

Data were collected from 358 students between the ages of 19 and 23 at three different universities in Japan across different undergraduate faculties. Data in the USA were collected from 111 students from four universities from undergraduate and graduate programs.

Materials

A presentation of a basic recipe was developed entitled, 'How to Make Oven Hot Cakes". (Appendix 1a/1b) This presentation was designed in English and Japanese. Items per slide, morphemes and timing per slide were designed to be the same for the same information displayed to keep variables to a minimum.

For the USA and Japanese versions some numerical information was displayed differently because of normal cooking usage terms. For the Japanese presentation, grams were used for ingredients such as flour. In the English version cups was used. Temperatures were in Fahrenheit in English and Celsius in Japanese.

Each presentation was pre-recorded and burned onto a CD. The classrooms where the presentations were conducted were at different institutions. Room characteristics such as lighting and distance from the screen could not be controlled. In addition, flat screen panels and projectors were both utilized. Since these presentations were presented over a two year period, it was not possible to test different background color presentations on one projection system or one university faculty to keep variables to a minimum. Microsoft PowerPoint was used for all presentations. No pictures were used in the presentations.

Procedures

Students were told that they would watch a short presentation and asked to fill out a simple 9-11 question survey. The students were not allowed to take notes. After the presentation, two different kinds of surveys were distributed. A student had either an "a" or "b" survey (Appendix 2). The questions were basically the same but in a different order. The use of 2 surveys was employed to deter copying of answers between students. Students were instructed to leave the question blank if they did not know the answer or to write a partial answer if they did not know the complete one. There was no time limit to answering the questions. The survey was based on questions in the order of the information presented, typical of comprehension questions on an exam. Numerical, procedural and sequential questions were asked.

The presentation had one changing variable, background color. For the first stage of the Japanese presentations, 8 colors were chosen to represent the color spectrum and commonly used colors in classroom/ computer systems. These colors were: orange, yellow, green, black white, rose, medium blue and dark blue. After careful analysis of survey responses, the top 4 colors were chosen and white was used for the second phase of surveys. The USA presentations used green, yellow white, blue and dark blue backgrounds. All colors were bright in color with no pastel varieties. The hexadecimal codes were as follows: (see Table 1)

Table 1: The hexadecimal codes

Background Color	Hexadecimal Color Number		
	Red	Green	Blue
Blue	51	51	204
Dark Blue	0	51	153
Green	102	255	102
White	255	255	255
Yellow	255	255	102

All presentations (Japanese and English) used black lettering with exception of the dark blue presentations which used white and the English (USA) blue version which used white also. For the Japanese presentation, the font style used was "ＭＳ Ｐゴシック" with 54 and 44 font size for titles and 40 font size for information. All characters used "bold weight" for readability purposes. The English presentation used "Ariel" because of the clean lettering with no use of serifs. Font sizes were 44 for titles and 40 for information.

Information presented on each slide varied from the title slide with one concept to slides containing 2 to 4 pieces of information. See Appendices 1 and 2 for the slides of the How to Make Oven Hot Cakes presentation in English and Japanese.

Results and discussion

The results of each question response were put in numerical data form. Each question answer was given a numerical value, so partial credit can be given for partial answers. For example:

Question: How much syrup is needed for each portion?

Japanese answer: 1小さじ two characters (小 meaning small, and さじ meaning spoon) plus one number. Each character/ number is worth 1 point and a maximum of 4 points was given for a complete correct answer.

English answer: 1 teaspoon. Two words and one numerical answer. Each word/ number is worth 1 point and a maximum of 4 points was given for a complete correct answer.

These numerical values were then calculated for an overall percentage correct result. This data was then analyzed using a basic descriptive statistic analyzer.

Table 2 shows the overall score of 9 questions combined. For the Japanese and American test presentations, both scored highest for mean correct answers in the blue range. Japanese students scored higher in the dark blue and American students scored highest in the blue presentation.

Table 2: Data Analysis of Percentage of Correct Data per Background Color Presentation

Japanese Results

Statistic	Yellow	White	Green	Dark Blue	Blue
N	42	73	44	59	45
Minimum	13.890	0.000	5.560	11.110	5.560
Maximum	88.890	100.000	91.670	86.110	85.190
Median	44.440	55.560	44.445	58.330	33.330
Mean	43.033	51.928	48.128	**54.473**	37.490
Variance (n)	367.249	474.469	407.997	339.924	334.478
Variance (n-1)	376.206	481.058	417.486	345.785	342.079
Standard deviation (n)	19.164	21.782	20.199	18.437	18.289
Standard deviation (n-1)	19.396	21.933	20.432	18.595	18.495

American Results

Statistic	Yellow	White	Green	Dark Blue	Blue
N	16	28	17	21	29
Minimum	31.580	5.260	25.810	15.790	15.790
Maximum	89.470	87.100	77.420	90.320	100.000
Median	57.975	53.735	52.630	57.890	57.890
Mean	55.400	52.237	49.405	54.243	**60.423**
Variance (n)	352.279	334.561	224.064	303.201	531.639
Variance (n-1)	375.765	346.952	238.068	318.361	550.626
Standard deviation (n)	18.769	18.291	14.969	17.413	23.057
Standard deviation (n-1)	19.385	18.627	15.429	17.843	23.465

A t-test of the highest scoring surveys gave the p value as shown in Table 3. This analysis validates that the data collected for this research is statistically significant.

Table 3: Data Analysis Comparison of Highest Correct Answers vs. Lowest Correct answers

USA results comparing Blue and Green:

Variable	Observations	Obs. with missing data	Obs. without missing data	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Green	17	0	17	25.810	77.420	49.405	15.429
Blue	29	0	29	15.790	100.000	60.423	23.465

95% confidence interval on the difference between the means:

Difference	-11.018
z (Observed value)	-1.918
|z| (Critical value)	1.960
p-value (Two-tailed)	**0.055**
alpha	0.05

Japanese results comparing Blue and Dark Blue:

Variable	Observations	Obs. with missing data	Obs. without missing data	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. deviation
Blue	45	0	45	5.560	85.190	37.490	18.495
Dark Blue	59	0	59	11.110	86.110	54.473	18.595

95% confidence interval on the difference between the means:

Difference	-16.983
z (Observed value)	-4.629
|z| (Critical value)	1.960
p-value (Two-tailed)	**< 0.0001**
alpha	0.05

Analysis of factors contributing to noted differences

1. ***Light background and dark font vs. dark background and light font***

Zufic & Kalpic (2009) did an experiment using computer monitors and tested whether text or background color influenced learning. For this experiment, black text and white background were the control group combination for the display. In addition, in this experiment the students were required to read a text for a fixed amount of time, then asked to recall the text by writing down what they remembered. The most interesting results came from the actual percentage of remembered terms on the color slides.

For this experiment using white as a control, the following results are noted (see Table 4).

Table 4: Overall results compared with White Overall Results (Correct Answers)
*= white lettering **= black lettering

	Japanese (%)	Japanese %-- Japanese %White	American (%)	American (%)— American (%) White
Yellow	43.033	-8.8895**	55.4	3.163**
White	51.928	0**	52.237	0**
Green	48.128	-3.800**	49.405	-2.832**
Dk Blue	**54.473**	2.545*	54.423	2.186*
Blue	37.490	-14.438**	**60.423**	8.186*

From the analysis above, the first characteristic that reveals a significant contrast is between the black lettering and the blue background color. This readability factor had an effect on retention scores when compared with the other contrasting background colors and text. Dark blue, for both Japanese and American values, had similar contrasts with their white presentation scores. But the biggest difference was recorded with the yellow background color presentation. Szabo & Hastings (2000) found that US students preferred light background and dark font (62.7% agree or strongly agree) as opposed to dark background and light font (20% agree or strongly agree). In this study, black and white was given a 3.9% approval with 88.8% strongly disagreeing. ??

2. ***Number of items per slide and retention***

Psychologists researching memory have used the term of the brain digesting "chunks" of memory. In 2000, Cowan stated that four is the number of chunks that the human brain can process. This research can be applied to the number of concepts or items to retain and remember that PowerPoint designers place on a slide. The typical PowerPoint design books recommend one concept per slide, but many times this can be too much if we want to display numbers or amounts as the test presentation did in this experiment.

From the theories of Cowan (2000), the presentation used in this study should have no noticeable issues for memory retention, but we can see a pattern in the results of the surveys. The one concept slide had the highest retention of information across Japanese and American results. For the two concept slides, correct results were consistent for all but one slide and the color slide having the highest retention was found to be similar. For the 3 concept slides, the results were different.

3. ***Order of information represented***

For questions earlier in the presentation, the American students had higher retention rates for the first four questions and all but one were for different color backgrounds. As the presentation continues, the Japanese results are higher, again with different colors noted. Out of the seven questions noted in this analysis, only two questions had the same color for the highest retention. One question had a similar retention rate of that same color.

4. ***Perceptional difference across cultures and the effect on recall***

Cross cultural perception has been the interest of this author since experiencing peer evaluation versus instructor evaluations with presentations in the university classroom. In addition, Nisbett (2003, p. 82) presented an interesting research topic concerning perception and cognition between Westerners and East Asians, noting that East Asians view the world holistically, attending to the entire field and relations among objects, Westerners view the world analytically, focusing on attributes of salient objects (Nisbett & Masuda, 2001). Also of note is Porter (2012, p. 6) who states: "Companies wanting business in other countries have to consider the implications of using color in their business presentations." Different cultures have different names for colors, but this difference is noted

in children as they learned names of colors in their language. Infants were noted to distinguish between colors (Franklin et al., 2008), but, once they acquired the name, the ability jumped over to the left brain hemisphere from the right. A different part of the brain for processing means that it is encoded for a different meaning. According to Bhatia (2012), "Infant brains are rewiring themselves to absorb our visual language."

In addition to the analysis of Baddeley & Hitch (1974), they define working memory as explicit and implicit. Background colors, being a room color or a background color of a presentation, have an effect that can be determined as an implicit memory component. This implicit memory also has an emotional component that can be related to the emotion of a color. Frager & Fadiman (2005) state that we are all born with a basic psyche that can later be differentiated based upon personal experience. These experiences are used to understand and encode what we see. For this research, we can hypothesize that cultural meanings of colors can generate a physical response. This response, depending on the encoding of the color, can also generate an emotion or feeling. One emotion, anxiety, can interfere with retention and recall by disrupting the channel of the working memory (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Tobias, 1983).

One further note is the research produced by Jalil, Yunus, & Said in 2012. Their paper analyzed 40 color studies selected from various disciplines on the impact of color on humans and noted that previous studies showed inconsistent and unclear color effects. They further emphasized that out of the 40 research articles they reviewed (ranging from 1964-2011), only two research articles considered how people respond to colors differently based on culture. This research review has also been noted to separate psychological and physiological assessments. Only five of these papers included the physiology component. None were noted to separate the nationality or culture of the test subjects in their research, thus showing a body of research that has been overlooked or the assumption that it is an innate trait in all humans.

5. Short wave versus long wave colors: Data comparisons

Diagram 4: Visible Light Spectrum Wavelengths

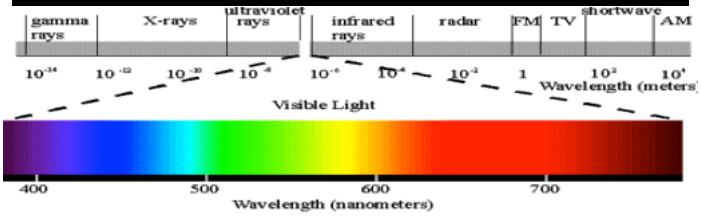

Table 5: Average Correct Scores %

	Japanese (%)	American (%)
Yellow	43.033	55.4
White	51.928	52.237
Green	48.128	49.405
Dark Blue	**54.473**	54.423
Blue	37.490	**60.423**

Looking at the overall correct scores (Table 5) for each presentation, the theory of blue or short wave colors having an effect on retention is supported by the data. But an exception is noted with the yellow result of the American students. The low blue result of the Japanese students can be due to the low contrast of the background color and text. The high yellow result recorded needs further investigation as to why this was recorded with a high retention score. One consideration for this data recorded is the work by Apperson et al. (2008). This research measured the preference of certain PowerPoint characteristics from university students surveyed in the USA (* this author assumes USA because the authors of this paper were from USA based institutions). A Likert scale was used with the score of seven being labeled as "strongly agree". The results indicated a measure of 4.26 for the statement 'I prefer the bright colored backgrounds on PowerPoint slides." The statement, "I prefer darker colored backgrounds for PowerPoint slides." received a 4.01 score. Therefore, a preference is noted in the American group. This can explain the higher retention rates in this group.

Another consideration can be placed on the type of student in the classroom participating in the test presentation. The majority of the yellow presentation USA data came from a predominantly Caucasian student body (86%) as compared to the other American universities tested using the other colors that had a 41% Caucasian student body. This is another factor that needs to be investigated.

6. Additional Effects to Consider on the Data Collected

An additional piece of the research question is the consideration of any visual disabilities that could affect the results of the data recorded. Colorblindness must be considered when designing presentations since it is a recognized condition across all populations and can also vary according to the sex of the student. This condition is defined as the ability to perceive some or no colors. In the United States, one out of every 10-12 males and 200 females is believed to have some sort of colorblindness. In Japan, one out of every 20 males and 500 females suffers a form of this condition. (Color Universal Design Organization, 2013) This condition is more prevalent in the United States and must to be considered when designing presentations especially

to male dense audiences. It is also a variable that can change research results in this experiment. The gender of the participants was not noted on the surveys.

Conclusion

The choice of background color for presentations in the classroom has rarely been given consideration based on cognitive principles. The popularity of PowerPoint usage in education and business must consider this visual language component as a factor in attention and recall. In addition, the cross cultural meaning of color and the human body's psychological and physiological effects must also be considered when designing with this multi-media tool. The research presented in this paper carried out a cross cultural recall survey based on a presentation developed with one design variable, background color. Intra-culturally, a strong positive recall rate was observed for blue hue presentations. The Japanese subjects were noted to favor the dark blue presentations as compared to the American subjects, who favored a medium blue presentation background. Inter-culturally, the second and third highest recall rates were very different and proved that color interpretation and encoding is not only an innate reaction, but contains cultural components that need to be taken into consideration when designing for specific audiences. In addition, contrast of the colors of the lettering and background was proven to have a direct influence on recall.

Further research is also noted concerning gender differences and type of information presented with regard to background color. With the familiarity of use of presentation software today and the myriad of colors and background templates available, research needs to see beyond the blue or red paradigm noted in the majority of studies referencing this field of study and expand their research across cultures and disciplines.

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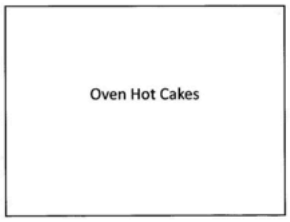
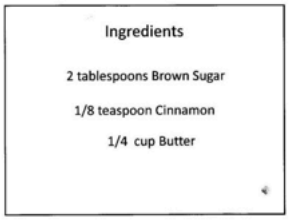
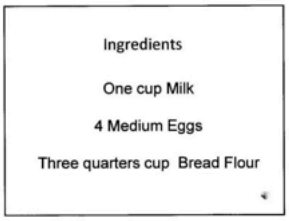
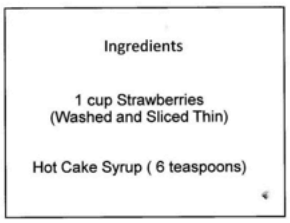
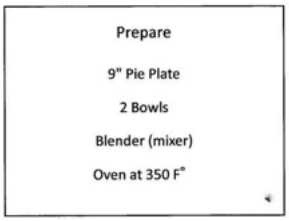
Appendix 1a English Presentation











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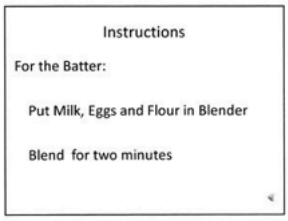

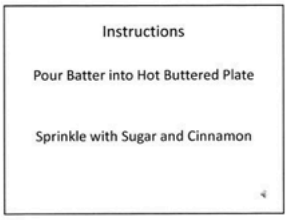

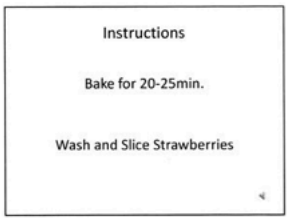

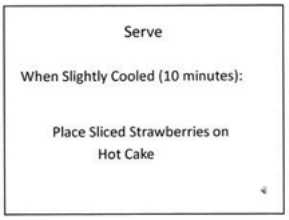

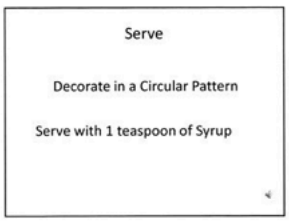

Appendix 2 Student Surveys A and B

Participant # _____ Survey a/b

Thank you for participating in this survey. You help will greatly help me with my doctoral research. After watching and listening to the presentation, please answer the questions. If you do not remember the answer, please write 'Don't Remember'

Thank you!

What is your native language? _____

What other languages do you speak? _____

How long have you lived in Japan?_____

Please list any other countries that you have lived in for more than 1 year: Country Length of time lived

_____ _____

1. (a/b)What is the name of the recipe?
2. (a)How much cinnamon is used? (b) How much brown sugar is used?
3. (a)How much milk is needed? (b) How many eggs are needed?
4. (a) How much strawberries are needed? (b) How much cake flour is needed?
5. (a) What is the temperature of the oven? (b) What is the size of the pie plate?
6. (a) Do you add the butter before or after you pour the batter in the pie plate?
   (b) What is the temperature of the oven?
7. (a) How long do you blend the batter in total?
   (b) Do you add the butter before or after you pour the batter in the pie plate?
8. (a) How long do you bake it for? (b) How long do you blend the batter in total?
9. (a) How much syrup should you serve it with?
   (b) When do you sprinkle the sugar and cinnamon, after or before baking?