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***Form-focused Grammar Instruction: Effects on Grammar Accuracy and Oral and Writing Proficiency in English***

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**Abstract**

One of the main goals of second language learners is to develop awareness of language structure (Bialystok, 1989). To achieve this goal, there has been a paradigm shift from form-focused to meaning-focused type of instruction over the years. However, through a number of researches, some researchers have explored the effectiveness of switching back to form-focused grammar instruction (FFGI) to develop proficiency in a language. Motivated by this “pendulum-shift” to pedagogical grammar, the researcher investigated the effectiveness of FFGI and its relationship to two macro skills in language development, speaking and writing. This study aimed to explore the effects of form-focused grammar instruction (FFGI) on grammar accuracy, oral and writing proficiency. It also aimed to establish the correlation between oral and writing proficiency after the participants’ exposure to FFGI.

The study adopted a one-group pretest-posttest design. An oral exam by Cromwell and an online writing test for writing proficiency were administered to the participants of the study. Afterwards, the participants were exposed to the intervention (FFGI). The same tests in the pre-test were administered during post-test. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference in the participants’ pre- and post-test scores in the grammar accuracy test. Conversely, there was no significant relationship between grammar accuracy and oral and writing proficiency. It was concluded that FFGI can contribute to the improvement of grammar accuracy of students. However, knowledge of grammar rules does not automatically result in oral and writing proficiency.

Keywords: oral proficiency, writing proficiency, form-focused grammar instruction, grammar accuracy

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## Introduction

An understanding of language and its structure is essential for communicative purposes. This is in conjunction with one of the components in Savignon's (1976) communicative competence model which is grammatical competence. It pertains to the ability to recognize the lexical, morphological, syntactic, and phonological features of a language and to make use of these features to interpret and form sentences. Clearly, it implies the importance of grammar in language learning and teaching.

The Philippine education system puts premium on the understanding of the English language structure in developing the communication skills, both oral and writing, of Filipino students as reflected in the curriculum of both basic and tertiary education. Even with the Enhanced Basic Education program (K to 12 curriculum), grammar lessons remain to be integral components of the English subject. In a larger scale, it recognizes the vital role that English plays in producing highly-skilled and globally-competitive citizens.

However, there are alarming realities that English quality is seriously deteriorating and that mastery of English among Filipinos is declining. By a common observation, Filipino students can no longer communicate well in the English language as evidenced by the decline in their proficiency. In a survey conducted in 2004, it was observed that the English proficiency of Filipino overseas workers, both skilled and non-skilled, has likewise declined (Funtanilla, 2005). What is even alarming is the poor performance in English proficiency examinations even among teachers themselves (Melencio, 2007). For instance, the mean score of 117, 728 permanent Grade 1 and 2 public school teachers in the entire country who took the Test of English Proficiency for Teachers (TEPT) and Process Skills Test (PST) in 2012 was 50.53. This indicates low level of proficiency based on the descriptive equivalent set by the Department of Education (DepEd).

Indubitably, these alarming observations challenge English teachers to develop writing and oral proficiency among students. English teachers face the greater responsibility of enhancing such skills to help students realize the goals and specific learning outcomes set by the English curriculum while dealing with the other factors affecting second language learning and teaching. As Funtanilla (2005) noted in her study, language specialists who view language as something learned through use and practice are convinced that the more exposed a learner is to the structure and use of the target language, the better he/she learns. Bachman's (1990) grammatical competence strands, cited by Brown (2000), were also used by Malik (2012) in his study where he indicated that the language competence aspect that affects English oral proficiency the most was limited knowledge and poor understanding of the English language.

In conjunction with these findings, there are several issues related to the development of students' oral and writing proficiency. Some of these issues concern the current pedagogical practices that may have a contribution to students' low oral and writing examination results. Thus, it is timely to find out whether or not teachers are able to capitalize on the time used for grammar drills and exercises. It is worthy to investigate whether or not such drills have aided or contributed to the development of English

proficiency of the students who have been exposed to grammar instruction for a long period of time. More than the time spent in learning and understanding the structure of the English language, the manner in which grammar lessons are taught sparks interest in the researcher given that it is an important factor in the teaching-learning process. Consequently, it motivated the researcher to look into grammar teaching methodologies in order to develop English proficiency.

This study aimed to explore and assess the effectiveness of form-focused grammar instruction in promoting not just the oral but also the writing proficiency of students. Likewise, it investigated the correlation between speaking and writing, two important language skills, after implementing a form-focused grammar instruction. In essence, this study capitalized on FFGI as a tool in addressing difficulties specific to the declining writing and oral proficiency in English of a group of Filipino students.

### **Need to Focus on Grammar**

The selection of form-focused grammar instruction as an intervention was grounded on several theories and related studies. According to Enverga-Florece (2006), the conscious understanding of the target language system and its features: phonology, orthography, morphology, and syntax is necessary if learners are to produce correct language forms and use them appropriately in verbal or written communication. It presupposes that teaching of grammar is a sufficient condition for language.

Concerning form-focused instruction, Hayashi (1995) cites three positions in relation to learning the structure of a language. First is the non-interface position which claims that formal instruction such as FFGI has little effect on second language acquisition and learning because explicit knowledge does not become implicit knowledge (Krashen, 1982). The second position is the strong interface position which claims that knowledge acquired explicitly becomes implicit knowledge through constant practice (Sharwood-Smith, 1981). Finally, the weak interface position (Ellis, 1990), affirms that FFGI can be useful in natural communication depending on the target structure. Among these positions, the main influence in the researcher's conduct of form-focused grammar instruction was the strong interface position and the weak interface position. Thus, various activities that drill the students' mastery of the grammar structure were carefully chosen and implemented during the intervention.

The study also anchored its framework on the claim of Swain (1985) in his output hypothesis which states that speaking or writing can help students move from semantic to syntactic processing such as adjectival agreements, subject-verb agreements, subordination, and coordination. This claim was supported by Malik's study in 2012. The study investigated the factors affecting students' fluency level in the second language and their effects on oral proficiency and fluency. The results indicated that oral fluency was most of the time affected by grammar. After analyzing the recording of 50 students, the researcher captured more mistakes in grammar followed by vocabulary and pronunciation. These mistakes were highly correlated with pauses due to hesitation and word repetition. It is therefore clearly understood that grammar as well as vocabulary produced direct impact upon the dependent variable pauses due to hesitation and word repetition. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that if students do not have proper knowledge of grammar rules and their automatic application in verbal speech (pertaining to the output component

of Swain's hypothesis), they will not be able to consciously raise their awareness of grammar structure and consequently, this will prevent them from speaking more fluently.

Clearly, the study shows the importance of Swain's suggestion: learners should be engaged not only in input which she believes, involves comprehension and that requires little syntactic organization but also in output which includes negotiation of meaning and talking about language in order to succeed in acquiring and learning the language. With these observations and findings, the study did not only focus on providing input (form-focused grammar instruction) but also concentrated on analyzing participants' outputs (speaking and writing tasks during the implementation of the intervention) to further explore and validate the claims in Swain's output hypothesis.

### **Form-Focused Grammar Instruction**

The history of second language teaching and learning has alternated between two opposite approaches - those that focused on analyzing the language, i.e., language usage (focus on forms) and those that focused on using the language, i.e., language use (focus on meaning) (Afshari, 2012). The focus on forms (FonFs) pertains to the systematic teaching of language structure and features while focus on form (FonF) refers to the instruction that focuses on the communicative tasks or activities with the language feature taught incidentally, that is, only when the need arises.

While the advent of these approaches has yielded some significant contributions to the field of second language teaching and learning, it has also posed a dilemma as to whether or not teachers should focus on form or meaning. Further, it has elicited several conflicting and various views and criticisms among linguists, teachers, and researchers. Moreover, it has paved the way for certain studies that attempted to determine which methodology is more effective in learning and teaching a second language.

The approach focusing on form has numerous definitions but to simplify, Spada has provided a nicely-worded definition: "any pedagogical effort which is used to draw the learner's attention to language form either implicitly or explicitly" (1997:73). In essence, it is not just confined to the language form per se since the other end of the continuum implies indirect reference to forms, learner's paying attention to specific linguistic features in input and the integration of forms into communicative tasks or grammar consciousness raising by Ellis. Accordingly, in this study, communicative activities were incorporated in speaking and writing tasks applying the rules of grammar. The form-focused was solely done during the delivery of instruction on grammar lessons.

### **Conceptual Framework**

Below is the conceptual framework of the current study. It reflects the effects of a method in teaching grammar (form-focused grammar instruction or FFGI) on the essential components of communicative competence and language skills in English (oral and writing proficiency) and the extent of its significance. First, it indicates how FFGI is related to grammar accuracy which reflects the first research question. Second, it depicts the relationship between grammar accuracy and both writing and

oral proficiency in English which is indicated in the second research question. Finally, it shows the possible relationship between oral and writing proficiency in English.

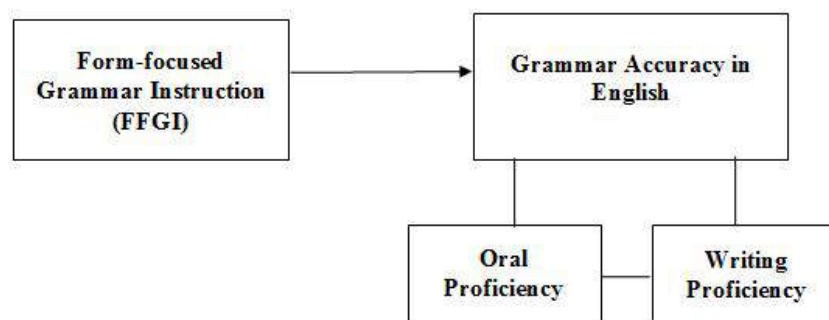


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

### Research Questions

The focus of this study was the evaluation of the effectiveness of form-focused grammar instruction (FFGI) in developing oral and writing proficiency in English of college students. After the implementation of FFGI, it further investigated the correlation between oral and writing proficiency in English. Specifically, the study sought to address three research questions. First, *Is there a significant difference in the study participants' pre and post test scores in the grammar accuracy test after going through form-focused grammar instruction?* Second, *Is there a significant relationship between the students' grammar accuracy and English oral proficiency and the students' grammar accuracy English writing proficiency?* Finally, *Is there a significant correlation between students' oral and writing proficiency in English after they undergo form-focused grammar instruction?*

### Research Design

To obtain the necessary information for this research, a One-Group-Pretest-Posttest design was employed. The pre-test and the post-test consisted of two sets of tests: one for oral proficiency and another one for writing proficiency. Results of these tests were collated and interpreted in light of the questions posed for this study. An explicit aspect of this study was the use of form-focused grammar instruction as an intervention emphasizing on the structure of the language rather than its meaning. The study also utilized a descriptive correlation method to determine the relationship between the oral and writing proficiency of students in English after the implementation of FFGI. This method was deemed the most appropriate for this study as it attempted to explain the relationships and the extent of the significance between and among its variables.

### Research Locale/Participants

To realize the objectives of this study, forty-two (42) college students of a private non-sectarian university in Manila enrolled in an English grammar course during the first term of AY 2014-2015 served as study participants. They were mostly from the College of Business Administration but were pursuing majors such as Customs Administration, Operations Management, and Accountancy. One participant was taking International Relations while another was majoring in Multimedia Arts.

However, at the end of the term, there were only thirty-one (31) participants left due to attrition related to absences, course dropping, and unavailability of either the pre-test or the post-test results in speaking and/or writing.

### **Instruments**

As this study operated on a One-Group-Pretest/Posttest design, two sets of tests for the pre-test stage and the post-test stage were utilized. Cromwell's oral pre-test (short autobiography) and a standardized grammar accuracy test including five open-ended questions on some selected topics was utilized to determine their writing proficiency.

*Oral Pre-Test/Post-Test.* The researcher used one of Cromwell's speaking tasks in his oral exam – narration of short autobiography. This oral pre-test was deemed appropriate for the self-introduction activity at the start of the course. During the pre-intervention phase of the study, the participants were asked to introduce themselves by sharing their autobiography. The self-introduction of each participant was set at two to three minutes. Accordingly, it was recorded using a digital camera and afterwards rated by three English professors using the oral proficiency rating scale to ensure objectivity and uniformity of rating. The highest possible score for the test was 35 points. The same oral test, which was the autobiography, was used after the intervention to measure improvement in the participants' oral proficiency.

*Purdue Online Writing Test.* In order to assess the grammar accuracy and the writing proficiency of the participants, the researcher adopted the Purdue Writing Test, an online standardized test. This was chosen because it had already undergone validation as it was used in a study by Funtanilla (2005) and the test items are consistent with the grammar topics outlined in the course syllabus of the selected participants. The test consists of two sections: grammar and free writing. The grammar section consists of 60 items about basic grammar and proper use of the eight parts of speech. The free writing consists of five topics from which study participants can choose. These topics include the following: the importance of attending a college or university, a comparison between knowledge gained from experience and knowledge gained from books, the qualities of good neighbors, success as a result of hardwork, and parents as best teachers. In the free writing, the participants were instructed to choose one topic and write a short composition about it in at least three paragraphs. The objective part of the test was rated by the researcher while the free writing test was rated by the three faculty raters from the English department. They were the same raters who assessed the oral proficiency of the participants.

*Oral Proficiency Scoring Rubric.* For objective rating of the oral tests, the researcher adopted the oral proficiency rating scale used by Ibanez (2001) in her study on cooperative language learning approach towards English as a Second Language (ESL) Oral Proficiency. The rating scale has categories that include the four aspects of communicative competence by Savignon namely, grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence. The categories are rated on a scale of 1 to 5, the total scores are added up, and a simple average is taken from the examinee's overall rating. This was used by the three professors of English from the College of Arts and Sciences – Department of English and Literature (CAS-DEL) in the research locale.



*Writing Proficiency Scoring Rubric.* To objectively assess the written outputs of the students, the researcher utilized Lee and Paulson's (1992) Evaluation Criteria for Compositions which was also used by Baetiong (2004) and recently by Envarga-Florece (2006) in their respective dissertations. The analytic marking scheme consists of five criteria arranged according to the assigned numerical score each of the criteria received. The criteria include content, organization, vocabulary, language, and mechanics. Among the writing rubrics, this was selected as it had undergone a series of validations having been used in two related studies. Likewise, the descriptors for each criterion are very detailed particularly for language and mechanics. This was also used by the same raters for oral proficiency.

*Lesson Plans.* The researcher prepared twenty-five (25) sets of lesson plans for the entire semester based on the grammar topics outlined in the syllabus. Prior to the implementation, the lesson plans were submitted to the evaluators for their review and validation. Some of the evaluators' suggestions were considered in the revision and execution of the plan. The lesson proper usually began with motivational activity. Afterwards, the researcher discussed the lesson using form-focused instruction. Guided practice and individual practice followed the instruction. One of the key features of the plan was the reinforcement activities that always came in pairs – one for oral proficiency labelled as *Speak Up* and another for writing proficiency *Write Up*.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection consisted of three phases: pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention. Each phase comprised of an activity for oral and writing proficiency with corresponding data to be collected.

Data collection started after administering the two tests during the pre-intervention phase of this study. For the oral pre-test, the participants introduced themselves through their autobiography. The participants were given two to three minutes to share their autobiography. As they spoke, their speeches were recorded using a digital camera facilitated by the researcher himself. Two class meetings were allotted for the oral pre-test because the initial forty-two (42) participants could not be accommodated in one class meeting only. Thereafter, the speech samples were transcribed, analyzed and evaluated using the oral proficiency rating scale to account for the grammatical lapses in the course of the oral test. On a separate class meeting after the oral pre-test, the students took the Purdue Writing test consisting of 60 objective items on basic grammar and an essay part with five (5) topics. In other words, the oral and writing pre-tests were administered on separate class meetings. For the essay part of the pre-writing test, Lee and Paulson's (1992) Evaluation Criteria for Compositions was used in rating the participants' composition. The results gathered from both the oral and written tests at this stage served as baseline performance data for the study.

### **Data Analysis**

In analyzing the data obtained for this study, the following statistical tools and techniques were used to ensure valid, scientific, and systematic presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data: weighted mean, frequency count, standard deviation,

Pearson  $r$  for the third research question about the correlation between students' oral and writing proficiency in English after they undergo FFGI, and the T-test for paired samples.

The weighted mean was used to compute the participants' average scores in the tests. In comparing two means from a single sample arranged in a before-after panel design, the t-ratio was the most appropriate statistical tool to employ (Weirs, 2007). Accordingly, in this study, the t-ratio is used to compare two means (oral proficiency and writing proficiency means) from a single sample (a college class) arranged before and after the intervention (FFGI). Further, the parametric test (t-test) was used to determine whether or not the difference between the means was significant.

## Results

### Grammar Accuracy before and after FFGI

Table 1 shows the results of the study participants' pre and post-test scores in the grammar accuracy test. The mean score of the participants in the pre-test is 34.39 and the standard deviation (SD) is 6.291. On the other hand, the mean score in the post-test is 36.13 and the SD is 6.874. This indicates an increase of 1.74 points.

Table 1  
*Pre-test and post test scores in the grammar accuracy test*

Grammar Accuracy Test	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	t-value	<i>p</i>
Pre-test	34.39	6.291	1.13		
Post-test	36.13	6.874	1.235	-2.187	**0.037

Note: \*\*= $p < 0.05$ . N=31

To determine if there is a statistically significant difference between the study participants' pre and post-test scores in the grammar accuracy test, the paired sample T-test was employed. Based on the Paired Sample T-test, the null hypothesis stating that there was no significant difference between the grammar pre-test and post-test scores was rejected because the p-value ( $p=0.037$ ) is less than 0.05. This means **that the participants' pre- and post-test scores in the grammar accuracy test are significantly different in favor of the post-test scores.** Thus, this means that **the students' grammar accuracy score has improved after going through FFGI.**

### Grammar Accuracy and English Oral and Writing Proficiency

Table 2 indicates that the participants' grammar accuracy has an inverse relationship with English oral proficiency. The Pearson's correlation value is -0.156. This value points to a moderate inverse relationship which means that even if there was an improvement in grammar accuracy, it did not necessarily lead to an improvement in the participants' oral proficiency. Despite the presence of a moderate inverse relationship, the p-value at 0.402, which is greater than the set level of significance ( $p=0.05$ ), suggests that there is not enough evidence to show that **the relationship between grammar accuracy and English oral proficiency is not significant.**

Table 2

*Relationship between the participants' grammar accuracy and English oral proficiency*

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed) p-value	Interpretation
Grammar Accuracy and Oral Proficiency	-0.156	0.402	Not Significant

Note:  $p > 0.05$ . N=31

The same results were observed for the relationship between grammar accuracy and English writing proficiency as specified in Table 3. The Pearson's correlation value is -.308. This value implies moderate inverse relationship which means that even if there was an improvement in grammar accuracy, it did not lead to an improvement in the participants' writing proficiency. However, after statistical treatment, the p-value is at 0.092 which is likewise greater than the set level of significance ( $p=0.05$ ). This shows that **the relationship between grammar accuracy and English writing proficiency is also not significant.**

Table 3

*Relationship between the participants' grammar accuracy and English writing proficiency*

	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed) p-value	Interpretation
Grammar Accuracy and Writing Proficiency	-0.308	0.092	Not Significant

Note:  $p > 0.05$ . N=31

The data shown above suggest that neither an increase nor a decrease in English oral and writing proficiency can necessarily be attributed to an increase or decrease in grammar accuracy. The non-interface cognitive model of Krashen (1982) can be used to partly explain the non-significance of the relationship between grammar accuracy and writing and oral proficiency. Using the model, Krashen claimed that form-focused instruction has little effect on second language acquisition. Explicit grammar knowledge which is learned from the instruction does not become implicit knowledge which can be automatically used in natural communication. This means that even if the students learn the rules, they do not understand them immediately and thus, they cannot be expected to use them spontaneously and accurately in interaction whether in task-based or real-life communication.

### **Participants' Oral and Writing proficiency after they undergo FFGI**

Based on the data shown in Table 4, oral and writing proficiency have positive moderate relationship with a correlation value of 0.293. However, the p-value ( $p$ -value = 0.11) is more than the 0.05 level of significance; therefore, the positive moderate relationship is not significant. In essence, **this means that there is no significant correlation between the participants' oral and writing proficiency in English after they undergo FFGI.** This suggests that an improvement in oral

proficiency does not necessarily translate to an improvement in writing proficiency and vice versa.

Table 4

*Correlation between the participants' oral and writing proficiency before and after FFGI*

	Pearson Correlation	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed) p-value	Interpretation
Oral Proficiency and Writing Proficiency	0.293	-2.733	0.11	Not Significant

Note:  $p > 0.05$ .  $N = 31$

### Conclusions and Implications

Based on the findings obtained in this study, the following conclusions were drawn: **First, form-focused grammar instruction contributes to the improvement of grammar accuracy of students.** The explicit discussion of grammar rules and target structures, drills, repetitions and error correction aids in learning a language as also noted by Sheen (2003). The marked improvement in the participants' grammar accuracy score indicates their explicit knowledge of the target language. As explicit knowledge is mostly considered to be the starting point of second language proficiency (e.g., DeKeyser, 1998; O'Malley, Chamot, & Walker, 1987; Sharwood Smith, 1988), there is a direct relationship between teaching grammar and second language proficiency. Bialystok (1994) shares the same view that learners of second language learners can utilize explicit information for developing analyzed linguistic knowledge. Based on the assumption that language is a structured knowledge system, Bialystok argues that one of the main goals of L2 learners is to develop awareness of the structure of language. As posited by Macaro (2006), the effectiveness of FFGI is not conclusive but the focus on grammar will be beneficial. Grammatical ability is highly correlated with second language (L2) proficiency. Students who learn grammar do not only focus on form but also grasp meanings when sentences are complicated. Further, students who have high grammatical ability can understand meanings and write well-organized compositions even though they still produce errors on those that were not explicitly taught. **Thus, the teaching of grammar using form-focused instruction is still valuable in language classrooms.**

**Second, the knowledge of grammar rules does not automatically result in improved oral and writing proficiency.** In this study, there was no significant relationship found between grammar accuracy and oral and writing proficiency. While it is true that the study participants improved in their grammar accuracy after going through FFGI, there were a number of instances when they were not able to apply the correct language forms as evident in the incorrect grammar structures in their oral and written outputs. Despite being exposed to FFGI, the participants' outputs still reflected a number of errors related to tense consistency, subject-verb agreement, correct use of prepositions, pronoun-antecedent agreement, and parallelism. However, the persistence of these errors cannot be misconstrued as FFGI being an ineffective teaching methodology in developing students' proficiency in the language. Conversely, the improvement in grammar, oral and writing proficiency

cannot also be fully associated with FFGI being an effective approach to improve the students' communicative ability. Because of sample size constraints and the interplay of other factors not accounted for in this study such as first language background, second language proficiency level, learning styles, structure complexity, and affective filter of the study participants, the results were not fully conclusive particularly regarding the relationship between the participants' grammar accuracy and writing and oral proficiency as well as the correlation between the students' oral and writing proficiency in English after their exposure to FFGI. In this context, the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of FFGI cannot be generalized. In order to address this weakness, the study may be replicated involving a bigger group and considering the previously stated factors that may have an effect on second language learning.

To further determine the effectiveness of FFGI as a methodology in developing language proficiency, future researchers can replicate the study by a) involving more participants for the results to be more conclusive; b) extending the study for a longer period of time (longitudinal study) to establish the effect of sustained FFGI; c) including an experimental group that will undergo non-FFGI for comparison and contrast of effect; and d) integrating it with other pedagogical interventions like communicative approach, process writing, and reading-writing connection for further establishment of its pros and cons. The future researchers, who are particularly interested in pedagogical grammar, can also conduct a similar study that will take into account the developmental level of the learners. This recommendation was based on the weak interface model which claims that the effect of explicit instruction such as FFGI in learning a target language form relates to the learners' stage of development. The researchers can implement FFGI among three groups based on level of proficiency such as beginning, intermediate, and advanced and consequently, compare the groups in terms of who would benefit the most from explicit instruction.

In summary, language proficiency is not solely affected by a particular kind of instruction. Explicit knowledge acquired from explicit instruction such as FFGI does not necessarily convert to implicit knowledge of real-life communicative functions particularly involving speaking and writing. Nonetheless, the teaching of grammar, regardless of whatever approach or methodology, will always find its niche and value in the domains of a language class.



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***The Convergence of Last and First-mile:  
Practicum Curriculum Redesign for Language Majors***

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**Abstract**

This on-going research intends to explore how Flipped Learning (FL) can be applied to a practicum course design for tertiary-level language programs in Taiwan. Foreign language/literature programs in colleges and their students' employability are under severe scrutiny and face social criticism. This study incorporates FL framework in an innovative practicum course titled Workshops of Bilingual Digital Publications, with the intention to increase language majors career choices and employability. The instructional design is composed of Guided Exploration (for market research), Flip, and Apply three stages, and features the collaboration with field practitioners in learning modules for quality publication products. The FL task design and its induced learning effects in the practicum are investigated from students', the instructors, and field practitioners' views. Sub-inquiries reveal students' likes and dislikes, instructors' reflection, field practitioners' involvement and outlook, students' progress in professional discourse, FL, career decisions and self-efficacy, as well as their understanding of product marketability. The data collection instruments include 1) students' needs assessment results; 2) students' exit survey responses; 3) video-taped classroom meetings and observation notes; 4) students' online discussion archives; 5) students' and the experts' product rubrics and work evaluations; and 6) individual and focus-group interviews with the participants. Mixed-method data analysis techniques are used. The findings of this research contribute to the field in two ways. The FL approach prescribed to practicum facilitates curricular re-design. Moreover, the FL design and execution in a scholar-practitioner co-teaching model elevates the informational openness and professionalism in the quest for interdisciplinary knowledge and skills.

Keywords: Digital Publication, Language Major, Practicum, Flipped Learning

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## Introduction

The connection between graduates' employability and higher education is unquestionable: "The higher education system is subject to governmental steer, one form of which is to give an emphasis to the enhancement of the employability of new graduates" (Yorke, 2004, p. 3). Unfortunately, foreign language majors and their employability are under severe scrutiny and face social criticism. The shrinking job market and cloudy career development path for these majors challenge the long-existing curricula of foreign language departments. Institutional curriculum is meant to facilitate and maximize graduates' ability to gain proper employment—bridging between the last mile at school and the first mile at work, a new educational policy in Taiwan. To actualize this ideal, multiple competencies should be cultivated, including problem-solving skills, research skills, communication skills, presentation skills, peer/self-assessment skills, and teamwork (Chang, 2012). This skill cultivation and knowledge integration in the last mile require delicate an up-to-date curricular design which can reflect the demand of job market, and bold pedagogical restructuring which might be unprecedented to the field. For the labor market and higher education to seamlessly satisfy each other, they need to be mutually inclusive and participatory (Yorke, 2004), but what are the possible ways to achieve this goal? Are there any alternatives to full-fledged internship placement, especially for geographically challenged schools? This research intended to explore if and how flipped learning (FL) can be applied to improve a practicum course designed for tertiary-level language programs in Taiwan. In this research, FL serves as the theoretical framework of the study as well as the cornerstones of instructional design. FL, a burgeoning trend, is not only becoming an educational fad many schools promoted inside of outside of Taiwan, but the growing popularity also affects curricular evolution in Taiwan's higher education system, especially for disciplines in vocational distress, such as language and/or literature.

In response to the growing negativity against the value of language departments and majors, the report of the island-wide curricular evaluation on higher education between 2008-2010 provides a high-stakes curricular evaluation that sheds some light on national and international perspectives on this issue. The section on foreign language disciplines in Taiwan (K. J. Chen, 2010), based on a massive survey and multiple roundtable discussions with faculty members, students, and chairmen of language departments, reveals the relative scarcity of two course components across language departments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in Taiwan (see Figure 1): creation and presentation (of only 2.54% to 3.37%) and Internet and computer technology applications (of only 7.79% to 14.58%).

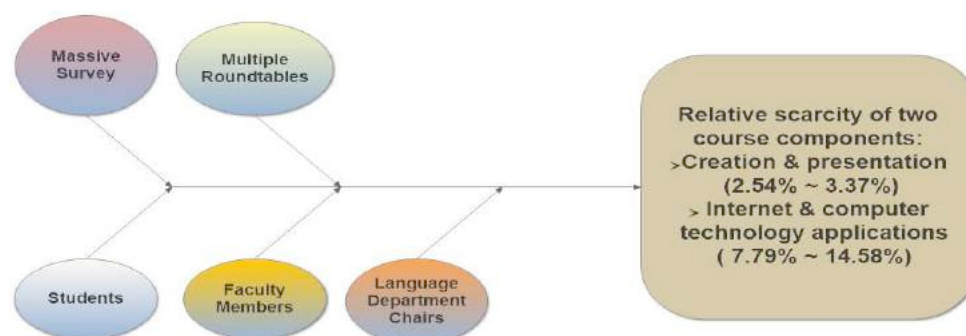


Figure 1: The result of the island-wide survey



The course components targeting students' hands-on skills (especially technology) and skill applications/demonstrations are evidently insufficient. In short, courses emphasizing marketable and marketing skills are urgently needed. The result of a recent evaluation of the author's humble department also pinpointed the same curricular flaws, as a result of the institution's remote geographical location. Furthermore, even when a practicum is offered in a language program, the only type that exists is predominately associated with student teaching (W. C. Chen, 2012). The monochromic practicum is problematic for obvious reasons. The result of a recent survey tracking down all alumni of my department, including undergraduate (the Foreign Languages and Literature program) and graduate students (the TEFL/English Literature program), found that fewer than 20% became teachers. More than half went into the publishing industry (e.g., copyediting or translation) or marketing (sales and advertisement planning/designing).

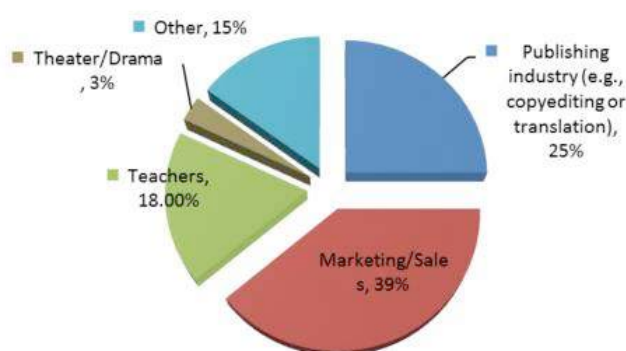


Figure 2. Career tracks for students and alumni

Clearly, practicum courses should be diversified. Hence, in this research, an innovative practicum course entitled English for Multimedia Publications incorporated an FL approach, with the hope of cultivating students' hands-on skills and problem-solving abilities through work-based learning to yield marketable products. This approach aimed to directly boost their employability (Chang, 2012). Technology was the key medium for market exploration, field practitioners' intervention, and work production.

### Flipped Learning and Practicum Course

In order to reverse this chronic egg-and-chicken causality between the development of higher education and increase of employment rate, all educators should take a moment to scrutinize how closely their curricular design reflects the current job market, and hopefully will redesign their instruction and rethink how they invest their in-class time. In other words, the challenge now becomes figuring out how to prepare students for the class so that one can effectively teach what's desired and needed by the job market—an ultimate wash-back effect. This study has adopted FL to design an unprecedented practicum to demonstrate a new approach for interdisciplinary learning. A flipped classroom refers to a teaching practice in which students watch or listen to lessons before class and do their assignments in class (Fulton, 2012)—the opposite of the conventional practice. This practice frees up class time for deep learning. Although many successful stories of flipped classrooms are documented, few are reported in a rigorous manner, especially due to the concept's current infancy in Taiwan. Since more and more classroom practitioners have been experimenting with

flipped classrooms in U.S.-based contexts over the past decade, a mature FL framework has been established (FLN, 2014). A diverse class hence is more of a desired than a problematic situation for FL. The result of this, the authors believe, is an interactive teaching environment rather than lecture-based teaching. This interactive assignment-based model encourages students to be responsible for their first exposure learning outside of the classroom. Because this way of structuring the classroom inverts the more traditional pattern (of introducing students to content/materials in class), and assigning homework to engage content at a deeper level outside/prior to the class, a FL is also referred to as an inverted classroom. Judging from above features, several existing teaching methods seem to support FL designs, e.g., UbD (Understanding by Design), PBL (Problem-Based Learning), and GBS (Goal-Based Scenarios). FL has been made some appearance in territory-level Language Education research in Taiwan (e.g., Hung, 2014; Lee, 2013), as well as in overseas (e.g., Doman & Webb, 2014; Snart, 2010; Strayer, 2012), but never done for an integrated skill course. The author of the present proposal would like to push the FL approach further to examine if it will still “shine” in a tech-based practicum course? If so, how should it evolve?

### **The Study**

This case study explores if and how FL model can contribute to a tech-based practicum course in a language department. Practicum, by Daresh’s (1990) definition, is an environment or opportunity for the learners to:

1. apply knowledge and skills in a practical setting.
2. progressively develop competencies through participation in a range of practical experiences.
3. test their commitment to a career.
4. gain insight into professional practice.
5. evaluate progress and identify areas where further personal and professional development is needed.

Meanwhile, Flipped Learning Network also advocates the following four pillars to facilitate students’ engagement in FL:

#### **1. Flexible Environment:**

FL allows for a variety of learning modes; educators often physically rearrange their learning spaces to accommodate a lesson or unit, to support either group work or independent study. They create flexible spaces in which students choose when and where they learn. Furthermore, educators who flip their classes are flexible in their expectations of student timelines for learning and in their assessments of student learning.

#### **2. Learning Culture:**

The FL model deliberately shifts instruction to a learner-centered approach, where in-class time is dedicated to exploring topics in greater depth and creating rich learning opportunities. As a result, students are actively involved in knowledge construction as they participate in and evaluate their learning in a manner that is personally meaningful.

#### **3. Intentional Content:**

Teachers should still determine, despite of FL's nature of openness/flexibility, what they need to teach and what materials students should explore on their own. Educators use intentional content to maximize classroom time in order to adopt methods of student-centered, active learning strategies.

#### 4. Professional Educator:

During class time, professional educators continually observe their students, providing them with feedback relevant in the moment, and assessing their work. They are reflective in their practice, connect with each other to improve their instruction, accept constructive criticism, and tolerate controlled chaos in their classrooms. While Professional Educators take on less visibly prominent roles in a flipped classroom, they remain the essential ingredient that enables FL to occur.

Theoretically, FL and Practicum both emphasize on active learning with professional guidance on the side. Based on this common ground, the learning-by-doing process shall be geared toward an open and exploratory work-based learning (Boud & Soloman, 2001) in which personal- and peer-learning, formal and informal learning mutually scaffold and support. An innovative practicum course titled **Workshop of Bilingual Digital Publication** was designed in an FL approach, with the hope to cultivate students' hands-on skills and simulate on-job training to yield marketable products. Technology was the key medium for exploration, expert-intervention, and work-production.

Twenty-six junior/senior students, foreign languages and literature majors, were enrolled to this first-time offered elective practicum. All the participants were nonnative English speakers who also had learned at least one other foreign language (Japanese, German, French, and Spanish) at the same time. These participants were identified as higher intermediate English learners based on their previous admission requirement and—most of them in average would pass GEPT higher-intermediate level preliminary stage (or equivalent in TOEIC/TOEFL), based on the past history. Before taking this practicum course, they should have completed 70% of the core course requirements (English language trainings and western literature). Those who signed up for the course should be interested in or would like to explore the field works of multimedia-based sales advertisements/commercials, e-books, digital teaching/learning material productions, hence English for specific purposes (ESP) were included. The instructor-researcher also had field work experiences and personal connections with publishing companies. In addition a TA with related experience or background were recruited to assist the course for a semester.

The data collection instruments included 1) students' needs assessment results, 2) students' entry- and exit-questionnaires, 2) interviews with the students and the participating field practitioners, and finally 3) students' work products. Data analysis approaches involved qualitative analyses and descriptive statistics.

### Findings

In general, the preliminary results showed that students' comfortable level with FL increased with the extent of flip, especially the proportion of expected autonomous learning compared to the conventional teaching. Abundant flexibility, crafted proposals, detailed execution, timely feedback, and competition were all the lessons

from this pilot study and later became the requirements in the formal study. Furthermore, before the prior-class study (the priming stage), a guidance proceeded in the form of brief classroom discussions could satisfy students' "what's in it for me" mentality and induce their drive to learn the upcoming learning tasks. Not only a one-time orientation in the beginning of the course, but also a suggestive road map before every task to unveil possible directions for the students to achieve the destination of their choice. Moreover, in the beginning of each class meeting, reflection on how work problems were resolved at an individual or group level was also important to better their higher level thinking and abilities. Despite of the minor bumps, students showed the unprecedented exhilaration and creativity during their work proposals and in the final products. The classroom climate was drastically different and filled with excitement and laughters, which was also a highlighted advantage. Most importantly, the depth of the questions/comments and answers among students during class discussions became solid collective knowledge.

By the end of the semester, the whole class completed amazing work products shown in Figures 3 to 6 with brief introductions respectively.



Figure 3: e-books (Travel books on Chiayi City official site)



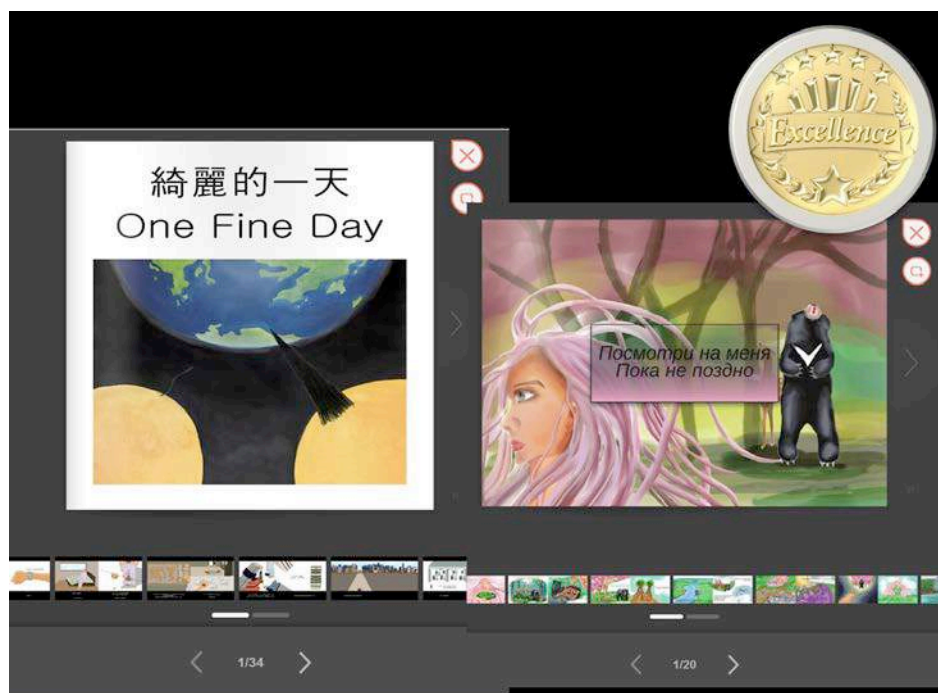


Figure 4. Creative digital picture books the students authored and illustrated in Chinese, English, and Russian. One of them was awarded in an island-wide competition.



Figure 5. Microfilm about a local kumquat farm students created and shot.



Figure 6. Photo exhibit of the professional photos students took with their phones.

In the process of creating these astonishing products, the students, and the collaborating field practitioners all had their doubts but later replaced with affirmations. The following four sections are interview and questionnaire summaries respectively from field practitioners and students.

● **Field practitioners' doubts:**

1. *How much can students learn within 3 months? So much to do within a very short time!*
2. *What do the students want to learn from us?*
3. *"Do I have to teach in English?"*
4. *Where to start? Foreign to the existing curriculum and equipment.*
5. *How much do students know about the basics ?*
6. *Hard to foresee difficulties...*
7. *Will students resist?*
8. *Students will need to learn much more about art before developing their artistic sense.*

● **Field practitioners' affirmations:**

1. *Great to combine language specialty with digital publication/media creation. "Your students are particularly sensitive to words and thought-expressions."*
2. *Invitation from a language department is unprecedented—the interdisciplinary collaboration is necessary and practical. International market in the publication field really can use language majors.*
3. *"Students know much more than we expected."*
4. *Online tutorials before and after class are very helpful.*
5. *Students should be able to create their unique value (employability) in the job market.*

6. *Students have shown great potential to enter this field, especially for senior students.*

- **Students' doubts:**

1. *This looks like something I can do, but.....*
2. *Low confidence to master the computer programs.*
3. *Uncertainty about their potential to become professional in the publication/media creation field.*
4. *Uncertainty about their ability to succeed in job-hunting in the field.*
5. *Unclear about where to start their career-planning.*
6. *"I don't **draw**, can I still be artistic?"*
7. *"I don't have any specific goals/special interests. "*
8. *"Is this field a good option? \$\$\$ and qualifications."*

- **Students' affirmations:**

1. *"I am surprised at what we have achieved. We are better than we thought."*
2. *"The computer programs we learned are very useful for my future and my personal hobby."*
3. *"Speaking to field experts gave me a reality check.....I understand the highs and lows of the industry now. Salary could be an issue in the future."*
4. *"I know how to continue developing these skills, though I am still a rookie now."*
5. *Teamwork is tough. Group members showed different sides during the work production.*
6. *"The candid feedback from peers, instructor, and field experts pushed me to learn more and try harder."*
7. *"During the work production, I had a chance to deeply explore and openly express myself."*
8. *"I wish we had more time to perfect our works. "*
9. *"I am seriously considering this field for my career choice."*
10. *"Our major is not as weak as we thought."*

## **Conclusion**

The results of this innovative practicum were apparently rewarding; the outcomes were also empowering to the language/literature majors as well as to the department. Nonetheless, the hardware, software, and preparation time required to deliver this course had exceeded what an individual faculty member can normally afford. This time, the project completion much relied on multiple funding sources—or else it would not be possible. Therefore, this kind of practicum should be planned from a long-term perspective and in a top-down approach among the faculty. With this pioneering demonstration, the quality, quantity, and the diversity of practicum can be achieved if decision-makers can set it as a new path for the existing faculty to work collaboratively and form various teams, based on different specialties/personal interests, to share workloads, while seeking interdisciplinary input/assistance. This way the society will acknowledge that language/literature departments still have the ability to provide exciting practicum courses which the market desires.

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***Scaffolding Oral Presentation Instruction to Improve Communicative Competence  
across Differing Student Levels and Disciplines***

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**Abstract**

This paper shares strategies for adapting oral presentation course instruction to meet the diverging needs of EFL students from differing student levels and areas of study. With increasing globalization, it is increasingly important for students to acquire oral presentation skills. For students to meet the demands of their future academic and professional roles, they must be taught to give effective oral presentations (Živković, 2014). As such, instructors have the responsibility to meet the diverse needs of their students when integrating oral presentations into their courses. Effective course structure and appropriate scaffolding of oral presentation assignments are imperative to course success (Wilson & Brooks, 2014).

Instructors must adapt classroom activities to student language ability to improve student motivation and performance (Wilkinson, 2012). Additionally, presentation assessment impacts the quality of student group discussions and interactions, and should be considered when designing classroom activities (Sundrarajun & Kiely, 2010).

In addition to research, the authors pull from their combined experience of teaching and creating materials at the undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate levels to meet the needs of students from diverse areas of study, including Chemistry, Business, Engineering, and Liberal Arts. Despite the divergence in the fields and levels of study, the language goals and skills acquired through academic presentations converge to provide students with the oral communication skills necessary to be successful in a globalized community. Though the method of teaching oral presentation skills diverge, the communicative benefits are similar. This paper should help instructors to meet their students' varied communicative goals.

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## 1. Introduction

With increasing globalization, oral communication skills have become more important than ever. Živković (2014) wrote that students require plenty of practice sharing their ideas to develop oral communication skills and achieve their professional goals, “Students need a lot of opportunity to practice language in situations which encourage them to communicate their needs, ideas and opinions. With globalization graduates need to be proficient in oral communication skills in order to function effectively in the professional setting” (p. 468). Well-rounded English communication programs need to address the increased demand for oral communication skills by providing students with increased opportunities to improve their oral communication skills.

An oral communications program should offer students a safe and supportive environment where mistakes are not seen in a negative light, but rather as the learning opportunities they present. Students need an opportunity to make mistakes and learn because they not only need these skills to make formal and informal academic presentations, but they will need to be able to perform similarly in the professional setting, where the stakes are raised. Živković (2014) addressed these future demands, as well: “Communication skills are required by students (future specialists) whether they are expected to give presentations at conferences, symposia or other meetings.” (p. 469). Despite the divergence in the language needs of students across academic disciplines, students gain practical skills that will help them achieve their present and future goals. The oral communication skills developed through oral presentations provide the immediate benefit of smoother communication within the classroom as well as the long term value of preparing students for their future professional careers.

Presentations give English language students plenty of opportunities to use their second language in real ways that will benefit them in academia and in their professions. As Wilson and Brooks (2014) explained, “Presentations require students to use their L2 in a natural way because they are required to use English to understand the topics they are presenting and communicate this understanding to others. This is closer to real language use and gives students an opportunity to develop research and critical thinking skills, as well as linguistic and communicative skills” (p. 513). In addition to developing their ability to give oral presentations, this convergence of skills enables students to enhance their overall communicative competence and confidence in expressing themselves in English. When students present their ideas to peers, it affords them an opportunity to see if they have successfully communicated their ideas. At the same time, it gives audience members an opportunity to practice critical listening skills during the presentation and test their comprehension by providing feedback to the presenter. As Otoshi and Heffernan (2008) noted, having students evaluate their peers not only helps the presenter to understand where improvements can be made, but also helps the audience members learn to notice what works well and what does not work well. This knowledge can then be applied to their own presentations.

## **2. The need for scaffolding**

Including oral presentations in a course can be daunting for students. Due to everything that goes into giving an oral presentation, students can be overwhelmed with the research and communication skills necessary for a successful presentation (King, 2002). One way to alleviate this is to scaffold a presentation course so students gain confidence as they build their presentation skills until they are able to successfully present on their own. As Wilson and Brooks (2014) explained, “If not properly scaffolded, many problems can occur throughout the presentation...In the worst-case scenario this can lead to a group of students who end up disliking oral presentations, and an instructor who believes that students gain nothing from giving oral presentations” (p. 514). Incorporating presentation structure, using presentation language, utilizing eye contact, integrating gestures, creating visual aids, and learning various other skills can inundate students and discourage them when giving presentations. This can result in students disliking presentations and failing to gain the benefits presentation skills can provide. As Wilson and Brooks (2014) noted, it’s essential to break down the instruction of the presentation process into manageable steps so students understand they are expected to build on each stage of the presentation process. A properly scaffolded presentation course will give students guidance in preparing, organizing and delivering oral presentations and provide students with lifelong skills that will benefit students in all of their classes as well as their future careers (King, 2002).

## **3. Liberal arts course**

The first author’s Oral Presentations course is a mandatory course in the Liberal Arts curriculum. It is a two-semester course for first year students. Each semester consists of fifteen class meetings held once a week for 90 minutes over a fifteen week period. Each section of the course has an enrollment of around twenty students, enrolled with the same instructor for both semesters. While it is a mandatory course for all Liberal Arts students, the Liberal Arts major is highly competitive and student motivation for language acquisition is quite high from the start, but they have very little prior experience or confidence in making presentations in front of an audience.

The first semester is designed to introduce presentation skills and give each student an opportunity to practice and present on a new topic every other week, for a total of seven two- to three-minute presentations per student. The second semester is designed to build on presentation skills, integrating visual aids and slideshow technology for the first half of the term and then developing interactive responsiveness through debate presentations. During the second semester, each student makes three distinct three- to five-minute technology-enhanced presentations, participates in two ten-minute, one-on-one debate presentations, and participates in one twenty-five minute team debate presentation. All assignments are evaluated by the instructor and feedback for improvement is provided. While it is helpful to know where a course is headed, this section will focus on the scaffolding of instruction during the first semester of the course.

### ***3.1 Scaffolding assignments and assessment***

Assignments are scaffolded to develop one skill at a time and build up to complete presentations. For the first two presentations, students prepare outside of class by brainstorming, organizing, and writing out their presentations. Please see Appendix 1 for a sample assignment. Students are generally very apprehensive to present at first, so the main goal is to instill a sense of confidence. At the beginning of class, students practice their presentations by rotating among the audience members and making their presentations. After practicing in this way, students are able to receive feedback from their partners and make adjustments to their presentations. By doing this repeatedly, students build fluency and confidence in their presentation topic before making their presentations in front of the whole class.

#### *3.1.1 Weeks 1 through 5*

The first two presentations of the first semester are designed to develop student confidence by getting students to speak in front of the class. At this point, the only things being evaluated are organization and delivery of the presentation, so students are allowed to read their presentations to the class directly from their notes. This allows some of the more confident students to begin integrating the other presentation skills into their presentations without the additional worry of it counting towards their grades. By explaining that students are free to experiment in this way without fear of negative consequences, more seem willing to try new things. At the same time, students who are fearful of speaking in front of the class are able to simply read from their notes and experience being the center of attention.

Each student makes two presentations that are evaluated in this way. Giving students two opportunities to speak in front of the class without requiring them to integrate additional presentation skills into their presentations allows them to see what others do and try it themselves. Often those who were unsure about looking up from their notes or incorporating gestures see other students experimenting for the first presentation and try experimenting with these for the second presentation.

After the first two presentations, most of the students have gained more confidence speaking in front of the class. Additionally, since a third of the semester has already been completed, students have become more comfortable and trusting of each other. When students get to know one another and realize that the classroom is a safe place where experimentation and mistakes are welcome, they start to take even more chances, becoming more creative with their presentations.

#### *3.1.2 Weeks 6 through 9*

For the third and fourth presentations of the first semester, students prepare before class by brainstorming, organizing, and outlining their presentations (see Appendix 2 for sample assignment). No longer are they allowed to write out and read their presentations. Instead, they are to outline their points and support, using important words and phrases to

help guide them through difficult parts of the presentation. Students are expected to keep eye contact with the audience for the majority of the presentation, reading from their outlines for no more than one third of the presentation. While this can be difficult for some students to achieve during the third presentation, with some students still relying too heavily on their outlines, many experience success and those in the audience are encouraged by these successes and try even harder for the fourth presentation. A few of the more daring students have even put down their outlines by this point to free up their hands and begin experimenting with gesturing.

### *3.1.3 Weeks 10 through 13*

For the fifth and sixth presentations of the first semester, students also prepare before class by brainstorming, organizing, and outlining their presentations. However, they are no longer allowed to present with their outlines. Instead, they are given a single note card on which to write key words, phrases, or statistics, so that they do not need to rely on their memories for everything. Students are expected to keep eye contact with the audience throughout the presentation, with only a few furtive glances at their notecards. The small size of the notecard makes it difficult for students to write whole sentences, discouraging them from reading. For many of the students, the notecard provides a sense of security that they do not need to commit the whole presentation to memory. This helps prevent robotic recitations of memorized material. Additionally, it encourages students to incorporate vocabulary that they may not have risked had they not had the note card for reassurance.

In addition to more extensive eye contact, students are expected to integrate body language and hand gestures into their presentations by this point, so students are being evaluated on organization, delivery, eye contact and body language. The small size of the notecard frees up their hands for more effective gesturing than is possible when they are holding an outline. Some of the students even forego the notecard altogether, further encouraging others not to heavily rely on their notecards. Students are also encouraged to move freely about the classroom as they present, rather than remaining near the front of the classroom. Many of the students still lack the confidence to interact with the audience in this way, but some of them do attempt to do so during the fifth presentation, which encourages others to attempt it during the sixth presentation.

### *3.1.4 Weeks 14 and 15*

For the last presentation of the semester, students are evaluated on organization, delivery, eye contact and body language. They are not permitted notes of any kind and they are expected to interact with the audience, moving freely about the classroom as they present. While some of the students still hesitate to do this during the final presentation and others do so awkwardly, some have gotten to the point where they are interacting with the audience and exuding a great deal of confidence. This is good practice for when students begin to integrate slideshow technology into their presentations during the second semester, as walking freely among the audience members allows students to view the slides without it being overly apparent to the audience.



### ***3.2 Engaging audience***

Some instructors take issue with assigning presentations because a significant amount of class time is devoted to a single student presenting in front of the class (Wilson & Brooks, 2014). To make sure that class time is well spent, it is important to keep everyone engaged in the learning process. While it is important for students to receive instructor feedback, giving and receiving peer feedback can be even more instructive for student learners, as it provides audience reviewers and presenters opportunities for improvement (Otoshi & Heffernan, 2008). For peer feedback to be most effective, students must feel secure to be upfront with criticism. To this end, the first author assigns audience reviewers an identification number so they can remain anonymous but reviews can be matched to reviewers should a problem arise with the type of feedback provided. In addition to being anonymous, reviews must be specific to be helpful. Students are asked to provide specific points of praise to encourage the presenter and specific suggestions for improvement so the presenter has something to focus on for future presentations.

### **4. Science course**

The second author's Oral Presentation course is a voluntary course for engineering and chemistry students in a Master's or Doctoral program. It is an eight week course meeting once a week with each class being 90 minutes in length. There are generally between eight to 12 students in a class with all of the students having presentation experience in their L1, Japanese. The linguistic range of the students is varied since the composition of the classes is not based on language ability.

While many of the students have some experience in presenting in their L1, the expectations of a presentation, particularly regarding sufficient eye-contact and body language, are different than what an English-speaking presenter faces (Lustig and Koester, 2003). All of the students are scheduled to give English presentations on their current research within three months of enrolling in the class. For the entire course, the students are working on an English presentation of their current research, to be given in front of professors at their university as well as the other students in their laboratory. Additionally, most of the students will be giving the same presentation at an international conference or symposium shortly after completion of the course. Unlike humanities students, the science students are clearly motivated by their desire to hone their presentation skills for the betterment of their careers beyond the classroom. They understand that they need to explain their data and research in a comprehensible and logical manner and take these oral presentation courses to prepare themselves for their futures. As Živković (2014) explained, "Every professional is involved in some aspects of communication which usually involve gathering, analyzing, and distributing scientific and/or technical information efficiently and accurately for specific audiences" (p. 472).

All of the students participating in the course come to the first class with their newly made English scripts and slides, which they've translated from Japanese. The scaffolding of instruction is based on working within what the students have already produced in order



for the students to have ownership of their own work while adjusting how the message is presented when translated into English. Students practice their presentations every week and are provided with instructor and peer feedback for their improvement. The presentations are between ten to fifteen minutes in duration.

#### ***4.1 Scaffolding presentation instruction***

The course is scaffolded to develop the skills of the spoken, physical, and visual messages that are necessary for successful presentations. Teaching the skills in this order gives the students manageable steps for each of the eight classes so that, in each class, they are focusing on improving one specific skill, before moving on to the next one. Since the students have already researched and translated their research into English, there is no instruction provided on the tasks of brainstorming, research, or organization. After receiving instruction and practice with the skill being taught in each class, students present, first to a partner, and then to a small group. Having the opportunity to present in each class allows the students to gain confidence in the presentation skill and get comfortable with presenting their research in English.

##### *4.1.1 Spoken message, Weeks 1-4*

The first four weeks of the course focus on the spoken message. This familiarizes students with presentation language as well as allow them to become comfortable with presenting their own research in English. The students arrive for the first class with their English presentation script and the early part of the course is spent on taking the student's translations and finding ways to make them sound more natural. Since most of their scripts are their own translations along with online translation websites, the language usually comes across as unwieldy and can be very challenging to understand.

Since the body of the presentation comprises the bulk of the presentation, the first class focuses on adjusting the language and adding transitions. The first part of the first class deals with transitions and sequencers. The students listen to two sample presentations. The first lacks transitions and sequencers, while the second contains these elements. By listening to both presentations, the students understand the importance of how these keywords help an audience follow the different parts of a presentation. The students are then given the listening transcript of the second presentation and circle or highlight all of the transitions and sequencers. The students spend the next few minutes working with a partner to think of other transitions and sequencers that can be used in a presentation. As a class, a list is compiled of applicable transitions and sequencers, and students are then given a printed sample of a short presentation that is missing transitions and sequencers and told to fill-in the blanks with the appropriate words. Once students have grasped the significance of transitions and sequencers, they are told to go through their own presentation scripts and add these words and phrases where they are appropriate. Upon completion, the students pair off and read their presentation scripts to each other. Since the focus is exclusively on language, eye contact is not necessary at this stage and students are allowed to read directly from their scripts. The students who are listening to their partners are told to list every transition and sequencer that they hear. After both partners have read

their presentations to each other, they check their lists with the presentation scripts to confirm the target language. The final stage in this first class has students breaking into groups of three or four and performing the same tasks.

At the end of the first class, the students turn in their presentation scripts so the instructor can read through them to look for language that sounds unnatural. Upon receiving their scripts back at the start of the second class, students find their scripts highlighted in places where they need to adjust their phrasing. The focus here is not to point out grammatical errors, but to make the language more natural and accessible to audiences. Because these students are researching distinctive aspects within their own fields of study, it is essential to try to make the language comprehensible to a general audience. While technical language often cannot be simplified, the overall message can be made easier for the audience to understand.

Classes two through three echo the skills and pattern of the first class, with class two focusing on simplifying the language and adding transitions and sequencers to the introduction, and class three doing the same for the conclusion. Once the phrases have been introduced and sample exercises have been completed, the students will once again read their presentations to a partner, followed by doing the same thing in a small group. By the end of class three, the students will have read their presentations six times, half of which have been in pair work, and the other three to small groups.

With the language of the presentations established, the focus of class four emphasizes how to deliver a presentation, particularly through voice inflection. The three skills that are highlighted are pausing, stretching, and emphasizing key words. After a brief description of the three different skills, the students are shown a couple of videos of newscasters demonstrating these skills as they deliver the news effectively. The students are then given scripts of the newscasts and told to mark the words where the newscasters paused, stretched, or emphasized key words. After completing this task, there is a discussion about what kinds of words involve voice inflection and students usually notice that numbers, negative words, descriptive words, and comparison words are most often subjected to voice inflection. The students read through the newscast scripts and practice the different voice inflection skills. Just as with the transitions and sequencers, the students then go back to their presentation scripts and circle or highlight the numbers, negative words, descriptive words, and comparison words and then make a note of whether they will pause, stretch, or emphasize the selected words. As this skill takes longer to introduce and practice, the students will usually only have enough time to read through their presentation, with transitions, sequencers, and voice inflection, one time with a partner, but are encouraged to practice more at home.

#### *4.1.2 Physical message, Weeks 5-6*

Weeks five and six involve teaching students the importance of the physical message, which includes the use of eye contact and gestures. The purpose for having the physical message come after scaffolding the spoken message is because, at this stage, the students, having had the chance to go through the presentations at least seven times in class, should

be more comfortable with their presentation script, and are beginning to become less reliant on reading directly from their scripts. This familiarity naturally has students looking up at the audience at various intervals and is the opportune time to instruct students about the proper way to make eye contact while giving a presentation. While most students are aware that this is necessary, most students either continually look at only one section of the audience or bob their heads up and down between reading their scripts without really making eye contact with anyone. To get students into the habit of looking at various members of the audience and actually making eye contact, the presentation format within the class is adjusted.

Rather than presenting in pairs as they did in the first four weeks, the students begin to present to the entire class for the last four weeks. Having had the opportunity to present to nearly everyone during their pair presentations, the students have already spoken and listened to nearly all of the presentations by the time they present to the entire class. In week five, peer response is used to help student practice eye contact correctly. Each audience member is given a form (see Appendix 2) to evaluate how well the presenter made eye contact with them. The audience members are asked to mark their location in the classroom and tally the number of times the presenter made eye contact with them. In addition to keeping the presenter accountable for making eye contact with as many students as possible, it also makes the audience members responsible for listening to their classmates. The peer response forms are anonymous to allow students to freely critique their peers.

The final activity in week five is self-evaluation. From weeks five to eight, all of the student's presentations are recorded. The students are given a video copy of their presentation and are asked to watch and assess how they did on the skill being taught in class. For example, in week five they watch the video and evaluate how well they used eye contact during their presentation. Having the students watch and evaluate their own presentations is significant for the students because it allows them to take more responsibility for their learning and enables them to see how audience members view their presentation.

In week six, the physical message shifts to incorporating gestures into a presentation. Using their own presentation scripts, students go back and find the parts where they indicated they used voice inflection. Just as numbers, negative words, descriptive words, and comparison words are places to use voice inflection, the same holds true for using gestures. Students are put into pairs to think of different gestures they can use while using voice inflection. After a few minutes of brainstorming different gestures, there is a class discussion where students describe some of the gestures that they use for various words in their presentation. Once students have their gestures, each student presents to the entire class. Peer response is once again used, but this time, half of the class is checking for eye contact, and the other half of the students are checking for gestures. The student's homework is again to watch their presentation and reflect on their use of gestures.

#### *4.1.3 Visual message, Weeks 7-8*

The final two weeks of the course focus on the visual message. This is the final stage of scaffolding because it is usually the easiest for students to fix. Since the students have already given a presentation on their research in Japanese and were told, prior to the start of the course, to have a slideshow ready in English, all of their visual aids have already been made. Through the first six weeks of the course, the students have not presented with all of their visual aids since the focus has been on the spoken and physical message. The only time that the students use the visual aids during the first six weeks is when they have a visual aid that shows graphs, charts, videos, or any other visual data. Though they have used their visual aids during their presentations, they have not received feedback or comments on them prior to weeks seven and eight.

The problem with most presentations involving science students is that they have an abundance of data that they want to share but the slides are too difficult to follow. This is usually due to having too much text on a slide, using fonts and backgrounds that make it difficult for audience members to follow, having too much visual information on one slide, or having all three of these errors. Since the students have much of their presentation memorized, at this stage, they immediately realize that their slides have too much text and find this easy to correct. Changing fonts and backgrounds is also easy to adjust by having students in the back of the class raise their hands if they are unable to see information due to a font that is too small or a color too similar to the slide background. The final problem of having too much visual information on one slide typically involves a slide with two or three graphs or charts when there should only be one, or one large graph or chart which has too much information on it and would be better served by dividing it into two graphs or charts. This is more difficult to fix due to the field-specific nature of the student's presentations and classmates as well as the teacher unable to give adequate advice about how the data should be split up. Generally, students are asked to keep their original charts and graphs and make alternatives that would make their data easier to follow for a non-specialist. In the end, the student selects the graph or chart to be included in the presentation, but in most cases the student chooses the alternative charts and graphs or a slightly simplified version of the original data. For the final two weeks, the students are once again given peer response forms as well as self-evaluation forms.

### **5. Conclusions**

The authors discerned more points of convergence than divergence in their approaches to scaffolding presentation instruction for differing student levels and disciplines. The authors both begin with organization and delivery when teaching about the spoken message and save teaching about visuals until last. Both authors address eye contact and body language after organization and delivery and work to fully engage the student audience, such that students are actively listening and participating in presentation evaluation. While there are many similarities in the authors' approaches to scaffolding oral presentation instruction, the diversity of student level and discipline necessitates differences, as well.

The main points of divergence are in the emphasis of instruction as the authors adapt to meet differing student needs and motivations. While the first author's undergraduate humanities students need more time building confidence to speak in front of an audience and their beginning knowledge about the content of their presentations is limited, their motivation for acquiring English language skills is quite high from the start, so additional time is required to build confidence in themselves as presenters and in their ability to explain the content of their presentations. This diverges from the second author's graduate science students, who have previous experience making presentations in their L1 and begin the course with a great deal of content knowledge about their presentation topics, but are less motivated to acquire English language skills. This necessitates less confidence building and more focused fine-tuning of language elements so that the content of the presentations is more accessible to a general audience.

As the authors noted more similarities than differences in their approaches to scaffolding oral presentation instruction for differing student levels and disciplines, they are currently discussing and researching how they integrate presentation skill instruction into their other (non-oral presentation) undergraduate courses. Their next paper will address how the authors adapt course materials to integrate presentation skills into their general English courses. The authors hope their next paper will have an even wider application for instructors of general English language courses and that it helps others more effectively utilize presentations as a powerful tool for English language instruction.

#### **First author's biodata**

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#### **Second author's biodata**

Eric Hirata is a full-time EFL lecturer at Nagoya University of Foreign Studies. In 2012, he received a M.A. in Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching from The University of Nottingham. He has taught at vocational colleges, universities, and technological institutes in the Nagoya area for the last ten years. His fields of research include corpus linguistics and collaborative learning.



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**Appendix 1**  
**Topic: Myself**

Briefly, write down everything you can think of about the topic.

Write one thing that represents you. This could be an important idea or item.

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Write three points about the thing or idea.

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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In one sentence, connect the topic to the three points.

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Give details and explain about the three points.

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

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**Write a 2-3 minute speech that combines these ideas.**

Introduction (introduce your topic and show how it is connected to your points).

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Main Point 1 (give details and explain about the first point).

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Main Point 2 (give details and explain about the second point).

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Main Point 3 (give details and explain about the third point).

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Conclusion (show how your topic is connected to your points; emphasize why it's important).

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## Appendix 2

Presenter's Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Eye Contact Checker

*Shade the area where you were sitting.*

Presenter


*How many times did the presenter make eye contact with you?*

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>Body</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>Total</b>

Comment

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*An Interlanguage Pragmatic Study on Taiwanese EFL Learners' Email Request*

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Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

This study aims to investigate EFL learners' interlanguage pragmatic development through the elicited request emails addressed to the faculty in an institutional setting. Sixty Taiwanese students of two linguistic levels (i.e., high-intermediate, and low-intermediate) were included and different email tasks with varied imposition levels were designed to examine if and how students' use of request strategies and politeness features would vary accordingly. In total, 180 emails were composed for comparative analysis. By applying Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper's (1989) CCSARP framework, the results revealed that students of both levels adopted more direct strategies as main requestive head acts for clarity and used the most numbers of supportive moves prior to the request in the highest imposition request. Different combinations of supportive moves were also adopted for different request tasks by the two groups, indicating students' awareness of different imposition levels inherited in different tasks. In addition, the high-intermediate proficiency group displayed more varieties of internal and external modifiers in their request than their less proficient counterparts. Some developmental sequences in the use of politeness features can thus be identified. However, certain syntactic and lexical downgraders never appeared in both groups' email messages, suggesting the need for explicit instruction. From the preferred use of direct strategies, supportive moves, and a pre-posed request sequences, L1 pragmatic transfer can be observed in the email messages of both groups. The possible perlocutionary effect of this transfer and suggestions for classroom intervention will also be discussed.

Key Words: Interlanguage, Requestive Head Act, Supportive Moves, Internal/External Modification, Perlocutionary Effect

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## Introduction

Over the past decade, studies have investigated how L2 learners compose e-mail messages in terms of communication strategies and discourse styles (e.g., Biesenback-Lucas, 2005, 2006a, 2007; Chapman, 1997; Chen, 2001, 2006; Gonzalex-Bueno, 1998; Hartford & Bradovi-Harlig, 1996; Siu, 2008). Hartford & Bradovi-Harlig's (1996) study particularly focused on e-mail requests written by college students (native and nonnative speakers of English) to faculty and analyzed the perlocutionary effects of these e-mails on the faculty and professors. From the professors' perspective, they found that nonnative speakers used fewer politeness strategies and thus, their requests were considered less effective than those written by native speakers. In comparing native and nonnative students' email requests to faculty, Biesenback-Lucas (2007) found that although native and nonnative students tended to use the same general strategies, nonnative students' use of politeness strategies was characterized by a mix of "lack of linguistic flexibility and idiomatic expressions, unawareness of letter conventions transferrable to email, and inability to select appropriate lexical modification" (p.74).

It is apparent that writing emails to professors requires sophisticated use of language on the part of L2 learners since it is a type of FTA. The difficulty can be further complicated by the issue of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences between the addresser (i.e., the nonnative student) and the addressee (i.e., the English professor) (Chen, 2001). In addition, the results of previous research were mainly interpreted from the professor's perspective and thus, the more fundamental causes as why non-native students chose to use certain linguistic politeness strategies for their requests were still not fully understood. Furthermore, most studies conducted in the L2 environment are of comparative nature, in comparing how nonnative speakers differed from native speakers in their realization of request strategies. Kasper (1992) pointed out that most interlanguage pragmatic research were comparative rather than acquisitional in nature and thus, little has been known about how L2 learners develop their pragmatic competence over time. By conducting interlanguage pragmatics research cross-sectionally, the result obtained would be more acquisitionally oriented, and thus, shed more light on the developmental aspects of pragmatic acquisition.

Finally, research specifically looking at the EFL learners' pragmatic competence in writing e-mail request to faculty in the Chinese EFL context is relatively scarce, and thus, the current study aims to explore Taiwanese EFL Learners' pragmatic competence in their email request to professors. Specifically, it sets to find out EFL learners' use of requestive head act, the internal, and external modifications used in their emails. In order to gain insights on the developmental aspect of interlanguage pragmatics, students with varied levels of proficiency (lower intermediate, and higher intermediate level) were included. To see how imposition level would impact on students' request strategies, different writing tasks with varied imposition levels were designed to examine if students' request strategies would vary accordingly. Finally, to understand why these EFL students chose certain politeness strategies in their emails, open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were administered to see what factors influenced their choices of linguistic politeness strategies and what difficulties they encountered in the process of composing these email requests.



With designed writing tasks, two groups of students varied in linguistic proficiencies were required to write request emails to their English professors in order to find answers for the following research questions:

(1) For the higher-intermediate level students, do their emails to their English professor promote more direct or indirect request strategies? Do their use of request strategies and politeness features vary with increasing imposition of requests?

(2) For the lower-intermediate level students, do their emails to their English professor promote more direct or indirect request strategies? Do their use of request strategies and politeness features vary with increasing imposition of requests?

(3) Are there preferred linguistic realizations by students of different linguistic levels for different request types? How do they differ in terms of the realization of request strategies and politeness features in their email requests?

(4) For these EFL learners, what are the factors which might influence their choices of linguistic politeness strategies used and what difficulties do they encounter in the process of composing these email requests?

### **Research on E-mail Request**

By using the authentic data based on naturally-occurring requests, the available studies on actual email messages, due to the privacy and ethical reasons, have been mostly based on limited number of messages sent to the researchers themselves (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2006a, 2007; Hartford & Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Warschaur, 1999). Analyzing from professors' perspective, Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) investigated how native and nonnative students composed email messages in terms of communication strategies and discourse styles. They found that in comparison, nonnative students used fewer downgraders in their requests, mentioned personal time needs more often, and acknowledged imposition on faculty less often, which lead to negative perlocutionary effect on the faculty.

Chen's study (2001) compared the request emails to professors by Taiwanese overseas students and American students to identify the preferred request strategies by these two particular cultural groups. She discovered that both groups preferred to use 'query preparatory' and 'want statements' to realize their requests, but they differed in the amount of lexical or syntactic mitigating features, which made native speakers' requests more indirect and polite. Chen (2006) later conducted a longitudinal case study to investigate how two Taiwanese graduate students' email request to their professors changed over two and a half year stay in US. She discovered that students' request strategies changed from primarily 'want statements' to 'query preparatory strategies' and the email messages contained more lexical and syntactic modifications. She also pointed out that a nonnative student chose to adopt direct over indirect forms was their false belief that by making their messages sound urgent, their professors would more likely to attend their messages.

Biesenbach-Lucas (2007) examined the email requests sent by native and nonnative English graduate students to faculty. By varying the level of imposition, she discovered that both groups selected more direct strategies for the lower imposition requests, but not for the highest imposition requests, an indication of students'

awareness of situational factors (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007). In addition, she found that nonnative students used less syntactic modifications, but more lexical modifications (particularly *please*) than native speakers. Biesenbach-Lucas concluded that nonnative speakers' request strategies showed "a lack of the linguistic flexibility and idiomatic expressions and an inability to select appropriate lexical modifications" (2007, p. 74).

## Methodology

### Participants

In total, sixty sophomore students enrolled in the general English courses participated in this study. Based on students' Toeic scores (or the equivalent TOEFL or GEPT scores), they were grouped as higher-intermediate group (Toeic scores ranged from 680 to 850) and lower-intermediate group (Toeic scores ranged from 350 to 520). Participants have studied English for 12 years. Most of them (93.3%) have never studied in English-speaking countries and the relatively few (6.7%) who did, had studied there for less than a month.

### Instruments

The data for the present study were collected from four types of instruments: (1) a written background questionnaire, (2) three experimental email writing tasks, (3) a retrospective open-ended questionnaire, and (4) the semi-structured interview. For the three writing email tasks, they were varied in the levels of imposition on the professor. Three writing tasks were: 1) requesting for bending rules as the highest imposition, 2) requesting for feedback on a paper as the intermediate imposition, and 3) requesting for an appointment to get advice on course matters as the low imposition. Table 1 listed the makeup of the scripts collected from two groups of students. 90 email scripts across three topics were collected from two groups of students and in total, 180 email scripts were collected.

Table 1: The makeup of the scripts collected from two groups of students

	Higher-intermediate level students (30)	Lower-intermediate level students (30)
Topic: Request for Bending rules	30	30
Topic: Request for feedback	30	30
Topic: Request for appointment	30	30
Total emails	90	90

### Coding Scheme and Data Analysis

Analysis of the email requests was based on the CCSARP framework developed by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989). Some modifications regarding the coding categories were made since some email messages included in the current study did not exist in the original CCSARP coding framework. Appendix A, B, C listed the coding categories for main request strategies, syntactic and lexical modifiers, and supportive moves adjusted for the current study. The corresponding examples were also provided.

## Results and Discussion

### Higher-intermediate Level Group: Directness Levels across Request Types and the Use of Politeness Features

Table 2 displayed the comparison of the mean numbers of the different request strategies for different request types by higher level group. As seen on Table 5, only the use of query preparatory was significantly different across different request types. The result of post hoc analysis indicated that students used significantly less query preparatory for the highest imposition request ( $M= 0.27$ ) in comparison with the medium level imposition request ( $M=0.63$ ).

Table 2 Comparison of frequency usages of main request strategies across request types by higher level group

Request strategies	Req. (high) rule-bending		Req.(medium) feedback		Req. (low) Appt.		ANOVA	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
direct	0.67	0.479	0.37	0.490	0.50	0.509	2.790	ns
query pre.	0.27 <sup>a</sup>	0.450	0.63 <sup>b</sup>	0.490	0.50	0.509	4.421	.015*
hint	0.07	0.254	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.071	ns

*Note.* Means with different alphabet letters within the same category differ significantly ( $*p < .05$ ) by the post hoc Tukey test., ns= not significantly different

As for the types of direct strategies used, Table 3 showed the subcategories of direct strategies adopted by higher level group across request types. The totals in Table 6 indicated that higher level students resorted largely to ‘expectation statements’ (76.67%) (i.e., *I hope you can understand and let me pass the course*) across all request types.

Table 3: Subcategories of direct strategies adopted by higher level group across request types

Request types	Imperatives	Performative	Direct questions	Want statements	Need statements	Expectation statements	Total direct strategies
Rule-bending	6.67%	13.33%	0.00%	10.00%	0.00%	36.67%	66.67%
Feedback	0.00%	6.67%	0.00%	13.33%	0.00%	16.67%	36.67%
Appointment	0.00%	6.67%	0.00%	20.00%	0.00%	23.33%	50.00%
Total	6.67%	26.67%	0%	43.33%	0%	<b>76.67%</b>	

For the use of internal modifications, statistics indicated that both syntactic and lexical downgraders were not used significantly different across different request types. As for the types of syntactic downgraders used across different request types, Table 4 indicated that students used more syntactic downgraders for medium imposition request (63.33%). Within the subcategories of syntactic downgraders, ‘progressive aspect’ (i.e., *I’m hoping.....*) was least used.

Table 4: Syntactic downgraders used across request types by higher level group

Syntactic downgraders	(High) Req. rule-bending	(Medium) Req. feedback	(Low) Req. appointment
past tense	23.33%	40.00%	40.00%
progressive aspect	6.67%	10.00%	10.00%
embedding	23.33%	33.33%	30.00%
Total	40.00%	<b>63.33%</b>	56.67%

Table 5 showed the types of lexical downgraders used across request types. Fewer than half of the students used lexical modifiers to mitigate the force of their requestive acts. Within the subcategories of lexical downgraders, ‘hedges’ (i.e., *somewhat, somehow, sort of, etc.*) and ‘understater’ (i.e., *a little, a bit, etc.*) were not employed by any subject in any request type. ‘Politeness marker’ (i.e., *please*) was used the most in the high imposition request (23.33%).

Table 5: Lexical downgraders used across request types by higher level group

Lexical downgraders	(High) Req. rule-bending	(Medium) Req. feedback	(Low) Req. appointment
politeness marker	23.33%	13.33%	6.67%
subjectivizer	3.33%	3.33%	0.00%
consultative device	6.67%	23.33%	13.33%
downtoner	20.00%	10.00%	6.67%
understater	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
hedges	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
others	0.00%	13.33%	10.00%
Total	46.67%	43.33%	30.00%

The use of external modifications across different request types could be observed from Table 6. Significant difference was found in the frequency usages of supportive moves used across different request types. The result of post hoc analysis further indicated students used significantly more supportive moves for the highest imposition request ( $M=4.90$ ) than for the lowest imposition request ( $M=3.93$ ).

Table 6: Comparison of frequency usages of external modifications across request types by higher level group

External modifications	Req. rule-bending		Req. feedback		Req. Appt.		ANOVA	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	4.90 <sup>a</sup>	1.27	4.23	1.65	3.93 <sup>b</sup>	1.26	3.716	.028*

Note: (\* $p < .05$ ), Means with different alphabet letters differ significantly (\* $p < .05$ ) by the post hoc Tukey test.

Table 7 showed the types of supportive moves used across request types by higher level group. All subjects used external modifiers to soften the requestive acts across different request types. Within the subcategories, the use of ‘grounder’ (i.e., *reasons, explanations*) could be found across different request types by nearly all participants. Most participants also applied ‘acknowledge imposition’ (80.00%) for highest level imposition. But the percentage of this move dropped drastically for medium and low imposition request. In general, students applied different types of supportive moves for different imposition levels of e-mail tasks.

Table 7: Types of supportive moves used across request types by higher level group

Supportive Moves	(High) Req. rule-bending	(Medium) Req. feedback	(Low) Req. appointment
preparator	16.67%	6.67%	13.33%
precommitment	23.33%	23.33%	6.67%
grounder	110.00%	96.67%	103.33%
acknow.imposition	80.00%	10.00%	6.67%
promise	46.67%	0.00%	16.67%
expectation	13.33%	30.00%	23.33%
sweetener	13.33%	60.00%	100.00%
apology	66.67%	30.00%	30.00%
thanking	56.67%	93.33%	53.33%
direct appeal	26.67%	30.00%	20.00%
imposition minimi.	0.00%	10.00%	3.33%
importance	13.33%	10.00%	0.00%
effort	20.00%	10.00%	0.00%
giving options	3.33%	13.33%	16.67%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Apparently, the higher linguistic proficiency students in the current study used the most direct strategies in the highest imposition request. Particularly, they adopted most ‘expectation statements’ (i.e., *I hope that.....*) as their main requestive act. Query preparatory was used significantly more for medium imposition request. From the interview, students pointed out that direct strategies, particularly ‘expectation statements’, did not signify impoliteness but allowed for more explicitness and sincerity since its direct Chinese translation resembled humbleness and respectfulness, and their intention could be conveyed more clearly. As for the significantly more use of query preparatory for medium level imposition, the finding suggested that when the compliance of the request was not as critical, students would resort to the conventional indirect strategy modified by internal downgraders to express their requestive intention. More direct strategy use for the highest imposition request found in the current study thus conflicts with the many previous findings in which more query preparatory was used for high imposition request (see Biesenback-Lucas, 2007; Chen, 2000, 2001). As for the use of politeness features, higher proficiency students used more external than internal downgraders, particularly for the highest imposition request, as students believed that would show more politeness and respect to their addressee.

### **Lower-intermediate Level Group: Directness Levels across Request Types and the Use of Politeness Features**

Statistical result indicated that the frequency usages of main request strategies across request types were not significantly different for lower level group, although more direct strategies were used as the imposition level increased. Table 8 showed the percentage of different subcategories of direct strategies used for different request types. Among all, ‘want statements’ were the most preferred direct strategy (53.33%), closely followed by ‘expectation statements’ (50.00%).

Table 8: Subcategories of direct strategies adopted by lower level group across request types

Request types	Imperatives	Performative	Direct questions	Want statements	Need statements	Expectation statements	Total direct strategies
rule-bending	16.67%	6.67%	0.00%	13.33%	3.33%	23.33%	63.33%
Feedback	6.67%	3.33%	0.00%	10.00%	6.67%	26.67%	53.33%
Appointment	6.67%	6.67%	3.33%	30.00%	0.00%	0.00%	46.67%
Total	30.01%	16.67%	3.33%	<b>53.33%</b>	10.00%	<b>50.00%</b>	

Table 9 showed the comparison of frequency usages of both syntactic and lexical downgraders used across different request types by lower level group. As indicated, frequency usages of syntactic downgraders were significantly different across different request types. Only LSD post-hoc test was able to locate the significance ( $p = 0.047$ ). Specifically, the result pointed out that the use of syntactic downgraders was significantly less for high imposition request ( $M = 0.27$ ) and more for low imposition request ( $M = 0.67$ ). As for lexical downgraders, no significant difference was found. The result revealed a relative low use of lexical downgraders across different request types by lower level group.

Table 9: Comparison of frequency usages of internal modifications across request types by lower level group

Internal modifica.	Req.rule-bending		Req. feedback		Req. Appt.		ANOVA	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
syntactic.	0.27 <sup>a</sup>	0.521	0.60	0.675	0.67 <sup>b</sup>	0.758	3.177	0.047*
Lexical.	0.37	0.490	0.23	0.430	0.17	0.379	1.640	ns

Note: (\* $p < .05$ ), Means with different alphabet letters within the same category differ significantly (\* $p < .05$ ) by the post hoc LSD test.

Table 10 showed the types of syntactic downgraders used across three different request types. Students used significantly more syntactic downgraders for low imposition request (66.67%) than high imposition request (23.33%). Within the subcategories, 'progressive aspect' was least used

Table 10: Syntactic downgraders used across request types by lower level group

	(High) Req.rule-bending	(Medium) Req. feedback	(Low) Req. appointment
Syntactic downgraders			
past tense	10.00%	40.00%	40.00%
progressive aspect	3.33%	3.33%	3.33%
embedding	13.33%	16.67%	23.33%
Total	23.33%	50.00%	66.67%

Table 11 showed the types of lexical downgraders used across three request types by lower level group. In general, very few lexical modifiers were used except for the 'politeness marker'-*please*.



Table 11: Lexical downgraders used across request types by lower level group

Lexical downgraders	(High) Req.rule-bending	(Medium) Req. feedback	(Low) Req. appointment
politeness marker	33.33%	13.33%	6.67%
subjectivizer	3.33%	0.00%	3.33%
consultative device	0.00%	0.00%	3.33%
downtoner	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
understater	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
hedges	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
others	0.00%	10.00%	3.33%
Total	36.67%	23.33%	16.67%

The use of external modifications across different request types could be observed in Table 12. Significant difference was found in the frequency usages of supportive moves across request types. The result of post hoc analysis further indicated that students used significantly more supportive moves in requesting for bending rule ( $M = 4.15$ ) than in requesting for feedback ( $M = 3.10$ ) and requesting for appointment ( $M = 3.37$ ).

Table 12: Comparison of frequency usages of external modifications across request types by lower level group

External modifications	Req. rule-bending		Req. feedback		Req. Appt.		ANOVA	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
	4.15 <sup>a</sup>	1.14	3.10 <sup>b</sup>	1.09	3.37 <sup>b</sup>	1.00	14.256	.00*

Note: (\* $p < .05$ ), Means with different alphabet letters differ significantly (\* $p < .05$ ) by the post hoc Tukey test.

Table 13 showed the types of supportive moves used across request types by lower level group students. All subjects used supportive moves to soften the requestive acts across different request types. Within the subcategories, the use of 'grounders' could be found across different request types by all participants. 'Acknowledge imposition' and 'promise' were used by more than half of the participants (63.33%) in the highest imposition request, but were not used at all in the lower level imposition requests.



Table 13: Types of supportive moves used across request types by lower level group

Supportive Moves	(High) Req. rule-bending	(Medium) Req. feedback	(Low) Req. appointment
preparator	6.67%	6.67%	3.33%
precommitment	13.33%	23.33%	6.67%
grounder	90.00%	96.67%	93.33%
acknow.imposition	63.33%	0.00%	0.00%
promise	63.33%	0.00%	0.00%
expectation	16.67%	13.33%	16.67%
sweetener	3.33%	26.67%	80.00%
apology	86.67%	13.33%	6.67%
thanking	76.67%	100.00%	80.00%
direct appeal	16.67%	10.00%	23.33%
imposition minimi.	0.00%	6.67%	3.33%
impotence	10.00%	6.67%	3.33%
effort	3.33%	0.00%	0.00%
giving options	0.00%	6.67%	20.00%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Apparently, for lower linguistic proficiency students, the use of request strategies across request types did not vary significantly, although they tended to use more direct strategies for the highest imposition request. Among all direct strategies, ‘want statements’, ‘expectation statements’ and ‘Please + impositives’ were often adopted as requestive head acts. Students pointed out these strategies would sound less ambiguous yet polite, and thus were adopted more frequently for highest imposition request. As for the use of politeness features, students used significantly more external than internal downgraders, particularly for the highest imposition request. Similar to the higher level groups, students pointed out the need to be indirect by showing more supportive moves before making the core request. Students showed very limited ability in using lexical modifiers, except for ‘please’, and only ‘past tense’ in syntactic downgraders was sometimes adopted. This could be explained by the developmental continuum pointed out by Barron (2003) in that lower level students overuse ‘please’ and underuse other lexical modifiers such as ‘downtoners’, ‘hedges’, ‘understaters’, etc.,

### Higher-intermediate vs. Lower-intermediate Proficiency Level students

As shown in the previous section, both higher-intermediate and lower-intermediate groups used more direct strategies for high imposition request. Statistical results also indicated that the frequency usages of different strategies in all request types were not significantly different between the two groups.

Table 14 showed the comparison of two groups’ frequency usages of syntactic and lexical downgraders, and Table 15 showed the comparison of supportive moves in all request types. The results indicated that higher level group used more syntactic downgraders and significantly more lexical downgraders and supportive moves in comparison with the lower proficiency group in all request types.

Table 14: Comparison of higher and lower level groups' frequency usages of different internal modifications in all request types

Internal modifications	Higher level group		Lower level group		t-test	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Syntactic downgraders	0.72	0.765	0.52	0.674	1.964	0.051 <sup>#</sup>
Lexical downgraders	0.51	0.691	0.26	0.439	2.962	0.003*

Note: (\* $p < .05$ ), <sup>#</sup>Marginally significant

Table 15: Comparison of higher and lower level groups' frequency usages of supportive moves in all request types

External modifications	Higher level group		Lower level group		t-test	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Supportive moves	4.36	1.448	3.66	1.229	3.497	0.001*

Note: (\* $p < .05$ )

In comparing the use of direct strategies and politeness features across different request types by the two groups, the results showed their choice of using direct strategies in making high imposition request was the same. As revealed in the interview and questionnaire, this phenomenon had to do with students' insecurity with their linguistic ability, which enforced them to use more explicit and concise, thus more direct requestive acts for the highest imposition request to avoid ambiguity on the addressee. In addition, both groups did not equate "explicitness and conciseness" with "directness and impoliteness" since the Chinese equivalents of these "direct strategies" were considered humble, indirect, and polite. However, qualitative differences did exist, since higher level group used more politeness devices such as 'past tense' and 'embedding' to internally mitigate the illocutionary force in their request. As for the politeness features, higher proficiency group used more syntactic modifiers, and significantly more lexical modifiers, and supportive moves than lower proficiency group. Thus, as students' linguistic level increased, their adoption of internal as well as external modifications would also increase. However, cautions should be made in that some of the internal modifiers such as 'progressive aspect', 'hedges', and 'understaters' were rarely or never used by higher level students. This suggests some of these modifiers may not be acquired by mere exposure; explicit teaching might be the key for students to effectively learn these devices in making e-polite requests.

### Factors which influence students' choice of linguistic politeness strategies in emails

#### *Imposition level of the request*

From the questionnaire and retrospective interview, the majority of students' perceived levels of imposition on three email tasks corresponded to the imposition levels originally designed. Most students specified that the most indirect strategy should be used for the highest imposition email request. However, from the actual realization of their request, the direct strategies were most frequently used for the highest level imposition request by both groups. Particularly, 'expectation

statements' (i.e., *I hope that.....*) were used extensively. Students pointed out that the Chinese equivalents of "I hope ...", "Wo-Xiwang..." could be perceived as very polite strategies since the same realizations of this strategy was very modest and humble in Chinese. In addition, the most adopted 'expectation statements' often combined both direct and indirect elements, "in which the hope expressed is itself a conventionally indirect request that refers to the hearer's ability or willingness" (Yu, 1999, p. 300). Students thus considered these strategies as being indirect, rather than direct strategies as they appeared on the CCSARP scale.

### ***Linguistic proficiency***

Both groups addressed their difficulties in making e-mail request in the writing tasks. Some higher proficiency students pointed out that they found it difficult to make their email requests clear and at the same time polite. As for the lower level students, their perceived difficulties mainly came from their limited knowledge of English grammar and word usages. In general, higher level students concerned more about the pragmatic appropriateness, whereas lower level students worried more about their linguistic problems. To overcome the limited capability in related pragmatic norms, the higher level students, with relatively more linguistic resources, tended to elaborate more by using more supportive moves, which might lead to verbosity and cause negative perlocution on their addressee. As for the lower level students, their limited capacity in both linguistic and pragmatic knowledge had hindered their attempts in using some English structures or expressions they were unsure of in order to "play safe" in avoiding making too many mistakes.

### ***Transfer of L1 pragmatic knowledge***

Students from both groups pointed out they would resort to their existed L1 pragmatic knowledge of politeness in composing these emails since they were not familiar with the norm and context of making English request to professors. Most of the students also mentioned that they were using the "Chinese way" in composing these email requests by giving reasons prior to requests and by using different types of supportive moves to show their sincerity and respect. Zhang (1995b) pointed out that "to define indirectness in Chinese and to realize it in interaction, external modification of utterances is mandatory, internal modification is not" (p.82). The result of the current study thus echoed Zhang's findings.

### **Conclusion and Implication**

This study intends to explore Taiwanese EFL Learners' pragmatic competence in the production of email request to professors in the institutional setting. The findings pointed out that both higher and lower linguistic groups preferred to use direct strategies in making high imposition email request. This phenomenon revealed that students' preference in making their requestive head acts more explicit and concise, and seemingly more direct (according to CCSARP scale) in order to avoid ambiguity on the addressee, since the consequence of failing or passing the course was at stake. It should be noted that students' perceptions regarding 'expectation statements' (i.e., *I hope that you...*) were neither direct nor impolite since such request statements showed concerns for the hearer's ability or willingness and were thus regarded a conventionally indirect request (Yu, 1999). It could also be inferred

that at this stage of the interpragmatic development, both groups were still strongly influenced by their L1 pragmatics since the conventional request strategies were not their main choices for the highest imposition task in making proper email requests in the target language.

As for the politeness features used, the result pointed out that as students' linguistic level increased, their adoption of internal and external modifiers also increased accordingly, indicating the developmental sequences in the acquisition of the politeness features. However, since some of the internal modifiers were never used by even higher proficiency groups, these devices may not be acquired by mere exposure; explicit teaching might be the key for students to learn these politeness features effectively. Regarding the use of supportive moves, both groups preferred the inductive move pattern ("justification-request") which may not agree with the deductive move pattern ("request-justification") preferred by the native Anglo-American culture (Kong, 1998). Since this may thus cause confusion or negative perception on the recipients of the target language, explicit instruction would be useful in clarifying the different writing rhetoric across different cultures.

As revealed by the questionnaire and interviews, students believed that being indirect was considered as the most respectful way of showing politeness and it was manifested largely via the use of "expectation statement" and pre-posed supportive moves. In addition, students were also aware that they were using Chinese rhetoric particularly in the patterns of supportive moves. However, when lacking contextual knowledge in making proper English email request to professors, they could only resort to their existing L1 pragmatics. Thus, what constitutes the polite head act and the proper use of diverse internal and external strategies should be made explicit in the language classroom, so students could be equipped with effective means to make effective upward email request.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A: Coding categories for request strategies in the current study

CCSARP directness levels	Request strategies	examples
Direct (least ambiguous)	(1) Imperatives	<i>Please take a look at my paper.</i>
	(2) performative	<i>I request to have special consideration to let me pass the course.</i> <i>I am asking you for your help to proofread my term paper.</i>
	(3) Direct questions	<i>When do you have time?</i>
	(4) Want statements	<i>I want to set up a meeting with you.</i> <i>I would like to hear your comments about my paper.</i>
	(5) Need statements	<i>I will need your advice in taking this course.</i>
	(6) Expectation statements	<i>I hope you can understand and let me pass the course.</i> <i>I hope I can have this appointment with you in talking about this course.</i>
Conventionally indirect	Query preparatory	<i>Would you please read my paper in your free time?</i> <i>I was wondering if you would give me some comments on my paper.</i>
Non-conventional indirect ( Hints)	Strong hint	<i>Attached is my research paper.</i>
(most ambiguous)	Mild hint	<i>I am having a hard time in deciding whether I should take this course or not.</i>

### Appendix B: Coding categories for syntactic and lexical modifiers in the current study

Internal modifiers	Sub-categories	examples
Syntactic modifiers	1) Past tense 2) Progressive aspect 3) Embedding	<i>I was wondering...</i> <i>I'm hoping...</i> <i>I would appreciate it if you could..</i> <i>Can you take a look at my paper if you have time?</i>
Lexical modifiers	1) Polite marker 2) Subjectiviser 3) Consultative device  4) Downtoner 5) Understater 6) Hedges	<i>please</i> <i>I'm afraid..; I suggest..; I think...</i> <i>Do you think you will; do you mind if; Would it be possible..</i> <i>possibly; perhaps; maybe</i> <i>a little; a bit; just</i> <i>somewhat; sort of; kind of</i>



## Appendix C : Coding categories for supportive moves in the current study

Supportive moves	Examples
1) Preparator	<i>May I ask you question?</i>
2) Precommitment	<i>Could you do me a favor?</i>
3) Grounder	<i>The reason that I missed so many classes was that I have to take care of my grandmother in the hospital.</i>
4) Acknowledge the imposition of the request	<i>I know it violates the rules to miss so many classes, but could you make an exception this time?</i>
5) Promise	<i>I promise that I will not miss any class any more.</i>
6) Expectation	<i>I look forward to hearing from you soon. I hope I can see your reply as soon as possible.</i>
7) Sweetener	<i>You are the expert in the field so I think you are the most appropriate person to give me advice.</i>
8) Apology	<i>I am really sorry for my poor attendance.</i>
9) Thanking	<i>Thank you for taking your time reading my mail.</i>
10) Direct appeal	<i>I really hope you can understand. Please understand my situation.</i>
11) Imposition minimizer	<i>Please give me some feedback on my paper, under the circumstances that it won't take too much of your time.</i>
12) Importance	<i>This paper is really important for me.</i>
13) Showing the effort	<i>I have handed in all the assignments and have got good grades on the tests.</i>
14) Giving options to the addressee	<i>Please let me know your available time so I can remove my schedule.</i>



*Videos as Final Project for Assessment of Spanish as a Foreign Language in  
Higher Education Context*

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The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2016  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The article shows how we are using audiovisual projects to assess different skills in the Spanish language of beginner and intermediate groups of students that are learning Spanish as a Foreign Language in a College context. We are using midterm and final projects to evaluate their learning process. It is a variant of Project Based Learning as during the course we give them the tools, skills and guides to create the two projects they have to accomplish every semester.

According to Bell (2010), the use of projects helps students improve communication and collaboration skills.

The videos that our students made, are not only authentic assessments allowing teachers to evaluate the learning process of our students, but also engage students' ability of collaborate learning and critical thinking. In addition to the intercultural awareness developed by this kind of project when they have to confront their world with the target language's one. Furthermore, the project stimulates the learning autonomy and the students are responsible for their own learning process. They have to collaborate, auto-evaluate their work and make decisions during the process of making their video.

This kind of tasks are very meaningful as real-world situations are simulated and require the use of a great variety of skills like writing, reading, communication, interaction, cultural explorations, etc.

Keywords: Project, assessment, video, skills, scaffolding, peer feedback, intercultural awareness, motivation

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## Introduction

The world has changed dramatically over the past 15 years. Technology is an inevitable part of our every day life. We are living in a connected world that is changing every second, with every click. Education systems are reinventing themselves trying to cope and adapt to this changing world as quick as possible. Education has moved from teaching, testing facts and teacher centered approach to a further more complex student-centered approach where not only knowledge is transmitted but also focus on stimulate skills such a collaboration and communication skills, scaffolding, cultural awareness, etc. The Foreign Language Programs should embed 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills such as cultural awareness, critical thinking, collaborative skills, creativity, etc. Instructors should take the challenge of providing these skills to their students as global citizens that they are.

This article explains step by step how to use videos as a final project assessment, starting with the outline of the assessment, presenting the project to the students and guiding them during the process, ending with submission and evaluation of the project. The kind of Project Based learning that will be described in this article is an outside of class task, meaning that students will have to create their videos during their free time. The project will be only discussed in class the day it is presented to the class. The presentation of the project would be using some class time that can vary from 30 minutes to an hour class depending on the needs of your students. This is a proposal for using PBL when it is not possible to do it during class time.

### 1. What is project-based learning?

Project-based learning (PBL) is an instructional approach that can be very useful in teaching nearly any subject. Kalyonc & Tepecik (2010), described Project-based Learning in the following way:

“PBL approach focuses on general concepts, thoughts, and principles of a discipline. It includes students’ duties as searching, achieving information and creating a product by integrating this information in a meaningful way for the solution of the problem. It lets students work in their unique ways and build their own knowledge.” (p. 2,412).

We can also apply this to language learning where students have to create an end product, in this case a short video about a selected topic using the learned knowledge through the course. In order to accomplish this, students have to be able to get into the foreign language culture context and use the learned materials in this context to create an authentic product .

According to Stoller (2006) PBL is more than merely engaging students in projects and takes on a variety of forms depending on teachers, students and context. Consequently to that there are many ways of using projects in teaching and it has been argued whether it can be considered a PBL or not. There are many ways of using PBL depending on teachers, students and situation.

## **1.2. Why project based assessment:**

Videos are not only authentic assessments to allow instructors to evaluate the learning process of their students, but also engage students ability of collaborative learning and critical thinking in an original setting and with an utility value for the students as they are working in a real-world issue. In addition to the intercultural awareness developed of this kind of project when they have to confront their world with the target language world. On top of that, projects stimulate the learner's motivation and learning autonomy, the students are responsible for their own learning process. They have to collaborate, auto-evaluate their work and make decisions during the process of making their video. Bell (2010) noted that through projects, students develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills that lead them to become member of a global society. He also pointed out that project based assessment is an authentic assessment style.

### **1.2.1. Advantages of Project Based Learning are:**

Cooperative learning  
Motivation and implication of the learner  
Problem solving skills and creativity  
Contextual social awareness

These kinds of tasks are very meaningful as real-world situations are simulated and require to use a great variety of skills like writing, reading, communicative, cultural explorations, etc. Brown (2002) emphasized that meaningful learning will lead toward better long-term retention than rote learning.

Frank (2013) remarked the importance of creating opportunities for both, teachers and students, to examine and reflect on the target culture and that of their own country. By implementing video projects to the curriculum it could facilitate the opportunity to facilitate students' knowledge of the target culture in the language courses, helping them to understand how language and culture are connected. According to Chamness & Mikulec (2011), knowledge of other languages and cultures not only affords individuals with connections that a monolingual individual does not have, but also helps them to understand the way in which language and culture are connected to other disciplines, as well as how one's culture affects one's worldview.

## **2. How to work with project based assessment:**

The first thing that must be clear is the instructor and student's role. The instructors will be moderators which guide and coordinate the learning process, that way the students will have to take more responsibility and be more autonomous in their learning process. This is a student-centered approach.

### **2.1. Instructors role:**

Instructors as moderators will guide the students, negotiate with them, motivate and give them feedback. Chamness & Mikulec (2011) emphasized that the structure of the project is essential. That said, teacher must provide clear and explicit instructions.

### **2.1.1. Prepare the project outline for your students.**

- Suggest main topic. It is advisable to give students 3 or 4 scenarios as setting for the videos, always look for real life situations like: meeting a new friend, dating, planning a trip, cooking tutorial, etc. By giving them scenarios, they can have a better understanding of the task, that guide them to come out with their own ideas. It is important and highly motivating for them, to allow them to suggest their own scenario for their video. Students love to develop their own ideas. According to Chamness & Mikulec (2011), giving the students the opportunity of selecting their topics and freedom to determinate how to set the project would encourage enjoyment.  
Finally, note that the scenarios must be related with the topics learned in class. The teacher should approve the students project ideas to make sure they will accomplish the expectations.
- If necessary, organize the student's in groups, ideally in small groups of two or three students.
- Give them deadlines (checklist): For this kind of assessment three weeks time should be enough for the students to complete their project.
  - Deadline to select their topic and project outline.
  - Deadline for the draft of their project and script.
  - Deadline for the submission of the project.
- Be very clear about expectations and provide the students with a project guideline and the rubrics for the evaluation of the project.
- Length of the video: the instructor should decide how long the video should be. Videos of at least 5 minutes works very well for partner work. In case of using small groups of 3 students a length of at least 8 minutes would be appropriate.
- Make clear what is not allowed in the project. It is advisable to remind the students that they have to act in the video not hide behind an image and read out. In order to avoid this situation, it is highly recommended to make it very clear in the grading rubrics that reading is not allowed and will be penalized.
- Guide them during the process of planning their project.
- At the end of the project students should write a reflection of their learning process.
- Evaluate the projects according to the project evaluation guideline or rubric.

### **2.1.2. Project's evaluation:**

Rubrics provided to the students at the beginning of the process should be used for grading the project. Furthermore, it will work as an extra guideline for the students when working on the video project.

### **2.1.2.1. What is a Rubric?**

A rubric is a scoring tool created to assess the performance of the students in a certain assessment, often it is created by the instructor who develop the task to be assessed.

The Eberly Center (2015) defined the rubric as “a scoring tool that explicitly represents the performance expectations for an assignment or piece of work. A rubric divides the assigned work into component parts and provides clear descriptions of the characteristics of the work associated with each component, at varying levels of mastery. Rubrics can be used for a wide array of assignments: papers, projects, oral presentations, artistic performances, group projects, etc. Rubrics can be used as scoring or grading guides, to provide formative feedback to support and guide ongoing learning efforts, or both.”

### **2.1.2.2. How to create a rubric:**

There are different kind of rubrics, however, it is easier to follow a rubric with well described levels of achievement, that will guide the students when making the video. In order to create a good rubric the teacher has to plan well the following steps and incorporate them into the rubric:

1. Task description: it must be decided which kind of task will be performed by the students for e.g. a video product as we are talking about in this article.
2. Expectations: The teacher must have very clear expectations of what will be assessed and what the students are expected to accomplish.
3. Achievements levels: A good rubric should have at least three well described different levels of performance of each assessed point. However, I recommend to have at least four levels: the highest level expected for students to accomplish, the good level of performance, the adequate level of performance and the poor or unacceptable level of performance. All levels must be well described so the students have a good reference point when doing the project.

## **2.2. Student's role.**

Students as autonomous learners will follow the assessment guideline. In this case, the guidance of the teacher has to be limited to the structure or ideas as it is an assessment and the student is not allowed any external help to create or edit the script.

Students take responsibility of the whole process of creating their video. At the beginning of the project, students are organized in groups and each group sets each member of the group duties. Moreover they decide what to do in case that one member does not accomplish them. They make their duties official by signing a group-contract.

Another great advantage of working in small groups is that students have a great opportunity to accomplish their multiple intelligence to achieve the same goal. One of my students has said in their project reflection: “*I felt that we worked well together because we had different strengths and talents*”. Other students mention how they support each other with the pronunciation, grammar, etc.



### **2.2.1 Planning their project:**

Once the instructor has explained the project to the students and groups have been formed, the project moves away from the classroom and becomes a social interaction, connecting the new skills and real life. The process has to go through the following stages:

- Selecting their topic, context and title of their project.
- Organizing ideas and setting goals: what they want to do and how they are going to set the video.
- Creating a script
  - Language base: students make sure that they are using learned vocabulary, grammar, idiomatic expressions, etc.
  - Sociolinguistics, cultural understanding: situations, reactions, use of non-verbal language.
- Reviewing a script: peer feedback and scaffolding. Students will read their partner's part of the script and provide input, monitor grammar and discuss sociocultural points.

### **2.2.2 Recording the video:**

Although, this is the part of the project that students might like the most, it can be very challenging, as the students have to find a way of performing and recording simultaneously. Most of the time, they take turns to record or ask for external help to record the scenes. When filming the students memorize and play their role, that way they reproduce discourse and behaviors of a native speaker of the target language. That is also the moment when students have the last opportunity to auto-evaluate and change or adapt their script.

### **2.2.3 Editing the video:**

The last part of the process is editing the video. At this stage students have to negotiate again the sequences of their video, add subtitles and extras if they wish to. Although nowadays students have a fairly good knowledge of how to edit videos, it is always advisable to provide them an online guide "how to do videos". Another factor to consider is the technology needed to edit a video. Usually schools and universities have computer labs where students can edit the project and most of the students have good computers with the necessary software or can download it via the internet.

Particularly noteworthy is to recommend to the students that they are not expected to spend huge amounts of time editing. They tend to over do the editing. At the same time we emphasize that the most important aspect is the content and settings they choose.

#### **2.2.3.1 Online guide for students:**

There are a great variety of websites with guides for students with this part of the task. Here I will mention some of them that I used for my students:

- Tips to shooting your video with an iPhone: <http://wistia.com/library/shooting-video-with-an-iphone>

- Backlight effects: [http://www.cctv-information.co.uk/i/Backlight\\_Compensation](http://www.cctv-information.co.uk/i/Backlight_Compensation)
- Sky camera work: [http://www.ehow.com/info\\_8077220\\_image-stabilization-mean-camera.html](http://www.ehow.com/info_8077220_image-stabilization-mean-camera.html)
- Some instructions of how to use iMovie: <http://www.apple.com/support/mac-apps/imovie/>
- Some light techniques: <https://vimeo.com/33672808>
- Upload a video to Dropbox: <https://www.dropbox.com>

These are just same example of tools available online. It is advisable to look for the ones that are suitable for your students needs, such as if they use different software.

### **3. Benefits from the project work:**

Projects give the students the opportunity to use their sociolinguistic and linguistic skills in the target language and culture as whole and through out the project. They have to use writing skills to create the script, their reading skills to read other students' work and check their group mates writing work "scaffolding". At the same time, speaking and listening skills to play their role in the short movie are also developed. Moreover, when the students are being filmed they have the chance to emulate behaviors, discourse such an idiomatic or sayings and norms of the target language. Also during the recording of the video, students could make changes of the script to fit the metalinguistic needs of the scene. There is a continuous reflection process of their learning, which reinforces their learning autonomy.

My experience with high school and university students is that they are very motivated and enjoy the process of doing such a project. Overall, students are very creative, some students try to inject humor in their projects, and others experiment with special effects. In addition, students put a lot of effort to show cultural awareness in their projects, which shows a better understanding of the cultural group of the target language.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Language (page 161) *"Successful task performance is more likely where the learner is fully involved; a high level of intrinsic motivation to carry out the task – due to interest in the task or because of its perceived relevance, for example to real life needs learner involvement; extrinsic motivation may also play a role, for example where there are external pressure to complete the task successfully"*

However, it is not always all positive as sometimes students complain about the workload of such a project and unfortunately there are sometime cases when a student is not working in the project as they should and their group partners or partner have put more time and effort in the project. In order to evaluate this last issue, it is recommend to ask students individually to submit a short essay explaining how they collaborate in the project in the form of an individual reflection of their learning process.

#### **4. Difficulties encountered:**

Some students think that the video project is very time consuming, as they have to invest a lot of time to complete it. However, they are a minority.

#### **5. Conclusion:**

In conclusion, using video projects as final assessments is a very effective and authentic way of assessing students' knowledge, abilities and understanding of the target culture. It not only evaluates what students learned during the whole semester, but also is highly motivating and less stressful than an exam. In addition to that, learner's autonomy is reinforced and they have the chance to be creative. The fact that real-life situations are simulated, give the students a practical experience of using the language. Besides that, video projects give students the opportunity of applying their multiple intelligence and work collaboratively with their teammates during the project. The students find the process very engaging and enjoyable. Also, students report to have a greater ability to formulate sentence and convert ideas in Spanish after the project.

The logo for iafor (International Association for Applied Linguistics) is centered on the page. It features the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is surrounded by several overlapping, semi-transparent circular arcs in shades of light blue and light red, creating a dynamic, swirling effect.

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*Exploring EFL Learners' Strategies of How They Improve the Process of Their Writing Assignments*

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**Abstract**

The authors of this study teach English in a Japanese university and give writing assignments for EFL learners as part of their assessment. Although EFL learners are given enough time to finish their writing assignments, they do not tend to ask teachers to give feedback on their writing drafts before they submit their final assessment copy. The aim of this study is to explore EFL learners' strategies of how they improve the process of their writing assignments before they submit their final writing production. In particular, this study examines how long learners spent on writing their final papers and whether they seek feedback from teachers on their writing drafts. This study used questionnaires about the process of students' assignment writing for the data collection. The total of 415 responses was collected from both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year university students. The data is mainly analyzed quantitatively, however a qualitative approach is also adopted in order to analyze open-ended questions on our questionnaires. The results show that most students showed their writing drafts to others (including their teachers and classmates) before they submitted their final drafts. Interestingly, although nearly 70% of participants admitted that their teachers' feedback was the most reliable feedback, nearly 50% of participants actually showed their drafts to their friends instead of their teachers.

Keywords: Writing feedback, peer feedback, EFL,

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## **Introduction**

Writing tasks are often given to university students as one of their assessments. The authors of this study adopt PBL (Project Based Learning) to their English classes. Under PBL, students decide their research topic in the beginning of the semester and they research their topics either individually or in a small group. At the end of the semester, they need to submit their final paper. In order to assist the process of writing the final paper, homework is given to students each week and therefore, if students consistently and conscientiously do their homework each week, they are able to write their final paper easily. However, some students tend to submit high quality final papers but others do not. The aim of this study is to explore EFL learners' strategies of how they improve the process of their writing assignments before they submit their final writing production. In order to collect the data, questionnaires were used and 13 questions were asked in total. Participants of this study were students of a private university in Japan and were majoring in sport and health science. The total of 415 responses was collected from both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year university students. The data is mainly analyzed quantitatively and also qualitative approach is adopted, in order to analyze open-ended questions on our questionnaires.

## **Literature review**

Receiving feedback on written drafts is one of the learners' strategies to improve the quality of their writing. There are two types of feedback in general. Feedback from teachers to students and feedback between students, which is often called peer feedback. Firstly, feedback from teachers to students is discussed and then peer feedback is discussed.

## **Feedback**

Nicol (2009) for example, explains that as long as learners are motivated in improving their writing skills, learners value their teachers' feedback on their writing tasks. Teachers' comments particularly help explain gaps in understanding of how to write their essays and suggest ways of how to improve their writing tasks. Hattie and Timperley (2007) also explain feedback influences on learners' learning and their achievement. For example, learners may develop a skill such as error detection, which is the ability to find errors by themselves in their writing through teachers' feedback. Teachers can support learners to clarify their goals, enhancing their commitment and their efforts through teachers' feedback. Hyland and Hyland (2007) point out that feedback by the teacher is a key element for learners to build their confidence and the literacy resources to participate in target communities. The authors of this study try to give students feedback once they submit their homework. However, as Gibbs, Simpson, Gravestock, and Hills (2005) point out, it is difficult for teachers to give feedback individually in a big size class. In large classes, teachers' workload increases and each student's feedback tends to be simple. The authors of this study in fact taught nearly 10 classes, of which each class had about 25 students in one semester. In order to reduce the amount of teachers' workload, peer feedback can be used in class (Nicol, 2010).

## **Peer feedback**

Before discussing peer feedback, it is important to make clear the terms “Peer feedback” and “Peer assessment”. Liu and Carless (2006, p280) explain the difference between these two terms. Peer feedback is a communication process used by learners in order to improve their understanding and learning, while peer assessment is to grade their performance using relevant criteria. This study focuses on examining peer feedback since the data of this study only involves peer feedback aspects.

Peer feedback often works well in order to improve students’ performance. Rollinson (2005), for instance, explains that peer feedback among learners is often delivered informally while teachers’ feedback is often given to students in formal circumstance. Also under such circumstance, learners who received peer feedback can easily reject feedback comments from their peers and learners can make their own decisions whether they keep their own texts or not. Miao, Badger and Zhen (2006) found that teachers’ feedback were more highly valued than peer feedback from their EFL students. However, EFL students admitted the importance of peer feedback which made an improvement in their writing and which encouraged their motivation to learn independently (Miao et al., 2006).

## **Academic support center**

Accessing an academic support center is useful for EFL learners to improve their writing draft. Although there are not many universities which have an academic support in Japan, for example, Tokyo University of the Arts has an academic learning support which is called “a global support center” ([http://www.geidai.ac.jp/department/center/global\\_support\\_center](http://www.geidai.ac.jp/department/center/global_support_center)) and provides some programs to their students. Support staff state they do not proof read or edit students’ writing products for their students. Instead, they try to give their students some linguistic and grammatical suggestions on their writing products in order to improve the quality of writing products. Hokkaido University also has an academic learning support which is called “Eigo Writing Clinic” ([http://asc.high.hokudai.ac.jp/office/resource/ec/ec\\_ewc.php](http://asc.high.hokudai.ac.jp/office/resource/ec/ec_ewc.php)). Their students submit their writing products and native speakers of English check and make comments on students’ writing. Support staff check not only grammar & structures of students’ English, but they also check whether students’ English is naturally written or not. As well as Tokyo University of the Arts global learning center, the learning support center of Hokkaido University does not offer a proof reading or editing service to their students. It tries to teach their students how they can independently improve their writing.

## **Methodology**

### **English classes**

All participants were learning English through a project/problem-solving based learning (PBL) method. Under the PBL, participants needed to set up their project topic in the beginning of the semester and research their project throughout the semester in English. Writing a final paper was one of participants’ assessments. In

this study, all first year students did their project individually but all second year students conducted one project in a small group (3 or 4 people each group). The aims of classes between the first year students and the second year students were different. The table below shows the details of each class.

P2 (1 <sup>st</sup> year students' class)	P4 (2 <sup>nd</sup> year student's class)
✓ Individual project work	✓ A small group project work
✓ Focus on basic research skills	✓ Focus on academic research skills
✓ Weekly homework	✓ Weekly homework
✓ Two presentations	✓ Two presentations
✓ Writing assessment (20%)	✓ Writing assessment (25%)

### Data collection

In order to collect data, questionnaires were used. Paper-based questionnaires were distributed to the participants in one of the authors' classes and the participants wrote their answers on the papers. All questions were asked in Japanese to participants in this study since participants' English level varied. Once the data was collected, all answers were translated into English by the authors of this study. The data was collected in 2014. The total of 415 participants answered questionnaires but there was no answer to some questions by some participants. Therefore, depending on a question, the total numbers of answers are shown differently. For the first year students, there were 124 male and 92 female participants. For the second year students, 129 male and 70 female students participated in this study.

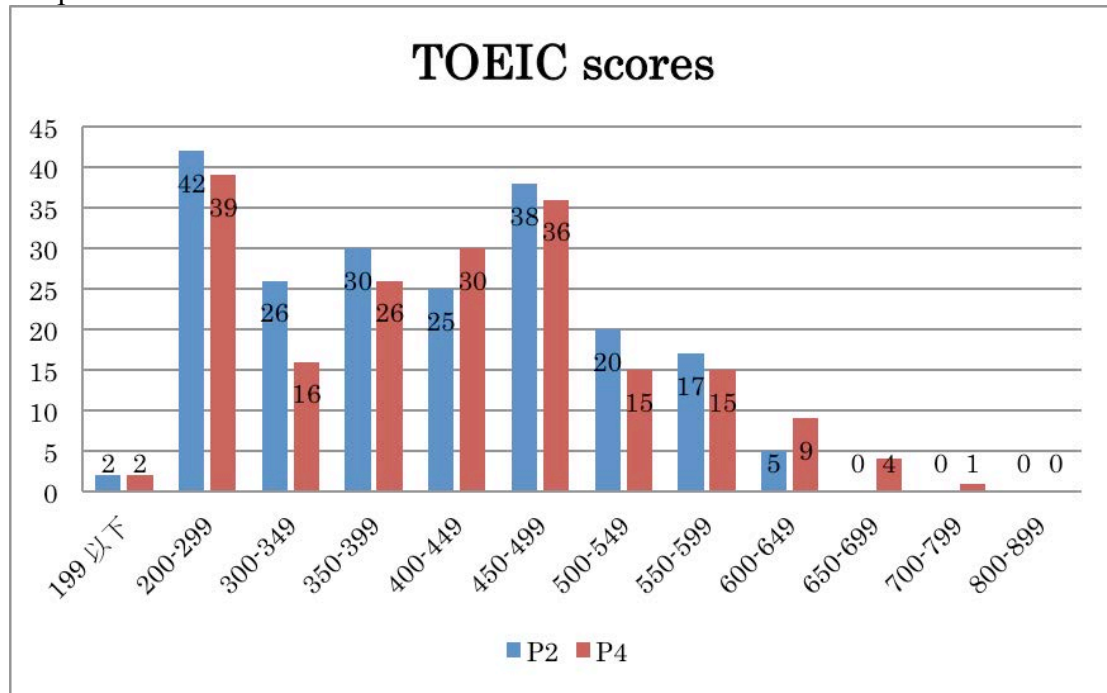
### Participants

The participants in this study were both first and second year students in the private university in Japan. They were majoring in sport and health science but studied English as one of their compulsory subjects.

**Results**

Results of Q2

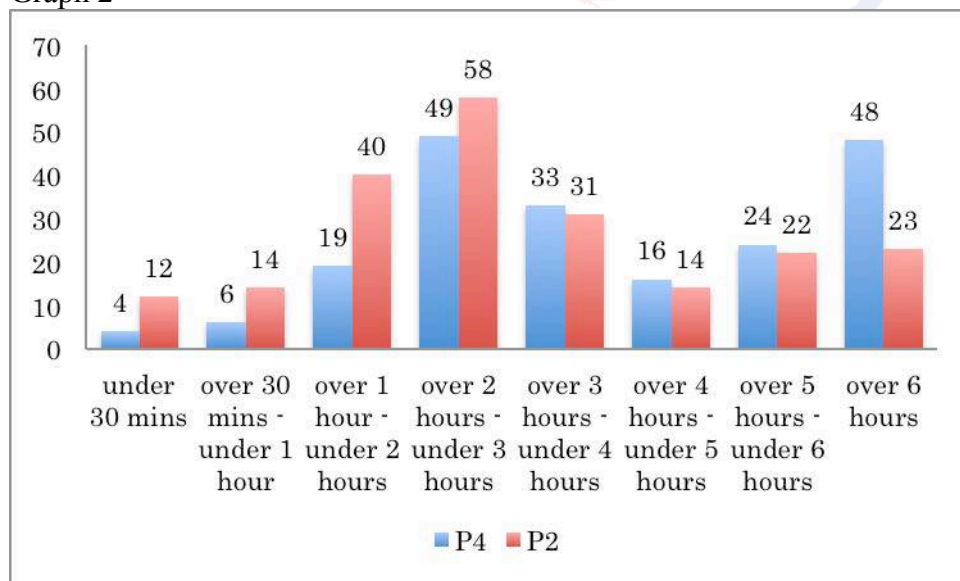
Graph 1



Results of Q2 show that the average TOEIC score of P2 is 401 and of P4 is 415. The second year students' TOEIC score is slightly higher than the first year students.

Results of Q4: How long did you spend on your final paper?

Graph 2

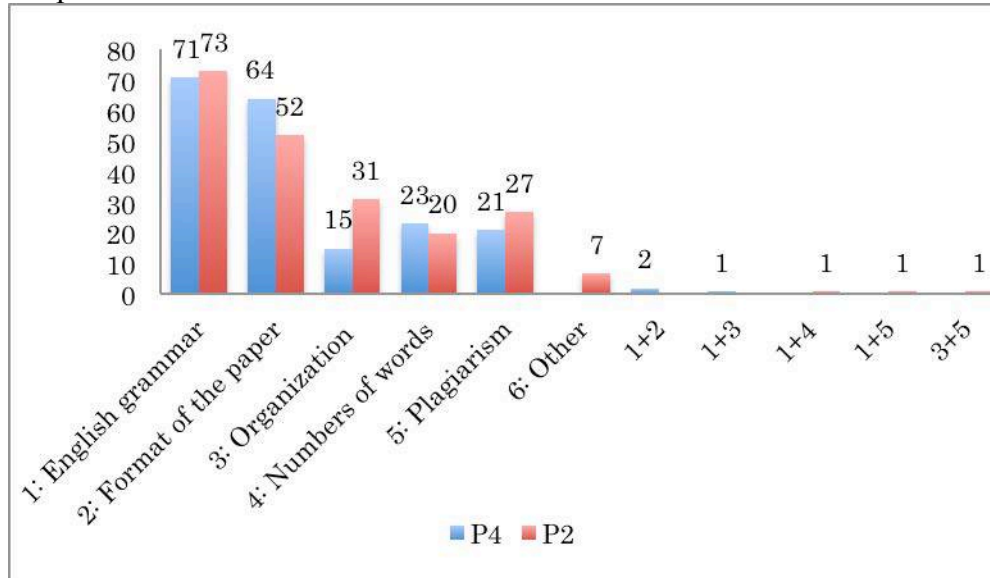


25% (N=49) of P4 students spent between 2 and 3 hours on making their final paper. Surprisingly, 27% (N=48) of P4 spent over 6 hours on making their final paper. As for P2 students, 27% (N=58) of P2 students spent between 2 and 3 hours on their final

paper. 19% (N=40) of P2 students spent between 1 and 2 hours on their final paper. While 25% (N=49) of P4 students spent over 6 hours, only 11 % (N=23) of P2 students spent over 6 hours on their final paper.

Results of Q5: What was the most difficult part for you when you wrote your final paper?

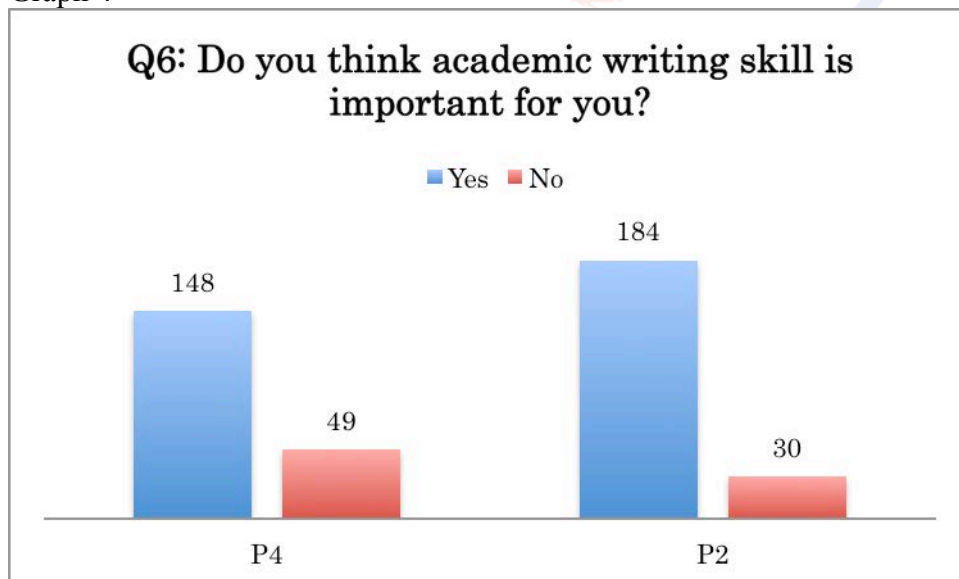
Graph 3



The most popular answers of both P4 and P2 students are English grammar (36%: n=71) and Format of the paper (32%: n=73).

Results of Q6

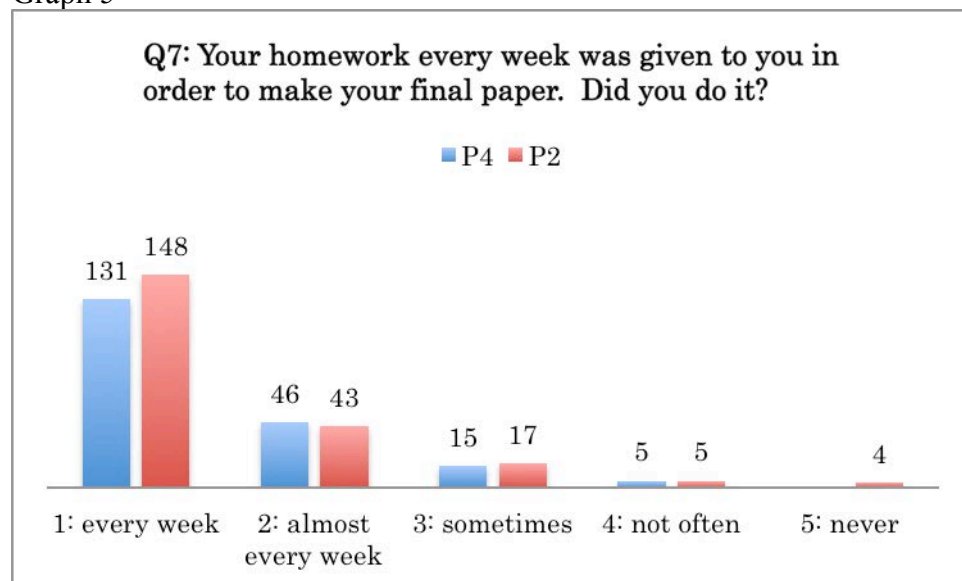
Graph 4



While 75% (n=148) of P4 students and 84% of P2 (n=184) students answered that academic writing skill was important for them, 25% (n=49) of P4 and 14% (n=30) of P2 students did not think academic writing skill was important for them.

## Results of Q7

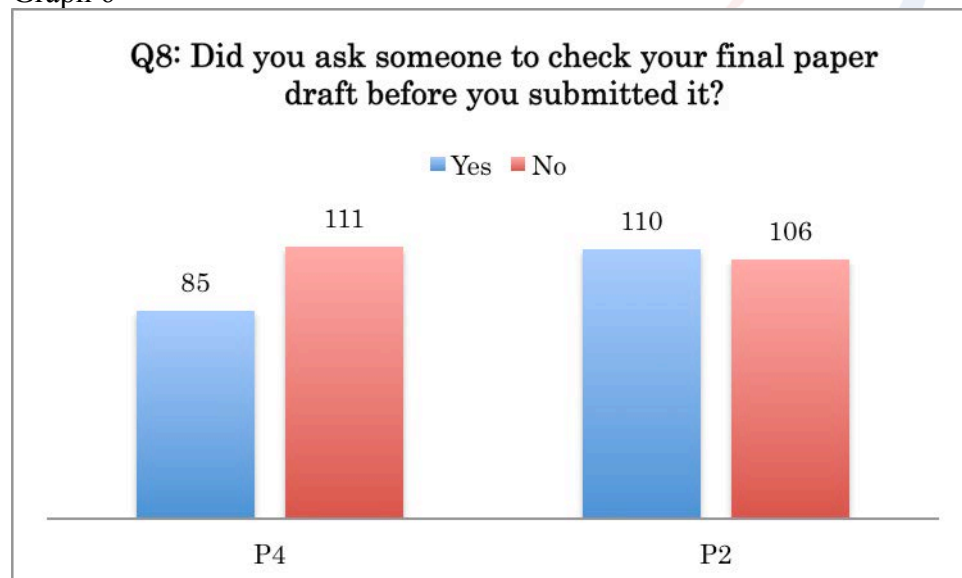
Graph 5



Results of Q7 show the frequency of homework per week. The majority of both P4 and P2 students did their homework seriously. 66% (n=131) of P4 students answered that they did their homework every week and 23% (n=46) of P4 students did their homework almost every week. 68% (n=148) of P2 students did their homework every week and 20% (n=43) of P2 students did their homework almost every week.

## Results of Q8

Graph 6

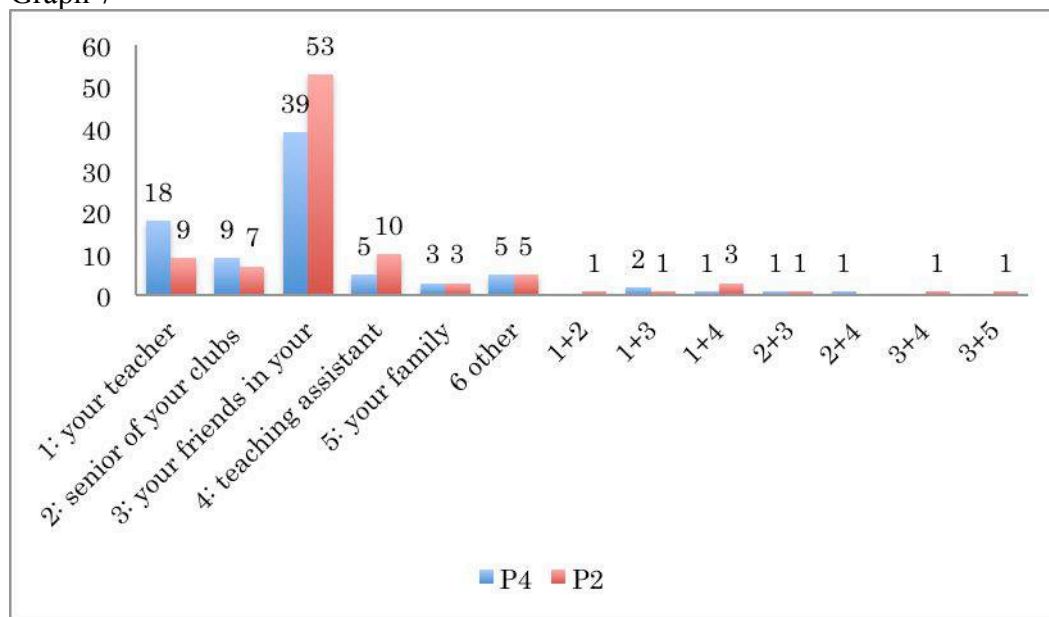


Results of Q8 show whether students showed their drafts of the final papers to someone before they submitted it by the deadline. 43% (n=85) of P4 students asked someone to review their final papers while 57% (n=111) of P4 students did not do it. 51% (n=110) of P2 students showed their final papers to someone while 49% (n=106) of P2 students did not do it.



Results of Q9: If you answered yes on Q8, then who did you ask?

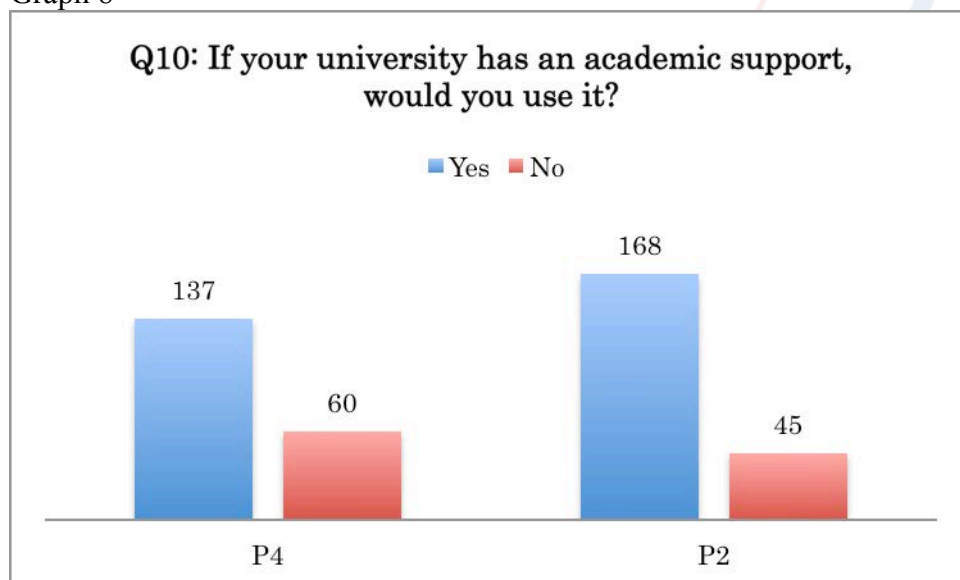
Graph 7



The majority of both P4 (47%: n=39) and P2 (56%: n=53) students showed their final paper drafts to their friends. Only 21% (n=18) of P4 and 10% (n=9) of P2 students showed their final paper drafts to their teachers.

Results of Q10

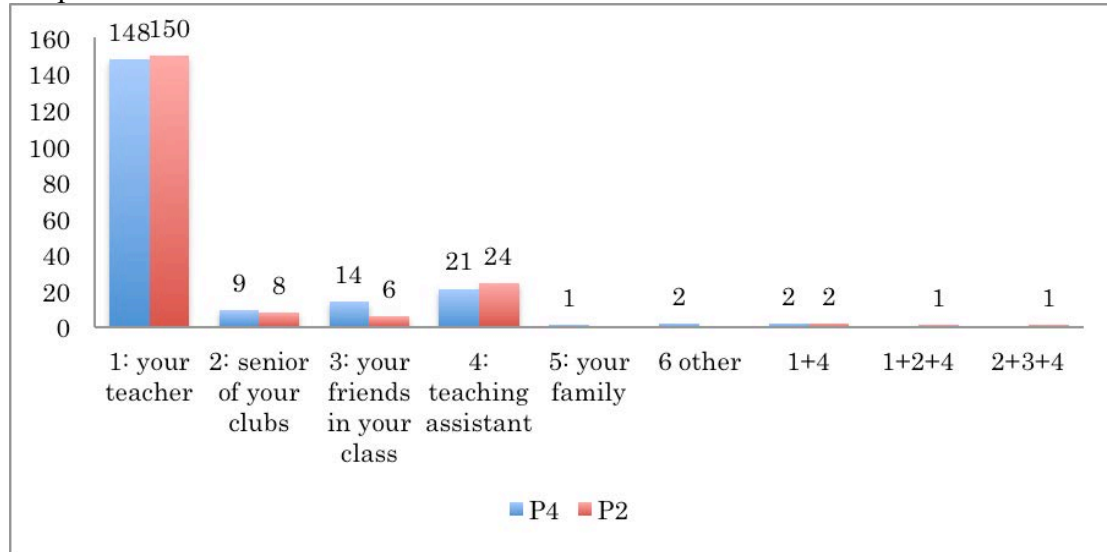
Graph 8



Results of Q10 show whether the participants use an academic support or not whether it is available or not. In P4, 70% (n=137) of participants answered they would use it and in P2, 79% (n= 168) of the participants answered that they would use it.

Q11: Who do you think you want to get advice from for writing your final paper?

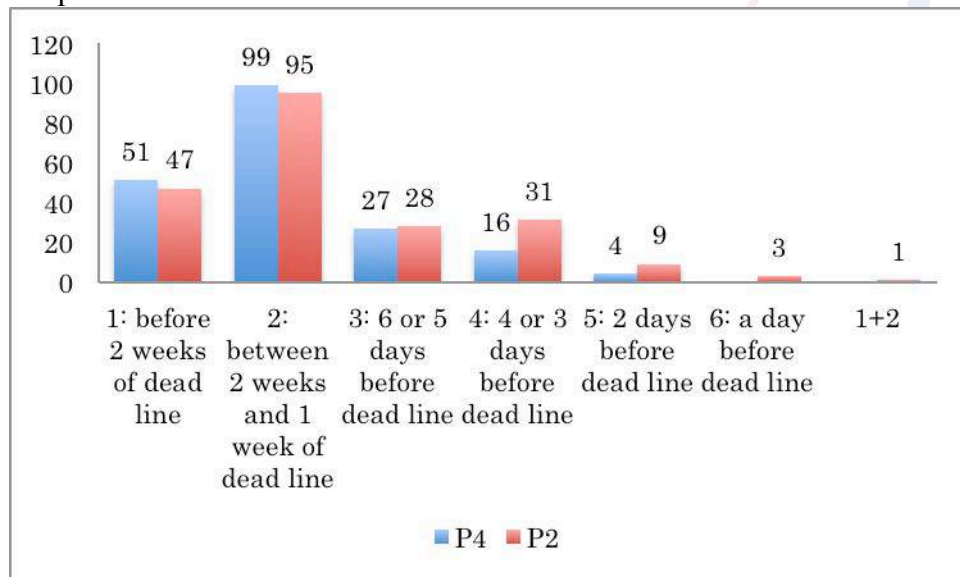
Graph 9



The results of Q11 show that 75% (n=148) of P4 and 78% (n=150) of P2 students answered they wanted to get advice from their teachers. Then 11% (n=21) of P4 and 12% (n=24) of P2 students answered advice from their teaching assistants. Compared to the results of Q9 (Who did you ask?), there is a trend that students want to get advice from teachers as the results of Q11 showed, but they, in fact, did not tend to show their writing drafts to their teachers. Instead, they tend to show their writing drafts to their friends as the results of Q9 showed.

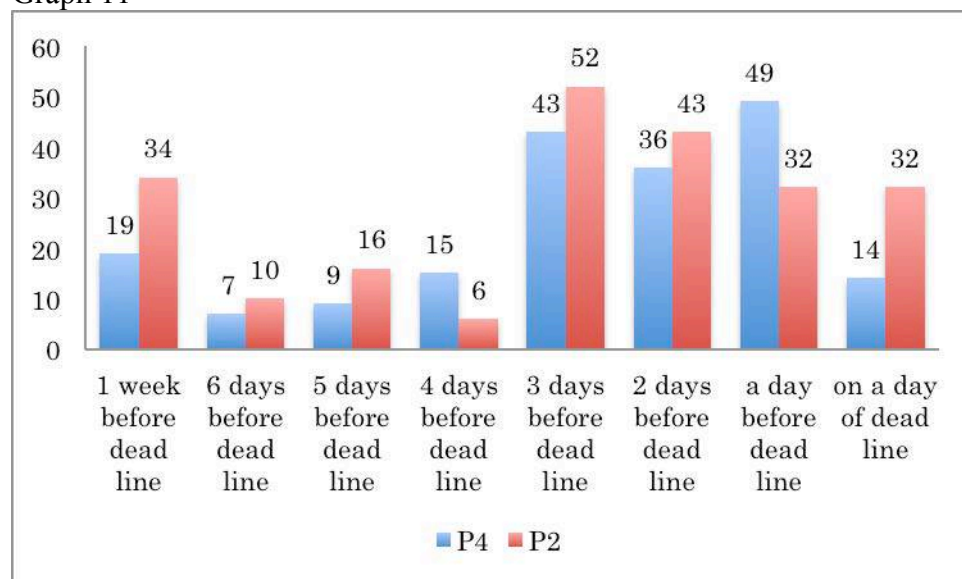
Q12: When did you start writing your final paper?

Graph 10



Q13: When did you finish writing your final paper?

Graph 11



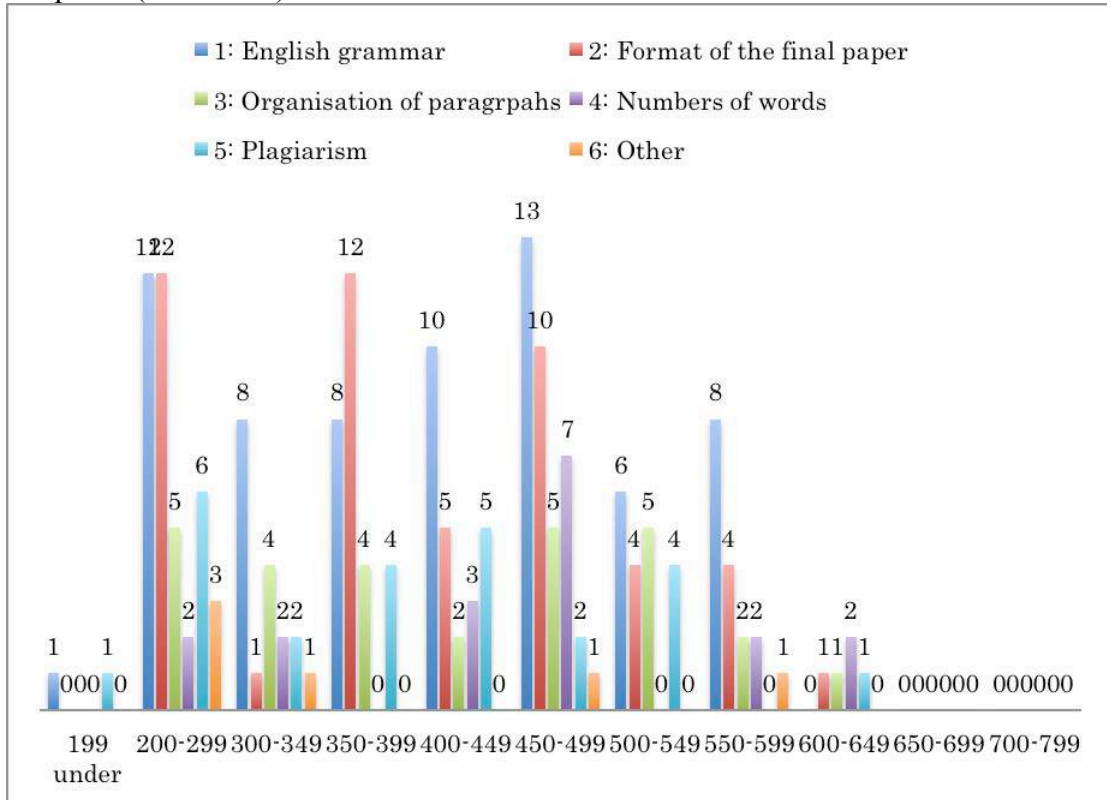
Both graphs 10 and 11 show the results of Q12 and Q13. The most popular answer of when participants started writing their final paper was between two weeks and one week before the deadline (P4, N=99: 50%, P2, N=95: 44%). The second popular answer was “before two weeks of the deadline” (P4, N=51: 26%, P2, N=47: 22%). There were few participants answered either “two days before of the deadline” (P4, N=4: 2%, P2, N=9: 4%) or “a day before of the deadline” (P2, N=3: 1%).

On the contrary, the graph 11 shows when the participants finished writing their final papers. In P4 classes, the most popular answer was “a day before the deadline” (N=49: 25%) and then “three days before” (N= 43: 22%) comes next. In P2 classes, the most popular answer was “three days before the deadline” (N=52: 23%) and then “two days before the deadline” (N=43: 19%) comes next. Interestingly, 10% (N=19) of P4 participants and 15% (N=34) of P2 participants answered that they finished their final papers one week before the deadline.

### Results of relationship between participants and their TOEIC scores

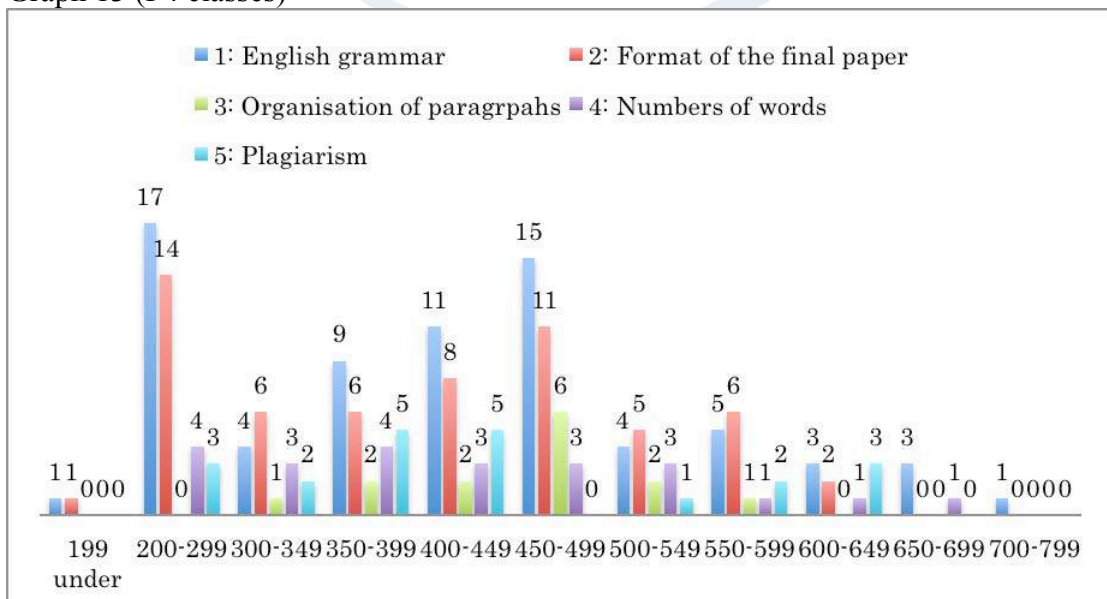
Graphs 12, 13 and 14, and Tables 2 and 3 show the results of some questions with participants’ TOEIC scores. To start with, graph 12 shows that the relationship between participants’ TOEIC scores and results of Q5 (What was the most difficult part for you when you wrote your final paper?) in P2 classes.

Graph 12 (P2 classes)



There is a trend among participants that four categories were important for them such as “English grammar”, “Format of the final paper”, “Organization of the paper” and “Plagiarism”. However, participants in between TOEIC 200 and 249 thought both “English grammar” and “Format of the final paper” were important, while participants in between TOEIC 300 and 599, except in between TOEIC 350 and 399, thought “English grammar” was more important than “Format of the final paper”. Participants in between TOEIC 600 and 649 thought “Numbers of the words” was more important than “English grammar” and “Format of the final paper”.

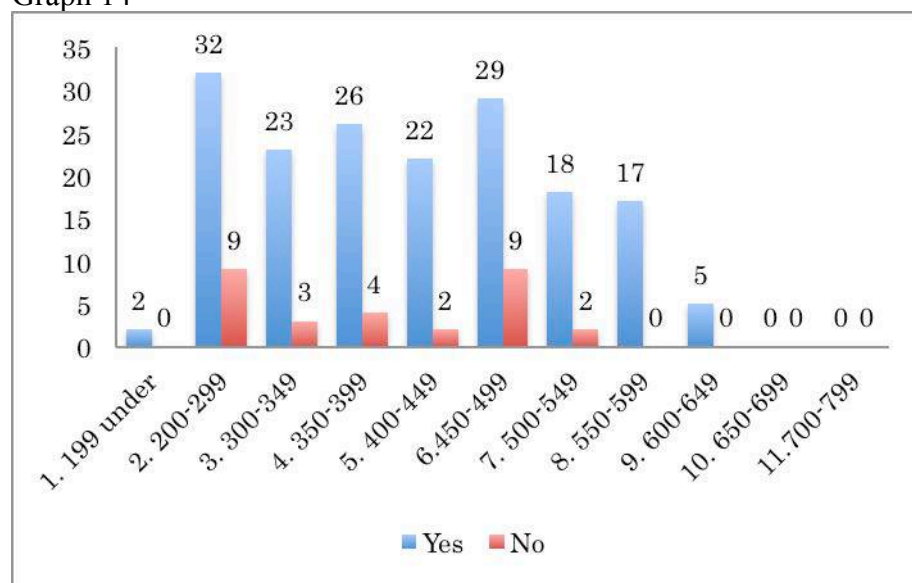
Graph 13 (P4 classes)



The graph above shows the results of the relationship between participants' TOEIC scores of Q5 in P4 classes. Participants in between 200 and 649 thought both "English grammar" and "Format of the final paper" were more important than "Organization of the paper", "Plagiarism" and "Numbers of words". In particular, Participants in between TOEIC 200 and 299 (N=17) strongly thought both "English grammar" and "Format of the final paper" were important to them compared to other participants who achieved higher TOEIC scores. Interestingly, although there are not many participants, there were some who answered "plagiarism" was important for them.

Q6: Do you think academic writing skill is important for you?

Graph 14



In graph 14, there is a trend that those who have under TOEIC 500 see academic writing skill as important in general. Among these participants, in particular, those who have TOEIC between 200 and 299 (N=32) placed the highest value on the importance of academic writing skill.

Table 2 (P4)

TOEIC Scores (P4)	200-299	300-349	350-399	400-449	450-499	500-549	550-599	600-649	650-699
Hours on average of the Final Paper	7	4~5	6	4~5	3~4	5~6	5~6	4~5	2~3

Table 2 shows the relationship between TOEIC scores and how much time participants of this study spent for their final paper in P4 classes. As the authors of this study predicted, those who have TOEIC 200 to 299 spent the longest (7 hours) while those who have TOEIC 650 to 699 spent the shortest (2 or 3 hours). However,

for those who have TOEIC 300 to 649, hours they spent vary. Thus it is hard to conclude that those who have lower TOEIC scores tend to spend longer in their writing and neither, those who have higher TOEIC scores tend to spend shorter in their writing.

Table 3 (P2)

TOEIC Scores (P2)	200-299	300-349	350-399	400-449	450-499	500-549	550-599	600-649	650-699
Hours on average of the Final Paper	1 - 2	0.5-1	0.5-1	0.5-1	2 - 3	0.5	0.5	0.25	0

Table 3 shows the relationship between TOEIC scores and how long participants of this study spent for their final paper in P2 classes. Unlike P4 classes, participants in P2 classes tend to spend fewer hours for their final papers. This is because P2 classes have a different course structure from P4. In P2 classes, students are learning basic research skills in English while P4 classes aim to teach academic writing.

### Discussions

First of all, as both graphs 12 and 13 showed, there was a trend that those who have lower TOEIC scores tend to want to get advice on “English grammar” on their final papers. This result suggests what kind of feedback teachers should be giving to their students. At the same time, this result suggests teachers have a problem when peer feedback is introduced in classes. When teachers try to use peer feedback among those who have lower English skills, students might find it difficult to correct grammatical errors for each other.

Second of all, as the results of Q8 (Did you ask someone to check your final paper draft before you submitted it?) showed that nearly the half of the participants in this study (P4: 57% and P2: 49%) did not ask anyone to check their final papers before they submitted their assignments. The reason of this phenomenon is explained by the results of Q13 (When did you finish writing your final paper?). As the graph 11 showed, many participants in this study finished their final papers within three days before the deadline. In addition, both the results of Q 11 and 12 showed-76% of P4 and 66% of P2 students started writing their final papers two weeks before the deadline. Based on these results, many students tend to take a long time to write their final papers although they started writing their final papers in advance. Because of it, they did not tend to have enough time to have checked their final papers before the deadline. Furthermore, in P4 classes in particular, as the table 2 shows, there was a trend that those who had lower TOEIC scores tended to spend longer to finish their final papers. In both P2 and P4 classes, the authors of this study also gave their students homework to complete every week. One of the aims of giving students homework every week is to simplify the task of writing their final papers by breaking it down into smaller tasks. Thus if students do homework every week seriously, then they would have enough time to finish writing their final papers. In fact, the results of



Q7 (Your homework every week was given to you in order to make your final paper. Did you do it?) showed that the majority of students did their homework. However, they still did not tend to have time to have checked their final papers before the deadline.

Third of all, the results of Q9 (if you showed your final paper, then who did you ask?) revealed that the majority of participants (P4: 47% and P2: 56%) in this study showed their final papers to their friend while only both 21% of P4 and 10% of P2 participants showed their final papers to their teachers. However, the results of Q11 (Who do you think you want to get advice for making your final paper?) showed that the majority of both P4 students (75%) and P2 students (78%) answered that they wanted to get advice from their teachers. There is a gap between what participants wanted and what they actually did in seeking feedback. Tsui and Ng (2000) found the teachers' feedback was preferred. They explain that teachers' feedback gave students more confidence because teachers were more experienced, authoritative and gave better quality comments than their peers. Trahasch (2004) also found students did not believe in feedback by their peers while they believed in the feedback from their tutors and teachers. Participants in this study also preferred teachers' feedback to peer feedback as the result showed. However, Gibbs et al. (2005) points out the problem of teachers' workload in giving feedback to students. Giving feedback to individuals depends on the class size. As the class size increases, teachers' workload also increases. Teachers tend to be very busy and it is often difficult for them to give individual feedback on students' writing. The authors of this study in fact had 10 classes per semester. Each class had between 25 and 30 students and thus teachers often have limited time to deal with individual students. Thus, it might be difficult for participants in this study to try to find their teachers to get some comments on their writing drafts before the deadline of the final paper. In addition, there is a positive side of peer feedback which can explain a reason why the participants of this study used their friends to get feedback. Tsui and Ng (2000) point out peer feedback encourages collaborative learning among students. Students had the opportunity to clarify and to negotiate their writing products more effectively. In P4 classes in this study in particular, students were asked to do small group projects and therefore peer feedback made it easier for the participants easy to enhance the quality of their writing drafts.

### **Implications**

Firstly, the results of both graphs 12 and 13 showed, to satisfy learners' needs of peer feedback, teachers need to pay attention to how groups for peer feedback are formed. As Rollinson (2005) and Miao, Badger and Zhen (2006) explained the effectiveness of peer feedback on writing, the authors of this study admitted effectiveness of peer feedback to improve the quality of the final papers. However, in order to maximize students' expectation as both graphs 12 and 13 showed, it is important for teachers to consider members of a group for peer feedback.

Secondly, the results of both graphs 10 and 11 showed participants of this study tended to spend longer finishing their final papers. To support learners' time for their final papers, improving the quality of weekly homework is important for learners to have enough time to show and received feedback on their writing drafts before the deadline. The authors of this study gave their students weekly homework which was

aimed at assisting writing their final papers. Many of the participants of this study in fact did their homework every week but they did not tend to have enough time for getting some advice on their final papers before they submitted. Therefore, teachers need to ensure the quality of weekly homework of learners and encourage learners to do homework seriously.

Finally, as both results of Q9 and Q11 showed, there was a gap between what participants wanted and what they actually did regarding feedback for their writing. Students expect to get advice from their teachers but teachers tend to be busy which often makes it difficult to give individual feedback. In order to solve this problem, the authors of this study encourage both teachers and students to use academic support service if it is available. Hendriksen et al. (2005) found that students who utilized their academic support center and had tutoring sessions earned better final results in their course on average. Thus when academic support service is effectively used for students, teachers' workload will be reduced but students still can access some advice on their writing drafts.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the aim of this study was to investigate EFL learners' strategies of how they improved the process of their writing assignments before they submitted their final written assignments. Firstly, this study found the participants who had lower TOEIC scores tended to get advice on "English grammar" for their final papers. Secondly, the results of this study found that the participants of this study tended to spend longer to finish their final papers. Nearly half of the participants in this study started writing their final papers two weeks before the submission deadline but many participants finished writing their final papers within three days before the deadline. Thirdly, the results of this study revealed that participants preferred teachers' feedback to their peer feedback. However, the majority of the participants of this study, in fact, showed their final paper drafts to their peers instead of teachers. To support learners of English, the authors of this study suggest three implications. Firstly, it is important to consider the levels of learners' English skills when teachers give their learners' feedback. Secondly, to give learners enough time for writing their final papers, it is important for teachers to check the quality of weekly homework that supports completion of these final assignments. Lastly, to satisfy learners' needs of feedback, using an academic support service for learners is recommended. This study was limited to exploring learners' writing strategies in PBL English classes. Within the PBL English classes, learning writing skills as well as participating in presentations and discussions is utilized to improve students' English skills. In the future, examining learners' writing strategies in the other types of English classes, such as English writing classes, might show a different result from this study.

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## Appendix

Questions on questionnaires

Q1: Are you a man or woman?

Q2: Please tell us your TOEIC score

Q3: What year are you in?

Q4: How long did you spend on your final paper?

Q5: What was the most difficult part for you when you wrote your final paper?

Q6: Do you think academic writing skill is important for you?

Q7: Your homework every week was given to you in order to make your final paper.  
Did you do it?

Q8: Did you ask someone to check your final paper draft before you submitted it?

Q9: If you answered yes on Q8, then who did you ask?

Q10: If your university has an academic support, would you use it?

Q11: Who do you think you want to get advice for making your final paper?

Q12: When did you start writing your final paper?

Q13: When did you finish writing your final paper?

The logo for iafor (International Association for Applied Linguistics) is centered on the page. It features the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is surrounded by two large, overlapping, semi-transparent circular arcs. The outer arc is light blue and the inner arc is light red, both curving around the central text.



## *The Moral Imperative of Bi-cultural Leadership: The Leader Laid Bare*

Margaret Peggy Burrows, University of Canterbury, New Zealand

The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2016  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

This paper explores my experiences as a principal undertaking practitioner based, auto-ethnographic research, as I seek to appropriate new ways of leading that will ensure equity of educational outcomes for Māori students at Rangiora High School, a large state secondary school in the South Island of New Zealand/Aotearoa. This study was prompted following an analysis of our National Certificate of Educational Achievement [NCEA] student achievement data which highlighted unexpected and unacceptable disparities between Māori and Pākehā. Over the course of two years I collected the narratives of students in my school and used these to examine hegemonic imperatives that underpinned deficit thinking in our institution. Using that new knowledge I made deliberate changes to my leadership practice and then measure the effect my altered practice had on those around me. The work is important because, while there is a plethora of educational research around principal leadership, there is little if any auto-ethnographic research focussed on principal leadership, in a uniquely New Zealand context, underpinned by an examination of bicultural perspectives. This paper offers a unique opportunity to advance our understandings of the changing context within which qualitative inquiry may be practiced as well as the implications of such practice on raising achievement levels for Maori students.

Keywords: autoethnography, practitioner-based research, insider research, Māori achievement, cultural safety, indigenous inquiry

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## **Tīmatatanga<sup>1</sup> Ehara taku toa, he takitahi, he toa takitini**

I was appointed to the position of principal at Rangiora High School, a large semi-rural coeducational state secondary school located in North Canterbury, New Zealand in May 2003. The school was one hundred and nineteen years old and I was its tenth principal and the first woman to hold the position. The school's ethnic composition included 82% New Zealand European/Pākehā, 10% Māori, 3% Asian and 5% students classified as 'Other.'

One month after my arrival in June 2003 the school was reviewed by the Education Review Office,<sup>2</sup> as part of their published cycle of review of state funded schools. The review, published in November of that year, reported a lack of a professional engagement on the part of some staff, a general lack of student achievement, limited student engagement with quality learning opportunities and regular incidents of student bullying. The school's suspension and stand down rates were identified as higher than those of schools of a similar size and decile<sup>3</sup>.

The report made recommendations that my Board of Trustees<sup>4</sup> and I used to formulate a blueprint for school improvement (Stoll 1999). My clear mandate from the Board was to raise student achievement levels to above national norms and create a vibrant learning environment that met the needs of all students. I began by focussing on strengthening leadership capacity across the school. (Robertson 2008). Deal and Peterson's (1990) assertion that 'success is unlikely unless reforms are linked meaningfully to the daily realities and deep structure of life in schools' (p.12) resonated with me at this time. I discussed this challenge with staff and was buoyed up by the shared sense of commitment staff had to improving our school's overall performance (Fullan 2006). As with all change most staff were committed to the new systems and structures as we planned and introduced them. This carefully orchestrated and strategic approach saw us achieve significant gains over the next three years. The staff were energised, the students' engagement rates improved and our community celebrated the school's notable successes and as a result the school's roll grew steadily from 1276 students in 2003 to 1547 students by 2006.

A cursory look at our student achievement data at that time showed that our students were enjoying improved academic success however the reality was that success was a façade, a construct underpinned by hegemonic systems, institutional structures and general perceptions. The reality was we were a cruising school (Stoll and Fink 1988), perceived by our community as successful but not really performing to our true potential. This was clearly demonstrated in 2009, when we undertook a national

<sup>1</sup> Tīmatatanga: The Beginning. [My success should not be bestowed onto me alone, as it was not individual success but success of a collective].

<sup>2</sup> The Education Review Office (ERO) is the New Zealand Government Department that evaluates and reports on the education and care of students in schools and early childhood services within the state school sector.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.minedu.govt.nz/Parents/AllAges/EducationInNZ/SchoolsInNewZealand/SchoolDecileRatings.aspx>. Deciles assist the New Zealand Ministry of Education allocate Operations funding to schools. A decile is a 10% grouping. There are ten deciles and around 10% of schools are in each decile. Decile rating indicate a school's socio-economic ranking. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities. Decile 10 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from high socio-economic communities.

<sup>4</sup> Every state school and state-integrated school in New Zealand has a board of trustees. School boards are usually made up of three to seven elected parent representatives, the principal as the board's chief executive, professional advisor and educational leader, an elected staff representative and an elected student representative (in schools with students above year 9). Boards of Trustees are accountable to parents and caregivers, their local communities, the Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education, other government agencies and the public, for their actions and performance.

NZCER<sup>5</sup> research survey into leadership. On reviewing the findings I was surprised that a significant number of staff saw the principal as minimally effective in ensuring that the school's strategic/long-term goals were seen as important to Māori students and their whanau; and in ensuring that clear school-wide targets for the academic achievement of Māori students were made explicit.

On the back of this NZCER survey data our NCEA<sup>6</sup> achievement data also challenged my assumptions about my efficacy as an educational leader. While analysis of our student achievement data clearly showed improved levels of attainment to above national norms, as we drilled down, the data exposed a disparity in our Māori students' achievement when compared to their Pākehā peers. This disparity mirrored the national data on Māori student achievement and came as a shock to me given my assumptions around the gains we had made since my appointment. Even though my focus had been on building our leadership capacity to raise student achievement, and there was empirical evidence of overall success in that endeavour, the reality was Māori students did not achieve to the same degree as their Pākehā peers.

As a result of this revelation I decided to undertake a PhD research study using a practice-based insider research methodology (Merton 1972, Hellowell, 2006). My interest in strengthening leadership capacity had morphed into an exploration of new ways of leading (Senge, et. al. 1999) that would help us, as a school, address the disparities our data highlighted and provide legitimate pathways for Māori students to achieve to their full potential. Bicultural leadership approaches and strategies (Berryman & Bateman 2008) had been invisible in my leadership journey until that point. This reorientation was a challenge for me as I had little idea about what leadership looked like when it deliberately supported and promoted policies and practices that delivered success for Māori students<sup>7</sup>.

I was advantaged as an insider researcher (Greene 2014) because I had a legitimate and direct involvement with and connection to my research setting (Robson 2002). My work morphed into an auto-ethnographic study (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2010) as I focussed on narrative inquiry methods (Clendenin & Connelly, 2000). I began to explore my own journey as a principal and to track my learning over a two year period. I wrote personal narratives and collected the narratives of students and staff in my school. I distilled these stories into distinct themes, including alienation, invisibility, resistance and cultural clash (Bishop & Berryman 2006), (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh & Teddy 2009), (Whitinui 2011) and then I used these themes to examine hegemonic imperatives that underpinned deficit thinking in my school. Using the new knowledge I had acquired I then made deliberate changes to my own leadership practice and I measured the effect my altered practice had on me and those around me.

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<sup>5</sup> New Zealand Council for Educational Research - is an independent educational research organisation generating the ideas, questions, tools, products and services to meet educational needs of the New Zealand Education System in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<sup>6</sup> The National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA) is the main national qualification for secondary school students in New Zealand. NCEAs are recognised by employers, and used for selection by universities and polytechnics, both in New Zealand and overseas.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Promoting-Success-for-Maori-Students-Schools-Progress-June-2010>. Promoting Success for Māori Students: Schools' Progress (June 2010)\* : 05/10/2010

### **Māramatanga<sup>8</sup> He waka eke noa**

One narrative that will illustrate this approach explores the themes of resistance, alienation and taitama<sup>9</sup> Māori. Kaharoa Manihera [Ngai Tahu, Ngāi Tūhoe] a young Māori teacher on my staff had attended Rangiora High School in the 1980s. His narrative tells the story of his experiences as a sixteen year old high school student who was asked to leave the school because of his continual disobedience and defiance. The catalyst for that chain of events was an altercation with a Pākehā teacher who, while taking the class role one day, mispronounced Kaharoa's name. When the Pākehā teacher had found it difficult to pronounce Kaharoa's name he then insulted him by insisting publically that he would call him Karl instead because his "Māori" name was too hard to say. This highly intelligent bi-lingual young Māori male, who was fluent in his native tongue and was the repository of 2000 years of his tribe's whakapapa [oral history] refused to acquiesce to this instruction. His visceral response to the teacher, in full view of the class, ultimately cost him his place at Rangiora High School. Kaharoa's narrative is a story of exclusion and alienation, a story retold a thousand times over in the 150 year history of the New Zealand education system.

### **Kupu Whakatepe<sup>10</sup> Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi**

The real test of the value of this autoethnographic research project is seen in its positive impact on my practice as a principal and the changes I have made as a result of my experiences as a practitioner researcher. Fullan (2003) talks about moral purpose saying 'school leaders with moral purpose seek to make a difference in the lives of students' (p.17). As a result of the new knowledge I acquired I have a moral obligation to lead bi-culturally. With conscientization (Freire 1998) comes a moral imperative for all educational leaders and educators to provide culturally safe schools (MacFarlane, Glynn, Cavanagh, & Bateman 2007), where Māori student engagement and achievement is a priority. As principal I sought to make a difference in the lives of the students in my school. Initially I had failed Māori students and my sense of failure was profound. It was this epiphany that motivated me to look for new ways of leading that would enhance Māori student engagement and achievement. It did not matter how successful I had been as a principal in a mainstream setting if Māori students were not enjoying equity in educational achievement.

### **Whakahau Matatika<sup>11</sup> He wahine manawa kaha a Peggy, 'he matatika hītawetawe tōna'.**

It is not enough for educational leaders to look for strategies that don't disadvantage Māori within the school system. The paradigm which underpins our education system and educational leadership in New Zealand/Aotearoa must clearly advantage Māori students. Both must allow for Māori students to succeed as Māori and both must celebrate that success as normal and not an anomaly. That is the moral imperative for change.

<sup>8</sup> Māramatanga - enlightenment, insight, [A canoe which we are all in with no exception].

<sup>9</sup> Taitama - to be a young man.

<sup>10</sup> Conclusion. [With your basket and my basket the people will live.]

<sup>11</sup> Moral Imperative – [Peggy is a woman of strong character and high moral values.]

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## *Helping Students to Write an Overview for IELTS Academic Task 1*

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Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

More universities and third level institutions now require at least an IELTS Band 6 for entry into courses of study for non-native speakers of English. This presentation focuses on the IELTS Academic Writing Task 1 and in particular on the marking criterion of Task Achievement. A requirement for candidates aiming at Band 6 and above is that they include an *overview* in the text that they produce for Task 1. With this in mind, the presenter will examine what exactly is meant by an overview, how students can be assisted in forming one and the type of language which an overview normally incorporates. A number of classroom teaching ideas will be introduced and participants will have the opportunity to compare and discuss sample overviews written by candidates for this examination. Intended audience: teachers of IELTS Academic Writing.

Keywords: IELTS, overview, task achievement

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This paper looks at some ways in which students preparing to sit the IELTS Academic Module examination can be given guidance and assistance in achieving a higher band in the Task Achievement criterion of the marking rubric for Writing Task 1. It focuses specifically on the inclusion of an appropriate overview which would enable a candidate to obtain at least a score of 6 as far as Task Achievement is concerned. There are at least 7 or 8 different types of question which can appear in IELTS Academic Writing Task 1 (ranging from single line graphs to process diagrams and plans or maps). This paper will consider only those questions dealing with charts and graphs.

A quick perusal of the Task 1 Writing Band Descriptors (public version) indicates that a Task Achievement band 6 requires ‘an overview with information’. A band 7 requires ‘a clear overview of the main trends, differences or stages’. By comparison, a Task Achievement band 5 indicates that there is ‘no clear overview’. The implication of this, then, is that a candidate will need to produce some kind of overview in order to score a 6. Nowadays, there is increasing pressure on students to get an overall band 6 or higher to continue to the next stage of their academic study and hence the need to be more rigorous in preparation for the examination is clearly important.

IELTS preparation textbooks often do not clarify what exactly is meant by ‘an overview’ and students can sometimes be uncertain or confused as to the difference between writing an introduction to the Task 1 question and producing an overview. The difference between the two (and which needs to be clearly established), is that an introduction is generally a paraphrasing of the language which appears in the task to describe the subject or topic of the graph(s)/chart(s) whereas an overview highlights the main features and provides comparisons where necessary. The overview should generally be two or three sentences in length and should not include any figures – these can come later in the main body of the answer. An introduction need only be a single sentence long. An example of a typical Task 1 question is given in Appendix A (taken from the *Official IELTS Practice Materials*) and a good, sample answer can be found in Appendix B (where the introduction and overview have both been highlighted).

The importance of an overview is simply that it demonstrates the candidate’s ability to size up a graph or chart and extrapolate the key information from it. It shows that the candidate can take a step back and provide a succinct summary of what is presented in the question.

A point which is worth making is that students aiming for a higher score should also be able to distinguish between the two main types of graphs or charts – static and dynamic. This is again something which is not always made explicit in textbooks but there is an important difference which impacts on the strategies and approaches that are required for teasing out a solid overview. A static graph is one which shows a snapshot of a single point in time – there may be no time reference included at all, in fact. A dynamic graph, on the other hand, presents information over a period of time. Examples of static and dynamic graphs are given in Appendices C and D respectively. For static graphs, students need to look at features such as the highest and lowest figures, similarities and marked differences. With dynamic graphs, they are interested in trends – the change between the beginning of the time period and the end, significant fluctuations, peaks and troughs. A systematic examination of the graph or

chart using these guidelines will go a long way toward producing a good overview which in turn will make the writing of the main body of the answer much easier and more logical.

Although the marking criteria for Task 1 separate out key areas into 4 (Task Achievement, Coherence and Cohesion, Lexical Range, Grammatical Range and Accuracy), there are obviously parts of each of these which will influence the score on others. An appropriate overview, for example, will need to show evidence not just that the candidate has been able to identify the most salient features of the graph/chart but also that he/she has used suitable vocabulary and has a good command of certain grammatical areas. For an overview, the candidate will need conjunctions such as 'although', 'while', 'whereas', 'even though' and be able to produce these in grammatically correct complex sentences. There is also a whole raft of lexical items (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, phrases) which the candidate will need to select from to ensure an eye-catching overview. A selection of such lexical items is given in Appendix E. Further language of which students might avail is provided in Appendix F – these are mainly passive structures and time expressions but all are valuable in overview writing. All of this goes to illustrate that while the marking criteria are separated out into discrete areas, none exists in isolation and deficiencies in one area will ultimately affect another.

Students also often ask where exactly an overview should come in terms of the overall structure of their Task 1 answer. Probably the most logical place would be as a second paragraph, following the introduction (which paraphrases language already used in the actual question). If we take the answer as being divided into 4 paragraphs, then the structure might be something like this:

**Paragraph 1:** Introduction

**Paragraph 2:** Overview

**Paragraphs 3 & 4:** Expansion and elaboration of overview with figures and numbers provided

Paragraph 2 (the overview) acts like the skeleton of the answer and is a useful springboard for fleshing out the selection of information in the final 2 or 3 paragraphs. That said, there is nothing inherently wrong in using an overview as a conclusion. This can be a concise ending to the piece of writing and can be very effective. However, a Task 1 answer does not require a conclusion – it is most certainly something which is better suited to Task 2 as it implies some form of final judgement or consideration/assessment of a topic or situation. For this reason, students are probably best advised to use the overview earlier on as it lends itself easily to expansion and elaboration.

In summary, then, students preparing for IELTS and aiming at least for a Band 6 should be aware of the following as regards the writing of an overview:

1. Definition of an overview
2. Difference between an introduction and an overview
3. Why an overview is important
4. Difference between static and dynamic graphs/charts
5. Useful conjunctions for producing an overview
6. Useful nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, phrases
7. Passive structures and time expressions
8. Where to put an overview

## APPENDIX A

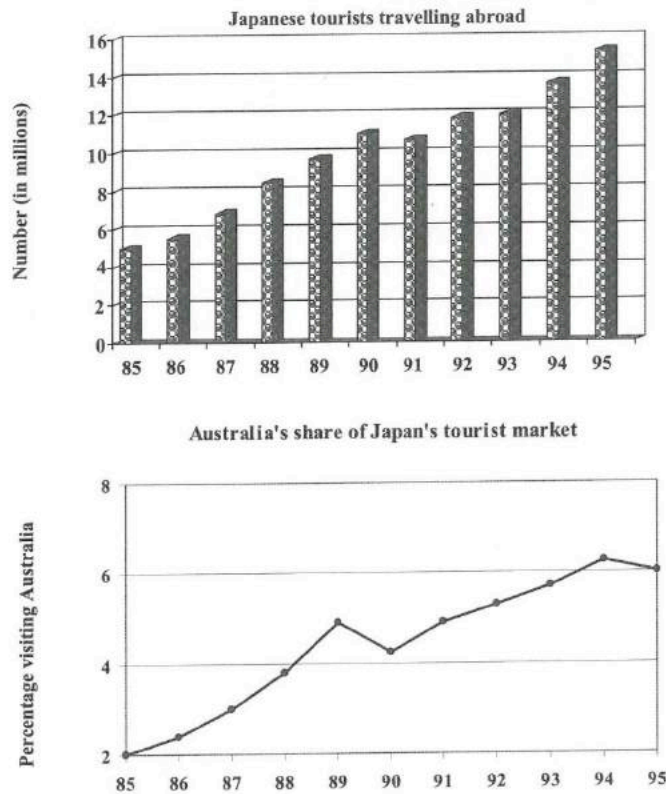
### WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

*The charts below show the number of Japanese tourists travelling abroad between 1985 and 1995 and Australia's share of the Japanese tourist market.*

*Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.*

Write at least 150 words.



## APPENDIX B

The charts show the number of tourists from Japan (in millions) who travelled outside their country between 1985 and 1995 and the percentage of Japanese tourists visiting Australia over the same number of years

From the graphs, it can be seen that over the given period there was a steady increase in both the numbers of Japanese tourists travelling abroad and in Australia's share of Japan's tourist market.

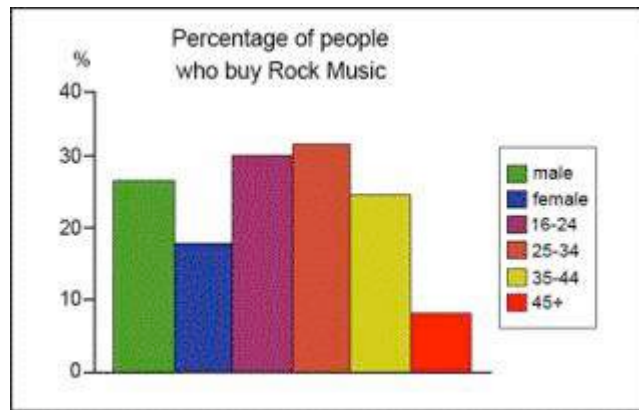
The first graph shows a clear upward trend between 1985 and 1995. From 1985 and 1990, numbers rose steadily from 5 million to just under 11 million. Numbers then dropped slightly in 1991 before rising again and remaining approximately the same for 1992 and 1993. The final two years showed a steady climb to a peak of about 15 million in 1995.

The second graph shows an upward trend between the years given. The percentage of Japanese tourists visiting Australia rose from 2% in 1985 to 6% ten years later. There was a steady increase between 1985 and 1989 but in the following year, the percentage fell slightly from 5 to just over 4%. Between 1990 and 1994, numbers continued to rise before levelling off in the final year (1995) at around 6%.

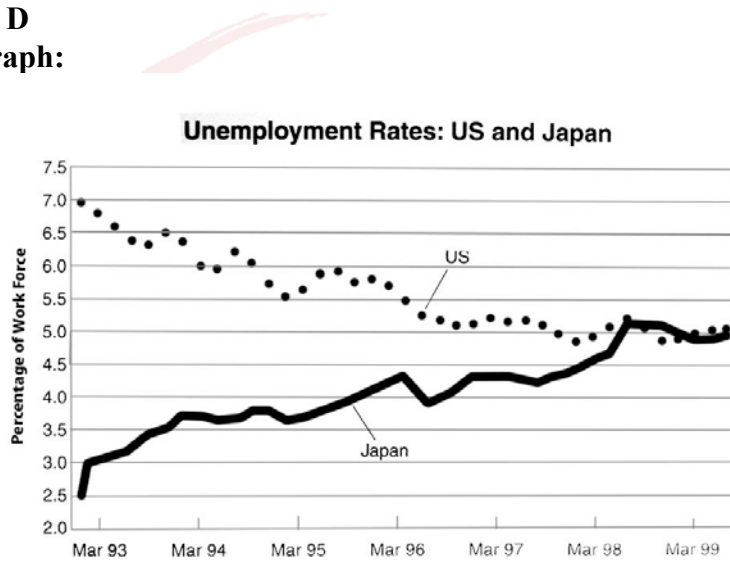
Both graphs are similar in that the trend is upward and over the ten year period numbers more or less tripled.

The logo for 'iafor' is centered on the page. It consists of the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is surrounded by several overlapping, semi-transparent circular arcs in shades of blue and red, creating a dynamic, circular graphic effect.







**APPENDIX C**  
**Static Graph:**







**APPENDIX D**  
**Dynamic Graph:**



**APPENDIX E**

						
<b>Nouns</b>	a rise an increase a surge a growth	a fall a drop a decline a dip	a peak	a fluctuation a variation	a period of stability	a plateau
<b>Verbs</b>	to rise to increase to surge to grow	to fall to drop to decline to dip	to peak	to fluctuate to vary	to stabilise	to plateau

						
<b>Phrases</b>	to show an upward trend	to show a downward trend  to hit the lowest point  to hit a trough	to reach a peak	to show some fluctuation /variation	to remain stable/constant	to reach a plateau  to level off  to flatten out

<b>Adjectives and Adverbs</b>	steady steadily	relative relatively	considerable considerably	the second highest  the third lowest	slight slightly gentle gently a little	gradual gradually
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**APPENDIX F**

- ▶ It can be clearly seen that ...
- ▶ It can be observed that ...
- ▶ It is clear that ...
- ▶ Overall, it is obvious that ...
- ▶ Over the entire time period, ...
- ▶ Throughout the period given, ...

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***Language Learning Strategies: The Case of Foreign Multilinguals in a Philippine Secondary School***

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Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

Studies have focused on learner-related factors have grown greatly through the years. However, local research directed on foreign language learners and their language learning styles have remained scarce. It is with this reason that this study was conducted. Using Rebecca Oxford's study on language learning styles and strategies (2003) as framework, the paper aims to identify the most and least frequently used language learning strategies by multilingual students in a Philippine secondary school, together with the correlation this has on their English language proficiency scores. The findings of this study were aimed at helping educators identify the learning styles that students prefer and those they don't in order to assist them in designing classroom strategies that correspond to students' manner of learning. Results of the rank order of frequency reveal that the most frequently used strategic category is metacognitive, followed by cognitive, social, compensation, memory, and affective. It has also been found out that there exists a statistically significant relationship between language learning strategies and English language proficiency. Therefore, it may be sound to say that learners with more variety of language learning strategies may have higher language proficiency.

Keywords: language learning strategies; individual differences; multilingual students

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## Introduction

Throughout the years, various research have ventured on determining the various factors that may positively or negatively affect the process of language learning. From teacher- focused classroom research, there has been a shift of interest to student-centered variables affecting language learning of both foreign and second language speakers. A number of these carefully undertaken studies focus on variables such as motivation (Benson, 1991; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Holt, 2001), level of anxiety (Aida, 1994; Chen & Lin, 2009; Djigunovic, 2006; Horwitz, 2001), willingness to communicate (Cetinkaya, 2005; MacIntyre, et al., 2003; McCroskey, 1997; Yousef, et al., 2013), and significantly, language learning strategies (Chamot, 2004; Clouston, 1997; Oxford, 1999; Tao, 2011).

Among these factors, one's learning strategies have been gaining much interest for being identified as a crucial factor in the entire process of language learning as results showed that there is a wider array of strategies being employed by the more successful language learners (Vann & Abraham, 1987, 1990, in Lee, 2010, p.143). Generally, language learning strategies are referred to by Weinstein and Mayer (1986) as "behaviors and thoughts that a learner engages in during learning" and are "intended to influence the learner's encoding process" (p. 315).

Although extensively studied in other countries, studies on this in the Philippines have remained scarce. Moreover, there is also limited literature focusing on the language learning strategies utilized by foreign multilinguals who have migrated to the Philippines. It is with the goal of improving the language learning of this set of learners in the Philippines by bridging this research gap that this study was conducted.

## Definition of language learning strategies

Language learning strategies have been defined by various professionals in applied linguistics. One of which was made by O'Malley and Chamot in 1990. According to them, learning strategies are "special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (p.1). This forms similarity with the definitions of Chamot in 2004 and Schmeck in 1988. Chamot claimed that these are deliberate views and actions employed in attaining a learning objective (p.14), in the same way as Schmeck defined them to be a collection of "learning tactics" that come together to achieve a learning outcome (Schmeck, 1988 in Klassen, et al., n.d.).

In 1975, Rubin also stated that these learner- constructed strategies help build one's language system and directly affects learning (p.22). It is also worth noting that learning strategy differs from learning style as the former is personally selected while the latter is involuntary (Ehrman & Oxford, 1990, p. 312). Additional studies of Oxford and Scarcella likewise characterize strategies as "specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques – such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task – used by students to enhance their own learning" (1992, p. 63).

## **Categories of language learning strategies**

As more studies were conducted on the importance of language learning strategies, much debate also stirred due to the different categories established by different professionals.

One of the earliest classification schemes was introduced by Naiman et al. (1978) whereby thirty-four good language learners were studied. They classified the learning strategies into five primary groups: active task approach, realization of language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands, and monitoring L2 performance.

Rubin (1981) presented two primary strategy classifications: strategies that directly affect learning, and process that contribute indirectly to learning. Under the first category are six other subgroups: clarification/verification (e.g., asking for an example of how to use a word or expression, repeating words to confirm understanding), monitoring (e.g., correcting errors in one/ others' pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, style), memorization (e.g., taking note of new items, pronouncing out loud, finding a mnemonic, writing items repeatedly), guessing/ inductive inferencing (e.g., guessing meaning from keywords, structures, pictures, context, etc.), deductive reasoning (e.g., comparing native/ other language to target language, word grouping, looking for rules of co-occurrence), and practice (e.g., experimenting with new sounds, repeating sentences until pronounced easily, and listening carefully and trying to imitate). Lastly, a greatly acknowledged categorization was presented by Oxford in 1990 and was the basis of this research.

## **Language learning strategies and language learning proficiency**

The extensive research on language learning strategies and their effect in over-all language proficiency generally show a positive correlation between the two, creating what is so called a "good language learner". At this point, it is important to establish the working definition of this term. According to the study of Rubin (1975), there is a gap between good and poor learners. Good learners are the ones who use a number of strategies to learn the language easily. They are conscious of the strategies they use and the reason why they use them. They are good guessers, and are willing to communicate, express, and analyze (pp. 46-47).

## **Research questions**

Specifically, the present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What language learning strategies are used most frequently by foreign multilinguals? What language learning strategies are used least?
2. How do language learning strategies affect their proficiency of the English language? How are these correlated with each other?

## **Theoretical Framework**

This research is structured using Rebecca Oxford's study on language learning styles and strategies (2003) where she explored the effect these factors have in L2 learning.

According to Oxford, a strategy may be considered valuable if it is (1) related to the L2 task, (2) associated with the learning style of the student, and (3) used effectively with other strategies (p. 8).

In the similar study, Oxford strongly claimed the positive effects of developing learning strategies not only in language learning but also in other content areas as these kind of students, also referred to as “good language learners” (Rubin, 1975). She noted that the “good language learners” do not have a specific set of strategies, but what they have is a set of varied, organized, and relevant strategies (p. 10).

Additionally, another scaffold of this research is Oxford’s six main categories of L2 learning strategies as seen in her work “Adult language learning styles and strategies in an intensive training setting” (1990). The six main categories are cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective, and social strategies. The first three categories are under direct strategies because language is involved, while the latter three are classified under indirect because they reinforce language learning using non- language factors.

### **Significance of the study**

The Philippines is known to be one of the Asian countries primarily attracting foreign students to its rich curricular offerings and standards in the field of English language learning, as supported by Ruth Tizon, Programme Director of the Philippines ESL Tour Program when she said in an article in The PIE News that the Philippines was chosen by international students studying English in Australia as an option country (ICEF Monitor, 2013). The Philippine Bureau of Immigration also confirms this through a report made in January 2013 stating that there was a 14% boost in the number of student immigrants in compares to the statistics in 2011, jumping from 41, 443 foreign students to 47, 478 (ICEF Monitor, 2013).

Considering this report and assuming this to be the same in the incoming years, the researchers believe that the study is going to benefit these foreign multilinguals that come to the Philippines with the hope of improving their English proficiency. Not only will this benefit foreigners but will also help Filipino multilinguals.

Through this research, educators may derive insights on what works for students nowadays, and apply these in designing new teaching methodologies. Knowing the strategies being frequently used by students also allows for the teachers to connect directly with the needs of the students. This paper is also significant in furthering local research related to language learning strategies.

### **Research Design**

This research study is descriptive in nature which focused only the identification of the language learning strategies employed by the multilingual learners in learning English. The study also deals with the analysis as to whether these language learning strategies influence the performance and the proficiency in the subject. Furthermore, descriptive statistics was also applied, attaining only the mean and standard deviation as the questionnaire administered to the respondents used the five-point Likert Scale to gather the demographic data of the participants and to calculate their overall

strategy use. As for the data analysis, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine how these language learning strategies correlate to the proficiency of the respondents.

### **Participants**

A total of 30 multilingual students were included in this research study. The participants were heterogeneously mixed Grade 9 and Grade 10 students that could utilize more than two languages. The languages varied from European languages like French and Italian to Asian languages like Korean and Japanese.

### **Instrument**

To address the main objective of the study which is to investigate the relationship and correlation between the language learning strategies and the English language proficiency of the respondents, the research study utilized Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) to identify the learning strategies of the participants. The study used the SILL's 50-item questionnaire for learners of English as second or foreign language (ESL/EFL). The SILL uses a choice of five Likert-scale responses for each strategy described: never or almost never true of me, generally not true of me, somewhat true of me, generally true of me, and always or almost always true of me. On the SILL, respondents were asked to indicate their response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) to a strategy description, such as "I physically act out new English words" or "I try to talk like native English speakers". The SILL is a comprehensible and validated approach in the identification of the language learning strategies of the students that include "the social and affective sides of the learner as well as the more intellectual (cognitive) and "executive-managerial"(metacognitive)" (Oxford, 2001). Oxford also emphasized that the SILL assesses the totality of the learner's language performance rather than just the cognitive and metacognitive side of the students.

According to Oxford (2001), six subscales were established from the SILL to facilitate more thorough understanding of the learning strategies of the ESL/EFL. These subscales included:

1. Memory strategies, such as grouping, imagery, rhyming, and structured reviewing.
2. Cognitive strategies, such as reasoning, analyzing, summarizing (all reflective of deep processing), as well as general practicing.
3. Compensation strategies (to compensate for limited knowledge), such as guessing meanings from the context in reading and listening and using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning when the precise expression is not known.
4. Metacognitive strategies, such as paying attention, consciously searching for practice opportunities, planning for language tasks, self-evaluating one's progress, and monitoring errors.
5. Affective (emotional, motivation-related) strategies, such as anxiety reduction, self-encouragement, and self-reward.
6. Social strategies, such as asking questions, cooperating with native speakers of the language, and becoming culturally aware.

These subscales were used to identify the strategies used by the participants. These subscales were also determined to classify which language learning strategies were the most and least employed by the multilingual respondents of the study. For the

English language proficiency, the students' 1st term A.Y. 2014- 2015 English grades were measured as the reflection of their English proficiency.

### **Procedure**

After making the preparations and the time schedule, copies of the questionnaire were made. All students agreed to participate in the study before the distribution of the SILL survey. During the completion of the questionnaire, the students stayed in their respective classrooms to avoid distractions and the teachers offered some necessary help to them by explaining the instructions on the questionnaire and asking them to provide the demographic information first. After that, the students spent 20-30 minutes to finish the 50-item questionnaire.

### **Method of Analysis**

The means and standard deviation for each item analyses of the corpus were computed as the statistical method applied by the research study. Oxford (1990) suggests a mean of lower than 2.5 for "low", a mean range of 2.5 to 3.4 for "medium," and a mean range of 3.5 to 5 for "high" levels of strategy use.

To identify the language learning strategy most or least commonly used by the respondents, the 50-item questionnaire was categorized according to the six subscales of Strategy Inventory for Language Learning by Oxford (2001). These subscales are (1) Memory Strategies, (2) Cognitive Strategies, (3) Compensation Strategies, (4) Metacognitive Strategies, (5) Affective Strategies, and (6) Social Strategies. The responses of the participants were tallied and analyzed using the scheme above to determine the interpretation according to the 5-point Likert scale. The mean of each statement and the mean of each subscale were also computed to identify the rank of the language learning strategy used.

### **Results and Discussions**

Descriptive statistics was employed to investigate the language learning strategies used by the multilingual ESL/EFL students. Table 1 illustrates that the mean of frequency of overall strategy use was 3.47, which was approximately almost at the high degree of usage (with a range from 1 to 5). According to the results of Table 1, the most frequently used strategy was metacognitive strategies, (M= 3.76) and followed by cognitive strategies, (M =3.71), social strategies (M =3.63), compensation strategies (M=3.24), memory strategies (M =3.17) and lastly, affective strategies (M= 2.96). Metacognitive, cognitive and social strategies were at high level of usage that suggests more students employ these strategies in their English subject.



Table 1: Summary of Descriptive Statistics for Language Learning Strategy Use

Strategy	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Interpretation	Rank
Memory	3.17	0.57	2.33	3.9	Medium	5
Cognitive	3.71	0.47	3.03	4.63	High	2
Compensation	3.24	0.58	2.37	4.20	Medium	4
Metacognitive	3.76	0.44	2.73	4.27	High	1
Affective	2.96	0.64	2.47	3.90	Medium	6
Social	3.63	0.49	3.00	4.40	High	3
Overall Strategy Use	3.47	.58	2.33	4.63	Medium	

Table 2 illustrates the ten most frequently used language learning strategies of the multilingual respondents. The statement “I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English” got the highest mean followed by statements “I ask questions in English” and “I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.” These results might be attributed to the proliferation and availability of media using English as medium. These results also indicate that the respondents learn the language through practice like statements “I start conversations in English”; “I practice English with other students.” and “I try to talk like native English speakers.” The statements “I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.” and “I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.” show that the respondents were conscious about their own learning and improvement.

Table 2: Ten most frequently used language learning strategies of the foreign multilingual respondents

Rank	Statement	Mean	SD
1	15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English.	4.63	0.37
2	49. I ask questions in English.	4.40	0.46
3	17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English.	4.33	0.65
4	14. I start conversations in English.	4.30	0.49
5	32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	4.27	0.58
6	29. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing	4.20	0.50
7	31. I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	4.10	0.64
8.5	33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	4.00	0.76
8.5	47. I practice English with other students.	4.00	0.71
10	11. I try to talk like native English speakers.	3.97	0.81



Table 3 illustrates the least frequently used learning strategies of the foreign multilingual students of the study. Out of all 50 strategies, the statement “I use flashcards to remember new English word.” was the least frequently used by the respondents followed by “I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.” Out of the six items under affective language learning strategy, half falls under the least frequently used by the respondents. It is evident that the respondents were less mindful of their feelings towards language learning with such statements like “I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English” and “I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.” falling under the least frequently employed learning strategy. Some strategies like “I physically act out new English word.” and “I use rhymes to remember new English words.” might have been least used by the respondents due to the fact that these strategies are mostly used by beginner learners.

Table 3: Ten least frequently used language learning strategies of the foreign multilingual respondents

Rank	Statement	Mean	SD
1	6. I use flashcards to remember new English word.	2.33	1.26
2	26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	2.37	1.19
3.5	42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	2.47	0.97
3.5	43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	2.47	1.45
5	44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English	2.53	1.25
6	7. I physically act out new English word.	2.57	0.93
7	5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.	2.67	0.96
8.5	34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.	2.73	0.95
8.5	41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.	2.73	1.32
10	46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	3.00	1.12

Table 4 shows the result of the Pearson correlation analysis of each student’s language learning strategies and the students’ language proficiency as reflected with their 1<sup>st</sup> term A.Y. 2014- 2015 English grades. As seen in the table, the computed  $r$  between language learning strategies and language proficiency is .470. The significant value is .009, which is lesser than the significant level of ( $p < 0.05$ ). This implies a moderate relationship between language learning strategies and language proficiency. Thus, there is a relationship between these two variables. Apparently, the respondents who employed more language learning strategies got higher English grade proving the

study of Rubin (1975), that good learners utilize more varied and eclectic strategies to improve their language proficiency.

Table 4: Correlation between Language Learning Strategies and Language Proficiency

		Score of Language Learning Strategy	Average English Grade
Score of Language Learning Strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	.470
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	30	30
Average English Grade	Pearson Correlation	.470	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	30	30

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

### Conclusion and Recommendation

This study aimed to identify the different language learning strategies of foreign multilingual students using Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). Additionally, this study wanted to investigate the correlation of these language learning strategies to the language proficiency of the students. From the results, more than half of the strategies are all in medium level of usage. According to the rank order of the frequency of use, the most frequently used strategy was metacognitive and followed by cognitive, social, compensation, memory, and affective. The findings also demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between language learning strategies and language proficiency. This proves that learners with more variety of language learning strategies have higher language proficiency.

Based on the findings of the study, some pedagogical implications may be suggested. Since the importance of using language learning strategies might be a vital understanding to the students; thus, educators should impart this message. According to the results of this study, learners with more language learning strategies used have better language proficiency. With this knowledge, a learner should develop more language learning strategies for further enhancement of one's language proficiency. This could be beneficial in helping the poor learners develop their own language ability. Consequently, educators should have a better understanding of their learners and should help students cultivate and raise awareness of language learning strategies. Educators have been implicitly teaching language learning strategies with the different classroom activities. The following is a list of recommended activities based on the learning strategy categories mentioned in this study:

1. Memory- using schema, presenting words in context and in sentences.
2. Cognitive- grouping, constructing graphic organizers, note-taking, elaborating prior knowledge, summarizing, deducting, inducting, visualizing through imagery, making inferences.
3. Compensation- word parsing, identifying synonyms.
4. Metacognitive- previewing, skimming, identifying the gist, organizational planning, listening or reading selectively, scanning, finding specific information, monitoring comprehension, monitoring production.
5. Affective- speaking in front of an audience, short speeches.

6. Social- questioning for clarification, cooperating or working with classmates, thinking aloud, developing turn-taking skills, assigning buddies.

Moreover, development of methodologies for students with varied language learning strategies may enhance the proficiency of each learner. Once students are aware of advantages of using strategies in their language learning process, they will be willing to and appropriately employ these strategies to facilitate their English learning.



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## *Sing and Move – Removing Static English Language Classroom*

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### **Abstract**

Very often in Taiwan, elementary students learn passively in English language classroom. The learning environment is static and students appear to be shy, quiet and intimidated. Nevertheless, once outside the classroom, they become energetic, physical active and talkative. Young children's characteristics might need to be considered in a language classroom to maximize their engagement in learning. Providing multiple ways to learn and the elements of songs and body movements might bring improvement to their learning. This study aims to explore the effect of the integration of songs, jazz chants, and body movements in elementary English lessons on students' learning outcome in a four-day English summer camp. Twenty-two Grade 2 to Grade 6 students participated in this study. A pre-test and a post-test of the learning content were given at the beginning and at the end of the camp. The results showed significant improvement in reading, speaking and writing.

Keywords: second language learning, elementary education, English language, learning outcome

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## **Introduction**

In Taiwan, elementary schools often seek opportunities to improve their students' English ability. At elementary level, without the pressure of national exams, the English language curriculum can be more flexible. Nevertheless, with many subjects to be included in students' class schedules, English lessons are very limited. There may be only up to two lessons each week. Therefore, some elementary schools will consider summer camps as extra learning opportunities for their students.

Considering the nature of students at the elementary level, they are often described to be energetic and physically active, spontaneous and not afraid to speak out and participate (Shin & Crandall, 2014). However, in Taiwan, when learning English in traditional classrooms where the learning environment is static and students are involved in mechanical exercises, some elementary students tend to be shy, passive and intimidated. It seems that their behavior in traditional classrooms is contradictory to their natural characteristics. English lessons, therefore, may need to be designed with young children's characteristics in mind. Hence, it may affect their engagement in learning. Furthermore, even young children might have their preferred learning styles in different circumstances and possess multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983; Gardner, 1999). Providing young children with multiple ways to learn may improve their learning outcome (Dunn & Dunn, 1978; Gilakjani, 2012; Hattie, 2011). Thus, in contrast to traditional English classrooms, English lessons can be designed to engage young children physically with the use of songs, jazz chants and body movements. This study aims to explore the effect of the integration of these elements in elementary English lessons on students' learning outcome in a four-day English summer camp.

### **The context of the study**

This study was done in the form of industry-academia cooperation and was initiated by a local elementary school. The local elementary was seeking cooperation opportunities with a university to conduct an English summer camp for their students, who were passive and shy in English lessons. The aims of the English summer camp were to provide their students with extra English learning opportunities and more engaging English learning activities in the summer. The integration of songs, jazz chants and body movements in English lessons might provide different English learning experiences to the students, which might improve their engagement in the classroom and learning outcome.

In this study, five junior university students designed a four-day English summer camp for an elementary school in Taiwan. They were pursuing a bachelor's degree in foreign language instruction at a university in southern Taiwan. This degree program aims to prepare students to be EFL teachers. These five student teachers did this four-day English summer camp in July as part of their graduation project. They started preparing four months before the English camp took place under the guidance of their advisor. They needed to organize all the camp activities, design English lessons, produce learning materials and teaching aids and teach in the camp.

The target elementary school is located in southern Taiwan. It is a relatively small school with 12 classes from grade two to grade six (two class per grade) comparing to

other elementary schools in the cities. Formal English classes are provided starting from grade three onwards. Before the English summer camp took place, the target elementary school recruited 23 of their students between grade two and grade six to join this summer camp. They were divided into two classes – Class A (12 students) and Class B (11 students). Each class contained mixed grade students ranging from grade two to grade six (see Table 1). The student teachers designed six 40-minute English lessons integrating songs, rhythms and body movements (see Table 2). There were two topics, Animals and Body Parts. Each topic contained three units. Topic 1 – *Body Parts* included (1) *Build Up Yourself*, (2) *Body Up*, and (3) *Moving All of Us*. Topic 2 – *Animals* included (1) *Where is the Animals?*, (2) *Animals Difference*, and (3) *Animals Up and Down*. On the fourth day of the camp, each class had to participate in an English performance event showing what they had learned from the lessons, e.g. singing a song with actions. Class A performed the body part song and Class B performed the animal jazz chant. To prepare for the event, three lessons distributed in the afternoon on the first, second and third days of the camp were assigned for students to practice their performances. The aims of the lessons were to develop students' interests in learning English and improve their learning outcome of English through songs, jazz chants and body movements.

Table 1. Distribution of students in Class A and Class B

Grades	Number of students in Class A	Number of students in Class B
Grade 2	5	4
Grade 3	3	4
Grade 4	2	2
Grade 5	1	1
Grade 6	1	0
	Total = 12	Total = 11

Table 2. Lessons arrangement for Class A in the camp

Date	7/6 (Mon)	7/7 (Tue)	7/8 (Wed)	7/9 (Thurs)
Time				
8:00–8:30	Sign-In			
8:30–9:00	Briefing	Morning Exercises	Morning Exercises	Morning Exercises & Photo Taking
9:00–9:10	Break			
9:10–9:50	Pretest & Welcoming	<b>Body Up!</b>	<b>Animals Discovery</b>	<b>Animals Up and Down!</b>
9:50–10:00	Break			
10:00–10:40	<b>Build up yourself!</b>	Review Activities	Review Activities	Review Activities & Post Test
10:40–10:50	Break			
10:50–11:30	Review Activities	<b>Moving All of Us!</b>	<b>Animals' Difference</b>	Final Performance Rehearsal
11:40–12:50	Lunch & Lunch Break			
13:00–13:40	Final Performance Practice	Final Performance Practice	Final Performance Practice	Final Performance & Farewell
13:40–13:50	Break			
13:50–14:30	Group Activities	Group Activities	Group Activities	

## Research Method

Twenty-two out of the 23 second-graders to sixth-graders participated in the 4-day English summer camp stated above (One second-grader was excluded due to her incompleteness of her post-test). A learning styles survey was given to the participants to find out their dominant learning styles (visual, auditory and tactile/kinesthetic learning styles) at the beginning of the camp. The survey was adapted from the Elementary Learning Style Inventory (2012) by Stetson and Associates, Inc. originally contained 30 items (10 items for each learning style) in English. Only five items from each learning style were selected and translated into Chinese to make the survey in this study in order to reduce the possible fatigue effect when answering the survey for young children. The participants checked the items that they thought described them. The number of checks were added, recorded and analyzed according to the three learning styles. Also, they were given a survey of eight questions asking about their previous English learning experiences and a pre-test of the lesson content in the summer camp. There were four sections – listening (5 items; 20 points), writing (8 items; 32 points), reading (6 items; 24 points) and speaking (6 items; 24 points) in the pre-test. During the camp, the participants received six 40-minute English lessons under two topics – Body Parts and Animals, which included the elements of songs, jazz chants, and body movements. At the end of the camp, the participants were given a post-test, which was the same as the pre-test. The scores of the pre-test and post-tests were analyzed using dependent-sample t-tests on the Social Science Statistics website (<http://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/ttestdependent/Default2.aspx>). The data of the previous English learning experience survey and feedbacks were analyzed manually.

## Results

The results of the previous learning experience survey revealed that most of the participants (89%) liked English. Forty-two percent of them had learned English for over two years. Half of them believed that English was very important to them. Among the choices of means of learning English, the participants seemed to like various means of learning, such as games, music, videos and DIY, instead of a particular one. Almost all of them (96%) liked to have group work, and the teaching contents (54%) were the main factor that affected that willingness to learn English. Among the four skills of English, they thought that they were slightly weaker in writing (31%) and speaking (31%) than listening (15%) and reading (23%). Furthermore, they thought that tactile/kinesthetic activities (54%), especially playing games, helped them remember better while learning English.

The learning styles survey showed that the participants had higher scores on tactile/Kinesthetic learning style, followed by auditory learning style and then visual learning style. The differences were more obvious for third graders and above (see Table 3).

Table 3. Results of the learning styles survey

Grades	Visual	Auditory	Tactile/Kinesthetic
Grade 2 (n=8)	3.4	3.8	3.9
Grade 3 (n=6)	2.6	3.1	3.6
Grade 4-6 (n=7)	1.7	2.1	3.1
Grade 2-6 (n=21)	<b>2.6</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>3.5</b>

The analyses of pre-test and post-test showed significant improvement in learning outcome in reading, speaking and writing ( $P < 0.05$ ) with mean differences at 6.00, 7.64, and 9.45 respectively while listening did not show a significant difference ( $P > 0.10$ ) (see Table 4 and 5). The participants had the best scores in listening (18.36; 91.8% and 18.00; 90.0% respectively) and the lowest scores in writing (5.82; 18.2% and 15.27; 47.7% respectively) in the pre-test and post-test.

Table 4. The means and standard deviations of the listening, reading, speaking and writing scores of the pre-test and post-test

Language Skills (Total Scores)	Pre-test Scores n=22		Post-test Scores n=22	
	Means	SD	Means	SD
Listening (20)	18.36	4.39	18.00	5.20
Reading (24)	13.27	6.80	19.27	5.74
Speaking (24)	11.45	8.03	19.09	4.77
Writing (32)	5.82	7.48	15.27	11.08

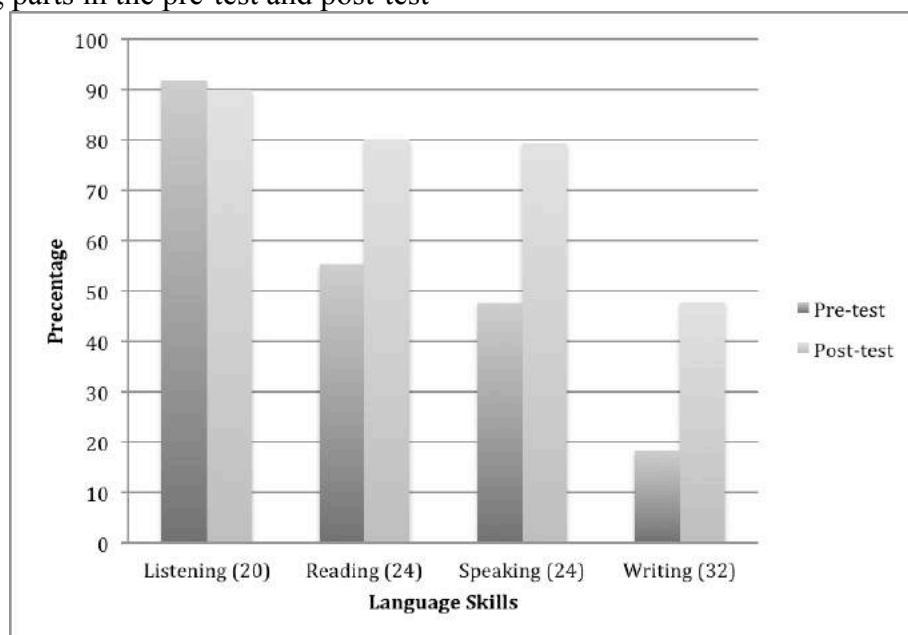
Table 5. Significance of listening, reading, speaking and writing scores between the pre-test and post-test

Language skills	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
Listening		
Pre – Post	-0.36	0.754
Reading		
Pre – Post	6.00	0.004
Speaking		
Pre – Post	7.64	0.000
Writing		
Pre – Post	9.45	0.001

Table 6. The scores in percentages of the listening, reading, speaking and writing parts in the pre-test and post-test

Language Skills (Total Scores)	Pre-test Scores n=22		Post-test Scores n=22	
	Means	%	Means	%
Listening (20)	18.36	91.8	18.00	90.0
Reading (24)	13.27	55.3	19.27	80.3
Speaking (24)	11.45	47.7	19.09	79.5
Writing (32)	5.82	18.2	15.27	47.8

Graph 1. Bar chart of the scores in percentages of the listening, reading, speaking and writing parts in the pre-test and post-test



### Discussion and conclusion

English summer camps can be provided as extra English learning opportunities for elementary students in Taiwan. The integration of songs, jazz chants and body movements in elementary English lessons could be beneficial to the learning outcome of students who were passive and shy in their regular English language classrooms. The results of this study showed significant improvement in reading, speaking and writing.

According to the results of the learning style survey, the participants had a higher rating on tactile/kinesthetic learning style. The participants were more likely to learn best through movements and using their body and hands. In this study, songs, jazz chants and body movements were integrated in the English lessons in the summer camp. The significant improvement of the reading, speaking and writing scores after the post-test indicated that the elements of songs, jazz chants and body movements might have facilitated the participants' learning. Regarding to listening, the participants had very high scores (18.39; 91.8%) in the pre-test and therefore the test might not able to assess improvement in the post-test.

In the previous English learning experience survey, the participants expressed that they were weaker in speaking and writing, which are productive skills. Compared to receptive skills, listening and reading, productive skills are relatively more demanding and more difficult to master. The results of the pre-test and post-test confirmed this phenomenon. The participants had higher scores in listening and reading and lower scores in speaking and writing in both the pre-test and post-test. It appeared that writing was the most difficult for the students. Nevertheless, the post-test results showed that the participants made great progress in speaking (from 47.7% to 79.5% and in writing (from 18.2% to 47.8).

Based on the results of this study, integration of songs, jazz chants and body movements in elementary English language classrooms should be encouraged. Teachers of English may add some of these elements in their current lessons. They may modify their teaching materials into songs and jazz chants, and they also can create body movements for their teaching materials when applicable.

Nonetheless, there were limitations in this study. Other variables, such as the teachers' performance and peer interactions in the class, might also have contributed to the significant improvement of the learning outcome. Without a control group, it would not be able to single out the causes of the positive effects. Furthermore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to other populations due to the small sample size and could only be applied to similar situations. Therefore, further research should be done in various settings.





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***Enhancing Students Willingness to Communicate in English through Korean Pop Culture: A Case Study***

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**Abstract**

In recent years, Korean pop culture such as Korean drama, pop singers and TV programs have gained popularity in Taiwan, particularly among teenagers. The aim of the present study is to find out whether students' will be more willing to use English to communicate with topics they are interested in.

The participants were 37 students from a local middle school. Throughout the five-day camp, various topics related to Korean cultures have been used in the lessons during teaching, such as Korean Festival, Korean Landscape, Korean Food. At the end of the camp, students have to use English to give a three minutes presentation comparing Taiwanese culture with Korean culture. Through the presentation, students will be able to apply what they have learned into the presentation.

At the end of the camp, 78% of the participants stated that they enjoyed learning English through Korean pop culture, 41% of the participants indicated their English speaking ability have improved and 94% of the participants indicated that they have gained knowledge about Korean cultures and 81% of the participant stated that the camp has met their expectation. Among the 32 participants who filled out the questionnaire at the end of the camp, 17 would like to participate in similar English camp in the future and 13 stated they are not sure if they would be able to participate in the future, it would depend on whether they have time or parents' decision.

Keywords: willingness to communicate, motivation, culture, peer influence, learning community

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## Introduction

### Background of the Study

Learning about the syntactic structure of a target language is not the same as learning how to speak that language. This reality is especially applicable to learners who reside in countries where access to the target language is limited mainly to classroom learning. The goal of the present study is to explore the means to enhance middle school students' in Taiwan to actively and willingly participate and speak English with topics that they are familiar with outside of classroom setting. Middle school students were selected to participate in this study because they were at the stage where memorizing vocabulary words and grammar rules are important and they do not have much opportunity to speak during the class.

### Purpose of the Study

In recent years, Korean pop culture such as Korean drama, pop singers and TV programs have gained popularity in Taiwan, particularly among teenagers. The aim of the present study is to find out whether students' will be more willing to use English to communicate with topics they are interested in.

The participants were 37 students from a local middle school. Throughout the five-day camp, various topics related to Korean cultures have been used in the lessons during teaching, such as Korean Festival, Korean Landscape, Korean Food. At the end of the camp, students have to use English to give a three minutes presentation comparing Taiwanese culture with Korean culture. Through the presentation, students will be able to apply what they have learned into the presentation.

The research questions of this study are:

1. What do students expected to learn through the five-day camp?
2. In terms of the four skills, which skill would they like to improve?
3. Did the course and activities designed meet students' expectations?

### Research Procedure

The research design and procedure is shown in timeline format below:

2015/2/1	Fushan Summer Camp dates confirmed.
2015/3/1-2015/3/30	Recruit Camp Assistants
2015/4/1-2015/6/30	Train Camp Assistant
	Course design
	Material design
2015/7/1	Summer Camp Start
	Distribute Pre-Course Questionnaire
	Observing and videotaping students' interaction and performance
2015/7/5	Summer Camp End
	Distribute Post-Course Questionnaire
2015/7/5-2015/12/31	Analyzing questionnaire and observation result

## Literature Review

Willingness to communicate (WTC) has been defined as the intention to initiate communication, given a choice. In the late 1990s, many second language acquisition (SLA) researchers began to realize that there is a difference between WTC and communicative competence. Thus, MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, and Noels (1998) argued that there is a need to examine WTC in the L2, define the concept as the individual's "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using L2" (p.547)

According to Wen and Clement (2003), how to generate students' WTC to improve their oral proficiency has been a key issue for English language teaching in China. This is a key issue because Chinese students are recognized for their adeptness in grammar-based written examinations but poor in oral communication skills.

To Chinese students taught in a grammar-translation approach, every phenomenon in language must be judged according to grammar structures. As students have memorized so many rules so well, it is natural that they are rule-ridden driven and tend to monitor themselves all the time, constantly checking their output against their knowledge of English. Horwitz(1984) stated a number of students believe nothing should be said in the foreign language until it can be said correctly and that it is not okay to guess in an unknown foreign language word. Such beliefs must produce anxiety since students are expected to communicate in the second tongue before fluency is attained. According to MacIntyre and Gardner (1991), "learners do not begin the language learning experience with anxiety. Anxiety occurs only when attitudes and emotions regarding the language learning experience have been formed" (p.527).

## Methodology

The study was conducted at a middle school in southern Taiwan. The participants were 37 students who attended the camp as part of their summer school program. The camp lasted for five days from July 1<sup>st</sup> to July 5<sup>th</sup>. Lessons included food, tourist sites, festival and table manners in Korea. Throughout the five-day camp, various activities have been used in the lessons during teaching, such as the use of worksheets with questions for students to find the answers from the reading on their own to train their reading skills, and three-minute individual presentation to let students compare the differences between Korean and Taiwanese culture based on what they have learned throughout the five-day camp. (See Appendix 1 for class schedule)

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used during the data collecting process. Quantitative data include pre and post course questionnaires. Qualitative data include field notes from the lesson, videotaping the lessons and students' presentation performance.

## Result, Discussion and Conclusion

### Research Question One

*What do students expected to learn through the five-day camp?*

In terms of what participants expected to learn from the summer camp, 35% stated they would like to learn Korean culture, 24% would like to learn all Korean related topics designed for the course and another 14% stated that they would like to learn Korean culture (See Table 1). This indicated that students are interested in topics related to Korea.

Table 1: What do participants expected to learn from the camp?

	Frequency	Percentage
Korean Culture	13	35
Korean Food	2	5
Korean Festival	2	5
Korean Landscapes	1	3
Food + Landscape	3	8
Culture + Landscape	5	14
Culture + Landscape + Food+ Festival	9	24
Culture+ Landscape + Festival	1	3
More vocabulary	1	3
Total	37	100

Note: The percentages calculated are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 2 discussed teaching approaches that participants preferred during the summer camp, 97% of the participants indicated that they would prefer interactive teaching approach instead of traditional teaching. This result indicated that participants are interested in learning English through communication with peers and in a more relaxed atmosphere.

Table 2: Which teaching approaches participants prefer?

Teaching Approach	Frequency	Percentage
Interactive	36	97
Traditional	1	3
Total	56	100.0

Note: The percentages calculated are rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Research Question Two

*In terms of the four skills, which skill would they like to improve?*

As participants were asked which language skill they would like to improve during the summer camp, 54% of participants stated that they would like to focus on speaking, 16% would like to improve their writing skills and 13% of participants would like to improve both listening and speaking skills (See Table 3). This result is consistent with their reasons for attending the camp which indicates that participants are eager to apply and use English through oral communication in their daily life.

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Table 3: Which language skill would you like to improve?

Language Skill	Frequency	Percentage
Listening	1	3
Speaking	20	54
Reading	1	3
Writing	6	16
Listening + Speaking	5	13
Listening + Speaking+ reading	1	3
All four	3	8
Total	37	100

Note: The percentages calculated are rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Research Question Three

*Did the course and activities designed meet students' expectations?*

At the end of the summer camp, participants were asked to complete a post course questionnaire; questions include whether participants are satisfied with the topics designed, teaching approaches used, and their willingness to participate in a similar camp in the future. In order to find out whether the participants have become more familiar with the topics taught through activities during the summer camp, two questions related to the topics were also included in the survey. As Table 4 shown, 82% of participants indicated that the course and activities designed has met their expectation and they have gained knowledge about Korean culture through the camp (See Table 5).



Table 4: The course and activity designed has met my expectation.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	13	41
Agree	13	41
So so	6	18
Total	32	100

Note: The percentages calculated are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 5: I have gained some knowledges related to Korean culture through the camp.

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	16	50
Agree	14	44
So so	2	6
Total	32	100

Note: The percentages calculated are rounded to the nearest whole number.

In terms of the skills students would like to improve, as Table 6 has shown, 41% of participants claimed their speaking skills have improved through the camp and 22% indicated that both their listening and speaking skills have improved as they expected at the beginning of the course .

Table 6: Which skills did the camp help you improve?

	Frequency	Percentage
Overall	3	9
Listening	1	3
Speaking	13	41
Listening + reading + speaking	3	9
Listening + Speaking	7	22
Reading + Speaking	1	3
Speaking + Writing	1	3
Listening + Writing	1	3
Reading + Writing	1	3
Listening + Reading + Speaking	1	3
Total	32	100

Note: The percentages calculated are rounded to the nearest whole number.

## **Conclusion**

The participants in this study generally expressed positive attitude toward learning English through activities. They expressed how learning through activities could provide them more opportunities to use the language and more fun. Their attitude toward future participation of similar camp relies on whether the topics designed and teaching approaches used meet their learning preference. Therefore, to become a global citizen and to comply with the English teaching objective set by the Ministry of Education, teachers should make efforts to structure the English class to meet students' needs-that is to be able to use the language in their daily life rather than prepare them for the test. The results from the study have showed with careful planning, integrating four skills in language class can be beneficial for both teachers and students.

## **Limitation of the Study**

This study has its limitations. First, it is possible that some information was not covered in the interview. Second, the role of the interviewer may have affected the results and how the students expressed their attitudes and feelings during the interviews. Although this study concerned only one middle school in southern Taiwan, the results may shed lights on the effect of integrating language skills through activities in students' learning.

The logo for the International Association for Language Acquisition Research (iafor) is centered on the page. It features the word "iafor" in a light blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. The text is surrounded by several overlapping, semi-transparent circular arcs in shades of blue and red, creating a dynamic, circular pattern.

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## Appendix 1 Camp Schedule

2015 Fushan Junior High School Korean Culture English Camp					
	7/1	7/2	7/3	7/4	7/5
8:30-9:00	Register				
9:00-9:10	Opening Ceremony	Video time	Video time	Video time	Final Performance
9:10-10:00		Lesson 2	Lesson 4	Lesson 5	Rehearsal
10:00-10:10	Break	Break	Field Game	Break	Break
10:10-11:00	Ice Breaker	Lesson 2		Lesson 5	Closing Ceremony and Final Performance
11:00-11:10	Break	Break		Break	
11:10-12:00	Lesson 1	Lesson 3		Oral Practice	
12:00-13:10	Lunch Hour				
13:10-14:00	Lesson 1	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Oral Practice	
14:00-14:10	Break	Break	Break	Break	
14:10-15:00	Oral Practice (Computer Lab)			Rehearsal	
15:00-	End of the Day				

Note:

Lesson 1: Korean Festival

Lesson 2: Korean Table Manners

Lesson 3: Korean Food

Lesson 4: Korean Traditional Buildings

Lesson 5: Korean Landscapes



***A Corpus Stylistics Study of the Mental Clauses and Speech and Thought Presentation of Gilbert's (2006) Eat Pray Love***

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Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

Elizabeth Gilbert's (2006) memoir *Eat Pray Love* depicts her journey of self-discovery in her trips to Italy, India and Indonesia following a difficult divorce. Among the three phases of the author's journey, the "eat" and "love" aspects have received far more responses from readers, but, overall, the author's experiences with love, loss and the pursuit of happiness have created resonance with a huge readership. Nevertheless, very little attention has been given to the "pray" domain of the author's truth-seeking journey.

Combining the methodological tools of corpus linguistics and stylistics, this study will conduct a corpus-based stylistics analysis of the pray part of Gilbert's (2006) *Eat Pray Love* (from chapters 37 to 72) with reference to the mental clauses and speech and thought presentation depicted in the fiction. The study will use the corpus analysis toolkit provided by a freeware AntConc, including concordancer, word and keyword frequency generators, tools for cluster and lexical bundle analysis, and a word distribution plot for the investigation of selected lexical items. For linguistic frameworks, the study will employ relevant features from Halliday's (1994) transitivity system for the exploration of the mental clauses containing the lexis such as "think," "feel," "mind," "meditate," "pray," and Simpson's (1993) point of view model for the investigation of free direct speech and thought presentation. The underlying objectives of the research are to explore the author's ideology and point of view in the representation of spiritual concepts related to mindfulness and meditation, and the potential for the use of corpora by computer software in stylistics.

Keywords: corpus stylistics, corpus linguistics, literary interpretation, *AntConc*

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## **Introduction – Theoretical frameworks, aims and scope of the study**

Corpus stylistics is an innovative approach to stylistics which integrates the methodology of corpus linguistics and literary appreciation in a stylistic analysis of a text. It is an emerging sub-discipline which has been growing fast and become popular in Stylistics. The approach is not limited merely to the study of literary texts. It is an integrated methodology which draws on analytical frameworks and methods from qualitative literary criticism to complement quantitative computational techniques. Individual lexical items generated from corpus studies will be situated in their co-texts or contexts for the investigation of their local textual functions. Therefore, corpus stylistics can be considered a sub-discipline that exists in its own right since it is a unique approach to stylistics that integrates corpus-based linguistic analysis with literary interpretation (Mahlberg, 2013, pp. 1-3, pp.11-12; McIntyre, 2015, pp 59-61).

Combining the methodological tools of corpus linguistics and stylistics, this study conducts a corpus-based stylistic analysis of the pray part of Gilbert's (2006) *Eat Pray Love* (from chapters 37 to 72). The lexical items selected for analysis are mental clauses and speech and thought presentation. The study uses the corpus analysis toolkit provided by a freeware *AntConc* for the investigation of selected lexical items. *AntConc* is a freeware, multi-platform, multi-purpose corpus analysis toolkit, designed by Laurence Anthony for specific use in the classroom. It offers the essential tools needed for the analysis of corpora (Anthony, 2005, p. 729, p. 735). The corpus tools used for the linguistic analysis include concordance, word and keyword frequency generators and tools for cluster and lexical bundle analysis. For linguistic frameworks, the study employs appropriate features from Halliday's (1994) transitivity system for the exploration of the mental clauses containing the lexis such as "feel," "think," "mind," "meditate." The study also employs Simpson's (1993) point of view model for the investigation of speech and thought presentation. The research aims to explore the author's ideology and point of view in the representation of spiritual concepts related to mindfulness and meditation. It also explores the potential for the use of corpora by software in stylistics.

### **A brief review of Gilbert's (2006) *Eat Pray Love***

Elizabeth Gilbert's (2006) memoir *Eat Pray Love* depicts her journey of self-discovery in her one-year trips to Italy, India and Indonesia following a difficult divorce. Her travels consist of three phases – (1) pleasure seeking in Italy, (2) finding spirituality and peace in India, and (3) maintaining a balance between the two in her new romance in Bali. Among the three phases of the author's journey, the "eat" and "love" aspects have received far more attention from readers than the "pray" part. But, overall, the author's experiences with love, loss and the pursuit of happiness have created resonance with a huge readership across different countries. The book was an international best seller, translated into 40 languages with a film version released in 2010. As travel literature, *Eat Pray Love* is a very good text for the exploration of the issues concerning love, relationship, marriage, spirituality, and the quest for the meaning of life in a contemporary context. The present study conducts a corpus stylistics analysis of the mental clauses and speech and thought presentation with regard to the "pray" part of the book in the writer's journey to India.

## Procedure for analysis

The linguistic analyses in this study take the following steps:

1. A word list is generated by the *AntConc* software.
2. The frequencies of the mental lexical items which fall into the semantic field of “mindfulness and meditation” including “feel,” “meditate,” “think,” “mind,” coupled with those of the speech and thought presentation including “say” / “said” and “thought” are counted as the starting points for further analyses.
3. The selected lexical items for investigation are lemmatized and their concordance lines are analysed.
4. Further semantic and grammatical patterns, that is, the clusters, collocations and colligations of the lemmata are analysed.
5. The patterns identified allow for insights into the qualitative analysis of semantic preference (topic, lexical field), and semantic prosody (attitude, motivation, communicative purpose) of the writer, according to Stubb’s levels of language description (2007, qtd. in Mahlberg, 2013, p.16).

## Findings and interpretation of the keywords

A word list ranked by frequency was first generated and it was found that the corpus comprises 5,409 word types, 38,357 word tokens, and 3,077 hapaxes (words occur only once). Thus, the type token ratio is 14.1%, and the lexical variety of the writer’s diction cannot be considered high. She tends to use simple and conversational daily-life expressions. Out of the 5,409 types, 3,077 are hapaxes which occur only once such as “seas,” “seawalls,” “secretary,” “secrets,” “seditious,” “seductive,” “sending,” “sensations,” etc. This shows that she still uses a lot of unique diction creatively even though her vocabulary overall is not very much varied. Other than those grammatical words, the mental lexical items selected for study and those related to the writer’s spiritual domain have significant frequencies compared to other lexical words in the word list generated for analysis; for example, ashram (91 instances), meditation (77 instances), mind (77 instances), pray (44 instances), spiritual (36 instances), temple (36), practice (35) etc. The following outlines the frequency of each mental lexical word for further discussion. Different word forms belonging to the same lemma are treated as one unit. For convenience in this study, word-forms of different parts of speech (word classes) will still be grouped under the same lemma, e.g., “meditate” (verb) and “meditation” (noun) are categorized as one lemma under the lexical item “meditation.”

### The frequencies of the mental lexical words selected for investigation

**Table 1 – Lemma “feel” (feel, feels, feeling, feelings)**

<b>Lexical word</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
feel	30
feels	10
feeling	18
feelings	8
<b>Total frequency</b>	<b>66</b>

**Table 2 – Lemma “think” (think, thinks, thinking)**

<b>Lexical word</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
think	46
thinks	3
thinking	29
<b>Total frequency</b>	<b>78</b>

**Table 3 – Lemma “mind” (mind, minds, mindedness)**

<b>Lexical word</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
mind	77
minds	3
mindedness	1
<b>Total frequency</b>	<b>81</b>

**Table 4 – Lemma “meditation” (meditation, meditations, meditate, meditated, meditating, meditative, meditator)**

<b>Lexical word</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
meditation	80
meditations	5
meditate	19
meditated	1
meditating	9
meditative	7
meditator	1
<b>Total frequency</b>	<b>122</b>

**Table 5 – Lemma “say” (say, says, saying)**

<b>Lexical word</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
say	61
says	28
saying	12
said	70
<b>Total frequency</b>	<b>171</b>

**Table 6 – Lemma “thought” (thought, thoughts)**

Lexical word	Frequency
thought	33
thoughts	43
<b>Total frequency</b>	<b>76</b>

The mental processes selected for investigation are all significant data revealing the writer’s experience in meditation and her pursuit of mindfulness. The two most frequently occurring lemmas are “mind” (81 instances) and “meditation” (122 instances). This supports that “meditation” and “mindfulness” are the recurrent themes depicted in the selected text for study. Speech and thought presentation is also prominent in the selected corpus scrutinized, with a total of 171 instances of occurrence for the lemma “say” (say, says, saying) and a total of 76 instances for the lemma “thought” (thought, thoughts). The following provides a brief interpretation of the individual selected lexical items in their co-texts or contexts with insights gained from the study of their corresponding concordance lines.

### Investigation of the individual lexical items

#### 1. Feel

The concordance lines of the lemma “feel” (including feels, feeling, feelings), its two-word collocates (to the right), and two-word clusters were generated for investigation. A total of 66 instances of the words belonging to the lemma “feel” are found in the selected corpus. A close investigation of the two-word clusters and collocates of the words “feel,” “felt,” and “feeling” finds that the typical patterns of many of their collocates are adjectives and noun phrases describing the writer’s state of mind in her struggles with letting go of her past, her meditation practice, her encounter with God and her spiritual experience with other religious figures from whom she draws inspirations. Most of the adjectives and noun phrases associated with the mental verb “feel” are negative describing the writer’s negative moods and intense struggles in letting go of her past, engaging herself in meditation practices, and even in her encounter with God and experience with other spiritual figures. The data are outlined as follows, and the negative phrases associated with the mental verb “feel” are highlighted in bold.

<b>The writer’s struggle with letting go of her past associated with the lemma “feel”</b>	
8	But I <b>didn’t feel strong</b> . My body ached in diminished worthless
38	because I’m <b>feeling too damn sorry</b> for myself,
39	to pretend that <b>negative thoughts and feelings</b> are not occurring
43	it was over. I could feel that I was free.
49	I could feel <b>all this old pain of lost love</b> and past
<b>The writer’s meditation experience associated with the lemma “feel”</b>	
6	to start <b>feeling sorry</b> for itself, and loneliness follows
7	When I do this, it feels <b>really interminable and annoying</b> .
9	It keeps you feeling <b>separate</b>

10	I can feel this soft blue electrical energy pulsing
19	I began feeling <b>frustrated and judgmental</b> about myself
20	but the Gurugita feels <b>long, tedious, sonorous and insufferable.</b>
21	I had hoped my feelings about the Gurugita would change
22	my feelings about the Gurugita <b>have shifted from simple dislike to solid dread</b>
23	I don't feel like I'm singing it so much
24	had come to dread the Gurugita, how <b>tortuous</b> it feels.
25	I could feel <b>cold</b> , clammy sweat accumulating
26	I kept feeling <b>fireballs</b> of
31	feeling so <b>crusty and cranky and resentful</b>
33	If you are feeling <b>discomfort</b>
34	a general <b>burning</b> feeling
<b>The writer's encounter with God and her spiritual reflection associated with the lemma "feel"</b>	
14	is a blue light which they can feel <b>radiating</b> from the center of their skulls.
35	and I feel <b>bored</b> and parched by empirical debate
36	to formulate an authentic prayer. If I <b>don't feel sincere,</b>
37	<b>Destiny</b> , I feel, is also a relationship
59	Not only did I feel <b>unhesitating compassion</b> and unity with everything
61	I could feel myself <b>falling</b> through layer after layer of
64	But it was pure, this love that I was feeling.
<b>The writer's spiritual experience with other religious figures associated with the lemma "feel"</b>	
3	I feel sometimes—like I almost have a Guru.
5	to God about all my feelings and my problems all the livelong day,
13	you can almost feel her <b>coming out of that delirious experience,</b>
15	but I could feel Swamiji watching me, <b>impatient and judgmental</b>
30	And I never feel him closer to me than <b>when I'm struggling</b>
56	what it feels like to be-come one with the divine
66	I can feel <b>the world halt,</b>

## 2. Think

The concordance lines of the lemma “think” (including think, thinks, thinking), its two-word collocates (to the right), and two-word clusters are generated for investigation. A total of 78 instances of the words belonging to the lemma “think” are found in the selected corpus. An investigation of the two-word clusters of the lemma “think” finds that the word tends to co-occur with the grammatical words “about,” “of” and “that” to form the colligations of “think about” (7 instances), “thinking about” (7 instances); “ think that” (5 instances), “thinking that” (6 instances), and think of (5 instances). Most of the mental processes “think” and “thinking” describe the recurrent themes of the writer’s struggles to let go of her lost love, her meditation experience, her spiritual experience with God and other religious figures, and her self-reflection on herself and life. The dominant categories of data under the lemma “think” are the writer’s struggles to let go of the memory of her divorce, and her attempts to focus her mind on meditation. The examples of these two categories are outlined as follows.

<b>The writer's struggle with letting go of her past associated with the lemma "think"</b>	
5	And when I think of the mental anguish I was going through
8	the emotional attachment that goes along with the thinking.
21	I can't stop thinking about all our happiness together
22	but I think the reason it's so hard for me
24	send him some love and light every time you think about him
36	and all I can think about is my ex-boyfriend?
37	I still love him and I can't stop thinking about him
61	just your ego's way of tricking you into thinking that you're making moral progress.
64	I would never again think about my ex-husband
<b>The writer's self-reflection on life and her meditation experience associated with the lemma "think"</b>	
7	The truth is, I don't think I'm good at meditation.
10	all I have to do is think of the mantra
11	Mind: I can help you think of nice meditative images
16	you can never really be sure if what you think is sleep is actually sleep;
33	I'm starting to think of them as irritating telemarketers
34	In actuality I really only think about a few things
35	and I think about them constantly
38	after an hour or so of unhappy thinking
39	Instead of thinking that I was a failure
44	doing other things with my morning that I think are much better for my spiritual growth
46	and I think it's probably having a positive effect on
47	I kept thinking: "It's only an hour
49	and was able to think my normal, instinctive morning thought
50	and thinking that it was maybe time for me to change
52	Here's what I caught myself thinking about in meditation this morning
63	I realized I'd been thinking about all this too literally.

Similar to "feel," the lemma "think" also collocates with negative phrases such as "mental anguish," "emotional attachment," "irritating," "unhappy," "failure" in the writer's attempts to let go of the pain of her divorce and focus her mind on meditation. The writer's mind wanders uncontrollably and it is hard for her to concentrate her mind in meditation, as revealed from many other things she often thinks about in her meditation practices.

### 3. Mind

The concordance lines of the lemma "mind" (mind, minds, mindedness), its two-word collocates (to the right), and two-word clusters are generated for investigation. A total of 81 instances of the words belonging to the lemma "mind" are found in the selected corpus. Most of the descriptions of the writer's mind are associated with her recurrent attempts to quiet her mind in her meditation practices, and to achieve a state of bliss



in her spiritual pursuits – “that point of even-mindedness” – as expressed by her. The whole chapter 42 depicts the writer’s self-monologues in her meditation practices. She talks to herself and directs her mind to focus on the here and now in meditation. Many collocates of the word “mind” are associated with the writer’s restlessness and distraction in meditation. The following lists some examples of the phrases co-occurring with the lemma “mind” in the selected corpus.

<b>The writer’s meditation practices experience associated with the lemma “mind”</b>	
2	but to loosen up their muscles and minds in order to pre-prepare them for meditation
3	Only from that point of even- mindedness will the true nature of the world
5	with little distraction or relief from the apparatus of your own mind
6	I can’t seem to get my mind to hold still
7	Oh Krishna, the mind is restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding
8	When I ask my mind to rest in stillness
9	what the Buddhists call the “monkey mind”—the thoughts that swing from limb to limb
10	the distant past to the unknowable future, my mind swings wildly through time
11	and pissed off all over again; and then my mind decides it might be a good time to start
13	through the choppy waves of the mind
14	how much trouble I have keeping my mind focused on mantra repetition,
16	the conversations between me and my mind during meditation
22	Can we meditate now, please? Om Namah Shiv— Mind: Yes!
24	but let’s MEDITATE now, please? Om Namah— Mind: Right! I
28	Please stop! YOU’RE MAKING ME CRAZY!!! Mind (wounded): Sorry. I was only trying to help.
29	But then— Mind: Are you mad at me now?
30	my mind wins, my eyes fly open and I quit.
31	I had no strength, my mind was quivering.
33	and who is the “mind.” I thought about the relentless thought-processing
34	I can’t get my mind to sit still.”
41	all it wants is quietude. The only place the mind will ever find peace is inside the silence of
42	“Meditate on whatever causes a revolution in your mind.
43	for any thoughts of the mind—even the most fervent prayers—will extinguish
44	Once the troublesome mind
45	what happens to a transcendent mind
47	during meditation, was able to quiet his mind so completely
49	Even worse, once I am awake, my mind has been two-timing me again
51	Desperate, I beg my mind to please step aside and let me find God
55	it teaches you how to quiet your mind.
58	is that my mind is actually not that interesting a place,
59	I sit in my silence and look at my mind, it is only questions of longing and control



70	I pictured the harbor of my mind—a little beat-up,
71	The harbor of my mind is an open bay,
77	is not affected by the swinging moods of the mind, nor fearful of time or harmed by loss.
78	you must leave the busy commotion of the mind and abandon the desires of the ego
79	Then my mind started to really protest

Similar to the lemmas “feel” and “think,” the semantic prosody of the lemma “mind” tends to express more of the writer’s negative emotions in engaging herself in meditation practices by struggling to focus her mind on the present moment.

#### 4. Meditate / Meditation

The mental words “meditation” and “meditate” are used prominently in the selected text to describe the author’s meditation experience in an Ashram in India. There are altogether 80 instances of the word “meditation,” 5 of “meditations”; 19 of “meditate,” 1 of “meditated” and 9 of “meditating” used in the text studied. They are frequently occurring lexical items used to describe the recurrent motif of the writer’s meditation practice in her journey to India. The following outlines some of the examples of the concordance lines of the lemmas “meditation” and “meditate.”

hit	examples of the lemmas “meditation” and “meditate”
7	if you sit down with the pure intention to meditate
12	in that regal silence, finally—I began to meditate on (and with) God.
14	feeling discomfort then you are supposed to meditate upon that discomfort,
15	take my meals in solitude, meditate for endless hours every day
16	among my many, many problems with meditation is that the mantra
22	where you come to deepen your meditation, but this is a disaster.
23	“By certain signs you can tell when meditation is being rightly performed.
24	trapped in that meditation hall and ensnared in my own shame
31	was to not stir up the intellect during meditation,
35	that intense meditation brings everything up

An Ashram is a monastery for spiritual instruction and meditation. In the second part of *Eat Pray Love* (Chapters 37 to 72), Gilbert describes the way Indian and Western pilgrims come to the ashram to practice meditation. There are two meditation caves, which are silent basements with comfortable cushions, open all days and nights for the devotees to do meditation. According to Gilbert (2006, Chapter 39), the Ashram life is both physically and psychologically demanding. Devotees are required to sit still for long hours from 3:00am to 9:00pm every day in silent meditation. To the author, to engage herself in meditation practice is even harder than to do labor work. Gilbert defines meditation in the following way as searched from the two-word clusters of the word:

1. Meditation is both the anchor and the wings of Yoga. (Chapter 41)
2. Meditation is the way. (Chapter 41)

3. .... meditation is the act of listening. (Chapter 41)
4. .... meditation is a disaster. (Chapter 48)
5. .... meditation is that my mind is actually not that interesting a place, (Chapter 50)
6. .... Vipas-sana meditation is the practice of pure regarding, (Chapter 56)

The writer aims to attain the state of “pure regarding” and seek the way in meditation. But in reality, she often struggles very hard not to stir up her thoughts in contemplation. However, there seems to be a breakthrough in the writer’s spiritual pilgrimage. At some point in the middle of her journey to India in Chapter 56, Gilbert seems to attain a new realization of herself. She comes to realize that she needs to be more compassionate in accepting her failures in meditation. Since then she seems to be able to quiet her mind better. She describes herself at that point as “disregarding the reflex” in responding to the external stimuli. She is then able to let go of and deal with her “unfinished business” with her ex-husband. She has become “still in meditation.” (Chapter 56)

Meditation practice is described by Gilbert as “a disaster” (Chapter 48). Similarly, the semantic prosody of the word “meditation” tends to be more negative than positive in describing the writer’s unpleasant feelings in meditation. Prominent collocates with the word “meditation” are such as “trapped,” “subdue,” “ensnared,” “alarmed,” “grief,” “hateful,” “difficult,” “desperate,” “cool” and “alone.” The writer’s meditation practices are often considered by herself as failures and unpleasant experiences. Near the end of Gilbert’s spiritual pilgrimage, she seems to undergo transformation in her meditation experience. At the end of her retreat in the Ashram, she describes that she has practiced meditation for a couple of hours at ease and she feels more at home with own company in meditation. She uses more positive words to describe her meditation practice, in contrast to her preceding depiction.

“I’m getting a lot of time alone here now. I’m spending about four or five hours every day in the meditation caves. I can sit in my own company for hours at a time now, at ease in my own presence, undisturbed by my own existence on the planet. Sometimes my meditations are surreal and physical experiences of shakti—all spine-twisting, blood-boiling wildness. I try to give in to it with as little resistance as possible. Other times I experience a sweet, quiet contentment, and that is fine, too.” (Chapter 68)

### **Investigation of the speech and thought presentation**

Speech and thought presentation is a prominent linguistic feature in the selected corpus studied. It is used to represent the speech and thought between the writer and other characters described in the novel. A number of the speech and thought presentation is concerned with the writer’s own speech and thought represented in the FDS and FDT modes. It is close to the stream-of-consciousness style of narration. The analyses focus on the use of Direct Speech (DS), Free Direct Speech (FDS), Indirect Speech (IS); Direct Thought (DT), Free Direct Thought (FDT), and Indirect Thought (IT). The frequencies and examples of each category of the speech and thought presentation identified are outlined below.

**Findings of speech presentation**

<b>Speech Presentation</b>	
Direct Speech (DS)	94
Free Direct Speech (FDS)	22
Indirect Speech (IS)	27
Total frequency	143

**Findings of thought presentation**

<b>Thought Presentation</b>	
Direct Thought (DT)	5
Free Direct Thought (FDT)	14
Indirect Thought	4
Total frequency	23

**Examples of Direct Speech (DS)**

<b>hit</b>	<b>example</b>
14	Corella says. "I just kind of ... say it."
45	"You're totally right," I say.
48	"Shut the door, then," says my big Texas Yogi.
98	The Western tradition says, "It'll all get sorted out after death,"

**Examples of Free Direct Speech (FDS)**

<b>hit</b>	<b>example</b>
16	"Can you maybe speak aloud for me the way you say it in your head when you're meditating?"
66	Remember what our Guru says – be a scientist of your own spiritual experience.
68	After which I heard Swamiji burst out laughing in my head, saying: That's funny – you sure act like somebody who wants to be here.
81	"What can I say, guys? I do a lot with guilt..."
88	During the typical human experience, says the Yogis, most of us are always moving between three different levels of consciousness – waking, dreaming or deep dreamless sleep.

**Examples of Indirect Speech (IS)**

<b>hit</b>	<b>example</b>
9	But I wouldn't say that anything about this night has been lonely.
22	The Lakota Sioux say that a child who cannot sit still is a half-developed child.
52	I should say here that I'm aware that everyone goes through this kind of metaphysical crisis.
84	Swamiji used to say that everyday renunciants find something new to renounce.

### Examples of thought presentation

<b>Direct Thought (DT)</b>	
<b>hit</b>	<b>example</b>
35	I've thought, "I'm just going to stay clear of this character....."
44	I thought, "This is a bad time of day to practice Vipassana meditation"
<b>Free Direct Thought (FDT)</b>	
<b>hit</b>	<b>example</b>
36	My first thought was: If there were ever a good excuse not to go the Gurugita, this would be it.
41	I was aghast. I thought: Here you are in India, in an Ashram...
<b>Indirect Thought (IT)</b>	
<b>hit</b>	<b>example</b>
34	and I thought I might faint, or bite somebody....
76	The Hopi Indians thought that the world's religions each contained one spiritual thread

### Interpretation of the speech and thought presentation

The speech and thought presentation is used to express the writer's speech and thought with her friends including Richard, the Indian girl Tulsi, her Guru, her roommate and the woman at the Ashram, and other religious figures she describes in the novel such as an Indian Monk, an American Monk, Swamiji, an ancient philosopher, the saint, etc. There are a lot of discussions on meditation, religions, God, and other spiritual matters which are the concerns of the writer.

DS is the dominant category of speech and thought presentation used in the corpus studied (94 instances). The reporting clause is sometimes placed specially before the reported speech such as – The Western tradition says, "It'll all get sorted out after death" – or after the reported speech such as – "Shut the door, then," says my big Texas Yogi. For DT, the reporting clause is generally placed before the reported thought such as – I've thought, "I'm just going to stay clear of this character....." For the FDS presentation, some of them is stripped of the reporting clause such as – "Can you maybe speak aloud for me the way you say it in your head when you're meditating?" – but the quotation marks of the speech are retained. But for some others, the reporting clause is retained yet the quotation marks of the speech are removed; for example – After which I heard Swamiji burst out laughing in my head, saying: That's funny – you sure act like somebody who wants to be here. For FDT presentation, most of them is stripped of the quotation marks for the reported thought; for example:

My first thought: If there were ever a good excuse not to go to the Gurugita, this would be it;

I thought: Here you are in India, in an Ashram...

For IS and IT, the word "that" of the reporting clauses is sometimes omitted; for example:

but he says he really loves me,  
and I thought I might faint, or bite somebody  
in my fury.

The writer, overall, is creative and imaginative in the use of FDS and FDT. There is variety in the way she places the reporting clauses for both FDS and FDT, and uses the quotation marks to highlight the speech and thought between herself and other characters. A significant portion of the speech and thought presentation represents the writer's internal monologues in her meditation practices and spiritual reflections. The following lists some examples of the writer's self-monologues in both the speech and thought modes.

### Examples of the writer's internal monologues

hit	mode	example
10	IS	But I wouldn't say that anything about this night has been lonely
30	DS	I sit down to meditate and I say to my mind, "Listen – I understand you're a little frightened..."
34	DS	I say to it, "I believe in you," and it magnifies,
76	FDS	The first time I heard myself say this, my inner year perked up at the word.
10	FDT	Oh, that is a nice image. Mind: Thanks. I thought of it myself.
12	IT	Me: Wait, I thought you said I was a temple.
13	FDT	Me: Sop! Please stop! You'RE MAKING ME CRAZY!

In the above examples, the writer engages in internal monologues when she is meditating. Since the writer talks to herself, the speech and thought modes overlap, and her interior monologues manifest her intense struggles in the stream-of-consciousness narrative mode. It reveals the writer's multitudinous thoughts and feelings in her meditation practices and spiritual reflections.

### Conclusion

The study demonstrates the possible link between corpus linguistics and literary interpretation. *AntConc* is shown to be an effective and user-friendly freeware for processing the corpus data quickly that can hardly be handled manually in a similarly efficient and handy manner. The corpus linguistics tools provide a relatively objective tool for the identification of linguistic patterns. Corpus investigation techniques such as word frequency lists, concordance lines, clusters and collocations can be used to illuminate aspects of a writer's style and his / her ideology and point of view. The quantitative data generated can be used as starting points for further qualitative analyses. Nevertheless, focused and in-depth literary appreciation of individual examples within their immediate co-texts and broader contexts is still necessary in exploring how meanings are encoded in the language use. Therefore, both the corpus linguistic and literary appreciation methods enrich and complement each other and thus should be combined as an integrated methodology in stylistic study.

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The logo for the International Association for Applied Linguistics (iafor) is centered on the page. It features the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is surrounded by several overlapping, curved lines in shades of blue and red, creating a circular, abstract design.

***Developing an Instructional Model to Teach Periphery Researchers to Write English Scientific Research Articles for Scholarly Journals***

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**Abstract**

Periphery researchers in sciences have been found to have problems with publications of their research articles (RAs) in scholarly journals. However, the corpus-based studies available tended to focus more on RAs' features than on the development of pedagogical practices aiming to enhance researchers' writing ability. Having witnessed these problems among Thai researchers trying to publish their works, I conducted a three-year, research-and-development study, constructing an instructional model by initially exploring problems and needs of 125 Thai research assistants and researchers in 2010. The participants revealed writing problems in sentences, paragraphs, essays, and RAs. Also, the research assistants showed stronger needs in developing their writing abilities in such discourse levels than the researchers did. These results informed the constructed model implemented in phases two and three, in 2011 and 2012, where 25 and 30 research assistants in sciences were taught to write scientific RAs. The findings revealed the effective use of the teaching model. The participants could write their scientific RAs effectively. With awareness of RAs' generic features in their fields, they could write professionally despite some Thai collectivist thought patterns hindering English writing. The findings suggest that the model rested on the participants' backgrounds is of use to educators/researchers to develop scholarly-writing abilities of periphery researchers in non-English science institutes.

Keywords: instructional model, scholarly publications, problems in English scientific writing, non-native English speaking researchers

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## Introduction

As the importance of globalization of science and its related fields has been accelerating, the predominant role of English as the language of research publication has been observed, and the need for sophisticated English writing ability for scholarly publication has thus been expanding (Cameron, 2007; Flowerdew, 1999a, 1999b; Tychinin & Kamnev, 2005; Wang & Bakken, 2004). However, writing by non-native writers has been found to deviate from the rhetorical conventions required in certain academic discourse communities. These writers suffer from being inexperienced in their fields and thus struggle in the schematic, rhetorical patterns of academic genres (Blicblau, McManus, & Prince, 2009; Chen, 2009; Gosden, 1995).

Such problems were consistent with those in Dudley-Evans (1995) and Martin (1999), where non-native writers were required but failed to construct research articles (RAs) that could be accepted by reviewers in their fields. With such requirements, these writers were apparently marginalized from, rather than included in, the professional communities due to their insufficient abilities to communicate their research outputs on the basis of the communicative events signified by certain communicative purposes governed and understood among such targeted communities. In addition, these researchers suffered the same problems found in Bhatia (1993) and Lavelle (2003), failing to have their research articles accepted by the English native-speaking academic community due to their lower competence in the rhetorical traditions of academic writing, although their rigorous science inquiries were of quality.

On account of these problems, theoretical perspectives by a number of scholars (e.g., Crookes, 1986; Hinkel, 2006; Miller, 1984; Moses, 1985; Pagel, Kendall, & Gibbs, 2002; Swales, 1981, 1987; Widdowson, 1983) support explicit instructions on genre structure revealing lexical, grammatical and rhetorical features. The abilities in advanced sentence constructions have been highlighted as one of the elements most needed. Also, research in applied linguistics has recommended that explicit instructions oriented to the schematic, rhetorical requirements of the English-language scientific article, regardless of their mastery of English grammar, should benefit these marginalized writers (Cameron, 2007; Flowerdew, 1999a, 1999b; Gosden, 1995; Swales, 1990; Tychinin & Kamnev, 2005; Wang & Bakken, 2004). However, in response to these recommendations, there has been a dearth of research offering formal instruction or training to those researchers/writers who exhibit problems and needs in various disciplines (Gosden, 1995; Spack, 1988). As a result, instruction in the rhetorical conventions of English scientific writing should be an integral part of the development of those non-native professionals.

In this study, I therefore constructed an instructional model used in training Thai researchers in scientific disciplines to write their scientific RAs. I conducted a three-phase study—preliminary survey, creating and testing a teaching model for in scholarly writing workshops, and retesting the model to assess its effectiveness in practice—achieved through two major research questions.

Table 1  
Three-phase research questions

Research Phases	Research Questions
1 Problems & needs explored for model construction	1. What are the participants' major problems and needs in relation to English writing for scholarly publications?
2 & 3 Testing & retesting the model	2. What were the effects of explicit instruction on participants' competence and abilities in scholarly publications?

## Research Methods

### Research Elements

To explore the participants' holistic problems, I in 2010 analyzed the survey results of the participants, 125 researchers and research assistants in sciences and social sciences, randomly selected from those working in research institutes situated in Bangkok and its suburban areas. To test the model through experimentation, I conducted the second phase in 2011 with 25 research assistants in science institutes of the same areas, also randomly selecting them from those volunteering to join the project. The third phase of research was conducted in 2012 aiming to retest the model effectiveness by repeating the second with some justifications, having 30 participants sharing the same background as those in the previous phases. Accordingly, the inquiry processes included seven stages: surveying the participants' problems in scholarly writing, planning for related elements of a teaching model serving the participants' problems and needs, developing the model based on such problems and needs, testing the model in an actual workshop, initially revising the model, retesting the adjusted model in another workshop, and finalizing the model for applications. Table 2 shows elements of such processes.

Table 2  
Research elements

Research Elements	Phase 1: Preliminary Survey	Phase 2: Testing the Model	Phase 3: Retesting the Model
Research Participants	125 researchers/research assistants in sciences and social sciences in Bangkok and suburb areas	25 research assistants in sciences in the same areas	30 research assistants in sciences in the same areas
Data Collection Methods *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Initial survey</li> <li>- Writing samples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experimentation</li> <li>- Pretest and posttest papers</li> <li>- Written research papers</li> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Class observation</li> <li>- Self-reported survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Experimentation</li> <li>- Pretest and posttest papers</li> <li>- Written research papers</li> <li>- Interviews</li> <li>- Class observation</li> <li>- Self-reported survey</li> </ul>
Research instrument	Self-reported questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-reported questionnaire</li> <li>- Pre- &amp; post tests</li> <li>- Course materials</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-reported questionnaire</li> <li>- Pre- &amp; post tests</li> <li>- Course materials</li> </ul>
Issues of Validity	Index of Congruence value (IOC) by three specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two raters (a native teacher &amp; the researcher) validating the pretest and posttest papers</li> <li>- course materials and self-reported questionnaire</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two raters (a native teacher &amp; the researcher) validating the pretest and posttest papers</li> <li>- course materials and self-reported questionnaire</li> </ul>
Research procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Surveying</li> <li>- Analyzing data</li> <li>- Constructing &amp; validating the model</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pre testing</li> <li>2. Training the participants to write through the model</li> <li>3. Self-reported questionnaire &amp; attitude survey</li> <li>4. Post testing</li> <li>5. Analyzing data</li> <li>6. Revising the model</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pre testing</li> <li>2. Training the participants to write through the model revised from Phase 2 results</li> <li>3. Self-reported questionnaire &amp; attitude survey</li> <li>4. Post testing</li> <li>5. Analyzing data</li> <li>6. Concluding the model</li> </ol>
Units of analysis	Quantitative analysis through descriptive statistics	Mixed-method analysis	Mixed-method analysis

\* To conceal the participants' identity in all data sources (e.g., test papers, RAs written, interview data, and more), I assigned each a fictitious name.

### Instructional Model

The model sketched through the lens of the participants' problems and needs was validated practically and theoretically, based on the model formation in language education and in science content (Ebenezer, Chacko, Kaya, Koya, & Ebenezer, 2010). More importantly, the model constructed was driven by students' problems and needs, previous education, and language proficiencies, justified by writers' different purposes and contexts, and expected to enhance developmental learning (Christie, 1990; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Hyland, 2007). As such, the model started with academic literacy and moved on to skills in compositions and RAs, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3  
Elements of the instructional model

Participants' problems & needs	Sequential elements of the model	Resources
Academic literacy	1. Essential patterns of essential sentences & clauses	Authentic research articles
Composing skills	2. Paragraph building	Authentic research articles
	3. Essay development	Authentic research articles
	4. Text structures	Authentic research articles
RAs writing skills	5. Research articles	- Generic feature frameworks - Authentic research articles
Discontinued thoughts	6. Language, flow & metadiscourse	- Language observation through English corpus concordancers - Authentic research articles

In this model, linguistics is an effective, fundamental tool eliciting how distinctive patterns of vocabulary, grammar, and cohesive markers structure the texts written into stages based on the purpose of the genre (Hyland, 2007). Many L2-instruction scholars (e.g., Celce-Murcia, 2001; Christie, 1998; Martin, 1992) believe L2 writers attending to general instructions are at a disadvantage in both academic performance and their career paths. Language quality of L2 writing, as viewed by these scholars, is of importance to these writers as grammatical and lexical competence cannot be separated from the meaning of the written discourse. Also, the quality of language and the written texts normally contributes to the text evaluation. I found that such academic literacy was needed for the participants to gain the minimal but essential skills like sentence construction. Their linguistic skills were then used in the paragraphs and essays designed for them to practice argument making necessary for the discussions in RAs, where the genre models by Kanoksilapatham (2005), Swales and Feak (2012), and Weissberg and Buker (1990) were introduced as the generic features of RA parts as they are closely related to the participants' working disciplines. Then, they could transfer these skills in these abilities when working ethnographically by analyzing text features of the RAs in their discipline and across others. Equally important, the participants were introduced to (a) a synopsis of text

structures helping them understand relationships of those sentences and clauses in a higher discourse level, (b) the observations of how language was used through English corpus concordancers, a corpus-based learning tool that facilitates self-correction of locally occurring mistakes, in addition to my feedback always given in earlier drafts of their work, and (c) metadiscourse and flow of coherent, connected thoughts throughout the workshop.

Also, the model was validated through three experts in the field of applied linguistics, L2 writing, and scientific writing. The first two were Thai EFL teachers with applied linguistics and corpus studies backgrounds validating the theoretical, sense making and actual use for instruction of English specific purposes. The third specialist is a senior researcher working as a scientist in the Ministry of Science whose role was to consider the effective use of the model to be implemented in real world practice of scientific writing. The validated model then led us to Research Phases 2 and 3, but I, with limited space, discussed only the participants' writing abilities as a result of learning through the model in Phase 3, which confirmed the previous phase.

## Results and Discussions

### 1. What Are the Participants' Major Problems and Needs in Relation to English Writing for Scholarly Publications?

#### 1.1 Participants' Writing Problems

Problems in English writing for scholarly publications were analyzed through the participants' self evaluation divided into groups based on their job positions. The data are illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4  
Participants' level of self-evaluated ability

Item	Areas of evaluation	Weak (%)	Fair (%)	Good (%)	Excellent (%)	Mean	S.D.
1	knowledge of argument appeals	8.80	71.20	16.00	4.00	1.15	0.62
2	abilities in argument appeals	81.60	17.60	0.80	0.00	1.19	0.41
3	knowledge of sentence types	92.00	8.00	0.00	0.00	1.08	0.27
4	abilities in writing various types of sentence	26.70	72.30	1.00	0.00	1.74	0.46
5	awareness or knowledge of English text structures	53.60	29.60	9.60	7.20	1.70	0.91
6	knowledge in paragraph writing	28.80	52.80	12.00	6.40	1.96	0.81
7	skills or abilities in paragraph writing	38.6	54.50	6.90	0.00	1.68	0.60

8	knowledge in essay writing	70.40	11.20	13.60	4.80	1.53	0.90
9	Abilities in essay writing	72.80	9.60	13.60	4.00	1.49	0.87
10	Link between development of essays and RAs	80.00	17.60	1.60	0.80	1.23	0.51
11	knowledge in writing English research papers with generic features	75.20	3.20	17.60	4.00	1.50	0.92
12	abilities in writing English RAs with generic features	74.40	7.20	12.80	5.60	1.50	0.92
13	confidence in writing English RAs with coherent development	80.00	12.00	8.00	0.00	1.28	0.60
14	confidence in writing English RAs with flow of thoughts	75.20	18.40	4.00	2.40	1.34	0.67
15	confidence in writing English RAs with science rhetorical style	80.80	14.40	3.20	1.60	1.26	0.59
16	confidence in content organization in English RAs with generic features	70.4	11.20	14.40	4.00	1.52	0.88
17	stress or anxiety in writing English RAs	14.4	54.4	23.20	8.00	2.25	0.80
Grand mean						1.57	0.53

N=125

1.00-1.74 = weak    1.75-2.49 = fair    2.50-3.24 = good    3.25-4.00 = excellent

The participants revealed strong problems in three major areas. A primary one is related to the notion of appeals, where they stated a weak level in knowledge and abilities in argument appeals (mean = 1.15 & 1.19). The second group of problems was of a similar pattern. They felt that their knowledge of and abilities in sentence construction and text patterns were quite low. Most participants stated their perceived knowledge and abilities in paragraph writing at a fair level (means = 1.96, 1.68), and a weak level in knowledge and skills in essay writing (means = 1.53, 1.49). At the third level, they expressed weak abilities in all elements of scholarly writing, a higher order of writing skills. Their knowledge in and abilities of RAs generic structures were quite deficient (a 1.50 mean each). Their confidence in writing English RAs with coherent development, flow of ideas expressed, science rhetorical style and content organization in English RAs with generic features was quite low (means = 1.28, 1.34, 1.26, & 1.52). They also demonstrated a moderate level of stress or anxiety in writing English RAs.

To gain more specific results revealing such problems, I examined the same aspects of such areas of evaluation in three groups of the participants based on their job positions and areas of work—research assistants in social sciences and in sciences, and researchers in sciences.

Table 5  
Three specific groups' levels of evaluation ability

Groups of Participants	Grand Mean	S.D.	Interpreted Results
1 (30 research assistants in social sciences)	1.24	0.13	Weak
2 (74 research assistants in sciences)	1.45	0.37	Weak
3 (21 researchers in sciences)	2.44	0.45	Fair

The results showed a greater grand mean in researchers in sciences (2.44) than that in research assistants in science (1.45) and in social science (1.24). Then I compared the difference of perception in their ability between the research assistants in sciences and social sciences due to their shared positions as research assistants, and between the researchers and the research assistants in sciences due to their shared areas of work. There was no statistical difference in self perceived abilities among the research assistants in both areas. Both perceived their ability in scholarly writing as weak. However, when comparing the science researchers' grand mean (2.44) to that of the research assistants (grand mean = 1.45) in the same areas, the difference was significant, indicating the very low perceived ability in the research assistants in sciences.

What explains these results could be the education background of each group—the researchers' Doctorates earned from English speaking countries, lending them more opportunities to use English naturally in authentic contexts, and the research assistants' Masters obtained from non-English-speaking study programs in Thailand not giving them these opportunities. What confirms the importance of educational background is the result showing that the research assistants in social sciences were only exposed to English writing while in college, thus resulting in their limited English abilities, as these data obtained from interviews show:

English is not official language in Thailand, so it's not easy to write English publications well. Thai people are not skill to speak, write in English language when compare with neighbor country. Thai people who not graduated foreign country gave a little practice to learn writing/speaking in English language. I think if I have many training, my writing publication English will be development. I expect that teacher will correct it; then, I become confident to do it. (Original interview transcription, Piy)

I felt that it was quite difficult for me to write in English—to write as I actually thought, to write grammatically correctly, and to write for communicating ideas with an audience successfully. (Translated interview transcription, Sur)

Also, the problem severity the research assistants perceived could be on account of their little exposure to academic English literacy as a result of the absence of



academic writing in their education. This could cause them not to fully acquire writing abilities sufficient for their text production. To put it another way, their lower exposure to English could result in the same pattern of their awareness in how language is used in certain purposes like research publications. With such a lower level of language awareness, they could resort to the writing convention of their mother tongue. This was witnessed in this research and several studies indicating writing problems and sociopolitical issues in the process of knowledge production in researchers in science in periphery countries like Poland (Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008), Venezuela (Salager-Meyer, 2008), Sudann (ElMalik & Nesi, 2008) and Italy (Giannoni, 2008).

Related to this are the deviating texts found in various aspects. Primarily, language mistakes in non-native writers' texts are considered 'commonly consistent mistakes occurring in the areas of general grammar, composing incompetence, academic citations, strategies of academic voice and knowledge claims, strategies for metadiscourse/promotional discourse like hedges, and cultural barriers interfering with writing processes (Adams-Smith, 1984; Bazerman, 1988; Dudley-Evans, 1994; Johns, 1993; Mauranen, 1993; Swales, 1990). Surprisingly, the problems in such basic literacy were even commonly found in the participants holding doctorates from English speaking countries, who also revealed language difficulty in publication (e.g., Cho, 2004; Tardy, 2004), although they felt more confident than those pursuing the degree in non-English environments.

## 1.2 Participants' Needs in Writing for Scholarly Publications

The participants' needs in scholarly writing were then investigated through the self-reported survey in three specific groups, as shown in the following result.

Table 6  
Three groups' level of need for scholarly-writing improvement

Item	Need of improvement	Social science RA (Group1)		Science RA (Group 2)		Science R (Group 3)	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
1	academic English grammar	3.07	0.69	3.36	0.73	3.29	0.71
2	vocabulary, right, effective words	3.13	0.62	3.20	0.75	3.29	0.78
3	academic expression	3.30	0.75	3.32	0.77	3.57	0.67
4	sentence patterns	3.53	0.62	3.69	0.68	3.90	0.30
5	advanced sentence patterns	3.97	0.18	3.80	0.49	3.86	0.35
6	skills in paragraph writing	3.73	0.58	3.73	0.62	3.90	0.30
7	skills in essay writing	3.77	0.56	3.74	0.62	3.86	0.35
8	skills in English RA writing	3.97	0.18	3.74	0.62	3.95	0.21
9	transitions used in writing	3.57	0.62	3.68	0.64	3.81	0.40
10	thoughts spontaneously expressed through writing	3.90	0.30	3.85	0.35	3.86	0.35
11	writing without direct-translation mistakes	4.00	0.00	3.85	0.35	3.90	0.30
12	writing strategies for academic purposes	4.00	0.00	3.88	0.32	3.90	0.30

13	practical models of effective writing	4.00	0.00	3.88	0.32	3.76	0.43
14	good examples of professional writing needed	4.00	0.00	3.82	0.38	3.86	0.35
15	writing effectively based on norms of native speakers	4.00	0.00	3.95	0.22	3.95	0.21
Grand Mean		3.73	0.25	3.70	0.41	3.05	0.65
Interpreted results		Strongly need		Strongly need		Moderately need	

Group 1 (N= 30), Group 2 (N= 74), Group 3 (N= 21)

Like the results revealing the participants' problems related to scholarly writing, the research assistants in social sciences and sciences showed strong levels of such needs with high grand means, 3.73 and 3.70. This could relate to the quite low levels of English writing abilities shown in the participants' felt problems discussed earlier. However, the researchers in sciences needed to improve their scholarly writing skills moderately (grand mean = 3.05). This is sensible as these researchers used academic scientific English as a result of their overseas graduate studies. This could have contributed to their abilities at work, where they could write their research works for conferences and publications.

To help solve some extent such problems our Thai researchers have encountered, I indeed needed to fabricate a teaching model to strengthen the participants' skills of writing in all related levels.

#### Research Question 2

What were the effects of explicit instruction on the participants' writing competence?

In Phases Two and Three, the effectiveness of the invented model was tested and retested. After some adjustments of the model implemented in Phase Two, the participants of Phase Three (N = 30) were trained to write for scientific publication, and their writing gains would be inferred as the effectiveness of the model was retested in the third phase. To achieve this, I examined the participants' pre-and post tests, and RAs written during the workshop, both functioning as triangulation of this finding.

#### 2.1 Pre-and-Post-Test Results

The pre-and-post tests were used as the primary data source to examine the extent of writing competence the participants gained after the instruction. Validation of the scoring process was conducted by two raters.

Table 7

A comparison of the participants' pre- and post-test scores evaluated by two raters

Test	Rater	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig. *
pretest	researcher	4.60	0.77	-0.34	0.74
	Co-rater	4.67	0.76		
posttest	researcher	7.57	1.38	0.40	0.69
	Co-rater	7.43	1.19		

N = 30 ; \*  $p > 0.05$

The pre-and-post-test papers were assessed through rubric assessment used in the paragraph writing course of my university, where quality of ideas, organization and language are taken into account. The data by the two raters illustrate the consistent scores in the pretest and the post test, indicated by the significance levels of the two tests assessed by two raters as greater than 0.05. This process was treated as the reliability of the scoring procedure performed in the second and third phases of this research. Indicated by the data from the pretest and the posttest papers, the participants became more advantaged as they were trained to write paragraphs as a fundamental builder for writing in a more advanced level like RAs, shown in the following samples.

#### Pre-test sample

##### Problems of Thai Researchers

Writing in English, it is quite hard for me. In writing journals, I know and understand what I will write, but I don't know how to write it in English. Even I could write those sentences in English, but it lose the meaning when it be translate to English. Sometime I am going to write paper, but I can't remember the word in English that I have known before. All the problems happen because I am Thai, and I think, speak and write in Thai language all times. The problems have still existed, but I am going to fix it by directly learn how to write journal in English. (Tri)

#### Post-test sample

##### Problems of Thai Researchers

Writing in English is quite hard for me. First, in writing journals, in the past I did not know how write although I knew what I wanted to write. However, I learn many things from the workshop. I know how to write good paragraph, essay and journal although my writing is not good enough now. Second, I still cannot write sentences that have the same meaning that I want to say 100%. However, I know the patterns of sentence and clause that I saw a lot in journal but did not know it in the past. Although I am not good enough now, but I feel better. Because I know what you call 'rhetorical convention, generic feature of research article. Now I think being Thai is not problems because I learn how to write all type from paragraph to be journal. (Tri)

Also, the interview data pointed out some improved aspects, especially in the flow of ideas expressed through the paragraphs written in the pre-and-post-test papers. The writer reflected on his problems and, through his work sample, told us how he needed help, as can be seen by his voice here.

Writing in English, it is quite hard for me. In writing journals, I know and understand what I will write, but I don't know how to write it in English. Even I could write those sentences in English, but it lose the meaning when it be translate to English. Sometime I am going to write paper, but I can't remember the word in English that I have known before. After workshop, I feel happy. Because I can write better. I have fixed moves in the paper parts and I know what we are expected by the editors as you said in teaching. Thank you for your help. (interview data, Tri)

These test samples, as well as others, explained well how the participants had improved over time. As the workshop was aimed to coach the participants to write

professionally, I also investigated how well they could write RAs, the later component of the model.

## 2.2 Research Articles

To triangulate the data mentioned earlier, I analyzed the participants' RAs written during the research participation. For practicality on account of their time constraints, I opened more room for their selected papers. The RAs analyzed included those they wrote while in the workshop, those available as their lab reports, and those rejected elsewhere, all of which were treated as their first draft for this study. Although these were not equal in terms of how each arrived with his or her first draft, the disparity did not affect my analysis as the participants had to revise all their papers after they were taught to write each part of the RA, where the gap between draft 1 and their revision was considered for their competence in scholarly writing.

After being trained to write essential sentences and clauses, paragraphs and essays in the earlier phase of the workshop, the participants were then trained to write scientific RAs through three leading genre-based frameworks (Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Swales & Feak, 2012; Weissberg & Buker, 1990) I used as generic features. Their practice started with Materials and Methods, and Results, and moving on to Introduction, Discussion, and Abstract, according to the complexity levels of each part and the nature of their lab research where they normally performed lab tests before writing them up. The RAs were evaluated in terms of the moves and steps required in the genres of each article section. Successive drafts of complete RAs were once again assessed by two raters, and there was no statistically significant difference between the scores by the raters ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating the reliable assessment of the data identifying the participants' improved abilities in scholarly writing, as shown here:

Table 8  
A comparison of the participants' RAs first and final drafts

RA Parts	Drafts	Mean	S.D.	t	Sig. (p)
Abstract	draft 1	3.90	0.71	-10.88	< 0.05
	revision	6.53	0.90		
Introduction	draft 1	4.13	0.86	-14.52	< 0.05
	revision	7.03	0.72		
Method	draft 1	4.63	0.77	-13.40	< 0.05
	revision	7.10	0.80		
Result	draft 1	4.57	0.77	-18.06	< 0.05
	revision	7.57	0.50		
Discussion	draft 1	4.03	0.77	-18.02	< 0.05
	revision	7.57	0.50		
Complete paper	draft 1	21.40	3.02	33.85	< 0.05
	revision	43.18	3.36		

N= 30

The participants' score average of the revised RAs was greater than that of their first drafts significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ). The same statistical pattern occurred in all RA parts and the whole paper. This indicates that the participants could improve their abilities

in scholarly writing demonstrated in the whole RAs as a result of their participation in the instruction conducted for this research.

Below is an RAs' excerpt, where the writer stated ideas written in Thai and translated into English later.

#### Methodology of Management to Increase R&D Projects in Thai SMEs

##### Introduction

Science and technology (S&T) is one of the main important factors for driving bussiness to the global economy. S&T comes from doing the dynamic research and development (R&D), creating the innovation, and improving. Then R&D supporting in the Thai Industrial sector or SMEs is the contineous mission and policy of Thai government. However, R&D is ignored by SMEs except multination companies.

Industrial Technology Assistant Program (ITAP) is under the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), Ministy of Science and Technology. Almost 20 years, ITAP support R&D projects for Thai SMEs to do problem solving, increase productivity and develop new products, which focus on the product differentiation or creat value-added products. However, the portion of R&D projects was done in SMEs compare with the number of factories is very low. (translated text)

As appearing in the excerpt, the content drafted in Thai was quite logical and coherent, and this resulted in the same pattern in its English translated version with some problems in flow of connected ideas, regardless of simple grammatical mistakes sporadically occurring throughout the RA and its excerpt. However, this was not considered unfavorable although the translation could indicate the writers' lower competence in writing. Learning in the workshop, the writer, though still resorting to translation, could in the first place have spelled out her intended meaning into English better, and subsequently revised the draft with three moves as required in the introductions section, as in her revision shown here:

#### Management Methods to Increase R&D Projects in Thai SMEs

##### Introduction

To highlight the significant role of R&D, Industrial Technology Assistant Program (ITAP), an agency under the National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA), Ministy of Science and Technology, supports R&D to achieve its mission on SMEs. Over 20 years, ITAP has supported financial and experts for Thai SMEs to solve problems, increase productivity and develop new products, all of which focus on the product differentiation or create value-added products. However, the portion of R&D projects, compared to a number of Thai factories, has been investigated in SMEs in a low degree. More seriously, invitations of SMEs to increase R&D projects are still problematic.

Therefore, the main purpose of this paper is to offer suitable methods of management to increase R&D projects in SMEs via two approaches, support individual companies and industrial sectors. We believe the findings will provide the greatest solution on

how ITAP helps industries and subsequently produces practical, influential research and development for Thai SMEs.

Despite some ungrammatical mistakes, this revision appeared to be accepted more by the generic features of the Introduction section, where the writer clearly indicated the central ideas in the opening sentence, the gap indicating the need for the current research, and the main objective of the study, all of which were quite a bit more coherent, compared to her first draft.

The participants' competence in scholarly writing can be explained by the elements forming the instructional model. First, the model encouraged the participants' linguistics knowledge, writing skills in discourse levels including paragraphs, essays and RAs, and assisted them to gain cognitive competence in all elements of writing. The excerpts below showed their problems in lower skills of sentence writing and confusing thoughts:

(1) The study of graphic symbols in AAC has primarily focused on an analysis of symbol learnability and complexity and grouped in terms of iconicity. Researchers studying symbols frequently refer to the iconicity of the symbols. Iconicity refers to the visual relationship of symbol of its referent and varies along a continuum from transparent to opaque. (Sar)

(2) Some of existing works only suggested a list of refactoring without ordering and the others suggest refactoring sequences. However, these works do not include the criteria. Therefore, our research problem is "Can we find an optimal refactoring sequence that removes the bad smells, uses the least effort to understand refactored code and improves the maintainability?" (Pan)

Second, while being trained, the participants learned to plan more for their thoughts to be woven into effective sentences conveying their intended meaning. The following sample was the less effective work with less-planned thoughts that could not attract readers.

The physical rehabilitation for these groups of people is important to maximize their capability, promote independent living, return them to the society and have good quality of life under individual's circumstance. (Jak)

Related to the participants' planning are logic elements. The participants, after being trained to write academically through the model, witnessed that the most important element of writing is logic. The following sentences showed the participants' problems in organizing content that may have made audience unable to follow their actual meaning:

(1) CO<sub>2</sub> from the Roi Et green Plant is from biomass combustion and hence, being part of the global carbon cycle, does not contribute to global warming. This is a distinct advantage of biomass-based production. (Neu)

(2) Current available methods for determining the fungal resistance of synthetic polymeric materials such as ASTM G21 and JIS Z 2911, have the disadvantage in time-consuming in order that the visual fungal growth is shown. (Ked)



Fourth, the model was helpful for those with difficulty in argumentative skills through logical sentences and the flow of connected ideas. Also, it helps those normally orientating their readers through the inductive approach, when they are developing ideas or arguments in paragraphs, to witness that the same ideas with the deductive approach became more effective as they could serve native English speaking readers more. The first sample demonstrates incomplete thoughts where the idea in the sentences between inter move shifts was not completely connected. Also, the second exemplifies paragraphs inductively written unnecessarily.

(1) Thai Government Pharmaceutical Organization (GPO) has started the first vaccine production in pilot plant-scaled level and has purchased 2 million doses of pandemic inactivated vaccine from the Sanofi-Pasture company while high priority groups of population is 4 million people. Lacking of the facilities and know-how of industrial-scaled influenza vaccine production, our country will have not the self-reliance for the emergency of the pandemic. (Sup)

(2) Not pattern such influences on the perception of graphic symbols, but also the influences on culture will be considered. Culture is generally defined as a set of behaviors, institutions, beliefs, technologies and values invented and passed on by a group of individuals to sustain what they believe to be high quality of life and to negotiate their environments. To sum up, culture is a perceptually shared reality, a world view. (Sar)

In these examples, the writers could have relied more on on-going development with unclear centrality. This became more severe as the writers could not make a point and failed to connect paragraphs in terms of logical ties. However, such phenomena prevalent among the participants could be handled better when the participants were trained to write in English, starting from logical sentences to systematic paragraphs, essays, and research articles. Below is a paragraph written with on-going explanation, and its revised version finally published in his field journal:

(Earlier draft) Fig.8 represents the results of the thermal conductivity ( $k$ ) of the non-doped  $\text{CuAlO}_2$  sample from 300 K (room temperature) to 1000 K. The results showed that the values of thermal conductivity were decreased with the range from 3.5 to 1.5 W/mK with measuring temperature from 300 to 1000 K respectively. The maximum value of  $k$  was 3.48 W/mK at room temperature and minimum value was 1.5 W/mK at the range temperature from 800 to 1000 K. (Zhe)

(Revision) Fig.8 shows the thermal conductivity ( $k$ ) of the non-doped  $\text{CuAlO}_2$  sample from 300 K (room temperature) to 1000 K. It is measured by using a laser flash method with the relation  $k = dC_p a$ , where  $d$ ,  $C_p$  and  $a$  are the same density, specific heat and thermal diffusivity respectively. The results of  $k$  value are the range from 3.5 to 1.5 W/mK in temperature 300 to 1000 °K respectively. These results shows that the thermal conductivity of the non-doped  $\text{CuAlO}_2$  sample at room temperature is decreased depending on increasing temperature. (Zhe)



Last but equally important, the participants learned through the model to observe the three leading frameworks I used as generic features (Kanoksilapatham , 2005; Swales & Feak, 2012; Weissberg & Buker, 1990) so they could write RAs in their disciplines in a quite flexible manner. In fact, the participants worked in various disciplines, such as microbiology, applied physics, biochemistry, nanotechnology, materials sciences, computer sciences, and the like, but the generic feature of RAs can be of help as the structure, though in different academic discourses, can more or less share such generic features. As such, observing RAs written through the generic features based on these flexible frameworks can help them justify what works and what does not in their own field. What is more helpful is the actual work we took from some journals with high impact factors, such as *Science*, *Nature*, *British Medical Journal*, *Journal of the American Chemical Society*, *Green Chemistry*, *Angewandte Chemie International Education*, *Advanced Energy materials*, *Catalysis Today*, and the like, through which they can learn to observe real practice in their field and across others so they implement these practices in their work more substantially. With the guidelines and continuous feedback I always offered in the workshop, the participants could demonstrate their skills in RA writing.

As a result, the skills of being ethnographers I taught in the sessions, where one observes actual journals of any target discipline for any discourse patterns, can help them in any quest of knowledge. What they always need to do in their real world is to investigate generic features and certain linguistic use of the research articles in their discipline. For any local grammatical mistakes, they are very happy with being ethnographers observing actual use of language from English corpus concordancers (<http://www.lex Tutor.ca/conc/eng/> & <http://corpus.leeds.ac.uk/protected/query.html>), where they can self correct using patterns most frequently occurring in the concordance lines, although some unacceptable grammatical errors may still appear in their manuscripts.

## Conclusion

All the findings suggest that periphery professionals, if trained to write scholarly, are believed to hold strong competence in writing at all levels, which should subsequently contribute to their high confidence and motivation to publish more. For self study among those professionals, we clearly learn that the problems encountered by these professionals could result from an absence or lower levels of awareness of the role of genres in academic conventions (Swales, 1984; Swales & Feak, 2000). When writers lack appropriate schemata or generic features for academic text production, they thus need to be sensitive to the complexity and variation of academic conventions, and the awareness of such genres is truly required (Holmes, 1997). Therefore, the professionals who wish to develop themselves through self-directed learning should be aware of generic features of scientific RAs. And when it comes to publishing their works in international journals, where English is required as an international language with Anglo-American norms, style and conventions, those in periphery areas should not feel that they are at a linguistic or rhetorical disadvantage to L1 researchers any more. Together, the findings kept me informed that my exploration is of use for their career lives, and this certainly can imply the effectiveness of the model I have created to be used as a tool to help EFL researchers to develop themselves professionally.

The logo for iafor (International Association for Applied Linguistics) is centered on the page. It consists of the lowercase letters "iafor" in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is surrounded by two large, overlapping circular arcs. The upper arc is light blue and the lower arc is light red, both appearing as thin, brush-stroke-like lines.

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*An Evaluation of Students' Oral Fluency to Identify Ways to Help Them  
Improve Their English Speaking Skills*

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## Introduction

In the process of globalization, it seems there is a general consensus to accept English to be a lingua franca although people have a natural preference to communicate with foreigners in their native language (Hall, 2013: 8). In Hong Kong, educators, teachers and students probably recognize this phenomenon very well. When planning the English curriculum, teachers are trying hard to promote a congenial learning atmosphere to enable students to acquire a high level of English to meet their professional and career needs.

## Communicative competence

In the Hong Kong context, the classical grammar-based teacher-centred drilling approach which prevailed till late 1960s (Richards, 2006: 6) has become outdated. English teaching has adopted the communicative approach. Students are expected to do communicative tasks in the form of pair or group work. They use English to exchange information, present their ideas and finish the projects.

The focus of teaching oral skills at the tertiary level is to enable students to read aloud, give a presentation, ask and answer questions in a discussion or interview, describe and tell a story. These oral skills will enable learners to pass the speaking paper in public examinations like IELTS and TOEFL.

Hymes defined **communicative competence** as competence to decide when to speak, when not, what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner” (1966, 1972). This is a basic, pragmatic description of the ability to use the language to interact with others purposefully in a specific context. Nevertheless, he had not taken into consideration the medium for communication as a key factor affecting the effectiveness of communication.

## Computer mediated communication (CMC)

According to Blake (2013), “84 percent of teenagers use the Internet as a primary communication tool, either in writing or by instant messaging (IM)” (cited in Hernandez & Rankin, 2015). With the convenience and widespread use of “whatsapp”, instant messaging, facebook and instagram in Hong Kong, tertiary students are used to communicating in their “peer-type” English with a lot of emojis, incomplete sentences, acronyms, Chinese expressions translated directly into English and short answers with a particle at the end to add emphasis.

Here are some common phrases used in CMC

- (A) “blowing the wind” -- bluffing and exaggerating
- (B) “he not know?”, “you mean what?”
- (C) “cu, ttyl, fds”
- (D) “no la”, “you ah?”

Computer mediated communication (CMC) no doubt can help students convey their messages to receivers very efficiently. They can focus on communicating “the ideas”, not the language expressions. In other words, there is a real information gap and the sender of the message is trying to use language concisely to pass information and

interact naturally with the receiver. Thus fast and vivid exchanges are generated. Eventually a certain style is developed among the group members who are used to one another's way of expressing themselves. As a language teacher, it is very hard to train students to speak properly using the correct conventions.

### **The research findings and analysis**

In Semester 1 (2015-16), a total of 50 recordings of Year 1 students' discussions and presentations have been collected for analysis. The speech data is used for identifying common problem areas and errors for improving the learning of English and the English curriculum.

The subjects are from three programmes: Bachelor of Business Administration in Service Marketing and Management, Bachelor of Psychology and Bachelor of Social Work. The majority of this cohort have passed the DSE (Diploma in Secondary Education) examination and have attained at least Level 3 in their English and Chinese subjects.

From our recordings of 50 first year students, we find that students have the problems in:

- using appropriate vocabulary/ expressions to convey their ideas to others;
- using correct tenses, articles, prepositions, singular and plural forms of nouns etc.;
- avoiding the use of Chinese English;
- having too much hesitation and repetition;
- turn-taking and responding appropriately to others in a discussion; and
- using the correct tone and register in their discussions.

Weak students, in particular, have problems in the choice of appropriate vocabulary, tenses and sentence structures. Most of them could not differentiate the definite article "the" from non-definite articles (a, an). It is clear that L1 has interfered their use of L2. Quite a few also tried to memorize texts from various sources in their presentation. Only some above average students could respond to the teacher's comments using appropriate expressions.

In addition, there was a range of abilities among the group. Some were already quite articulate whereas others were still struggling to search for the right words to express their ideas. The weakest students were not able to pronounce some basic words properly. For instance, a weak student might say "I want to make **suggest (suggestion) go (going) together, meet at the ferry pier.**" (He pronounced "pier" as "pair"). It is hard for the listeners to capture what he meant.

### **Strategies to tackle the problems in speaking**

Here are some suggestions to help tertiary learners improve their oral proficiency:

#### **Formal face-to-face classroom teaching**

(A) Adopt the **communicative/ situational approach** to maximize the opportunities for students to interact with one another in discussions, presentations,

debates and simulated situations. Teachers should encourage students to use language to express their views naturally. It is not desirable to spend a lot of time on repetitive drills or practice the use of new vocabulary out of context.

(B) Teach basic **pronunciation skills**: students have to learn some basic pronunciation skills. It is useful for them to learn what syllables, primary stress, intonation patterns, rising and falling tones are. But instead of having the teacher point out the mistakes, let students record their own speech and identify the errors. In so doing, they will be more aware of their articulation and will not repeat the errors.

### **Making use of computing technology to improve oral skills**

(A) Recommend a list of self-learning sites to students: useful websites such as “TED talks” (Technology, Entertainment and Design) which consists of thousands of speeches. The site can be used for maximizing students’ exposure to the native tongue and enrich their vocabulary. If L2 learners find the speeches to be too difficult, they can switch on the “tapescript” to listen and read the text first. Listening to TED talks can increase their knowledge as well as improve their listening and reading proficiency.

(B) Video-tape or record students’ presentations, upload video clips to the learning site. In so doing, students can comment on one another’s performance and be more aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

(C) Teacher can select specific tapes/ recordings to focus on some common speaking errors which are likely to cause misunderstanding and communication breakdown.

Promoting self-evaluation can increase learners’ self-awareness. By adopting **an action-oriented learning approach**, learners are given ample opportunities to practice chunking of phrases, reducing redundancy (repetition, use of clichés, rephrasing the previous line etc.) and intonation patterns in formal speeches. Though redundancy makes it easier for learners to understand what the speaker is talking about (Brown, p.237), it is advisable to speak clearly and concisely on formal occasions. Thus teachers have to remind students to note the differences between personal (informal) and public (formal) communication.

With the advance of technology, teachers can easily use electronic multimedia devices such as mini recorders (recording pens, or cell phone), computer, ipod, ipad and camera to enable students to evaluate their own performance.

## Conclusion

The study is to identify students' common pronunciation mistakes and problem areas in speaking to find ways to enhance their oral proficiency through the use of multimedia devices. In class, certain common spoken errors are highlighted and analyzed by the speakers themselves. This has increased students' awareness of their performance. Furthermore the teacher gives encouragement and support to the learners as positive feedback can strengthen their confidence in speaking English. Only through continuous efforts and practice in the language production process can L2 learners improve their oral fluency.

The proposed strategies are to enable students to get a more holistic perspective in English and communication. It is essential to make for them to understand that English is not a set of discrete skills confined to the classroom but an integral part to their success in their academic and later professional development. The ultimate goal is to empower students so that they can gain self-awareness to their English speech and improve their overall proficiency.

Some practical implications to course design include putting the learning tasks in context. Learners will be able to practise English in a more natural manner when the the practice tasks are similar to the real world tasks. In addition, after teachers highlight a culturally specific list of errors that might affect communication, students will be more careful to avoid making these errors.

Furthermore, involving students in the analysis of their own speeches or performance can broaden their exposure to English in use. They will be more careful and consider the social and cultural context when choosing expressions to present their ideas. All in all, teachers' attitude and efforts in creating a favorable atmosphere in the classroom bears a major impact on the effective learning of a second language.

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*The Effect of Metalinguistic Feedback and Recasts on Learners' Uptake  
and Subsequent Production of Past Simple*

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**Abstract**

This study aims to investigate the effect of metalinguistic feedback and recasts on learner uptake and subsequent production of past simple while engaging in controlled oral tasks. Firstly, related articles on corrective feedback on oral errors are reviewed and the effects of the two feedback types on learners' accuracy of past simple are discussed. A small scale laboratory experiment was carried out to examine learners' uptake as responses to metalinguistic feedback and recasts provided by the teacher to direct their attentions to the wrong forms in their utterances. The data on teacher- student interactions during the controlled oral production tasks were recorded, transcribed and coded for analysis purposes. Further investigation on learners' awareness of corrections received from the teacher was conducted using semi-structure interviews. Finally, a brief conclusion and pedagogical implications are drawn from the findings.

Keywords: corrective feedback, uptake, noticing, interaction

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## Introduction

According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis, exposure to comprehensible input or positive evidence is significant to language learning and acquisition; whereas: error correction is viewed as unnecessary and may block learning development. However, the acquisitional value and the role of corrective feedback (CF) in communicative classroom settings, particularly in L2 instructional context, have always been investigated. The main reason is because exposure to input may not be sufficient for L2 learning to take place. Moreover, views on learners' errors and corrections have changed according to the changing trends in language learning and teaching. Error correction was once viewed as punishment that may cast negative effects on language learning and should be avoided. After communicative language teaching approach had prevailed language classrooms, meaning and communicative skills are primarily focused on. Consequently, error correction has been utilized in order to promote form focus or accuracy while interaction process is least interrupted. Interactionist researchers argue that feedback needs to be contextualized and it works best when it occurs in context at the time the learner makes the error (Ellis, 2009, p.5). Interactional feedback as responses to learners' error or 'corrective feedback' (i.e., a form of negative evidence informing learners that a particular utterance is problematic in relation to target language norms,) is highly regarded as a technique that might facilitate grammatical acquisition during meaningful interaction particularly in an EFL learning environment where linguistic input is limited. Nevertheless, research findings on the effectiveness and the efficacy of CF remain inconclusive. This paper reports on the effective of metalinguistic feedback and recasts on learners' subsequent product of past simple tense and learners' attitudes and preferences on the two techniques

## Literature Review

Corrective feedback refers to teacher's responses to learners' utterances containing linguistic errors. Corrective feedback episodes are comprised trigger, the feedback move and optionally uptake (Ellis,2009).

- |    |  |                     |
|----|--|---------------------|
| T: | When were you in school?                               |                     |
| L: | Yes. I stand in the first row?                         | trigger             |
| T: | You stood in the first row.                            | corrective feedback |
| L: | Yes, in the first row, and sit, ah, sat the first row. | uptake              |

Lyster and Ranta (1997) introduced a taxonomy of CF which consists of 6 different types of CF; explicit correction, recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition. Figure 1 illustrates error treatment sequence proposed by Lyster and Ranta.

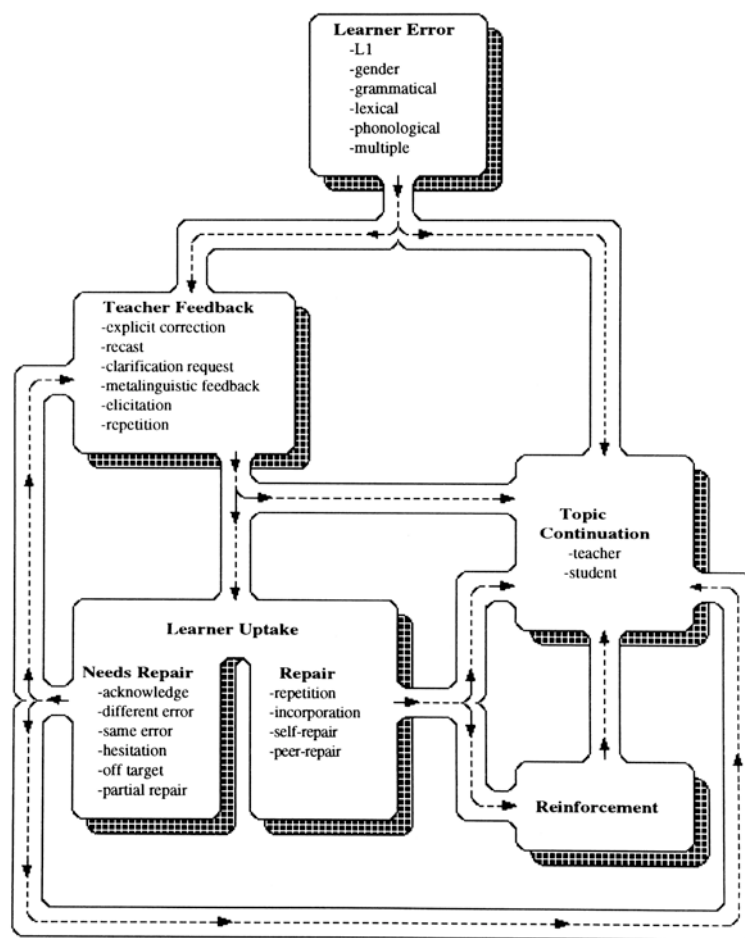


Figure 1. Error treatment sequence (Lyster & Ranta, 1997)

Uptake is learner responses to feedback. Uptake can take different forms including needs (unsuccessful) repair and (successful repair). Studies on CF and uptake regard needs repair uptake as evidence of no noticing which can be assumed that the speaker may not be aware of the error and the target form provided in the feedback. CF that triggers successful repairs, on the other hand, is viewed as effective as it help generate an internal process that may lead to interlanguage system development.

In the past few decades, researchers have examined how corrective feedback facilitates language acquisition in order to find the most effective ways for teachers to treat errors including phonological, lexical, and syntactical. Different types of corrective feedback have been examined as treatments to different types of errors to find out if there are any relationships between types of feedback and types of error. A number of classroom research reveals that teacher feedback is often inconsistent, unfocused and unsystematic leading to unsuccessful learning development. Survey and observation studies also reveal discrepancy between teachers' and students' attitudes about corrective feedback. While teachers think corrections are likely to discourage students from speaking and can be a threat to fluency, students have positive attitudes toward teacher corrections and express strong needs for corrective feedback from their teachers English (Chenoweth et al., 1983; Katayama, 2006). In the past few decades, numerous studies on CF have been conducted in different learning settings including immersion, laboratory, EFL/ ESL classrooms and using

different designs such as surveys, observation, and empirical designs by means of pre-test, post-test and delayed post-test to measure learning outcomes. Research on CF covers a range of various topics such as characteristics of CF, CF patterns in relation to errors, relationship between CF and uptake, explicit and implicit CF, and factors of CF efficacy and effectiveness.

A sheer amount of studies have examined the characteristics of different types of feedback, their relationship with different types of errors, and their effect on learner uptake. The ultimate goal is to discover correction techniques that can facilitate language development. In this present study, metalinguistic feedback and recasts were selected as the two feedback types to treat errors on past simple tense.

### Metalinguistic Feedback

Without providing the correct form, the teacher poses questions or provides comments or information related to the formation of the student's utterance (for example, "Do we say it like that?" "That's not how you say it in French," and "Is it feminine?"). Metalinguistic questions also point to the nature of the error but attempt to elicit the information from the student.

Learner:	He kiss her.	<i>trigger</i>
Researcher:	Kiss - <u>You need past tense.</u>	<i>metalinguistic feedback</i>
Learner:	He kissed	<i>repair uptake</i>

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S:	I went to the train station and pick up my aunt.	<i>trigger</i>
T:	<u>Use past tense consistently.</u>	<i>metalinguistic feedback</i>
S:	I <u>went</u> to the train station and <u>picked</u> up my aunt.	<i>uptake</i>

(Sheen, 2004)

Some researchers categorized metalinguistic feedback as 'explicit' when it involves the explanation of a formal aspect when an error has been detected.

### Recasts

This CF technique involves the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error (Lyster & Ranta, 1997, p.46). Following Doughty (1994), Lyster and Ranta (1997) have adopted this widely used term from the L1 acquisition literature. Chaudron (1977) included such moves in the categories in "repetition with change" and "repetition with change and emphasis". Recasts are generally viewed as implicit CF technique. Yet, according to Lyster and Ranta (1997), the technique can be utilized in a salient manner. Without directly indicating that the student's utterance was incorrect, the teacher implicitly reformulates all or part of a student's utterance, minus the error.

- S: when I was soldier, I used to wear the balaclava  
 T: and why did you wear it? for protection from the cold or for another reason.  
 S: just wind, uh protection to wind and cold      *lexical error*  
 T: protection from      *recast*  
 S: uh, from wind and cold      *uptake*  
 T: right, okay, not for a disguise

(Loewen, 2005)

While narrating a story, the student misused the preposition ‘to’ that came after ‘protection’. The teacher provided a partial or focused recast by reformulating the erroneous phrase and replacing ‘to’ with ‘from’.

### **Past Simple**

For L2 learners of English, tense/aspect marking is considered one of the most difficult areas to acquire, especially for learners whose first language is categorized as ‘tenseless’, such as the participants in this study. Generally, past tense –ed, is known to be problematic for Asian L2 English learners, leading to errors (e.g., Doughty & Valera, 1998; Ellis et al. 2006) especially evident in communicative context. When communicating in English, learners tend to have problems with pronunciation in their oral production because of the difficulties in pronouncing /t/ and /ed/. Studies have found that –ed and other morphological features such as –es, and –s are problematic to acquire for Asian learners despite long years of explicit instruction of tenses and pronunciation in schools. Results from oral production tests demonstrated that the learners made many errors on verb form regarding tenses and were inconsistent in producing –ed ending appropriately, where it was obligated. As research findings suggested Thai learners are inconsistent in the use of tense and in some instances, demonstrate an accurate use of tenses. However, more often than not they use incorrect tenses. Sometimes it is obvious that learners know what is the correct tense and what form they need but they just fail to inflect the verb. At other times it is not quite clear if one can infer that the phonological omission of the inflected verbs is due to the fact that they do not know the form they needed or that they had not acquired the concept.

This paper reports on the effect of two different types of feedback (metalinguistic feedback v. recasts) on the subsequent production of past simple and students’ attitudes and opinions toward teacher correction techniques and their effectiveness. The present study attempts to answer the following questions.

### **Research Questions**

- RQ1 How do metalinguistic feedback and recasts affect learners’ subsequent product of past simple?
- RQ 2 What do learners think about the feedback on their errors of past simple?

## Methodology

### Participants

Six 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in a Thai university participated in the present study. They are non-English majors and prior to their participation in the present study, they had taken one or two basic English speaking and listening courses as required by their degrees. Therefore, they were quite familiar with oral production tasks. Three of them received metalinguistic feedback and three received recasts to correct the erroneous utterances they produced during the tasks.

### Data Collection

Individually, participants were invited to the researcher's office to complete two oral production tasks. The first task is related to the participants' personal past experiences on their recent trip with their family or friends. While the task objective is to invite use of past simple in their responses, it is also important to use the topic that makes them feel relaxed and less anxious to speak. The second task is more controlled as the participants were asked to tell a story based on the pictures. The participants' oral production data were audio-recorded. After completing both tasks, the participants were interviewed about the correction technique they received. The interview questions focus on their attitudes and preferences toward the two types of CF and their benefits to language development. The interviews were also audio-recorded.

#### *Task 1 A trip with my family*

After greeting and a brief introduction, in order to create a relaxing atmosphere and reduce anxiety and stresses, the researcher asked the participants to talk about their family and the most recent trip or holiday they had with them. Some questions were asked to trigger the participants to think and produce more specific details. The instructions and questions are as follows:

*Can you tell me about your recent trip or holiday with your family or friends?  
Where did you go? What did you do? What did you enjoy most during the trip? What did you like least about the trip?*

#### *Task 2 Picture story*

After completing Task 1, participants were asked to make up a story based on the given pictures. Unlike the first task, this task is more controlled and aims to push the participants to produce the target forms (i.e., past simple)

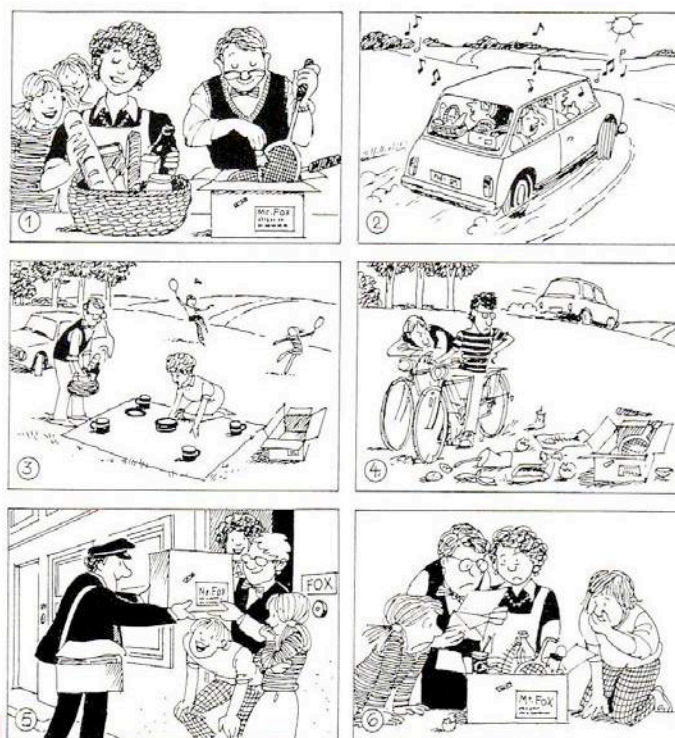


Figure 2. Picture story task

### Interview questions

1. How did you plan your speech when you were asked to share your past experiences in Task 1?
2. Were you aware of the use of past simple tense when you were talking about your past experiences?
3. Did you notice that you were being corrected while telling your story?
4. What type of errors was corrected?
5. How did the researcher correct the errors in your speech production?
6. How did you feel when you were corrected?
7. Do you think the correction technique is helpful?
8. Do you think if you receive this type of feedback when the errors are spotted in your speech production constantly in the classroom, it can improve your accuracy in long term or not?

### Data Coding and Analysis

The oral data were transcribed and the instances of episodes that contain CF were identified. The CF episode starts when the participant uttered a wrong form of the target structure (trigger) followed by teacher corrective feedback (i.e., metalinguistic feedback and recasts). Responses to teacher's correction or uptake were coded for successful, unsuccessful and repair. In this present study, metalinguistic feedback is operationalised as a teacher's comments containing metalanguage whereas recasts are repetition some or all part of the erroneous utterance with emphatic intonation on the error. Example 1 to 4 illustrate the CF episodes consisting of trigger, feedback and uptake.



## Metalinguistic Feedback

Example 1 (Task 1) P = Participant R = Researcher

- P: When I go there by myself... *trigger*  
 R: It's past tense here. *metalinguistic feedback*  
 P: Ah. When I went there by myself, *uptake (successful repair)*  
 I think...I thought *self-initiated self-repair*  
 that it [was] like in the music video of  
 Pee Bird that I like.

Example 2 (Task 2)

- P When they... they forget their things they  
 prepare from home... *trigger*  
 R: We are talking about what happened in the past. *metalinguistic feedback*  
 P: Ok... they forgot their things they prepared from *uptake (successful repair)*  
 home and then a lot of garbage on the ground

## Recasts

Example 3 (Task 1)

- L: I went to Hua Hin with my friends.  
 R: When was it?  
 P: Thai New Year Day , I think, with my friends.  
 Ten people. We are go to Hua Hin... *trigger*  
 R: We are go to Hua Hin... *recast*  
 P: Ah no no no we went to Hua Hin. I'm sorry. *uptake (successful repair)*  
 And...we ...rent a one big house...to stay  
 R: Rent(?)  
 P: Yes , rent one big house. Like 10-12 thousand baht  
 R: How many rooms?  
 P: Almost 6 bedrooms.

Example 4 (Task 1)

- R: What did you do last New Year holiday?  
 P: Last New Year...Oh I go to... *trigger*  
 R: You go(?) *recast*  
 P: Sa-Pan Taksin to watch the fire *uptake (no repair)*  
 R: Fireworks.  
 P: Yes.

In Example 3 and 4, the participants wrongly use the present tense verb form in their utterances where past simple tense is more appropriate. The researcher repeats the error immediately with emphatic intonation to draw their attention to the error. The participants' responses indicate that they did not perceive the feedback from the researcher as a correction of form. As a result, they did not correct the error but continues on. It is reasonable to assume that they perceived the feedback as information checking or feedback on meaning rather than on form.



In order to answer research question 2, the interviews were transcribed and analysed.

### Results and findings

The main results and findings from the analysis of oral production data are summarized as follows.

*RQ1 How do metalinguistic feedback and recasts affect learners' subsequent product of past simple?*

1. Students who received metalinguistic feedback noticed the correction and repaired the error in their utterance. Successful repair rates are significantly high after the first few corrections were given.

Example 5 (Task 1, Metalinguistic feedback)

- |    |   |                                |
|----|---|--------------------------------|
| P: | Ahh begin with the weather <u>is</u> similar with Thailand but a bit hotter.  | <i>trigger</i>                 |
| R: | <u>So we are talking about the past event.</u><br><u>You need to use past tense.</u>  | <i>metalinguistic feedback</i> |
| P: | Ok I mean <u>the weather was...the weather was</u> about almost 30 degrees.   | <i>successful uptake</i>       |
| R: | Quite similar to the weather in Thailand.   |                                |
| R: | Yes. The first day when we <u>arrive...arrived</u> at the airport, we went to the hotel. I actually don't remember the name of the hotel. |                                |

In Example 5, after being corrected on the use of past simple when narrating past events, the participant repairs the error (is-was) and continues his talk. He seems to be aware of the problematic feature and monitor his production of past simple verbs in the utterances after being pointed out the grammar rule. Without correction from the researcher, he spontaneously repairs the error when he replaces 'arrived' with 'arrived' which he pronounces the -ed sound at the end of the word quite clearly.

2. Students who received recasts feedback noticed the corrections but less than their counterparts. This resulted in lower repair rates. The participants' responses in Example 6 and 7 illustrate no repair uptake

Example 6 (Task 1, Recast)

- |    |  |                  |
|----|--|------------------|
| P: | They <u>are</u> waiting for fireworks...like..   | <i>trigger</i>   |
| R: | <u>They are(?)</u>                               | <i>recast</i>    |
| P: | Yes, a lot of people are there, like foreigners. | <i>no uptake</i> |

## Example 7 (Task 1, Recast)

- R: How long did you stay there to watch the fireworks?  
 P: I arrive at 10 pm. but it start ...around like 12. *trigger*  
 R: It start (?) *recast*  
 P: Yes, around 12 and about half or an hour or something. *no uptake*  
 Yes. I think it's not very special.  
 R: How did you go home...from there?  
 P: We drive a car. *trigger*  
 R: You drive(?) *recast*  
 P: Oh no, her boyfriend drive....  
 my friend's boyfriend drive us. *unsuccessful repair*

3. Some students did not notice or were not aware of being corrected. They perceived recasts as feedback on meaning rather than on form.

4. After students noticed the pattern of correction, they became more aware and produced less errors on past simple. It is also evident that the self-initiated self repair rates increased after they received feedback from the researcher.

*RQ 2 What do learners think about the feedback on their errors of past simple?*

The analysis of the participants' responses during the post-task interviews are summarized as follows.

1. Most of the participants explained that they focused on meaning more than form although they are aware that they need to use past simple when narrating past events. They think that even they do not use past simple verbs perfectly, the meaning is still clear.
2. The participants expressed positive attitudes toward teacher corrections during the tasks. They do not view corrections as interruptions but they are necessary for their language development since there is not much chance they will get corrected when they use the language to communicate outside the classroom.
3. The participants expressed their strong preferences on immediate feedback to delayed feedback. They reported that being corrected on the spot can help them notice the errors they had just uttered. Whereas, if the feedback is provided after they completed the tasks, they had difficulties to recall their own speech and the corrections will not be very useful.
4. After completing the task, the participants who received metalinguistic feedback could recall precisely how they were corrected by the researcher. However, those who received recasts had difficulties recalling what the researcher said or how they errors were corrected. Two participants who received recasts stated that the emphatic intonation in the researcher's comments together with the researcher's facial expression made them realize that they must have just made some error in their speech production. This stopped them from continuing their talk and deviated them to focus on the form and grammar in their speech.
5. All participants were aware of the requirement of past tense verb forms in the narration ;however, they did not monitor themselves to produce the final sounds of the inflected verb as they rather focused on meaning. Thus, even though they intended to narrate a story in the past, they failed to use the past forms of the verbs in their

utterances and failed to pronounce the correct sounds of the verbs that end with –ed.

6. All participants believe if they receive effective and consistent corrections from their teachers, they would gradually form a habit of close monitoring on their own speech. In other words, such corrective feedback provision promotes learner autonomy in a long term.

## **Conclusion**

This present study investigated how metalinguistic feedback and recast has an effect on learners' subsequent production of past simple in their utterances. The results indicate that metalinguistic feedback could draw learners' attention to the wrong form in their utterances and push them to correct the errors. Moreover, it also helped learners to become more aware of their use of the past simple verbs when they produce sentences telling past events. For recast, although generally, it could trigger learners to correct the errors, the rate of successful repairs is slightly lower than those as responses to metalinguistic feedback. Therefore, it is less effective to help learners be aware of the errors. One possible reason why metalinguistic feedback may be more effective than recast is it is more explicit and thus more salient to learners. Recasts, despite of the emphatic intonation, could appear to the learners as responses to meaning but not to form due to its implicit characteristics. It is unclear to the learners whether they are being corrected on form. The results are consistent with previous studies claiming that explicit correction such metalinguistic feedback results in more successful uptake or repairs (Lightbown & Spada, 1990, 1991; Sheen, 2004).

Some useful pedagogical implications can be drawn from the findings on the effect of metalinguistic feedback and the positive attitudes towards teacher correction. Teachers should provide sufficient and consistent explicit feedback such metalinguistic feedback on grammatical errors in communicative classrooms. Ultimately, learners will gradually become autonomous and begin to monitor their production when using the target language in real life situations.

## **Limitations of the study**

The results of this present study must be interpreted with caution due to several limitations that need to be addressed. Firstly, the sample size was very small (n=6). Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that the participants were at the exact same level of proficiency. Clearly, further classroom research is called for with a larger sample size. Another limitation is that the present study was not conducted in an actual classroom but a laboratory setting where factors were strictly controlled. The findings, therefore, should not be generalized.

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***Recommend Video Materials to Enhance Language Learning Motivation by Collaborative Filtering Method***

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**Abstract**

Learning English on Internet has become increasingly common, where Internet movies for learning English are also booming. For instance, the VoiceTube, an Internet video platform for learning English, has pluralistic free videos with both Chinese and English captions. Meanwhile, VoiceTube can combine social media to create a learning network community. However, a good recommendation system is necessary to select proper videos from the English film resources according personal preferences. Hence, the present study used collaborative filtering method to recommend videos, which were found in the learners' lists with similar preferences. First, we used a web crawler to crawl user information on VoiceTube. Then, the Crab, which is recommender engine in Python, was used to analyze the collected data for identifying similar learners. According the preference scores, Crab can precisely recommend proper English learning films to every learner. Finally, we created a query interface for the data crawled from VoiceTube. Thus, learners can use the query function to search friends, collecting similar favorite movies, through VoiceTube social networks. As a result, learners can passively get recommended videos or actively select proper English movies that can enhance their motivation of learning English through watching videos.

Keywords: VoiceTube, social media, recommendation system, collaborative filtering, learning motivation.

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## Introduction

With the popularity of the Internet, it is relative convenient to access rich and free online resources for learning English. Learning English is no longer just to acquire knowledge from books. A large number of English-language teaching-related Web sites, software, videos and other resources can be used for various purposes. English-language film is a great learning tool while watching entertainment movies. Learners can listen to conversations while watching, and can try to recognize the words on caption. In addition, the situations in the film can help learners into the context of a foreign culture, which is difficult to learn in books.

There are many video sharing platform and YouTube is a popular video sharing site for users to upload, watch, and share videos freely. The VoiceTube (URL: [www.voicetube.com](http://www.voicetube.com)) is an English learning website based on watching YouTube videos at Taiwan. Learners can repeatedly play a single sentence to enhance English listening comprehension and reading. In addition to the both English and Chinese captions, learners can use the instant dictionary to check words. Furthermore, VoiceTube combined with social media Facebook. Because VoiceTube is so successful, this study explored how to integrate with recommendation system on this platform.

Furthermore, it is difficult to make a selection correctly among a large number of, various types of film resources according to learners' different preferences. Moreover, quality of online videos cannot judge due to lack of appropriate assessment and management mechanism. How can learners quickly find the right information on Internet becomes a very important issue. Therefore, using recommender system to help users filter out useful information from large amounts of data is necessary. The recommender system can actively provide information to users according to user preferences at the right time.

In summary, this study uses Crab, a flexible, fast recommender engine, to recommend video clips on VoiceTube. To develop the collaborative filtering recommendation system, the web crawler should first crawl through VoiceTube to collect data to be analyzed and discussed. Then, the calculation formula should be designed to obtain the scores of the featured film in order to meet learners' interests. Finally, learners' responses, including English learning motivation and system usability, were collected as feedback to improve the recommender system.

## Related Studies

### *Collaborative filtering*

O'Donovan & Smyth (2005) pointed out that collaborative filtering recommender system, sometimes called social filtering, are built mainly on property or interest similar or user experience to provide personalized information service. Based on preference data, users can be divided into a number of group with high degree of preference similarity. Herlocker, Konstan, & Riedl (2000) also mentioned the collaborative filtering system is connecting the users by the same group of people interested to originally predict the extent of a transaction or information. To sum up, the main concept of collaborative filter is to create recommend mechanism from a

large group of users with similar preference records. Then, the recommendation system will try to count assessment scores of every item for the user. Finally, a list of items will be recommended to the user.

### *Web crawler*

Web crawler (Web Crawler) is an automated web browsing programs, also known as Web Robot, or Web Spider (Kausar, Dhaka, & Singh, 2013). Web crawler is an orderly, automated way to visit and retrieve specific information from the web by simulating web browser. It will analyze links to other document or information in retrieved files and will continue to retrieve other files, and so repeated. Therefore, Web crawler often used as one of the basic components in search engine technology, such as: Google, AltaVista, Lycos, and Infoseek. There are some commercial crawler architectures in literatures. For instance, Bingbot is the name of Microsoft's Bing web crawler. Yahoo! Slurp was the name of the Yahoo! Search crawler before Yahoo turn to use Microsoft's Bingbot instead. Googlebot is described in some reports, but only the early version of its architecture was described. Fortunately, there are some Open-source crawlers available. In this study, Scrapy, a free and open source web crawling framework written in Python, was used to systematically collect data from learning website.

### **System Design**

This study designed a collaborative filtering recommendation system for videos of learning English. The system was implemented on the VoiceTube website through its members on the social media Facebook. There are three main steps in the whole process, including Python web crawling, data analyzing and formulating, and Crab recommending steps. In the first step, Web crawler will retrieve users' favorite videos as the Movie list and collect users' identification with common favorite videos as Friend list. The difference set between user's Move list and his/her friends' favorite videos is the candidate videos as New Movie list. Then, the retrieved data by Web crawler was analyzed and formulated as a Matrix for Crab recommendation system. Finally, this system is expected to recommend a proper list of videos for learning English. The following Figure 1 illustrates the processes of the system design in this study.

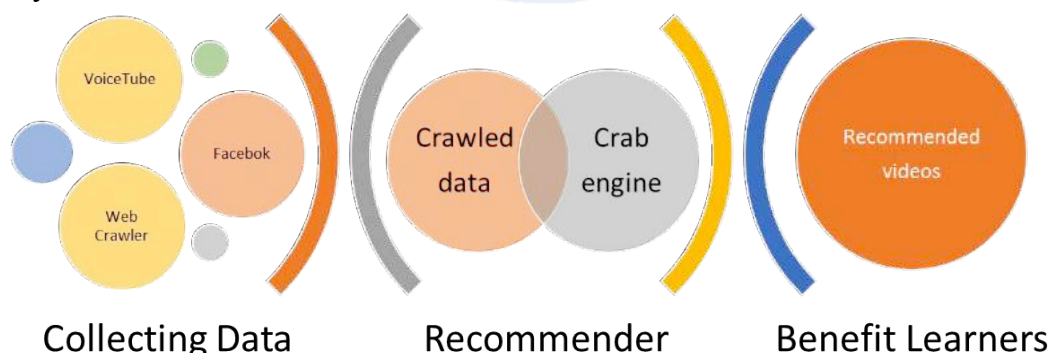


Figure 1. System Design Flow.



## Clustering Analysis of Crawled Data

Based on the collected data from VoiceTube by Python web crawler, the study used cluster analysis to observe the distribution of users according to characteristics in their learning profiles. Through analyzing VoiceTube members' learning profiles, we can discover the majority of users viewing characteristics on learning English movie websites. The results of clustering analysis can help us to make more precise adjustments to a pre-established threshold and avoid the prevalent cold start problem (i.e. the system cannot draw any inferences for recommended items about which it has not yet gathered sufficient information in early stage) of a collaborative filtering system.

Since the data is too large, 2000 profiles were randomly selected for clustering analysis. There are users account id, total time to watch videos, number of collected videos, number of collected vocabularies, and other usage information of VoiceTube so on. The results of cluster analysis divide users into five similar groups according to aforementioned data. The following Figure 2 shows the results of clustering analysis, where x-axis for number of watched videos for learning English and y-axis for the total time of watching those videos.

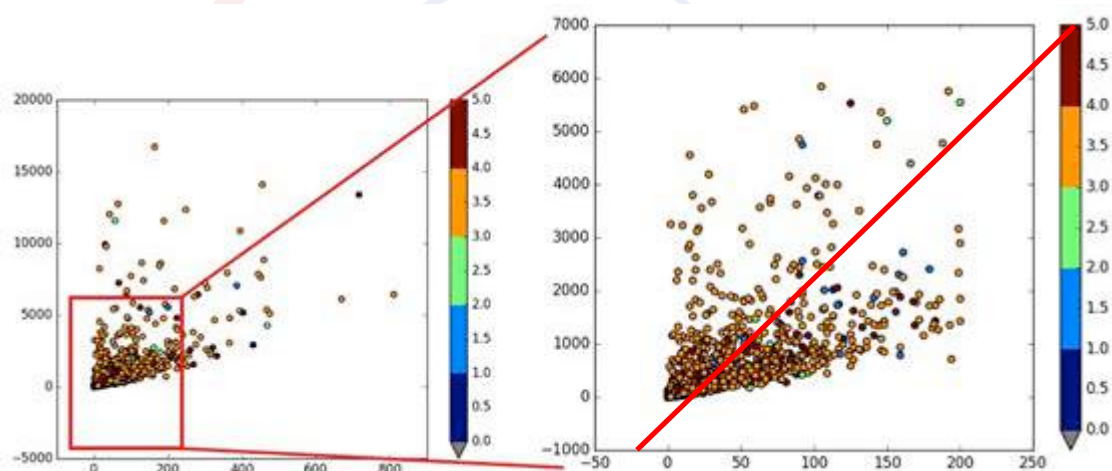


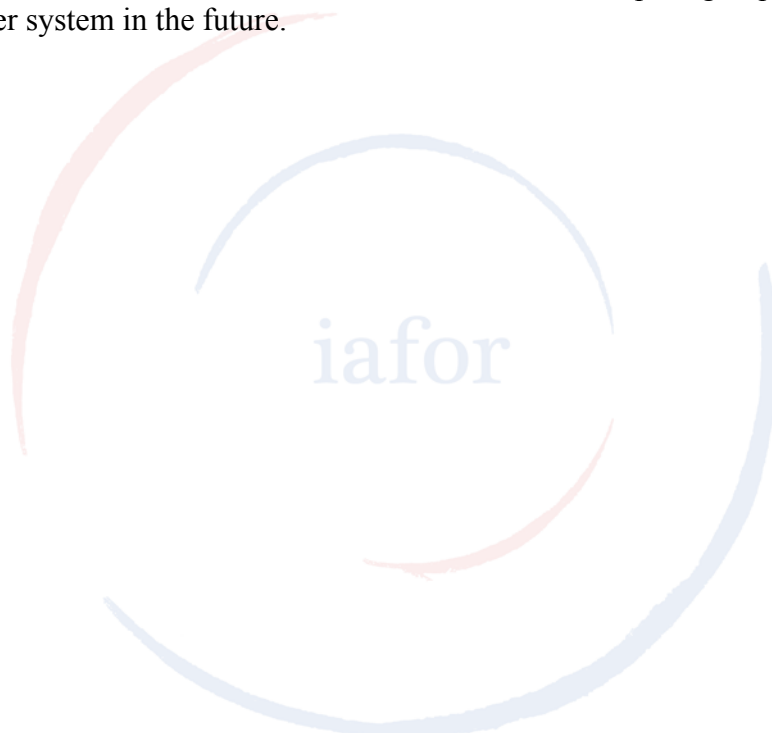
Figure 2. Result of Clustering Analysis

Based on the results shown in Figure, yellow blocks can be found mostly in the figure. The yellow blocks actually occupied 89%, so it can be used as a major group. Furthermore, yellow blocks are widely distributed, mostly gathered in the lower left corner. However, there are still some scattered at another end (i.e. upper right corner). Moreover, the number of yellow blocks at the lower right part is more than the number of yellow blocks at the upper left part. This phenomenon shows that users' learning strategies can be divided into two groups in spite of their similar features (such as collections of videos and vocabularies). The group at the lower right part, may called Extensive Learning group, watched as many different kinds of videos as they can, chiefly for pleasure, and only needing a general understanding of the videos. Another group watched videos with concentration and great care in order to understand exactly the meaning in the videos. It can be seen that most users on VoiceTube will learn English in a Extensive Learning style. In the future, we will

report details about characteristics for that group and how we used those feature to achieve more accurate recommendations.

### **Conclusion and Future Work**

This study uses collaborative filtering method through social media scoring mechanism and Crab recommender engine to recommend English movies according to learners' preferences. Thus, the system can stimulate interest in watching videos to enhance English learning motivation. Consequently, learning English through watching videos are not just interesting; they are engaging and compelling. In addition, we found that members of VoiceTube mostly prefer Extensive Learning style. In other words, learning website, such as VoiceTube, may not suitable for learners who prefer looking up the words and grammatical structures and translating every word. Through this analysis, we not only can understand VoiceTube user features, but also can use the results to revise the computing equation of the recommender system in the future.



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## *The Role of Duolingo in Foreign Language Learners' Autonomous Learning*

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### **Abstract**

Duolingo, a free language learning software, is lessoned by units semantically and grammatically with different activities (translation, matching, speaking and listening), and available both on the computer and on the mobile phone. As language learning software like Duolingo becomes more and more popular in language learning, Benson (2013) suggested that the modern concept of learner autonomy (LA) has to be "reconceptualized" due to the changing of the way learners learn foreign languages. This study investigated whether Duolingo could help learners promote learner autonomy and to what extent could LA be achieved. Ten college students were selected to participate in this study. Both qualitative and quantitative tools were used, with qualitative as the main and quantitative as the supplementary. The study was carried out in two phases. Quantitative tool was applied in phase one with self-initiated and self-regulated questions and Duolingo's learning logs tracker. Participants involved in phase two, a semi-structure interview, were selected depending on participants' phase one result to obtain in-depth information about to what extent LA be achieved, the transfer of learners' metacognitive strategies in learning, and the interesting features of Duolingo that prompted LA. The results showed that learners promoted LA by managing their leisure time and the daily goal of learning period, looking for more information to solve their problems, selecting related materials, and evaluating the performance and achievement of themselves. Pedagogical implications for promoting LA with language learning software were also discussed.

Keywords: Learner Autonomy, Computer-Assisted-Language Learning, Foreign Language Learning

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## Introduction

The essential relationship between learner autonomy and language learning has long established (Dam, 1995; Holec, 1980; Little, 1996). Dam (1995) acknowledged that the development of learner autonomy is essential for a learner to succeed. To become an autonomous learner, Holec (1980) argued that it is important to take the responsibility of deciding learning objectives and keep self-evaluating oneself. Little (1996) argued that an autonomous learner “pre-supposes a positive attitude to the purpose, content, and process of learning on one hand and also well-established metacognitive skills on the other” (p.204). However, learner autonomy has never been easy to define; on different condition or specific context, learners have different degree of freedom in making their own choices (Little, 1990). In this study, using the most general concept, learner autonomy refers to “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” (Holec, 1981, p.3) and “the capacity to transfer what [he or she] has been learned to wider contexts” (Little, 1991).

Before the development of technology, studies of learner autonomy focused on the work of teaching learners how to perform self-directed learning and how to use self-access learning resources (Benson, 2013). With the popularity of technology and growing interests of technology learning, more and more studies start paying attention on the role of technology in learners’ autonomous learning (Chik, 2014; Collentine, 2011; Lee, 2011; Mutlu, 2013; Smith, 2013). Benson (2013) pointed out that after the widespread application of technology in language learning, the focus of autonomous learning is different to what it was in 1970s. The direction of studying autonomous learning has been changed from studying how to develop learners’ learner autonomy to examining learners’ autonomous learning with the help of technology. The key factor related to this change is the utilization of Internet in language learning (Benson, 2001). As Benson (2013) mentioned, the Internet provides massive expansion of access to learning resources to learners.

Though many researches have studied technological application on autonomous learning, such as the Internet (Benson, 2013), the digital gaming (Chik, 2014), and blogging (2011, Lee), to what extent can language learning software promote learner autonomy has not yet been well-examined. This paper aims to investigate learners’ autonomous learning with the assistance of language learning software. In this research, Duolingo, a free online language learning software, is selected as the target language learning software. Since Duolingo was voted as one of the popular app in 2013 of Apple’s iPhone APP and Best of the Best of Google Play in 2013 and 2014 (Zipkin, 2015), choosing Duolingo as the target language learning software to investigate learner autonomy may be meaningful because many people around the world have used Duolingo. Ten college students, who regard Duolingo as an effective language learning software and are still learning with it, were selected as the participants in this quantitative research to investigate their autonomous learning. Besides examining to what extent learner autonomy can be promoted, this study also investigated learners’ attitude toward learning with Duolingo to find out how Duolingo assists learners in their learning and what features learners love to learn with Duolingo.

## Literature review

### Learner Autonomy

Learner autonomy refers to a capacity of taking full responsibility of one's learning (Benson, 2011, p.58; Holec, 1981). According to Holec (1981), they perform learner autonomy by “determining objectives, content, and progression, selecting methods and techniques, monitoring acquisition, and evaluating what has been acquired” (p.3). That is, autonomous learners are active in their learning that they clearly “understand the purpose of their learning, explicitly accept responsibility for their learning, share in the setting of learning goals, take initiatives in planning and executing learning activities, and regularly review their learning and evaluate its effectiveness” (Little, 2003).

Aside from the aspect of self-managed behaviors of learning, Little (1991) also provides another perspective of learner autonomy—psychological autonomy. In Little's (1990), he argues that “the most efficient learners will be those who know how to bring their existing knowledge to bear on each new learning task” (p.82) and provides his definition of learner autonomy:

Autonomy is a capacity—for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts. (Little, 1991, p.4)

Though this concept of learner autonomy has been widely accepted over the year, many researchers regard autonomy as a non-easily defined behavior. Little (1990) acknowledge that autonomy is “not a single, easily describable behavior” (p.7). Benson (2013) states that autonomy is “complex, multidimensional, and variably manifested” (p.840). According to Benson, he indicates that autonomy can be manifested “in the form of autonomous language learning”. That is, when learners are doing practices made by instructors, through group discussion or through peer-evaluation they take control to all aspect of learning. Moreover, autonomy can be manifested in the learning “outside the context of formal instruction.” In this perspective, learner autonomy refers to the concept that learners become self-initiated; they start their learning from goal-setting, material-choosing, to self-evaluating.

The concept of learner autonomy seems to be flexible and can be slightly changed according to different learning context. However multifaceted it may be, Little (1990) provides five negatives principles of “what is learner autonomy.” He indicates that autonomy is “not a synonym to self-instruction; that is, it's not limited to learning without teachers”, “not a matter of letting learners get on with things as best they can”, “not another teaching method that teachers do to learners”, “not a single, easily described behavior”, or “not steady state done achieved by learners.”

### Learner Autonomy and Technology

With the wide-spread of technology and popularity of technology's usage in language teaching, accessible learning resources have become very different to what it was in

1970, which results in slightly different perspective of learner autonomy (Benson, 2013). Benson (2013) demonstrates that the development of Internet let the access to resources largely expand. Learners now don't necessarily rely on teachers' materials and instructions. However, learners can select the resources through the Internet, which provide bigger chances for them to initiate their own learning. Changes also happened to learner control. In early researches, learner autonomy refers to learners' "collection and provision of resources through self-accessing... and also their self-directed training" (Benson, 2013). Learner control still limited to the instructors and the instructional content. However, with the emergence of technology in language teaching, researchers now have chances to look for self-initiated learning, without the intervention from language teachers.

Besides knowing how learner autonomy changed with the intervention of technology in language teaching, Oxford (2003) suggests that researchers are also curious about under which "situational conditions" may develop learner autonomy, because these are regarded as "other-created condition, not conditions initially generated by the learner." Healey (2007) focuses on the condition of self-directed settings and promotes a table of four situational conditions in terms of the flexibility of content and locus of control (See Table 1). From fixed to variable content, and from teacher-controlled to learner-controlled, Healey categorizes into highly structured learning, accreditation and training, contract-based independent study, as well as highly self-directed learning.

Table 1. *Four Settings for Self-directed Learning*

		Locus of Control	
		Teacher	Learner
content	Fixed ↑	<b>A. Highly structured learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students control time and pace.</li> <li>➤ Designer or teacher controls content, sequence, and evaluation.</li> </ul>	<b>B. Accreditation and training</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students control time, pace, and sequence.</li> <li>➤ Teacher, board or designer controls content and evaluation.</li> </ul>
	Variable ↓	<b>C. Contract-based independent study</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students and teacher negotiate all aspects.</li> </ul>	<b>D. Highly self-directed learning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Students control all aspects.</li> </ul>

Healey (2007) points out that most of the technological learning materials are belong to B category for they provide learners the opportunities to choose learning materials from the technological programs and decide how to learn with it by themselves.

## Research Design

This study set to understand to what extent learner autonomy (LA) can be promoted by mapping the findings from an exploratory study on learners who have learnt with Duolingo in FLA learning context to Nguyen's (2012) framework for investigating learner autonomy. Following Chik's (2014) research design of exploring the gaming practices of those who had mentioned using digital games for L2 learning to understand their autonomous learning behaviors, this study applied the same method of exploring learners who have learned with Duolingo for a period of time to



investigate to what extent Duolingo learners practice autonomous learning. Selecting learners who have learned with Duolingo, but not finding participants to start learning from the beginning is because this study wants to maintain the meaningful characteristics of real-life events and to obtain the most realistic behaviors of their learning with Duolingo. If researchers choose to investigate Duolingo users who were asked by researchers to participate in the experiment, the study may lose the chance to investigate learners' self-initiated attitude, which is one of an important element of learner autonomy. This is the reason why this study chose to explore learners who have learned with Duolingo for a period of time.

In this study, participants were selected from the researcher's friends or her friends' of friends. There were two criteria for selection of the participants. The first criterion was that the participants should have learned with Duolingo for at least three weeks. Learning for three weeks without any discontinuation might imply that the users have some degree of learner autonomy and they are the target subjects of this study. They can regulate themselves to learn continuously for three weeks, which is a period of time that cannot be achieved because of the curiosity and interest to a new learning tool. The other criterion was that the participants were still learning with Duolingo. It was to ensure that all the participants provide the most realistic and familiar information to the researchers but not something recalled from their memory. Finally, there were 10 Duolingo users participating in this research. All of them were college students studying in National Taiwan Normal University and National Taiwan University of Science and Technology. That is, they were all between the age of 22 and 26 and from the similar cultural context. All of their native language is Mandarin Chinese. There was no restriction on the target second language learning. 4 of them were learning German. 3 of them were learning French. 2 of them were learning English. 1 of them was learning Spanish. The last person was learning Swedish. In addition, in this study, there was no restriction on their choosing interface of their learning with Duolingo. Duolingo was available both on the computer and on the smartphone. However, participants could choose whichever devices they were more convenient to learn with and change between the interface whenever they wanted to. The learning interface was not a restricting criterion of the participants.

Table 2. *Background Information for the 10 Participants*

<b>Learner</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Target Language</b>	<b>Already Learned for</b>	<b>Learning Interface</b>
Participant 1	23	French	3 weeks	Computer
Participant 2	22	German	12 weeks	Smartphone
Participant 3	26	German	48 weeks	Smartphone
Participant 4	23	French	3 weeks	Smartphone
Participant 5	24	English	4 weeks	Computer
Participant 6	22	Spanish	4 weeks	Smartphone
Participant 7	26	Swedish	48 weeks	Smartphone
Participant 8	23	German	3 weeks	Smartphone
Participant 9	22	German	48 weeks	Computer
Participant 10	23	English	12 weeks	Computer

Nguyen (2012) argued that an autonomous study may easily fall into a description of learners' autonomous behaviors when the evidence was not strong and convincing to show the strength between learner autonomy and language learning outcomes.

Previous researches had shown that learners became more autonomous in their studies (Cunningham & Carlton, 2003; Dam, 1995; Natri, 2007; Tagaki, 2003), but there was no empirical evidence to show the benefits of learner autonomy. For example, the lack of compatibility between groups of participants may be a big issue in the studies of learner autonomy (Nguyen, 2012). However, if learner autonomy is measured rigorously and properly, the study can provide persuasive evidence for the benefit of learner autonomy for language learning. In order to measure learner autonomy rigorously, this study followed the three principles provided by Nguyen (2012). First, the notion of learner autonomy should be clearly defined “based on which any accounts of learner autonomy can be analyzed and measured”. Second, the study should employ both qualitative and quantitative methods for its data collection to investigate learner autonomy from a variety of points of view for both methods can provide “equally valuable, but different, data”. Third, the tool should be “carefully developed, piloted and validated” (p.51).

Little (1990) and Benson (2013) acknowledged that learner autonomy is not easily to be defined depending on different learning contexts. This study is based on the CALL context, where learners have the opportunities to choose learning materials from a number of online learning software and control the pace, time, and sequence of their learning (Healey, 2007). However, they have no right to choose the learning content, which is designed by the software programmers. Combining Benson’s (2001) and Holec’s (1981) definition of learner autonomy and Healey’s (2007) software learning context, learners may perform these autonomous behaviors: reflecting upon their learning, initiating changes of learning strategies in target language, being able to create situation of learning for themselves, monitoring their own performance and self-accessing other materials to improve themselves. In this study, these autonomous behaviors are the target items that are going to be investigated to show the extent of learners’ practice of learner autonomy.

This study was conducted in two phases. The first phase was applied with quantitative method that asked participants to fill in a questionnaire with 7-point liker scale. Q1-Q2 were questions about their educational background of the target language. Q3-Q5 were self-initiation questions about learners’ motivation, reasons to start language learning and their learning goal setting. Q6-Q19 were self-regulation questions asking participants to evaluate themselves and fill in the 7-point liker-scale about their self-regulated behavior during their learning. Those participants who had low points in self-initiation part and high points in self-regulation part were selected to participate in the second phase, which was conducted by an in-depth interview. Comparing the difference between self-initiation part and self-regulation part, the result showed that these participants started with low motivation to learn. This may reduce the possibility of selecting those who had already built up learner autonomy before starting to learn with Duolingo. For those who started with low motivation and still perform low degree of self-regulation during the learning, they were also deleted from the second phase. In the end, 5 out of 10 were selected to participate in the second phase to have an in-depth interview about their learning attitude and their improved language skills from learning with Duolingo.

## Findings

### Self-regulation: Learning Language on a Regular Basis

According to the result from the questionnaire, participants presented the highest score in Q13: *During your learning with Duolingo, to what extent do you regulate yourself to learn on a regular basis?* ( $M = 6.22$ ,  $S.D. = 1.09$ ) It shows that every participant regulated themselves to maintain the habit of learning with Duolingo. In addition, the average number of the days all the participants logged in Duolingo to learn was 5.18, which meant that these participants had already performed high degree of self-regulation, because they asked themselves to learn language with Duolingo more than five days a week. It must be a great news to hear that learners could regulate themselves to learn the target language five days in a week. However, it was mainly attributed to Duolingo's daily reminder function. It was a function reminding you that you haven't learned with Duolingo today by sending email. Many participants mentioned in the interview that they loved this function of Duolingo, because it made them have chance to learn the target languages every day. By receiving the reminding emails everyday, some participants mentioned that logging-in Duolingo to learn language had gradually become a habit. Some were used to learn language on their way home in the traffic. Some were used to learn language for thirty minutes before they went to bed. Duolingo made learners get into a good habit to learn the target language every day. Moreover, there was another function that encourage learners to learn with Duolingo every day, which was Duolingo's reward systems. According to one participant, she mentioned that Duolingo would give you more lingots, Duolingo's shopping money, if one had regularly logged-in and learned the language. This participant was a lover of lingots. She encouraged herself to learn with Duolingo by winning as more lingots as she could. She enjoyed shopping in Lingot store to purchase items that can help her complete a lesson, such as "heart refill" or "streak freeze" or items that can add new skills to language tree, such as "idioms", "flirting" or "timed practice".

### Self-regulation: evaluating and finding solution to the problems

For Q13: *During the learning with Duolingo, how often do you evaluate yourself and find solution to the problems you have*, all the participants presented mid-high score. ( $M = 5.44$ ,  $S.D. = 0.72$ ), which means that most of the time, the participants would find the answers by themselves. The role of teachers was replaced by other learning materials. Duolingo played a good role in answering learners' questions. During the interview, many participants mentioned that most of the time they could find the answers from Duolingo's feedback after every activity. Because Duolingo's learning tasks were mainly designed to let learners translate, when learners couldn't finish the task, they would understand what their problems and questions were. Then, after they sent out the answer, Duolingo's feedback could tell them where they were wrong and what the right answer was. Moreover, in the computer interface, Duolingo provides every question with a discussion forum for learners around the world to ask questions. Participants 5 mentioned that he loved this function. Whenever he was still not clear about the answer after reading Duolingo's feedback, he would visit the forum and looked for the answer. Most of the time, he could find learners who had the same questions as him. Besides looking for the answers, P9 also mentioned that checking the discussion forum allowed her to learn from others' questions. Duolingo was

designed for learners to learn by themselves without instructors' assistance. It's discussion forum and the feedback after every questions were very popular among the participants. Many of them even pointed out that they loved to learn with Duolingo, because they loved the interaction between learners and "instructor"—Duolingo. The participants seemed to build up a good habit to find the answers by themselves, but not rely on teachers' answers. In addition, for Q16: *After learning with Duolingo for a period of time, how willing are you to look for more materials for improving language ability*, the average result for this question is  $M = 5.8$ ,  $S.D. = 1.09$ , almost gets 6. That is, the participants build up the motivation and willing to find more materials to improve their language ability.

### Promoting Learner Autonomy

Five out of ten participants were selected to participate in the second phase. These five participants were those who had performed low degree of learner autonomy at the beginning, but showed high extent of autonomous learning after a period of time of their learning with Duolingo. Table 3. provided the comparing result of participants' self-initiation scores and self-regulation scores. As you can see in Table 3., the result showed that participants among the second group, the group in the middle, presented great extent of autonomous learning behaviors after a period of time learning with Duolingo. All of these participants performed high scores in Q8: *During your learning with Duolingo, how often do you evaluate your own learning* ( $M = 5.2$ ,  $S.D. = 0.836$ ). It implied that all the participants evaluate their learning very often during their learning. According to participant 4, Duolingo's activities were designed to let users finish the tasks independently, such as translation, indication, matching and fill-in-the-blank. That is, users could only rely on themselves to finish the tasks. If they couldn't finish the tasks, they would immediately understand their problems of this lesson, for example, forgetting the spelling of the vocabulary or forgetting the meaning of the new vocabulary.

Table 3. *Comparison between the Self-initiation Scores and Self-regulation Scores*

Participants	Self-initiation Part (Q3-Q5)		Self-regulation Part (Q6-Q16)	
	Total/21	Percentage(%)	Total/77	Percentage(%)
<b>Already with Strong Learning Motivation</b>				
3	18/21	85.71%	63/77	81.81%
7	18/21	85.71%	62/77	80.51%
6	16/21	76.19%	61/77	79.22%
10	16/21	76.19%	56/77	72.72%
<b>Target Participants from low learning motivation to high degree of learner autonomy</b>				
1	10/21	47.61%	68/77	88.31%
2	10/21	47.61%	60/77	77.92%
4	8/21	38.09%	55/77	71.42%
8	11/21	52.38%	53/77	68.83%
9	5/21	23.80%	56/77	72.72%
<b>Participant without building up strong LA during the learning</b>				
5	8/21	38.09%	43/77	55.84%

Another interesting finding was that P1 performed much greater extent of learner autonomy than those participants in the same category. As you can see in Table 2. However, participant 1 had only learned with Duolingo for 3 weeks, and she even performed greater extent of autonomous behaviors than P3 and P7, who had already built up strong motivation in language learning, such as Q9: *reflecting upon her learning and think of better ways to make learning more effective* and Q10: *tending to adjust her learning strategies to make learning more effective*. The same phenomenon was also found in P4's autonomous learning that he performed higher score in Q9 and Q10. The reason might be that because among these five participants, only P1 and P4 were in intermediate level of their target languages. Others were still in elementary level, which indicated that they still hadn't had enough exposure to the target language and not to mention they would come up with any idea to adjust their learning strategies to make learning more effective. This finding further indicated that for those who have already had some educational background knowledge about the target language, Duolingo might have positive effect to the language learning outcome. Many participants also pointed out this phenomenon that Duolingo is much suitable for those who have already had some educational background knowledge to the target language.

Participant 2 was also a learner who performed greater extent of learner autonomy after a period of time learning with Duolingo. However, different autonomous learning behaviors had been found during the interview with her. P2 was not an active learner. She chose Duolingo as her language learning software because Duolingo provided a planned lesson for her. In addition, Duolingo would remind her to review some lessons by decreasing the yellow power chart under every lesson when she hasn't reviewed it since last time she finished the lesson. For P2, she only needs to regulate herself to learn with Duolingo every day, then she can improve her language ability. P2 mentioned that this function of reminding learners to review over and over again was a very good method to maintain the familiarity with the language and to build up concrete basic knowledge of the target language. From P2's autonomous liker-scale, she presented low score on *planning, coming up with better learning strategies and adjusting her learning strategies*. However, she showed very high score on *self-accessing time to learn, finding the solution to the problems, and realizing her shortage and where she should improve more*.

### **Improvement: new vocabulary, vocabulary spelling, and recalling learned vocabulary**

From the interview with the five participants from the second group, four of them had mentioned their vocabulary database had been widely expanded by leaning with Duolingo. Some explained that they learned many new vocabularies step by step, from easy to difficult, and from nouns to verbs and adjectives. Others said that they had improved their spelling. They were able to spell the word as long as they heard the pronunciation. And still others mentioned that they had recalled many vocabularies that they learned before. Most of the participants appraised Duolingo's activity design for teaching vocabulary. Participants even argued that Duolingo is mainly designed for learning vocabulary. There were different variety of activities designed for learning vocabulary, including picture-vocabulary matching, dictation and translation. These activities usually accompanied with repeating pronunciation of the vocabulary and the translation in Chinese. By learning with Duolingo, many



participants pointed out that they were more familiar with how to pronounce the words in the target languages.

Another advantage of Duolingo's activity design is that the same vocabularies repeatedly appear in different lessons. Moreover, Duolingo will ask learners to repeatedly review the vocabularies after a period of time since last time you have learned them. In the interview, participants mentioned this function allowed them to remember the new vocabularies in a short time. Because the vocabularies kept appearing in the activities, if they wanted to finish the lessons, they must to force themselves to remember the new vocabularies. By this way, learners not only learn many new vocabularies, but also review the vocabularies that they learned before.

## Conclusion

By learning with Duolingo, learners tend to increase learner autonomy, in terms of their *self-regulation on learning on a regular basis, self regulation on accessing time to learn, evaluating one's learning, finding more materials to learn, and adjusting learning strategies to have more effective learning*. In this study, five out of ten participants performed greater extent of autonomous behaviors in their learning. However, only those with some educational background knowledge to the target language could gain the advantage between learner autonomy and language learning outcome. Participants who had some knowledge about the target language realized where their problems were and understood how to utilize Duolingo's feedback and discussion forum to solve their problems. During the learning process, learners well demonstrate learner autonomy to give rise to better language learning outcome. These participants even regard Duolingo as the best language learning software for review. They could review what they had learned, and also acquired new knowledge. Because Duolingo allowed learners to learn step by step, and from easy to difficult level, all the participants in this study mentioned that they never feel stressful when learning with Duolingo.

Duolingo's instant feedback and daily reminder are the two most popular functions among the participants. Many participants enjoyed the interaction with Duolingo during their learning. They pointed out that this interaction makes learning become interesting and effective. The instant feedback provided by Duolingo not only allow learners to understand their mistake and problems immediately, but also come up with the answer for learners to solve the problem. Sometimes, when learners answer correctly for all the questions, learners may easily get the sense of achievement from a series of correct feedback, a soft bell sound and green color. As for the other popular function—daily reminder, it built up the habit of learning language every day for many participants. It was also a great contributor to fostering learner autonomy. Duolingo's daily reminder forces learners to learn to make use of their time and regulate themselves to learn every day. By sending a reminding email everyday, Duolingo played a good role in learners' language learning to make them maintain the familiarity with the target language.

Though present study shows that Duolingo promotes learners' learner autonomy, limitation still exists. The participants in this study are all university students. There may be the possibility that these university students have already build up learner autonomy in language learning. As Benson (2001) argued that learners may acquire

learner autonomy as they become more mature. In this study, the variable of teacher instruction had already been considered and deleted. That is, for these 10 participants, they haven't joined any other language classes during their learning with Duolingo. However, the variable that whether participants have acquired autonomy or not is difficult to control, which may be an important consideration for future research design.





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## Appendix I: Questionnaire (English Translation)

Dear participants, On the matters of privacy, your answers will only be used in this study. Real name won't be shown in the paper. Thanks for your participation and cooperation. Researcher: Charlene Tsai (MA student from National Taiwan Normal University TESOL program)

	Background information	Explain						
1	Do you learn the target language in other places (school, learning institute, etc..) If yes, please explain.							
2	Have you ever learned the language before you start learning with Duolingo? If yes, please explain to what level.							
3	What's the reason that makes you start learning with Duolingo?							
4	How do you find Duolingo as your language learning tool?							
5	Before starting to learn with Duolingo, did you set your learning goal?							
	For the following questions, please based on your learning process with Duolingo	never-----always						
6	You find and make use of time to learn with Duolingo.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	You develop your language learning plan	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	You monitor and reflect on your learning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	You will think of better ways to make learning more effective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	You adjust your learning strategies to make learning more effective.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	You realize which learning activities are effective and which are not.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	You regulate yourself to learn on regular basis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	You find solutions to your problems when you have questions or make a mistake.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	After a period of learning, you evaluate yourself and your learning outcome.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	After a period of learning, you realize your shortage and understand it should be improved.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16	After a period of learning, you will find more materials for further reading.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

## Appendix II: Interview Question

1. 一般來說，你都什麼時候使用 Duolingo? 請說明“時間”及“地點”。 (Usually, when do you usually learn with Duolingo? Please, explain “time” and “places”)
2. 一般來說，你每次使用 Duolingo 都使用多久時間? (Usually, how long do you learn with Duolingo for every time?)
3. 一般來說，你每週使用 Duolingo 的頻率為何? (Usually, how many times do you learn with Duolingo in a week?)
4. 在使用 Duolingo 學習以前，你有設定學習目標嗎? 若有，請說明預計多久時間，學習到什麼程度。 (Before starting to learn with Duolingo, do you set any learning goal? If yes, please explain to what extent and in how long do you wish to achieve.)
5. 你喜歡使用 Duolingo 學習語言嗎? 請舉體說明哪些地方/功能吸引你。 (Do you like to learn with Duolingo? Please explain how and what in detail.)
6. 在使用 Duolingo 學習一陣子後，你覺得語言能力進步最多的是? 請具體說明。 (After learning for a period, which language ability do you improve most? Please explain as detail as you can.)
7. Duolingo 如何使你該項語言能力進步最多? 請具體說明。 (How does Duolingo make you improve that language ability? Please explain as detail as you can.)
8. 你覺得在使用 Duolingo 過程中，有沒有遇到學習上的困難? 若有，請具體說明。 (During your learning with Duolingo, do you face any difficulties in your learning? If yes, please explain as detail as you can.)
9. 當你遇到困難/問題時，你覺得 Duolingo 的註解對你學習有幫助嗎? 若有，請具體說明。 (When you face the difficulties, do you think Duolingo can help you by their explanation? If can, please explain as detail as you can.)
10. 你覺得 Duolingo 有提升你語言學習的自我規劃/學習能力嗎? 若有，你覺得是哪方面的能力。 (Do you think Duolingo can help you improve your planning/programming ability of language learning? If yes, please explain what kinds of abilities. )
11. 什麼原因讓你一直使用 Duolingo 學習語言? 請具體說明。 (What’s the reason that makes you keep learning with Duolingo? Please explain as detail as you can.)

## Appendix III: Data Analysis

Self-initiated Questions Analysis											
	Questions	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Q3	<b>What's the reason that makes you start learning with Duolingo?</b> (1. Curious about the game; have fun and willing to try. 2. Choosing to learn language to kill time. 3. To improve language ability, but no specific goal. 4. Make use of one's time to learn language. 5. To review and maintain the familiarity with the language 6. With learning goal. 7. Learning for language test or studying aboard.)	5	3	7	2	1	6	6	5	1	6
Q4	<b>How do you find Duolingo as your language learning tool?</b> (1. Asked by teacher. 2. Recommended by teachers. 3. Heard from friends that it's interesting. 4. Recommended by friends. 5. Asking friends by yourself. 6. Asking friends because strongly eager to find a language learning tool. 7. Looking for the tool by yourself.)	4	3	4	5	4	5	6	4	3	4
Q5	<b>Before starting to learn with Duolingo, did you set your learning goal?</b> (1. Without goal. 2. Learning as much as I can. 3. With goal, but didn't strictly follow. 4. Following Duolingo's daily goal. 5. Practicing for school work. 6. Being able to use language in daily communication. 7. Pass language test.)	1	4	7	1	4	5	6	2	1	6
<b>TOTAL (21)</b>		10	10	18	8	8	16	18	11	5	16
<b>Percentage (%)</b>		47. 6	47. 6	85. 7	38. 0	38. 0	76. 1	85. 7	52. 3	23. 8	76.1
Self-regulated Questions Analysis (7-point liker scale: 1. Never -- 7. Always)											
	Questions: Based on your learning process with Duolingo	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10
Q6	You find and make use of time to learn with Duolingo.	7	7	5	4	6	7	3	5	7	4
Q7	You develop your language learning plan	5	3	6	2	2	5	5	4	5	4
Q8	You monitor and reflect on your learning.	6	5	5	5	3	4	5	4	6	5
Q9	You will think of better ways to make learning more effective.	6	3	4	6	4	3	6	4	3	6

Q10	You adjust your learning strategies to make learning more effective.	6	3	5	6	3	6	6	4	3	6
Q11	You realize which learning activities are effective and which are not.	6	6	6	7	5	4	7	6	4	4
Q12	You regulate yourself to learn on regular basis.	7	7	7	4	5	7	6	6	7	4
Q13	You find solutions to your problems when you have questions or make a mistake.	6	7	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	6
Q14	After a period of learning, you evaluate yourself and your learning outcome.	6	7	5	5	4	6	6	4	6	4
Q15	After a period of learning, you realize your shortage and understand it should be improved.	6	7	6	4	3	7	6	6	5	6
Q16	After a period of learning, you will find more materials for further reading.	7	5	7	7	3	7	7	5	5	7
<b>TOTAL (77)</b>		68	60	63	55	43	61	62	53	56	56
<b>Percentage (%)</b>		88. 3	77. 9	81. 8	71. 4	55. 8	79. 2	80. 5	68. 8	72. 7	72.7


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***The Study of English Listening and Speaking Skills Development by Using  
Computer Assisted Language Learning of Primary Students in Lampang Province***

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**Abstract**

The purposes of this research were: 1) to study English Listening and Speaking Skills of using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) for Primary students' 2) to study the Primary students' satisfaction towards the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) program.

The target group was 60 grade 4-primary students of Anubanmaemoh School Lampang Province during the first semester of the academic year 2015. The experiments instruments were: 1) Survey of respondents 2) Interview form 3) Student Assignment: English Listening and Speaking Skills of using Computer Assisted Language Learning for Primary students' 4) Test and 5) Primary students' satisfaction form.

The findings of the research were as follows: 1) improving of English Listening and Speaking Skills of primary students' had risen higher than before taking of the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), by the average score of post interview is higher than the previous 4.25 (24.62%) 2) the scores of the primary students' satisfaction towards the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) program are in a satisfied level, and the CALL program has been beneficial to the students.

Keywords: Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Primary Students, English listening and speaking skills development, The satisfaction of the students towards Computer-Assisted Language Learning

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## Introduction

At present, the global society is the era of information and communication in the online world, which known as the era of information technology (IT). People all of the world can get to information by a variety of ways and quickly. Information system is an important factor to develop the economic, social and cultural, moreover; the information system can increase the work efficiency, reduce costs, and save time. Nowadays English language is necessary for communication and getting information, which English is an international language. Besides teachers bring the education technology to apply in English classroom management which to encourage students with knowledge, to use English language efficiency especially listening and speaking skills, to encourage students to use language to communicate properly with the situation and social conditions. Many students began to study English language since primary school but they cannot communicate with native speakers. So, they lack of confidence and disappointment and they cannot take the knowledge of English language to develop themselves. Listening and speaking skills are the basic of communication because you must understand what speakers say before responding. The development of English skills consists of many factors such as teachers, who teach English language, should be the native speakers or English teachers and having instructional media can encourage and support students to learn English language. Schools with an adequate budget and in urban communities often do not experience difficulty in learning a foreign language. However, schools in remote and isolated communities have a limited budget always confront with a learning language problem. Nowadays, some schools are teaching the so-called distance learning via satellite “Kru Tu”.

The advantage of distance learning is that teachers teach directly to the group and have experience in teaching. There are a variety of teaching techniques and interesting. But there are two weaknesses; first, a one-way communication while studying through the distance learning via satellite (Kru Tu) some students have doubts or questions they cannot ask and interact with the teacher. And another problem is if the teacher who looks after the classroom is not an English teacher, it may have no clear answer for those students. One of another disadvantages is students cannot get back to the class because of some remote schools would rather have a problem with the Internet. When the problems occur, some schools have introduced media CAI is a tool to help develop learners instead so as to reduce poverty and to provide learners with access to language development in a certain way. The CAI is a retrospective study or reviewed at any time depending on the needs of teachers and learners, and now the use of computers in teaching and learning English is important and is more prevalent. This is consistent with Bubpamata Chanaphorn (2009) who researched the development of computer assisted instruction in Prepositions for Mattayomsuksa 2 Students that found the achievement before and after using computer assisted learning English were different statistical significant level of 0.5. This is consistent with the research of Sittirhat Panruetai (2009). Development of computer assisted instruction lessons in foreign language learning strand entitled “Present Simple Tense and Past Simple Tense” for 7th grade education which the result found the achievement before was higher than after using computer assisted learning English. For this reason above when using computer assisted language learning English to develop English skills of students. Therefore, the researchers had selected the students in Anubanmaemoh School to be samples to do this research

according to several factors as follows: 1) Anubanmaemoh School had no foreign teachers who were native speakers since it was an educational opportunity extension school 2) Anubanmaemoh School was still lack of the experts who develop the lessons for enhancing English listening and speaking skills and 3) Anubanmaemoh School was still lack of development of lessons for enhancing English listening and speaking skills.

From the above mentioned, the researchers mutually agreed that English skills development should begin from developing listening and speaking skills simultaneously. Also, the students should be developed their English skills at an early age fundamentally to develop other skills in the future. Therefore, the researches were interested to develop English listening and speaking skills by using Computer-Assisted Language Learning for primary students in Lampung Province.

### **Research Purposes**

1. To study English listening and speaking skills development by using Computer-Assisted Language Learning for primary students in Lampung Province.
2. To examine the satisfaction of the students towards Computer-Assisted Language Learning for primary students in Lampung Province

### **Scope of Research**

This research aimed to study English listening and speaking skills development by using Computer Assisted Language Learning for primary students in Lampung Province.

#### **Scope of Contents**

This research aimed to develop English listening and speaking skills by using Computer-Assisted Language Learning with the contents based on core curriculums in a group of foreign language.

#### **Scope of Populations and Samples**

The populations in this research were the primary students in Lampung Province. The samples in this research were 60 grade 4-primary students of Anubanmaemoh School Lampung Province.

#### **Scope of Variables**

- Independent variables included Computer-Assisted Language Learning Programs.
- Dependent variables included
  - 1) English listening and speaking skills during the use of Computer-Assisted Language Learning
  - 2) The satisfaction of the students towards Computer-Assisted Language Learning

### **Methods to Create and Develop Research Tools**

This research is an experimental research study focused on the development of computer assisted language learning. The procedures were as follows:

1. Creation of an interview form in this research was created to meet the requirements of the target group and those related about the English contents in order to study English listening and speaking skills of primary students in Lampung Province which interviewed before and after using Computer-Assisted Language Learning.
2. Creation of quizzes in the end of the lesson in this research were created to study the achievement of the target group before and after using Computer Assisted Language Learning. The quizzes created had brought to three experts to provide English contents and check consistency of the contents, distinctness, appropriateness of the language used and consistency between the questions and the objectives of IOC (Index of Item Objective Congruence). The researchers selected the quizzes with the value of consistency greater than 0.5, which could be used as a test to measure learning achievement. For the quizzes with the value of consistency less than 0.5, they had to be amended and improved. For the quizzes with the value of consistency equal to or less than 0.00, they could not be used as a test. Therefore, for the criteria of selecting quizzes to be as a quiz to measure learning achievement, the researchers chose the quizzes with the value of consistency in a range of 0.50 – 1.00 to be used to measure learning achievement in a total of 50 items.
3. The researchers surveyed the requirements of the target group about the English contents of Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs to study English listening and speaking skills development. The additional lessons of Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs were divided into 10 lessons. Then, the lessons of Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs were reviewed by experts, improved and re-examined by the experts once again.
4. The test was conducted by assigning the 60 students in the fourth year of primary school, Anubanmaemoh School, Lampung Province who were studying in the first semester of academic year 2015 to study from Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs in order to examine their English listening and speaking skills. The period of studying was 30-45 minutes once a week. They would have to study for 10 weeks simultaneously with doing the quizzes in the end of the lesson.
5. After the students had completed all 10 lessons, they would be interviewed again in order to be examined their English listening and speaking skills development. It was an interview paralleling to an interview before class that was checked by the experts.
6. After the researchers collected the data of quizzes and interviews, they analyzed the data by the statistics were as follows: average, percentage, and standard deviation.
7. Assign the students to do the satisfaction survey on the use of Computer-Assisted Language Learning Programs. The satisfaction survey was divided the format into two parts: Part 1 – A closed-end questions:- It was a creation of messages to express opinions of the students towards Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs in order to examine English listening and speaking skills development. The scales were separated into five-level rating scales.

## Research Results and Discussion

The research on the title of 'The Study of English Listening and Speaking Skills Development by Using Computer Assisted Language Learning of Primary Students in Lampang Province' had data analysis details from the research as follows:

### Results of Data Analysis

Part 1 - A study of English listening and speaking skills by using Computer Assisted Language Learning of primary students in Lampang Province.

Table 1 Average scores from the quizzes at the end of the lesson to study English listening and speaking skills by using Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs

Average Score	Lesson 1-2	Lesson 3-4	Lesson 5-6	Lesson 7-8	Lesson 9-10
10	5.5	6.6	6.1	7.35	7.05

From the table 1, the study of English skills development could be found that after the students had learnt from Computer-Assisted Language Learning programs, they could do the quizzes with following average scores. The quizzes in the end of Lesson 1-2 had an average score of 5.5 representing a moderate level. The quizzes in the end of Lesson 3-4 had an average score of 6.6 representing a moderate level. The quizzes in the end of Lesson 5-6 had an average score of 6.1 representing a moderate level. The quizzes in the end of Lesson 7-8 had an average score of 7.35 representing a good level. And the quizzes in the end of Lesson 9-10 had an average score of 7.05 representing a good level. The results indicated that the average scores of the quizzes at the end of the lessons of the students in the fourth year of primary school were in a moderate level and tended to develop at a good level.

Table 2 Average scores from interviewing the students before and after studying from Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs

Average Score	Interview before class	Interview after class	Average Score Increased	Representing
20	8.45	12.70	4.25	21.25

From the table 2, the study of English listening and speaking skills development could be found that the average score of interview before class was at 8.45 and the average score of interview after class was at 12.70. Nonetheless, the average score of interview after studying from Computer-Assisted Language Learning Programs was higher than the score obtained before class at 4.25 representing 21.25%. It represented that the students had the development after studying from Computer-Assisted Language Learning Programs more than the period before class and tended to develop in a better direction.

Table 3 The number of students who got the quiz scores after studying in different levels

Level	Score	Lesson 1-2 (Person)	Lesson 3-4 (Person)	Lesson 5-6 (Person)	Lesson 7-8 (Person)	Lesson 9-10 (Person)
Excellent	9-10	-	3	3	21	15
Good	7-8	6	27	21	15	24
Average	5-6	54	30	36	24	21
Fair	3-4	-	-	-	-	-
Poor	0-2	-	-	-	-	-

From the table 3, the study of English listening and speaking skills development represented the number of the students who scored from the quizzes in the end of the lessons at various levels. As a result, the researchers had recognized English listening and speaking skills development of the elementary students as follows: 1) The scores of the quizzes in the end of Lesson 1-2: There were the students who scored at a good level in a total of 6 students and a moderate level in a total of 54 students. 2) The scores of the quizzes in the end of Lesson 3-4: There were the students who scored at an excellent level in a total of 3 students, a good level in a total of 27 students, and a moderate level in a total of 30 students. 3) The scores of the quizzes in the end of Lesson 5-6: There were the students who scored at an excellent level in a total of 3 students, a good level in a total of 21 students, and a moderate level in a total of 36 students. 4) The scores of the quizzes in the end of Lesson 7-8: There were the students who scored at an excellent level in a total of 21 students, a good level in a total of 15 students, and a moderate level in a total of 24 students. 5) The scores of the quizzes in the end of Lesson 9-10 : There were the students who scored at an excellent level in a total of 15 students, a good level in a total of 24 students, and a moderate level in a total of 21 students. From the scores from the quizzes in the end of the lessons at various levels, the scores of the students were likely to develop in a better direction. However, English listening and speaking skills development within a limited period might not result in the development of scores from the quizzes in the end of the lessons in every student because of many factors included learning ability and interestedness in learning of each student that were different as well as attitudes of each student towards English subject as well.

Part 2 - The satisfaction results of the students towards Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs to study English listening and speaking skills development of the primary students in Lampung Province.



Table 4 The satisfaction results of the students towards Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs to study English listening and speaking skills development of the primary students in Lampung Province.

Item	Content List	Satisfaction results of the students		Interpretation	No.
		$\bar{X}$	S.D.		
1	The presentation of studying by using CALL Programs was interesting.	4.22	0.76	Satisfied	5
2	Studying by using CALL Programs helped increase illustration and overtone of learning to be more interesting, readable and observable.	4.30	0.65	Satisfied	2
3	Studying by using CALL Programs had appropriate fonts and colors.	4.28	0.78	Satisfied	3
4	Studying by using CALL Programs helped learning additional vocabularies easier to remember.	4.27	0.80	Satisfied	4
5	Studying by using CALL Programs made the learning more enjoyable and interesting.	4.32	0.65	Satisfied	1
6	Studying by using CALL Programs could be repeated the lessons conveniently and easily.	4.10	0.71	Satisfied	7
7	Studying by using CALL Programs helped reduce tension in the class.	3.97	0.78	Satisfied	9
8	Studying by using CALL Programs helped increase enthusiasm in learning.	4.18	0.75	Satisfied	6
9	Studying by using CALL Programs could be learnt by themselves if needed.	3.95	0.79	Satisfied	10
10	Studying by using CALL Programs could be repeated the lessons unlimitedly.	3.98	0.77	Satisfied	8
Average		4.16		Satisfied	

From the table 4, the satisfaction results of the students towards Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs had a mean score of 4.16 with a satisfied level of overall image.

## Conclusions

The research on title of 'The Study of Listening and Speaking Skills Development by Using a Computer Assisted Language Learning of Primary Students in Lampung Province' can be concluded as follows:

1. From the study results of listening and speaking skills development by using computer assisted language learning of primary students in Lampung province, it could be found that the development of English language skills was likely to improve in a better direction since the average scores of the quizzes in the end of the lessons increased progressively. And the study results of the development of the students by the interview indicated that after learning with the computer-assisted language



learning program, they had the average score increased 4.25 points per student representing 21.25%.

2. The satisfaction results of the students towards the computer assisted language learning program in English listening and speaking skills of the primary students in Lampang province had the average at 4.16 with a satisfied level in overall image.

### **Finding Discussion**

The research on title of 'The Study of Listening and Speaking Skills Development by Using a Computer Language Learning of Primary Students in Lampang Province' could be discussed as follows:

1. From the study results of listening and speaking skills development by using Computer Assisted Language Learning of Primary students in Lampang province, the researcher has conducted the research following to the approach of experimental research by developing Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs according to the objectives systematically. There were plans to create lessons, monitoring, evaluation, amendment, improvement, and examination by experts in both English contents and creation of Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs in a systematic way. After the process of creating Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs or the lessons of Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs, it was examined by the experts and was modified following to the instructions completely. Then, Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs was brought to test with populations and the primary students in Anubanmaemoh School, Lampang Province. This is consistent with Jaitheingtong Kanokwan. (2013), who researched in the title developing English skills of the Matayomsuksa 5 students through computer assisted, found that after students learned English grammar (adjective) by using computer assisted the development of English skills of students had higher levels than before. This is consistent with Laeied Wilaiwan (2007), who studied the research title 'The development of computer assisted instruction in English Vocabulary for Prathomsuksa 5 Students', found that the achievement in English vocabulary after using computer assisted instruction higher than before. For the research on title of 'The Study of Listening and Speaking Skills Development by Using a Computer Language Learning of Primary Students in Lampang Province' the researcher must be designed to meet the individual differences as much as possible and give an opportunity to learners to control their own lessons in part of contents. The learners will be able to learn any lesson, skip any part, out of lesson or reverse to it any time. Controlling the sequence of lessons by learners can let them choose to study any lesson earlier or later as needed. Therefore, students who interested in computer assisted language learning, the achievement of learners will tend to better, and students can develop other skills in the future.

2. The satisfaction results of the student towards Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs in English listening and speaking skills development of primary students in Lampang Province in a total of 10 items found that the majority of the students had their opinions towards Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs in English listening and speaking skills development in a satisfied level. The students were interested and liked to learn these lessons. From the observation, it found that the students were enthusiastic to learn and were very satisfied with towards Computer

Assisted Language Learning Programs in the primary school, Anubanmaemoh School, Lampang Province. This is consistent with Kangkan Sureephorn (2009) who studied the research title 'Using CAI Lessons in Developing Language Skill on Parts of Speech and Word Functions for Prathom Suksa 5 Students of Doi Luang Kindergarten School under the Chiang Rai Educational Service Area Office 3', found that the students who learned by using Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs were interested, liked the programs and required to have more lessons in this form. The use of colors, illustration, and lines with movement and music will be more realistic and appeal to be curious, practice exercises or do activities by learners, etc. In addition, this is also consistent with Champrasert Kannika (2014), who studied the research title The Development of Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) for Academic Career Based on the Use of Energy Saving by the Learning group of 10th Grade Students of Occupation and Technology Learning Substance Group, said Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) helped increase motivation for learning to learners due to learning by computer gives a new and strange experience by the uses of colors, drawing lines that look like moving as well as music that adds reality and inspiration to learners to be curious, want to do exercises or do activities and so on. Studying by using Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) is a teaching that gives an opportunity to students to choose learning on their own and emphasize their interestedness with illustration and audio that are appropriate with ages of students. Also, time to study and lesson to learn can be chosen as needed.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings above, the researchers have recommendations as below.

1. The time of studying from Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs should be increased to enhance effectiveness of teaching English listening and speaking skills.
2. Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs should be developed in a responsive function to enable the students to take this lesson to study by themselves additionally after class.
3. There should be a study on the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs in English teaching to improve other skills additionally.
4. There should be a study on comparison between the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs and other teaching approaches.
5. The Computer Assisted Language Learning Programs or this assisted language learning lessons should be installed on a website in order to add more channel of self-education for the students.

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***General Education with a Purpose:  
Theme-Based Approaches for Academic Literacy in English***

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**Abstract**

While internationalizing education is important for preparing students for the employment opportunities that globalization has brought to Thailand, it is also about instilling cross-cultural values in a globalized world such as humanism and cosmopolitanism. Many international programs are geared more to the former goal of internationalization rather than to the latter, resulting in more emphasis on major and specialization courses, which this author argues is contradictory to the goals of a “general” education. The author of this paper and presentation calls describes the ongoing debate at his college about the future of the General Education program and argues for the development of academic literacy through exploration of themes that are not tailored to industry, but instead emphasize critical thinking and humanism that is crucial to the twenty-first century.

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*“I think we really should feel ashamed of being branded a corrupt nation... The worst problem of the nation is people of the same nation cheating one another... This has been highly embarrassing for many years”* (Privy Council President, Prem Tinsulanonda cited in Nanuam, Mar. 13, 2016).

## **Introduction and Context**

This conference paper and presentation describes an ongoing debate happening at my university about the future of our liberal arts education. It is an international college that offers a curriculum program modeled largely on liberal arts programs pioneered in the United States. The thinking behind this is that students enter their majors after first completing a significant number of courses in General Education (GE) designed to introduce them to an array of experiences across the disciplines, and thereby equip them with foundations for critical thinking and knowledge transferability across learning and life. The mission statement published on the website boasts of an “international liberal arts education and selected professional fields in order to prepare global citizens for the 21st century and transforming knowledge for the benefit of society through sustainability” (Mahidol University International College, 2016). These kinds of knowledges and values would seem of particular importance in a time and in a country that is struggling to develop both economically and socially because of reasons reflected in the opening quotation to this paper from Privy Council President, Prem Tinsulanonda, the highest ranking member of the Royal Palace, the most respected and revered institution in Thailand. However, there is a movement now to significantly cut the GE program to bolster the majors, which for many is a highly concerning development.

Students at this college typically come from the privileged families of Bangkok, and this is significant as Thailand is a highly unequal society and moreover is a country at a political cross-roads, currently under military rule, with political factions marked starkly along class lines. As admittedly reductionist this characterization is, the political complexities are beyond the scope of this paper, but it is nevertheless important for contextualizing this paper. An international education (as opposed to a local “Thai” education) is a mark of sophistication as well as class in Thai society, and an international program like that at our college is not as focused on attracting international students as it is on alluring middle and upper class Thai families (Lavankura, 2013; Lao, 2015).

Since a new administrative team took over, the liberal arts focus has come under scrutiny. People in the more vocational major programs and by far the largest and most popular programs, namely *Business Administration* and *Tourism and Hospitality Management*, have voiced resentment of the liberal arts focus, seen by some to take undue focus away from the major programs and to over-emphasize Humanities subjects that do not clearly contribute to the pursuit of employability. This sentiment was expressed in one comment from one individual in the executive team: “If we ever had a liberal arts soul, we've long sold it for more registration fees to the college,” alluding to the aggressive marketing and successful recruitment of students to the vocational programs as well as the competitive salaries offered to faculty at the college. All of this said, the debate introduced here is not a new one, but I argue that it is becoming a very salient one in developing areas like Thailand where employability

and economic interests are winning out against the more humanistic goals of education.

### **Aims of Education**

The debate over the aims of education presented here is framed primarily according to two different points of view. On one hand, an *international* education is aimed at helping students take advantage of the economic opportunities brought to Thailand by processes of globalization (Lavankura, 2013). Burke (2014) describes how organizations must respond to shifts in the external environment, compelling “senior executives and their constituents to consider what to change about their organization to meet the new challenges and to survive as an organization” (p. 168). Globalization has required businesses to internationalize in order to remain competitive, and so many students come to our college specifically to boost their employability in the international job market. The point here is that international education is thought of through an economic framework, and much research reflects this by describing education in terms of *investment* and *returns* in employment and income (see Moenjak and Worswick, 2003; Hawley, 2003; Meer, 2007; Sukboonyasatit, et al., 2011). On the other hand, an *international* education is thought to instill in students values and worldviews such as cosmopolitanism and humanism that are foundational to living in a globalized world (Seritanondh, 2013; Tran and Nguyen, 2015). Many see education as a moral enterprise and that in fact, most education systems as they were developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were outgrowths of religious institutions that saw expansion of character and consciousness as the primary aim (see Green, 2013; Warea, 2016).

Dewey was arguing in 1916 for a generalized education that “stimulates one to take more consequences (connections) into account” (p. 109). The aim of an education, according to Dewey, was to identify the intersections of different knowledges; in other words, knowledge is not restricted to specific disciplines but instead it the one who can make the connections between knowledges is one we can call educated. Cremin (1961) described the unfortunately named “life adjustment movement” (p. 333) in post-WWII United States that emphasized specific and employable skills to meet the workforce demand of the post-war boom. What curriculum-designers behind this movement failed to recognize was industry’s eventual demand for problem-solving and critical thinking manpower. Milton Friedman (2002), considered by many the grandfather of free market economics (Klein, 2007) and harsh critic of government spending, says in a section entitled “General Education for Citizenship” that government subsidization of specialist programs “cannot be justified on the same grounds as elementary schools or, at a higher level, liberal arts colleges” (p. 88). People in a democracy, Friedman says, must have access to a general education of math and literacy in order to participate fully in society. Later, Hirsch (2007) bemoans the poor instruction of basic literacy as reading, she argues, is key to being an informed citizen in a democracy. Reading must be exercised in broad areas of knowledge, and “the only thing that transforms reading skill and critical thinking skill into general all-purpose abilities is a person’s possession of general, all-purpose knowledge” (p. 12). Finally, in a report by Hart Research Associates (2009), they cite that 78% of American colleges and universities “say that they have a common set of intended learning outcomes for all of their undergraduate students” and their administrators say that “general education has increased as a priority” (p. 1).



Not unlike the post-war economic boom seen in much of the West, I argue that the rapid economic development in countries like Thailand as a result of accelerated globalization has seduced curriculum-reformers to retrench to the disciplines and specializations that are in high demand and are economically attractive. I also argue that this narrowing focus of education is short-sighted as “global citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> century” will need to be problem-solvers like never before. The breakdown of democracy in Thailand and widespread corruption in Thai business and politics are indicative of a citizenry that is struggling to adopt the humanistic values that an international education is well-equipped to provide, and instead is lured more by the economic and self-interested opportunities that an international education is also well-equipped to facilitate.

### Perceptions of Other Stakeholders

In this section, I will describe my conversations with two colleagues who are also engaged in the debate over the proposed changes to the GE curriculum at the college. The first participant (Participant #1) is a teacher of Spanish. *Foreign Languages* currently makes up 8 credits (2 courses) of the GE program, and these will be cut under the new proposal, categorizing all language courses as free electives. The second participant (Participant #2) is a teacher of *Philosophy, Music Appreciation, and Ethics*. Under the new proposal, the number of required credits in this program will be reduced to 8 credits (2 courses) from 12 (3 courses). Both participants were purposefully selected because of their direct stake in this change. I met with them individually at their offices for approximately 30 minutes. They were asked three open-ended questions to allow for a more conversational and free-flowing interview.

The three questions are the following:

1. According to your understanding, what is precipitating the move to change GE?
2. In your view, is a so-called *liberal arts* education still relevant?
3. How do you envision the curriculum with respects to the role of GE?

Both participants were informed that the data collection was for a conference presentation and paper and that they would remain anonymous.

What is often lost in these debates are the voices of students. In my academic writing class, I employ a theme-based approach to instruction where we study a particular area to inform the topics that we read and write about for assignments. The theme for this edition of the course was *Education*. As part of the students' participation requirements, they were asked to respond to a weekly online blog about the readings and discussions in class. On this particular week, we read a chapter from the book *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell (2009) called the *10,000-hour rule* that popularized the apparent phenomenon that says it takes 10,000 hours of dedication, practice, and obsession to become elite at a particular skill. On the blog, I asked the students if this phenomenon challenges the way we think about general education. It is important to note that the students did not know about the internal politics and proposals that are the subject of this paper. Students were informed that some of their comments may be used as part of my own studies, and if they did not want to participate, they could e-mail their responses to me privately instead. Only public postings on the blog would be considered for this paper (see the blog at <http://muicadvancedenglish.blogspot.com/2016/02/journal-blog-6-10000-hour->



rule.html). However, firstly I shall share the perspectives from Participant 1 and Participant 2.

### **Perspectives From Participant #1**

He expressed frustration that there had been little explanation for why GE had to change. According to him, it does not appear that there are any external pressures like from the university or from the Ministry of Education (as had been previously argued by the executive team some months prior). When I probed him further for a more direct answer for why GE had to change, he simply shrugged his shoulders. With regards to the second question, he said:

*I think the liberal arts are very important. The college keeps talking about 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, but it's like they know what skills will be needed in ten or twenty years. They don't. But we do know that art and culture and philosophy have been important for centuries, and I think that learning more languages is a 21<sup>st</sup> century skill.*

For the third question, again he had trouble answering, but he did express worry: “*It doesn't look good, and the maddening thing is that good reasoning or argument doesn't work. They don't answer the arguments.*” However, what he did expect is that some of the smaller foreign language programs such as French and German may disappear due to less demand and more competition if they are grouped in a free elective category. He continued: “*Chinese and Japanese are the vocational languages. English is the language of academia; Chinese and Japanese are the languages of business; and Spanish is the language of football [soccer].*”

He added that over the last decade, lecturers in all of the languages have worked very hard to make relationships with overseas institutions and businesses to strike agreements to host our students for short-course study programs and internships abroad. Under the new proposal, enrollment in some of these programs will fall and he feared these special arrangements developed over many years would also fall apart.

### **Perspectives From Participant #2**

“*They have no idea what they're doing,*” cried Participant #2 in response to the first questions. “*I can't believe how thoughtless and cavalier they are with all of this GE stuff. They really haven't thought about this through very carefully.*” Participant #2 was more focused on the administrative or structural changes that would, in his view, need to happen to make this drastic change in the curriculum work. He continued:

*I don't know if programs will be maintained? Will divisions keep their current shape? Will the college install a GE division? If this is the case, what will be its structure? These questions seem urgent, particularly if one looks at the recent proposal for cross-divisional GE groupings under broader Humanities and Social Sciences umbrellas.*

Here he is alluding to a rumor or leak that there is a plan to have a General Education Center. In other words, GE courses would be run by a centralized division and would not be the charge of different disciplines.

When I asked him if he believes that a liberal arts education is still relevant, he said:

*“Yes. Maybe more. You know that most of our students are doing what their parents want them to do. Most of them will go on to work in their family business and university is just a step to doing that, so while they’re here they should learn to open their minds and see something outside of their world.”*

Again, here Participant #2 is alluding to the privileged lives of most of our students. *International Business* is the largest program at the college (accounting for 51% of total enrollment), and the majority of those students have family businesses that they are expecting to inherit and run.

### **Perspectives from Students**

Here I want to re-iterate that students were free to express themselves honestly and openly without power-over pressures from the teacher. While it is likely that my biases for GE are clear, this blog post happened on Week 8 of the course, so by that time a level of trust and safety was established in the class to share opinions and arguments freely without fear or judgment. The only direction leading to these responses was the reading from Gladwell and my lead-up and instructions on the post, which in part reads: *“What do you think about this 10,000-hour rule argument? Does it challenge the way you think about how an education should be designed?”* Following are excerpts from four student responses, who will heretofore be referred to as Student #1, Student #2, Student #3, and Student #4.

Student #1.

*Of course, it is ideal that we excel at the things we do, but perhaps, just perhaps, not everyone was meant to become a 'genius'. In my view, sometimes it is better to have a spectrum of knowledge about the world we live in rather than dwelling into one specific focus (and in the process undermine other aspects?)...Education to me has always meant a general approach to learning. Through general education, I can discover and learn topics in different areas other than my major course of study. I feel that this gives me a much wholer view of the world, and has got to be more interesting than just learning a specific area of knowledge.*

Student #2.

*Primarily, while reading Gladwell's argument, I leaned towards his opinion as it also included the luck that goes along with the hard-work. Upon further reflection though, I would say the Liberal Arts approach towards education is still what I would promote. While the 10,000 Hour rule can work miracles when it comes to polishing up a skill, it is very narrow and offers a "limited specialisation", i.e specialised skills in a single area. This might be more tempting for those of us with an intense obsession towards a field but I believe that a whole range of abilities are required in order to be successful, and general education offers vital tools for this.*

## Student #3.

*Granted it takes 10,000 hours to master a skill, to truly become an expert at something, I don't think it is the education system's role to provide those hours. There is a spectrum or career paths out there, some that require vigorous training (athletes, musicians), and others that demand transferrable skills and holistic skill sets (researchers, teachers, etc). I personally believe that education systems should generally serve the purpose of allowing people to explore their interests, figure out strengths and weaknesses, and promote critical thinking. This means, it also allows people to figure out the one thing they are willing to spend 10,000 hours on. Maxwell [sic] makes a strong argument in showing us that hard work is the key to true mastery, but he also argues that institutions should work better to provide opportunities. This is true, education systems ideally should be able to provide equal opportunity to all citizens, but practically that is not possible.*

## Student 4.

*I choose to promote the Liberal arts (GE) approach based on my own individual circumstances. Truthfully, I'd like to devote my 10,000 hours in a lab, but it's simply not possible. Who would fund it? Which university would support it? and would I even be able to come across that possibility? I'm not a risk taker, so I'm going to keep my choices open. GE allows its students to do just that.*

**Discussion**

In this section, I will highlight some key observations from the data collection. I will also work to identify overlapping ideas expressed in the comments made, and also see where they may diverge. One clear observation to make is that the views expressed in the data collection are very one-sided in favor of liberal arts and general education, and for Participant #1 and Participant #2, against changes in GE. The reasons for this one-sidedness will be considered later in the *Synthesis* section of this paper, but first of all, I shall discuss the convergent themes in the data collection.

**Convergent themes**

The most striking parallel between Participant #1 and Participant #2 is the general confusion about why this change is needed. They both express frustration about the lack of communication. According to the participants, they do not necessarily believe that there is not a clear or complete plan, but in fact they think information is being withheld or only being released one phase at a time in order to control the change and stifle dissent. Participant #2 was particularly conspiratorial about the future of the division. Kotter and Cohen (2002) say that: "Trust is often missing in senior management teams, although top managers are loath to admit this in public... People will think of themselves or of their subgroups first and be protective and suspicious" (p. 50). Due to the lack of communication or clear rationale for the GE reform, the comments of Participant #1 and #2 are reflective of this kind of suspicion. Protectiveness is also clear as they feel threatened and forced to defend their programs.

More than that, it is a challenge to their identity as scholars and practitioners. The downgrading of liberal arts and the elevating of the vocational majors is also a value judgement on the type of knowledge in which they have invested their careers and personhood. Participant #1's touch-in-cheek comment that *Spanish is the language of football* is a sarcastic spat at the fact that soccer is hugely popular among Thai people, and since Spain won the World Cup in 2010 and teams like Barcelona and Real Madrid have risen over recent years in the Thai consciousness, interest in the Spanish language program has spiked (and not because Spanish is the third-largest language group in the world after English and Mandarin). Chinese and Japanese, on the other hand, are the vocational languages, and as Participant #2 said, many of the Thai family businesses have Chinese and Japanese connections, and therefore, the Chinese and Japanese language classes are mostly populated by business students.

The comments of the students reflect a highly sophisticated awareness and appreciation for GE. Even though one student said she would like to devote all of her time to the lab, she wants to keep her options open and GE allows students to do just that. This idea of exploration was a common theme among the students, which is reflected in comments like "*discover and learn topics in different areas*" (Student #1) and "*education systems should generally serve the purpose of allowing people to explore their interests*" (Student #3). Student #2 emphasized that knowing different skills other than one specialization is "*required in order to be successful.*" While all three students acknowledged the examples cited in Gladwell's description of the 10-000 hour rule, they also noted those examples as remarkable exceptions that do not refute the goals and benefits of a liberal arts education.

### **Divergent Themes**

Between Participant #1 and Participant #2, there are two differences to highlight. The first difference is one of focus. Participant #1 was more concerned about his program and the survival of the less popular languages (French and German). Under the new proposal, he could see those programs fading away. There was a sense that the faculty of the *Foreign Languages* program had built something, and this reform would destroy it. For Participant #2, he did not directly mention survival of the program, although it was implied by his concern for the structural make-up of the university in general. He was more trying to anticipate the true motivations and goals of the administrative team, and so for him there were too many unanswered questions, which goes back to the issue of trust discussed in the previous section.

The second difference is more generally an observation of tone and attitude. Burke (2014) says that "with resistance to change is not necessarily a bad thing. Apathy is worse. At least with resistance, there is energy, and the person cares about something" (p. 111). It is not my intention to characterize Participant #1 as apathetic and uncaring. He certainly does care. However, there was a sense of powerlessness and fatalism when he said that "*good reasoning or argument doesn't work,*" suggesting that minds were already settled. Most of his comments expressed a kind of sadness and imminent loss, and maybe even fatigue over talking about it. On the other hand, Participant #2, while sharing many of Participant #1's fears, did not seem apparently worried as he did not think the reform could work under its current structure as proposed.

With regards to the students' comments, the obvious difference has to do with focus and knowledge. The students were not aware of the more political situations that Participant #1 and #2 were addressing. It is useful to note that the more salient bias for Participant #1 and #2 were more professional and organizational than educational. While they certainly have strong educational opinions about the value of a liberal arts education, their responses spoke to the viability of their jobs and the future of the division. For the students, their responses were more personal and about education because they were working to, in part, display what they had learned from the readings as well as share their own points of view for the class discussion.

The other notable difference was one of tone and sophistication. In my view, the students' responses show a mature thoughtfulness and level of care with regards to how they negotiate their own particular interests with the requirements of a general education. There is also an optimism in their comments as they show a clear interest in learning other subjects and a wariness of being too focused on one specialization. This seems to me in stark contrast to the views expressed by Participant #1 and #2 who express sadness, ambivalence, frustration, and distrust. Again, the different biases mentioned informs this difference in tone; however, I believe if the students had a louder voice in this debate in the organization, it would potentially raise the level of discourse beyond politics and conflicts of interest to more idealistic educational goals.

### **Synthesis**

The internationalization of education programs and institutions in Thailand, according to Lavankura (2013), was due to external and domestic forces. She says that "demands for market liberalization" are in part why Thailand needed to become more international (p. 664). She goes on to say that the Thai government promoted the internationalization of education in pursuit of "economic rather than political or social development, and it perceived higher education as contributing solely to economic development" (p. 665). This focus is echoed in commentary by Carter (2015): "Administrators in Thailand have a tendency to focus on maximizing profitability with short-term goals" (p. 36). In fact, economic development and wealth generation would seem to be natural goals for a developing country like Thailand that is working to gain prominence and legitimacy in the world, and the development of higher education has been a strategy for achieving such goals (Lao, 2015). While it is beyond the scope of this paper, it is worthwhile to note that internationalization in Thailand has generally meant westernization (Ferguson, 2011; Green, 2013) as a cultural marker of civilization, and economic development has over-shadowed social development in pursuit of this goal.

The interview data expressed by Participant #1 and Participant #2 represents an ongoing exasperation with this emphasis on economics and market demand in contrast to broader educational aims once stated by Thailand's Ministry of Education in 2002 explained here in Waree (2016):

The ultimate aims of education are to transform Thai citizens into perfect human beings, having good health, wholesome minds, intelligence, knowledge, morality, good behavior and cultural life. (p. 124)



While I do not believe anyone is minimizing the importance of employability, but there is deepening concern about the ever-narrowing myopia on vocational ends. There is a call here for balance as it is not an either/or proposition. Green (2013) calls for emphasis on *not only* as the goal of a liberal arts education. He says that education is about teaching “one to think and learn, but also to see things as a whole, to enhance wisdom and faith... *Not only* is the emphasis on strong, transferrable intellectual skills, but also on developing a sense of community and social responsibility” (p. 373). In the end, the interview data expresses a yearning to not only sell employability and support corporate interests, but also to give students a more complete educational experience that explores a variety of disciplines.

Before moving on to the conclusion, I shall address the weaknesses in this data collection, which renders this synthesis incomplete in some important ways. As mentioned earlier, this data collection has produced one-sided results. The biases of Participant #1 and #2 are clear, and they are both colleagues of mine, so the discussions represented in this paper are mere extensions of much longer and often more heated conversations about the role of Humanities and our place in the curriculum and college. I am not an unbiased researcher. In the critical theory tradition, the researcher is not only an observer but also a participant in the research and makes his or her positionality central to the claims about the phenomenon (Ponterotto, 2005). In this case, I share in my colleagues’ dismay about the proposed changes to GE, for both political and philosophical reasons. It is also reasonable to critique the responses from my students as it is possible that their posts are shaped at least in part by their teacher’s bias. I have also alluded to the small sample of students represented in this field study, and a larger one would surely include provocative arguments against GE and a liberal arts education for students who are driven towards clear professional goals.

## **Conclusion**

*“My predictions are probably as good as yours. What is clear in hindsight is that globalisation, consumerism, extravagance, dishonesty and immoderation have led to management failures in both government and business”* (Former Prime Minister of Thailand, Anand Panyarachun, cited in Panyarachun, Mar. 24, 2016).

This remark from former PM Anand Panyarachun was in response to the question of what the “new normal” will be for Thailand, long considered by many as the one reliable democracy in Southeast Asia. While globalization has brought enormous wealth and opportunity to Thailand, and is the reason behind the internationalization of education in general, it has also bred extraordinary levels of corruption and dishonesty as reflected in the opening remarks cited in this paper by Privy Council President, Prem Tinsulanonda. It has also intensified economic inequality and class strife that led to intractable protests and the eventual military take-over. Now in the country, there is a sense of pensive reflection about where we have come from and where we are going. However, the problem of practice outlined in this field study highlights an important university organization that continues to, in the words of our own Assistant Dean, “sell its liberal arts soul,” while under-selling the other dimension of an international education, the promotion of cosmopolitan and humanistic values that have been central to the GE program to date.

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***A Dynamic Usage-Based Approach:  
Using Video Segments in Teaching Listening Skill***

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**Abstract**

The National Foreign Language 2020 Project in Vietnam has advocated a shift from traditional Grammar-Translation Method to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). In line with CLT, a dynamic usage-based perspective to teaching a foreign language focuses on meaning. This approach provides plenty of authentic input and is believed to raise learners' motivation. The current study was conducted to investigate if a dynamic usage-based approach enhanced EFL learners' proficiency. Two classes of first year English students (39 students each) at the Department of English, College of Foreign Languages, Da Nang, Viet Nam participated in this study. The experimental group learnt English with repeated movie segments taken from two movies, 'Mean Girls' (2004) and 'Confession of a Shopaholic' (2009). They focused on listening and delayed speaking. The control group was taught with a regular textbook in which the four language skills were practiced with an emphasis on speaking. The data was collected by means of two standardized PET tests, which are pre-test and post-test, and analyzed by One-way ANOVA and Paired samples t-tests. The findings showed that the experimental group had better development than the Control group in general. The results of this study suggested that a DUB approach affected the students' language ability positively.

Keywords: dynamic, usage-based approach, listening

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## Introduction

In recent years, the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training has advocated the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach to second language teaching. This approach is a meaning-based approach that allows authentic communication in class. It is hoped that the CLT will help Vietnamese learners of English to be able to communicate confidently and fluently in English. However, it is a fact that many high school and college students in Vietnam still have difficulty expressing themselves in English.

To find a better teaching approach that can foster the learning, we tried a new method that was very much in line with the CLT. The new approach is a Dynamic Usage-Based (DUB) approach. This approach focuses on meaning and authentic communication. According to Kemmer and Barlow (2000), usage – based model is the exposure to numerous usage events that results in emerging a user’s language. One of the key statements of usage-based approaches is that the primary purpose of language is communicative, as Tomasello (2003) argued “language structure emerges from language use”. That means the more exposure to language learners have, the more language forms in their mind. Moreover, it is emphasized in the theory of CLT that the authentic materials and the exposure to language play important roles in language teaching. In the light of those mentioned theories, this research makes use of the theory of input: authentic input and repetition of input.

The focus of this research was to investigate the effects of video segments on learners’ listening skill. The use of videos instead of audio recording originated from the idea of Balatova (1994), suggesting that videos had greater positive effects on learners’ comprehension of the story than audio materials did thanks to means of action or body language. Also, inspired by the research on DST by Nguyen (2013), which used video as a source of authentic input and got some considerably positive results for the learner, we carried out this study as a simplified replication. Within the scope of this research, we will mainly focus on learners’ development of listening skill after they are taught with video segments.

## Theoretical Background

### *A Dynamic Usage-Based Approach*

There have been a number of theories that are considered usage-based or emergentist and compatible with a dynamic system theory (DST) approach: cognitive linguistics, emergentism, connectionist theories, grammaticalization theory, and usage-based L1 acquisition (Verspoor et al., 2011). Two of them focus on how learner acquires language. The ‘emergentist’ theory examines if complexities can emerge in language through simple iteration. The ‘usage-based’ approach focuses on linguistics communication. Within the scope of this study, we briefly mention some aspects of DST and DUB approach that are applied in this research.

Traditional linguistics used to consider input in language development as a one-way stream of information from the outside to the inside of a system. It is stable and not influenced by the fact that it is in interaction with another cognitive and social system. However, de Bot (2005) argued that from a DST perspective, there is a continuous

interaction between different sub-systems of language. They interact with each other, interconnect and change overtime. Originated from DST, Dynamic Usage-Based linguistics was born, which could be summarized in the two aphorisms: 'meaning is use' and 'structure emerges from use' (Tomasello, 2009). The former represents an approach to the functional or semantic dimension of linguistic communication, which focuses on how people use linguistics conventions to achieve social end. The latter was made explicit by Langacker (2000), which believes that language structures emerge from individual acts of language use and through repeated language use. That means the more learners are exposed to language and try to use it, the more likely they are able to use it as conventional units. To date, there have been a number of studies and articles about principles or characteristics of a DUB approach and its implications. Based on the characteristics of a DUB approach to second language teaching, and the positive effects of using video in class, we decided to conduct this study to examine the effectiveness of a DUB approach in practice.

One of the characteristics of DUB is that it focuses on input. As Richards, Platt, & Weber put it, input is "language which a learner hears or receives and from which he or she can learn" (Richard et al., 1989, p. 143). This suggests before we expect output from learners, they should be exposed to valid input frequently. Therefore, in the CLT method, we should put learners into authentic and meaningful communicative contexts instead of providing them sample contexts that are un-communicative so that they could get the meaning out of it. Authentic input is defined as real-life language materials, not those which are designed on purpose for teaching (Wallace, 1992), so they must be real language produced by native speakers, which is informative and socio-linguistically appropriate. Therefore, besides the material taken from the textbook for reading and writing sessions, we chose relevant video segments from entertaining movies familiar with learners' life and their prior knowledge to carry out this experiment. The movie language was also considered; it had to be neither too easy nor too difficult for the learners to understand the movies.

The second characteristic of DUB is frequency of input. When applying video in class activities, teachers have to make use of it. That means it should be shown over and over again, and be replayed in a lot of relevant activities designed to exploit it. Thanks to the visual aids and familiar topics of the movies, learners will find it more motivating to engage in class activities. In line with this characteristic, Smiskova and Verspoor (2012) zoomed in the development of chunks in sub-groups of high input and low-input learners. Results showed that high-input learners developed a greater range of chunk types. While low-input learners show a random like variability without clear developmental stages, the high input learners show this random-like variability early on, but after a year there is a rather sudden increase of variability and then a new stage.

Another characteristic of DUB is the exposure to authentic usage – based events and chunks. Froehlich observes that: "Foreign language education nowadays has to be fun" (Froehlich, 1999, p. 150-151). He suggests that L2 learners today like learning in authentic contexts, where they can have a chance to see and hear L2 native speakers simultaneously in an entertaining way. A good movie is both relaxing to watch and engaging to learn the language because of its near-everyday natural language and meaningful context exchanges in conversations between characters. Chunks are another aspect that should be noticed in language classrooms. Instead of learning

isolated words, DUB exposes learners to formulaic language or combinations of words that frequently go together to help learners be more natural and idiomatic in using the language. This characteristic of authentic usage of language was one of the reasons why we utilized movies in our study.

Although exposure to second language plays an important role in language teaching, we cannot omit the role of L1 as a scaffold to get meaning across. While being exposed to second language, learners need to understand its meaning. Along with visual aids, contexts, or examples, teacher also can use L1 as an effective tool. In contrast with the idea that using L1 in L2 classes may cause negative effects, several studies have been carried out to prove the effect of using L1 in L2 classes. All of them have shown that L1 does help improve the comprehension and acquisition of L2 in terms of abstract vocabulary and complex grammar points. In other words, by using L1, teachers can enable students to catch up with and comprehend the lesson instead of getting lost or forming fossilizations. Thus, they may feel more engaged and motivated. However, the amount of L1 used in class must be considered depending on the learners, the lessons and the specific social settings.

### *Previous studies*

Several studies investigated the effect of a DUB approach to second language teaching. First of all, Herron, Morris, Secules, and Curtis (1994) compared the effect of video-based versus text-based instruction in the foreign language classroom. Participants were first and second-year students at Emory University, who learned French as a foreign language. They were divided into two groups, with 14 students each (n=14). One was labeled as Control group, and other was named as Experimental group. The Control group was instructed by means of texts, reading texts aloud, cultural notes, cultural information and vocabulary. The Experimental group learned French by watching drama once a week. Then they were asked to do the comprehension questions as homework. After that, they were shown the explanation sections of the drama two days per week. While showing the video, the teacher stopped it every one or two minutes to check comprehension, or occasionally ask for repetition of key features, grammar points or discussion of cultural differences. The two groups were then tested by five on-going tests during two semesters. While the tests in the first semester didn't show any significant difference between the two groups, the final test did show that Experimental Group had significant higher scores than Control Group in listening and writing. This indicates that the use of videos does not have significant effect immediately; instead, learners needs time to internalize the language.

The second empirical study by Gruba (1999) investigated the role of digital video media in second language listening comprehension, and how it influences comprehension process. The study was conducted at Japanese Department of The University of Melbourne with two stages. First, the pilot research was designed to explore the unsolved issues in the theoretical background. This pilot study consisted of four participants, whose levels of proficiency ranged from beginning to advanced levels. The purpose of the pilot study was to set out a preliminary seven – category framework of listener interactions with the digital videotexts. In the main study, twelve non-native Japanese speakers at upper-intermediate level were selected. The participants provided retrospective verbal reports while they interacted with the

videotext and engaged with videotext during self-directed responses to open-ended task demands. The finding results pointed to a view that visual elements work in a number of ways that go beyond merely 'supporting' verbal elements; they are better thought of as integral resources to comprehension whose influence shifts from primary to secondary importance as a listener develops a mature understanding of the videotext.

An article by Canning-Wilson (2000) generalized some practical aspects of using video in the foreign language classroom. The researcher mentioned her previous large-scale research where learners were found to prefer entertainment movies to documentaries or pedagogic films. Also, she summarized the research by Herron, Hanley and Cole (1995), which concluded that using videos helps develop comprehension scores for students learning French by its contexts. Nevertheless, she suggested some key questions that teachers should take into consideration if they want to apply videos in Foreign or Second language classes.

The latest research, which also examined the use of video in foreign language teaching, especially from a DUB perspective, was conducted by Nguyen (2013). The aim of the research was to investigate the effectiveness of a DUB approach to second language teaching. A total of 163 first-year and second-year Vietnamese students from seven intact classes participated in the study. They were at low level of English and were divided into Control Group (three classes) and Experimental Group (four classes). Both of them took the same course (General English 1) at Can Tho University, but the teaching materials were different. The material used in the Control group class was a kind of task-based textbook, while the Experimental group watched two popular English – spoken movies. Four teachers acted as instructors. Two of them taught both Control group and Experimental group, another was just in charge of Control group and the last one just taught Experimental group. The results based on the pre-test scores, post-test score, the Willingness to Communicate and Self-confidence (WTC-SC) questionnaire, and a Language exposure questionnaire. Data were analyzed using T-tests and Anova Tests. The results showed that the Experimental group, which was exposed to video clips had greater improvement in their scores in most examined aspects. This suggested that the movie DUB approach was successful in enhancing the learner's general proficiency and self-confidence, and starting to familiarize the learner with the use of authentic language.

In conclusion, previous studies showed that the use of videos in teaching English had positive effects on learners. While Herron, Morris, Secules, and Curtis (1994) suggested that the effect of using video needs time to prove, Gruba (1999) found out that watching video helped learners understand the videotext better. Moreover, the kinds of video that are used in teaching are also important. From the result of Canning-Wilson's research (2000), we found that entertaining movies can get more attention of learners than documentaries. Last but not least, Nguyen (2013) conducted an experiment that used video segment from a DUB perspective. The results showed that enough authentic input could bring positive effect on learners' language proficiency.



## **The Study**

This study wanted to see whether the use of video segments positively affected the listening skill of English as a foreign language learners. To this end, a pretest-posttest quantitative study was carried out.

### ***Sample, materials and measurements***

Two classes of freshmen participated in this study. They were English majors at English Department (ED), College of Foreign Languages, Da Nang University. Each class consisted of 39 students, who had learnt English at school for seven years and had had little contact with English outside class. Most participants were female.

The first year students in ED were trained with the goal that they would be qualified for the CEFR B1 level at the end of their first school year. To this end, the textbooks used in the course are 'Solutions Pre-Intermediate' (Oxford University Press – 2007) and PET Results (Oxford University Press – 2010). In Experimental Group, the listening part of these books was replaced by movie segments taken from 'Mean girls' (2004) and 'Confession of a Shopaholic' (2009). Since this is a quantitative research, the process of collecting data was adopted by testing. The tests used in the research were Preliminary English Tests (PET), which were relevant to level B1 (CEFR). There were two different tests applied in the experiment procedure. One was pre - test, taken at the beginning of the semester. The other was post - test, taken at the end of the semester. Each test included four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The pre-test was taken from the Cambridge Handbook for Teachers, the post-test was designed by Office for Testing and Quality Assurance as PET format. These tests met the requirements of validity and the reliability of ISO 9001:2008 standard (Cambridge English Preliminary: Handbook for teachers – p. 2).

The experiment took place for one semester (15 weeks). Both classes were instructed by one instructor who was the researcher herself. In Control Class, students were taught as teacher's guide provided by the ED' Science Council. That means they had to use inputs from textbooks, and deliver outputs as required. In Experimental Class, video segments from entertainment movies as mentioned above were applied as replacement for pedagogic audio recordings. The researcher chose some meaningful and humorous segments from these movies to show students. Other input resources for reading and writing were used as usual.

### ***Procedures of using video segments in Experimental Class***

The procedure of using video follows steps explained by Nguyen (2013) and was slightly modified to suit the samples in the research.

Step 1. Students were provided with some unfamiliar words or useful expressions, idioms that they would meet in the scene. Since the students in this class majored in English, in some cases this step may be skipped.

Step 2. Students watched the movie segment for the first time. Before watching, teacher didn't ask them anything. Students just watched the segment without subtitles.



Step 3. Teacher asked them some general questions about what had happened in the scene, or asked them to guess the gist of the scene. In this step teacher may ask some more questions to elicit the answers.

Step 4. Students watched the segment again for several times. The number of replay depends on the complexity of the segment. This time, students were asked to focus on what the characters said. Teacher may ask some questions that related to the callouts, for instant, “What is the rule of this class?” or “How did the girl feel on her first day at school?”

Step 5. Students were showed and handed out the subtitles of the segments. Teacher read the lines or words on the power point slides. Students watched the segments one or two more times with subtitles. While they were watching, they were reminded to pay attention to the pronunciation and intonation of the characters. In the early part of the experiment, they were just asked to repeat and imitate the oral features as the characters. Afterwards, in later periods, they were asked to dub the segments, or practice role- playing.

As a Usage-based approach, grammar did not play an important role in this class. Instead, the instructor tried to expose students to as many authentic inputs as possible. In the very first classes, the instructor didn't force students to produce any speaking output. Instead, they just practiced some simple forms of speaking such as dubbing the segments with the transcript from in their handouts. Then, they were gradually asked to do role-playing as the movies' gist or role-playing by their own dialogue in the same situations in later classes. Unlike the Control Group who had to practice using some phrases provided by the textbook; the Experimental Group had plenty of room for creativity by making new dialogues and acted like actors and actresses in specific topic as the segments, such as making new friends, invitation, interviewing for a job, talk show... They were elicited and encouraged to speak and talk as much as possible without being corrected. At the end of each period, the instructor generalized some common errors made during the post-listening session (indeed speaking session) to remind students not to let them become systematic errors. It is not an inattention to speaking practice, indeed, as Nguyen (2013) cited from Postovsky (1974), there were positive effects when output was delayed, therefore, the speaking skill should not be forced or practiced at early stages.

### ***Data Collection and Analysis***

Except for the speaking skill that was graded instantly, other skills of both tests were graded at the end of the experiment. Different raters were invited to assure the objectiveness of the scores. The grading scale adopted in ED is 10 – point. Although the test tested four language skills, within the range of this research, mainly the listening skill scores were reported in this paper.

The independent variables were the method of teaching (with or without movie), and the dependent variables were the tests' scores. The score we focused on was that of the listening test because we applied a DUB approach in this session. However, to have a general view of the effect of DUB approach on students' development, we also examined and analyzed other scores like Speaking, Reading and Writing. First, we compared the pre-test scores of two classes to see if their initial level was the same.

Secondly, we compared their post-test scores to see if the phenomenon found in the previous step remained or not. Then, we analyzed them separately to investigate their inner development. Data were analyzed using One-way ANOVA and the Paired samples T-tests with relevant formulated hypotheses. The decision level (alpha error) was set at .05.

## Results

### *The initial English proficiency*

At first, both groups had to take the same pre-test to investigate their initial English proficiency, especially listening skill. Their gained scores were then analyzed by one-way ANOVA. The pre-test result (scores) was the dependent variable, and the type of group (Experimental or Control) was independent variable. The null hypothesis was that there was no difference between the two groups. The alpha error was set at  $p < .05$ .

A One-way ANOVA on pre-test of listening skill showed that there was significant difference between the two groups,  $F(1,76) = 4.36$ ,  $p = .04$ . In other words, the Control group was more proficient than the Experimental Group. Moreover, based on the SD result, the Control group was slightly more homogeneous than the Experimental group.

Table 1 Means and Standard Deviations of the Pre-test Listening Scores of two groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Experimental	39	4.25	1.63	1.2	8.0
Control	39	4.95	1.31	1.6	7.2

Note. Significant at the  $p < .05$  level

Regarding other skills, there was another significant difference in reading skill, in which Control group also defeated Experimental group,  $F(1,76) = 9.37$ ,  $p = .003$ . The remaining skills, speaking and writing did not record any considerable difference,  $F(1,76) = .79$ ;  $p = .38$ , and  $F(1,76) = .77$ ,  $p = .78$  respectively.

An analysis on the average scores of the two groups was made to have a general view of the results. As expected from the component scores, the Control Group significantly outperformed the Experimental Group,  $F(1,76) = 5.31$ ,  $p = .02$ . In other words, in this step, we can correctly reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) that there is no difference between the two groups in the pre-test. Instead, we can accept the  $H_1$ , which is the Control group has a higher initial level of language proficiency than the Experimental group.

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of the Pre-test's Average Scores of two groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Experimental	39	4.73	.66	3.4	6.2
Control	39	5.05	.55	4.0	6.3

Note. Significant at the  $p < .05$  level

*The between-group difference after using DUB approach*

The one-way ANOVA was used again to analyze the scores gained in the post-test, which is indeed their final-term examination, to track their development. Although the Control group's initial level of proficiency outweighed that of Experimental group, in post-test, this gap seemed to be narrowed. In the average scores gained by the two groups, there were no considerable difference between the two group,  $F(1,76) = 1.28$ ,  $p = .26$ . In other words, the Experimental Group seemed to catch up with the Control Group. From this statistical result, we cannot reject the second null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), instead, we must accept that the gap between them is no longer notable.

Table 3: Means and Standard Deviations of the Post-test's Average Scores of two groups

Group	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Experimental	39	6.93	.74	5.5	8.9
Control	39	7.12	.76	5.9	8.9

Note.  $p > .05$

The component scores came out with some interesting results. In comparison with Control group, the gained results showed no noticeable effects of a DUB approach on listening skill of Experimental group. In the average scores of the listening's post-test, the Control Group once again significantly outdistanced the Experimental Group,  $F(1,76) = 6.83$ ,  $p = .01$ . The results from reading skill witnessed the same phenomenon,  $F(1,76) = 20.71$ ,  $p = .00$ , with a more remarkable difference. As for speaking skill, its results had no change in which Experimental Group maintained the same level with Control Group,  $F(1,76) = .172$ ,  $p = .68$ . However, the Experimental Group surpassed the Control Group in the writing skill,  $F(1,76) = 14.57$ ,  $p = .00$ . Table 4 shows means and standard deviations of the Pre-test and Post-test's Scores of the two groups.

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviations of the Pre-test and Post-test's Scores of two groups

Skill	Group	N	Pre-test Mean (SD)	p-value	Post-test Mean (SD)	p-value
Listening	Experimental	39	4.25 (1.63)	.04	5.41 (1.29)	.01
	Control	39	4.95 (1.31)		6.22 (1.43)	
Speaking	Experimental	39	3.54 (.97)	.38	7.04 (.66)	.68
	Control	39	3.33 (1.14)		7.11 (.85)	
Reading	Experimental	39	5.90 (1.38)	.003	7.75 (.92)	.00
	Control	39	6.17 (.90)		8.64 (.79)	
Writing	Experimental	39	5.20 (.31)	.78	7.48 (1.08)	.00
	Control	39	5.17 (.34)		6.50 (1.17)	
Average score	Experimental	39	4.73 (.66)	.02	6.93 (.74)	.26
	Control	39	5.05 (.55)		7.13 (.78)	

Since the initial levels of language proficiency of the two groups were different, which was proved to affect the task outcomes (Lesser, 2004), the between-group comparison didn't seem to reflect exactly and thoroughly the effect of DUB approach on Experimental group. Thus, Paired samples T-tests were used to examine the internal development of each group.

### *The internal development of each group*

Paired samples T-test was used to track the development of the same group over the time.

As expected, Control Group gained more in post-test than pretest in all skills. A paired-samples t-test showed that the difference was significant. In terms of overall development, on average, Control Group performed better in the post-test ( $M = 7.13$ ,  $SE = .12$ ) than in the pre-test ( $M = 5.05$ ,  $SE = .09$ ). This difference was significant,  $t(38) = 16.73$ ,  $p < .001$ . The results are summarized in Table 5:

Table 5: Means and Standard Deviations of proficiency gain scores of Control group

Skill	N	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-test Mean (SD)	Gain Mean (SD)
Listening	39	4.95 (1.31)	6.22 (1.43)	1.26 (1.81)
Speaking	39	3.33 (1.15)	7.11 (.85)	3.78 (1.13)
Reading	39	6.71 (.90)	8.64 (.79)	1.93 (.99)
Writing	39	5.17 (.34)	6.50 (1.17)	1.33 (1.13)
Average score	39	5.05 (.55)	7.13 (.78)	2.08 (.78)

The paired samples t-test also recorded a considerable development of the Experimental Group over the time of the experiment. In fact, they had higher scores in all tested skills. In general, the Experimental Group performed better in the post-test ( $M = 6.93$ ,  $SE = .12$ ) than in the pre-test ( $M = 4.73$ ,  $SE = .11$ ). This difference was significant,  $t(38) = 20.72$ ,  $p < .001$ , suggesting that the Experimental Group did have considerable development after being instructed with a DUB approach.

Table 6: Means and Standard Deviations of proficiency gain scores of Experimental group

Skill	N	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-test Mean (SD)	Gain Mean (SD)
Listening	39	4.25 (1.63)	5.41 (1.29)	1.16 (2.00)
Speaking	39	3.54 (.97)	7.03 (.66)	3.49 (1.04)
Reading	39	5.90 (1.38)	7.75 (.92)	1.86 (1.38)
Writing	39	5.20 (.31)	7.48 (1.08)	2.28 (.99)
Average score	39	4.73 (.66)	6.93 (.74)	2.21 (.66)

As can be seen in Table 6, the overall gain mean of the Experimental Group was higher than that of the Control Group. It was resulted from the great leap of the writing skill. For the remaining skills (listening, speaking and reading), the Control Group seemed to have slightly higher gain score than Experimental Group.

## **Discussion**

### *Factors that affect the results*

The first factor was the format of the test. All students did not know the format of the PET test until they were introduced only one week before the pre-test. In addition, most of them were not used to listening and speaking skill, thus, they could not perform well in the pre-test. After being trained in the course, they can master the

format and such communicating skills as speaking and listening. As a matter of fact, both Control Group and Experimental Group scored much greater in post-test than in pre-test.

When carrying out the DUB approach in Experimental Group, the instructor asked students if they would rather learn with movie segments or learn with traditional recording, 32/39 (82%) students agreed that watching video was much more interesting. This could have led to the greater improvement of this group, in comparison with Control Group. This result met what Canning-Wilson (2000) concluded: 'entertainment movie segments are far more interesting than pedagogic materials.'

In the Experiment Group where students learned listening skill with movie segments, the videos were repeated for a number of times so language could have come naturally into learners' mind. The entertaining movie could have been another advantage: it helped learners to be motivated to watch to follow the story line. In the Control Glass, the participants listened to the CDs only twice or, occasionally, three times. This limited time may have hindered them from internalize the language in their mind. In the Experimental Glass, students excitedly asked the instructor to replay the videos for a number of times so that they can identify the gist of the segments. Moreover, those segments could be used in post - listening activities without any boredom. As explained, instructors made use of the videos in speaking activities: intonation and pronunciation training, dubbing or role-playing, etc. All students appeared to be eager to participate in the post-listening activities, which were, indeed, kinds of speaking practice.

The use of authentic input is considered as a factor that contributed to the improvement of Experimental group. Watching movie segments helped them to get used to different accents of the speakers. Moreover, when they watched the movie segments, they focused more on the intonations and facial expression of the actors/actresses, which was useful for their speaking skill. Actually, in those practice time, students were asked to imitate what they had seen on the screen like the characters' gestures, intonation in each sentence that convey an implication or purpose, as well as facial expressions in each scene. All of these helped students have more natural speaking style unconsciously as noticed by the researcher.

Another possible factor that affects the outcomes of the students would be the objectiveness and subjectiveness in the assessment procedure. While the listening and reading skill were tested entirely based on fixed keys, which ensures the objectiveness and accuracy in assessment, the writing and speaking skill relied much on markers or examiners' condition. Thus, their results, to some extent, were assessed with some subjective sensation and produced some unexpected results. According to Hammer (2007), receptive skills and productive skills interact and support each other in many ways. More specific, what we hear and see strongly influence what we say or write. However, surprisingly, the Experimental Group outperformed the Control Group on writing skill while it performed worse on listening and reading skills – receptive skills. Although it might be resulted from the input they got in the listening classes, the subjectiveness of the assessment might have get involved.

The initial level of English proficiency is another factor that is worth concerning. As mentioned above, Leiser (2004) found that there is a relationship between learners' proficiency and their outcomes. Language proficiency affects the amount of attention that learners pay to the form, the types of form they attend to and the extent of their success in solving the language problems they meet. Specifically, those who have higher levels of proficiency are more ready to notice grammatical features (which are very important in terms of speaking and writing assessment). This finding helped to partly explain the development of the Control Group and Experimental Group in this research. The Control group, which could be treated as more proficient, was more likely to improve their English skills, whilst the Experimental Group, which was less proficient, found it more difficult to gain new grammar forms as well as solving the language problem. On theory, they needed more effort to catch up with and to surpass the Control Group because they had a lower starting point. In this experiment, after being treated in the same time with Control Group by different methods, the Experimental Group scored nearly the same as those of the Control group. Although they didn't beat the Control Group's scores, their distance seemed to be narrowed as they had higher gain score. This suggested that they had faster development rate than Control Group.

In addition, the two groups' language ability was tested by only two tests at the beginning and end of the research. It could not reflect their development over the time of experiment. As mentioned in session 2, during the development of language learners, there are usually phase shift between two attractor states. We do not know exactly when students in this experiment reached their attractor state. Thus, the final test may possibly have fallen on either their high or low peak, and did not perfectly demonstrate their language development.

Finally, because of the delay in output, learners' speaking skill performance did not record any significant improvement. It is suggested that the experiment should take place in a longer period, about two semesters upwards, to give students time to adopt authentic input, which is long enough for authentic input from listening to come to their long-term memory so that output could be produced with considerable development.

## **Conclusion**

In general, this research succeeded in finding the answer to the research question. Although the statistical results did not produce ideal results that definitely suggests that the use of movie segments from a DUB perspective has noticeable positive effect on learners' development, considering all factors and relating theories, the results in this research does suggest the fact that the movie method results in the greater development of students. Therefore, this could be treated as a case study at UFLS to indicate the effectiveness of this method. Further research in a larger scale is suggested if shortcomings in terms of testing process, facilities and the duration of the experiment are to be minimized.



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*Effects of Imposition on Refusals of Requests by Vietnamese ESL Learners  
in Speaking and Emails*

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**Abstract**

This study investigated effect of imposition on how Vietnamese learners of English at different levels of language proficiency refuse requests in speaking and emails. The comparison between two modes (speaking and writing) was also performed. The data was obtained with the support of 24 Vietnamese students in Melbourne, which comprise three groups of eight. Using the semantic formulas modified from the formulas proposed by Beebe et al. (1990), refusals in three role-play situations and three emails were coded to find out frequency for each strategy. Statistical analysis was done with Chi-square. Then, semi-structured interviews in Vietnamese were conducted to gain insight understanding of chosen strategies. It was found that imposition had statistically significant influences on the refusal strategies. In high imposition scenarios, greater number of direct strategies and adjuncts were employed. However, direct strategies were mainly used by the beginner group. On the other hand, adjuncts were preferred by advanced participants. As for in direct strategies, language proficiency also affected the chosen performed strategies. In terms of differences between role-plays and emails, statistically significant results were found in all three groups. While lower proficiency groups felt freer to refuse directly in writing, advanced groups applied adjuncts to make moves for their refusal in speaking.

Keywords: second language pragmatics, speech act, refusals, speaking, writing, emails

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## Introduction

Human interaction is not only about linguistics features but also involves social and cultural norms, which makes intercultural communication challenging to non-native speakers. Particularly in situations requiring tact like refusals language should be considered more carefully due to the face-threatening nature of the speech act (Brown & Levinson, 1978). With the advancement of technology, in addition to traditional ways of interaction including face-to-face communication and hand-written letter, email has become a popular means of communication in every aspect of life. While it resembles an electronic version of a letter it is not exact the same. Ganes (1999, p.81) said email is 'a pseudo-conversational form of communication, conducted in extended time and with an absent interlocutor'. The language in an email seems to be 'less correct, complex and coherent than standard written language' (Herring, 2001). However, it also follows certain etiquettes, which makes email different from spoken language as well as traditional letters.

In pragmatics the choice of proper language depends on three main variables: power, social distance and imposition. Although many studies on refusal have been conducted, the question of how imposition influences the strategies Vietnamese ESL learners employ to refuse a request has been an unanswered issue. So far there have been no studies investigating refusal strategies in emails. This study is conducted with the hope to shed light on refusal strategies used by Vietnamese ESL learners. The research's focus is on the effect of ranks of imposition on how Vietnamese ESL learners at different levels of language proficiency refuse in open role-play and email writing.

### **Notion of 'Face', 'Face-Threatening' Act (FTA) and Perception of Imposition**

In 1959, Goffman proposed the notion of 'face' under perspective of Western culture, which was further developed by Brown and Levinson (1978). It is believed that 'face' reflects our wanted self through verbal and non-verbal interaction. In conversation, the speaker also makes a contribution to face of the interlocutor. Therefore, in interaction, there is always a process of protecting oneself and the interlocutors' face from embarrassment. Brown and Levinson (1978, pg. 61) confirmed that 'everyone's face depends on everyone else's being maintained'. In other words the mutual process depends on the negotiation between the two involved parties and the speaker will try to avoid face-threatening acts (FTA), which are defined as acts against the face wants of the interlocutor (Brown & Levinson, 1978).

However, the perceived notion of 'face' is not the same across cultures. Based on the research by Phan Ngoc (1994) and Tran Dinh Huu (1994), it is believed that Vietnamese concept of 'face' lies in between the two mentioned extremes. Like Chinese culture, in Vietnam social attributes such as age and status have a significant role in interactional choices. Plus, in Vietnam, 'face' not only refers to individual value but also it has a strong connection with family and community. This means that 'face' in Vietnam is linked with moral norms of the society (Nguyen Duc Hoat, 1995). In some cases, collective face is of greater importance than individual face.

To weight the potential FTA, Brown and Levinson proposed three variables, which are social distance, power difference and degree of imposition. Imposition refers to

degree of potential risks resulted from the message of the speaker. Ranking of imposition is described as ‘a culturally and situationally defined ranking of impositions by the degree to which they are considered to interfere with an agent’s wants of self-determination or of approval (his negative-and positive-face wants)’ (Brown & Levinson, 1987, pg. 42). In other words, imposition is about level of negative effects on the speech act. In general, in high imposition situations the speaker tends to employ a higher number of face-saving strategies.

### **Previous Studies**

The most influential study in investigating refusals may belong to the research done by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990). The focus of this study is to find out pragmatic transfer in L1 Japanese speakers. Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) were used to get data. Based on the data taxonomy of refusal strategies was proposed and this taxonomy has been used for reference in data coding in many later studies. In the study refusals to an invitation were analyzed according to a formulaic and it is discovered that although two groups of participants (American English speakers and Japanese EFL learners) used the same strategies differences were observed in terms of the order of semantic formulas, the frequency of the formulas, and the content of the utterance. Later on, due to the fact that

Taguchi, N. (2013) carried out a study on effect of proficiency on appropriateness and fluency of refusals produced by NSs, L1 Japanese speakers with higher level of English proficiency and L1 Japanese speakers with lower level of English proficiency. Role-play was employ to elicit speech act. Unlike DCT, it enabled researchers to examine ‘speech act behaviors in its full discourse context’ (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p.228). Based on interlocutors’ power difference (P), social distance (D), and size of imposition (R), two situations were designed. It is found that no matter how competent the participants are, production of PDR-low refusals was easier and faster than that of PDR-high refusals. Furthermore, greater significant effect of proficiency on appropriateness scores and speech rates is detected in the case of PDR-high situation. While NSs tended to use hedges and indefinite responses as supporting devices, L2 learners utilized more direct expressions. It is also pointed out that both L2 groups used direct strategies more often than NSs. Especially, less competent groups showed limited ability in mitigating their refusals with hedging and indirect replies.

Considering imposition to be an influencing factor in choosing politeness strategies, Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005); Niki and Tajika (1994) or Takahashi (1996) found that degree of imposition significantly affected on the learners’ choice of interlanguage speech act forms. In 2003, Kobayashi and Rinnert looked at the effect of imposition when L1 Japanese EFL learners produced requests. It is discovered that levels of English proficiency affected chosen strategies in situations with high degree of imposition.

Matsumoto-Gray (2009) investigated the effect of the three factors including power difference, social distance and imposition on politeness in political conversations. The findings confirmed Brown and Levinson’s model prediction that increase in imposition led to more observed polite forms.

Among studies on pragmatics in emails, request speech act seems to gain the most interest of researchers in the field. Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) investigated the perlocutionary effects of email requests written to professors by NSs and non-native speaker (NNS) graduates. It is reported that in general NNS students did not address imposition properly and they performed lower number of down-graders and supportive moves than expected. In the same research topic, Soler, E. A. (2013) studied on the use of mitigators in email requests written by 145 British English (BE) teenagers and International English (IE) students. The results indicated in case writers were aware of the request imposition; they would use strategies to soften the request. However, BE students use a wider range of syntactic mitigators (both syntactic and lexical). Zhu, W. (2012) looked at the effects of proficiency on the way EFL learner made request. It was found that less competent students used fewer indirect requestive strategies than more competent group.

Refusal to a request is a common speech act, though until now there is no research looking at this aspect of email pragmatics. Furthermore, the investigation on how imposition influences strategies Vietnamese people use in refusal is still missing in the existing data pool. This study was conducted with the aim to fill this gap.

### **Research questions**

The study is conducted with the aim to find out the answers for the two following research questions.

- (1) What are the differences in the refusal strategies used by learners at different proficiency levels when refusing requests of different degrees of imposition?
- (2) What are the differences between speaking and email writing in refusal strategies of Vietnamese ESL learners when refusing requests of different degrees of imposition?

### **Methodology**

#### *Participants*

The participants in this study are Vietnamese students studying in Melbourne aged from 18 to 35. All of them took an IELTS test from 6 to 12 months prior to data collection. Based on their test results they were put into one of three groups: beginner users, intermediate users and advanced users. For participants in the beginner and intermediate groups the test must be taken in the last six months in order to ensure that their proficiency is similar to the test results. However, for advanced learners the period of time can be within a year. The following table shows a summary of the participants.

*Table 1: Summary of the participant*

	N	Gender (%)	Age	Length of Residence	IELTS scores (%)
<b>Beginner (under 6.0)</b>	8	Male: 37.5% Female: 62.5%	20-30: 75% 31-35: 25%	Under 1 year: 37.5% 1-3 years: 50% Over 3 years: 12.5%	5.0 - 100%
<b>Intermediate (from 6.0 to 7.0)</b>	8	Male: 50% Female: 50%	Under 20: 12.5% 20-30: 75% 31-35: 12.5%	Under 1 year: 12.5% 1-3 years: 25% Over 3 years: 62.5%	7.0 - 37.5% 6.5 - 37.5% 6.0 - 25 %
<b>Advanced (above 7.0)</b>	8	Male: 75% Female: 25%	Under 20: 12.5% 20-27: 87.5%	Under 1 year: 37.5% Over 3 years: 62.5%	8.5 - 25% 7.5 - 75%

### Selection of given situations

The aim of the study is to find out how imposition influences on refusal strategies. Therefore, the other two factors including social power and social distance are kept to be consistent in all given situations. Specifically, in all designed situations the power between two interlocutors is equal (they are supposed to be casual friends) and the distance is not too close but not so far.

In order to get explicit data, six situations, in which two situations are at similar low ranking of imposition, two are at similar middle ranking and two are at high ranking, are needed. The six situations are then put into two groups: speaking and writing. The three situations for role-play are:

- (1) A friend asks you to lend him \$1,000, which is a large amount of money for you.
- (2) A friend has a business trip in Melbourne. He asks to borrow your car for one day because he could not find any available car to rent.
- (3) A friend asks you to buy a cup of coffee when you are about to go out during break time.

Other three situations for emails are:

- (4) You work with a classmate on a final assignment, which is very important to you. 2 days before the due date, she asks you to finish her part for her. She has only done a little of her part.
- (5) A friend comes to Australia for the first time and asks you to pick her up at the airport. She knows that you don't have a car.
- (6) A friend asks you to tutor him how to use a computer program you know well.

(1) and (4) are supposed to be high imposition requests. In contrast, (3) and (6) are considered to be small requests. (2) and (5) are believed to be relatively big requests.

### *Open role-play*

All of the role-plays in the study happened face to face. For each situation all of the participants were fully aware of the social status and distance between them and the interlocutor. The content of the each situation was not mentioned before the role-play. Only the details of the scenario like assumed location of the interaction, the



relationship between them and the interlocutor were provided. In this way more authentic data and participant reactions can be obtained.

#### *Email writing*

Three email situations were conveyed in email form. After completing the role-play tasks the participants received three emails sent to their provided email address. The participants had one or two days to reply those emails. There were no constraints in word limit and writing styles. All of the participants had full knowledge of their goal in writing and their relationship with the emails' sender. In this way the email writing tasks were set up in a way that reflects a possible scenario in real life.

#### *In-depth interview*

After participants sent their replies, a semi-structured interview was carried out in order to gain richer reflective information from participants. Due to save travelling time to meet face-to-face, the interviews were done through telephone at participants' convenience and in Vietnamese to create a comfortable atmosphere for the participants where they can express their ideas without language barriers.

#### *Data transcription and coding*

Based on the sequence of semantic formulae developed by Beebe and Takahashi (1990), the collected data will be coded and analyzed. Beebe and Takahashi (1990, p.72-73) generalized semantic formulas for refusals and adjuncts (expressions going with a refusal but they cannot function as a refusal by itself) as presented. Based on the taxonomy and the analysis of the responses of the participants, this study coded the data based on the following semantic formulas.

##### *\* Semantics Formulas*

- I. Direct – Nonperformative
  - A. 'No'
  - B. Negative willingness ability
- II. Indirect:
  - A. Statement of regret
  - B. Wish
  - C. Excuse/ reason
  - D. Explanation
  - E. Statement of alternative
    1. I can do X instead of Y
    2. Why don't you do X instead of Y
    3. Statement of suggestion
  - F. Set condition for future or past acceptance
  - G. Promise of future acceptance
  - H. Statement of principle
  - I. Statement of philosophy
  - K. Attempt to dissuade the interlocutor
    1. Threat/statement of negative consequences to the requester
    2. Guilt trip
    3. Criticize the request/requester, ect
    4. Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request
    5. Counter question



- 6. Self defense
- 7. Coherent questions
- 8. Remind of inconvenient current situation
- 9. Statement of disappointment
- L. Acceptance that functions as a refusal - Unspecific or indefinite reply
- M. Avoidance
  - 1. Non-verbal - Silence
  - 2. Verbal:
    - a. Topic switch
    - b. Repetition of part of request
    - c. Postponement
    - d. Hedging
- N. Statement of Reimbursement
- O. Statement of Encouragement
- P. Statement of Apology
- Q. Statement of Greetings
- R. Statement of Endings
- \* *Adjuncts*
  - III. Statement of positive opinion / feeling of agreement
  - IV. Statement of empathy
  - V. Pause fillers
  - VI. Gratitude / appreciation

## Results

### *Effect of Imposition on Refusal Strategies Employed by Each Group*

Based on the similarity in ranking of imposition, situations are collapsed. Chi-square is used for statistical analysis. The following table shows the statistical results of the beginner group.

*Table 2: Statistical results of the beginner group*

	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Adjuncts</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>High Imposition Situations (HISs)</i>	15	58	6	79
<i>Medium Imposition Situations (MISs)</i>	7	52	0	59
<i>Small Imposition Situations (SISs)</i>	9	45	2	56
<i>Total</i>	31	155	8	194

$$\chi^2(4) = 6.77, p = .1486, V = .132$$

The following table shows the statistical result of intermediate group.

Table 3: Statistical results of the intermediate group

	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Adjuncts</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>HISs</i>	6	55	6	67
<i>MISs</i>	1	62	0	63
<i>SISs</i>	3	53	3	59
<i>Total</i>	10	170	9	189

$$\chi^2(4) = 9.79, p = .0441, V = .1609, \phi = .23$$

The following table shows the statistical result of advanced group.

Table 4: Statistical results of the advanced group

	<i>Direct</i>	<i>Indirect</i>	<i>Adjuncts</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>HISs</i>	10	76	13	99
<i>MISs</i>	3	72	3	78
<i>SISs</i>	2	56	7	65
<i>Total</i>	15	204	23	242

$$\chi^2(4) = 9.54, p = .0489, V = .1404, \phi = .199$$

The results show that imposition has no significant effect on the beginner group. Learners at low level of proficiency tended to use similar ways of refusal in situations of different imposition rankings. In contrast intermediate and advanced groups had significant differences in refusal strategies although the effect sizes of the both cases were not high.

#### *Difference in Using Refusal Strategies by Three Groups*

In general the difference between three groups is found in frequency of using direct semantic formulas and adjuncts. The group with lowest language competence used direct strategies much more often than groups with a higher proficiency level. Taking adjuncts into account it seems that only the advanced group knew how to take advantage of this strategy. Particularly in medium situations, only advanced groups applied this kind of strategy in their refusal.

Regarding to indirect strategies, the more advanced participants are the higher number of indirect semantic formulas were used. Unlike the other two groups, indirect strategies group consists of 17 sub-categories. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the sub-categories. Chi-square will be applied to analyze data.

Table 5: Summary of indirect strategies used in six situations

	<i>IIA</i>	<i>IIB</i>	<i>IIC</i>	<i>IID</i>	<i>IIE</i>	<i>IIM</i>	<i>IIQ</i>	<i>Others</i>
<i>HISs</i>	29	14	46	8	20	21	8	43
<i>MISs</i>	24	7	42	11	33	14	34	21
<i>SISs</i>	23	8	11	9	26	14	18	14
<i>Total</i>	76	29	99	28	79	49	60	78

$$\chi^2(14) = 48.7, p < .001$$

This shows that imposition has a significant effect on how implicit rejection is realized. Higher frequency in most strategies was found in high-imposition situations.

The following table expresses the frequency of the indirect strategies in all situations of the three groups.

*Table 6: Summary of indirect strategies used in high imposition situations*

	IIA	IIB	IIC	IID	IIE	IIM	IIQ	Others
<i>Beginner</i>	13	2	20	2	2	10	1	8
<i>Intermediate</i>	8	8	8	4	5	3	4	15
<i>Advanced</i>	8	4	18	2	13	8	3	20
<i>Total</i>	29	14	46	8	20	21	8	43

$$\chi^2(14) = 29.5, p = .009$$

*Table 7: Summary of indirect strategies used in medium imposition situations*

	IIA	IIB	IIC	IID	IIE	IIM	IIQ	Others
<i>Beginner</i>	13	2	16	4	8	0	8	1
<i>Intermediate</i>	6	2	12	3	12	7	14	6
<i>Advanced</i>	5	3	14	4	13	7	12	14
<i>Total</i>	24	7	42	11	33	14	34	21

$$\chi^2(14) = 26.2, p = .024$$

*Table 8: Summary of indirect strategies used in small imposition situations*

	IIA	IIB	IIC	IID	IIE	IIM	IIQ	Others
<i>Beginner</i>	10	1	17	1	3	4	5	4
<i>Intermediate</i>	6	3	12	6	12	4	7	3
<i>Advanced</i>	7	4	11	4	11	7	6	7
<i>Total</i>	23	8	40	11	26	15	18	14

$$\chi^2(14) = 16.2, p = .3$$

The results show that there is a significant difference in how indirect strategies are used by the three groups in these situations. In small imposition situations, although the difference is insignificant, by looking at the table it can be seen that IIA and IIC are always the main way to refuse of learners with limited language ability. Different from the other situations, in small imposition situations it seems that IIE (statement of alternative) is more preferred by intermediate and advanced groups.

#### *Comparison between Refusals in Speaking and Writing*

Each group was compared in their role-plays and emails. The following tables compare the difference in frequency of direct strategies, adjuncts, and indirect strategies which consists of IIA, IIB, IIC, IID, IIE, IIM and 'others' used by each group.

Table 9: Summary of refusal strategies used by beginner group

	Direct	IIA	IIB	IIC	IID	IIE	IIM	Others	Adjuncts
Beginner Speaking	13	21	2	30	5	2	14	10	5
Beginner Writing	18	15	3	23	2	11	0	8	3

$$\chi^2(8) = 23.5, p = .0003$$

Table 10: Summary of refusal strategies used by intermediate group

	Direct	IIA	IIB	IIC	IID	IIE	IIM	Others	Adjuncts
Intermediate Speaking	4	10	9	14	4	12	9	8	4
Intermediate Writing	6	10	4	18	9	17	5	16	5

$$\chi^2(8) = 8.04, p = .0429$$

Table 11: Summary of refusal strategies used by advanced group

	Direct	IIA	IIB	IIC	IID	IIE	IIM	Others	Adjuncts
Advanced Speaking	8	9	8	21	8	19	17	18	21
Advanced Writing	7	11	3	22	2	18	4	23	2

$$\chi^2(8) = 25.1, p = .002$$

All three groups are significant different between role-plays and emails. However, based on  $p$  value, the difference in the case of beginners and advanced learners is more significant than intermediate learners.

Taken the difference among groups of participants into consideration, chi-square is employed again as follows.

Table 12: Summary of strategies used in speaking

	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts
Beginner – Speaking	13	79	5
Intermediate – Speaking	4	66	4
Advanced – Speaking	8	100	21

$$\chi^2(4) = 14.17, p = .0068, V = .1537$$

Table 13: Summary of strategies used in writing

	Direct	Indirect	Adjuncts
Beginner – Writing	18	76	3
Intermediate – Writing	6	104	5
Advanced – Writing	7	104	2

$$\chi^2(4) = 14.39, p = .0061, V = .1488$$

The groups are significantly different for both speaking and writing. In both speaking and writing there is a big shift from direct to indirect strategies when comparing the beginner groups with the intermediate and advanced. Furthermore, in speaking a big difference in number of adjuncts used by advanced groups is found in comparison with beginner and intermediate groups.

## Discussion

*Research Question 1: What are the differences in the refusal strategies used by learners at different proficiency levels when refusing requests of different degree of imposition?*

Taking refusal strategies of the three groups into consideration, it is not out of expectations that the lowest proficiency group tended to refuse more directly. It is true that rejecting a request indirectly is more complicated than directly because it requires a certain language level and language experience to negotiate and mitigate the refusal (Kobayashi and Rinnert, 2003; Taguchi, N, 2013). Limited language ability does not allow beginner participants to maintain the conversation so that they can refuse in a tactful way.

Within the three big groups of refusal strategies, *adjuncts* which were used as a supportive move were considered to be the most difficult. It is not surprising that the number of adjuncts used by advanced participants outnumbered the other two groups. In medium situations only advanced learners performed refusal speech acts with adjuncts. In response to small requests the frequency of adjuncts was much lower compared to that of big requests. From that it can be seen that adjuncts are often used as a signal of refusal in cases the chance of acceptance is small. In cases of small requests it may be performed in the attempt to save face for the involved parties.

In terms of indirect strategies, in high and medium imposition requests, Vietnamese learners tended to use far more excuses or reasons in refusal though a greater variety of strategies were also used to respond to a big request. When being interviewed the majority of participants was aware of the difference in imposition in the request. They also admitted that the higher imposition the situations were, the easier it was to refuse. However, they did not try to make a refusal plan according to the ranking of imposition. From the interview, some participants reported that casual relationship was not worth a great effort to maintain the positive face of the interlocutor and making up reasons or excuses seemed to be an easy strategy. Clearly, high imposition requests facilitate the refusal because when it is easier for participants to invent 'good' excuses.

In medium imposition situations, beginners showed their inability to diversify their strategies. Advanced and intermediate learners shared a lot in common in employing certain strategies like *statement of alternative* or *hedging* in opening and closing an email. However, advanced groups also used other strategies, which were different from groups of lower proficiency. Those differences among the three groups are also caused by the gaps in language level.

In the nutshell, it was found that imposition had influence on the way the participants said 'no'. In high imposition situations more direct strategies and adjuncts were used. The more competent the learners are in using English language, the more flexible they were in using the language. Beginners employed more direct strategies while adjuncts were mainly used by advanced learners. Beginners or intermediates still depend on typical strategies such as *statement of regret*, *wish* or *excuse/reason*. On the other hands, advanced users are able to combine a greater variety of refusal strategies.

*Research Question 2: What are the differences between speaking and email writing in refusal strategies of Vietnamese ESL learners when refusing requests of different degree of imposition?*

Generally the statistical distinction between speaking and writing was found in all three groups of participants. In writing, beginners and intermediates gave more direct refusals. In speaking, they are led by the requester and the negotiation lasts until the requester gives up. In writing, they totally control the content and the strategies. As the result, it was found that in writing beginners tended to use the same strategies for all three situations and the emails were quite short. In the interview, when being asked about their strategies in writing they said that they did not have any strategies and did not use any resources as reference. In the interview, two participants admitted that to some extent they felt more superior to the requester because in the cases, requester is in need of their help. This explained why they did not care much about how to soften their refusals.

The interview also revealed the communication belief of majority of advanced and intermediate learners. They thought that Vietnamese people tended to refuse less directly than Westerners. They reported if the same situations were performed in Vietnamese, their ways of rejection would have been different according to the expectations of society. However, in English, they chose to be more explicit, especially in writing. This showed that living in target language has certain influences on their notion of 'face'. They tended to care more about individual 'face' instead of collective 'face', which was opposite to the common concept of 'face' in Vietnam..

As for the intermediate group, they seem to be more flexible in writing. In emails they gave more suggestions and used more less-frequent strategies. In the case of the advanced group, saving-face factors were conveyed through adjuncts and supportive moves. It showed that the findings of the research are quite similar to what was found by Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996), Soler, E. A. (2013) and Zhu, W. (2012). In speaking, the number of adjuncts used by advanced participants was much higher than that in writing. This is mainly due to the fact that in speaking, the length of the conversation was quite lengthy and the speakers were forced to produce more language.

When comparing three groups in terms of three major strategy groups in speaking and writing, differences can be found in both modes. The pattern is quite consistent in that beginners always used more direct strategies. In speaking, thanks to a greater language capacity, advanced learners employed adjuncts to lessen the face-damage factors of their refusals. Especially in the case of small imposition situations, in the interviews, all of the participants admitted that face-to-face refusal to a small request is harder because they felt ashamed to say 'no' in the situations they could perform the request with very little effort. In writing, in general, the strategies to refuse were to give the reasons and alternative suggestions. The participants told that giving another feasible option was believed to be the softest way to reject the request.

Overall all three groups of participants showed a significant difference between the two modes. When having more freedom in choosing the strategies, in writing beginner and intermediate participants said 'I can't' or 'No' more often. Advanced group included a higher number of adjuncts in speech act in role-play than in emails. Intermediate participants seemed to be more confident in writing, with more strategies used in writing and of a greater variety.

### **Conclusion**

This study was conducted to find out the effects of imposition on the way ESL learners refused requests of different degree of imposition in speaking and emails. It was found that in high imposition requests more moves were required to reject and rankings of imposition did influence on the way the participants refuse although they were not really aware of that fact. Language proficiency also affects on the kinds of chosen strategies. Due to the difference in nature of communication in speaking and writing, different strategies are employed. While lower proficiency groups feel freer to refuse directly in writing, advanced groups apply adjuncts to make moves for their refusal in speaking. Future studies should be carried out response rating to examine the quality of the language. Plus, length of residence should be considered as a variable because level of target language exposure also affects pragmatic competence of ESL learners.



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The logo for iafor (International Association for Applied Linguistics) is centered on the page. It features the word "iafor" in a light blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. The text is surrounded by several overlapping, curved lines in shades of blue and red, creating a circular, abstract design.



***Internships in French-speaking Environments:  
First steps of a Thai University***

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**Abstract**

Internships in French-speaking environments are transformational learning opportunities (TLO) that often contribute to enrich and broaden student learning and personal development.

In a Thailand-centric context where the learning of French is losing momentum, it has become necessary over recent years to implement various tools to encourage our learners. Three different internships programs were implemented to develop cross-cultural sensibilities, to increase students' self-confidence, to improve their language skills, and to prepare them for a professional life open to the world.

The aim of this article is to share our experience regarding internships developed with French and Swiss institutions, and the steps we took to both implement and improve them. In the first part of the article, we will introduce the context of our study.

Then, our three main internship programs will be described: one-month internships in French and Swiss companies based in Thailand, three-month internships in France as well as export mission projects and we will explain the obstacles we encountered, and the solutions implemented.

Finally, we will demonstrate how these programs have had positive effects on our students.

Keywords: internships, internship abroad, internships in France, language study, TLO

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## **Introduction**

Since the new millennium, tertiary education has become more global through study abroad programs, universities exchanges, offshore satellite campuses, and international internships. The number of foreign tertiary students worldwide has increased significantly. A study published by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2015, p.352-369) shows that, between 2005 and 2012, this number increased by 50%. Concurrently, international exchange programs and internships abroad have continued to expand. As Bian (2013, p.451) noted, " for a student, the principal purpose of mobility is to enrich one's knowledge, broaden one's worldview and prepare for a future professional life." Furthermore, with these experiences abroad, the majority of students will further develop their language skills.

In this article, we will share our experience regarding three different internship programs initially for bachelor's degree students minoring in French. In the first part, we will introduce the context of our study. Then, we will describe the three main programs: One-month internships in French and Swiss companies based in Thailand, three-month internships in France, and Franco-Thai export projects. Obstacles and solutions will be discussed for each programs. In a third part, we will attempt to demonstrate how these programs have had positive effects on our students and on our institution.

### **1.The context: proposing internships in French-speaking environments**

#### **1.1. French language in Thailand**

Just before the Second World War, the teaching of French rose to a position of preeminence in Thailand. Boontham (1976) explains that, thanks to the francophilia of the Thai royal family, French was still being developed at schools and universities from 1950 onward. Until the National Education Act in 1999, Tantiratanavong (2007) points out that French was the first optional foreign language taught in high schools. Today, schools have more autonomy to choose which languages they make available. As a consequence, the diversity of languages on offer increased. Chinese has become the most common foreign language taught after English. Japanese courses, also popular with young people, are present in all universities in Thailand. Meanwhile, German and more recently Spanish stand as additional options for high school and university students. As a result, French no longer retains the cachet which it formerly possessed 20 years ago. According to data from the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, the number of learners in high schools and universities were estimated at 35,000 persons learning French in 2015 versus 55,000 in 2004 (- 36%). In a country where the French language is in decline, it was crucial to develop various programs adapted to a new environment.

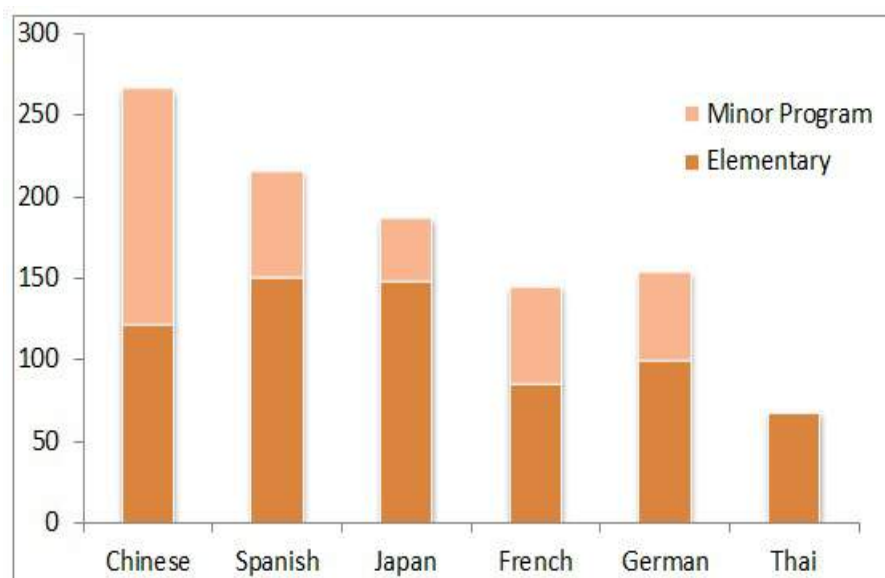
#### **1.2. The first tools developed to promote French at Mahidol University**

Founded in 1986, in Thailand, Mahidol University International College (MUIC) offers Bachelor's degree to more than 3,700 students of whom 20% are foreigners. In its mission statement, MUIC aims to prepare global citizens for the 21st century, fostering in them the ability to transform knowledge into action and to make

meaningful contributions to society (see website in references). In order to promote a global citizenry, the college has implemented active exchange agreements with over 100 universities in America, Europe, Oceania and Asia.

Upon entry, students also have the opportunity to commence the study of a second foreign language (Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, German, French or Thai). Two consecutive courses of 40 hours must be taken. After completing a basic curriculum of 120 hours for one academic year, more motivated students can further pursue language minor program via eight 40-hour courses (320 hours total).

This chart shows that French is not the most commonly chosen second foreign language in our college. However, its minor program remains stable.



Number of students per language at MUIC: Average on 3 trimesters(2014-2015).  
Data provided by the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA). Oct. 2015.

In a context where French language is declining, and in the specific environment of our International College (with a large number of languages being taught and concurrent development of new minors), it has become necessary over recent years to implement various tools to encourage our learners. We will briefly present the first tools we developed before focusing on internships.

### **Tool n°1: A summer language trip in Nice**

MUIC French section, in cooperation with the University of Nice, has organized an 80-hour intensive French course every August since 2003. This one-month study abroad trip aims to increase students' language skills and to give them a better understanding of some French socio-cultural realities. This summer trip, which for 70% of our students (who range in age from 17 to 21) is their first experience abroad without a parent or a relative, is a true first step towards personal autonomy, which in human terms represents without a doubt the most valuable reward to be reaped from a first trip abroad. For the French section of our college, this summer trip would prove to be a crucial factor encouraging students to continue learning French. From 2003 to 2013, among the 152 elementary students who registered for the French Minor, 67

had previously taken the language summer course in Nice, representing 44% of the French Minor Program. Moreover, we observed that in this group of 67 students, 54 finished the program of 8 courses and passed the DELF B1, a diploma testing French-language abilities for non-native speakers. The withdrawal rate of the minor program was quite low (19%). During the same time period, 85 students registered without taking the summer course but only 54 completed the program and succeeded the B1 exam. In this second case, the withdrawal rate is higher (36%). However, we must be careful with figures: it is obviously difficult to measure the importance of this language and culture summer course as it pertains to the motivation of our students, we remain convinced that this summer program is a good tool to encourage our learners and to promote French in our college.

### **Tool n°2: University exchange programs in France**

From 2008 onward, our college started to sign three-year MOU with French higher education establishments "Grandes Écoles" which, in many aspects, share similarities with our college. A first agreement was signed with a business school in Marseille, and so far, 9 Thai students benefited from this three-month exchange. Two agreements were just signed with Business schools in Dijon Burgundy and in Bordeaux. Since 2008, our students in biology and food sciences have had the opportunity to go to the School of Industrial Biology or EBI in Cergy-Pontoise, near Paris. Even though we only had few scientific students in the French program at that time, two of them went to study at EBI for six months in 2009-10, and one studied for a full academic year in 2012-13. This exchange is a challenge insofar as, unlike business schools, the language of instruction is French.

The university exchange is undeniably valuable for students; they contribute significantly to students' personal and professional development. However, it was necessary for us to offer other options for students who cannot go to the summer trip or to the university exchanges.

#### **1.3. Why offer internships in French-speaking environments?**

Our college did not succeed in developing relations with French universities in the fields of Tourism and Hospitality Management (THM) and social sciences. For our Thai students minoring in French, we first proposed one-month summer internships in French companies based in Thailand. As fourth year THM students were required to do a three-month internship, we decided to look for hotels in France. Initially, the objective was to increase student's motivation, and to show that French language could be useful outside the classroom. Every year since 2011, two THM students minoring in French do their three-month internships in two hotels in Bordeaux. Later, two Thai students succeed in developing a new type of internship: the export project. In this qualitative study, we will attempt to demonstrate how these programs have had a positive effect for our students.

#### **1.4. Qualitative survey**

Beginning 2012, we started to interview students regarding their opinions about the internships programs. The objectives of this qualitative survey were to both evaluate students' levels of satisfaction and to identify possible problems in the various



programs. Students were interviewed for 30 minutes and were requested to answer 20 to 35 questions divided in four parts:

- a. Students' profile.
- b. Their situation prior to the internship (i.e., decision process and preparation).
- c. The internship itself (arrival, accommodation, internship, workplace and mission, life in the city, cultural adaptation, personal likes and dislikes).
- d. The result of the internship (personal experiences with culture and language, their motivation in learning French, professional perspectives, others).

10 students responded to a questionnaire about the one-month domestic internship in French-speaking companies (N1), 10 students answered a questionnaire regarding internship in a French hotel (N2), and 2 students participated in the interview for the Franco-Thai export project (N3). The results of these interviews are presented in sections 2 and 3 of this article.

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations to these qualitative interviews. The sample' sizes (N1=10, N2=10, N3=2) are small, and do not pretend to be representative of any larger population. We are compelled to add that the majority of the interviews were organized within a month after students returned to the college, and that in the immediate aftermath of their time abroad, some students may still have been over-enthusiastic about their experiences and linguistic progress. Additionally, even though students were given precisely formulated questionnaires, their answers could have been unconsciously influenced by the interviewer who was their French language instructor. Finally, the author of this study is perfectly aware that students' intrinsic motivation cannot be fully measured in such a short period of time.

## **2. The progressive implementation of internship programs**

In this part, we will describe the three main internship programs implemented for our undergraduate students. For each of them, we will mention the obstacles encountered, the solutions implemented, and the perspectives of development.

### **2.1. One-month internships in French or Swiss companies based in Thailand**

For financial reasons, most of our undergraduates minoring in French could not attend the one-month summer course on the French Riviera without a scholarship. Moreover, as our university had only developed exchange agreements with business and engineering schools, no possibility were offered for students in social sciences or hospitality management. Finally, when we taught students how to write a résumé (C.V) and a letter of motivation, we soon realized that most of them did not have any working experiences. Internships appeared as a solution to that problem.

In 2007, we encouraged students to do a one-month internship during summer. Two French-speaking embassies, a Francophone cultural center, an Internet newspaper based in Bangkok, a Swiss multinational company and a French bakery were the first internships' experiences for our students and our long-time partners.

Our survey showed that the students were satisfied by these first working experiences which sometimes helped to choose their career choices. They had the opportunity to learn a company culture and to improve their language skills, both in French and in English. Moreover, by leaving their "comfort zone", they gained confidence.

However, all was not perfect. We encountered problems with two students: the tasks given to them were not clear at all, causing one to work without energy while the other felt useless, unable to contribute.

During these first two years, we worked very informally, but it became necessary to prepare and manage the internships more formally. In 2009, we wrote an internship agreement with precise information mentioning the name of the supervisor, the aim of the internship, its description, the conditions and evaluation items. In collaboration with the company and the intern, we created questionnaires. Finally, we had at least one contact with the supervisor and the student during the internship. Thanks to these agreements, students obtained more interesting missions, and were much more motivated.

These short-term internships in French-speaking environment, which for 70% of our students were their first working experience, can be considered a first true step in the professional world. Moreover, the young interns got to be in contact with people from a different culture and had the opportunity to practice French.

## **2.2. Three-month internships in France for THM students**

For students majoring in Tourism & Hospitality Management (THM), we first tried to develop exchange agreements with French-speaking universities. In France, the programs proposed by the "écoles hôtelières" are very different from those at MUIC. Furthermore, language was a barrier for both partners. The attempts we made in Switzerland were not successful, mainly because large hotel schools had already developed their networks. As fourth year THM students are required to do a three-month internship, we decided to look for hotels in France. "The purpose of international internships is to give students an opportunity to gain work knowledge, to be exposed to an international organization's operations, and to experience acculturation through sufficient time in country." (Furnham & Bockner, 1986). The opportunity to do an internship in France sharply increased students' motivation, as they quickly understood its value in terms of leveraging themselves on the international marketplace.

In September 2010, we signed our first agreement with a hotel in Bordeaux: two Thai students did a three-month internship in January 2011. A year later, an agreement was signed with a hotel in Arcachon: a bathing resort at 60km of Bordeaux.. They first prepared a French résumé ("curriculum vitae"), with a stated professional objective, and a letter of motivation, and they took the DELF B1 examination (see p.4) prior to their departure for France. To assist the students in their preparation, we designed an online course focusing on hotel and restaurant management. We also used different textbooks on French for Specific Purposes (FSP) including "hôtellerie-restauration.com" (Corbeau, et al., 2006).

A year later, we modified the first online version following the discussions with one hotel manager who made helpful suggestions to improve the course.

The administrative element of internships is consistently time consuming for teachers and students. We have to prepare administrative documents, including internship agreements ("convention de stage") signed by five different parties, which are required for obtaining a French visa. Experience taught us that it was necessary to delegate a maximum number of these duties to students who generally go to France in pairs.

Since 2011, the two hotels have received ten students from our college for three-month internships. Students were all the more motivated by the fact that their tasks were varied (reception, restaurant, kitchen, and household), and that they felt like useful members of the hotel staff, thanks to their level of language skills (in this context, English and in some cases Mandarin). Additionally, they received a compensation of 537 € per month (in 2015), and are housed and fed by the hotel.

So far, the internship program we have initiated with the two French hotels has been quite satisfactory. It seems that Tourism & Hospitality students gained in personal maturity and professionalism, as well as saw improvements in their spoken and written French. They definitely felt more confident with oral communication, and perceived the experience as advantageous in terms of seeking future employment.

Our survey indicates that seven students were very satisfied by their internship and their experience in France. Two students were a bit disappointed and have said that the work was too demanding and that the atmosphere was not nice. The first student did not like to work in the kitchen because of the stress.. The second one could not fit in the new environment she was confronted neither: she had an argument with an employee in the household department which led to her not being able to integrate herself during all the internship. The tenth student had a very poor attitude during the internship, and was not efficient at all; the supervisor was quite upset. Even though this first professional internship was a failure both for the student and for the hotel, the student got to better understand what he really likes and wants to do.

Most of these students have now found their first employment in international companies based in Thailand.

Knowing that an international internship experience can be a plus in a challenging and competitive job market, business students minoring in French asked us to help them to find internships in France. We had to develop new projects for the future.

### **2.3. Franco-Thai Export Missions**

This third tool was not initiated by the French section, but by a student who just graduated from Mahidol university, and who was studying computer networking & telecommunication (2013-2015) at "l'École d'Ingénieurs en Génie Électrique et Informatique" or ESIEE in Amiens. Two years prior, this student had done a first internship at the Franco-Thai chamber of Commerce, and had developed connections with Thai companies. During his two-year master degree, he met a French businessman who had a medium-size company specialized in industrial robotics. He

proposed to find Thai manufacturers for integrated circuits for the production of industrial assembly lines. He found a Thai company able to provide quality integrated circuits for the French business. His engineering knowledge and language skills, both in French and Thai, made him a key-partner in this venture. The fact that he was remunerated by the French side gave him confidence and motivation.

This student later presented his experience to the AIESEC Thailand (see references), and he then advised other students who had similar projects.

In 2014, a second student worked on an export mission just after her study exchange program in Marseille. She was working for a company looking for new natural compounds in the Thai cosmetic industry. Her mission was to identify potential suppliers on the French market, and to prepare a trip for two businesswomen. She first found two French companies, and later organized a business trip for the Thai buyers. As of right now, we do not know whether a deal was concluded, but our student had great enthusiasm for this project in which she used her common sense, her business knowledge and her language skills.

Without being aware of it themselves, these two "pioneers" have found a new way to develop internships. In both cases, they were studying in a university before getting into very active internships. They were very mature and already had an entrepreneurial attitude. The first student had his accommodation, his permit of residence and had an office in the French company. The second student, based in Marseille, was helped by the "AIESEC Marseille". She was able to start her one-month mission in the AIESEC office, which helped her to find a room in Marseille at a reasonable price.

The Franco-Thai export projects must be prepared long in advance. As soon as the student knows in which business school he plans to study, he can contact the Franco-Thai Chamber of Commerce and the Business France to get more information about the regional market. These two students gave us the idea to develop in cooperation with the International Relation Office and the Business Administration Division a package Study & Internship program.

## 2.4. Obstacles and solutions

One-month internships in Thailand	
1.- Most of the time, students don't have professional experiences, and they often lack maturity.	1.- Organize sessions to explain the benefits of internships in a French-speaking company. Give tips to write a CV and a cover letter. Select the most motivated students.
2.- Internship's mission and tasks are often not clear for students who lose motivation.	2.- Write an Internship agreement.
3.- Administrating internships is time consuming for educators.	3.- The administrative part must be shared. It must be recognized as an academic service.
Three-month internships in France	
4.- The administrative side of an international internship is time consuming for the educators	4.- Delegate a maximum of duties to students and organize a meeting with all the parties within your institution to facilitate the process
5.- "Vous parlez français ?" The intern must speak French, and work in a French environment. The first month is going to be a bit difficult.	5.- The student must take the DELF B1. S/he must take FSP 40-h for hotel & restaurant and must have basic on French culture on the workplace.
6.- Sometime, students are not motivated or are not able to adapt to their new environment.	6.- Select students very carefully with THM and BBA instructors. Make sure that they had good attitudes in previous internships. Organize meeting with former interns.
Franco-Thai export missions	
7.- Export missions are too difficult project for students. The timing is too short.	7.- It must be prepared at least six months in advance. Students can be advised by former students, teachers, chambers of commerce, association.
8.- Logistics can be time consuming for the student: Visa, accomodation, office, etc.	8.- A study abroad + internship offers a solution For accomodation and office space, students' association can help.

## 3. Internships in French-speaking environment: three main benefits

"College students are entering a world where understanding and navigating linguistic and cultural differences are essential. International experience can make students more attractive candidates for hiring" Gates (2014, p.33). This quotation mentions the three main benefits of our internships.

### 3.1. Personal development and cultural benefits

The majority of students identified the internships as greatly beneficial in expanding their cultural knowledge and in contributing to their personal growth and maturity. One student explained that this experience gave him a closer look at cultural differences between France and Thailand. He added that working in a French hotel for three months gave him a better understanding of the French.

Another student wanted to take her internship in France, but she was very afraid to leave Thailand alone. However, after the three-month internship, she was very proud to have discovered the world by herself, even though the first month had been a bit difficult.

Thanks to internships abroad, students acquire soft skills (Crossman, J.E., Clarke, M., 2009) that will contribute to their employability. These soft skills include cultural understandings, empathy, tolerance, respect, humanity. More commonly, international experiences are connected with open-mindedness. Our students are aware that these



soft skills have been acquired at the workplace while they were communicating in French.

### **3.2. Progress in French**

For the interviewees, who did a one-month internship in French and Swiss companies in Thailand, we cannot say that their progress in French was significant because it was a mild and short immersion, even though most of them had real opportunities to speak in "real life" situation. It was an important first step.

The three-month internship in France can be considered as a real immersion. The 10 interviewees have all confirmed that they were a bit lost at first, but that their levels of comprehension and oral expression improved markedly over the weeks. It is surprising to see the degree to which these students have consolidated their knowledge by practicing French in the workplace. Whereas before leaving, most of them spoke with difficulty and preferred to use English, we observed that they expressed themselves much more easily after their return and that they were speaking of their experiences with enthusiasm. It truly appeared that some students had made much more progress in French outside the classroom than inside it.

Resnick (1987, pp.13-20) was one of the first scholars to analyze the differences between a formal educational system and a more informal system based on the workplace. According to her analysis, there are, at least, four differences. First, practice sessions in school are for the most part individually-centered, while many of the activities outside the classroom are shared socially. Students in a classroom setting are still judged on the basis of individual tasks or tests whereas many activities at work require collaboration; success depends on the collective performance of several individuals. Second, schoolwork emphasizes mental activities, while real-world scenarios often require a blending of mental and physical acumen. Third, according to Resnick, school learning is based on the manipulation of symbols. The world outside school often makes use of objects or events to develop specific skills. Fourth, while school learning aims for the acquisition of general skills and principles, those practicing a language outside of a school develop situation-specific competencies.

Learning a foreign language at the workplace is very often informal. A young person will often learn by observing or listening to those in senior positions. If a supervisor sees that one of his or her subordinates is not able to complete an activity, they will repeat it, or place that individual with a more experienced employee. Our young Thai interns had the opportunity to work with and to learn from different employees at their hotel (including those in reception, restaurant, bar, kitchen, and household areas). The fact that they were part of a team also proved very positive, because although they were not working in the same service during the day, they could still help each other and discuss individual problems with the language and the culture.

### **3.3. Professional benefits**

Today, students are aware that the job market in Thailand is more and more challenging and that an international internship experience will be considered as a plus. They perfectly know that they need more working experiences before entering their professional life or studying at a higher level. These internships in Thailand or in

France clearly show that students begin to learn to engage and to work with people from a different culture. The ones who have been working in France for three months have experienced difficulties and have identified some of their strengths and weaknesses. They were able to adapt quickly to unfamiliar situations. They gained flexibility, open-mindedness, autonomy, and self-confidence.

After these internships in France, most of them had changed. When they came back to the college, they were communicating in French, and they were enthusiastic. They were ready to find employment.

### **Conclusion and perspectives**

The internships in French-speaking environment implemented between MUIC and French and Swiss companies during the last 5 years have had identifiable positive effects on our students: they learned to be more independent, more responsible and became more open to the world. Thanks to these programs, they improved their language skills, they gained international experiences, and found better opportunities on the job market. Moreover, these internships proved to be very valuable to encourage our students to pursue their French language studies.

Internships in French hotels have probably generated the most enthusiasm among learners who understand the benefit of such experiences for their résumé. Students majoring in business or in sciences have shown interest in doing internships in France as well. The Franco-Thai export projects developed by students themselves seem to be a good solution, but need to be improved in the future. A study & internship program including a three-month study in a French business school and a three-month internship in a French company or a three to six-month study in an engineering school and a three-month research internship in a laboratory could be very profitable international program options for students.

Looking towards the future, we hope that these kinds of international programs can also be developed in concert with French partners.



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*A Comparison of English Textbooks from the Perspectives of Reading:  
IB Diploma Programs and Japanese Senior High Schools*

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**Abstract**

The Ministry of Education (MEXT) is promoting International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, aiming to increase the number of IB schools in Japan to 200 by 2018 (MEXT, 2012). Although IB programs are recognized as awarding an international qualification, not many educators in Japan are familiar with the programs and there have been few studies conducted to elucidate the IB curricula. In this paper, I compare and contrast the English textbooks used in IB Diploma programs and the senior high school textbooks approved by MEXT, especially from the perspectives of reading in the second language. Two IB textbooks of English B and two textbooks of Communication English II were analyzed in this study. First, the themes and styles of reading passages were categorized. As a result of content analysis, the IB textbooks were found to cover topics related to communication, global issues, and social relationships, while the Japanese textbooks, though they included such topics as environmental problems and communication, focused more on biography, science, and technology. As for the styles of passages, reports in the newspaper and on the Internet accounted for more than half of IB textbooks; the Japanese textbooks included mostly exploratory essays. Second, tasks and reading comprehension questions of the passages were categorized according to the cognitive levels of Anderson's Taxonomy (2001), which revealed different patterns in IB textbooks and Japanese textbooks. The former had tasks of both lower- and higher-order thinking skills, while the latter focused on lower-level thinking skills such as understanding and remembering.

Keywords: textbook analysis, taxonomy, International Baccalaureate, cognitive demand, questions and tasks

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## Introduction

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) claims that it is of crucial importance to raise globally minded youths for the future prosperity of the country. Yet, in Japan, it is an issue that its nationals have become increasingly introverted. MEXT announced that school education should focus more on logical and critical thinking skills in the current Course of Study (2009). According to the PISA reading literacy test conducted in 2009, Japan was ranked 7<sup>th</sup> place among 64 nations and areas in “integrating and interpreting texts” and in “reflecting and evaluating texts,” while it ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in “retrieving texts and accessing to them”. It was also noted that Japanese test takers tended to leave open-ended questions blank (OECD, 2010). PISA defines reading literacy as understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with written texts in order to achieve one’s goals, developing one’s knowledge and potential, and participating in society (2013). The results of PISA indicate that Japan needs to boost reading programs at schools in order to foster the critical thinking skills of reading literacy.

Although PISA reading texts are intended to measure the reading skills in their first language, raising reading literacy in the second language is important in the second language education. Students are expected to develop academic language skills, or CALP (Cummins, 1981) in their target language in order to participate in international communities. In case of English education in Japan where communication skills have been greatly focused, policy makers are shifting an emphasis towards raising logical thinking skills in the second language.

As an initiative, the MEXT aims to increase the number of International Baccalaureate (IB) schools in Japan to 200 by 2018 (MEXT, 2012), though there are only 26 IB diploma schools in Japan as of May 2016 (IBO, 2016). Although IB diploma programs award an international qualification recognized as a strong high-school exit certificate, not many educators in Japan are familiar with the programs and there have been few studies conducted in Japan to elucidate their concepts and features. In this paper, I will attempt to compare and contrast the second language education of IB Diploma programs and of Japanese senior high schools in the perspective of reading in the second language. I will analyze the English textbooks used in IB Diploma programs and those of the senior high school textbooks approved by MEXT, especially from the perspectives of topics, text types of the passages, and cognitive levels of tasks and questions.

Before I discuss my research in detail, I will briefly summarize overviews of IB Diploma programs and the Japanese Senior High School Course of Study. First, there are four phases of IB programs based upon the age groups, and in this paper I shall focus on the Diploma Program for students enrolled in the last two years of secondary education. The Diploma program requires students to take a subject called Language Acquisition. Categorized in this subject is English B which is a course for ESL/EFL students. The IBO specifies the themes of English B as follows (<http://www.ibo.org>):

The course is organized into themes. Three core themes are required: communication and media, global issues, and social relationships.

Key features of the curriculum are:

- Intercultural understanding and plurilingualism are key goals of the course.
- Students are exposed to a variety of authentic texts and they produce work in a variety of communicative contexts.

Second, according to the MEXT Course of Study, most senior high school students in Japan study Communication English which mainly focuses on reading and communicative activities related to reading. Communication English II is the subject for senior high school second-year students. Students are to read stories, narratives, essays, reports, discussions, and expository passages and engage in reading them extensively (MEXT, 2010). All the textbooks are screened by the MEXT, and they play a crucial role in education in Japan.

In this study, I will compare English B textbooks of IB diploma programs with MEXT approved textbooks for Japanese senior high schools from the perspective of L2 reading. As for age, high school 2<sup>nd</sup> year students are roughly equivalent to first-year senior high school students in IB Diploma programs. Though the levels of English in IB schools and those at Japanese senior high schools may be different, both textbooks are for those who are learning English as the second or additional language.

Therefore, I hope to gain some insights about fostering L2 reading literacy through an investigation of textbooks used in two systems. The following two research questions were posed in the present study: 1) What are the themes and text types of reading passages in the textbooks and 2) what are the cognitive levels of questions and tasks of reading passages in the textbooks?

Now I would like to turn to the existing research in the relevant area. Textbooks have been a source of useful information for researchers by providing reliable data of content analysis. However, few studies have been conducted to investigate L2 reading literacy in IB schools. On the other hand, several research have been conducted at high school settings in Japan. Fukazawa reviewed questions from reading passages in reading textbooks and found that the answers to most questions were easily found or clearly written in the texts (2008). Tanaka claimed that the questions of reading passages in textbooks are largely divided into two categories, i.e. fact-finding and inferential questions (2010). The former type of questions checked understanding of passages, and the latter required understanding the context and the background of the passages, as well. Indeed such questions may lead to PISA reading literacy. A group of researchers conducted research on the questions and tasks of six major junior high school textbooks with the framework of Bloom's revised taxonomy, or Anderson's taxonomy (2001) and found that approximately 40 to 80 percent of questions and instructions in the textbooks studied were categorized as a low-order thinking skill (Hirai, 2014). The method used in this study was effective in clearly characterizing questions and tasks in terms of cognitive demand, thus, I decided to adopt this framework to investigate the cognitive domains of textbooks in this study. The content analysis of textbook yields objective and reliable data from which teachers and can make best use of the textbooks.

## Methods

Four textbooks were analyzed in this study. Textbooks A and B are commercial IB textbooks of English B, and textbooks C and D are MEXT-approved senior high school textbooks of Communication English II. All four books are widely adopted and used at schools.

The research procedures were conducted in two steps. First, the reading passages were categorized and tallied according to their themes and text styles. Second, the questions and tasks were categorized according to Anderson's taxonomy.

Table 1  
Anderson's Revised Taxonomy (2001)

Level	Categories	Subcategories
1	Remember	Recognizing, Recalling
2	Understand	Interpreting, Exemplifying, Classifying, Summarizing, Inferring, Comparing, Explaining
3	Apply	Executing, Implementing
4	Analyze	Differentiating, Organizing, Attributing
5	Evaluate	Checking, Critiquing
6	Create	Generating, Planning, Producing

For example, a question, "What did Hayabusa's operation team get from Dr. Itokawa?" was classified as Level 1, as it is a fact-finding question about the text. An instruction, "Explain what Dr. Itokawa and Dr. Kuninaka have in common." was a Level 2 task, as it is asking to compare two characters in a story. Two researchers first tallied the questions and tasks independently and then compared their results. The results were almost identical, except for a few items that were then discussed and agreed upon.

## Results

### Themes and Text Types

As a result of content analysis, the themes of the IB textbooks are specified in the syllabus, i.e. communication, global issues, and social relationships. English B can be taken as Standard or Higher Level, and in this study I focused on the reading passages that are covered at Standard Level. The topics that are dealt with in two years of IB Diploma course are as follows:

#### Textbook A (English B):

##### Core (required)

Communication and media

The Internet, Gaming, Blog

Global issues

Ending poverty, Global warming, Speeches

Social relationships

Minorities and education, Partners for life, Letter writing

##### Elective

Cultural diversity

Migration, Third culture kids

Customs and traditions

Pilgrimage, School uniform, Guidelines

Health

Alternative medicine, Beauty and health, Writing a news report

Leisure

Great hobbies, Extreme sports, Brochures

Science and technology

Future humans, Animal testing, Official report

#### Textbook B (English B):

Communication and media

Advertising, Radio and television, Advertising effects, Media and violence

Global issues

Global warming and issues, Energy conservation, Prejudice, Racism, Substance abuse, Drug abuse

Social relationship

Linguistic dominance, Cultural identity, Language and culture identity, Education and minorities, Stereotypes and gender roles, Homeschooling and social relationships, Education, Effects of alcoholism on social relationships

Cultural diversity

Language and cultural identity, Self-identity, Subcultures, Population diversity, Interlinguistic influence, Multilingual identity

Customs and traditions

Uniform, Tattooing: A tradition, Workplace dress codes and tattooing

- Health
  - Mental health, Eating disorders, Traditional medicine, Alternative medicine
- Science and technology
  - Computers, Mobile phones, Weapons
- Leisure
  - International youth festivals, Book festivals

On the other hand, the themes and topics of English Communication II are not clearly delineated by the MEXT, leaving textbook writers to choose themes and topics on their own. This subject, being a year course for the second year senior high school students, has about half number of lessons, compared to IB textbooks. The two textbooks C and D had similar themes and topics to IB textbooks, such as environmental problems and communication; they differed in their coverage of topics such as language and culture, biographies, and science and technology. The themes and the topics in each textbook are listed below.

#### Textbook C (English Communication II)

- Language and culture
  - Non-verbal communication, Journalism
- Eco-system
  - Recycling used bikes, Shortage of water around the globe, Space junks
- Biography
  - Steve Jobs, A nurse stood up against Nazis
- Science and technology
  - Development of iPS cells, Selective breeding of dogs, Da Vinci Codex

#### Textbook D (English Communication II)

- Language and culture
  - Facts about the Internet
- History
  - History of a church in Germany
- Biography
  - A generous Taiwanese lady, A Japanese car designer, Norman Rockwell and his works
- Science and technology
  - Research on sleep, Asteroid explorers, Facts about loggerhead

As these data show, textbooks A and B are covering themes related to contemporary culture and society where students might consider the relationships of a citizen (individual) and his/her communities, while textbooks C and D cover themes of language, culture, important historical figures, science, and technology. The IB textbooks reflected reality and controversial issues such as stereotypes and eating disorders, while Japanese textbooks included themes and topics which might be inspiring, informative, and instructive for high school students.

Next, I classified the text types of reading passages in the four textbooks examined. The numbers of text types for each textbook are shown in parentheses:



- Textbook A: expository(5), newspaper article(3), report(3), opinion(2), brochure(2), narrative(2), guidelines (1), poem(1), blog (1), advertisement (1), diary(1)
- Textbook B: expository(10), report(5), newspaper article(5), narrative(4), opinion(2), brochure(3), advertisement (2), letter(1), diary(1),
- Textbook C: expository(8), narrative(1), speech(1)
- Textbook D: expository(6), diary(1), narrative(1)

There are about ten types of reading passages in both of the IB textbooks including authentic readings such as opinions and reports. On the contrary, in Japanese textbooks, the majority of reading passages are expository writing. There were no passages of advertisements or brochures.

### Questions and Tasks of Reading Passages

In total, 510 questions and tasks related to reading passages in four text books were classified according to the Anderson's taxonomy. Level 1-Remember accounted for 20 to 30 percent for IB textbooks, while accounting for 70 to 90 percent in Communication English II. Level 2-Understand accounted for more than a fourth in IB textbooks, and 5 to 14 percent in Japanese textbooks. There were less than 10 percent of Level 3-Apply questions and tasks in all four textbooks. The IB textbooks had 11 to 22 percent of Level 4-Analyze questions, while Communication English II had 0 or 1 percent of questions and tasks from Level 4. As for Levels 5-Evaluate and Level 6-Create, IB textbooks had 7 to 14 percent, while Japanese textbooks had 0 to 5 percent.

As shown in Table 2, it was revealed that textbooks A and B included Level 1 and 2 questions as half of the total tasks and questions and that upper level questions and tasks were also included. In other words, IB textbooks had questions and tasks which were well-balanced in terms of cognitive levels; students would be engaged in a variety of activities in class. On the other hand, questions and tasks in textbooks C and D are mostly at Level 1. There were few activities requiring higher-order thinking skills.

Table 2  
Tasks and Questions in its levels of Anderson's Taxonomy

Level (n)	1-Remember	2-Understand	3-Apply	4-Analyze	5-Evaluate	6-Create
A (121)	28.1%	25.6%	7.4%	11.6%	14.9%	12.4%
B (70)	21.4%	31.4%	8.5%	22.9%	8.6%	7.1%
C (178)	90.1%	5.7%	0.1%	0%	2.1%	0.1%
D (141)	70.1%	14.6%	5.6%	1.7%	1.7%	5.6%

As the next step, I conducted a close examination of the questions and tasks of a passage at three stages: pre-reading, main reading, and post-reading questions and tasks. All of the four textbooks were designed to start with pre-reading questions and/or tasks for a passage. For instance, common warm-up questions were those questions asking about the experiences or knowledge of the readers related to the topic of the passage. It was noted that textbooks A and B included Level 2 and higher-level activities such as grouping target words and phrases into categories and judging the effectiveness of an advertisement. The activities also instructed students to work in groups, in pairs, or in class. On the other hand, textbooks C and D asked simple short questions about students' knowledge, preference, experiences, school life, and so forth. Although these questions would activate their schema about the topics of reading passages, they would not necessarily encourage students to think deeply or to communicate with other students at the pre-reading stage.

The main reading questions and tasks were found to have a similar tendency in all the textbooks; they were largely comprehension questions at Levels 1 and 2. As textbooks for second language readers, they are naturally equipped with an array of comprehension questions to see if readers understand the passages correctly. Some questions required Level 2 thinking skills - comparing and inferring; differentiating facts from opinions is an example of such activities.

Post-reading activities had similarities and differences among the four textbooks. As a similarity, summarizing tasks were included; "summarize in a few sentences," or "choose a heading for a paragraph," and "arrange the events in chronological order" were common tasks. There were also activities of ordering events as they happened. A difference was seen in the pattern of the levels found in the four textbooks; textbook A posed questions and tasks from Levels 4 and 5 as post-reading activities. For example, textbook A asked students if they would change their opinions of a topic after reading the passage. This question is categorized as Level 5, since it is requiring readers to reflect on the passage and evaluate its effectiveness. Textbook B suggests further projects related to the topics, which are categorized as Levels 3 and 6. Advice on how to carry out such projects are explained step by step in detail so that students are able to follow the procedures on their own. Textbook C has questions and tasks which are mostly categorized as Level 1. They are multiple choice questions about the content, and even in summary questions, students are to fill in the blanks from a list of words. Textbook D includes questions and tasks of higher-order thinking skills as post-reading activities. However, some of these follow-up questions are not really connected to the passage. For instance, in a chapter about Norman Rockwell's life, a question reads, "In what situation do you feel sympathy and compassion for others in your daily life?" Although this question is classified as Level 3-Apply, it is not based on the passage in terms of content and target language features. Therefore, students would not utilize any information they learned to answer this unrelated question.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, two research questions were posed; the first question pertained to the themes and text types of reading passages in the textbooks. As a result of content analysis, the IB textbooks were seen to cover topics related to communication, global issues, and social relationships, while the Japanese textbooks, though they included such topics as environmental problems and communication, focused more on

biographies, science, and technology. As for the text types of passages, reports in the newspapers and on the Internet accounted for more than half of those included in IB textbooks, though they covered a wide range of text styles; the Japanese textbooks included mostly exploratory writing. In other words, the former reflected authenticity of reading materials, and it intended to prepare students to read critically in their actual future lives. On the other hand, the latter was more focused on the expository passages which would give students some information, especially in science, and possibly teach ethical lessons from important figures to the students.

From the viewpoint of raising critical awareness, IB textbooks seem to be more suitable for raising thinking skills to higher cognitive levels. When students are exposed only to informative, instructive, and flawless texts, which are the type included in Communication English II textbooks, it may be difficult for students to infer, apply, analyze, and evaluate the texts. As suggestions to teachers using textbooks C and D, it is recommended to adopt some authentic materials such as email messages, blog entries, dialogues, and advertisements in their teaching practices.

The second research question was to probe the cognitive levels of questions and tasks from reading passages in the textbooks. The analysis using the framework of Anderson's Taxonomy (2001) revealed different patterns in IB textbooks and Japanese textbooks. The former had tasks of both lower- and higher-order thinking skills, while the latter focused on lower-level thinking skills such as understanding and remembering. Therefore, in order to raise critical reading ability, it is necessary to supply activities where students engage in activities requiring higher-level thinking skills, and which are closely connected to the passage. Also, the textbooks should provide step by step models and guidance in terms of vocabulary, sentence patterns, and research procedures as scaffoldings in the target language.

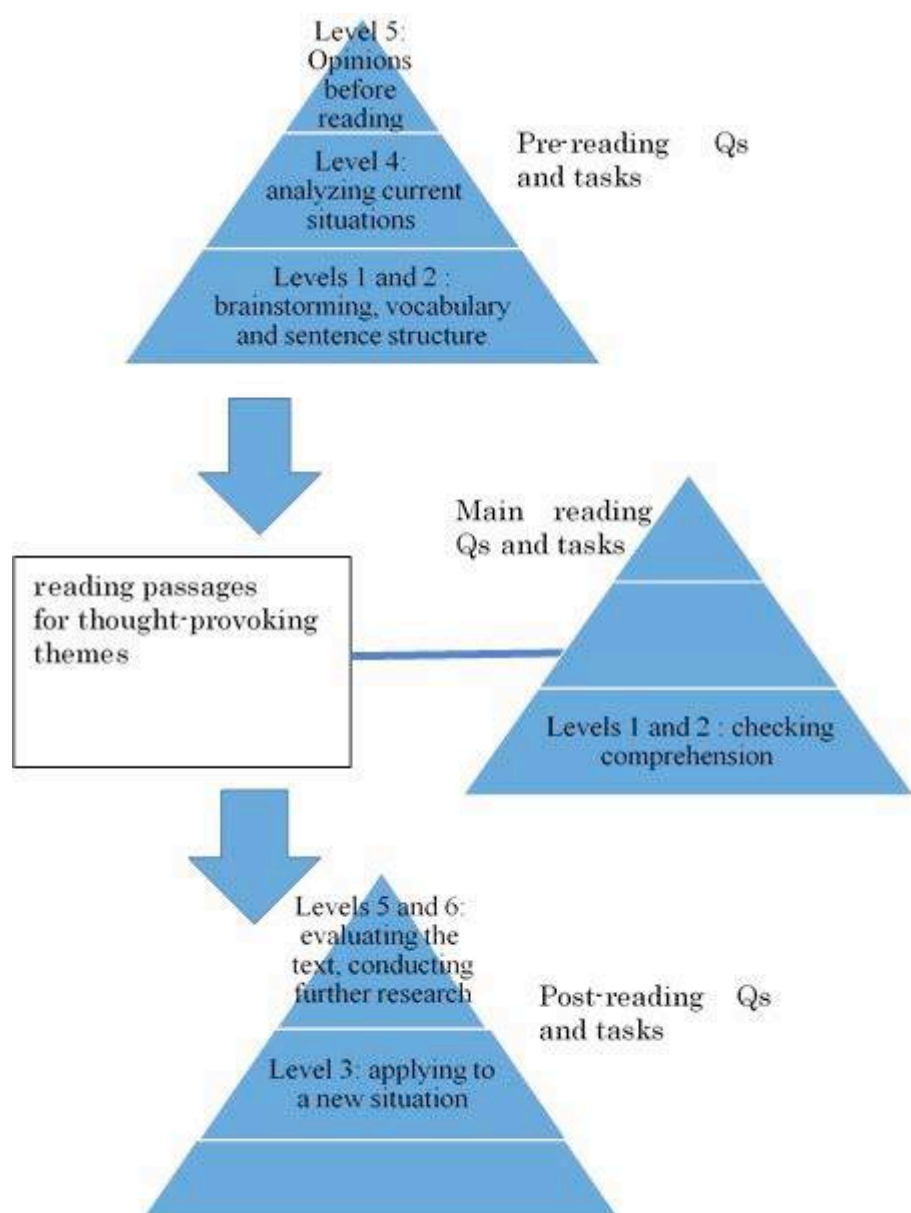


Figure 1: Concept chart of questions and tasks to foster critical reading skills

A model of reading passages, questions and tasks seen in IB textbooks can be conceptualized as in Figure 1. Ideally a textbook should include reading passages of themes and topics which would provoke discussions among students. At the pre-reading stage, students should engage in ample tasks from different cognitive levels. The main reading tasks will be comprehension questions for passages which would stimulate discussions among students. At this stage, students will have chances to clarify misunderstandings and gain new knowledge about the target language. Post-reading activities may include an evaluation of the passage in relation to their knowledge and experiences. Students can apply the information to a new situation and further carry out a creative project.

This study is a preliminary step in probing into the issue of raising critical reading skills in second language teaching and learning. As suggestions for future research, factors such as readability and vocabulary of passages in the textbooks would reveal

what L2 reading literacy involves. Furthermore, research on teaching methodologies and student portfolios would shed light on how critical thinking skills are raised in L2 reading classes.



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## *Psychosociological Predictors of Maritime Students' English Proficiency*

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### **Abstract**

Due to the varying ability of ESL students to learn a language, many language teachers are prompted to investigate the students' proficiency in English and its relationship to some selected variables. This article presents a descriptive-correlation study of one of those language teacher researchers who was driven as well to unveil the relationship between the freshman maritime students' English proficiency and some psycho-sociological factors and ultimately, to determine the predictors of students' proficiency in English. The psychological variables included in this study are attitude toward English language, language anxiety, willingness to communicate and willingness to communicate. While prior grade in English, family income and exposure to media are considered as the sociological variables. Seven instruments were used in gathering the needed data. These were the English Proficiency Test, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), Attitude toward English Questionnaire, Language Anxiety Questionnaire, Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Survey Questionnaire, Survey Questionnaire on Students' Exposure to Media, and Students' Profile Survey Questionnaire. The results of the study revealed that the following psycho-sociological factors significantly predict English proficiency: (a) writing anxiety, (b) language learning strategies of "learning with others" and "using all mental processes", (c) prior grade in English, and (d) use of cell phone. The study recommends to the English teachers the inclusion of the said variables among the factors to consider in enhancing the teaching of English.

Keywords: psycho-sociological factors, English proficiency, descriptive - correlational study

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## Introduction

It is undeniable that English is increasingly used as the global lingua franca and employed in every domain of communication in the wide world over. In the maritime industry, communication at sea plays an extremely important role for “safer shipping and cleaner oceans”. However, with the increasing multilingual and multinational crew ships, the risk of human error in communicating essential information is inevitable. It is believed that both on-board and external communication that are not properly understood and executed would lead to very costly accidents. Trenkner (2002) estimated that “deficits in communication account for up to 35% of ship’s accident”.

In consequence of the aforementioned safety concerns, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) direly sees the need to adopt one working language for effective communications, and that language is English. According to Logie et al. (2001), the official adoption of English by the IMO as the language of the sea is a clear indication of giving importance of human resources to the development of the maritime industry, with safety of life at sea considered the topmost priority.

The Philippines, being the premiere source of maritime workers, is challenged with a commitment to produce maritime graduates who are at par with their international counterparts. However, the “high marketability” of Filipino seafarers is threatened by the deteriorating command of English among them.

A study of the National Maritime Polytechnic (NMP), one of the training centers for mariners in the country, revealed that one of the most common issues complained by Filipino seafarers in a mixed crew setting is the communication and language barrier caused by their inability in understanding English as their counterparts speak it. Likewise, Cervantes (2004) in his study concluded that Filipino seafarers are far way below in the global standard of English proficiency than what they are perceived to be.

The findings culled from the abovementioned studies are quite parallel to the maritime students’ English proficiency in Palompon Institute of Technology (PIT) where the present study was conducted. PIT, an IMO white-listed maritime school, was no exception to such challenging proficiency level of seafarers. Despite of the concerted efforts done by the administrators and language teachers to address this issue, language problems among students are recurrent. Because of this, the writer was prompted to make an inquiry and to secure sufficient data on the psychosociological constructs related to the English proficiency of freshman maritime students.

In order to gain a clearer understanding on the factors which have bearing on the success or failure in learning a second language (L2), the writer looked into a number of theories.

In the Acquisition - Learning Hypothesis of Krashen (cited by de la Cruz, 2000), acquisition is considered as the basic process involved in developing language proficiency and is distinct from learning. Acquisition refers to the unconscious development of the target language system, which results from using the language for

real communication. Learning, on the other hand, is the conscious representation of grammatical knowledge that has resulted from formal instruction, and it cannot lead to acquisition. While it is the acquired system that we invoke to create utterances during spontaneous language use, the learned system can serve only as a monitor of the output of the acquired system. Krashen stressed that language learning takes place through using language communicatively, rather than through practicing language skills.

On the other hand, he argued that people acquire L2s only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to allow the input “in”. In his affective filter theory, affect is exemplified as motivation, attitude, anxiety, and self-confidence. These factors are seen to play an important role in acquiring an L2. Comprehensible input may not be utilized by L2 acquirers if there is a “mental block” that prevents them from fully profiting from it. The filter is up when the acquirer is unmotivated, lacking in confidence, or concerned with failure. The filter is down when the acquirer is not anxious and is trying to become a member of the speaking group.

In this study, willingness to communicate (WTC), a recent addition to the affective variables coming from the field of speech communication, was also included. McCroskey et al. in Hashimoto (2002) employed the term to describe the individual’s personality - based predisposition toward approaching or avoiding the initiation of communication when free to do so. WTC is seen to affect authentic communication in L2 and has been considered as a good predictor of frequency of communication.

Another factor which contributes to all parts of the learning - acquisition continuum is the language learning strategies. Oxford in Englis (2001) pointed out that learners use specific actions or techniques, often intentionally, to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. These strategies can facilitate the internalization, storage retrieval, or use of the new language and serve as tools for the self-directed involvement necessary for developing communicative ability.

The grade point average (GPA) in previous related subject has likewise been shown to affect students’ school performance. Alkin in Golo (2003) succinctly stated that grade point average in different subject areas is a predictor of academic performance.

The use of the different language learning resources is also found to affect learners’ performance. According to Villamin as cited by Tupaz (2002), books, reference materials, and other nonbook materials such as newspapers and magazines, audiovisual materials and automated information sources are treasury of knowledge that facilitates the teaching - learning process. Hence, the frequency of use and exposure of the above learning resource materials, which was considered as one of the independent variables of the study, can possibly affect the English proficiency of the students.

Considering the cited theories, the present study was designed to verify, prove, or confirm the foregoing claims of language theorists, experts and researchers that the students’ level of proficiency in English is influenced by a number of factors. In this study, the selected factors which are thought to affect the students’ proficiency level

in English are classified into two - the psychological and sociological factors. Figure 1 shows the variables used as well as the flow of the study.

Thus, the main objective of the study was to determine the predictors of the English proficiency of the Marine Transportation and Marine Engineering students. It sought answers to the following questions: 1) What is the English proficiency level of the students?; 2) What is the relationship between the English proficiency and each of the: psychological and sociological factors?; and 3) What are the factors best predict English proficiency?

The study utilized the descriptive-correlation research design. The respondents were 200 students who were randomly selected from a population of 238 first-year Marine Transportation and Marine Engineering students.

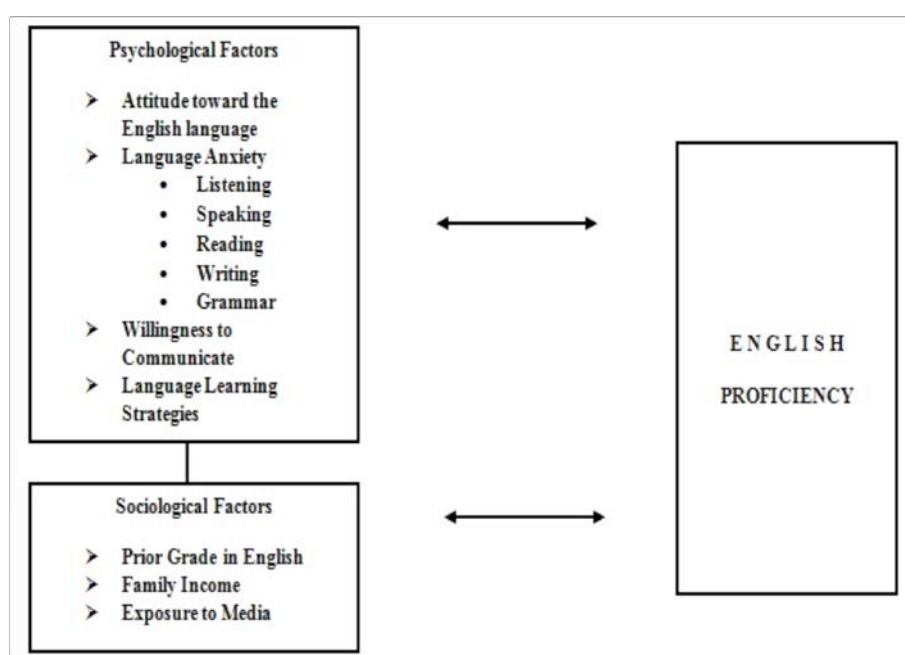


Figure 1. A Schematic Diagram Showing the Variables Used in the Study

The needed data were collected using the English Proficiency Test, Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), Attitude toward English Questionnaire, Language Anxiety Questionnaire, Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Survey Questionnaire, Survey Questionnaire on Students' Exposure to Media, and Students' Profile Survey Questionnaire.

All the statistics were computer processed with the SPSS software. The statistical analysis procedure applied on the data included frequency, percentage distribution, mean, weighted mean, standard deviation, Pearson r correlation, Eta correlation and Multiple Stepwise Regression.

### Respondents' Profile

The study showed that in terms of the psychological factors, the respondents generally used the strategy of "learning with others" (3.52) in learning English, had favorable

attitude towards the English language (2.40), had moderate language anxiety (3.51) and had high willingness to communicate (2.98).

In terms of the sociological characteristics, the respondents had a good prior grade in English (84.43%), belonged to low income families (32.5%) and were less frequently exposed to media (2.79).

With regard to their English proficiency, the freshman maritime students were on the average level. This means that generally the students can use the English language accurately and appropriately.

### **Relationship between Psychological Factors and English Proficiency**

Findings of the study showed that significant correlation between three language learning strategies and English proficiency. “Remembering more effectively” had significant correlation with the students’ proficiency in grammar 2 and with their writing proficiency. The positive correlation implies that the students with high proficiency in grammar 2 ( $r = 0.17$ ) and in writing ( $r = 0.17$ ) remember more effectively than the students with low proficiency in both skills. Likewise, positive significant correlations resulted when the strategy “using all mental processes” was paired with listening ( $r = 0.15$ ); with grammar 2 ( $r = 0.18$ ), and with writing proficiency ( $r = 0.16$ ). The significant correlation between the variables means that the students with high proficiency in listening, grammar 2 and in writing used more mental processes than those with low proficiency in the three skills. The variable “using all mental processes” also had significant correlation with the overall English proficiency of the students (with a computed  $r$  of 0.19).

“Learning with others” on the other hand, only showed significant relationship with proficiency in the fundamentals of grammar. The computed  $r$  of negative 0.14 indicates that learning with others did not seem to promote proficiency in grammar.

**Table 1**  
**Correlation between Psychological Factors and English Proficiency (N=200)**

Psychological Factors	Proficiency in English						
	LS	GS1	GS2	RS	WS	SS	CS
<b>Overall Language Learning Strategies</b>	.12	-.01	.13	.01	.06	.03	.09
Remembering More Effectively	-.00	.06	.17*	.01	.17*	.07	.12
Using All Mental Processes	.15*	.08	.18*	.11	.16*	-.05	.19**
Compensating for Missing Knowledge	.12	.09	.09	.02	.05	.00	.09
Organizing/ Evaluating Knowledge	.04	.04	-.11	.08	.00	.08	.10
Managing Emotions	.09	-.10	-.00	-.08	-.03	-.02	-.05
Learning with Others	.11	-.14*	.00	-.13	-.12	.01	-.10
<b>Attitude toward English Language</b>	.09	.06	.09	-.04	.08	.16*	.08
<b>Overall Language Anxiety</b>	.10	.09	.09	.13	.24*	.07	.20*
Listening Anxiety	.04	.13	.01	.11	.21**	.02	.16*
Speaking Anxiety	.07	.04	.07	.12	.19**	.04	.16*
Reading Anxiety	.07	.09	.12	.09	.15*	.10	.16*
Writing Anxiety	.11	.07	.12	.15*	.23**	.03	.21*
Grammar Anxiety	.09	.02	.00	.01	.14	.08	.08
<b>Willingness to Communicate</b>	-.07	.05	.09	.04	.11	.17*	.09

**Legend:**  
 LS - Listening Score      RS - Reading Score      CS - Composite Score (Overall Proficiency)  
 GS1- Grammar Score1      WS - Writing Score      \* significant at 0.01 level  
 GS2- Grammar Score2      SS- Speaking Score      \*\* significant at 0.05 level

Significant correlation also existed between attitude toward English and English proficiency in speaking. The computed  $r$  of 0.16 with  $p$ -value  $< 0.01$  suggests a weak but significant correlation. This result indicates that the students who have favorable attitude toward English tend to have high level of speaking proficiency than the students with poor attitude. In addition, the more favorable the respondents' attitude toward the language is the more they can express their ideas orally using the English language.

Moreover, the students' anxieties in listening, speaking, reading and writing were significantly related to writing skill as indicated by the computed  $r$ 's which were all interpreted as low correlation only.

A weak but significant correlation was also found between the respondents' level of writing anxiety and their level of reading proficiency ( $r = 0.15$ ;  $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ). This means lower levels of writing anxiety are not a good indicator of the level of reading proficiency.

When all aspects of language anxiety were combined and correlated with English proficiency, the correlation showed that there is a significant relationship between language anxiety and writing; and between language anxiety and overall English proficiency.

Similar to the respondents' attitude toward English, willingness to communicate was significantly related (but of weak correlation) to the level of the respondents' speaking proficiency ( $r = 0.17$ ,  $p$ -value  $< 0.05$ ). The direction of the correlation was positive



and this indicates that students who are willing to communicate tend to speak well in the class than those respondents who are hesitant.

Taking all these psychological factors, only the learning strategy of “using all mental processes” and overall language anxiety, including the anxieties in listening, speaking, reading and writing correlated with the overall English proficiency.

### Relationship between Sociological Factors and English Proficiency

There was a statistically significant but weak correlation between prior grade in English and English proficiency in grammar 1 ( $r = 0.24$ ), grammar 2 ( $r = 0.26$ ), reading ( $r = 0.27$ ) and writing ( $r = 0.31$ ). The positive direction of the four correlations means that in general, students with high English grades tend to have high proficiency in grammar 1, grammar 2, reading and writing.

**Table 2**  
Correlation between the Respondents' Proficiency in English and Prior Grade in English, Gross Monthly Family Income (N=200)

Sociological Factors	Proficiency in English						
	LS	GS1	GS2	RS	WS	SS	Composite
Prior Grade in English	.10	.24**	.26**	.27**	.31**	.14	.40**
Family Income	.11	.20	.27**	.29**	.25**	.09	.31**

**Legend:**

LS - Listening Score      RS - Reading Score      Composite - Overall Proficiency  
 GS1 - Grammar Score1      WS - Writing Score      \* significant at 0.01 level  
 GS2 - Grammar Score2      SS - Speaking Score      \*\* significant at 0.05 level

Prior grade in English showed high significant correlation ( $r = 0.40$ ) with the overall English proficiency of the students.

Family income was likewise found to have significant relationship with most of the six areas of English proficiency as follows: grammar 2 ( $r = 0.27$ ), reading ( $r = 0.29$ ) and writing ( $r = 0.25$ ).

When family income was correlated with the overall English proficiency, it showed a significant relationship. The direction of the correlation was positive. Such finding implies that the higher the income of the students' families the more likely they can be provided with their needs which, in turn, contribute to the enhancement of their proficiency in English

### Relationship between Extent of Exposure to Media and English Proficiency

The respondents' exposure to 7 out of 12 media showed significant correlation with their English proficiency. These were the television, radio, computer with internet, computer with Word processor, newspaper, magazine and cell phone.

The students' frequent exposure to television significantly correlated with their speaking proficiency ( $r = 0.20$ ). This result affirms the fact that watching television, especially English programs, provides opportunities to learners to be exposed to the

target language and eventually leads to the development or enhancement of their speaking ability.

A significant correlation also existed between exposure to radio and grammar 2 ( $r = 0.15$ ). Though the correlation was weak, this suggests that the authenticity of the English language provided in radios contributes to the students' knowledge on constructing sentences.

**Table 3**  
**Correlation between Proficiency in English and Extent of Exposure to Media (N=200)**

Media	Proficiency in English						
	LS	GS1	GS2	RS	WS	SS	CS
TV	.00	.05	.11	.08	.11	<b>.20**</b>	.13
VCD/DVD	.03	.07	.02	-.10	-.06	-.01	-.01
Films & Movies	-.04	.06	.13	.04	.12	.12	.11
Video Game	-.12	.09	-.02	-.05	.04	.05	-.02
Videoke	.02	.02	.04	-.00	-.14	.07	.07
Radio	-.02	-.08	<b>.15*</b>	.07	.09	.06	.12
Computer with Internet	<b>-.14*</b>	<b>.20**</b>	.11	.06	<b>.20**</b>	.09	.14
Computer with Word Processor	-.04	<b>.20**</b>	.13	.03	.12	.11	.13
Newspaper	-.08	<b>.18*</b>	.05	.10	.10	.10	.12
Magazine	-.07	<b>.20**</b>	.05	.10	.12	.07	.13
Cell phone	-.07	<b>.14*</b>	.12	<b>.16*</b>	<b>.20**</b>	.07	<b>.19**</b>

**Legend:**

LS - Listening Score  
GS1 - Grammar Score1  
GS2 - Grammar Score2

RS - Reading Score  
WS - Writing Score  
SS - Speaking Score

Composite - Overall Proficiency  
\* significant at 0.01 level  
\*\* significant at 0.05 level

The use of computer with internet, on the other hand, negatively correlated with listening ( $r = -0.14$ ). The negative correlation suggests that the more exposure to computer with internet means less proficiency in listening. However, exposure to computer with internet showed a significant correlation with grammar 1 ( $r = 0.20$ ) and writing ( $r = 0.20$ ). Such finding can be attributed to the fact that the internet, having an unlimited supply of information, can provide supplemental activities for students who wish to improve their technical usage of the language.

Results of the analysis also revealed that exposure to computer with Word processor, newspaper and magazine correlated with grammar 1. This result suggests that the more exposed the students are to these media the better will be their knowledge on the fundamentals. Reading newspaper and magazine, on the one hand, seems to foster the students' language skills. According to Cummins (1998), the more the learners read in the target language, the more access they get to its vocabulary, grammar, idioms, and so on, and the more of the language they learn, their knowledge of grammar is enhanced.

The use of cell phone in text messaging, likewise, correlated with grammar 1 ( $r = 0.14$ ), reading ( $r = 0.16$ ) and writing ( $r = 0.20$ ). This finding may be due to the



innovative strategies developed by text communicators in expressing themselves through typed text.

When all these media correlated with the overall proficiency, only the use of cell phone showed a significant correlation ( $r = 0.19$ ).

### Predictors of English Proficiency

Of the psychological variables considered in the multiple regression only three came out as predictors of English proficiency of the freshman maritime students, and they were as follows: writing anxiety, using all mental processes, and learning with others.

**Table 4**  
Regression of Psychological Factors on the Students' English Proficiency (N=200)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	p-value
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	129.063	8.931		14.451	<.001
Writing Anxiety	0.714	0.302	0.165	2.368	0.019
Using All Mental Processes	1.307	0.419	0.228	3.122	0.002
Learning with Others	-1.189	0.582	-0.150	-2.041	0.043

Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.08$ ; Computed  $F = 6.754$ ;  $p < .001$

The multiple correlation coefficient (R), using all the predictors simultaneously, is 0.31 and the adjusted  $R^2$  is 0.08, meaning that 8% of the variance in English proficiency can be predicted from the combination of the psychological factors. The ANOVA table, on the other hand, shows that  $F = 6.75$  and is statistically significant. This indicates that the combination of the predictors significantly combine together to predict English proficiency. The predictive ability of the variable writing anxiety explains the motivating factor of the language anxiety on the students' proficiency. That is, the anxiety felt by the respondents had stimulated them to some extent to achieve the expected goal (Biggs in Zhang, 2001).

On the other hand, of the sociological factors, prior grade in English and the use of cell phone were found to be predictors of English proficiency.

The multiple correlation R was 0.423 and the adjusted  $R^2$  was 0.17 which suggests that 17% of the variance in English proficiency can be predicted from a combination of prior grade in English, family income and exposure to media.

**Table 5**  
**Regression of Sociological Factors on the Students' English Proficiency (N=200)**

Model	Non-standardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	p-value
	Beta	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	2.871	26.901		0.107	0.915
Prior Grade in English	1.663	0.321	0.361	5.188	<.001
Use of cell phone	7.797	2.953	0.184	2.640	<.001

Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.17$ ;  $F = 18.76$ ;  $p\text{-value} < .001$

Table 5 shows that  $F = 18.76$  was statistically significant. This indicates that the combination of the predictors can predict English proficiency. The standardized beta coefficient of 0.361 for the predictor prior grade in English suggests that it can predict better English proficiency than the use of cell phone which has beta coefficient of 0.184. The t-values and significance level shown in the table mean that the two sociological variables can significantly contribute to the equation for predicting English proficiency.

## Conclusion

On the basis of the aforementioned findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Students generally used the strategy "learning with others" in learning the English language. This means language teachers could utilize group work or cooperative learning in various classroom activities for their students' optimum learning of the English language.
2. The students' favorable attitude toward English language and high willingness to communicate failed to manifest significant relationship with their overall proficiency. However, such result is a positive indicator that this group of students has bigger chances to improve the average level of their proficiency in English.
3. The anxiety felt by the students in learning the English language seemed to facilitate their English proficiency. Thus, the lower is the anxiety the better is the English proficiency.
4. Grades in the English subjects previously taken indicate or predict English proficiency, in the same way family income does.
5. The different types of media, such as television, radio, computer, newspaper, magazine and cell phone also seem to prove their contribution to one's language performance.
6. Among the psychosociological factors, writing anxiety, learning strategies of using all mental processes and learning with others, prior grade in English, and use of cell phone were found to be significant predictors of students' English proficiency. Based on the findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. In their teaching approach, language teachers should capitalize on the identified strategies, specifically “learning with others” and “using all mental processes”, that students use to facilitate language learning and adopt classroom instruction accordingly like group activities, peer teaching and the like.
2. There is a need also for language teachers to adopt humanistic activities, like group activities and cooperative writing, in order to lower the affective filter in their English writing class since writing anxiety was found to predict the students’ overall English proficiency.
3. The scores obtained by the students in the English proficiency test proved to be average. Thus, there is a need to improve English language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to meet the language competence specified in Standard of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Code, which in turn makes the maritime students marketable to international shipping companies. Conducting remedial classes and peer-tutoring can be some of the activities to undertake relative to this.
4. Since prior grade in English was found to predict the overall English proficiency, it is suggested that the Screening Committee for freshman students set the required high school grade in English higher than the present required average grade point of 80. In addition to this, an English proficiency test which covers the four language skills should be included in the College Admission Test of the Institute.
5. A follow-up study be conducted, this time using a Standardized English Proficiency test for Seafarers, including other variables not investigated in this study.

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*Learning Strategies and Learner Attitudes in the  
Massive Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game Cube World*

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**Abstract**

The shift from analogue to digital has transformed teaching and learning. Collaborative learning environments such as virtual worlds and digital games, especially massively multiplayer online role-playing games (henceforth MMORPGs), have generated increasing interests from experts. Recent studies showed that MMORPGs have the potential to be suitable platforms for language learning (Peterson, 2013). This paper will analyze the findings of exploratory work focusing on the use of the MMORPG *Cube World* involving EFL learners based at a university in Japan. Data analysis from pre- and post- questionnaires, text chats, in-class video recordings and learner feedback revealed that the target language exchanges between players when they communicate and collaborate with each other in the game appear beneficial, fun and motivating. This suggests that learner participation in network-based MMORPGs provides an arena for learner centered social interaction that offers valuable opportunities for target language practice. Data suggests that MMORPGs offer arenas for language learners to development their communicative competence. Areas with potential in future research are examined.

Keywords: MMORPG, Cube World, language learning, learning strategies, learner attitudes

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## Introduction

The rapid progress of technology has revolutionized learning over the past decade. Research (Bonk & Graham, 2006; Babb, Stewart & Johnson, 2010) has shown that technology can be effectively implemented in blended learning classrooms and can provide helpful tools for language learning (Blake, 2008). The emergence of digital natives, students born in the last twenty years (Prensky, 2001) – as well as the widespread availability of digital appliances such as smartphones and tablets have ensured that Computer Assisted Language Learning (henceforth CALL) has recently become more widely accepted as a means to facilitate the process of language learning (Thomas, Reinders & Warschauer, 2013).

Collaborative learning environments such as virtual worlds, social networking and digital games have generated increasing interest from experts (Gee, 2003; Squire, 2005a; Peterson, 2010) and past studies (Thorne, 2008; Zhao & Lai, 2009; Zheng et al., 2009) have suggested that of these tools, MMORPGs are promising educational platforms. It is claimed that these games present engaging environments for learning as they support problem-solving, communication and team work. However, despite the recent expansion in research, studies on utilizing MMORPGs in language learning are relatively limited in number, small in scale, and confined to investigating a narrow range of variables (Peterson, 2013). This paper will provide an overview of current research and examine the findings from an exploratory case study on how learners manage their in-game interactions in the target language (henceforth TL) as well as how learners view using MMORPGs as a language learning tool.

## SLA and MMORPGs

To date, the most common way that computer technology has been used to facilitate language learning has been through the use of specially designed programs (Barr, 2004) but the proliferation of the Internet has facilitated new forms of real time computer-based communication. O'Rourke (2005) asserts that the process of second language acquisition (henceforth SLA) is stimulated by the power of human interaction and teachers can create opportunities for beneficial forms of interaction within the context of computer mediated communication (henceforth CMC). A study by Kötter (2003) suggests that CMC-based collaborative learning offers participants the chance to be both a learner and a tutor, which may help to boost confidence and trust. Moreover, it is suggested that participation in this type of interaction makes learners more willing to offer and receive help from their peers in the same group. In order for learning goals to be achieved, learners must negotiate when and how to help their peers, as in how often and how much detail they should comment on each other's output. In this way, both the learner and the tutor are stimulated to evolve an awareness of the aims and process of learning as well as critically reflecting on their own learning needs. This implies that language learning and teaching are social activities and CMC is a platform that provides synergy for students to engage in SLA process.

MMORPGs are a type of digital game that takes place in a virtual world where large numbers of players develop their characters in a role-playing environment. As a form of CMC, one of the features that distinguish MMORPGs from traditional console-based role-playing games is that MMORPG game play is essentially based on



alliances of players. This type of game requires collaboration, strategizing, planning and interacting with objects and resources. Researchers claim that this type of game incorporates features that may facilitate SLA including assigning user controlled virtual agents known as avatars to individual learners, enabling them to experience a higher degree of immersion and emotional investment in the virtual world (Svensson, 2003). Moreover, avatars also contribute to the process of relationship forming and bonding between players by enhancing the role-playing experience (Peterson, 2006).

Byrant (2007) and Thorne (2008) claimed that the collaborative learning aspects of MMORPG game play not only provide the benefits of social interaction in the TL but also foster motivation, creating opportunities for real-time practice and exposure to immediate feedback. When playing MMORPGs learners can participate actively in goal-based communicative tasks which elicit beneficial forms of TL interaction such as negotiation of meaning and scaffolding that have been identified as playing a central role in learning in both the psycholinguistic and sociocultural accounts of SLA. Scaffolding, in particular, is important as it is central to the operation of Zone of Proximal Development, ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) providing a powerful means for learners to conceptualize the developmental process involved in language learning.

Additionally, MMORPGs provide a social platform for like-minded players to gather and this environment can serve as a catalyst for fostering collaborative learning. It is claimed that in-game collaboration and interactive conversations elicited by this type of game promotes critical thinking as well as supporting types of social negotiation associated with learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This in turn allows learners to share information, test their understanding and reflect on their learning (Jonassen, 1999). Instead of learning through explicit linear instruction by reading a manual first, players take their time to gather the information needed by evaluating various options before formulating a plan and change strategies and/or goals according to the different variables presented to them. In other words, MMORPGs have the potential to provide optimal learning mediums that are capable of meeting the needs of the younger generation who have grown up socializing with digital media.

### **Previous Research**

Previous small-scale studies (Rankin et al., 2009; Kongmee et al., 2012) on interactions between non-native speakers of English in MMORPG-based digital games have shown that participants improved their language learning skills with higher post-test scores. This in turn increased the participants' motivation. These researchers report that the participants were comfortable with the communication environment. The findings of the above studies suggest that the community-based nature of these games provides a safe and fun venue for the learners to take risks and reflect on their mistakes. As is noted in the literature (Kohonen, 1992), reflection plays an important role in SLA by providing a bridge between experience and theoretical conceptualization while risk-taking is associated with a willingness to maximize success. A higher intrinsic motivation leads to a higher incidence of positive experiences of communication success and this in turn encourages learners to take more risks and accept the ambiguity caused by the new linguistic system (Stern, 1983).



Another MMORPG case study involving a group of experienced gamers from New Zealand and the Netherlands undertaken by Bytheway (2013), shows learners adopting a combination of learning strategies influenced by the games culture which encouraged curiosity and in turn enhanced cooperative interactions with other players. The participants in this study were made aware of a variety of vocabulary learning strategies and many of them agreed that these strategies could be applied to other learning contexts in real life. This research also shows that educators need to dispel the negative conceptions of gaming in order to encourage learners to appreciate their empowering nature.

In a further case study (Uusi-Mäkelä, 2015), Finnish and Norwegian students collaborated in building villages in the MMORPG *Minecraft*. The researcher investigated informal learning. Researcher observation revealed that this phenomenon of informal language learning was observed throughout the study. Learner feedback was mixed. Some learners reported improvement in their language competences while others reported no improvements. However, most participants agreed that they were able to employ the TL in an appropriate manner. The researcher claimed that the collaborative learning environment provided by *Minecraft* enabled learners to practice adaptive strategies in order to communicate effectively with each other.

This paper will now examine the key findings of an exploratory study on the use of the MMORPG *Cube World* as a language learning platform. Preliminary results are examined. These observations indicate evidence of extensive collaboration conducted in the TL. The discussion will conclude with an examination of promising areas for future research.

### **Minecraft and Cube World**

“Today, more and more, digital games are being hyped as a new silver bullet” (Gee, 2013). The introduction of *Minecraft Education Edition* enables educators to use the *Minecraft* game in a variety of educational contexts. This game is designed to facilitate the development of essential life skills such as computational thinking along with communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and curiosity. Likewise, the interactive environment of *Cube World* which is inspired by *Minecraft* (von Funck, 2011) not only provides participants with the freedom to explore and discover the rules of learning through game play (Bogost, 2008) but also allows for a deeper understanding of simulations and enables learning situated in action to take place (Gee, 2005).



Figure 1: Cube World.

Figure 1 shows the rich and engaging 3D virtual environment of Cube World, an open world MMORPG developed by Picroma, released in 2011, that enables players to explore a large-scaled voxel-based world that is filled with randomly generated features such as grasslands, jungles, deserts and oceans. As is the case in other MMORPGs, Cube World provides access to personal avatars that specialize in different abilities.

In addition, players can interact with each other in real-time using text chat that is displayed in an on-screen text box. Navigation is achieved by the means of keyboard commands that enable players to move and explore the world. Enemies are a mixture of fantasy creatures and animals that inhabit universes corresponding to their real life counterparts. For example, one will encounter wolves in the jungles but not in the deserts and one might encounter a shark in the ocean but not in the rivers running through the grasslands. This realistic element of the game allows participants to relate game dialogues, images, experiences and actions to the context of use, actual experiences, functions and problem solving in the real world. The complex cognitive processes that are elicited during the completion of tasks involving problem solving (Rankin et. al, 2006) make it possible to understand conceptual learning and apply the knowledge obtained.

### Collaborative Learning in Cube World

Previous studies indicate that learners gain opportunities to engage in beneficial types of dialogue through social interaction in popular MMORPGs such as Minecraft (Swier, 2014). However, to date, most research is small scale, limited in scope and tends to focus on “what the players are learning and thinking when they play these games” (Squire, 2002). Few studies have explored learner strategies during task-based interactions or learner attitudes. In order to address these gaps in the literature a case study was undertaken to answer the following questions:

1. What discourse management strategies do learners employed during task-based TL interaction in a MMORPG?
2. What are the learner attitudes to study in a MMORPG?

The case study was held weekly during the fall semester of 2015 involving a class of 10 Japanese EFL students. A pre-questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the class in order to gauge the participants computing skills, gaming experience and linguistic capabilities. All of the participants claimed they possessed competent computer skills but only two of these participants mentioned they had prior background in playing MMORPG games. Nine out of 10 students claimed to have average reading skills while three students admitted to have poor writing skills in the pre-questionnaire. Furthermore, only four students have taken the TOEIC/TOEFL tests.

Similar to other studies (Anfara & Brown, 2001), a triangulation of questionnaires, observations and document analysis rendered a holistic understanding of the situation and generally converging conclusions. Collected data include pre- and post-questionnaires, text chats, in-class video recordings and learner feedback posted on the web-based platform Edmodo after each session. All participants were requested to participate actively in completing the tasks which were designed to meet learner needs, encourage active participation and elicit meaningful collaboration by engaging learners in purposeful interaction using the specific tools provided within Cube World. These tasks were completed in class in order to reduce the possibility of network issues impeding data collection on top of allowing the researcher to observe in-class interactions among the participants. Each task lasted for at least one session per week while some activities were done over a span of two to three sessions. Further relevant information on the tasks can be found in Table 1.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Self-Introduction	In order to break the ice between participants during their first meeting in the game the learners were required to introduce themselves and explain the reasons for their choice of avatar. They also gave feedback on the avatars chosen by other players.
Find A Place	Each participant was given a different clue and they have to take part in question-and-answer sessions with their group members to reveal the name of the place they were looking for in the game world.
Guessing Game	Learners were given bingo boards with various clues and the learners worked together with their group members to solve the clues in order to complete the bingo board.
Story completion	Learners worked together to fill in the blanks of a fairy tale. The required words and phrases were embedded in the game world.
Description Game	Learners were requested to visit a specific location in the game during a given time limit before heading back to base camp where they described their journey to the other group members.
Obtaining A Pet	At the start of the session, each participant was provided with an incomplete instruction sheet for finding an animal in the game world. The participants have to share and exchange the information they have with each other in order to find the animal specified in the instruction.

Table 1: Tasks.

### **Learner Interaction in Cube World**

The maximum number of players allowed to play on the LAN network was limited to four at a time but for the purposes of this study, the class was divided into groups of four and two players with each player being rotated between the groups so that the participants have the opportunity to interact with everyone in the class. Statements from learner feedback showed that the group size and rotations did not affect the players' interactions.

“Team member was different from last week. I enjoyed joining the game with a new friend and I think I can cooperate with new friends well next week too.”

Learner A

“At this time I worked together with [Learner 2]. He was a friendly person. We work good together. I want to talk more with playing with him.”

Learner B

Analysis of the text-chats revealed that majority of the participants chose to ask their group members for assistance, regardless of the group they were in. This mutual engagement of participants in coordinated effort to solve the problem together (Roschelle & Teasley, 1995) represents the type of collaborative learning that not only develops social and communication skills but also builds positive attitudes towards peers and learning materials as well as building social relationships and group cohesion (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

- (1) 1. Learner 1: my target is crocodile  
 2. Learner 2: crocodile?!  
 3. Learner 2: that sounds so hard  
 4. Learner 1: i don't know where thwy live  
 5. Learner 2: lets help each other  
 6. Learner 2: follow me!  
 (3 lines)  
 7. Learner 1: OK, lets go and find out crocodile  
 8. Learner 2: he is live near water  
 9. Learner 1: how you know?  
 10. Learner 1: so, lets go western river  
 11. Learner 2: crocodiles likes water, I think  
 12. Learner 2: let's go

In the above interaction, Learner 1 reveals the target of his/her task and in doing so, elicits help from a group member who obliges, thus creating a collaborative bond between these two participants. The target of the task (in this case, the crocodile) became the subject of subsequent conversations that further helped in strengthening the established coalition as well as helping the participants to focus on the task at hand.

In addition, a significant feature of the data involves either self- or other-initiated correction in the TL as seen in the excerpt below,

- (2) 1. Learner 1: i dont understand what 'fay-man' means...could you tellme?  
 2. Learner 2: fay-man?  
 3. Learner 3: you mean 'hay-man'?!  
 4. Learner 1: yea! yea 'hay-man'!  
 5. Learner 1: sorry!

Learner 1 makes an error in turn 1 in his/her TL output by misspelling the word "hay-man". This utterance draws a swift response for Learner 2 who signals that an error has occurred. In the next turn, Learner 3 provides appropriate corrective feedback. In turn 4, Learner 1 acknowledges the error and apologizes in turn 5. This example draws attention to an advantage of the communication environment provided by the game: learners can view their TL output on screen in real time as it is produced and this may facilitate the noticing first identified by Schmidt (2001).

- (3) 1. Learner 1: you have clues for me?  
 2. Learner 2: yes.  
 3. Learner 2: mosqtoes are active during \_\_ (sunrinse) or \_\_ (sunset)  
 4. Learner 2: sorry! mosquitoes :D  
 5. Learner 1: ww thank u

In interaction (3), Learner 2 commits an error in the form of misspelling "mosquitoes". In turn 4, this learner notices the error and provides the correct spelling and attempts to convey humor through the use of an emoticon in turn 5. As the avatars in this game cannot display facial expressions or use intonation, players normally employ a variety of text and keyboard symbols (emoticons and abbreviations) in an attempt to display these aspects of communication (Danet, 2010). The usage of the emoticon by Learner



2 elicits a positive response by Learner 1 with the abbreviated form of “u” and this learner further displays happiness through the use of the Japanese version of a “LOL” which is “ww”.

More usage of emoticons and abbreviations can be found in the following example.

- (4) 1. Learner 1: u are strong ww  
 2. Learner 2: I owe items u gave me ww  
 3. Learner 1: sorry I died :(  
 4. Learner 2: here r feathers

In the above interaction, Learner 1 and Learner 2 were fighting with an enemy when Learner 1 was “killed” by the enemy. She “revived” to join Learner 2. When they meet up later on, Learner 1 compliments Learner 2’s physical strength using the abbreviated form of “u” and displays a friendly behavior the use of the Japanese version of a “LOL” which is “ww”. Learner 2 accepts the compliment by conveying his thanks to Learner 1 and shows his intention of maintaining the positive relationship between group members by repeating the use of “ww”. Learner 1 apologizes for her “death” accompanied by the sad face emoticon and to this, Learner 2 offers his healing items (in this case, the feathers) to Learner 1.

Interactions (3) and (4) show that both participants utilized paralinguistic cues in the form of abbreviations and emoticons in order to minimize social distance and to build supportive relationships between interlocutors. The friendly atmosphere displayed in the conversations proves that the participants regarded themselves as members of a group, rather than individuals which imply a well-established collaborative relationship between the members.

### **Learner Attitudes and Learner Feedback**

Pre- and post- questionnaires and in-class video recordings disclosed some interesting findings on learner feedback in Cube World. As was noted previously, nine students reported to have average reading skills and three students reported having poor writing skills in the pre- questionnaires but at the end of the semester, seven students strongly agreed that their readings skills had improved and six students either strongly agreed or agreed that their writing skills had improved.

Learner feedback posted on Edmodo revealed that rather than being embarrassed by their errors, the participants perceived mistakes as a source of opportunity. The researcher observed that throughout the sessions, the learners appeared highly motivated.

“Todays game was a little easier and very exciting for me but I could not solve it. The more I experience this class, the better I play this game ;))”

Learner C

Moreover, the learners asserted that a benefit of the game was the access to new vocabulary.

“I found many words I didn’t know such as ‘rooster’, ‘purr’, ‘raccoon’ and more. There are so many words I haven’t seen yet.”

Learner D

In-class video recordings showed that participants seek out the meaning of unknown words and phrases through electronic dictionary applications on their mobile phones. Once they have discovered the meaning of new words or phrases, it was observed that they sometimes share them with other participants. This is an important finding as it is noted in the literature that the feeling of succeeding as a communicator plays an important role in future success (MacIntyre, 2007). This finding echoes previous research (Rubin & Thompson, 1983; Brown, 2000). Data from the learner feedback shows that the participants were clearly comfortable with the communication environment and were willing to take risks in the TL. Moreover, they were open to receiving help in overcoming errors. However, as is noted in the literature, motivation only keeps the learner engaged for a fixed span of time. In this context, motivation is something that emerges from a combination of goals, personal backgrounds, games affordances and institutional context (Squire, 2005b), not just from playing the game or interacting with other players in the game world.

Another observation particularly relevant to the findings of this study is that most of the participants claimed in their feedback that particularly in the early sessions, they had difficulty in understanding the game commands and in controlling their game characters. This in turn lowered their motivation levels by the end of the class. Although this issue requires acknowledgement, it needs to be stressed that the participants claimed they were motivated to learn from errors and mistakes made during communication exchanges and they were engaged by the interactive environment of the game. Post-questionnaires further revealed this, as indicated in the following comment:

“in normal classroom, we sit and listen to the Professor but in this class, we read and type in English while playing games. This keeps motivation up and students will be more willing to study.”

Learner E

### **Conclusion and future directions**

Data analysis revealed the presence of extensive collaborative dialogue involving forms of self- and other- initiated correction. Data shows that viewing TL output on screen in real time helped in drawing attention to errors and eliciting appropriate feedback in facilitating peer scaffolding. Moreover, it was found that learners use paralinguistic clues such as abbreviations and emoticons in order to maintain social cohesion and to replicate the beneficial collaborative relationships that are found in real life face-to-face communication in the computer-based communication of the game. Learner feedback indicates that the rich 3D world provided by the game appears to enhance motivation and engagement.

However, a case study involving a small group of participants in a relatively unknown game cannot offer definitive results. Furthermore, computer lag proved to be a limitation as participants had to deal with typing in the chat box as well as dealing with the time delay between typing and reading the chat text. This case study, though



experimental, indicates that MMORPGs such as Cube World provide an engaging learning tool for the new generation of learners.

Knowing and understanding how learners adapt various strategies in their interactions and how learners perceive learning through digital games are essential parts of the foreign language pedagogy. These findings have implications for future research. Going forward, educators may investigate the implementation of meaningful task-based activities with the goal of better comprehending how participation in MMORPG-based gaming enables learners to engage in valuable forms of TL interaction that expand their learning skills. Furthermore, future studies into learner attitudes offer the prospect of enhancing understanding of learner in-game experiences.



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*A Semantic Study on Verbs of Human Senses in English under Cognitive Linguistics (Versus Vietnamese)*

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**Abstract**

Cognitive Linguistics is a recontextualizing approach. In contrast with formal semantics, the conception of meaning that lies at the basis of this approach is not restricted to a referential, truth-functional type of meaning. Cognitive Linguistics embodies a fully contextualized conception of meaning. Meaning is not just an objective reflection of the outside world; it is a way of shaping that world. If meaning has to do with the way in which we interact with the world, it is natural to assume that our whole person is involved. The meaning we construct in and through the language is not a separate and independent module of the mind, but it reflects our overall experience as human beings. Languages may embody the historical and cultural experience of groups of speakers (and individuals). The article refers to a semantic research on conceptual metaphor of verbs of human senses in English and Vietnamese. The result will contribute to clarify the similarities and differences in thinking deeply hidden behind the cognitive mechanisms of native speakers (English and Vietnamese) in order to innovative English teaching methods in approaching cognitive linguistics, especially in teaching advanced English and translating for students in Vietnam.

Keywords: Cognitive linguistics, sensory verb, human senses, conceptual metaphor, cognitive mechanisms



## **Introduction**

Cognitive Linguistics refers to a particular branch of linguistics associated with scholars such as George Lakoff, Ronald Langacker, Charles Fillmore, and Gilles Fauconnier. Following van Hoek (1999:134): “Cognitive Linguistics is not a single theory but is rather best characterised as a paradigm within linguistics, subsuming a number of distinct theories and research programs. It is characterised by an emphasis on explicating the intimate interrelationship between language and other cognitive faculties. One of the basic tenets of the cognitive linguistics approach is that human cognition—the production, communication and processing of meaning. Another is that human cognition is independent of language: linguistic expressions of cross-domain mappings are merely surface manifestations of deeper cognitive structures that have an important spatial or analog component (Johnson 1987, Lakoff 1987, Langacker 1987). Cognitive Linguistics, then, comprises a number of theories which attend to various aspects of conceptual structure, including conceptual metaphor theory, mental space theory, frame semantics and cognitive grammar. In the study, we focus on the embodiment in semantic field through conceptual metaphors in order to clarify really meaning of verbs of human senses in English and Vietnamese.

## **Aims of the study**

- Finding theoretical background about cognitive linguistics, embodiment and conceptual metaphors.
- Contributing my bit to the cognitive theory of metaphor, to cross-cultural communication as well to bring out of the meaning of conceptual metaphors in verbs of human senses in English and Vietnamese.
- Distinguishing similarities and differences between conceptual metaphors in verbs of human senses in English and Vietnamese.
- Giving suggestions in teaching and learning translating English into Vietnamese and vice visa.

## **Research questions**

- In what dimensions do conceptual metaphors reveal the similarity and/or difference in the two languages in English and Vietnamese human senses through cognitive view?
- What explanations can be made for the similarities and/or differences in semantic field of conceptual metaphor of verbs of human senses in the two languages?
- What implications could be drawn out from the findings in terms of teaching and translating English into Vietnamese?

## **Objectives and Scope of the Study**

We focus on studying conceptual metaphors in English and Vietnamese under basis of cognitive linguistics. However, in the limitation of the research, we only concern with semantic field of verbs that express human senses in two languages through embodiment with the hope of inheriting the previous researches, especially the metaphor theory of Lakoff and Johnson as a base.

## Data

The linguistic data, on which this study is based, are all derived from ordinary language used by and familiar to native speakers. The data are mainly taken from magazines, novels, short stories, folk/popular songs and everyday language talking about people's human senses (emotions).

## Methods of the Study

- Critical Discourse Analysis
- Critical Metaphor Analysis
- Contrastive analysis
- Description
- Quality and quantity

## Main ideas in Cognitive Linguistics

The most fundamental tenet in this model is **embodiment** (Johnson 1987, Lakoff 1987, Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999). Cognitive Linguistics argues that both the design features of languages and our ability to learn and use them are accounted for by general cognitive abilities, kinaesthetic abilities, our visual and sensimotor skills and our human categorisation strategies, together with our cultural, contextual and functional parameters (Barcelona 1997:8). It is the result of what Lakoff calls "**the cognitive commitment**" (Lakoff 1990:40). Mental and linguistic categories are not abstract, disembodied and human independent categories; we create them on the basis of our concrete experiences and under the constraints imposed by our bodies. Human conceptual categories, the meaning of words and sentences and the meaning of linguistic structures at any level, are not a set of universal abstract features or uninterpreted symbols (Barcelona 1997:9). They are motivated and grounded more or less directly in experience, in our bodily, physical, social and cultural experiences, because after all, "we are beings of the flesh" (Johnson 1992:347).

The second main idea is related to the theory of linguistic meaning. For Cognitive Linguistics, meanings do not exist independently from the people that create and use those (Reddy 1993); all linguistic forms do not have inherent form in themselves, they act as clues activating the meanings that reside in our minds and brains. This activation of meaning is not necessarily entirely the same in every person, because meaning is based on individual experience as well as collective experience (Barcelona 1997:9). Therefore, for Cognitive Linguistics, we have no access to a reality independent of human categorisation, and that is why the structure of reality as reflected in language is a product of the human mind. Semantic structure reflects the mental categories which people have formed from their experience and understanding of the world.

One of the basic tenets of the cognitive linguistics approach is that human cognition - the production, communication and processing of meaning - is heavily dependent upon mappings between mental spaces. Another is that human cognition is independent of language: linguistic expressions of cross-domain mappings are merely surface manifestations of deeper cognitive structures that have an important spatial or analog component. These mappings take several forms, but perhaps the most

dramatic form and the form we will be primarily concerned with here is what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson refer to as “**conceptual metaphor**,” where part of the structure of a more concrete or clearly organized domain (the *source* domain) is used to understand and talk about another, usually more abstract or less clearly structured, domain (the *target* domain) (Johnson 1987, Lakoff 1987, Langacker 1987).

### **Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics View (Conceptual Metaphor)**

In traditional theories, metaphor is usually portrayed as a relatively rare and somewhat “deviant” mode of communication thrown in to add rhetorical spice, but one fully reducible to some equivalent literal paraphrase. Metaphor understood in this way is thus viewed as a purely optional linguistic device.

Nowadays, metaphor is, in fact, primarily a matter of *thought*, not language. Lakoff and Johnson’s 1980 book *Metaphors We Live By* changed the way linguists thought about metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson observed that metaphorical language appears to relate to an underlying metaphor system, a “system of thought”. In other words, they noticed that we cannot choose any conceptual domain at random in order to describe relationships like marriage. They consider the example “LOVE IS A JOURNEY”. This pattern led Lakoff and Johnson to hypothesise a conventional link at the conceptual level between the domain of LOVE RELATIONSHIPS and the domain of JOURNEYS. According to this view, LOVE, which is the target (the domain being described), is conventionally structured in terms of JOURNEYS, which is the source (the domain in terms of which the target is described). This association is called a **conceptual metaphor** which is ubiquitous and unavoidable for creatures like us. Thought is not a manipulation of symbols but the application of cognitive processes to conceptual structures. Meaning structures come not only from the direct relationship with the external world but also from the nature of bodily and social experience (how humans experience with the world) and from human capacity to project from some aspects based on this experience to some abstract conceptual structures.

### **The basic paradigm of verbs of human senses in English and Vietnamese**

The semantic field of verbs of human senses includes *vision, hearing, touch, smell and taste*. They can be classified in three different groups according to the semantic role of their subjects: experience, activity (Viberg 1984:123), and “percept” (Gisborne 1996:1). The “experience” group is traditionally described as “the receiving of an expression by the senses independently of the will of the person concerned” (Poutsma 1926:341) such as “*He saw Fred and George look at each other*” (Harry Potter 2000). This classification can be found in Vietnamese such as “*Họ thấy chúng tôi đi với nhau*” (*They see we go each other*). The second group of verbs refers to an “unbounded process that is consciously controlled by a human agent” (Viberg 1984:123). These verbs are called “active perception verbs” (Poutsma 1926:341, Leech 1971:23, Rogers 1971:206, 1972:304). As the verb *listen* in “*Jane was deliberately listening to the music*” (from Gisborne 1996:1) accepts the adverb *deliberately*, it can be classified as an agentive verb; while in “*Jane deliberately heard the music*” the infelicity of this adverb with *hear* indicates that it is an experience verb. In Vietnamese, we have “*Tôi nhìn ông, chỉ thấy phía sau lưng, nhưng khi ngọn roi vụt xuống tôi có thể hình dung gương mặt ông se lại như thế nào*” (*I look at him from his back, but when he whips the rod into me, I could imagine his pain*) (from I

am Beto, Nguyen Nhat Anh 2012:45). Viberg (1984) establishes the differences between experience and activity verbs on the one hand and copulative verbs on the other, on the basis of what he calls “base selection”, i.e. the choice of grammatical subject among the deep semantic case roles associated with a certain verb. In the former case, verbs are “experiencer-based”; that is to say the verb takes an animate being with certain mental experience as a subject. In the latter case, verbs are “source-based” or “phenomenon-based”, as the verb takes the experienced entity as a subject. The last group is formed by those verbs whose subjects are the stimuli of the perception as illustrated in “*Harry, trying to say “Shh!” and look comforting at the same time*” (Harry Potter 2000). Following this, I conducted to apply it to Vietnamese illustrated in the following sentence “*Tôi nhìn Bino, tiếp tục thấy lạ lẫm*” (I look at Bino, I still feel strange) (from I am Beto, Nguyen Nhat Anh 2012:158).

According to B. Iraide Ibarretxe-Antuñano (1999), it is important to notice these verbs in cases such as hearing there is a different verb belonging to this sense cognition for each group. In the other cases however, there are not different lexical items for each group. This does not imply that the distinction between experience, activity, and percept is less important in these cases (Miller and Johnson-Laird 1976:618), but that, as Lehrer (1990:223) points out, only one polysemous verb corresponds to the three of them.

### **Cognitive semantics in verbs of human senses in English and Vietnamese**

Cognitive semantics began in the 1970s as a reaction against the objectivist world-view assumed by the Anglo-American tradition in philosophy and the related approach, truth conditional semantics, developed within formal linguistics. Eve Sweetser, a leading cognitive linguist, describes the truth conditional approach in the following terms: ‘By viewing meaning as the relationship between words and the world, truth-conditional semantics eliminates cognitive organization from the linguistic system (Sweetser 1990:4). In contrast to this view, cognitive semantics sees linguistic meaning as a manifestation of conceptual structure: the nature and organisation of mental representation in all its richness and diversity, and this is what makes it a distinctive approach to linguistic meaning (Vyvyan E. and Melanie G. 1998).

A fundamental concern for cognitive semanticists is the nature of the relationship between conceptual structure and the external world of sensory experience. In other words, cognitive semanticists set out to explore the nature of human interaction with and awareness of the external world, and to build a theory of conceptual structure that is consonant with the ways in which we experience the world. One idea that as emerged in an attempt to explain the nature of conceptual organisation on the basis of interaction with the physical world is the bodily embodied cognition thesis. As we saw, this thesis holds that the nature of conceptual organisation arises from bodily experience, so part of what makes conceptual structure meaningful is the bodily experience with which it is associated (Vyvyan E. and Melanie G. 1998).

Sweetser (1990) investigates the multiple meanings in the semantic field of English verbs of human senses. She shows that lexical polysemy cannot be understood independently of human cognitive structure. The fact that everyday cognition is metaphorically shaped, at least partially, helps us to understand the way in which the

senses of polysemous words are related.

**Vision** is the capability of the eye(s) to focus and detect images of visible light on photoreceptors in the retina of each eye that generates electrical nerve impulses for varying colors, hues, and brightness. In the case of vision, Sweetser identifies a basic metaphorical understanding of this sense that leads to the connection of vision to intellectual activity. Some vision terms involve physical perceptions or manipulations and have correlates in the domain of intellectual operations. As important as the routes for sense perception are the patterns that unify these semantic changes. In this case, Sweetser suggests three reasons for this parallelism between vision and intellection: (i) Vision is our primary source of objective data about the world. It gives us more information than any of the other senses, and it appears that children rely most heavily on visual features in their early categorisation. (ii) The focusing ability of vision that enables us to pick up one stimulus at will from many, to differentiate fine features. (iii) Vision is identical for different people who can take the same viewpoint. Therefore, it seems to provide a basis for shared public knowledge. It is by far the most studied sense of the five. The semantic field of sight has been analysed not only from the point of view of polysemy (Bauer 1949, Prévot 1935, García Hernández 1976, Alm-Arvius 1993) but also from the language acquisition perspective (Landau and Gleitman 1985, C. Johnson 1999). From the above concept of vision, in daily life, humans use words of this sense to express their ideas by their cognition and bodily experience. In this case, “*see*” means “*understand, foresee, consider, to imagine / visualize, to consider / regard / judge, to revise / study*” which are extended meanings relating physical vision with the intellect or mental activity. Let’s consider these examples: “*See why I’ve got to go back to Hogwarts? It’s the only place I’ve got*”, “*I see.....a clever plan,*”, “*Harry couldn’t see any way out of his situation*”, (from Harry Potter 1999), “*I see him as a good teacher*”. This situation also appears in Vietnamese, as in “*Thấy gì làm ấy*” (What we see we do) “*Lúc đầu Văn thấy ê chề, tủi cực lắm...*” (At first time Van feels so bitterly, , deplore..) “*Tôi thấy cô ấy nói như chim hót*” (I see she speaks as birds sing) (from Cánh đồng bất tận, Nguyễn Ngọc Vũ 2010:102), “*Mấy thằng bạn rượu phấn khởi gấp bốn lần Kha Ly, thắp thoáng đầu đó đã thấy màu tương lai*” (My wine friends look exciting four times than Kha LY, they see the color of future) (from Bãi vàng, đá quý, trầm hương, Nguyễn Trí, 2012:119). However, “*see*” which means “*study*” is only found in English “*I see how to use these documentaries*”, this meaning is used in Vietnamese. Additionally, in English, we can find conceptual metaphor of “*see*” relating social relationships “*to meet, to visit, to receive, to go out with, to get on badly*” as in “*See you next summer!*” (from Harry Potter 1999) or “*That couple can’t see each other*”. “*We have been seeing each other for a decade*”, “*Malfoy, ...sour each time he saw them at it*” (from Harry Potter, 1999:210), In Vietnamese, learners can receive the similarity to English in these meanings, except the meaning “*to go out with*, for example: “*Sau khi chia tay, họ nhìn nhau không còn tốt đẹp*” (After divorcing, they get on badly), “*Đã lâu cô ấy không nhìn thấy con mình*” (She has not seen her children for a long time), “*Tôi chưa bao giờ thấy một người nào đẹp như vậy*” (I have never met a girl like that).

**Hearing** is the sense of sound perception. In Sweetser’s opinion, the sense of hearing is similar to the sense of vision, the most salient sense. Hearing shares with vision some of its characteristics when speaking about mental activity, but it is not the same kind of activity. In hearing, the voluntarily on-off control of vision is no longer



applicable; we cannot control the reception of sounds. The function of hearing is regarded as linguistic communication, as a means of intellectual and emotional influence on each other; this is carried out in an effective manner via the vocal organs and the auditory sense-channel. The sense of hearing therefore is connected to: (i) Heedfulness and internal receptivity, (ii) Internal reception of ideas, understanding what is heard. The verbs used for the analysing are *hear* and *listen* in English, *nghe* and *nghe thấy* in Vietnamese. In English, cognitive meanings include “*to understand, to heed, to pay attention, to obey, to be told, informed*”, as in “*Listen to what I’m telling you*”, “*I told you to listen to your mother*”. In Vietnamese, we consider “*Nghe đây, ngày mai chúng ta được nghỉ làm*”. (Pay attention! We’ll have a day-off tomorrow).

**Touch** has always been related to the field of emotions. The verbs used for the analysing are *touch* and *feel* in English, *sờ* and *sờ thấy* in Vietnamese. The sense of *touch* has often been related to two fields: the general sense of perception and the emotional feeling. In English, the meanings which have been discovered are *to partake, to check, to reach, to deal with*”, as in “*I didn’t touch a penny from your money*”, “*He touched everything in her bag*”, “*He touched the high point in his career*”, “*I wouldn’t touch that work*”. As Sweetser states, in many languages, at least one of the words that denotes ‘emotional feeling’ is related to the domain of physical feeling (Sweetser 1990:37) and consequently, expressions such as wounded, stroked, touched, which belong to the touch and tactile domain can also be used for emotional sensations. She also states that the verb meaning ‘*to feel*’ in the sense of *touch* is the same as the verb indicating general perception. In Vietnamese, the verb for ‘to touch’ *sờ thấy* is used in some forms (‘to pay, ‘to partake, ‘to check’, ‘to reach’, experience verbs), as in *Tôi không sờ vào đồng nào của anh* (I don’t partake any money of you), *Anh ta sờ sau lưng liệu có bị trầy không* (He checked his back whether there was any scratch), *Đứng lên ghế, cậu bé sờ vào râu của bố* (Standing on the chair, the little boy reached his father’s beard), *Tôi không sờ đến công việc đó* (I don’t pay attention to that work) (Tran Thi Thuy Oanh 2014).

**Smell** is generally considered a weaker source domain for metaphorical meanings in comparison with the other senses (Caplan 1973, Viberg 1984, Sweetser 1990). The sense of taste seems to be linked to personal likes and dislikes in the mental world. Perhaps the reason why this is so lies in the fact that the sense of taste is most closely associated with fine discrimination. According to Buck, the verbs used for the analysing are *smell* and *sniff* in English, *ngửi* and *ngửi thấy* in Vietnamese. The meanings as to trail, to disdain, to guess are found in English, for example “*The dog was smelling the ground looking for the hare*”, “*The critics sniffed at the adaptation of the novel to film*”, “*The police have been smelling the crime round here*”. But they are not used in Vietnamese, except “to guess”, as “*Tên trộm đã ngửi được mùi tiền trong túi bà ấy*” (The robber guessed there was money in her bag).

**Taste** is generally linked to personal likes and dislikes in the mental world. Perhaps the reason why this is so lies in the fact that the sense of taste is most closely associated with fine discrimination. This makes the sense of taste very accurate from a descriptive point of view, as it allows us to express ourselves very precisely when we want to describe a taste. It is worth noting, as a contrast, the case of smell, which as Aristotle pointed out, lacks any independent classification of smells similar to that of tastes. The verbs used for the analysing are *taste* and *savour* in English, *nếm* and

*nếm thấy* in Vietnamese. to experience something, to produce a feeling (enjoy/dislike), as “*He has tasted the frustration*”, “*They started to taste the other team’s defeat*” in English, “*Họ đã nếm đủ mùi khủng khiếp*” (They experienced horrors enough) in Vietnamese.

### **Embodiment in conceptual metaphors of human senses in Vietnamese**

One of features of Vietnamese is that adjectives can be considered as theme or “verb” in sentences, for instance in “*Cô ấy ngon nhí*” (She looked delicious). Therefore, Vietnamese has many ways to express their feelings with countless interesting illustration for experimental hypothesis itself through experiencing senses (*taste, touch, smell, hearing, sight*).

- The original meaning of the **visual** sense only: short, long, high, low, good, bad, rectangular, round, distorted, big, small, fuzzy, clearly ..., for example: “*Câu nói tròn vành rõ chữ*” (The speech is round, clear), *Giọng to thế, hơi dài thế*” (That’s a big voice and a long breath).

- The original meaning of the sense of taste just like: *sour, sweet, savory, salty, pale, bitter, tart, spicy, warm, numb ...*, people expand concepts in embodying: “*Giọng nói cô ấy chua quá*” (Her voice is too sour), “*Chị vào phòng, không khí nhạt quá, chị lại ra ngoài*” (*She came in. The atmosphere was too tasteless. She went out again*)...

- The initial feeling from **hearing** such as: noisy, rumbling ... through human experience, people use them to express the meanings as noisy characteristics, noisy days.... We consider the sentence “*Cô bé ồn ào cả ngày*” (She is noisy all day).

- The words to that initial feeling of touch as: *soft, smooth, rough, rough, lumpy, smooth ...* used to refer to feelings such as: *rough shape, smooth pocket, smooth voice*...

- The original meaning only from the sense of **smell**: *aromatic, pungent, spirited, notorious, fishy*... is used to describe the feelings, such as “*Hợp đồng thơm phức*” (This contract is aromatic).

In fact, in the metaphor result, there is a particularly noteworthy, they are hidden example, using the name of the sense of belonging to this sense to name the feelings of other senses or the intellectual, emotional feelings" (Vietnamese Lexical and semantic, Đỗ Hữu Châu 159-160). However, the author just stops at the mentioned phenomena and early comments without questioning learn, explains why there are such phenomena.

In Vietnamese, the phenomenon called multiple sensory sensation is used to name the feelings of other senses or switch to just the nature of intellectual, emotional, is quite common.

In short, through Cognitive linguistics, the meaning of human senses moved through the human body experiences.



## Conclusion

Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action. Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. The concepts that govern our thought are not just matters of the intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning, down to the most mundane details. The mapping of several target domains such as “see” means “go out” is only found in English data, but not in Vietnamese. It is seen that the English tend to describe things and state in a more concrete way while in Vietnamese. On the other hand, the influence of natural condition is also shown in both languages. Due to the differences between two languages on structure and function of word, some adjectives of human senses can be used as “verb” in speech, especially through embodiment or human experiences, people transfer the significance of their cognition on things by conceptual metaphor for their purposes. As Lakoff and Goerge state “Normally, we do not notice the fact that we use metaphors every day, Lakoff established the term “conceptual metaphor” to emphasize the fact that with our conceptual systems we have a metaphorical structure that allows us to conceptualize one domain in terms of another. It is helpful if teachers understand the root underlying similarities and differences between English and Vietnamese metaphors to teach their students the target language. For interpreters and translators as well as Vietnamese students, metaphors shed light and take advantages of the cultural models and norms shared in a given time in a given community.

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The logo for the International Association for Language Acquisition Research (iafor) is centered on the page. It features the lowercase letters "iafor" in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is surrounded by several overlapping, semi-transparent circular arcs in shades of blue and red, creating a dynamic, circular design.

***The Discourse Strategy of Code Switching on SNS texts:  
Focusing on the Case of L1 Chinese-Korean and Chinese***

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**Abstract**

This study aims to figure out the discourse functions of code switching which occurs in SNS chats, 'Kakaotalk' (Korean Mobile Messenger) and 'Wechat' (Chinese Mobile Messenger). This study observed and analyzed several dialogues of 10 Chinese Koreans and 10 Chinese living in Korea. The findings represent Chinese Koreans and Chinese students use a lot of code switching strategies in the observed texts. Chinese Koreans generally used Korean when saying official things or objective information. In daily conversation, on the other hand, there was no obvious consistent tendency. This shows that the preceding languages affect language selection of the following person. It is also shown that Chinese uses L1 in daily conversation but they use Korean when asking for official or personal help. In SNS group chats, Chinese Korean and Chinese use code switching depending on formality of information, for instance, a notice for formal and a request for personal help or personal question for informal. This paper suggests such discourse strategies are adopted to make successful and effective communication in the given context.

Keywords: SNS, Code switching, Discourse Strategy, Language Selection

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 What is code switching?**

Bokamba (1987)'s study found "code switching is the mixing of words, sentences across sentence boundaries and code mixing with the embedding of various linguistic units, such as affixes (bound morphemes), words (unbound morphemes), phrases and clauses from two distinct grammatical (sub-) systems within the same sentence and speech events" (p. 36). According to Auer (1995), code switching is different from insertion. Code-alternation, he suggests, emphasizes on discourse pragmatic approach as a super ordinate concept (Auer, 1995, p.116). Hamers & Blanc (1987) defines code switching as a concept including code mixing and code changing. Code mixing involves change in constituents of a sentence and code changing involves changes across sentences or turn taking. Also, there are researches in the discourse level like Gumperz (1972), which code switching can be used as a strategy of communication. In this study, the terminology "code switching" is used in a broad sense, including code mixing and discourse strategy for effective communication.

### **1.2 Why Korean-Chinese bilingualism?**

This study focuses on two Korean-Chinese bilingual groups; one is Chaoxian people(朝鮮族) who live in northeastern China, the other is Chinese learners of Korean. In the case of Chaoxian people, they not only acquire Chinese as a formal language of the society to which they belong, but also do speak Korean as a heritage language from their parents or grandparents. There is little research on advanced Chinese learners of Korean, even though the number of them has been increasing. A few studies dealing with code switching, yet, focus on code itself such as code types, instead of communication strategies (Lee, 2004; Lim, 2006).

### **1.3 Why Korean-Chinese code switching?**

There are a few studies that focus on the Huaqiao (Overseas Chinese in Korea) from Taiwan living in Korea (Son & Seo, 2008; Kang 2011, Kang, 2012) and researches on Chaoxian people generally concentrate on Korean-Chinese grammar errors. Code switching has been considered as a matter of error in inter-language studies, most of which were not based on discourse approach. Neither was in the case for Chinese learners of Korean. However, they often use code switching in their everyday lives and that so frequently. This study aims to investigate code switching in the discourse of Chaoxian and Han people in everyday lives and figure out the discourse strategies of code switching in both groups. Research questions are as follows: is there difference between code switching of Chaoxian people and that of Han people?; do they use discourse strategies? If they do, which discourse strategies do they use?; is there any difference in the discourse strategies they use?

## 2. Methodology

The participants of this study consist of 10 Chaoxian people and 10 Chinese learners of Korean. This study collected the twenty participant's group chatting dialogue in SNS, "Wechat" and "Kakao talk". Following Table 1 is for participant information.

Participants	Ethnic	L1	L2	Frequency of utterances
JH	Chaoxian	K	C	7
JY	Chaoxian	K	C	43
LSH	Chaoxian	C	K	21
WTL	Chaoxian	C	K	29
JGH	Chaoxian	K	C	48
CYS	Chaoxian	K	C	43
QX	Chaoxian	K	C	19
CMZ	Chaoxian	K	C	33
JX	Chaoxian	C	K	47
KJZ	Chaoxian	K	C	12
HJT	Han	C	K	52
FYL	Han	C	K	25
ZJH	Han	C	K	25
ZY	Han	C	K	9
WSH	Han	C	K	15
YFC	Han	C	K	3
ZYH	Han	C	K	16
BZD	Han	C	K	11
FBP	Han	C	K	20
PY	Han	C	K	8
Totals				486

Table 1: Participants' information

The participants are assigned to each of the 6 group chatting rooms. In the group 1 and 2, Chaoxian and Han people are blended, while only Chaoxian people in the group 3 and 4, and only Han people in the group 5 and 6.

Participants	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Group 5	Group 6	Totals
Chaoxian	3	2	3	2	-	-	10
Han	1	2	-	-	5	2	10
Total	4	4	3	2	5	2	20

Table 2: Participants' distribution in the SNS group

This study proceeds in three steps. The first step is to let the 20 participants judge their L1 and L2 by self-checks and set participants' marked or unmarked codes based on the judgment. For example, if participants check Korean as their mother tongue, Chinese should be unmarked code. The second is to use descriptive statistics, comparing the occurrence frequency rate<sup>1</sup> between the Chaoxian and the Han people. The third is conversation analysis as a qualitative approach, establishing a category with a peer review<sup>2</sup>, and then, presenting the types of discourse strategies of code

<sup>1</sup> The ratio of marked frequency means "a marked code frequency/the number of utterances \*100"

<sup>2</sup> As a Peer review, I received a review from two Chinese-Korean bilingual colleagues; there is a close



switching based on Gumperz (1982) and Song (2012). Some previous types are slightly changed (Table 3).

<i>Discourse Strategy</i>
Addressee specifications
Affective expression
Confirmation/ focus
Emphasis by repetition
Lexical/idiomatic expression
Personalization versus objectification
Face-threatening acts mitigation
Opinion expression

Table 3: The type of discourse strategy

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1 Discourse strategy comparison between Chaoxian and Han people

This study found 8 discourse strategies between Chaoxian people and Han people. These discourse strategies are: addressee specifications, affective expression, confirmation/ focus, emphasis by repetition, lexical/idiomatic expression, personalization versus objectification, face-threatening acts mitigation, and opinion expression.

1. The code of addressee specification switch serves to direct the message to a certain listener.
2. The code switch revealing affective expression serves to express emotional things with interjection, filler or agreements.
3. The discourse strategy of confirmation/ focus clarifies what is said.
4. The fourth strategy is an emphasis by repetition. This is speakers' message in L1 code repeated in L2 code, and this repetition serves to emphasize a message.
5. The code switch functioning lexical/idiomatic expression keeps original lexical and idiomatic expressions in L1 or L2.
6. The code of personalization versus objectification serves to distinct the degree of speakers' involvement or distance.
7. The discourse strategy of face-threatening acts mitigation mitigates speakers' face-threatening acts.
8. The last one is an opinion expression, which serves to express speaker's opinion, insistence, or argument.

Chaoxian people do not use the emphasis by repetition strategy and opinion expression; while Han people do not use lexical/idiomatic expression.

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correspondence between two.

### 3.2 A frequency analysis of code switching

Regarding a frequency analysis in each utterance, the number of inter code switching which occurs in sentences is higher than that of intra code switching including words or sentence constituent.

<u>Participants</u>	<u>The number of utterances</u>	<u>Intra code switching</u>	<u>Inter code switching</u>
JH	7	-	1
JY	43	-	15
LSH	21	-	1
WTL	29	-	-
JGH	48	-	5
CYS	43	-	-
QX	19	1	-
CMZ	33	1	1
JX	47	-	17
KJZ	12	-	2
Totals	302	2	42

Table 4: The code switching frequency of Chaoxian participants

<u>Participants</u>	<u>The number of utterances</u>	<u>Intra code switching</u>	<u>Inter code switching</u>
HJT	52	-	29
FYL	25	-	10
ZJH	25	-	13
ZY	9	1	1
WSH	15	-	5
YFC	3	1	1
ZYH	16	-	14
BZD	11	2	1
FBP	20	1	4
PY	8	1	2
Totals	184	6	80

Table 5: The code switching frequency of Han participants

Frequency does not mean normalized number representation, thus, information of frequency ratio is required. Following table shows the ratio of marked code frequency between Chaoxian and Han people, and code switching by Han people is shown to be more frequent than that of Chaoxian people.

<i>The ratio of marked frequency</i>			
<u>Participants</u>	<u>Intra code switching (%)</u>	<u>Inter code switching (%)</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Chaoxian	0.66	13.91	14.57
Han	3.26	43.48	46.74

*Note.* The ratio of marked frequency = the marked code frequency/ the number of utterance frequency \*100

Table 6: The ratio of marked code frequency

#### 4. Discourse strategies in Korean-Chinese code switching.

Now, 8 discourse strategies I mentioned before will be analyzed in this Chapter. The italicized part of the sentences is Korean language; the non-italicized is Chinese. The underlined parts refer to the code switching.

##### 4.1 Addressee specifications

(1) Chinese to Korean (Chaoxian, L1 Chinese)

1 A: Jintian juhui zanmei. Yihui jian. (This is for today's gospel song. See you later.)

2 B: Ni zai nar? (Where are you?)

3 C: *Oneul-do jiha-eseo hasilga-yo. Jigeum iban-e gongbuha-go gyesi-neun bun-i itgeodeun-yo.* (Today's meeting is going to be in the basement? Some people are using this room now.)

4 A: [speaking to B] *Mian gago itda.* (Sorry, I'm coming.)

5 B: Eng, women zai dixia. (Yes, we are in the basement.)

(2) Korean to Chinese (Han, L1 Chinese)

1 A: [speaking to B] B, *aidirang bibeon jwo.* (B, can you tell me your ID and password?)

2 B: [speaking to A] k\*\*\*\*\* 2\*\*\*\*\*

3 A: [speaking to B] *butak butak* (Help me, please.)

4 A: [speaking to All] You ren bang wo shenqing le ma? (Can anyone help me get to apply dorm?)

This strategy serves to direct the message to a particular listener. A in the example (1) speaks in his L1 Chinese to deliver the notice for their prayer meeting. When speaking to B, a particular person, however, he switches L1 Chinese to L2 Korean. A's request for B to ask for B's ID and password in the line 1 and 3 is written in Korean; All of the A's requests about applying to school dorm in the line 4 is written in Chinese. This shows that code switching occurs for Addressee specifications.

##### 4.2 Affective expression

(3) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 is Korean)

1 T: Zenme yang shangbanr (How is your new job going?)

2 J: *Sagi hoesa-ya. nawat-seo.* (A fraudulent company, I've quit my job)

- 3 T: A, zenme le? (What happen to you?)  
 4 J: *Don-do an ju-gu, sagichi-neun hoesa-ya.* (The company did not pay me, the fraudulent company.)  
 5 T: Gongzi ma? (Do you mean raise?)  
 6 J: *Eong* (Yes.)  
 7 T: Ting zhiqian zai nar gan guo de ren shuo de ma? (Did you hear from the person working in the company?)  
 8 J: Eng eng jiushi jiushi a. (You are right!! right!!)  
 9 T: Hao bu rongyi zhaodao yi ge bucuo de gongsi. (How hard you worked to find this job.)  
 10 J: (crying emoticon)  
 11 J: Jiushi jiushi. (That's what I am saying.)  
 12 T: Zai zhaozhao ba. Maoyi gongsi ting bucuo de. (Search for a job again. A trading company is great.)

(4) Chinese to Korean (Chaoxian, L1 is Chinese)

- 1 A: Ni xuan yi ge huozhe gen bie renheyan yeoksi (Please choose one, or you can do a combined concert, that's great that's great, as expected.)  
 2 B: Ni gen shei peiyin de (whom do you dub with?)  
 3 A: Bu renshi geshou (I don't know singer.)

This code switching serves to express emotional things with interjection, filler or agreements. J in (3) barely found the job, but did not receive the pay raise. J is expressing strong agreements in the switched code, Chinese, for T's empathetic question and caring. In the example (4), A was delightful for B's great achievement as A expected and praised B. Code switching here functions to reveal A's affective feeling.

#### 4.3 Clarification/focus

(5) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 Korean)

- 1 CYS: *Imo* (Aunt)  
 2 CYS: *Hangju-ro ga-neun bihaenggi maja-yo?* (Is the airplane going to Hangju, right?)  
 3 Aunt: *Geurae Hangju Shousan jichang* (Yes, Hangju Shousan airport.)  
 4 CYS: *Ne* (Yeah)  
 5 Aunt: Shousan jichang (Shousan airport)

(6) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 Chinese)

- 1 A: *Kimssiga Park moksanimkke jeonhuhaesseo jigeum* (Mr. Kim have just phoned Pastor Park.)  
 2 B: *Gisuksabi sam wol sam ile gaseo naeya duae.* (It is 1st, March that you are going to pay dormitory fee)  
 3 A: Women mushi bu jin bu man a. (The paster couldn't help meeting a deadline)  
 4 B: Shi a, haishi deng ni lai zai shuo ba. (Yeah, we'd rather talk later)  
 5 A: Keyi teng pangzi jiu chulai ba. Bu keyi dehua, jiu suan le. (If I could live in a dorm, I will live dorm, or anyone cannot help.)

The aunt in the line 3 in (5) emphasizes in Chinese where their arrival airport is by switching the code from Korean to Chinese. B's utterance in the line 2 in (6) is spoken in Korean. She is writing all her utterances in Chinese, except in this case.

Thus, we could assume why she switched Chinese to Korean anomalously, because she would tell A the due date (1st, March) for paying dormitory fee.

#### 4.4 Emphasis by repetition

(7) Chinese to Korean (Han, L1 Chinese)

- 1 A: Wo dao jichang le xiawu lai wo jia wanr ba. (I've arrived by airplane and came to the house in the afternoon.)
- 2 B: (smile emoticon)
- 3 A: *Ohue wulijibe nolleo wa.* (Come to my house in the afternoon.)
- 4 B: *KKK C-lang gachi gamyeon joeunde.* (Kiki It's good to come to your house with C.)

A's message in the line 4 of (7) is repeated in the line 3. The structural repetition serves to emphasize speaker's message. Han people only use this strategy in this study.

#### 4.5 Lexical/idiomatic expression

(8) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 Korean)

- 1 A: *Eonni imo bihaeggi sigan han beon deo allyeojuyo.* (Sister, please tell me aunt's flight schedule again.)
- 2 B: *chimdae waseo anjanghaejuneun salamdeul....diban liu heanwaseo eotteoke suli anduaena damju munuiheabwayaget-ta. jom neutge yaegihaeseo doelleoneunji moluigejjiman.* (The staffs installing beds scratched the floor; I want to ask the company for repairs.)

B in (8) starts to speak in Korean, but switched Korean to Chinese in lexical expressions to keep the meaning of original expression caused by language itself, not only by social and cultural factors.

#### 4.6 Personalization versus objectivization

(9) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 Chinese)

- 1 A: *Huanyeonghamnida! ~^^* (Welcome!)
- 2 A: *You xianzai yiqi qu chi fan de ren me?* (Is there anyone eat together?)
- 3 A: *Wo qin de dou zai jianfei ne.* (My roommates all are on a diet.)
- 4 B: (No replies)

A in the line 1 expresses his welcome for a new member officially in the chatting room for offline prayer meeting, while he switched the code to Chinese when requiring a personal help to seek a lunch mate.

#### 4.7 Face-threatening acts mitigation

(10) Korean to Chinese (Chaoxian, L1 Korean)

- 1 A: *Jeonhua han tong eopsseot-neunde seolsuigijeon-e jeonhuawatdela. Jungguk chuljang ganenghanga jeonhuawatdela.* (I got called before New Year's Day. They wanted to know whether it is possible to go on a business trip to China.)
- 2 B: *O, ting hao. haohaor gan ha.* (Oh, good job. Work hard)

3 A: *Alseok kkkkk na jalleogo. Ni ye zao dianr shui ba.* Mingtian hai dei shangban ne.  
(I got it. kikikikiki I'm to bed. I have to go to bed now. You go to bed early, too.  
Tomorrow you have to go to work.)

A would like to stop the conversation because it was getting late in the line 3 of (10), however, A does not want to lose B's face. The code switching of Korean to Chinese serves to mitigate A's face-threatening utterances.

#### 4.8 Opinion expression

(12) Chinese to Korean (Han, L1 Chinese)

1 A: B

2 A: *Zhe shi wo renshi de xuejie xie lunwen de zhuti bijiao chaoxianzu he hanzuren liaotian yuyan.* (I know a senior student. This is her thesis. The topic of the thesis is a conversation comparison between the Chaoxian people and the Han people.)

3 A: *Jeamiisseulge gatji?* (Would it be interesting?)

4 B: (No replies)

A in (12) talks about a thesis whose topic is a conversation comparison between the Chaoxian and the Han people. This is objective explanation. The last sentence is speaker A's evaluation for the thesis. She differentiates her opinion from explanation by switching the code in the parts of this evaluation.

#### 5. Conclusion

So far, I have been discussing the discourse strategy of code switching on SNS texts between Chinese-Korean and Chinese. This study has two main parts. First, discourse strategy between Chaoxian and Han people is compared. Second, the specific conversation on SNS texts such as 'Wechat' and 'Kakaotalk' is analyzed by the method of discourse analysis. This analysis has led to the following general observations: First, both the Chaoxian people and Chinese learners of Korean often use code switching strategically in the observed texts. Second, the twenty Korean-Chinese bilinguals use eight discourse strategies: Addressee specification, affective expression, confirmation/focus, emphasis by repetition, lexical/idiomatic expression, personalization versus objectification, face-threatening acts mitigation, and opinion expression. Three, Chaoxian people did not use the strategies of "emphasis by repetition" or "opinion expression." Chinese learners did not use the "confirmation/focus" strategy. Fourth, the texts show that the preceding languages affect the language selection of the subsequent person. Finally, the most salient point is that code switching is used by both groups as a discourse marker to distinguish public utterances (e.g., notifications, official requests) and private utterances (e.g., expressions of emotion or opinion). Coupled with evidence that Korean-Chinese and Chinese are using code switching as a discourse strategy, the results of this study also provide supports for the view that the discourse strategy is largely involved in objectification.

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*Teachers' Beliefs, Practices and Challenges in Using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in an ESL Context in the Philippines*

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**Abstract**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has as its fundamental goal, the promotion of communicative competence. It supports teaching practices that cultivate learners' abilities to effectively communicate in a second language. Over the last two decades, many ESL classrooms have adopted CLT into their curricula. Much of this research notes that teachers' beliefs play a critical role in their understanding and their implementation of CLT in their classrooms. There were however, only a small number of studies that focused on teachers' beliefs of ESL specifically in the context of the Philippines. This small-scale research project attempts to address this by exploring Filipino primary language teachers' beliefs toward CLT, their practices in implementing CLT and the challenges they encountered in using CLT.

Qualitative research methodology was used in this study. A descriptive online survey was distributed to 17 primary language teachers from a private school to gather data pertaining to teachers' beliefs, practices and challenges in implementing CLT. The data was analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings reveal that teachers claimed they do not always use CLT in teaching the English language. Whilst they claimed they use CLT in their classroom instruction, when examined, their beliefs were at times incompatible with CLT theory. This made their conceptual understanding of CLT ambiguous. The challenges identified by participants mainly concerned the preparation of materials, students' inability to take an active role in their own learning and the uncontrolled use of the first language during classroom activities.

Keywords: communicative language teaching, constructivist approaches, teachers' beliefs

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## Introduction

In the Philippines, since the early 1980s, there has been a change in the attitude towards language teaching from a structured approach, which gives emphasis on the correct usage of language forms to a communicative approach that stresses the significant and purposeful use of language. With the progress of communicative language teaching (CLT), language learning has made considerable improvements not only with its theoretical understandings but also in practice.

With the hope of improving English instruction, the Department of Education (DepEd) in the Philippines made some reforms not only to the English syllabus but in the whole curriculum. Three decades ago, the use of CLT in language classrooms was recommended to develop students' communicative competence. However, teachers found it pedagogically ambiguous (Martin, 2014). This is due to CLT's multifaceted definition which can be interpreted differently. This is supported by Mangubhai, Marland, Dashwood and Son (2007) who maintain that "many teachers remain uncertain about what CLT is" (p. 1). Some classroom-based studies (Kumaravadivelu, 1993; Nunan, 1987) have shown that communicative classrooms are uncommon, with most of the teachers asserting usage of communicative approach, but following the traditional approaches to language teaching.

The disparity between the CLT conceptual understandings and actual classroom practices has encouraged me to undertake this research. As Karavas-Doukas (1996) claims, one of the reasons for this inconsistency may be teachers' beliefs, because teachers teach according to their theoretical beliefs. Teachers' beliefs play a critical role in deciding the kind of teaching approach to be implemented in the classroom. Enthused by this perspective, I was motivated and inspired to study teachers' beliefs, practices and challenges with using CLT in English as a Second Language (ESL) context in the Philippines.

## Research Objectives

This research project aims to present findings that can be of use to second language teachers and other key stakeholders such as administrators and policy makers. Therefore, the key objectives of the project are to:

- find out if the teachers use CLT in teaching the English subject;
- explore teachers' beliefs toward CLT;
- investigate teachers' classroom practices in implementing CLT;
- identify the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing CLT;
- compare and contrast these beliefs to those in the literature on CLT, in order to ascertain whether teachers' views of CLT are changing and new beliefs about CLT are emerging.

## Research Questions

This research project will address the following questions:

1. Do the primary school teachers use CLT in the classroom instruction, and to what degree, if any, do the participants believe that CLT is reflected in their pedagogy?
2. What are the ESL primary school language teachers' beliefs about CLT?

3. What are the ESL primary school language teachers' practices in implementing CLT in the classroom instruction and what if any, are the challenges encountered by the ESL primary school language teachers in using CLT?

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### *Communicative Language Teaching*

4. In the mid 1960s, CLT, a language teaching approach was introduced as an alternative to the structural method (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). This approach begins from a theory of language as communication where the goal of instruction is centered on developing communicative competence of a learner in using the target language. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), language is not only learned by merely focusing on the mastery of structures, but by attaining communicative proficiency. For this reason, learners are encouraged to communicate using the target language, which is the English language, from the introduction of the instruction through interaction.

CLT came into being after Hymes (1971) criticised that the notion of linguistic competence which Chomsky (1965), had proposed was quite limited in successfully explaining how children acquire language. Hymes (1971) argued that, "there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless" (p. 15). This highlighted that effective speakers know how to use the language grammatically and appropriately in a given context, that is "...the speaker must know what to say, with whom, and when, and where" (p. 16).

Shaped by Hymes' theory, Canale and Swain (1980) then soon after developed "pedagogical applications" (Martin, 2014, p. 478) of communicative competence which was the integration of four competencies: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). Consequently, communicative competence was perceived as the motivating structure of skills essentially needed for real-life situations in which there is a "synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social contexts to perform communicative functions, and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p. 20). Communicative competence was viewed as the chief theoretical concept in CLT where the focus was on the learner.

According to Savignon (2003), teachers have various perspectives on CLT depending on their background, training and practice. Some appreciate the opportunity to choose and make their own materials, which gives learners choices of communicative tasks. Others feel frustrated and disappointed. Language teaching is then challenged to support learners to develop the skills they need. Furthermore, an "understanding of sociocultural differences in styles of learning" (p. 57) is necessitated in the selection of an approach that is appropriate in achieving communicative competence.

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design*

With the aim of investigating the beliefs, practices and challenges of primary school English teachers in using CLT in the Philippines, I, as the researcher, needed to locate myself in the “world of lived experience, where individual belief and action intersect with culture” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 8). It is helpful to explain “who you are and where you are coming from” (Boden, Kenway, & Epstein, 2005, p. 42). The ontological, epistemological and axiological beliefs are the foundations of research. According to Grix (2002), these points help shape the whole research process.

Driven by an assumption that there are multiple views about reality, my study drew on a constructivist paradigm where the researcher, with the participants in this study, co-constructed meanings that were influenced by the cultural systems we are within. The paper assumes that there are multiple realities and that our way of making sense of these realities are predicated by our prior knowledge and past experiences. As a researcher, my epistemological position is interpretivism (Bryman, 2008), which emphasises the significance of the participants’ views and “recognises the impact on the research of researchers’ own background and experiences” (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006, p. 196).

A constructivist ontological framework informed my choice to use a phenomenological case study. A case study includes a comprehensive description of a setting and its participants, accompanied by an analysis of data (Merriam, 1998).

### *Selection of the Participants*

The subjects for this study are the English teachers of a private primary school in Davao City, Philippines. Those who consented to participate were given the link to a Qualtrics online survey questionnaire. Participants who agreed to be interviewed were given semi-structured interview questions through electronic mail. The interview happened through an exchange of messages. It should be noted that it was possible for the teachers to participate in the survey questionnaire even if they did not consent to participate in the interview. Those who consented to be interviewed were informed that not all of them willing to participate in the interviews would actually be interviewed. In selecting the subset to be interviewed, I took the first six teachers who said yes.

### *Description of the Participants*

There are 20 English teachers in the school, all females and all graduates from the universities in the Philippines. Seventeen out of 20 teachers consented to answer the online survey questionnaire but only 16 teachers answered and completed the said survey. Their teaching experiences ranged from two to 25 years. Out of the 17 teachers, only eight have a major in English and one teacher a Master of Arts in Education, with major in Teaching English and Language Literature. Other teachers have postgraduate degrees, however, not with major in English.

## **Data Collection Methods**

### *Questionnaire*

In this research project, the respondents live in the Philippines. They answered an online survey questionnaire created through Qualtrics. This paper used the same questionnaire that Manzano (2015) used in her study. The instrument consists of two parts: a demographic profile of teachers and teachers' beliefs, practices and challenges encountered with using CLT. Manzano (2015) submitted it for face and content validation to three English language experts and the said instrument covered what it is was designed to evaluate.

#### *Semi-structured Interview*

The advantages of using semi-structured in-depth interviews are well explained by Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander (1990). They advocate its flexibility of the choice of words and the order of questions. If there is a need to elaborate more, then extra questions can be asked. As for the question formats, open-ended questions are chosen in attempt to enable interviewees to freely reply without any limitations on expressions (Keats, 2000). It is noteworthy to mention that questions were given to gather responses beyond what is expected from them. Interviews were done through electronic mails.

#### *Framework for Analysis*

The results of the online survey questionnaire were interpreted descriptively similar to how Manzano (2015) analysed the results of her study. As for the statistical treatment of data, the number of occurrence of the variables acquired from the participants' answers will be described and quantified using frequency counts. On one hand, percentages were used to qualify the number of respondents who choose a corresponding answer from the set of given choices. The formula for the percentage is  $\% = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$ , where  $f$  = frequency of the variable and  $N$  = number of respondents. Ranking was used to determine the beliefs, practices and challenges that were encountered by most of the ESL primary language teachers.

In analysing the data from the semi-structured interviews, I used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The interviews are used to support the findings from the questionnaires and to delve deeper into the themes uncovered. IPA aims to "explore in detail the participant's view of the topic under investigation" (Smith, Jarman & Osborn, 1999, p. 218). In this project, its purpose is to look into teachers' beliefs about CLT. This approach is phenomenological since it involves one's views "as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself" (p. 218). According to Eatough and Smith (2006), IPA is not a prescriptive kind of approach but rather a set of guidelines that is flexible and can be adapted to provide an understanding of the lived experiences of individuals.

## **Results and Discussion**

### *Teachers' Use of CLT in Teaching the English Language*

CLT is one of several approaches that have been mandated in the language area from the educational mainstream. In this study of the sixteen respondents, four of them *always* use CLT, six teachers *often* use CLT and six of them *sometimes* use CLT in teaching English to their students. This indicates strongly that English teachers in the primary context seemed to be familiar with CLT as an approach. Although they know what CLT is, it indicates that the respondents do not use CLT more often; hence, CLT is not the main approach used in the English classroom instruction.

Employing CLT approaches in teaching English may be attributed to the participants' learning experiences and educational background. Miller and Aldred (2000) contend that teachers who went through teacher-centred classrooms uphold beliefs and attitudes that made it challenging for them to adopt CLT. On the other hand, not all of the teachers have a specialisation that is aligned with the subject they teach. As mentioned, only seven teachers have an undergraduate degree in English and one teacher has a postgraduate degree related to teaching English. Teaching experience was a factor that emerged in the data. Only two respondents have been teaching English as a subject for more than 16 years. The rest of the teachers have less than 15 years of experience.

#### *Teachers' Beliefs about Language Use in CLT*

The teachers consider and believe in CLT. Fifteen respondents or 93.75% believe that language is chiefly viewed as a tool for communication; 13 or 81.25% of them view that language is a way of establishing and maintaining social relationships; 11 or 68.75% of them agree that it is a system of conveying meaning; 10 or 62.50% of them believe that language is a means to perform language functions such as requesting, narrating and instructing; six teachers or 37.50% believe that language is a means to communicate notions and five teachers or 31.25% view language as a set of sounds, word phrases, clauses, sentences and texts.

It can be seen that not all teachers responded to the viewpoints of CLT in the survey. Evidently, their beliefs on the nature of language appear to be limited. Nonetheless, it is apparent that what they have is knowledge in alignment with CLT. The findings also suggest that the respondents were able to understand some of the viewpoints of language that are well-matched and compatible with CLT.

The findings on teachers' beliefs about language show the same results in the study conducted by Manzano (2015). This means that university language teachers and primary school teachers in ESL context in the Philippines believe that language is a tool for communication.

#### *Teachers' Beliefs in Relation to Language Learning*

Among the fifteen respondents, 15 or 93.75% of them believe that language is best learned through maximizing students' interaction; 14 or 87.50% agree that language is acquired by involving students in real-life communication; 13 or 81.25% of the teachers believe that by carrying out meaningful tasks and by engaging learners in negotiation of meaning and information sharing, language can be learned best and eight or 50% of them believe that through exposing students to accurate and appropriate use of the language, language can be acquired. The results show that the



respondents are aware of how language is learned by the students. However, considering the last three results, where six or 37.50% of the teachers, view that language is best learned by conducting drills and sentence patterns; five or 31.25% of them believe that students learn the language by correcting their errors immediately; and four or 25% of them view that language is best learned by asking learners to mimic or imitate and memorize dialogues, tongue twisters, songs, etc. These three beliefs about learning are ascribed to Audio-lingual Method (ALM) not CLT. The results reveal that some teachers are still uncertain about how CLT is viewed and considered in terms of learning (Manzano, 2015). Furthermore, the findings show that the English teachers are conscious and informed about the CLT approach but their knowledge in regard to CLT's theoretical underpinnings on learning seem to be not yet fully developed. Some of their views are more aligned with ALM. The results reveal the same findings in Manzano's (2015) study.

#### *Teachers' Classroom Activities in Implementing CLT*

The respondents' beliefs on CLT are valuable in this research. Among the 16 respondents, 14 or 87.50% of them apply pair and group work and students' active participation in the learning process; 11 or 68.75% of them employ task completion; 10 or 62.50% of the teachers use authentic materials, role plays and simulations; nine or 56.25% of the teachers use syllabus which focuses on language functions and employ communication games; eight or 50% of them facilitate communication activities; six or 37.50% of the teachers use problem-solving activities and correct students' errors without interference with communication; five or 31.25% of them use realia and allow students to use their mother tongue only whenever necessary. These classroom activities implemented by the respondents in the classroom illustrate that their activities are in accordance with the CLT principles. Although not all teachers indicate the CLT-compatible activities, their beliefs in language and language learning are exhibited in their pedagogical teaching practices.

On one hand, six or 37.50% of the teachers, model English dialogues speech lessons; five or 31.25% of them follow a syllabus focusing on language forms; four or 25% of the teachers consider the use of speech laboratory for pronunciation lessons and allow translation from mother tongue to English; and a teacher implements memorisation of dialogues. These activities are not in consonance with CLT's principles. These findings disagree with some of the respondents' beliefs about CLT but support a few of their viewpoints on the nature of language learning that are compatible with ALM: conducting drills and sentence patterns, asking learners to mimic or imitate and memorise dialogues, tongue twisters, songs, etc. and correcting students' errors immediately. This result implies that the English teachers' practices with regard to implementing CLT in the classroom instruction are uncertain. Some teachers cannot completely determine the practices or activities that are in harmony with CLT. Hence, some of the teachers' pedagogical practices are incoherent with their beliefs on the nature of language and language learning.

#### *Students' Reactions to the Use of CLT in the Classroom*

Whilst Manzano's (2015) study indicates that 60% of the teachers observed university students find the implementation of CLT in the classroom *very interesting*, this



research shows that among the 16 respondents, nine or 56.25% of the teachers noticed that students find the use of CLT in the classroom *interesting* and seven teachers or 43.75% of the respondents observed that students find CLT *very interesting*. The data imply that generally, students find CLT activities interesting. This means that there is recognition of CLT as beneficial or enjoyable in the course of implementing CLT in the classroom.

### *Challenges Encountered by Teachers in Implementing CLT*

The English teachers in this study encountered many challenges as they implemented CLT in their classroom instruction. 11 teachers consider the preparation of CLT materials time-consuming as a problem. In the study conducted by Manzano (2015), this ranks number two in the problems encountered by the university language teachers. Savignon (2003) argues that teachers have different perspectives toward CLT depending on their educational background, training, experience and practice. Some teachers welcome the opportunity to choose and make their own materials, while others feel frustrated and disappointed. On one hand, eight or 50% of the teachers agree that students' inability and/or unwillingness to take an active role in their own learning is also a problem; the uncontrollable use of the native language during classroom activities and inadequate and incompatible use of CLT assessment tools for gauging students' performance are respectively the challenges pointed out by seven teachers or 43.75% of the respondents; six or 37.50% of the teachers consider institutional/ departmental policy on language instruction as a challenge for them; four teachers or 25% of them encounter challenges such as inadequate sources of CLT-compatible materials, students' lack of focus on completing a task and inability of some teachers to control students' noise during classroom activities; students' dislike of group activities are considered challenges by two teachers or 12.50% of the respondents; a teacher considers the unwillingness to play a peripheral/secondary role in the teaching learning process and time constraints as challenges in implementing CLT.

### *Teachers' Understanding of the Communicative Approach*

One of the electronic mail interview questions asked teachers about how they understood the term "communicative language teaching". Their answers showed that they all believed they were doing communicative teaching. Some mentioned that teaching communicatively meant allowing learners to develop language structures and cognitive skills. Two teachers suggested that teaching the communicative approach meant putting more emphasis on interaction among pupils in the classroom where the teacher facilitates and students do most of the talking.

As Williams and Burden (1997) maintain, teachers are mediators who can help develop a child's learning. In a classroom situation, there should be activities that can help encourage learners improve their learning process with the use of CLT activities (Kao, 2010). Furthermore, all six teachers saw the CLT approach at primary level as more on interactive teaching. The focus is on speaking skills where the teacher provides real-life scenarios for the students to practice on. As mentioned earlier, Berns (1990) explains that in CLT, "language teaching is based on a view of language as communication, that is, language is seen as a social tool which speakers use to make meaning" (p. 104).

### *Pair and Group Work*

The interview data imply strongly that teachers interviewed have the belief that pair and group work offer more impressive opportunities for using the target language in the classroom and also the students' active participation in the learning process plays a bigger role in learning the language. Richards (2005) asserts that pair and group work should be given emphasis because of the benefits learners can get. However, the teachers also talked about several constraints that hinder group activities such as class size and the discipline level within the class. In the school's case, each class has approximately 40 students. According to Mangubhai, Dashwood and Howard (2000), the size of the class can be one of the factors that can sometimes lead to disorderly behaviour of students. Borg (2003) suggests that class size, a contextual factor, has an impact on both teacher cognition and practice. During the interview, a teacher emphasised that classroom management is crucial in CLT implementation.

### *Other Classroom Practices*

All six teachers mentioned almost the same activities undertaken in the English class. These are whole-class discussion, cooperative learning, role-playing, think-pair-share and use of authentic materials such as booklets and flyers. Teachers advocate the use of authentic texts because they believe that in the classroom, students are prepared for "survival in the real world" (Richards, 2005, p. 22). A teacher also mentioned about games in the class. However, some games are "pattern practice in disguise" (Mangubhai et al., 2000, p. 17). These games are known to be explicitly teaching grammar. For example, a teacher mentioned about a game on identifying verbs. It could be that the teacher experienced this game as a learner. According to Phipps and Borg (2009), teachers' beliefs that are sourced from their experiences exert most influence on their practices. Moreover, in Martin's (2014) study of private and public high school teachers, results in the focus group discussion show that teachers allowed mother tongue and intermittently introduced grammar games in the class. Hence, not all games are in harmony with CLT principles.

### **Teachers' Attitude Towards CLT in the Philippines**

Although there are challenges, some teachers showed a favourable attitude to the introduction and implementation of CLT in the Philippines:

*I want CLT to be introduced in the Philippines' English teaching because this is a very good strategy. As what I shared, I learned speaking English language not so much of the structured way my teachers taught in class but more of using the language in day to day conversation with a friend. (Carly)*

*Positive, because it will surely be of great help to the academe and thus, adding positive implications to the society that will later on affect the succeeding systems. (Girly)*

*Students enjoy this approach because they are able to apply what they have learned in the English lesson. They remember more the topics because they are involved in the activities. (Hazel)*

English teachers in the Philippines encounter problems in implementing CLT in the classroom which is similar to the experiences of Vietnamese teachers who accepted CLT approach in their teaching (Hiep, 2007) and Iranian teachers who had constructive perceptions of CLT and its principles (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006). Also, in China, teachers seem to find it difficult to implement CLT but they are positive they can accomplish it (Liao, 2003).

While some teachers are positive towards CLT implementation, others are quite reluctant.

*The idea of CLT is very ideal. But introducing CLT in the Philippines' English teaching is like a paradigm shift and therefore it really needs full support from the school administrators, teachers and even parents. (Fida)*

*Being in a traditional school, there are still hesitations in implementing CLT specifically when it is placed side by side the covering of the planned curriculum. (Anna)*

Anna's attitude toward CLT implementation resulted to her previous learning experiences about teaching and learning (Cumming, 1989; Smith, 1996). Furthermore, her experiences in teacher-centred classrooms maintained her beliefs and attitudes that CLT is quite a challenging approach given the context of the curriculum (Miller & Aldred, 2000).

Although some teachers are quite uncertain about CLT implementation, all of them agreed that CLT should be adapted in the Philippine context. As one teacher said, "English teachers in the Philippines need to adapt CLT in their daily teaching because its effects are holistic. Traditional (teacher as sage on stage) teaching is not anymore the best approach in developing the 21st century skills of the learners. Teachers need to shift paradigm and embrace changes in order to suit to the modern times' needs". This is supported by Holliday (1994) who contends that innovation can work effectively only if appropriate to the actual circumstances of the school.

Also, some teachers who did not major in English seem to be more excited and passionate about the possibilities of CLT. Fida, Girly and Hazel all mentioned that they really try their best to use CLT to motivate students. Given the scope of this research, which is a small scale project, this is something worth investigating in a bigger research.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has discussed Filipino primary ESL teachers' beliefs, practices and challenges in using CLT. The results from the analysis of the questionnaire and the follow-up interviews are gathered together to answer the three research questions. These main issues were discussed and interpreted under different subcategories. From the findings of this research, the following conclusions were drawn.

First, the major findings reveal that primary English teachers do use CLT in teaching the English language. However, CLT approach is not predominantly employed in the classroom instruction.

Second, although the teacher respondents claimed that they use CLT in their classroom instruction, the results indicate that some of their beliefs are incompatible with CLT. There is a discrepancy between their beliefs about CLT and actual classroom practice. Furthermore, some of their viewpoints are more aligned with other approaches such as Audio Lingual Method and Grammar Translation Method which make their conceptual understanding of CLT ambiguous. Overall, the teachers' responses show that teachers acknowledge the central tenets and strengths of this approach, but at the same time, the responses manifest their lack of comprehensive understanding of CLT principles.

Third, some of the activities implemented in the classroom do not align or agree with the CLT approach. Some teachers seem to combine grammar-focused activities and CLT activities. Hence, their pedagogical practices are incoherent with their viewpoints on the nature of language and language learning. Teachers note that students find the use of CLT interesting. However, teachers described that some students were shy, which was perceived as a barrier for the teachers to implement CLT in the class.

Finally, the problems identified by the teachers mainly concerned the preparation of materials, which consumes a lot of their time; students' inability to take an active role in their own learning; and the uncontrollable use of native language during classroom activities.

The research shows no major differences as to how teachers understand CLT regardless of their educational background. Interestingly, those teachers who did not major in English showed more enthusiasm and passion in CLT implementation.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

### *Pedagogical Implications*

Apart from using authentic instructional materials, these materials should also be context-appropriate in terms of usability (Richards, 2005). The design of the learning and teaching materials by the teachers can be considered authentic in terms of giving careful consideration of their ESL classroom practice. However, this is done on the level of the teachers only. There should be a school policy or a national development of instructional materials for spoken and written English. As the interview data suggest, participants tend to use CLT based on cultural context rather than "uncritically adopt Western teaching methods at home" (Chowdhury, 2003, p. 296). This is how to meet the Filipino students' needs, to use CLT in their context, in the Philippine context.

### *Administrative Implications*

Some participants expressed their eagerness to have series of training and more seminar-workshops on the implementation of CLT in the Philippine context. Through these workshops, CLT views may be aligned to teachers' actual practices and the challenges on the use of CLT will be lessened. As mentioned by some teachers, they need full support from parents, administrators, policymakers and other stakeholders.

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*Cooperative Learning in the EFL University Classroom: Students' Discoveries*

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Official Conference Proceedings**Abstract**

Many classrooms in schools throughout Japan still adopt the traditional “teacher-centered approach”, where the student learning is the responsibility of the teacher and who is the active entity in the classroom. In many cases, the role of the student is a passive one. At many universities in Japan, students expect to be “spoon-fed” in their learning process; not speak, but listen and therefore assume that this is their role as a learner. The characteristics of the collectivist, passive, teacher-dependent Japanese learner (Littlewood, 1999) may strongly inhibit them from being able to take responsibility for their own individual learning, or even learning why it is important to be an autonomous learner. In particular, it may be argued that many Japanese students are still not aware that knowing how to learn and work collaboratively is a vital 21<sup>st</sup> century skill. Inside the L2 university classroom in particular, students still don't have enough opportunity to develop their communication and collaboration skills in doing social interactive activities such as problem-solving and critical thinking. This article will argue the importance of promoting cooperative learning in the university-level EFL classroom and briefly analyze responses about university students' and teachers' experiences of cooperative learning in the classroom. The author will then conclude by giving suggestions on ways to promote cooperative learning in the university classroom.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition, learner autonomy, cooperative learning, 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills

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## 1. Introduction

“...if teachers spend five to seven hours a day saying, “Help each other. Share, work together, discuss the material, explain” and make it clear that “you ‘re responsible not only for your own learning but for the learning of your peers” – if they promote cooperation among students – they will look at their colleagues as potential cooperators”(an excerpt by D. Johnson from *Educational Leadership* quoted by McCafferty et al. 2006).

Trilling and Fadel (2009), the founders and Co-chairs of the Standards, Assessment and Professional Development Committee of the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, claim that the two core skills that are in high demand in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are communication and collaboration skills. One way that students can become prepared to use these key work skills is through cooperative learning in the classroom. In using this instruction method with my students in the EFL classroom, I see not only improvement in L2 fluency, but improvements in their cognitive and social development, self-esteem, confidence and in their motivation to learn.

The purpose of this article is to briefly discuss the advantages of cooperative learning in the EFL classroom and discuss the students’ experiences by analyzing the responses of student and teacher questionnaires on group work in the classroom.

First, I will explore the definitions of cooperative learning and a brief review of past literature on the concept. I will then go on to discuss the responses of the student and teacher questionnaires on their experiences with cooperative learning in the classroom. I will then conclude this article by suggesting ways how teachers can encourage cooperative learning in the EFL classroom. This article is not intended to cover all of the aspects of cooperative learning and its implementation; but instead to aim in providing the reader with a brief overview of this concept of learning, to explore some factors of its effectiveness, and offer suggestions to help encourage cooperative learning in the EFL classroom.

### 1.1 Definitions of Cooperative Learning

Many researchers (Gokhale 1995, Johnson & Johnson 1978, 1988, Oxford 1997) have defined cooperative learning as a concept of grouping students for the purpose of achieving a common academic goal. Each student is held responsible for each other’s learning, as well as their own, and are encouraged and motivated to increase the learning of one another. In cooperative learning, all members of the group share the same success or failure in the group task at hand. McCafferty et. al (2006) states that cooperative learning is a instructional method that encourages students to draw upon already developed interpersonal and problem-solving skills and to utilize their prior knowledge and experiences (p.154). Cooperative learning has been characterized as positive interdependence, which encourages cooperation and a feeling of support (p.5). Oxford (1997) explains that cooperative learning is based six principles (see Appendix 1): 1) positive interdependence; 2) accountability, 3) team formation; 4) team size; 5) cognitive development; and 6) social development.

Several studies on cooperative learning (McCafferty, Jacobs, Iddings, 2006, Shachar & Sharan, 1988) suggest that it is a type of learning associated with improvement in achievement, higher-level thinking, self-esteem and inter-ethnic relations and motivation. Cooperative learning in the multi-level classroom functions so as to allow for heterogeneity in level of performance, interest and participation within each of the several small groups formed within the classroom. (Shachar & Sharan, p.7, 1988). Cooperative Learning groups may provide students with “the opportunity to contribute to the group’s progress and thereby enjoy some academic status among peers while learning” (Shachar & Sharan, 1988:7).

## **1.2 Learner Autonomy and Cooperative Learning**

In terms of its relationship to learner autonomy, cooperative learning help students develop into life-long learners by ‘enhancing their abilities and their inclinations to plan, control and evaluate their own learning’ (Wenden 1991, as quoted by McCafferty et al., 2006:26). The collaboration that occurs in cooperative learning groups fits well with notions of learner autonomy as students are given a large role in controlling their own learning process (Macaro 1997, as quoted by McCafferty, et al. 2006:26). McCafferty goes on to suggest that certain cooperative learning approaches foster a high degree of learner autonomy because they provide students with the freedom to explore their own interests and to organize group activities (p.26). One example is from the Sharan & Sharan 1992 group investigation where student groups choose their own topics and decide how to research them in preparation for sharing what they learn with the entire class. (McCafferty et al., 2006:26).

## **1.3 Benefits of cooperative learning**

According to Johnson & Johnson (1988), students are more positive about each other when they learn cooperatively than when they learn alone, competitively, or individualistically, regardless of factors such as differences in ability and ethnic background. They argue that students are more effective interpersonally as a result of working cooperatively than when they work alone, competitively or individualistically. Students with cooperative experiences have a better ability to take the perspective of others, are more positive about taking part in controversy, have developed interaction skills, and have a more positive attitude about working with others than students from competitive or individualistic settings.

Cooperative learning has been employed as an educational medium for promoting positive intergroup relations (Shachar & Sharan 1988: 7). Jacobs and McCafferty (2006) argue that students should learn in a variety of ways, where instruction should sometimes place students in contexts outside their comfort zone so that their learning repertoire stretches beyond their preferred means of learning “...students should come to recognize, understand and value the diversity that exists among them. They further claim that another skill that may be developed in cooperative learning is interpersonal intelligence – this involves showing respect to others and knowing how to understand and interact successfully with peers” (p.25). A small group of peers provides a relatively intimate setting, and usually a more supportive environment in which to try out

embryonic SL skills. Tsui (1996) found student-student collaboration to be an effective means of reducing debilitating anxiety among her L2 learners. Long and Porter (1985:211) believed that this “more supportive environment” may also increase motivation (as quoted by McCafferty, 2006:26). Oxford (1997) suggests that cooperative learning helps the development of social skills such as turn taking and active listening (p.445). Students working in small teams on collective tasks have been the subject of hundreds of studies. All the research arrives at the same conclusion - there are significant benefits for students who work together on learning activities compared to students who work alone. The benefits include both greater individual and collective knowledge growth, better confidence and motivation levels, and improved social interactions and feelings toward other students. (Trilling and Fadel 2009:108-109).

Trilling and Fadel (2009) claim that in cooperation learning, students can learn how to collaborate, meaning learning how to work effectively and respectfully with diverse people, learning to be flexible and willing to be helpful, compromise in achieving a common goal, assume shared responsibility for collaborative work, and value individual contributions made by the member of their group.

Research suggests that students with lower level ability benefit from cooperative learning as much as high level ability learners. High level learners gain a sense of leadership to helping their peers understand the material and the driving force in working for their group’s success. Lower achievers can receive help from not only the teacher, but their group members, and as a result, feel greater sense of motivation, belonging and confidence (Johnson et al. 1991, quoted by Mcafferty et.al. 2006:33).

According to Gokhale (1995), the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants in the group but also promotes critical thinking. Johnson and Johnson (1986) claim that there is convincing evidence to show that cooperative teams achieve at higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals. This shared learning gives students the chance to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning and therefore become critical thinkers.

Gokhale (1995), Trilling & Fadel (2009) claim that future 21 century workforce, workers will need to know how to working together with other people as a team in thinking creatively, solving problems and making decisions as a team. Therefore, the students can develop their teamwork and critical-thinking skills through collaborative learning in the classroom and be ready to succeed in their future jobs, whatever they may be.

In a study conducted by Gokhale (1995), it examined the effectiveness of individual learning versus collaborative learning in enhancing drill-and-practice skills and critical-thinking skills. The participants of this study consisted of 48 undergraduate students enrolled in a industrial technology course at a U.S. university, with 24 students participating in the collaborative learning group and 24 students participating in the individual learning group. The individual learning group were instructed to complete a worksheet by themselves at their own level and rate. The collaborative group were first

briefed on the collaborative learning structure and process before being given instructions for their task. As a result of this research study, though both methods of instruction were found to be equally effective in gaining factual knowledge, it was concluded that collaborative learning fostered the development of critical thinking through discussion, clarification of ideas and evaluation of other's ideas.

Johnson & Johnson's research (an authority on cooperative learning, in their extensive research on using this method of instruction) They conducted 122 studies from 1924 to 1980) suggests that: 1) students achieve more in cooperative interaction than in competitive or individualistic interaction; and 2) students are more positive about school, subject areas and teachers or professors when they are structured to work cooperatively

Compared to competitive and individualistic learning experiences, cooperative learning is more effective in promoting intrinsic motivation, and task achievement, generating higher order thinking skills, improving attitudes toward the subject, developing academic peer norms, heightening self-esteem and altruistic relationships, and lowering anxiety and prejudice (Oxford 1997:445).

## **2 Student Questionnaire Survey**

### **2.1 The students**

In order to find out what Japanese students think about cooperative learning and their personal experiences in the classroom, I conducted a questionnaire survey on the topic of Japanese university students' attitudes on learning together in groups in the classroom. (See Appendix 2). The students from whom I collected my data were undergraduate students studying at a private university located in the Kansai region of Japan. The students were enrolled in the Faculties of Business Administration and Economics, and they were students whom I had personally taught in the classroom. I had taught these students English oral communication and academic writing using cooperative learning methods in the classroom. A total of 90 undergraduate students answered the questionnaire. It asked 10 multiple-choice questions, offering at least four choices of answers per question. Some questions asked for further comments and details regarding the answer that they selected.

### **2.2 Summary of responses and discussion**

Some responses in particular which I felt were significant to this study on Japanese university students' attitudes towards their learning will be briefly discussed below.

When asked whether or not they liked doing group work in class (Question 1), most students (73%) who answered the questionnaire replied with "Strongly agree". When asked why (Question 3), students chose the following reasons:

- "I could speak freely and say my opinion".
- "It was fun talking together with other people"
- "I liked working in groups better than working alone in class"

These replies may suggest that Japanese students enjoy having some sort of interaction with other students in classroom setting. They become educationally stimulated and are engaged to try learning new and different things. The remaining students (27%) who

replied with “Disagree”, chose the following reasons (Question 2):

- “It was difficult to speak English”.
- “I cannot say my opinion/I am too shy to say my opinion”
- “ I like to work alone more in class”.

These comments may be interpreted that many Japanese students suffer from low self-confidence and low motivation in communicating with other students in L2, and have had little exposure and opportunity to socially interact and speak with their fellow students in the classroom.

When asked whether doing group work in class made them become more confident in interacting with other students (Question 4), The responses were as follows: “Strongly agree” -50%, “Agree”-20%, “Somewhat agree”-25%, and Disagree-5%

As you can see from the above percentages, 50% of the students strongly felt that their confidence in social interaction improved when learning in groups. With a vast majority of students feeling that their social interaction skills had improved, this may suggest again that students gain increased motivation and self-esteem when given a chance to learn in groups as opposed to learning alone.

When students were asked whether or not doing group work in class made them become more confident in saying their opinion (Questions 5), The students who answered Strongly agree/Agree/Somewhat agree totaled 63 %, whereas there was a significant 37 % who answered “Disagree”. Some students further commented on reasons why they responded with “Disagree” with the following: I’m too shy; It’s too difficult to say my opinion; I don’t think that I’m smart enough; I don’t have anything interesting to say; I’m worried how other students will think of me; I’m too scared to speak in front of others. These reasons may suggest that Japanese students lack self-confidence in not only communicating in L2, but not knowing how to take risks in language learning and expressing one’s opinion in front of their peers.

When asked whether or not group work taught them skills such as paraphrasing/summarizing information, problem solving and critical thinking (Question 6), 54% of students answered with either “Strongly agree/Agree/Somewhat agree” . The latter 46% answered with “Disagree”. These responses may suggest that the teacher needs to formulate better strategic methods in instructing the students to acquiring these skills.

When asked whether or not group work in class made them more confident in communicate in English in particular (Question 7) the majority of students (70%) answered with “Agree”. It was encouraging to know that the students felt that their communicative competence improved through group work during the course.



### 3 Conclusion

Based on the results of the student questionnaire, it seems obvious that the majority of Japanese students who may have originally come from a teacher-centered, individualistic learning environment now seem to prefer to learn in a student-centered, cooperative learning classroom environment. However, cooperative learning might not be beneficial to all types of learners; some learners prefer and may excel in individualistic learning, where they do not have to be accountable for another person's learning, and therefore results of a group achievement would not jeopardize one's personal grade. However, with an increased demand by both teachers and students in Japan to change the style of learning in the classroom, and in order to prepare students with the skills needed for future jobs that have yet to exist, educators in Japan must encourage their educational institutions to develop curriculums where learner autonomy is strongly encouraged in the classroom. One way to achieve this is to create more opportunities where students can learn together with, and from one another in the classroom.

Some suggestions in promoting cooperative learning in the classroom include the following:

- Select groups between that are most appropriate for the lesson. For example, three to four people.
- Assign particular students to groups (male/female ratio, ability level)
- Have designated, rotating roles for each member to play, such as secretary, facilitator, reporter, etc. Oxford (1997) suggests to assign a role to each student in the group, which as a result can improve self-esteem for low-status learners, and positive interdependence is enhanced by having a group goal to which each person must contribute (p.445).
- Arrange the classroom accordingly. Group members need to be close together and facing each other (so that they can share materials and converse with each other and exchange ideas and materials) and to make sure the teacher can see and be able to have clear access to all the groups)
- Clearly explain the task and cooperative goal structure to the students
- Monitor the groups as they work-the teacher needs to monitor carefully how well the groups are functioning: determine what skills are lacking, both related to the subject matter and to the interaction; set up a way for the groups to process how well they functioned and discuss how to do even better, and intervene where problems are serious to help groups work out their own problems. It is probably that some specific instruction will need to be focused on interpersonal skills as students will not have necessarily learned how to work with others effectively (Johnson& Johnson, 1988:37).
- Encourage individual accountability: use tasks and topics that are motivating enough so that all group members will want to participate and learn.
- Start individual assessments after students have had time to collaborate. Call upon group members at random to give their groups answer and to explain it. Each group member takes responsibility for one part or aspect of the groups work.

It should be noted that cooperative learning is not an easy method to implement in the EFL university classroom in Japan. For teachers who are just beginning to experiment with this approach, it may be wise to start slowly using a variety of cooperative learning techniques. For students who are used to individual learning, it might take some time for them to adjust to this type of collaborative learning in the classroom.

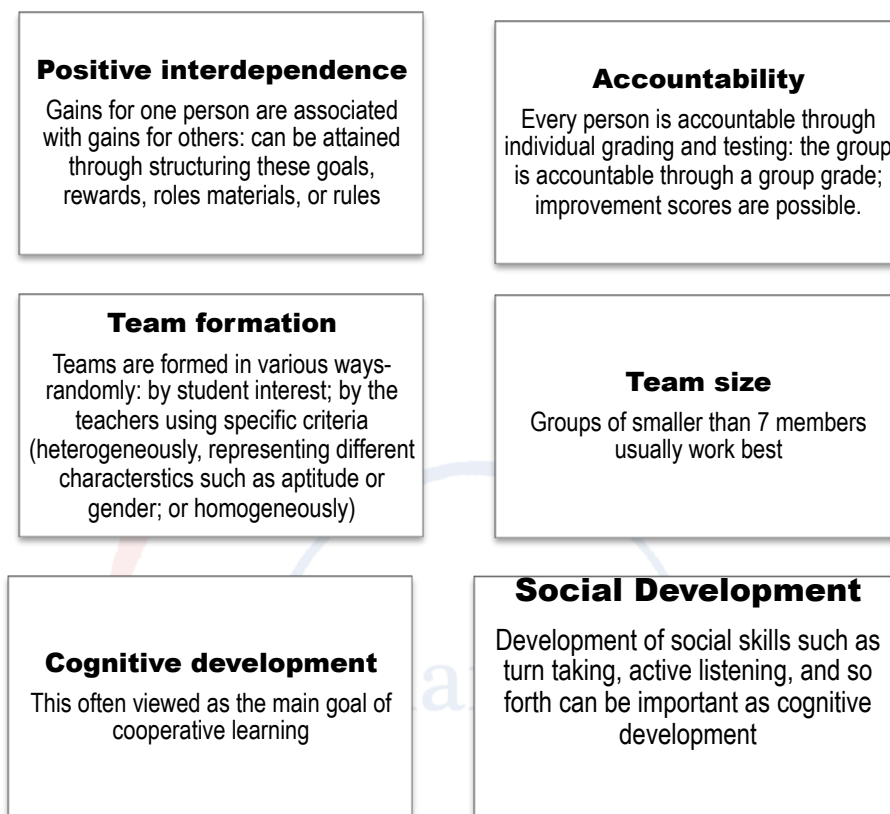


A cooperative learning classroom that promotes autonomous learning is essential to develop Japanese students' both communicative and collaborative abilities, two skills that will help them to thrive and take responsibility anywhere in the world.



## Appendix 1

Oxford's Principles of Cooperative Learning (Oxford 1997, pp.445)



1. Positive interdependence: Gains for one person are associated with gains for others: can be attained through structuring these goals, rewards, roles materials, or rules
2. Accountability: Every person is accountable through individual grading and testing: the group is accountable through a group grade; improvement scores are possible.
3. Team formation: Teams are formed in various ways-randomly: by student interest; by the teachers using specific criteria (heterogeneously, representing different characteristics such as aptitude or gender; or homogeneously)
4. Team size: Groups of smaller than 7 members usually work best
5. Cognitive development: This often viewed as the main goal of cooperative learning
6. Social development: Development of social skills such as turn taking, active listening and so forth can be as important as cognitive development

## Appendix 2

### Classroom Group work Survey

This semester in our English class, we did group work. You worked together with 3 or 4 other students and did activities in discussing, summarizing and presenting your opinions about different topics. Did you like doing group work in class? Why or why not? Please answer the following survey and write down your opinions.

Thank you very much for your cooperation,

Ms. Saki

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**Check a circle for each question.**

- ⊖ **I liked doing group work in class.**
  - Strongly agree → go to Question 3
  - Agree → go to Question 3
  - Somewhat agree → go to Question 3
  - Disagree → go to Question 2
  
- ⊖ **I didn't like group work because: (you may check more than one answer)**
  - it was difficult to speak English
  - I don't like to talk to people that I don't know well
  - I cannot say my opinion / I am too shy to say my opinion
  - I like to work alone more in class
  
- ⊗ **I like group work because: (you may check more than one answer)**
  - I could speak freely and say my opinion
  - It was fun talking together with other people
  - I was interested in hearing other's opinions
  - I liked working in groups better than working alone in class
  
- ④ **Doing group work in class made me become more confident in interacting with other students**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Disagree
  
- ⑤ **Doing group work in class made me become more confident in saying my opinion**
  - Strongly agree
  - Agree
  - Somewhat agree
  - Disagree

⑥ **Doing group work in class taught me how to summarize information**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Disagree

⑦ **Doing group work in class made me more confident in communicating in English**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Disagree

⑧ **When you did group work, what were some problems? (*you may check more than one answer*)**

- Some group members didn't say their opinions
- Some group members didn't participate (sleeping, used phone, etc.. during class)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- I didn't think group work was difficult

⑨ **When you had a problem (didn't understand what to do, could not communicate, had difficulty doing the activity) what did you do?**

- I asked the group leader to help me
- I asked the teacher to help me
- I asked other students in my group to help me
- I didn't do anything

⑩ **When your group had a problem (didn't understand what to do, could not communicate, had difficulty doing the activity, what did you do?**

- We asked the teacher to help us
- We tried to solve the problem by ourselves in our group
- We asked other groups for help
- We didn't do anything

**Other comments:**

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