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## Table of contents

7098	<i>Milieu Disparity between Author and Reader Generates Complexity: ESP &amp; ELT as a Case Study</i>	
	Aysha Mohd Sharif Yahya Torin Muritala	pp. 1 - 7
7367	<i>The Relationship between Willingness to Communicate and Language Learning Anxiety among Iranian College Students</i>	
	Mojdeh Mellati	pp. 9 - 18
7665	<i>Vocabulary Learning Strategies Used by High Vocabulary Knowledge Students Studying in the 3rd Year English for International Communication Students</i>	
	Tinutda Komol	pp. 19 - 27
7694	<i>Sociolinguistic Factors Influencing Language Acquisition in German Preschoolers in Three Follow-up Studies</i>	
	Eugen Zaretsky Benjamin P. Lange	pp. 29 – 41
8975	<i>Adjustment of Feedback on Postgraduate Writing to Optimize Uptake</i>	
	Filiz Etiz	pp. 43 - 47
10327	<i>The Role of Belief in Language Teacher Education</i>	
	Mojdeh Mellati	pp. 49 - 58
10541	<i>Team-Based Learning to Enhance Thai Undergraduate Learners' Achievement Motivation in English Report Writing Course</i>	
	Nunthawadee Wongsathian	pp. 59 - 81
11631	<i>Social Responsibility and Language Teaching: The Triple Bottom Line in EAP</i>	
	Alexander Nanni Joseph Serrani Adriano Quietì	pp. 83 - 94
13266	<i>Russian-like Discourse in English Essays</i>	
	Olga Bondarenko	pp. 95 - 101

- 13526  
*The Role of Informant-Context Knowledge in Interpreting Hybrid Texts: A Pragmatic Study*  
 Venkanna Ithagani pp. 103 - 116
- 13840  
*The Power of Informality in the Con-Textual Design of English-for-Specific-Purposes Scripted Role Plays*  
 Irina Stoykova Dimitrova pp. 117 - 128
- 13846  
*Can Machine Translation Be as Effective as a Human Translation? A Cross Linguistic Analysis of Machine Translation Ambiguity between English, French and Armenian*  
 Gohar Ghalachyan pp. 129 - 139
- 14290  
*Learner Autonomy: How Teacher Trainers Understand and Apply It?*  
 Anil Kandemir pp. 141 - 161
- 14507  
*Intertwining Language with Perception: A Case of Internalizing a Globalized Language*  
 Ibrahim Yabagi Mohammed pp. 163 - 173
- 14597  
*The Problems of Ironic Speech Acts Interpretation*  
 Manana Rusieshvili  
 Ilona Kenkadze pp. 175 - 188
- 14643  
*Negotiating the Syllabus: Autonomy and the Teaching of Literature in French Lycées*  
 Ashira B. Greene pp. 189 - 202
- 14965  
*The Reflections of Mental Processes in Language: Verbs of Perception*  
 Fatma Özkan Kurt pp. 203 - 212
- 15103  
*Phonological Processes in Missing Language: A Privilege Theoretic Account*  
 Loreina Pagag pp. 213 - 221
- 15118  
*Krashen's Monitor Model Theory: A Critical Perspective*  
 Tahamid Ar Rabbi pp. 223 - 231



- 15632  
*TESOL Programs: Theory Surpasses Practice*  
 Jalal Al Baqshi  
 Ala'a Al Shakhs pp. 233 - 249
- 16117  
*Reflections of Ab English Students on Their English Language Learning Experiences*  
 Roger G. Pagente Jr. pp. 251 - 266
- 16374  
*English as a Second Language at Kindergarten: Importance of Non-Verbal Language and Use of TPR to Elicit Communication*  
 Manuela Marchitelli pp. 267 - 279
- 16522  
*A Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis of the Highest-Frequency Vocabulary in Advanced and Native English*  
 Yunus Emre Akbana  
 Gülten Koşar pp. 281 - 298
- 16960  
*On an Effective Approach of Foreign Language Acquisition: Newspaper Reading*  
 Wen Bohua pp. 299 - 304
- 17302  
*Cross Cultural Communication*  
 Vineeta Kaur Saluja pp. 305 - 317
- 17320  
*Studies on Global and Partial Processing for Chinese Children with Dictation Difficulties*  
 Tan Yaqian  
 Qi Tingting  
 Liu Xiangping pp. 319 - 322
- 17326  
*The Function of "Turkish Language" Course in Colleges in the Teaching of Turkish as a Mother Tongue in Turkey*  
 Didem Akyildiz Ay pp. 323 - 330
- 17327  
*Content and Language Integrated Learning: In Search of a Coherent Conceptual Framework*  
 Zehra Gabillon  
 Rodica Ailincăi pp. 331 - 344

- 17416  
*Integrated Skills: Grammar and Home Reading in a Legal English Class*  
Elena Amochkina pp. 345 - 350
- 17470  
*Process-Genre Approach to Teaching Writing University Foundation  
Course Students in Pakistan*  
Abrar Ajmal pp. 351 - 356
- 17484  
*Learning and Teaching Experiences of Second Language in  
Sri Lankan Schools*  
Ulaganathar Navaratnam pp. 357 - 365
- 17575  
*Pecha Kucha: How to Improve Students' Presentation Skills*  
Rachel Robinson pp. 367 – 371

***Milieu Disparity Between Author and Reader Generates Complexity: ESP & ELT  
as a Case Study***

Aysha Mohd Sharif, International Islamic University, Malaysia  
Yahya Toyin Muritala, International Islamic University, Malaysia

The European Conference on Language Learning 2015  
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**Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to gain insight into the necessity of Islamic linguistic skills in terms of moral modifications and cultural relevancies for the improvement of ELT materials. The paper highlights the required assessments for the current need of English language for Muslims on all dimensions of ELT problems. This is enhanced through examining the reality of existence of Islamic approach to English usage in reference to its nature, historical background and contemporary impacts of English literary developments among Muslims. The result indicates that an Islamic approach to the language use and application should co-relate with universal features that include lexis, grammar, topic, style, audiences, code mixing: all of which express social and cultural identities. The ultimate goal is the attainment of communicative competence in English among Muslim learners through the medium of Islamic culture and systematic applications of the modern methods of English language learning and teaching.

Keywords: *Disparity, milieu, linguistic, identities, complexity*

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## **Introduction**

Coupled with the idea of students coming from different backgrounds, Kucer (2005) discusses the discrepancy not only between reader and reader but also between reader and author. “Not only do readers and writers bring their language to the printed page, conceptual knowledge is brought as well. There exists a symbiotic relationship between the knowledge conveyed through a text by the author and the knowledge conveyed through a text by the reader. In general, the more the reader’s and author’s backgrounds parallel one another, the smoother the construction of meaning is likely to be” (Kucer, 2005, p. 120). If a connection is not made or is not addressed in terms of the students’ knowledge of what the author is writing about, meaning can be lost before the process of reading has even begun.

According to Kucer (2005), our knowledge and experiences are culturally based. This means that we cannot experience or gain knowledge that is not “culturally coded” (Kucer, 2005, p. 125). What students bring to reading is culturally based and if what they bring differs from what the author or writer brings, there may be a loss of meaning within the scope of the text. As a result, compensations need to be made in the area of schemata if the reader possesses differing or conflicting knowledge of the author or writer. Based on the role that cultural variation plays in the acquisition of literacy, one must understand that there are various foundational theories that inform this acquisition. The psycholinguistic theory bears considerable ideas and concepts on how literacy can be acquired. This research provoked the idea that literacy is not something one was taught to do but rather something one learned or acquired; individuals made sense of what they encountered based on what they already knew, by accessing prior knowledge (Pearson & Stephens, 1992, p. 28). The psycholinguistic perspective has also affected one’s views of teaching and learning in a fundamental way. This fundamental learning theory allows one to comprehend that instead of teachers asking what they can do to teach students to read, they should be asking what they can do to help their students to read (Pearsons & Stephens, 1992, p.29). Literacy acquisition occurs with the understanding that the relationship between teacher and student is vital to that student’s literacy success. Teachers are not in the classroom to simply teach but to foster an environment where not only learning but also acquisition can happen.

## **Language and culture**

According to Ratnawati, dimensions of culture should be included when teaching a language to foster understanding between people of different cultures, to motivate learners and to help make it easy for the learners to assimilate into a foreign society. It is the teaching of English for the purpose of communication that emphasizes the teaching of not only what is linguistically appropriate but also socio-culturally appropriate which has been the focus of English pedagogy in the last few decades. Cultural implications have always been a matter of concern for the Muslims in teaching English language. According to Hyde (1994), “using English is often associated with image: “speaking English is the key to employment”, “speaking English speaks for modernity”, “and speaking English joins you to the international community” and so on.”

Milieu transformation is unjustified among the concerns of the Muslims. According to Alptekin (1993), “writers compose through culture specific schemas; and because most textbook writers are native speakers of English, they consciously or unconsciously transmit the views, values, beliefs, attitudes and feelings of their own English-speaking society.” Most of the Muslims think that if they are exposed to western ELT materials only, they will likely adopt those ideas and culture that seem very modern to all. That is why if there is a practical approach of Islamization of education, there will be less influence of the western ideas and their Islamic worldview and culture will be unaffected. However, producing such ELT materials is a real challenge. It is because distortion of any text culturally for focusing on one view is very difficult which in turn results knowingly or unknowingly in Text complexity.

### **Text Complexity**

Text complexity is based on the skills of the reader. When students have the literary skills necessary to read a text, they are likely to understand what they are reading. The Literacy Dictionary: The Vocabulary of Reading and Writing (Harris & Hodges, 1995) defines readability as “*the ease of comprehension because of style of writing*” (p. 203). This definition expands the idea of readability from the skills of the reader to include an analysis of the style of the writing. There are some writing styles that are harder for readers to understand than others. The Greenwood Dictionary of Education (Collins & O’Brien, 2003) defines Readability a bit differently: “*The quality and clarity of a piece of written work. Writing that can be understood by those for whom it is written*” (p. 295).

### **Methodology**

A number of researchers have identified the various considerations that should be addressed in an effective meta-analysis (Glass, McGaw, and Smith, 1981; Rosenthal, 1991a, 1991b; Wolf, 1986). These include: (1) defining the domain of research, (2) identifying the moderator variables, (3) establishing criteria for inclusion in the study, and (4) determining the type of effect size to be used. Marzano (1998) explains that within the narrative approach, a researcher attempts to logically synthesize the findings from a collection of studies on a given topic by looking for patterns in the studies reviewed. He further explains that the utility of a theory as the basis from which to conduct a meta-analysis on instructional research is best understood if one considers the differences between frameworks, theories, and models. Anderson (1990a) explains that theories can be articulated at a number of levels. He specifies that some studies used in this meta-analysis provided an evaluation of the methodological quality of the study or studies they included. Marzano (1998) summarizes that a theory-based meta-analysis of the research on instruction involves four elements of human information processing which are the self-system, the metacognitive system, the cognitive system, and knowledge. Durlak (1995) notes: “The ultimate goal of a literature research is to obtain a representative and non-biased sample of relevant investigations. . .” (p. 323)

The method is extracted because it complements the study that aims to focus mainly on to have a deep insight for the necessities of Islamic linguistic skills in terms of moral modifications and cultural relevancies for the improvement of ELT materials.

Most of the ELT textbooks do not have any features of Islamic linguistics and any moral values, which is found by referring to the theories on evaluation of the ELT materials. The textbooks which are out now do not have any moral values in the text and Islamic linguistic skills which results in a negative influence on the Muslim youth as it corrodes their minds and thinking. Students who pass the schools are academically strong but Islamically damaged. This paper propounds to make the Muslim world realize that to effectively execute the Islamization of knowledge and education, we need our own textbooks. The attainment of communicative competence in English among Muslim learners can be done through the introduction of Islamic English and linguistic skills which will retain the meaning of the words and the meaning of the terms and values will not be distorted. The medium of Islamic culture and systematic applications of the modern methods can be introduced in the English language learning and teaching.

### **Results and discussion**

The main problem is in the teaching materials, which include textbooks and the publications. Saeedah (2012) mentioned that textbooks, as the printed form of instructional materials, play a vital role in any English language-teaching program. Theorists such as Hutchinson and Torress (1994) said that “a textbook is an almost universal element of teaching”. Some others perceive their importance as one of the main tools of the trade in the language classroom. Sheldon (1988) suggests that they represent “the visible heart” of any ELT program. She highlighted that textbooks often contain ideologically-oriented values, cultural biases and social stereotypes. Another researcher Richards (2001) asserts, “They may distort content”. Many studies have demonstrated that racist attitudes, linguistics biases, gender dominance and cultural prejudices constitute part of the unrealistic view of the textbooks (Clarke and Clarke, 1990; Carrell and Korwitz, 1994; Ansary and Babaii, 2003). Sheldon (1988) propounded a theory on the evaluation of ELT materials, which said that the Literature on the subject of textbook evaluation is not very extensive. He mentioned that the publishers sometimes neglect matters of cultural appropriacy and they fail to recognize the restrictions operative in most teaching situations. Many textbooks, for example, use artificial, whole-sentence dialogues, despite the descriptions available of the truncated nature of authentic oral interaction (Cunningsworth, 1987). Therefore, he says, disjointed materials are produced in specific and possibly limited situations which are generalized and stitched together under flashy covers.

### **Teaching Materials and teachers**

According to Sepidah (2013), Instructional materials take two forms: Printed ones, such as textbook, workbook, teacher’s guide, etc., and non-print ones, such as audiotapes, videotapes, audiobooks and other computer-based materials. Sheldon (1988) suggests that textbooks do not only represent the visible heart of any ELT program, but also offer considerable advantages for both students and the teachers when they are being used in ESL/EFL classrooms. Hutchinson and Torres (1994) argue that the textbook has a very important and a positive part to play in teaching and learning of English. They state that textbooks provide the necessary input into classroom lessons through different activities, readings and explanations.

Simmons and Baines (1998) assert that the schooling years are of great significance to students as these school students recognize that they are encountering physical, psychological and intellectual changes. Usually, textbook writers have better resources than the ordinary teacher do (Compendium 3, 1989). However, they lack personal experience and knowledge of particular classes. According to Nunan (1991), the development of teaching materials includes three aspects namely, selection, adaptation and creation. Appropriate teaching materials can be used to maximize the learning outcome. Rossner (1988) provides several reasons for the importance of teaching materials.

1. Teaching materials should provide information on how language works.
2. Teaching materials should provide a focused practice in manipulating language forms and developing communicative skills.

Teaching materials should also focus on understandable, relevant and interesting exchanges of information to enhance the learner's communicative abilities of interpretation, expression and negotiation (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Rowntree (1974) classified that teaching materials prepared by teachers should imply the functions such as engaging the students motivation, recall earlier learning, provide new learning stimuli, activate the students response, give speedy feedback and encourage appropriate practice. According to Corbel (1985), there are three major procedures in developing teaching materials. The first is the identification of the learner's area of interest. The second is the identification of communication situations related to the learner. The third stage is to adapt or create teaching materials.

## Discussion

The theories and ideas of different researchers and academicians in ELT world highlights the main problems with the materials. When teaching a language like English, there are words which distort the real meaning of the word in Arabic and do not fulfill the need of the word. Universal features which include lexis, grammar, topic, style, audiences, and code mixing of any language express social and cultural identities. English and Arabic language both have their own social and cultural identities. The cultural and social identities of each language should be maintained by its users, learners and teachers. As we know that language is the skeleton of any content, hence the content is to be taught in language, mostly English as it is a lingua franca. The English vocabulary is so vast that it almost caters the meaning of any word but the words actually do not give the right meaning of some words which are in Arabic language. Therefore, the Islamic language i.e. Arabic and its universal features should be taken in consideration and the meaning of the words should not be distorted. The nature of distortion is by Translation and Transliteration. They are capable of great distortions of the form and content of Islamic concepts. Distortion, which is done by translation, actually changes the whole meaning of the word. For example: *Salah* which is often translated as 'prayer' but in English, 'Prayer' is any communication with whatever is taken to be one's god, even that if it is an idol. But actually *Salah* is the supreme act of worship in Islam which is conducted five times a day for the purposes defined by Shari'ah. It should consist of precise recitations, genuflections, prostrations, standings and sittings with orientation towards the Ka'bah and should be only entered into after ablutions and solemn declaration of intention or Niyah. Imagine, how can all this be compressed into a word 'prayer', which actually

corresponds to the meaning of Arabic word Du'a. This is the concept of Islamic English which was proposed by Al-Faruqi. This concept allowed the learners to improve their communicative competence using the right word with the right meaning when speaking the global language i.e. English. English is the language which is used by the whole world to communicate which also includes the Middle East region, which has the highest population of Muslims. The influence of the language has led to the Muslims adopting it more than Arabic with the culture of the language layered underneath. Therefore, to protect the culture and Islamic identities among Muslim youth, the immersion of Islamic English and values in the ELT materials will bring a huge difference in their thinking and way of life. Every layer or line in the materials designed by the authors can have moral values packed in it which can make them both academically and Islamically successful.

## **Conclusion**

As Tok (2010) states that a textbook plays an important role in the teaching–learning process and they are the primary agents of conveying the knowledge to the learners, therefore these primary agents are to be handled by best researchers and scholars which can control in demoralizing the learners. Today, the teaching materials which include textbooks do not have any objectives and are just created without knowing the learners' interests and their area of preference. There is no authentic resource which can confirm that the information provided is accurate or up to date or not. There are no authentic resources through which the textbook writers or the creator of the teaching materials can show parallelism. As seen before, the researchers who have evaluated the material which are being taught to the students in schools and colleges say that the materials just focus on imparting any kind of information irrespective of its moral value or ideological value.

The Muslim youth today is aiming for high accreditation and education. They are very competitive and want to excel in every field. They struggle to learn and attain command on the language. English language has made its mark on the whole world and the struggle of people to learn the language has also increased. But in this run, mostly the values, meanings, culture and social identities have changed a lot among the Muslims which is unfortunate. The scholars and the researchers are trying their level best to eliminate this problem. One of the ways is by actually producing their own materials i.e. Islamization of Education, a concept propounded by scholars like Dr. Bilal Philips. By taking this step we can stop the materials with no moral values and infuse Islamic values into them in order to reach the children. We can impart the correct meaning and the value of that particular word which they should understand. Islamization of knowledge and education can be done in any field which will make the Muslim learners not only academically strong but also Islamically strong. The Muslim learners should be aware of the distortion through translation and transliteration and understand. They should know the difference and be able to rectify the problems with Islamic values in the teaching-learning process. They should become volunteers in imparting the right words with the right meaning. Hence, immersion of Islamic English in enhancing the meaning and the universal features of a language should be used. This will help to ensure that the learners will learn the proper language and meaning of the words without distorting the real meaning of the word.



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**Contact email:** aysha.sharif18@gmail.com



***The Relationship Between Willingness to Communicate and Language Learning Anxiety Among Iranian College Students***

Mojdeh Mellati, Islamic Azad University, Tehran Medical Sciences Branch, Iran

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**Abstract**

General language communication has attracted researchers' attention for over fifty years (McCroskey, 1992). Therefore, teachers try to improve learners' communication abilities as far as possible, but on the contrary, although learners are given the opportunity to speak up in classroom or elsewhere some prefer to avoid speaking. Since one of the reasons of language difficulty has been considered to be anxiety (Tran, 2012), therefore, the present study tries to find out if there is a correlation between willingness to communicate and anxiety. Thirty three third year university students participated in the study. The study showed that there was a negative correlation found between level of anxiety and willingness to communicate, indicating that with the increase of anxiety willingness to communicate decreases. Therefore, the result of the study indicates that if the instructor decreases the anxiety of the learner, the willingness to communicate on the part of the learner will improve.

Keywords: willingness to communicate, anxiety, instructor, Iran

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## **Introduction**

Research into general language communication has attracted the attention for over half a century (McCroskey, 1992). Being confronted with the opportunity to use a foreign language, some students choose to speak up while others choose to avoid speaking. Even after having studied English for many years, many L2 learners will not change into language speakers. The reason why some learners try to remain silent is not very straight forward. According to MacIntyre (2007) Willingness to Communicate (WTC) relates to the preparedness to use the language whenever there is an opportunity. The concept of WTC is also defined as the probability of speaking when free to do so (McCroskey & Baer, 1985; MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998). In order to understand this aspect it is important to pay attention to the moment when the learner chooses to communicate.

## **Anxiety**

Foreign language anxiety research during the 1970s, however, was relatively scanty and they also presented mixed results. Krashen (1982) demonstrated that classroom environments which experience stress activate a "filter" blocking easy acquisition. During the 1980s, foreign language anxiety research continued to grow (e.g., Horwitz, 1986; Lucas, 1984).

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) obviously mention that research has neither completely defined foreign language anxiety nor explained its specific effects on foreign language learning. They also mention that foreign language anxiety can be best defined as "specific anxiety reactions".

Kumaravadivelu (2006) defines anxiety as " an emotional state of apprehension, tension, nervousness, and worry mediated by the arousal of the automatic nervous system." In an L2 situation, anxiety is referred to the feelings of "self-consciousness, fear of negative evaluation from peers and teachers, and fear of failure to live up to one's own personal standards and goals" (p. 33).

Tran (2012) mentions that anxiety is probably both the cause and effect of language difficulty. Besides, anxiety also seems to have different effects at different stages of L2 development, depending on its effect on both intake factors and intake processes (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Overall, the quantity of target language use overall has a negative relation with target language use anxiety about it (Levine, 2003).

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) argued that foreign language anxiety is a specific symptom that may be related to three well known anxieties related with first language use and everyday life. These are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Communication apprehension relates to discourse of an individual in talking in front of others.

It mentions that language anxiety and perfectionism may have similar symptoms in anxious language learners', a discovery that proposes that the techniques which can be used in helping individuals overcome their perfectionism can also be used in helping anxious foreign language learners' (Gregerson & Horwitz, 2002).

## **Willingness to Communicate**

One of the learner characteristics that Gardner and MacIntyre (1993) recognize as having a relationship with learning success is language anxiety. It is represented by self-disparaging, feelings of fear, and even physical manifestations such as a faster heartbeat! The anxious learner will also be not willing to speak in class, or to engage in informal interaction with target language speakers. Gardner and MacIntyre have cited many studies regarding the negative impact of language anxiety on learning success, and also some other studies which mention the controversy, for learner self-confidence. Lately, a very broad construct named "willingness to communicate" has been suggested as a mediating factor in second-language use and second language learning (MacIntyre et al., 2002). This construct includes variables which together produce "readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a L2" one of which is anxiety (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547).

WTC was at first developed to explain the existing individual differences in L1 communication. Burgoon (1976, cited in MacIntyre & Baker, Clement, & Conrad, 2001) described "unwillingness to communicate" as the state of avoidance of speaking due to elements such as introversion, lack of communication competence, and communication apprehension. Mortensen, Arntson, and Lustig (1977; cited in Chu, 2008) worked on predispositions toward verbal behavior. McCroskey and Richmond (1982) used the term "shyness" to explore the willingness to talk less.

The degree of WTC is assumed to be a factor in learning a second language and the ability to communicate in that language. The higher a speaker's WTC the more likely he is to be successful in second language (L2) acquisition. High WTC is related with increased frequency and quantity of communication (Richmond & Roach, 1992).

Willingness to communicate (WTC) has been proposed as both an individual difference variable affecting L2 acquisition and as a goal of L2 instruction (MacIntyre, Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1998).

MacIntyre and Charos (1996, cited in Matsuoka, & Evans, 2005) modified MacIntyre's (1994) model and designed a path model of L2 WTC. To this model integrativeness, attitude, and motivation were added. The relationship between affective variables distinguished anxiety, attitude, competence, and their effect on WTC and the actual use estimated by the frequency of L2 communication were investigated. According to the model anxiety indirectly influences WTC.

MacIntyre et al. (1998) adjusted the previous model and mentioned a pyramid model which takes twelve variables into account and also considers individual differences which are responsible for initiating L2 communication. The top of the pyramid is proposed as the final stage or the purpose of communicate with special people at a specific time which is recognized as the final step before one starts to talk in L2. The rest of the pyramid takes into account the specific situation and the influences which affect this willingness.

The pyramid model takes a group of motivational and attitudinal factors into account, those that can determine WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Motivation is defined as the driving force or attempt plus will that leads to achievement of the goal of learning the

language (Richards, & Schmidt, 1985; Gardner, 1985, as cited in Noel, 2001), and can be divided into positive and negative. "Positive motivation is often demonstrated by a person's willingness to communicate", the individual's desire to start communication (Moreale, 2007, p.7), and it is proposed that if positive motivation is taken by the student will tend to increase WTC. On the other hand, "negative motivation is the experience of anxiety or apprehension about communication", and it prohibits one from complete communication (Moreale, 2007, p.7).

Few studies have shown significant high correlation between language proficiency, anxiety, and WTC (MacIntyre et al., 2003; Yashima, Zenuk-Nishide, & Shimizu, 2004) but Alemi and Pashmforoosh (2011) mentioned that Iranian university students' WTC is directly related to their language proficiency but not language anxiety.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The relationship between language anxiety and WTC in an L2 learning context among Iranian EFL learners has not been clearly noticed. Furthermore, it seems to be found that few studies have dealt with the relationship between willingness to engage in communication and language anxiety in the context of Iran. Since effective communication is considered as an important skill for academic success, studies that examine the factors affecting the development of this skill among EFL learners are increasingly becoming important for learners. The resulting affective state might be considered to address the following research question in the current investigation: Is there a correlation between language anxiety and Iranian university students' WTC?

### **Method**

#### ***Participants***

A total of thirty three (33) third-year students of a four-year biology college in Islamic Azad University, Tehran Medical Branch participated in the study. All of the students were enrolled in a semester of English for academic purposes course starting from September 2012 to January 2013 school year. Aged between 21 to 25; student participants have already received an average of 8 years of formal education in learning the English language, prior to their participation in this study. All of the 33 students participated in the quantitative part of the study, which is to fill up the Anxiety questionnaire of Anxiety survey designed in 1988, and the Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire Scale.

#### ***Materials***

To measure the anxiety of the student participants, the study uses the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) Personal Report of Anxiety survey designed at 1988. The questionnaire consisted of 21 items, which each present a symptom of a person who is anxious or has been anxious in a situation. The questionnaire was translated into Persian and the validity and reliability of this questionnaire was measured by Kaviani and Mousavi (2008). As measured by them the reliability was shown to be 0.83 and the validity 0.72 with the correlation coefficient of 0.92. With having four boxes in front of each of the feelings, participants are asked to put a tick beside the strength of

the feeling they have experienced. The four boxes are calculated according to the following formulae: four (4) scales (*Not at all* = 0, *A little (it didn't bother me much)* = 1, *Moderate (It was really bad, but bearable)* = 2, *Strong (It was unbearable)* = 3; on various statements regarding anxiety symptoms. The total score which each student receives represents the amount of anxiety he experiences in the language classroom. Furthermore, the total score should fall between 0 and 63. According to Kaviani and Mousavi (2008), the anxiety is considered extremely high if the score falls between 37-63, high between 27-36, moderate between 19-26, low between 12-18, and it does not exist at all if it falls under 11. (*Please see appendix for a copy of the BAI questionnaire*).

In order to measure the students' willingness to communicate a self report instrument, known as the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) Scale which seems to be a valid operationalization of the construct (McCroskey & Richmond, 1987; Richmond & McCroskey, 1989) was used.

The WTC scale includes items related to four communication contexts- public speaking, talking in meetings, talking in small groups, and talking in dyads-and three types of receivers-strangers, acquaintances, and friends. The scale includes twelve scored items and eight filler items (those marked with an asterisk in Figure 1 are filler items). In addition to an overall WTC score, presumably representing the general personality orientation of WTC, seven subscores may be generated. These represent the four types of communication contexts and three types of receiver. In the study only the three types of receivers were measured. The internal reliability of the total WTC score is .92. The test has been also shown to be valid (McCroskey, & Richmond, 1990).

## Procedure

The study took place in the educational year 2012-2013 during the first semester. Student participants are thirty three (33) third-year students of a four-year biology college in Islamic Azad University, Tehran Medical Branch. All of the students were enrolled in a semester long English for academic purposes course. All students took the anxiety questionnaire along with the Willingness to Communicate questionnaire, and they were given time as long as they needed.

## Results

The mean, standard deviation, and reliability of the questionnaires were calculated and are mentioned in Table 1. The reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliabilities for WTC and Anxiety

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Reliability
Stranger	33	27.45	19.8	0.68
Acquaintance	33	61.94	20.7	0.55
Friend	33	68.89	19.3	0.64
Total WTC Score	33	53.16	16.3	0.82
Total Anxiety	33	22.57	12.1	0.91

Therefore, the reliability of the Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire seems to be acceptable regarding the three receiver factors which are communicating with stranger, acquaintance, and friend. The reliability of the anxiety questionnaire is also acceptable, and it even shows a high reliability. As shown in the table willingness to communicate with an acquaintance shows the highest mean ( $m=68.89$ ). Willingness to communicate including three factors and a total score was measured or related to different levels of anxiety as table 2 shows.

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for WTC and Anxiety

WTC	Anxiety	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Stranger	No anxiety	50.96	13.9	4
	Low anxiety	18.14	17.1	11
	Moderate anxiety	27.36	22.2	9
	High anxiety	23.75	16.3	4
	Extremely high anxiety	32.55	16.3	5
	total	27.45	19.8	33
Acquaintance	No anxiety	68.75	17.1	4
	Low anxiety	57.52	20.7	11
	Moderate anxiety	59.33	20.7	9
	High anxiety	59.37	33.9	4
	Extremely high anxiety	73	11.9	5
	total	61.94	20.7	33
Friend	No anxiety	75.62	24.01	4
	Low anxiety	70.52	15.6	11
	Moderate anxiety	61.02	23.0	9
	High anxiety	64.37	22.7	4
	Extremely high anxiety	77.67	14.2	5
	total	68.89	19.3	33
Total WTC Score	No anxiety	64.99	15.3	4
	Low anxiety	49.52	14.6	11
	Moderate anxiety	49.23	16.3	9
	High anxiety	49.16	22.7	4
	Extremely high anxiety	61.99	13.01	5
	total	53.16	16.3	33

As shown in table 2 the highest mean belongs to communication with a stranger and the total score, in subjects who did not experience any anxiety. After this group the next group which has the highest mean is the group who experience an extremely high anxiety in the same factors. In order to answer the research question Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated. The results are as follows.



Table 3 Pearson Correlation between WTC and Anxiety

Variable	N	correlation coefficient	Sig
Anxiety	33	-0.005	0.9
WTC	33		

$P < 0/05^*$

According to table 3 there is a negative relationship between anxiety and willingness to communicate.

### Conclusion

The present study compared the results of English ESP learners' performance on two questionnaires one anxiety and the other Willingness to Communicate. According to the results there is a negative correlation between willingness to communicate and anxiety, i.e. with the increase of anxiety willingness to communicate decreases. Therefore, the results of the present study confirm the findings of MacIntyre et al., (2003), Yashima, Zenk-Nishide, & Shimizu, (2004) that there is a relationship between willingness to communicate and anxiety, but rejects the findings of Alemi and Pashmforoosh (2011) indicating that Iranian university students' WTC is not directly related to their anxiety.

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***Vocabulary Learning Strategies Used by High Vocabulary Knowledge Students  
Studying in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year English for International Communication Students***

Tinutda komol, Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Thailand

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies used by high vocabulary knowledge students in the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, Songkhla. The subjects of this research were 72 third-year students studying in English for International Communication Program in the academic year 2013. The subjects were then divided into two groups; the students with high and low vocabulary knowledge groups based on their vocabulary size scores and were asked to rate the vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire. The findings revealed that the students with high vocabulary knowledge used vocabulary learning strategies at the moderate level. The strategies that were rated at the highest level were using English-Thai dictionary, using English media, taking notes of the newly-learned words in class, learning the words by translating the word meaning, and asking classmates for meaning.

Keywords: Vocabulary learning strategies; vocabulary size; strategy

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## **Introduction**

English plays a vital role in economic progress, modern technology, internationalization (Spolsky, 1998), as well as the Internet and the World Wide Web (Pakir, 2000). Lexical knowledge is also considered an important part of the foundation of learning English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Mastering a new word involves such common abilities as form recognition (pronunciation, spelling, derivations) and knowing its dictionary meaning. Knowledge of its specific grammatical properties, as well as the ability to use the word appropriately in certain context and function (frequency and appropriateness), are all part of the mastery process (Nation, 1990; Oxford & Scarcella, 1994). McCarthy (2001, cited in Fan, 2003) explained that vocabulary forms the biggest part of the meaning of any language, and vocabulary is the biggest problem for most learners.

Vocabulary teaching in many classrooms is largely incidental and used as a support for reading comprehension (Catalan, 2003; Fan, 2003). This means that when a particular word or phrase appears difficult to the students, they are told the definitions. Occasionally, this may be supplemented with the collocations of the target words or information about how the words are used, e.g., whether they are used to express negative emotions or whether the word is used in formal situations. More often, however, finding out about new vocabulary items is left to the discretion of the students, and they are encouraged to turn to dictionaries to look up meanings of words.

Regarding English language learning at Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya, students did not perform well in most of the English language courses. Academic results of the two fundamental English courses (English I and English II) which are compulsory for RMUTSV students across different disciplines showed that 20%, 40%, and 5% of the students gained grades C, D, and F respectively. Vocabulary knowledge is one of the problems to those RMUTSV students' English language proficiency and also hinders the students' learning in other elective English courses. Learning to learn or strategies to learn new vocabulary and store them in the learners' repertoire of knowledge have been widely accepted among English language professional researchers (Brown, 1987).

Teacher should be aware of their students' learning strategies. Laufer (1998) pointed out that investigating students' vocabulary size can be of substantial value to language research and pedagogy. It provides the realistic situation for lexical syllabus and indicates what would constitute optimal syllabuses which will, in turn, guide material design, testing, teaching and learning. The present study, therefore, intends to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies in a group of students in the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya.

## **Methodology**

The subjects of this study consisted of 72 students majoring in English for International Communication from the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Rajamangala University of Technology Srivijaya (RMUTSV), Songkhla Campus. These subjects were purposively sampled since they had the same experience in learning the two

compulsory English courses. Moreover, it is believed that language students would have more exposure to language learning strategies.

The subjects took the vocabulary level test and they were divided into two groups: the students with high and the students with low vocabulary knowledge. The purposes of dividing the subjects into two groups (36 high and 36 low vocabulary knowledge groups using 27% technique) were to investigate to which extent each group used vocabulary learning strategies, to determine the vocabulary learning strategy used by high knowledge students in terms of the frequency of vocabulary learning strategies they used.

## Result and analysis

The first research question was to find out the five main categories of vocabulary learning strategies: determination, social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies used by the third year students. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were employed. The results of vocabulary learning strategies were presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Frequencies of use of all vocabulary learning strategies

Strategies	N	Min	Max	$\bar{X}$	SD
DET	72	1.22	5.00	3.36	0.68
SOC	72	0.85	4.72	2.60	0.75
MEM	72	0.84	4.84	3.21	0.72
COG	72	0.82	4.84	3.19	0.80
MET	72	0.74	5.00	2.98	0.76
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>1.22</b>	<b>3.95</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>0.75</b>

As table 1 exhibits, the third year students in the Faculty of Liberal Arts used vocabulary learning strategies at the moderate level ( $\bar{X}=3.02$ ). By categories, it was found that the determination strategies (DET) were most frequently used ( $\bar{X}=3.36$ ) followed by memory strategies (MEM) ( $\bar{X}=3.21$ ), and cognitive strategies (COG) ( $\bar{X}=3.19$ ). For metacognitive strategies (MET) were moderately used ( $\bar{X}=2.98$ ). In this study, it is found that the third year students used social strategies ( $\bar{X}=2.60$ ) less than other vocabulary learning strategies.

## A comparison of the use of vocabulary learning strategies between high and low vocabulary knowledge groups

To answer the research question asking if there are any significant differences between students with high and low vocabulary knowledge in the use of vocabulary learning strategies. The test scores of vocabulary level test of the students with high vocabulary knowledge were significantly higher than those of students with low vocabulary knowledge at the 0.01 level. An independent sample t-test was then carried out with each strategy as a dependent variable and high and low vocabulary

knowledge groups as independent variables to determine whether the use of a particular strategy was significantly different between the two groups. The results of these analyses were presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Vocabulary size scores of high and low vocabulary knowledge groups

Vocabulary size	No of item	High		Low		t	Sig
		$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
<b>Total scores</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>23.40</b>	<b>2.82</b>	<b>12.25</b>	<b>3.29</b>	<b>17.338</b>	<b>.000**</b>

\*\*Significant at the 0.01 level

**Table 3:** Five categories of vocabulary learning strategies used by the students with high and low vocabulary knowledge

Strategies	High		Low		t	Sig
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
<b>DET</b>	3.61	0.58	3.14	0.71	3.456	.001**
<b>SOC</b>	2.75	0.74	2.44	0.73	2.495	.014*
<b>MEM</b>	3.16	0.65	2.65	0.65	3.564	.001**
<b>COG</b>	3.44	0.75	2.92	0.75	3.342	.001**
<b>MET</b>	3.28	0.56	2.70	0.60	3.846	.000**

\* significant at 0.05 level

\*\* significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 displayed the mean of vocabulary learning strategies used by the students with high vocabulary knowledge and their low vocabulary knowledge counterparts. The results revealed that the students with high vocabulary knowledge reported using all five categories of strategies significantly higher than the students with low vocabulary size ( $p < .01$ ). When looking into each category of the vocabulary learning strategies used by the high and low vocabulary knowledge students, the determination strategies (DET) were used significantly more often by the high vocabulary knowledge group than did the low vocabulary size group (high group,  $\bar{X} = 3.61$ ; low group,  $\bar{X} = 3.14$ ;  $p < .01$ ), followed by cognitive strategies (COG) (high group,  $\bar{X} = 3.44$ ; low group  $\bar{X} = 2.92$ ;  $p < .01$ ), metacognitive strategies (high group,  $\bar{X} = 3.28$ ; low group,  $\bar{X} = 2.70$ ;  $p < .01$ ), and memory strategies (high group,  $\bar{X} = 3.16$ ; low group,  $\bar{X} = 2.65$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Social strategies were determined as the least used strategies by the two groups and were found at a significant of 0.05 difference in the frequency of use between the two groups (high group,  $\bar{X} = 2.75$ ; low group,  $\bar{X} = 2.44$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

#### A comparison of determination strategies used by high and low vocabulary knowledge groups

**Table 4:** A comparison of determination strategies used by the high and low vocabulary knowledge groups

Determination strategies	High		Low		t	Sig
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
- Look up a word in English – Thai dictionary.	<b>4.42</b>	0.79	<b>4.25</b>	0.83	1.000	.320
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>3.457</b>	<b>.001**</b>

\*\* significant at  $p < .01$

\* significant at  $p < .05$



As shown in Table 4, the high vocabulary knowledge group used the determination strategies frequently ( $\bar{X}=3.61$ ) while the low vocabulary knowledge group used these strategies moderately ( $\bar{X}=3.15$ ). It was noticeable that high and low vocabulary size students reported using the strategy of using English-Thai dictionary at the most frequently used level ( $\bar{X} = 4.42$ ,  $\bar{X} = 4.25$  respectively). For consideration of determination strategies in order to see whether there were any significant differences between high and low vocabulary knowledge groups in using vocabulary learning strategies, the independent sample t-test was applied. As revealed in Table 4, in general, high vocabulary knowledge group reported using determination strategies significantly more often than those in the low vocabulary knowledge group ( $p < .01$ ). Only the strategies of using English-Thai dictionary and using Thai-English dictionary were not statistically significant different in terms of the frequency of use.

### A comparison of social strategies used by high and low vocabulary knowledge groups

**Table 5:** A comparison of social strategies used by the high and low vocabulary knowledge groups

Social strategies	High		Low		t	Sig
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
- Ask classmates for meaning	<b>3.60</b>	0.98	<b>3.83</b>	0.90	-1.187	.238
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.85</b>	<b>0.74</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>2.499</b>	<b>.001**</b>

\*\* significant at  $p < .01$

\* significant at  $p < .05$

As revealed in Table 5, the average mean scores of the high and low vocabulary knowledge groups differed in using each social strategy which indicated that the high vocabulary knowledge group used these strategies at a moderate level ( $\bar{X}=2.85$ ) while their low vocabulary knowledge counterparts reported using these strategies at the lower level ( $\bar{X}=2.45$ ). When looking by items, it was found that strategy of asking classmates for meaning ( $\bar{X}=3.60$ ,  $\bar{X}=3.83$ ) was frequently used by the high and low vocabulary knowledge groups. The results of independent t-test revealed a significant difference between the two groups on their frequency of social strategy use ( $p < .01$ ). There were three social strategies that both high and low vocabulary knowledge groups significantly differed in terms of frequency of use. These are asking the teacher to translate the meaning that they do not understand, asking the teacher for synonyms or similar meaning of words, and interacting with native speakers.

### A comparison of memory strategies used by high and low vocabulary knowledge groups

**Table 6:** A comparison of memory strategies used by the high and low vocabulary knowledge groups

Memory strategies	High		Low		t	Sig
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
- Learn the word translating the words' Meaning	<b>3.96</b>	0.89	<b>3.75</b>	0.95	1.100	.274
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>3.565</b>	<b>.001**</b>

\*\* significant at  $p < .01$

\* significant at  $p < .05$

As indicated in Table 6, the students with high and low vocabulary knowledge reported using memory strategies at a moderate level ( $\bar{X} = 3.15$ ,  $\bar{X} = 2.66$ ). As the reading frequency below showed, the strategy of learning the word by translating the words' meaning was frequently used by the students with high and low vocabulary knowledge groups ( $\bar{X} = 3.96$ ,  $\bar{X} = 3.75$ ). In order to test the significant differences between the students with high and low vocabulary size in using memory strategies, the mean score exposed to inferential statistic. In the independent sample t-test below, there were significant differences emerged among the two groups ( $p < .01$ ) in the following, the strategies of connecting the word to their experience, making a list of vocabulary arranged by topic or group for reviewing, associating the word with other words they have learned, reviewing the word they have learned by spelling it aloud, remembering the word from its strange form, pronunciation or difficult spelling, saying the word aloud when studying in order to easily remember, and learning the word of an idiom together. Noticeably, learning the word translating by the words' meaning was not statistically significant difference in the frequency of use in the two groups and this was the strategy students resorted to most often.

### A comparison of cognitive strategies used by high and low vocabulary size groups

**Table7:** A comparison of cognitive strategies used by the high and low vocabulary knowledge groups

Cognitive strategies	High		Low		T	Sig
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
- Learn the word through verbal repetition	4.00	0.98	3.38	1.14	2.866	.005**
- Learn the word through written repetition	4.02	1.04	3.42	1.00	2.889	.005**
- Take notes the newly-learned words in class	4.06	0.83	3.67	1.11	1.966	.052
- Use the vocabulary section in your textbook	3.56	1.12	3.34	1.09	1.742	.085
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>2.94</b>	<b>0.77</b>	<b>3.352</b>	<b>.001**</b>

\*\* significant at  $p < .01$

\* significant at  $p < .05$

As depicted in Table 7, the students with high vocabulary knowledge reported using cognitive strategies frequently ( $\bar{X} = 3.47$ ) while their low vocabulary knowledge counterparts performed these strategies at the moderate level ( $\bar{X} = 2.94$ ). When considering by items, it was observed that the strategies of taking notes of the newly-learned word in class, learning the word through written repetition, learning the word through verbal repetition, and using the vocabulary section in their textbook (high group  $\bar{X} = 4.06$ ,  $\bar{X} = 4.02$ ,  $\bar{X} = 4.00$ ,  $\bar{X} = 3.56$ : low group  $\bar{X} = 3.67$ ,  $\bar{X} = 3.42$ ,  $\bar{X} = 3.38$ ,  $\bar{X} = 3.34$  respectively) were frequently used by the students with high low vocabulary knowledge. Concerning the differences in using different types of cognitive strategies between the students with high and low vocabulary knowledge, it was found three strategies which the students with high vocabulary knowledge used significantly more often than the students with low vocabulary knowledge ( $p < .01$ ). These were the strategies of learning the word through verbal repetition, learning the word through written repetition, and keeping a word notebook wherever they go. Interestingly, it was found the strategies of taking notes the newly-learned words in class and using

the vocabulary section in their textbook were more often used by the two groups though significant differences were not found.

### **A comparison of metacognitive strategies used by high and low vocabulary knowledge groups**

**Table 8:** A comparison of metacognitive strategies used by the high and low vocabulary knowledge groups

Metacognitive strategies	High		Low		t	Sig
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD		
- Use English media (song, movie, newspaper leaflets, the Internet, magazine, etc	<b>4.02</b>	1.00	<b>3.75</b>	1.10	1.262	.210
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.28</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>2.72</b>	<b>0.72</b>	<b>3.853</b>	<b>.000**</b>

\*\* significant at  $p < .01$

\* significant at  $p < .05$

As Table 8 revealed, students with high and low vocabulary knowledge reported using metacognitive strategies at a moderate level ( $\bar{X} = 3.28$ ,  $\bar{X} = 2.72$  respectively). The frequently used strategies of these two groups was the strategy of using English media ( $\bar{X} = 4.02$ ,  $\bar{X} = 3.75$ ). In order to find the significant differences in terms of frequency of use between both high and low vocabulary knowledge students, five cognitive strategies were found to significantly differ at the 0.05 level: testing themselves with their word tests, translating the meaning of word from English into Thai, continuing to study the words over time, practicing by doing vocabulary exercises, and trying to speak or describe things in English.

### **Conclusion**

The results indicated that the strategies used by high vocabulary knowledge students were using English-Thai dictionary ( $\bar{X} = 4.42$ ) under determination strategies was most frequently employed by all subjects. This finding was in line with that of Schmitt (2000) and Sanaoui (1995), who claim that dictionary use plays an important role in EFL learning. The next frequently used strategies were using English media (songs, movies, newspapers, leaflets, internet, magazines, etc.) ( $\bar{X} = 4.02$ ) in the metacognitive strategies, taking notes of the newly-learned words in class ( $\bar{X} = 4.06$ ) under the cognitive strategies, learning the words by translating the word's meaning ( $\bar{X} = 3.96$ ) belonging to the memory strategies, and lastly asking classmates for meaning ( $\bar{X} = 3.60$ ) under the social strategies. These findings were similar to the findings of Stern (1992), Ellis (1997).

The results of this study were consistent with the previous studies in terms of types and frequency of vocabulary learning strategies employed by university students. The strategies used by the students were similar to those research studies of Schmitt, (1997), Oxford, (1990), Gu and Johnson, (1996).

The implication derived from the results of this study is that training the students for vocabulary learning strategies should be regarded as a needed aspect of lexical learning and it deserves more consideration. Understanding the students' natural learning patterns contributes to a better understanding of how they can learn the words of the target language, particularly English. From this study, it is hoped that

university teachers will better understand the vocabulary learning trends of students so that they can train and lead students more effectively to greater achievement in learning vocabulary.

Certainly, the findings offer great benefits to English language teachers and students. As the results showed that the strategies of using English-Thai dictionary, asking classmates for word meaning, learning the words by translating the words' meaning, taking notes of the newly-learned words in class, and using English media were found to be the most frequently used strategies among the students with high and low vocabulary size. Therefore, the students should be encouraged to make extensive use of those strategies. The teachers can design tasks for the students in order to improve their skills in using those most frequently used strategies.

Another implication is that the teachers should try to make the learners aware of the strategies that were found to significantly correlate to their vocabulary size. These were the strategies of analyzing parts of speech, analyzing affixes and roots to guess the meaning of words, using English-English dictionary, using Thai-English dictionary, listing vocabulary and reviewing it, asking the teacher for synonyms or similar meanings of the new word, asking the teacher to make a sentence by using the new words, asking the teacher to check their word lists for accuracy, interacting with native speakers, connecting the word to learners' experience, learning the word through verbal repetition, learning the word through writing repetition, taking notes of the newly-learned words in class, testing themselves with word tests, continuing to study the word over time, using English media, and trying to speak or describe things in English. The teacher should teach the students how to use these strategies whenever necessary and try to include these strategies in class activities and assignments, etc, in order to encourage the learners to internalize these strategies. Oxford (2001) states that making the students aware of the strategies they use in learning are one of the best ways to enhance their learning. When students are aware of the strategies which help them to learn better, they are motivated to use them more frequently in their learning.

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**Contact email:** tinutda\_k@yahoo.com



*Sociolinguistic Factors Influencing Language Acquisition in German Preschoolers  
in Three Follow-up Studies*

Eugen Zaretsky, University Hospital of Frankfurt/Main, Germany  
Benjamin P. Lange, Julius Maximilian University of Wuerzburg, Germany

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**Abstract**

The data of three follow-up studies on language acquisition were analyzed retrospectively in order to identify sociolinguistic factors associated with the need for additional educational help in learning/acquiring German in German preschoolers. Factors of interest were documented by means of questionnaires for parents and daycare center teachers. The questions were related to the immigration background, medical issues, language contact, and the language competence of the test subjects. Also, age-appropriate language tests were conducted. All children were classified by language experts as needing or not needing additional educational support after both test sessions in all three studies. The purpose of the study was the explanation of the differences in these classifications (“worse–the same–better”). Associations between changes in the classifications and sociolinguistic factors were analyzed by Chi-square values and correlations. Significantly associated factors entered regressions for the identification of the most important ones. Also, classification trees were utilized. Monolingual, normally developed German children who acquired German under optimal or average sociolinguistic conditions demonstrated comparatively slow growth of their test scores. Their classification as needing or not needing additional educational support usually did not change because their language skills had already been good before the first test session. Bi-/multilingual children, especially those who had acquired German under unfavorable conditions before, developed their language skills rapidly and hence were often classified as “better” after the second test session. The impetus for their advances in the language development was the attendance of the daycare center and, hence, active contact to the German language.

Keywords: language acquisition, language disorders, German language, children, preschoolers

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Language acquisition is a developmental process that seems to be built upon some basic innate cognitive mechanisms (Pinker, 1994) but that, however, requires also consistent and quantitatively as well as qualitatively sufficient linguistic input embedded in a proper social environment (e.g., Carrier, 1999; Cartmill et al., 2013; Huttenlocher, Vasilyeva, Cymerman, & Levine, 2002; Kuhl, 2004; Schmid & Dusseldorp, 2010; Tarone, 2007).

Previous research indeed suggests the existence of a broad palette of sociolinguistic as well as medically relevant factors influencing language acquisition. Luoma et al. (1998) found that preterm children performed significantly lower than controls in speech and language comprehension and production at the age of five. In accordance, low birth weight is predictive of poor receptive vocabulary at the age of four (Taylor, Christensen, Lawrence, Mitrou, & Zubrick, 2013). Also socioeconomic status and maternal education affect language acquisition (Letts, Edwards, Sinka, Schaefer, & Gibbons, 2013; Taylor et al., 2013). Another study indicates that not only socioeconomic status but also children's emotionality and parenting stress might influence language acquisition (Noel, Peterson, & Jesso, 2008). Taylor et al. (2013) identified several risk factors for vocabulary delay at the age of four. If the mother, for instance, is not proficient in the language the child acquires (in the Taylor's study it was English), child's vocabulary might be underdeveloped. Other risk factors were: child not read to at home, four or more siblings, low family income (in accordance with the Letts et al. study), maternal mental health distress, low maternal parenting consistency, and high child temperament reactivity. Also low maternal education was, as in the study by Letts and colleagues, predictive of language problems, in this case vocabulary delay (Taylor et al., 2013). As for the second language acquisition, specifically, many factors have been proposed too that might be responsible for the child's verbal proficiency. Apart from the quantity and quality of the linguistic input, an early onset of the second language acquisition might be crucial. Possibly, also the other language(s) spoken might play its/their part too (Cornips & Hulk, 2008).

In the current study, we analyzed retrospectively the influence of sociolinguistic variables on language competence. This was not done by means of cross-sectionally measured language competences, but based on the changes in the language competence between two test sessions in three different follow-up studies. These changes were classified as "worse – the same – better" in respect to the classification of children as needing or not needing additional educational support in learning/acquiring German. The classification was carried out objectively by university language experts on the basis of validated, age-appropriate language tests. The study did not aim at confirming or falsifying any hypothesis on language acquisition.

## **Material and Methods**

### ***Test subjects and tests***

In all three studies, children acquiring German were tested twice with validated language tests within a time span of several months. For an overview of the sample sizes, time spans, tests used, and locations of all three studies, see Table 1.



All children were classified by an expert panel (speech and language pathologists and researchers in clinical linguistics) as needing additional educational/pedagogical support in acquiring German (PAED) or normally developed (ND). Children classified as PAED scored low in the language tests, that is, usually below the 17<sup>th</sup> percentile of the reference population, which corresponds to at least one standard deviation below the average value of the reference group. The definition of PAED presupposed that PAED children can profit from language courses. The classification as PAED or ND was carried out both after the first and after the second test session on the basis of audio records of the tests, test batteries, and questionnaires filled out by parents and daycare center teachers.

Table 1. *Sample sizes, tests used, time spans, and locations of all three studies*

	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3
<i>N</i>	209	134	165
<i>N</i> boys	115 (55%)	82 (61%)	99 (60%)
<i>N</i> girls	94 (45%)	52 (39%)	66 (40%)
<i>N</i> MO	142 (68%)	3 (2%)	60 (36%)
<i>N</i> BM	67 (32%)	131 (98%)	105 (64%)
Age range, 1 <sup>st</sup> session	48-55 months	48-53	37-68
Age median, 1 <sup>st</sup> session	51 months	50	50
Age range, 2 <sup>nd</sup> session	60-78	54-60	60-81
Age median, 2 <sup>nd</sup> session	65	56	66
ND (1 <sup>st</sup> session)	140 (67%)	61 (45%)	105 (64%)
PAED (1 <sup>st</sup> session)	69 (33%)	73 (55%)	60 (36%)
ND (2 <sup>nd</sup> session)	160 (77%)	70 (52%)	116 (70%)
PAED (2 <sup>nd</sup> session)	49 (23%)	64 (48%)	49 (30%)
Result ND ⇒ PAED	30 (14%)	8 (6%)	8 (5%)
Result ND ⇒ ND or PAED ⇒ PAED	129 (62%)	109 (81%)	138 (84%)
Result PAED ⇒ ND	50 (24%)	17 (13%)	19 (12%)
Tests in the 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> session	MSS b ⇒ MSS b	MSS b ⇒ MSS b	MSS b ⇒ S-ENS b
Months between test and retest (range)	11-16	4-7	9-33
Months between test and retest (median)	13	6	15
Questionnaires: 1 <sup>st</sup> session	for parents and daycare center teachers	for parents and daycare center teachers	for parents and daycare center teachers
Questionnaires: 2 <sup>nd</sup> session	for daycare center teachers	for daycare center teachers, short version	for parents and daycare center teachers
Years	2007-2008	2010	2008-2011

Test location	daycare centers	daycare centers	public health departments and daycare centers
Region in Germany	state of Hesse	state of Hesse	state of Hesse

ND = normally developed, PAED = needing additional educational assistance in acquiring German, MO = monolingual German children, BM = bi-/multilingual children, MSS b = validated short version of the language test “Marburger Sprachscreening”, S-ENS b = language test “S-ENS. Screening des Entwicklungsstandes bei Einschulungsuntersuchungen” with some additional validated tasks

Both monolingual German children (MO) and bi-/multilingual children (BM) were included into the study sample. German children who spoke not only German but also (an)other language(s) at home were classified as BM. BM children were mostly Turks, Italians, Russians, Serbs, Croatians, Poles, and Arabs. Most of them did not have any or had very little contact to German till their third or fourth year of life.

All parents signed informed consent before the first test session and received information on the results. Consequently, parents were informed about the need of educational assistance for their children and usually had an opportunity to apply for language courses and therapies.

Language tests used were a modified, validated version of the “Marburger Sprachscreening” (MSS b; Euler et al., 2010; Neumann et al., 2011) and the validated school enrolment test “S-ENS. Screening des Entwicklungsstandes bei Einschulungsuntersuchungen” (Döpfner, Dietmair, Mersmann, Simon, & Trost-Brinkhues, 2005) with some additional validated tasks (S-ENS b). The former includes subtests on grammar, vocabulary, articulation, fluency, speech comprehension, and phonological short-term memory (repetition of sentences and nonce words). The latter has subtests on the same linguistic domains except fluency. Because fluency disorders (stuttering and cluttering) were not the subject of this study and were not included into the definition of PAED, this discrepancy was of no relevance here. In both tests, study participants had to answer questions on the basis of colorful pictures depicting playing children and well-known objects like a ball or an apple. In case of low compliance or illness, children were retested several days or weeks later. The testers were linguistics students and researchers.

The analysis of sociolinguistic factors influencing language development was carried out retrospectively on the basis of the data gathered for the validation of various language tests including MSS b. No exclusion criteria except inappropriate age were applied in the original studies. In Study 2, however, the original study design aimed at the validation of MSS b for BM children only. This explains why only three MO children were tested. Also, no special criteria were utilized for the choice of children to be retested, that is, all children recruited for the first test session were invited to participate in the second one.

### *Statistical analyses*

Non-parametric tests were used because the metric data were not normally distributed according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test ( $ps < .05$ ).

Sociolinguistic variables from questionnaires for parents and daycare center teachers (categorical and nominal data) were cross-tabled with changes in the PAED/ND classification “worse – the same – better” after the second test session: (1) “worse”: ND  $\Rightarrow$  PAED (children who were classified as normally developed after the first test session and as needing additional educational assistance after the second one); (2) “the same”: ND  $\Rightarrow$  ND or PAED  $\Rightarrow$  PAED (children whose classification did not change between two test sessions); (3) “better”: PAED  $\Rightarrow$  ND (children whose classification improved and who did not need additional educational assistance anymore according to the second classification). Instead of cross-tables, Spearman’s correlations were calculated for the metric data from questionnaires and the same changes in the PAED/ND classification.

Sociolinguistic variables of interest were immigration background (BM vs. MO), gender, age in months in the first and second test sessions, time span between test sessions in months, language(s) spoken at home (by the child, father, mother, whole family), length of daycare center attendance in months, whether the child attended a nursery school in the first two years of life, whether the child attended the daycare center regularly, for half a day or a whole day, possible comorbidities (hearing, sight, and motor disorders, otitis media), early or difficult birth and low weight at birth, length of contact of the child and parents to the German language, language disorders and “problems with reading and writing” in the family, whether the child played with German speaking children during and after the daycare center time and spoke out when playing, whether he or she underwent a language therapy or participated in language courses, whether the child was a member of some study group or association, whether there was at least one more child in the daycare center group who spoke the same non-German language as the child, educational level of parents etc. Also, school marks given by daycare center teachers for the child’s German language competence for the time points when he/she began to attend the daycare center and when he/she was tested for the first time were taken into account.

For all three studies, regressions were calculated in order to predict the language development of the children classified as “worse – the same – better”, which was the dependent variable. The independent variables were sociolinguistic factors identified as relevant (significant or at least marginally significant) in the cross-tables and in the correlations with the ordinal classification “worse – the same – better”. For a comparison, classification trees with the same dependent and independent variables were calculated for each study (growing method: Exhaustive CHAID).

The development of language test scores of ND and PAED children between two test sessions was visualized for Study 1.

Finally, total scores of each child in both test sessions were transformed into percentiles. Differences between percentiles in the first and second test sessions were calculated. For instance, if the child reached 10<sup>th</sup> percentile in the first test session and 20<sup>th</sup> percentile in the second one, the difference between these two values was +10

and meant that the result got better in the second session. An association between changes in percentiles and sociolinguistic items from questionnaires (which were filled out in the first test session and hence were valid for all three studies) was analyzed by Spearman's and point-biserial correlations as well as by Kruskal-Wallis *H*-tests.

All data were processed using SPSS 20 (International Business Machines Corp., New York, USA).  $P < .05$  was considered to indicate a statistically significant difference. All results are reported as two-tailed if not stated otherwise.

## Results

Results of the cross-tables and correlations of the questionnaire items with changes in the PAED/ND classification („worse – the same – better“) are given in Tables 2 (Study 1), 3 (Study 2), and 4 (Study 3). Only significant and marginally significant ( $p \leq .08$ ) results are reported. Significant sociolinguistic factors were utilized for categorical regressions. However, in Study 1 significant variables related to BM children only had to be excluded because their inclusion resulted in too low sample sizes. In Studies 2 and 3 the regression models were not significant and are hence not described here.

Table 2. *Study 1: sociolinguistic factors from the questionnaires for parents and daycare center teachers associated with changes in the PAED/ND classification (“worse – the same – better”)*

Factor	Chi-Square, linear-by-linear associations or Spearman's correlations			Categorical regression: $F_{(10, 52)} = 5.89, p < .001$ , adjusted $R^2 = .44$		
	$\chi^2$ , $l_{bl}$ , or $r_s$	$p$	$N$	Beta	$p$	importance
Immigration background	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 23.74$	< .001	209	1.006	.005	.947
Language(s) spoken at home	$l_{bl(1)} = 19.70$	< .001	196	-0.749	.023	-.621
Membership in an association or a study group	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 7.63$	.022	194	-	n. s.	.035
There is at least one more child in the same daycare center group who speaks the (non-German) mother tongue of the child	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 9.50$	.009	73	-	-	-
Age when the child had enough language contact to learn German	$l_{bl(1)} = 7.80$	.005	80	-	-	-
A school mark for the language competence of the child when he/she began to attend the daycare center	$l_{bl(1)} = 12.84$	<.001	91	-	n. s.	.255

A school mark for the language competence of the child given in the first test session	$lbl_{(1)} = 13.60$	<.001	74	-	n. s.	.344
Attendance of a nursery school in the first two years of life	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 13.61$	.001	180	-	n. s.	.066
Age of the child in months in the first test session	$r_s = -.138$	.046	209	-	n. s.	.000
Age of the child in months in the second test session	$r_s = -.158$	.039	171	-	n. s.	.000

Note: n. s. = not significant

Table 3. Study 2: sociolinguistic factors from the questionnaires for parents and daycare center teachers associated with changes in the PAED/ND classification (“worse – the same – better”)

Factor	Chi-Square, linear-by-linear associations or Spearman’s correlations		
	$\chi^2$ , $lbl$ or $r_s$	$p$	$N$
Attendance of daycare center for half a day or a whole day	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 5.02$	.081	90
The child does not hear well	$lbl_{(1)} = 4.87$	.027	110
A school mark for the language competence of the child given in the first test session	$lbl_{(1)} = 5.00$	.025	56
Length of daycare center attendance in months	$r_s = .295$	.003	98

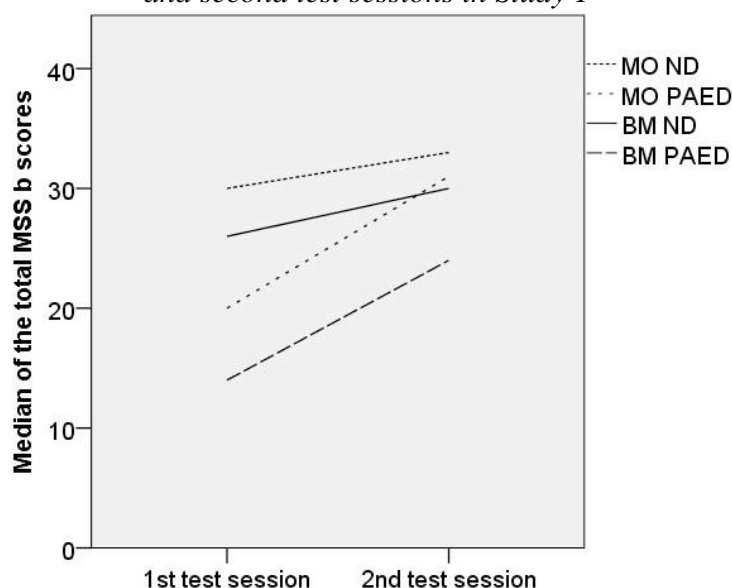
Table 4. Study 3: most important sociolinguistic factors from the questionnaires for parents and daycare center teachers associated with changes in the PAED/ND classification (“worse – the same – better”)

Factor	Chi-Square or Spearman’s correlations		
	$\chi^2$ or $r_s$	$p$	$N$
Attendance of a nursery school in the first two years of life	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 5.25$	.071	147
Participation in a language therapy	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 14.49$	.001	156
Language disorders in the family	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 5.76$	.056	155
The child has often otitis media	$\chi^2_{(2)} = 5.05$	.080	66
Age in months in the first test session	$r_s = -.186$	.017	165
Length of daycare center attendance in months	$r_s = -.221$	.016	119

The only statistically significant factor identified in a classification tree in Study 1 was immigration background ( $\chi^2_{(1)} = 19.02$ ,  $N = 209$ ): 45% of BM and 14% of MO children were classified as “better”. The classification trees predicted correctly 62% of the dependent variable (“worse – the same – better”). The classification trees for Study 2 and Study 3 did not identify any significant factors.

Of importance for the further discussion is also the development of the total scores between two test sessions, exemplified here for Study 1, see Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Development of the MSS b total scores of correct answers between the first and second test sessions in Study 1*



MO = monolingual German children, BM = bi-/multilingual children, ND = normally developed children, PAED = children needing additional educational assistance in acquiring German

Sociolinguistic factors associated with changes in percentiles of each child are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. *All three studies: most important sociolinguistic factors from the questionnaires for parents and daycare center teachers associated with changes in the percentiles of test total scores between two test sessions*

Factor	Correlations or Kruskal-Wallis <i>H</i> -tests		
	$\chi^2$ , $r_s$ , or $r_{pb}$	$p$	$N$
Mother's first language	$\chi^2_{(12)} = 20.77$	.054	111
Participation in a language therapy	$r_{pb} = -.121$	.034	308
How often the study participant plays with the child(ren) who speak(s) the same (non-German) language	$r_s = -.207$	.050	90
A school mark for the language competence of the child given in the first test session	$r_s = .209$	.052	87

An attempt to calculate a classification tree with these variables yielded no results.

## Discussion

In this article, three follow-up studies were analyzed retrospectively in order to identify sociolinguistic factors associated with the need for additional educational assistance in learning/acquiring German. Sociolinguistic factors of interest were collected by means of questionnaires for parents and daycare center teachers. The

questions were dedicated to the immigration background, medical issues, language contact, and language competence of the test subjects. All children were classified by language experts as needing or not needing additional educational support after both test sessions in all three studies. Explanation of the differences in this classification (“worse – the same – better”) was the purpose of this study. To sum up, changes in the classification of children as needing or not needing educational assistance in acquiring German were associated with almost all analyzed unfavorable conditions for the language acquisition.

Three factors yielded significant or marginally significant values in two out of three studies in the cross-tables and correlations: age in months in the first test session, school mark for the language competence of the child in the first test session (given by daycare center teachers), and length of daycare center attendance in months. Thirteen other factors were associated with the classification “worse – the same – better” in one of the studies. In the only significant regression and the only significant classification tree (Study 1), immigration background and language(s) spoken at home (only in the regression) were the most important factors influencing changes in the ND/PAED classification of children. The reason for not statistically significant regressions and classification trees must have been the missing data in the questionnaires. Both parents and daycare center teachers left out certain items if they were not sure about the answer or did not want to disclose some information.

The positive beta value of the factor “immigration background” in the regression from Study 1 means that not MO, but BM children were often classified as “better” after the second test session. This corresponds to other tendencies found in the cross-tables, correlations, regression, and Figure 1. The following values should illustrate which groups of children were classified as “better” in the ND/PAED classification:

- Study 1, cross-table and classification tree: 14% of MO children and 45% of BM children were classified as “better”;
- Study 1, cross-table: 13% of children speaking only German at home and 60% of children speaking only (an)other language(s) at home;
- Study 1, cross-table: 13% of children who were members in some association or study group and 30% of children who were not members in such organizations;
- Study 1, cross-table: 16% of children who could not speak their (non-German) mother tongue in the daycare center and 50% of children who could, which reduced their contact to the German language;
- Study 1, cross-table: 17% of children who acquired German from their birth on and 73% of children who acquired it since their third year of life;
- Study 1, cross-table: 14% of children whose German skills at the beginning of the daycare center attendance were estimated with the school mark “very good” and 67% of children with the school mark “very bad”;
- Study 1, cross-table: 18% of children whose German skills at the time of the first test session were estimated with the school mark “very good” and 100% of children with the school mark “very bad”;
- Study 1, cross-table: 3% of children who attended a nursery school and 31% of those who did not; the same is valid for Study 3 with percentages 4% vs. 16%;
- Studies 1 and 3, correlations: younger children received a higher classification (“better”) more often;

- Study 1, Figure 1: the total scores of PAED children, both MO and BM, grew more between two test sessions than the total scores of ND children;
- Study 2, cross-table: 15% of children who always heard well and 33% of children who seldom heard well;
- Study 3, cross-tables: 7% of children who did not often suffer from otitis media and 33% of children who suffered often;
- All three studies taken together: according to Table 5, following groups of children reached better percentile values in the classification tree:
  - children of mothers with other first languages than German,
  - children who participated in the language therapies (that is, children who probably had some medical issues);
  - children with worse school marks for their language competence in the first test session.

One of the factors clearly associated with the result “worse” was the presence of language disorders in the family. In Study 3, 0% of children whose relative(s) suffered from language disorders and 13% of other children were classified as “better”. On the contrary, 17% of the former and 4% of the latter were classified as “worse”. Also, according to Table 5, BM children who spoke often their mother tongues in the daycare center did not catch up with their peers in acquiring/learning German. Obviously, children, who had acquired German under unfavorable conditions before they began to attend a daycare center and to communicate in German there, were usually classified as “better”, whereas children who kept on speaking their mother tongue in the daycare center could not catch up with other children. The same is valid for children with language disorders in the family, that is, children in a risk group for language impairments (specific or with comorbidities). The fact that children who attended a daycare center for half a day received the result “better” in 5% of cases, whereas children who attended it for a whole day were classified as “better” in 10% (Study 2), also indicates that the daycare center attendance was the crucial factor behind “better” results.

Because according to the questionnaire for daycare center teachers most BM children began to learn German in the third (14%) or fourth (41%) year of life, many children with immigration background were still in the active phase of the second language acquisition when they were tested in our studies. Also, due to limited contact to the German language in the first years of life, these children might have received less attention from the medical and educational personnel. Therefore, for the BM children the third and fourth years of life were also the phase of medical examinations and therapies. Some families addressed speech and language therapists after they had received our results for the first test session with recommendations on educational assistance and/or medical examination. MO children, on the contrary, had already acquired German to a considerable degree before the first test session and, if necessary, had already undergone medical therapies associated with the language disorders. Their German skills had already been good and would have been classified as “even better” if this category had been available. This explains why not the children with more favorable conditions of language acquisition but those with the most unfavorable ones were classified as “better” after the second test session.

Some contradictory results between the studies emerged. According to Study 2, the longer the daycare center attendance, the higher the classification (that is, “better”),



but according to Study 3 the correlation was negative. Both correlations were weak. Because neither parents nor daycare center teachers filled out their questionnaires completely, the sample sizes were not high, which might be the explanation for some inconsistencies. All in all, Study 2 has certain characteristics of a cross-sectional study (Zaretsky, Lange, Neumann, & Euler, 2014), probably because of a short time span between two test sessions. Also, it should be taken into account that in studies with large numbers of statistical comparisons one or two statistically significant findings can be a matter of chance even in case of  $p < .01$ . For the same reason, Bonferroni adjustment was utilized in the classification trees.

Methodological differences can also result in somewhat different findings on the basis of the same data. For instance, if the available sociolinguistic variables are included into the regression without pre-selection in Study 2 (with the argumentation that the items were taken from a validated language test and hence must be relevant for the language acquisition in any sample), then the variable “how often the child plays with other children” would yield a significant result (Zaretsky et al., 2014), whereas not a single variable was significant in the regression presented here.

The fact that in Study 2 only three sociolinguistic variables yielded significant results in the cross-tables and correlations (plus one marginally significant result) and none in the regression is not surprising because the time span between the first and second test sessions was only six months (cf. 13 in Study 1 and 15 in Study 2). Obviously, it was too short for the sociolinguistic variables to influence the language competence considerably.

To conclude, the age of four and five years can be considered the age of active language acquisition. However, monolingual, normally developed German children who acquired German under optimal or average sociolinguistic conditions demonstrated comparatively slow growth of their test scores, as was exemplified in Figure 1 for Study 1. Their classification as needing or not needing additional educational support usually did not change because they did not need such support. On the contrary, bi-/multilingual children, especially those who just began to acquire/learn German or those with language-associated comorbidities, developed their language skills rapidly and hence were often classified as “better” after the second test session. The impetus for the advances in their language development was daycare center attendance and, hence, active contact to the German language. Contacts to the experienced daycare center personnel might have also contributed to the examination of such children in the medical facilities and to the medical assistance in acquiring/learning German.

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## *Adjusting Written Feedback on Postgraduate Student Writing to Optimize Student Uptake*

Filiz Etiz, Middle East Technical University, Turkey

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### **Abstract**

The importance of written feedback on L2 student writing is widely accepted. What seems to be unclear is which form of feedback proves to be most effective. In tertiary education settings where the medium of instruction is English, instructors of academic writing are also challenged with making decisions in prioritizing between genre-specific and L2-specific feedback. Despite the fact that genre-specific and language-specific feedback is constantly given to student writing, much of the end-product still includes mistakes ranging from minor grammatical errors to major genre-specific problems. This study was carried out to determine to what extent postgraduate students taking the course *ENG 402 – English for Graduate Studies I* revise their drafts according to the feedback given on their writing. Essay files consisting of a first draft with instructor feedback and a second final draft produced according to this feedback were collected at the end of the semester. The types of written feedback provided by the instructor were then related to the quality of response given by students in their final draft. Taking the findings of this examination into consideration, ways by which written feedback on postgraduate student writing can be adjusted in order to optimize student uptake in this course were identified.

Keywords: graduate writing, feedback

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## **Background to the Study**

The importance, or even necessity, of giving feedback in foreign language learning has long been debated by scholars. Despite the fact that there are some scholars who have previously posited that giving feedback is not necessary in language learning, an overwhelming majority has strongly argued for providing feedback. In this vein, Gagné (1985) and Gagné et al. (1992) define feedback as “an external learning condition to improve the effectiveness of learning” and have pointed out the importance of feedback for one’s learning, respectively. In addition to providing feedback to students, Brookhart (2008) puts emphasis on the “just-in-time matching” of feedback, i.e. providing feedback to each student tailor-made for that particular instance and individual.

Students in the foreign language classroom value teacher feedback and attach great importance to writing accuracy (Ferris & Roberts, 2001; Lee, 1997). Research reveals that indirect feedback rather than direct feedback where mistakes are corrected prove to be more beneficial for students (Ferris & Roberts, 2001). Feedback comes in three basic types: (i) direct feedback where the feedback is tailor-made for the student and correct versions are provided, (ii) indirect feedback where especially language errors are highlighted usually by the use of symbols, and (iii) dialogic feedback where the teacher engages the student by posing questions (O’Sullivan & Paynter, 2013).

The present study was inspired by a 2013 doctoral study carried out by one of our colleagues at the Department of Modern Languages, Gökçe Vanlı. The focus of her study was on student and teacher perceptions on feedback to student writing. At the end of her study, she points to the need to “analyze what goes on during the revision process” in order to “have a better understanding of how the students revise” as well as to the need to “shed more light on the issue of how much of a teacher’s feedback the students consider”. These suggestions for further study served as the starting point for the current study.

### **The context:**

The study was conducted at the Department of Modern Languages at Middle East Technical University. The aim was to evaluate to what extent teacher feedback to students’ essay rough drafts were taken into consideration in the final draft. The essays were written in a graduate English course, ENG 401, during the Autumn term of the 2014-2015 academic year. ENG 401 is an integrated skills courses where the writing component aims to develop students’ essay writing skills through the process approach. In ENG 401, students write several non-graded documented essays and a graded documented expository essay, where instructor feedback is given to the outline and rough draft, and the process is also graded. The instructors gives feedback for outlines (first without and the second with sources incorporated), and rough draft during the process.

### **The Participants:**

The instructor, who also works as a tutor at the academic writing center has 12 years of experience teaching writing courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The students come from a variety of departments. Student proficiency levels range roughly from CEFR B1 to C1. For the study, in each category - poor, average, good, respectively - 12 student essays (rough and final drafts) were collected.

### **Research Questions:**

The research questions formulated in this study were:

- What type of feedback (FB) for content, organization and language is preferred by the teacher?
- To what extent do students take into account FB on content, organization and language?
- What is the relationship between student language proficiency and FB uptake?

### **Data Collection:**

Samples were collected from the teacher who shared the rough and final drafts of 12 students (poor, average, good), including her written feedback. Instructor feedback types for content, organization and language were recorded separately for each student. Then, the extent of uptake in the final draft for each category was noted for each. Finally, the patterns emerging from the data in each category (content, organization, language) and each proficiency level were interpreted on a table. The analysis of feedback given by the instructor revealed that she gives written feedback and mostly prefers to use a combination of types of written feedback (e.g. direct, indirect, dialogic). However, the analysis of student papers revealed minimal use of constructive and even less use of positive feedback in general.

Students at all proficiency levels responded to written feedback but to varying degrees. Even students with poor proficiency attempted to revise their essays in some way. Student uptake of written feedback varies significantly according to proficiency levels. For the most part, the higher the level of proficiency of the student is, the better the uptake is. This is expected since proficiency in L2 also entails familiarity with writing conventions and experience reading, writing and revising as well as facility in understanding instructor comments and language skills.

Teacher feedback to Content varied in type: comments indicating errors, suggestions, positive comments and questions. Among the “good” students, 2 students did not need revision. Students at all levels attempted revision. Uptake improved with increase in proficiency level.

Teacher feedback to Organization varied in type to a lesser extent: mostly error indication, suggestions all of which were considered to a large extent by students with higher proficiency levels but most students with “good” proficiency did not need to make major changes in organization. Language feedback was given to all levels of students and the uptake tends to be higher as the level of proficiency increases.

## **Conclusions**

Taking into consideration the results of the study, several conclusions can be made regarding this study: For one, it is evident that students at all proficiency levels tend to respond to feedback to a large extent. However, the uptake of feedback varies and seems to be in direct correlation with proficiency levels. In other words, the higher the proficiency level of students, the higher their uptake of feedback. This may be either due to more proficient students' higher frequency of writing skills practice earlier or to their better understanding of and insight into the L2 language mentality and thinking patterns as opposed to less proficient students' less engagement with L2 (writing) beforehand, or perhaps due to both factors. Another conclusion that may be drawn from this study is the fact that merely written feedback in different types rather than combining it with face-to-face and whole-class oral feedback is preferred. One reason why this may be so can be attributed to lack of time and high number of students to deal with in one semester. One other conclusion that can be reached in this study is about the employment of positive and constructive feedback. Apart from few positive remarks on especially more proficient students' writing, the use of such feedback appears to be minimal for the essays. Again, this may be due to lack of time and having to cope with large numbers of students every semester.

## **Suggestions**

In the light of the conclusions made in this study, the following suggestions can be made:

- (i) Instructors should provide regular feedback for all writing tasks throughout the semester, and the feedback provided for students should be varied and should come in as whole class and face-to-face (oral) in combination with written feedback to optimize student uptake.
- (ii) It is evident that there is a strong relationship between student proficiency level and student uptake of feedback. Therefore, rigorous effort should be made both on the part of the instructor and the student to raise overall proficiency levels of students.
- (iii) More constructive feedback in the form of suggestions should be provided for student writing in order to guide and encourage the student. In addition to constructive feedback, positive feedback pointing to the strong points in student writing should not be disregarded since such feedback is likely to increase student confidence in writing and give the student a sense of achievement even at early stages of academic writing.



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The logo for IAFOR (International Association for Foreign Language Research) is centered on the page. It features the word "iafor" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The text is surrounded by a circular graphic composed of several overlapping, curved lines in shades of blue and red, creating a sense of motion or a globe.



## *The Role of Belief in Language Teacher Education*

Mojdeh Mellati, Islamic Azad University, Tehran Medical Sciences Branch, Iran

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### **Abstract**

The role of teacher education is of crucial importance and has been challenged over the years. The change of teacher role since the time of grammar translation up to the time of eclectic method is a proof of importance of teacher role. Therefore, efforts have always been taken, to formulate teachers role and to guide them in their career. Carter and Doyle (1996) mention teacher role as being quite personal and rooted in one's beliefs as well as some other factors. Dewey (1933, cited in Barcelos, 2000) mentions belief as being equal to thought, but later on belief is viewed as a social process (Wright, 1987). Anyway, whether belief is considered as thought or social process, none of them is formed during a few years, and belief formulation starts from the early years of life (such as Lortie 1975, [as cited in Egbert, 2002], Stern, 2004). Therefore, in order to change prior beliefs different procedures have to be taken.

Hence, the present article first tries to define belief from different points of view and next to show the importance of teacher belief. Then it continues with the formulation of teacher belief from the time the teacher is still a young student. It also pictures the importance of formulation of correct beliefs during these early years. Finally, it tries to picture the outcome of all the efforts that are taken to formulate new beliefs and their practicality in practice.

Keywords: Belief, teacher education, change, formulation, student, attitude

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## **Introduction**

Teaching has been described as a contradictory activity, full of nervousness and difficult situations or dilemmas (Lampert, 1985). In daily practice, teachers are confronted (and sometimes torn) with problems that cannot be easily solved. Although there are no definite answers or methods that can provide the best solution for the dilemmas they confront in everyday practice, teachers' self-knowledge may be one of the means of dealing with dilemmas, since when they know themselves better they can become empowered to solve their problems (Barcelos, 2010).

Role is defined as "a complex grouping of factors which combine to produce certain types of social behaviors" (Wright, 1987, p. 7). Several studies have addressed the variety of roles language teachers and learners can play (Wright, 1987; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). One fundamental common supposition in these studies is that the teacher's role varies within a continuum from a more directive to a more facilitative role. By the same demonstration, students' roles vary a lot depending on the teacher philosophical orientation (Oxford et al., 1998), different teaching methodologies, students' beliefs and expectations about teachers' and their own roles (Barcelos, 2010)

Carter and Doyle (1996) mention that "teaching is deeply personal and rooted in an individual's identity and sense of meaning" (p. 134). Thus, in order to understand teaching we have to make sense of our own knowledge and beliefs and how they influence our practice.

Some of the factors which influence the teaching are beliefs, attitudes, task related behaviors, interpersonal relationships, and communication content and style. Beliefs are part of teaching and learning as a social process, where "relationships are established, maintained, and evaluated through communication" (Wright, 1987, p. 10). The way teachers and learners act and what they say in the classroom are an indicator of the kinds of beliefs they have (Barcelos, 2010).

## **Belief**

Teachers' "beliefs" about teaching play a fundamental role in the way they formulate goals and define the tasks of teaching. This is up to the point that when such beliefs are disregarded, the systems of practices they guide or make sense of will be correspondingly opaque. At a surface level, this may result in one measuring or analyzing aspects of the classroom which have no prominence for the participants, or, conversely, it may lead one to look over or ignore features of the situation which greatly influence those involved in it. At a more profound level, failing to attend to beliefs leaves the researcher in the position of being able to develop only an abstract model of the structures or regularities underlying classrooms processes – the functions and uses of classroom structures, and the social "rules" governing their use, remain hidden (Nespor, 1985).

Breen (1985) characterized the language classroom as "coral gardens" a place in which subjective views of language, various learning purposes, and different beliefs about learning appear.

The difficulty of defining belief has been distinguished by several researchers, and due to this characteristic it has been called a "messy" construct (Pajares, 1992). According to Pajares, this hardship is partly due to the paradoxical nature of beliefs and agendas of researchers. James and Pierce also mention the paradoxical nature of beliefs. James (1907; as cited in Barcelos, 2000) did not see beliefs as separate from our experiences in the world. According to him beliefs influence actions, and actions or facts one after another modify beliefs.

Other educational researchers have also alluded to the paradoxical nature of beliefs (Eisner, 1991; Feiman-Nemser & Remillard, 1996 as cited in Barcelos, 2001; Pintrich, Marx & Boyle, 1993). Feiman-Nemser & Remillard (1996, as cited in Barcelos, 2001) have mentioned that beliefs also help people to interpret and to assess "new ideas and potentially conflicting information"(p.80-81). They have mentioned that the beliefs from our prior experiences, that aid us in learning, make learning new information difficult for teachers and students.

Dewey (1933, as cited in Barcelos, 2000) defines beliefs as a form of thought:

[belief] covers all the matters of which we have no sure knowledge and yet which we are sufficiently confident of to act upon and also the matters that we now accept as certainly true, as knowledge, but which nevertheless may be questioned in the future- just as much as knowledge in the past has now passed into the limbo of mere opinion or of error (p.6).

He further on describes belief as part of our experience, and if they are not consistent with our experiences this may cause conflict.

Peirce (1978, as cited in Barcelos, 2010) mentioned that beliefs lead desires and form actions by preparing individuals to act in case the situation arises. He explained that beliefs are paradoxical since they can stop doubt and can make thought begin at the same time (i.e. after belief is reached, thought relaxes and comes to rest for a moment). However, belief is a rule for action. It is a "stopping place" and a "starting place" at the same time. (p.121),

Learning to understand our beliefs and dilemmas is part of the process of becoming a critically reflective teacher (Brookfield, 1995; as cited in Barcelos, 2010 ). According to Brookfield, if we seek to instill in our students the attitude of examining their own beliefs, we have to model it and show that, as teachers, we are also struggling for insight, critical clarity, and openness. Third, by listening to our students' voices we initiate a dialogue with them that can help us "unlearn" many of our common assumptions about learning and teaching (Wink, 1997; as cited in Barcelos, 2010).

### **Teacher Role and Belief**

Richards and Lockhart (1994) emphasize that the way the contexts in which teachers work, and their beliefs about their role can influence their approach to work and the strategies they employ to achieve their goals. Teachers may select various roles for themselves such as planners, managers, quality controllers, group organizers, motivators, empowerers, and team members. However, according to Richards and Lockhart, these roles often have something in common. Teachers cannot be everything to all people, and their role may change in the process of the lesson. Among the aspects that can influence the role types, teachers may adopt, three sites

are mentioned. First, the way teachers interpret their roles will cause “different patterns of classroom behavior and classroom interaction” (p. 106). Second, the various phases of a lesson also affect the role that teachers play. This means that the teacher can make use of a more controlling role when directing a drill, or adopt a more facilitative role during an open discussion. Eventually, teachers as well as learners can interpret their roles according to a) a number of various teaching settings and teaching methods employed, b) individual characteristics and teachers’ personal interpretation of problems, and c) cultural suppositions about teachers’ responsibility, concept of learning and teaching, and learners’ roles and duties in the classroom.

Featherstone's research shows that the switch of role from student to teacher is not a simple change, rather beginning to teach is now seen as a difficult and complex task that can have a major impact on the professional development of first year teachers (Featherstone, 1993, as cited in Farrell, 2009). Indeed, prior assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes built up during student years, are often challenged as learner teachers learn about teaching (Loughran, Brown, and Doecke, 2001; cited in Farrell, 2009). Therefore, language teacher educators need to consider how the prior assumptions and beliefs which often serve as a lens through which novice teachers view teaching, can be explained during the language teacher education program.

### **Formulation of Language Teacher Belief**

In foreign language teaching literature, research shows that language teacher candidates have pre-existing beliefs and expectations about foreign language teaching and learning that originate from their own formal and informal language learning experiences (Freeman, 1991; Johnson, 1994) & Freeman, 1994 as cited in Hanson, 2011). Teachers' knowledge and beliefs are formulated through and by the normative ways of thinking, talking, and acting that have been historically and culturally imbedded in the communities of practice in which they participate (as both teachers and learners) (Johnson, 2009).

Stein (2004) mentions that teachers' carry, sets of beliefs which they have gathered from childhood.

Those who choose the teaching profession gain many of their attitudes and beliefs about teaching from the teachers and school-related events that they have observed and experienced throughout their lives (Lortie 1975, as cited in Egbert, 2002)

The practices of teachers who have completed training in normal universities are affected by the beliefs of their teacher educators as well as by the training they have received (Wang, 2002).

Allwright (1984, as cited in Barcelos, 2010) offered a different view from the long-held belief that teachers control the classroom interaction. He explained that teachers teach only by agreement, and that learners contribute to the management of their own learning. This management may involve trying to “socialize their teachers into being the sorts of teachers they themselves want” (p.75).

Patro (2002) mentions that teacher education is likely to consist of four elements: increasing the quality of the general educational background of the trainee teachers;

increasing their understanding and knowledge of the subjects they are to teach; education and understanding of children and learning; and improving practical skills and competences.

Teacher learners also examine theories of SLA; discover cultural, linguistic, and sociological matters as they affect the student learning; engage in active practice with a number of different methods; "investigate models of effective instruction and authentic assessment, and network with teachers and community leaders through semester length field experiences" (Hones, 2002, P. 14).

During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the belief that teaching was an art and that teachers were born rather than made was still prevalent (Schulz, 2000).

Vygotsky was interested in the social and cultural characteristics of individual human development. His recognition of the social origins of higher mental capacities is shown in his argument that 'every function in the child's cultural development occurs twice: first, on the social level and later on the individual level; i.e. first, between people (inter-psychological), and then inside the child' (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Clarke, 2008). The small class sizes are claimed to facilitate educational conversations and dialogues through which student teachers can develop, share, process and formulate appropriate ideas and theories (Clarke, 2008). In addition, group project work encourages student teachers to discuss ideas and represent their thinking to others. As another part of this process, previous models are consciously explored, externalized and placed side by side with different images and models of teaching. As Johnson (1999 as cited in Clarke, 2008, p.57-8) urges:

"If teachers' epistemic beliefs are to be refined, expanded, or transformed, and teachers' projected or newly emerging beliefs are to become more dominant, teachers must become cognizant of their own beliefs; question those beliefs in light of what they intellectually know and not simply what they intuitively feel; resolve conflicting images within their own belief systems; and have access to, develop an understanding of, and have successful encounters with alternative images of teachers and teaching."

This encourages teacher educators to meet student teachers on their own conditions and to acknowledge, validate, challenge and extend their previous experiences and present understandings (Clarke, 2008).

Peacock (2001; as cited in Attardo, & Brown, 2005), conducted a three-year longitudinal study of teacher trainee beliefs about second language learning. He showed there were significant differences between the beliefs of trainee teachers and experienced teachers considering the roles of vocabulary and grammar learning and the role of intelligence in language learning, and these beliefs were inclined to change little over time. Peacock claims that it is important for trainees to have beliefs that more closely picture those of experienced teachers. Peacock claims to let the trainees use their own (in this case non-communicative-language-learning-oriented) beliefs once they become teachers themselves.

In the specific field of language teaching, the 1990s witnessed a burgeoning of research into teacher knowledge and teacher beliefs. Much of this work is summarized in Borg's comprehensive review of research into language teacher cognition (2003). However, as reflected in the term 'cognition', this work is often

supported by a psychological approach, with a focus on individual minds, in contrast to the socio-discursive and socio-cultural approaches (Clarke, 2008).

At some point in life, all individuals will have to choose and behave according to compatible beliefs. That is the time when the most predominant beliefs are discovered. Pajares (1992) mentions that at this time, beliefs "appear more consistent than they really are" (p.319).

Current research on teacher development focuses on teachers' beliefs with relation to their practices rather than on the teaching skills approved by educators or policy makers (Carter 1990; Richardson, 1994, as cited in Sato, 2002).

### **Language Teachers' Beliefs**

As mentioned earlier, the recent researches participate on ways of thinking about the teaching role of the teacher/learner relationship, focuses on the things that go on in the minds of teachers and teacher education learners' as they participate in learning to teach, planning, classroom action, reflection, and assessment (Richardson, 2003).

Teachers' belief is a relatively new subject. It can be followed to the mid-1970s when Lortie published his classical study on teachers' socialization. Lortie's study contributed to the identification of teacher thinking as an idea in education and thinking as a concept in education and teaching as a cognitive undertaking. The concentration was now put on the teachers' mental lives and knowledge. The new paradigm gave birth to teacher thinking, learning, knowledge and cognition (Freeman, 1996; as cited in Barcelos, 2000).

Beliefs are what underlie the best teaching, which lead, in turn, to the best learning (Wang, 2002).

### **Change in Beliefs and Practices**

Feiman-Nemser & Remillard (1996; as cited in Barcelos, 2000) mentioned that beliefs can change. Pajares (1992) claims that beliefs are inflexible and basically unchanging. He refers to Rokeach (1968) in saying, "beliefs differ in intensity and power; beliefs vary along a central-peripheral dimension; and the more central a belief, the more it will resist change" ( p. 318). In fact, empirical studies show the difficulty of changing beliefs and practices. Foss and Kleinsasser (1996; as cited in Barcelos, 2000), for example, studied pre-service mathematics elementary teachers' beliefs and practices during a mathematics methods course. The authors concluded that while pre-service teachers were supposedly developing pedagogical and content knowledge, the teachers' beliefs and practices were little changed.

Richardson (2003) mentions that changing the beliefs of the teacher candidates is a relatively difficult job and it is mostly due to their teaching experiences.

Richardson et al. (1991; as cited in Sato, 2002) conducted a three-year research project on thirty-nine elementary teachers' beliefs and practices about reading instruction. They found that a majority of teachers lacked reading theories to implement in the classroom. Only one teacher changed her beliefs and practices. Five others showed slight changes in beliefs but did not change their practices.



As Richardson (1996; Attardo, & Brown, 2005) notes, “beliefs are thought to drive actions; however, experience and reflection on action may lead to changes in and/or additions to beliefs.” In fact, Richards and Lockhart (1994), among others, would put reflection at the core of teacher education and change.

Richardson and Kile (1999; as cited in Attardo, & Brown, 2005) examined changes in beliefs of traditional and nontraditional students taking part in a first semester teacher education course. They found that teacher candidates' basis changed from traditional to a more constructive theory of learning. There were also differences in the responses between traditional and nontraditional students. At the beginning the nontraditional teacher learners' brought views of teaching that concentrated on teachers' role and the traditional teacher learners' concentrated on learners' roles. By the end of the course the nontraditional teacher learners' had strengthened their view and the traditional learners' had changed their concentration from student to teacher.

Other researchers/teacher educators, who have examined changes in their teacher learners during a course, found that many of the teacher learners' beliefs and conceptions did not change (Ball, 1990; Civil, 1999).

## **Conclusion**

According to Schirmer Reis (2011) intellectual analysis alone is not sufficient to cause changes in beliefs and attitudes as well as the critical social perspectives are necessary to change in educational contexts.

Teachers need to clarify what they ‘learn’ in regard to their cultural and teaching contexts, to their beliefs, to their expectations, and to their needs (Slaouti & Motteram, 2006).

The outcomes of belief upon the belief of others and on behavior may be so important, that men are forced to take into consideration the grounds or reasons of their beliefs and its logical consequences (Dewey, 1997).

The relationship between beliefs and actions in teaching has been documented in a clear way (Richardson, & Placier, 2001; cited in Richardson, 2003). Smith (1996; as cited in Barcelos, 2000) concentrated on the affect of teachers' beliefs on their decision making. Her results showed that teachers' decisions showed an eclectic use of their beliefs, theory, and practices and they were internally consistent. Her study also showed that teachers choose and modify theoretical ideas based on their personal beliefs about teaching and learning and their knowledge of the instructional context.

On the other hand, other studies have shown that teachers' beliefs may lack consistency with their classroom practice, because teachers deal with contradictory ambiguities and interests in their practice (Lampert, 1985).

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*Team-Based Learning to Enhance Thai Undergraduate Learners' Achievement  
Motivation in English Report Writing Course*

Nunthawadee Wongsathian, Rajamangala University of Technology Suvarnabhumi,  
Thailand

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**Abstract**

The Team-based Learning (TBL) is accepted as the innovative small group pedagogy that emphasized on students' deep learning. Moreover, TBL encourages learner's motivation higher than traditional didactics and also is appropriate to the needs of class size expansion. Therefore, this classroom action research aims to determine TBL implementation enhancement on the learners' achievement motive in English for Report Writing Course. The samples used in this study are purposively selected from 105 English for International Communication Undergraduate Students studying in Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Suvarnabhumi Ayutthaya, Thailand. The participants are divided into 10 groups according to the achievement scores on the English Report Writing pre-requisite courses: Essay Writing and Academic Writing Course. Each group consists of high, middle and low proficiency levels. Each group works together throughout the semester – 15 weeks. The study draws attention to the effects of TBL implementation on intermediate undergraduate learners' achievement motive including the effects on learning achievement levels of thinking: remembering, understanding, and applying. However, the learning achievement levels of thinking in analysing, evaluating, and creating of upper-intermediate undergraduate learners is significantly higher than the others. On this basis, it is recommended that TBL may not only be the effective choice of teaching methodology to implement in large language classes with differential learners' proficiency but also it could enhance the learners' achievement motive.

Keywords: Team-based Learning, TBL, Achievement Motive, Learning achievement

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## **Introduction**

Appropriate classroom environment for learning is one of the essential factors to attain learning outcomes development of students in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Likewise, it is valuable to encourage learners' motivation to be competent in their future lives with the suitable teaching approach. Team-based Learning (TBL) is accepted as the innovative small group pedagogy that emphasized on students' deep learning. A number of studies indicate that team-based learning plays a significant role in successful learning pedagogy (Dana, 2007; Wagner et al., 2008; Clark et al., 2008), learning outcomes development (Kuhne-Eversmann, Eversmann, and Fischer, 2008; Laverie, Madhavaram, and McDonald, 2008), and learning achievement (Letassy et al., 2008; Carmichael, 2009; Clark et al., 2008; Umble, E., Umble, M. and Artz, 2008; Johnson and Lee, 2008). Moreover, TBL encourages learner's motivation higher than traditional didactics and also is appropriate to the needs of class size expansion (Johnson and Lee, 2008; Clark et al., 2008).

Despite the benefits of TBL reported in previous research, there is no investigation in terms of the language learning environment. As a result, this study aims to examine the effects of TBL on the learners' achievement motive. Specially, the English for International Communication (EIC) Undergraduate Students in order to probe the effects of TBL on those learners' achievement motive taking up English for Report Writing Course. English for Report Writing Course is one of the challenging courses in the 2007 Rajamagala University of Technology Suvarnabumi, Bachelors of Arts (Major in English for International Communication) Curriculum. This course emphasises on problem-based learning, research-based learning, and critical thinking. Moreover, the challenging outcome of the writing process is writing a report. The way to increase learners' engagement on the difficult course is to encourage students' motivation. TBL is one such active learning method that encourages small group learning and is advantageous in its ability to promote problem solving, critical thinking, and interpersonal communication skills and also it is an effective instructional strategy for courses with large group of students and diverse writing proficiency (Clark et al., 2008). Given the benefits of TBL, this approach could be an appropriate instructional strategy that might enhance learning experience and outcomes of students in the course.

## **Literature review**

As mentioned, most previous studies have indicated the effectiveness of TBL to enhance active learning and it plays a significant role in successful learning pedagogy, learning outcomes development, and learning achievement. The related literature will be reviewed as follows:

**Team-Based Learning Strategy**

According to Dana (2007), under TBL a course is divided into four to seven units. Each unit follows the same basic organization principle: individually assigned reading, take a Readiness Assessment Test (RAT) on the reading, retake the test with their teammates, and complete a series of team application exercises that allow the students individually and as a team to explore the more subtle implications of the concepts. This process is repeated for each unit in the course. Students are graded on both their individual and team performance.

Thus, TBL is a teaching strategy that represents a systematic, coherent approach to an entire course. Instead of using group activities periodically throughout a semester, TBL uses a semester-long student teams as the focal point around which all course activities are structured. An instructor who uses the TBL lectures a little, if at not all, throughout the semester. Hence, the instructor only act as a facilitator guiding the student teams in their learning in order to allow the students themselves to explore and learn the concepts.

The four key purposes of TBL are: 1) to increase students’ understanding of substantive course content, (2) to enable students to use course content to solve problems and make decisions, (3) to develop students’ team skills, and (4) to allow students to experience the value of team. An additional purpose is to increase both student and instructor satisfaction with the course.

The following model shows team-based learning strategy for each segment of a course.

**Figure 1: Team-based learning strategy for each segment of a course**

Preparation before class	In class				Post class context
	← 45-75 minutes →				1-4 hours of time in class
1	2 (15 mins.)	3 (15 mins.)	4	5	6
Self-directed learning (Do the assigned reading)	Take Individual RAT	Retake RAT with Team	Discuss the answers with teammates and class	Instructor grades students’ performance individually and as a team with feedback	Activities involved applying the subject matter (This course focuses on writing a report)



**Figure 2: EIC Students take Individual RAT in English for Report Writing Course.**



**Figure 3: EIC Students take Team RAT in English for Report Writing Course.**



**Figure 4: EIC Students discuss their answers to class after taking Team RAT.**

### ***Team-Based Learning vs. Learning Pedagogy***

Dana (2007) implements TBL in an Introduction to Law Course at Montana State University College of Business. It is indicated that TBL is the appropriate approach to that course due to the effectiveness of Readiness Assessment Test (RAT) which promote student achievement, greater use of higher level reasoning and critical thinking skills. Wagner et al. (2008) conducted team based methods in developing approaches for achieving learner centered Information Systems curriculum outcomes. Active learning methods, including small group learning strategy, have become increasingly popular in modern curricula to increase students' participation in the learning process. One kind of small group learning, team-based learning, is a relatively new instructional strategy in health care education. Team-based learning is theoretically based and empirically grounded for ensuring the effectiveness or small groups working independently in classes with high student-to-faculty ratios (e.g., up to 200:1), without losing the benefits of faculty-led small groups with lower ratios



(e.g., 7:1). To explore the effectiveness of this learning pedagogy, Clark et al. (2008) evaluated students' level of engagement and attitudes toward the value of teams. Findings demonstrated that team-based learning is an effective teaching strategy for large groups of students.

#### ***Team-Based Learning vs. Learning Outcomes Development***

Kuhne-Eversmann, Eversmann, and Fischer (2008) conducted team- and case-based learning to activate participants' learning and enhance sustainable knowledge to 159 physicians in Germany. To maintain a medical license, physicians are required to participate in high-quality continuing medical education (CME) – a regular training. The study was designed an interactive, team-based CME concept and was launched in a series of seminars on internal medicine. The group work was designed using team-based learning. Pre- and post-course knowledge tests and questionnaires were used to evaluate the knowledge, motivation, and expectations of the participants. The results represented that participants rated the interactivity and team-based discussion of the CME seminars as highly important reasons to participate and stated that the CME course was very instructional and the case discussions enhanced their learning. The majority of the participants stated that their expectations were met. The participants also obviously enhanced their learning outcomes. Moreover, Laverie, Madhavaram, and McDonald (2008) fostered a learning orientation by using team-based active learning for marketing classes. Based on the analysis of data collected from 246 marketing students, the results suggest learning orientation, based on team-based active learning, positively influences marketing program creativity and knowledge.

#### ***Team-Based Learning vs. Learning Achievement***

Since 2008, instructional institutions and business organizations have been widely enhancing TBL to promote learning achievement and business competitions. In educational circumstance especially in Science, TBL is implemented in many courses such as an Endocrine Module and Introductory Biology (Letassy et al., 2008; Carmichael, 2009) to promote students' active learning. Comparing with traditional lecture-based approach, the studies confirm significantly higher students' learning achievement using TBL approach. Furthermore, many studies (Letassy et al., 2008; Clark, et al., 2008) concluded that TBL is an effective active-learning, instructional strategy for courses with large students-to-faculty ratios and distance education environment. In case of business competitions, The Edward Jones Company recently initiated financial sponsorship of team-based competitions in six undergraduate business core classes at Baylor University. Teams of students in each course competed for monetary awards ranging up to \$1,000 per team member under the project namely "The Edward Jones Challenge". The article suggests that team-based projects can be used to generate many positive learning outcomes for students. Students are encouraged to be creative, take ownership of the process, learn from each other, and have the opportunity to interact with business professionals (Umble, E., Umble, M.; and Artz, 2008). There is also implementing TBL to increase the effective performance in organizations. Johnson and Lee (2008) examined the effects of shared mental models on team and individual performance. The results indicated that each team's share mental model changed significantly over the time that subjects participated in TBL activities. The results also showed that the shared mental subcategories (team-related knowledge, skills, attitude, dynamicity, and environment) are strongly correlated to team and individual performance. It can be discussed that

individual's learning achievement derived from the effectiveness of TBL related to individual's achievement motivation.

### ***Achievement Motivation***

Motivation can be defined as the driving force behind all the actions of an individual. The influence of an individual's needs and desires both have a strong impact on the direction of their behavior. Motivation is based on emotions and achievement-related goals. There are different forms of motivation including extrinsic, intrinsic, physiological, and achievement motivation. There are also more negative forms of motivation. Achievement motivation can be defined as the need for success or the attainment of excellence. Individuals will satisfy their needs through different means, and are driven to succeed for varying reasons both internal and external (Rabideau, 2010).

According to Brunstein & Maier (2005), there are two motives directly involved in the prediction of behavior, implicit and explicit. A person with a strong implicit drive will feel pleasure from achieving a goal in the most efficient way. The increase in effort an overcoming the challenge by mastering the task satisfies the individual. However, the explicit motives are built around a person's self-image. This type of motivation shapes a person's behavior based on their own self-view and can influence their choices and responses from outside cues. In Theory of Needs, McClelland (1961) suggest that, regardless of our gender, culture, or age, we all have three motivating drivers, and one of this will be our dominant motivating driver. The theory focuses on three needs: achievement, power, and affiliation. Need for achievement consists of the drive to excel, to achieve in relation to a set of standards, and to strive to succeed. Need for power is the need to make others behave in a way that they would not have behaved otherwise. And need for affiliation contains the desire for friendly and close interpersonal relationships. The people who have a compelling drive to succeed, they are striving for personal achievement rather than the rewards of success per se. This drive is the achievement need. McClelland found that high achievers differentiate themselves from others by their desire to do things better.

Most theorists conceptualize individuals' performance achievement motivation in terms of positive and negative behaviors. As Butler (1999) proposed that achievement goals affect individuals' achievement-related attitudes and behaviors. Two different types of achievement-related attitudes include task-involvement and ego-involvement. Task-involvement is a motivational state in which a person's main goal is acquire skills and understanding whereas the main goal in ego-involvement is to demonstrate superior abilities. One example of an activity where someone strives to attain mastery and demonstrate superior ability is schoolwork. However, situational cues, such as the person's environment or surroundings, can affect the success of achieving a goal at any time. Studies confirm that a task-involvement activity more often results in challenging attributions and increasing effort (typically in activities providing an opportunity to learn and develop competence) than in an ego-involvement activity. It could be claimed that learning achievement presents learners' success and failure. High or low scores of learning achievement depended on many features such as individuals' responsibility toward their family and society, anxiety, self-concept, school system conditions, learning's habit and attitude, and teaching process, etc. However, achievement motivation is the main feature that stimulates individuals'

successful and encourage learners' learning progress (Surat Angulwirot, 1989 cited in Yoawaluk Wongpom, 2006).

### **Research questions and hypotheses**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of TBL on three groups of learners' achievement motive: high, middle and low proficiency EFL in English Report Writing Course. This study was designed to determine whether a statistically significant difference exists in the extent of achievement motive between higher, moderate and lower EIC students learning proficiency level when TBL is being implemented. The null hypothesis is stated as follows:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant difference in means of achievement motive scores of higher, moderate and lower EIC students learning proficiency level when TBL is implemented.

### **Methods**

#### ***Subjects***

Participants are purposively selected from 105 English for International Communication (EIC) Undergraduate Students who enroll in English Report Writing Course. The participants are divided into 10 groups according to the achievement scores on the English Report Writing prerequisite courses: Essay Writing and Academic Writing Course. Each group consists of high, middle and low proficiency levels. Each group need to work together throughout the semester – 15 weeks.

#### ***Instruments***

##### ***1. Readiness Assessment Test (RAT)***

Readiness Assessment Test (RAT) is designed and constructed directly from the learning objectives of the English Report Writing Course Syllabus. There are 5- subjective type of tests. The tests consisted of the levels of thinking skills such as: of knowledge, comprehension and application, analysis, evaluation, synthesis, and creativity (Bloom's Taxonomy cited in Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The RAT is an important instrument that is used to examine individual's learning progress and teams' learning efficiency. Learners need to be responsible for self-directed learning before attending the class. The RAT is given to the individual to examine their learning proficiency level after that the same RAT is given to the members of team. This method motivates the learners in analyzing and solving problems.

##### ***2. Achievement Test***

Achievement Test is also a subjective type of tests and is used to evaluate individual's learning achievement in English Report Writing Course after TBL is being implemented. It is composed of the midterm and final examination covering up 4 lessons. It is designed and constructed directly from the learning objectives of the English Report Writing Course Syllabus and directly accorded with RAT content validity.

##### ***3. Achievement Motivation Assessment***

The 3-category, Likert-type Achievement Motivation Assessment created from Motivational Needs Theory (McClelland, 1961) to measures learners' achievement

motivation after TBL is implemented. This instrument was developed and tested on 16 EIC students who did not enroll in English Report Writing Course before it is used in this study. It is established in terms of face and content validity by 3 experts. The reliability coefficient of this assessment is 0.81.

### **Data analysis**

In this study, TBL instructional strategy is used to gather the information as follows:

#### ***Creating Team***

TBL teams are created in the first week of the course and stay together throughout the semester. The 105 learners are divided into 10 groups according to their achievement scores on the English Report Writing prerequisite courses: Essay Writing and Academic Writing Course. Each group consists of high, middle and low proficiency levels.

#### ***RATs and Feedback***

One of the keys to the success of TBL is the use of the RATs. At the beginning of each course unit, students do the assigned reading on their own and take both the individual and team closed-book RAT without the benefit of any lectures on the material. This method motivates the students' assistance in terms of analytical thinking and problem-solving. Then, the instructor grades the students' performance individually and as a team with continuous and rapid feedback (immediately or 1 week after the RATs is employed).

#### ***Grade Distribution***

**Figure 5: English Report Writing Course Grade Distribution**

<b>Component</b>	<b>Total Points</b>	<b>Weight, %</b>
<b>Four unit examinations<sup>1</sup></b>	80	40
<b>IRAT/TRAT<sup>2</sup></b>	40	40
<b>Team Written Report</b>	20	20

Abbreviations: IRAT = Individual Readiness Assessment Test

TRAT = Team Readiness Assessment Test

<sup>1</sup>total points are 30 for midterm examination and 50 for final examination

<sup>2</sup>weight distribution is 20% for the IRAT and 20% for the TRAT

In order to test hypothesis, One-way ANOVA is used to compare the difference in mean achievement motive average total score of higher, moderate and lower EIC students learning proficiency level.

### **Results and Discussions**

This study examined the hypothesis which relates to the extent of achievement motive between higher, moderate and lower EIC students learning proficiency level when TBL is implemented. The results of the study are as followings:

**Table 1: Comparison of overall mean difference of achievement motive on EIC students' different learning proficiency level when TBL is implemented in English Report Writing Course**

Achievement motive and Team-based Learning	Source of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
English Report Writing Learning Proficiency Level	Between Groups	2	2.167	1.083	2.903	.060
	Within Groups	99	36.940	.373		
	Total	101	39.107			

\*  $p \leq .05$  (significant at 0.05 level)

Based upon the mean difference on the achievement motive between the higher, moderate and lower EIC students learning proficiency level in Table 1 ( $p \leq 0.05$ ), null hypothesis is accepted. It is claimed that TBL approach is related to learners' achievement motivation in English Report Writing Course. This indicates that Team-based Learning affects learners' different proficiency level intrinsic motivation in terms of achievement-related attitudes and behaviors including progress in studying (Butler, 1999 and Rabideau, 2010). Furthermore, TBL approach responds to people's higher achievement motive in terms of challenging, organizing, planning, critical thinking, responsibility, and tolerance, etc. (McClelland, 1961; Guilford, 1959; Atkinson, 1964; Crandall, 1968 cited in Yoawaluk Wongpom, 2006).

**Table 2: Comparison of the mean difference between 3-category of achievement motive and TBL on EIC students learning proficiency level in English Report Writing Course**

Achievement motive	Source of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>1. The drive to excel</b>						
1.1 Need to do more difficult assignment	Between Groups	2	6.751	3.376	6.873*	0.002
	Within Groups	99	48.622	0.491		
	Total	101	55.373			
1.2 Need to be a good learner	Between Groups	2	0.543	0.271	0.329	0.721
	Within Groups	98	80.883	0.825		
	Total	100	81.426			

<b>Achievement motive</b>	<b>Source of variation</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1.3 Need to be praised from teachers and classmates when have good learning outcomes	Between Groups	2	1.170	0.585	0.461	0.632
	Within Groups	99	125.497	1.268		
	Total	101	126.667			
1.4 Satisfied when passing the test	Between Groups	2	0.699	0.350	0.314	0.732
	Within Groups	97	108.141	1.115		
	Total	99	108.840			
1.5 Believe that tolerance can make successful assignment	Between Groups	2	1.704	0.852	1.281	0.282
	Within Groups	99	65.874	0.665		
	Total	101	67.578			
1.6 Make arrangement to achieve assignment	Between Groups	2	1.319	0.659	0.759	0.471
	Within Groups	99	86.054	0.869		
	Total	101	87.373			
1.7 Follow up unfinished assignment to be able to submit on time	Between Groups	2	0.256	0.128	0.209	0.812
	Within Groups	99	60.763	0.614		
	Total	101	61.020			
1.8 Scores are important motivation	Between Groups	2	4.550	2.275	3.400*	0.037
	Within Groups	99	66.244	0.669		
	Total	101	70.794			

Achievement motive	Source of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>2. The drive to achieve in relation to a set of standards</b>						
2.1 Enthusiastic to test after self-studying	Between Groups	2	2.405	1.202	1.901	0.155
	Within Groups	99	62.615	0.632		
	Total	101	65.020			
2.2 Challenged with difficult lessons	Between Groups	2	3.656	1.828	2.238	0.112
	Within Groups	99	80.863	0.817		
	Total	101	84.520			
2.3 Unwilling to attend class	Between Groups	2	11.232	5.616	5.565*	0.005
	Within Groups	99	99.915	1.009		
	Total	101	111.147			
2.4 Prefer self-directed learning	Between Groups	2	13.013	6.507	8.685*	.000
	Within Groups	99	74.163	0.749		
	Total	101	87.176			
2.5 Always ignore the difficult and boring assignment	Between Groups	2	5.463	2.732	3.440*	0.036
	Within Groups	99	78.615	0.794		
	Total	101	84.078			
2.6 Continuously following up the project and working to improve it.	Between Groups	2	0.482	0.241	0.302	0.740
	Within Groups	99	79.009	0.798		
	Total	101	79.490			

<b>Achievement motive</b>	<b>Source of variation</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
2.7 Challenged to give an opinion in the team when working	Between Groups	2	2.915	1.458	1.975	0.144
	Within Groups	98	72.332	0.738		
	Total	100	75.248			
2.8 Able to understand difficult lessons	Between Groups	2	1.238	0.619	10.050	0.354
	Within Groups	99	58.341	0.589		
	Total	101	59.578			
2.9 Challenged to do a difficult task in the team when working	Between Groups	2	5.422	2.711	4.299*	0.016
	Within Groups	99	62.422	0.631		
	Total	101	67.843			
<b>3. The drive to strive to succeed</b>						
3.1 Like to compete with better learners but never win	Between Groups	2	1.673	0.836	0.725	0.487
	Within Groups	99	114.141	1.153		
	Total	101	115.814			
3.2 Prefer to do more attempted assignment	Between Groups	2	2.822	1.411	3.061	0.051
	Within Groups	98	45.178	0.461		
	Total	100	48.000			
3.3 More motivated when receiving low grade	Between Groups	2	1.657	0.828	1.001	0.371
	Within Groups	99	81.922	0.827		
	Total	101	83.578			



<b>Achievement motive</b>	<b>Source of variation</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
3.4 Happy with successful assignment	Between Groups	2	4.137	2.069	2.055	0.134
	Within Groups	99	99.676	1.007		
	Total	101	103.814			
3.5 Immediately stop doing assignment when faced with difficulties	Between Groups	2	1.611	0.805	0.972	0.382
	Within Groups	96	79.561	0.829		
	Total	98				
3.6 Motivated to achieve the assignment even doing the wrong thing	Between Groups	2	3.067	1.533	2.016	0.139
	Within Groups	99	75.286	0.760		
	Total	101	78.353			
3.7 Need to get higher scores	Between Groups	2	1.023	0.512	1.035	0.359
	Within Groups	99	48.938	0.494		
	Total	101	49.961			
3.8 Always study lessons in advance	Between Groups	2	3.586	1.793	2.674	0.074
	Within Groups	98	65.721	0.671		
	Total	100	69.307			
3.9 Achieve assignment even if it is not preferred	Between Groups	2	0.226	0.113	0.189	0.828
	Within Groups	99	58.922	0.595		
	Total	101	59.147			

<b>Achievement motive</b>	<b>Source of variation</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
3.10 Need a good grade after taking the test	Between Groups	2	3.928	1.964	3.916*	0.023
	Within Groups	98	49.161	0.502		
	Total	100	53.089			
3.11 Less motivated to do the assignment if there is no grade	Between Groups	2	5.203	2.601	2.737	0.070
	Within Groups	98	93.154	0.951		
	Total	100	98.356			
3.12 Prefer self-taught activities before attending the class	Between Groups	2	0.959	0.480	0.508	0.604
	Within Groups	99	93.560	0.945		
	Total	101	94.520			
3.13 Prefer teamwork due to improved grade	Between Groups	2	3.398	1.699	1.759	0.178
	Within Groups	99	95.622	0.966		
	Total	101	99.020			

\*  $p \leq .05$  (significant at 0.05 level)

According to Table 2, it is found that 7-item on the achievement motive, i.e. Need to do more difficult assignment, Scores are important motivation, Unwilling to attend class, Prefer self-directed learning, Always ignore the difficult and boring assignment, Challenged to do a difficult task in the team when working and Need a good grade after taking the test reported by the higher, moderate and lower learning proficiency EIC students is significantly related to TBL at 0.05 level. Therefore, Scheffe is used to test pair-wise difference on the achievement motive between the higher, moderate and lower EIC students learning proficiency level as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Comparison the pair-wise difference on 3-category of achievement motive between the higher, moderate and lower EIC students learning proficiency level**

Achievement Motive	Learning proficiency level		Higher	Moderate	Lower
<b>The drive to excel</b>					
		<b>Mean</b>	3.60	3.56	3.04
Need to do more difficult assignment	<b>Higher</b>	3.60	-	0.33	0.55
	<b>Moderate</b>	3.56	-0.33	-	0.51*
	<b>Lower</b>	3.04	-0.55	-0.51*	-
		<b>Mean</b>	3.90	4.16	3.69
Scores are important motivation	<b>Higher</b>	3.90	-	-0.26	0.20
	<b>Moderate</b>	4.16	0.26	-	0.47*
	<b>Lower</b>	3.69	-0.26	-0.47*	-
<b>The drive to achieve in relation to a set of standards</b>					
		<b>Mean</b>	2.50	1.93	2.67
Unwilling to attend class	<b>Higher</b>	2.50	-	0.56	-0.17
	<b>Moderate</b>	1.93	-0.56	-	-0.74*
	<b>Lower</b>	2.67	0.17	0.74*	-
		<b>Mean</b>	4.20	4.13	3.41
Prefer self-directed learning	<b>Higher</b>	4.20	-	0.66	0.78*
	<b>Moderate</b>	4.13	-0.66	-	0.71*
	<b>Lower</b>	3.41	-0.78*	-0.71*	-
		<b>Mean</b>	2.90	2.83	3.32
Always ignore the difficult and boring assignment	<b>Higher</b>	2.90	-	0.06	-0.42
	<b>Moderate</b>	2.83	-0.06	-	-0.48*
	<b>Lower</b>	3.32	0.42	0.48*	-
		<b>Mean</b>	2.70	2.96	2.45
Challenged to do a difficult task in the team when working	<b>Higher</b>	2.70	-	-0.26	0.24
	<b>Moderate</b>	2.96	0.26	-	0.51*
	<b>Lower</b>	2.45	-0.24	-0.51*	-0.51*
<b>The drive to strive to succeed</b>					
		<b>Mean</b>	4.20	4.60	4.16
Need a good grade after taking the test	<b>Higher</b>	4.20	-	-0.40	0.30
	<b>Moderate</b>	4.60	0.40	-	0.43*
	<b>Lower</b>	4.16	-0.30	-0.43*	-

\*  $p \leq .05$  (significant at 0.05 level)

Table 3 shows the comparison of pair-wise difference on 3-category of achievement motive between the higher, moderate and lower EIC students learning proficiency level. It indicates that there is significant relationship between TBL approach and achievement motive classified by students learning proficiency level as follows:

1. The moderate proficiency learners significantly need to do more difficult assignments than the lower proficiency learners at 0.05 level.
2. The moderate proficiency learners significantly take precedence over scores than the lower proficiency learners at 0.05 level.
3. The lower proficiency learners are more significantly unwilling to attend class than the moderate proficiency learners at 0.05 level.
4. There are 2 pair-wise significant differences at 0.05 level in terms of preferring self-directed. The higher and moderate proficiency learners more significantly prefer self-directed learning than the lower proficiency learners.
5. The lower proficiency learners always significantly ignore the difficult and boring assignment than the moderate proficiency learners at 0.05 level.
6. The moderate proficiency learners are significant challenged to do a difficult task in the team when working than the lower proficiency learners at 0.05 level.
7. The moderate proficiency learners significantly need better grade after taking the test than the lower proficiency learners at 0.05 level.

The comparison of pair-wise difference on achievement motive between the higher, moderate and lower EIC students' learning proficiency level indicates that the moderate proficiency learners have significantly higher achievement motivation than those who have higher and lower proficiency level in English learning at 0.05 level. This implies that the TBL strategy is the main feature that stimulates moderate proficiency learners' successful and encourage their learning progress (Surat Angulwirot, 1989 cited in Yoawaluk Wongpom, 2006) as following views. Firstly, moderate proficiency learners need to do more difficult assignments due to the main characteristic of the learners who are likely to be successful with challenging work, and dislike succeeding by chance (McClelland, 1961). TBL approach, especially, self-directed learning before classes, take individual RAT from the assigned reading after that retake the test with their teammates,; thus, the lessons and the RAT will be continually difficult, encourages their learning progress. Secondly, they are willing to attend classes which affect the individuals' learning achievement-related attitudes and behaviours (Butler, 1999). They believe that attending classes may help them to gain more knowledge and they also need to receive rapid feedback on their performance to improve their learning. Moreover, they would like to participate with their teammates all course activities. Thirdly, they prefer self-directed learning due to high responsibility for finding solutions to problems (McClelland, 1961). These groups of learners really prefer TBL approach since they think that they may assist team to be successful when Team RAT is retaken. Particularly, scores are important motivation to these learners. However, whether the scores received after test is high or low; they'd still likely to be successful as an individual and team. Furthermore, these learners are very tolerant even in doing the boring and difficult assignments. They are willing and able to achieve success on those assignments. Moreover, they are more challenged to do difficult assignments with the team than others due to competition. It is claimed that the characteristics of the Thai EFL moderate proficiency learners as mentioned consist of collaborative and participative learning style (Grasha. A; Riechmann. S; in Matthana Thammabuds, 2010).

**Table 4: Comparison of the mean difference on each Individual and Team Readiness Assessment Test classified by learners' different learning proficiency level**

Readiness Assessment Test	Source of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
IRAT1	Between Groups	2	1.857	0.928	0.927	0.399
	Within Groups	102	102.200	1.002		
	Total	104	104.057			
IRAT2	Between Groups	2	0.850	0.425	1.735	0.182
	Within Groups	102	24.975	0.245		
	Total	104	25.825			
IRAT3	Between Groups	2	4.838	2.419	1.781	0.174
	Within Groups	102	138.535	1.358		
	Total	104	143.373			
IRAT4	Between Groups	2	0.098	0.049	0.107	0.899
	Within Groups	102	46.826	0.459		
	Total	104	46.924			
IRAT5	Between Groups	2	4.686	2.343	3.664*	0.029
	Within Groups	102	65.228	0.639		
	Total	104	69.914			
IRAT Total	Between Groups	2	25.708	12.854	2.575	0.081
	Within Groups	102	509.162	4.992		
	Total	104	534.870			

<b>Readiness Assessment Test</b>	<b>Source of variation</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
TRAT1	Between Groups	2	4.413	2.207	2.877	0.061
	Within Groups	102	78.244	0.767		
	Total	104	82.657			
TRAT2	Between Groups	2	0.030	0.015	0.256	0.775
	Within Groups	102	6.032	0.059		
	Total	104	6.062			
TRAT3	Between Groups	2	0.066	0.033	0.344	0.710
	Within Groups	102	9.782	0.096		
	Total	104	9.848			
TRAT4	Between Groups	2	1.331	0.666	1.722	0.184
	Within Groups	102	39.431	0.387		
	Total	104	40.762			
TRAT5	Between Groups	2	12.297	6.148	3.983*	0.022
	Within Groups	102	157.465	1.544		
	Total	104	169.762			
TRAT Total	Between Groups	2	18.596	9.298	2.957	0.056
	Within Groups	102	320.704	3.144		
	Total	104	339.300			

IRAT stands for Individual Readiness Assessment Test

TRAT stands for Team Readiness Assessment Test

The comparisons of the mean difference on each Individual and Team Readiness Assessment Test scores classified by learners' different learning proficiency level show that there is no significantly different on students' learning outcomes when IRATs and TRATs are administered at 0.05 p-value except RATs No.5. Both IRATs and TRATs No.5 are found different on students' learning outcomes at 0.05 statistical significant level. Therefore, Scheffe is used to examine pair-wise difference on students' learning outcomes between learners' different learning proficiency level as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5: Comparison of pair-wise difference on Individual and Team Readiness Assessment Test classified by learners' different learning proficiency level**

Readiness Assessment Test	Learning proficiency level		Higher	Moderate	Lower
		Mean			
IRAT5 <sup>1</sup>		Mean	2.96	2.36	2.39
	Higher	2.96	-	0.60	0.57*
	Moderate	2.36	-0.60	-	-0.02
	Lower	2.39	-0.57*	0.02	-
TRAT5 <sup>2</sup>		Mean	3.34	2.72	2.37
	Higher	3.34	-	0.61	0.96*
	Moderate	2.72	-0.61	-	0.34
	Lower	2.37	-0.96*	-0.34	-

\*  $p \leq .05$  (significant at 0.05 level)

<sup>1</sup>Individual Readiness Assessment Test No.5

<sup>2</sup>Team Readiness Assessment Test No.5

As shown in Table 5, there is only one pair-wise significant difference at 0.05 level when Individual and Team Readiness Assessment Test are administered. It is shown that the higher proficiency learners reported more synthetic and analytic test scores than the lower proficiency learners.

**Table 6: Comparison of the mean difference on achievement learning outcomes in English Report Writing Course classified by learners' learning proficiency level**

Achievement Learning Outcomes	Source of variation	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Students learning proficiency level	Between Groups	2	1703.36	851.68		
					46.57*	0.000
	Within Groups	102	1865.26	18.28		
	Total	104	3568.63			

\*  $p \leq .05$  (significant at 0.05 level)

In Table 6, it represents that the learners who have different learning proficiency level have significantly different achievement learning outcomes in English Report Writing Course at 0.05 level.

**Table 7: Comparison of pair-wise difference on achievement learning outcomes in English Report Writing Course classified by learners' learning proficiency level**

Achievement Learning Outcomes	Learning proficiency level	Mean	Higher	Moderate	Lower
			Achievement Test <sup>1</sup>	Higher	23.78
	Moderate	17.17	-	0.60*	11.23*
	Lower	12.54	-0.60*	-	4.63*
			-11.23*	-4.63*	-

\*  $p \leq .05$  (significant at 0.05 level)

<sup>1</sup>Four unit examination paper tests = 40%

Regarding the comparison of pair-wise difference on achievement learning outcomes in English Report Writing Course classified by the students' learning proficiency level, it presents that there are 3 pair-wise significant differences at 0.05 level, i.e. the higher proficiency learners have higher achievement test scores than both the moderate and lower proficiency learners whereas the moderate proficiency learners also have higher achievement test scores than the lower proficiency learners.

Based on the results presented in Tables 4-7, it is claimed that there is no significantly different on students' learning outcomes in English Report Writing Course when Individual Readiness Assessment Test and Team Readiness Assessment Test are administered with differential learners' proficiency at 0.05 p-value except the synthetic and analytic test. The results show that the higher proficiency learners have higher scores in those tests than the lower proficiency learners. Furthermore, there is significantly different in achievement learning outcomes between the three groups of learners at 0.05 level. It is found out that the average scores of achievement learning outcomes comparing with overall course grade of the higher proficiency learners is only 50 percent whereas those scores of the moderate and lower proficiency learners are lower than 50 percent. It is suggested that achievement motivation related to TBL approach implemented in English Report Writing Course may not directly affect to learners' achievement learning outcomes in the courses that stimulate critical thinking and synthesis. It is contrary to Dana (2007) and Clark (2008) findings which found that RAT could effectively promote learners' critical thinking. However, the average scores from the synthetic and analytic RAT indicate that there are higher scores from those tests when the higher and moderate proficiency learners take the Team Readiness Assessment Test. This argues that teamwork could reinforce individual learners' critical thinking skills, but it could not affect the overall achievement learning outcomes because the average scores of the lower proficiency learners are decreased. Nevertheless, this result contrasts with Sureerat Ungulwirot (1989) research (Sureerat Ungulwirot, 1989 cited in Yaowaruk Wongpom, 2006) which



confirms that motivation is important factor that encourages learners' achievement learning outcomes. In particular, TBL approach impacts Thai moderate proficiency learners' achievement motive with higher frequency in the drive to achieve in relation to a set of standards (McClelland, 1961). Besides, there are many factors that affect learning achievement such as anxiety, team collaboration, individuals' proficiency and critical thinking skill which requires a period of practicing. Moreover, learning style of Thai learners is different in each group of learners, i.e. the higher proficiency learners tend to be self-directed, the moderate proficiency learners are collaborative and participative while the lower proficiency learners are dependent on others (Grasha. A; Riechmann. S; in Matthana Thammabuds, 2010). This result shows the difference of Thai-Western learning style that effect on test results and achievement learning outcomes. For the reason that, the higher proficiency learners have high responsibility and tend to work on competition, they would have higher achievement motivation and achievement learning outcomes than others. Even if the teaching methodology stimulates their motivation, this group of learner inclines to have higher achievement learning outcomes than the other groups. Hence, TBL is the effective strategy that motivates them.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

It is concluded that TBL is the appropriate didactic approach to encourage achievement motivation environment in language learning of learners with different proficiency level especially, Thai intermediate undergraduate learners. In addition to this, TBL affects learning achievement levels of thinking: remembering, understanding, and applying on each group of learners. However, the learning achievement levels of thinking in analysing, evaluating, and creating of Thai upper-intermediate undergraduate learners is significantly higher than the others. On the other hand, the achievement motivation occurred during TBL approach implementation may not affect the achievement learning outcomes of learners' who attended the courses that emphasize high analytic and synthetic ability. On this basis, it is recommended that TBL may not only be the effective choice of teaching methodology to be implemented in large language classes with differential proficiency level of the learners but also it could enhance to learners' achievement motive.

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**Contact email:** [wadee.ying@gmail.com](mailto:wadee.ying@gmail.com)





## *Social Responsibility and Language Teaching: The Triple Bottom Line in EAP*

Alexander Nanni, Mahidol University International College, Thailand  
Joseph Serrani, Mahidol University International College, Thailand  
Adriano Quieti, Mahidol University International College, Thailand

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### **Abstract**

Sustainability is a key aim of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), particularly in areas such as environmental management, employment options, and socio-economic development; however, many Southeast Asian students lack a clear understanding of the meaning of sustainability. Even students who do understand sustainability may be unable to discuss this topic in English, the working language of ASEAN. The imminent integration of the ASEAN Economic Community, scheduled for 2015, lends urgency to the task of resolving these issues. This paper will outline an upper-intermediate level language project designed to teach Southeast Asian English-language learners about sustainability. This project, created in an intensive English for academic purposes (EAP) program at a Thai university, is structured around Elkington's Triple Bottom Line framework, which assesses sustainability in terms of people, planet, and profit. Over a semester, each student evaluates a particular multinational corporation by referring to the three aspects of the Triple Bottom Line. In addition to improving their language skills, the goals are to prepare students to become more responsible members of the global community and to provide students with the language that they need to engage in meaningful dialogue about sustainability. This paper will describe the project in comparison to three other approaches to education for sustainability, drawing insights from each to provide directions for further development of the project. The paper will be of interest to language educators who wish to introduce elements of sustainability and social responsibility into their courses.

Keywords: English for academic purposes (EAP), education for sustainability, Triple Bottom Line (TBL), EFL, project-based learning, content-based language instruction

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## **Introduction**

Sustainability is an issue of growing international concern; indeed, “never has the whole world been so concerned about global issues generally and environmental education and protection in particular” (Nkwetisama, 2011). While the issue of sustainability concerns people around the world, it resonates particularly strongly in regions that are undergoing rapid economic development. Southeast Asia is such a region, and the secretariat of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has declared that sustainable development is one of the primary goals of the soon-to-be integrated ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) (ASEAN Secretariat, 2009). Despite the local, regional, and international importance of sustainability, many students enter university with only a vague understanding of its meaning. This paper describes the approach to education for sustainability that has been integrated into the curriculum of the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics, an intensive English for academic purposes program at Mahidol University International College in Salaya, Thailand. The paper begins by introducing the approach to education for sustainability that has been implemented at the center. Next, it briefly describes three instances of education for sustainability from other contexts: Egypt, Cameroon, and Australia. It then contrasts the various approaches, paying particular attention to their theoretical underpinnings.

The Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics provides intensive classes for students who wish to enroll in the English-medium liberal arts program at Mahidol University International College but who lack the requisite language skills. As indicated in its mission statement, the program aims “to provide educational experiences which cultivate students’ academic English communication skills; to foster their ability to be self-reflective and responsible learners; and to stimulate their curiosity about the world.” These goals are consistent with education for sustainability and with the aims of liberal arts education in general. Writing from the Center of Inquiry at Wabash College, Blaich, Bost, Chan, and Lynch (2004) provide a thorough and insightful operational definition of liberal arts education. They posit that liberal arts education has as its goal the following: “an attitude of intellectual openness, especially to inquiry, discovery, new ideas and perspectives. The eagerness to grapple with difficult questions ... [and] the ability and desire to adopt a critical perspective on one’s and other’s beliefs, behaviors, values, and positions” (p. 14). In the context of the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics, education for sustainability certainly introduces new concepts and difficult questions to students. It also requires significant critical thinking, a set of skills that must be developed in order for the students to make the most of their liberal arts education. The complementary aims of liberal arts education (and thus of Mahidol University International College), the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics, and education for sustainability provide ample justification for the implementation of this project.

## **The Triple Bottom Line Project**

At the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics, sustainability is taught through a project that centers on a term-long investigation of the sustainability of a major international corporation. For the purposes of the project, sustainability is understood through the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) framework, which was coined by John Elkington (1997) in his book *Cannibals with Forks*. This framework is generally

used in assessing the sustainability of businesses. Accordingly, it explains sustainability in terms of three aspects: people, planet, and profit. In this model, the three aspects are interrelated, and sustainability is located at the intersection of the three. The first aspect, people, assesses the impact of a company on all of its stakeholders, including employees, customers, and all others affected by the company's actions. The second aspect, planet, assesses the impact of a company on the environment. This includes the environmental effects of the company's products and services. It also encompasses any other actions, such as investment in clean energy, that impact the environment. The third aspect, profit, assesses a company's financial performance in both the short and the long term. This final aspect of the Triple Bottom Line is comparable to the idea of a company's "bottom line" as it is generally understood, providing a useful link between business success and sustainability. Approximately 70% of the students enrolled at the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics plan to major in business, and the TBL is effective in linking environmentalism with business sustainability. The inclusion of the business aspect of the TBL increases students' motivation, giving teachers an opportunity to introduce environmental education in an engaging way.

The primary product of the sustainability project is a term paper of approximately 1,400 words. For many students, writing this paper is the first major research project that they have undertaken. To make this project more accessible, it is heavily scaffolded. At the beginning of the 10-week term, a clear schedule that breaks the project down into manageable steps is distributed. In the first week, each student is assigned a different multinational company from a list compiled by the teachers. The companies have been chosen because of the availability of sufficient information about them in English. Once the companies have been assigned, the students develop their background knowledge. They do this by completing a series of readings about sustainability, the history of environmentalism, and the Triple Bottom Line over the first few weeks of the term. These readings have been adapted from various authentic sources. The students are also given guidelines, which are included in the appendix of this paper, to help them structure their papers.

Each student is assigned a faculty advisor. This teacher will work with them throughout the term to guide the student's research and provide feedback. This will be done both face-to-face and through Turnitin.com, which is a web-based service for process writing. Turnitin.com has the additional benefit of submitted texts against websites and against a database of previously submitted work for instances of plagiarism. Each student meets with his or her advisor individually three times during the term: in week 3 to discuss source selection, review the term paper structure, and be advised on how to write an effective outline; in week 5 to discuss a draft of the outline and review the sources; and in week 7 to discuss the content of the first complete draft of the term paper and receive feedback about grammar. The final draft of the term paper is due in week 9, at which point the advisor will use a rubric to assess the paper.

Students also receive instruction on finding sources and evaluating their reliability. They are encouraged to begin their research by reading the homepage of their company's website and any other materials provided by the company, such as annual reports; however, the students are cautioned that they should not rely heavily on information directly from the company in their final paper. Other commonly used

sources of information include news sites and online magazines. Google Books and the university's library databases are also introduced, but their use is not mandated.

The main educational theories guiding the TBL project are project-based learning and content-based language teaching. Project-based learning has a long history, extending back to Dewey (1907) and other educators in the 19th and 20th Centuries. This approach to teaching seeks to involve students in challenging and intrinsically motivating activities that push them to explore new content and develop new skills. Such an approach contrasts sharply with rote learning, which has been prevalent in many educational contexts through much of recent history. A solid working definition of project-based learning is provided by the Buck Institute: "a systematic teaching method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks" (Markham, Larmer, & Ravitz, 2003, p. 4). The design of this project was informed by Thomas' (2000) five criteria for effective project-based learning. The five criteria are as follows: centrality, meaning that the project is an essential part of the course; driving questions, meaning that students are pushed to engage with important content through focused questions; constructive investigation, meaning that completing the project requires students to develop new skills and knowledge; autonomy, meaning that students have some input in the way that the project is completed; and realism, meaning projects are authentic, not "school-like" (Thomas, 2000, p. 4). The TBL project meets some of these criteria to a greater extent than others, and the criteria provide useful directions for further development.

The other educational theory guiding this project is content-based language instruction. This approach to language teaching entails "a focus on real-world content and the understanding and communication of information through language is the key to second language learning" (Beglar & Hunt, 2011, p. 93). In content-based language teaching, language and content teaching are integrated to a greater or lesser extent (Brown, 2001). The "strong" form of content-based language teaching values the teaching of content over the teaching of language, whereas the "weak" form values both equally (Brown, 2011, p. 234). The Triple Bottom Line project is informed by the "weak" form of content-based language teaching. Several studies have revealed positive effects of content-based language teaching, including greater improvement of language skills as compared to skill-based language learning (Kasper, 1997) and improved likelihood of passing further language and content courses (Song, 2005). The Triple Bottom Line project seeks to integrate key elements of education for sustainability, project-based learning, and content-based language instruction.

### **Other Approaches to Teaching Sustainability**

Although the use of sustainability-based lessons, projects, and courses in the teaching of English as a foreign language is still relatively uncommon, such materials have been applied in a variety of contexts and with various specific goals. This paper will describe approaches to education for sustainability that have been drawn from three different contexts: Egypt, Cameroon, and Australia. Examining these three approaches in contrast with each other and with the approach used at the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics will provide insights into the myriad forms that education for sustainability can take.



The first example is drawn from Egypt. Nashat (2011), an EFL instructor at Cairo American College, explains the use of a lesson based on sustainability in the middle school language classroom. The lesson arose through a “serendipitous event” (Nashat, 2011, p. 41): at the time that the teacher planned to introduce persuasive writing, a controversy arose at her school about the possibility of taxing bottled water. This provided an opportunity for Nashat to give her students a practice persuasive writing assignment about a topic drawn from their own experience. Furthermore, the completed essays could be submitted to the school administration. The author does not include any explicit formulation of the meaning of environmental education; however, the assignment that she gave her students seeks to address a specific environmental concern in their context. This implies that the teacher considers environmental education to include participation in resolving local issues.

The process that the teacher followed was relatively straightforward. Nashat (2011) watched a short film about bottled water with her students, who took notes for later reference. Together, she and her students brainstormed pros and cons of introducing a tax on bottled water. Once they had done so, the teacher introduced persuasive writing, including both the organization and types of support typical to this genre. The students were then asked to outline essays on the topic of whether or not the school should tax bottled water. Next, the teacher had them focus on two specific writing conventions, fluency and word choice. The students gave each other feedback and suggestions, which helped them to edit their essays. Finally, the completed essays were submitted to the school administration. This last step adds authenticity, and it is a major strength of the assignment.

The second example is drawn from Cameroon. In this article, Nkwetisama (2011) explores the ways in which environmental education could be integrated into language teaching in the Cameroonian context. The author emphasizes the connection between critical thinking and environmental education. Additional theoretical considerations include content and language integrated learning (CLIL) and task-based language learning. The author mentions that environmental education has been piloted in some schools in the southern region of Cameroon and lists typical activities, which include discussions, debates, writing tasks, and authentic input texts; however, not much detail about these activities is provided.

Cultivating students’ critical thinking skills is one of the primary objectives of education for sustainability in Cameroon. The author explains that thinking critically will help learners decide what to believe and how to behave. This type of thinking is cultivated through repeated practice discussing important and complex global issues. In the author’s view, critical thinking “sharpens learners’ focus on environmental matters and urges them to react accordingly” (Nkwetisama, 2011, p. 114). The author also draws a connection between critical thinking and critical language awareness, i.e., “the ways in which language relates to social issues, such as power, inequality and discrimination” (Nkwetisama, 2011, p. 113). Exploration of the complex relationship between ideology and language is useful in developing students’ critical thinking skills as well as helping them to understand the world around them.

The author includes two additional theoretical bases: CLIL and task-based learning. CLIL is comparable to content-based language teaching as both teach academic content in the target language. While there are some minor theoretical differences

between the two, CLIL and content-based language teaching programs “share the same essential properties” (Cenoz, 2015). Task-based learning is an approach to language teaching in which learners are given an objective, or task, which requires the use of language. Typically, completing the task requires learners to acquire new language. This type of learning values the achievement of a communicative or real-world goal over the teaching of specific language: “priority is given to getting something done through language rather than to practicing predetermined language items” (Nkwetisama, 2011, p. 115). Task-based learning follows a specific procedure: pre-task activities scaffold learning, and post-task feedback reinforces new language and corrects common mistakes.

In the case of the article on Cameroon, environmental education is defined clearly. The author indicates that the goal of such education is to raise awareness of the function, management, and protection of natural environments, stressing that a broad range of topics such as habitat destruction, global warming, energy use, and water crises must be included (Nkwetisama, 2011). The goals and topics that the author includes are explicitly based on the goals listed in the UNESCO-UNEP, which include the following: being aware that environmental problems exist, possessing a rudimentary understanding of the environment and of humans’ role in it, being concerned about environmental problems, having the necessary skills to ameliorate environmental problems, being able to assess the effectiveness of potential solutions to environmental problems, and contributing actively in addressing environmental problems (Nkwetisama, 2011).

The third example is drawn from Australia. This article Podger, Mustakova-Possardt, and Reid (2010) describes the whole-person approach to education for sustainability. This approach is centered on critical moral consciousness, which is related to concepts such as identity, motivation, and “higher-order dispositions” (Podger et al., 2010, p. 339). Significantly, this approach was applied in content courses, not in the language classroom. In the case of this article, sustainability is understood to mean “a disposition towards human rights, peace, active citizenship, participatory democracy, conservation, and ecological, social, and economic justice” (Podger et al., 2010, p. 339). This definition, which is based on the writing of Sterling (2007), includes much more than the typical definition of environmental or business sustainability, also encompassing various topics related to human rights and social responsibility.

Critical moral consciousness is the major theory underlying this approach to education for sustainability. This theory draws heavily from critical pedagogy as formulated by Freire (1973); however, it is also shaped by more recent cross-cultural studies by Mustakova-Possardt (2003). The authors describe the development of critical moral consciousness as follows:

evolution of critical moral consciousness in the lifespan is characterized by an intuitive and progressively more conscious critical moral dialogue with the world, spurred by a quest for truth and justice, and characterized by an increasingly responsible, interconnected, and action-and-service-oriented disposition to collective social life; while the understanding of truth, justice, and agency is continually developmentally reconstructed. (Podger et al., 2010, p. 342)

According to the authors, the development of critical moral consciousness depends on the development of systematic thinking and on primary moral motivation, which is seen as a “disposition toward truth, beauty, and goodness” (Podger et al., 2010, p. 342). In the authors’ understanding, moral acts take these factors into account; immoral acts ignore them for the sake of convenience or other self-serving reasons. Primary moral motivation is developed through four interrelated areas of awareness: sense of self-identity, sense of the sources of moral authority, sense of being related to others and to the world, and sense of life’s meaning (Podger et al., 2010). For a whole-person approach to environmental education to be effective, it would need to develop learners’ critical moral consciousness by instilling rigorous systematic thinking and healthy primary moral motivation.

## **Discussion**

Each of the approaches to education for sustainability introduced above is based on a different understanding of the meaning of sustainability as well as different educational theories. Comparing and contrasting the various approaches provides insight into their relative strengths and weaknesses. It also provides direction for further development of the Triple Bottom Line project at the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics.

Authenticity is a strength of several of the approaches. This is particularly the case in the Egyptian example. The students wrote persuasive essays for a real audience: members of the school administration. Having such an audience motivates students to perform well. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of clear communication as a means of effecting change in the world. In this case, the involvement of the students in school policy elevates the lesson from an academic exercise to more authentic learning. None of the other approaches include an authentic audience; however, both the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics and the author in Cameroon use content-based language teaching or CLIL, thus providing the students with authentic content in the language classroom. The use of authentic inputs is present to a lesser extent in the Egyptian example, as the teacher shows the students a video about plastic water bottles. While she does not explicitly call her approach content-based language instruction or CLIL, Nashat (2011), explicitly draws the connection between sustainability education and effective language teaching. In her view, such materials provide “the perfect medium for teaching both content and language concepts” (p. 40). In all of these examples, education for sustainability provides appropriate content for language learning.

Task- or project-based learning is also common to several of the approaches. The Cameroonian example supports task-based learning, and the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics used project-based learning. The Egyptian example also uses task-based learning, although this is not explicitly stated in the article. Both task-based learning and project-based learning motivate the students and allow them to learn language in realistic, goal-oriented situations. The complexity of the content and the existence of many real-world problems creates opportunities for meaningful tasks and projects.

Critical thinking is also a commonality. In describing education for sustainability in Cameroon, Nkwetisama (2011) explains the connection between critical thinking and

responsible decision-making. Systematic thinking, which is similar to critical thinking, is also mentioned in the Australian example as one of the two foundations of critical moral awareness (Podger, 2010). The Egyptian example and the Triple Bottom Line project both require students to engage with challenging content; however, neither explicitly teaches critical thinking or systematic thinking skills.

Perhaps most interesting are the different understandings of environmental education and sustainability. These range from specific and concrete — a highly specific definition provided by the U.N. (Nkwetisama, 2011) — to the broad and abstract — a definition encompassing human rights, democracy, and justice as well as environmental conservation in its definition (Podger et al., 2010). In another case, only a vague definition of education for sustainability is provided. The teacher from Egypt states that it “encompasses current economic, social, and environmental issues that have a direct effect on the lives of future generations” (Nashat, 2011, p. 40). She does not provide a meaning of sustainability. In contrast with all three of the other definitions, sustainability at the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics is explicitly understood in terms of the Triple Bottom Line framework, which includes a strong business component. While this is helpful in motivating business-oriented students, it may downplay the importance of environmental sustainability.

The examples explored above provide insights into avenues for further development of the TBL project at the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics. Inspired by the Egyptian example, more authentic audiences could be found for the students’ work. One way to do this would be for the students to produce short videos making a persuasive point about the company that they have analyzed. If the company’s performance in terms of the Triple Bottom Line is exemplary, they could call for people to support the company; on the other hand, if the company’s performance is poor, they could call for changes in the company’s policy. Inspired by the Cameroonian example, the project could be brought into line with the objectives of environmental education that were outlined by the U.N. This would mean placing more of an emphasis on finding solutions to environmental problems, evaluating proposed solutions, and ultimately participating in overcoming problems. Bringing the Triple Bottom Line project into line with these goals would require extending the project to include problem solving, which is also consistent with the development of critical thinking as described in the Cameroonian and Australian examples. Overall, these three instances of education for sustainability have provided excellent material for the development of the project at the Preparation Center for Languages and Mathematics.

## **Conclusion**

Educators in a wide range of contexts have addressed the need for education for sustainability in various ways, basing their approaches on diverse understandings of sustainability and diverse theories of education. The Triple Bottom Line project described in this paper represents one approach to teaching about sustainability, an approach that is tailored to an English for academic purposes program at a Thai university. The project is still a work in progress, and it will continue to develop by drawing inspiration from both the local context and other instances of effective teaching. The need for education for sustainability is increasing, and this need can be

met in part by language teachers, who are in an excellent position to incorporate this meaningful content into their programs.



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## Appendix: Triple Bottom Line Term Paper Guide

This quarter you will need to write a term paper about the economic, environmental, social impacts of a particular corporation and evaluate their overall sustainability.

The framework for organizing your paper and analyzing will be provided in your academic reading class. This framework will be based on a book by John Elkington called *Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*. In this book, Elkington provided a framework for analyzing a company's sustainability. Sustainability is the principle of making sure actions taken today do not negatively affect those around us, now and for future generations.

Your teacher will allocate you a corporation in the first week. You will need to do the following:

- Give a brief background of your company, particularly aspects related to the TBL.
- Describe the company's profitability and how this impacts the planet and people.
- Explain how the three Ps (People, Planet & Profit) are interrelated.
- Predict how the sustainable the company will be in near future.

*The word length of the paper is a minimum of 1,400 words (does not include title page and references).*

This is a suggested outline for the term paper with details on the content you should include in each section. This is only a guide — if you wish to organize it differently then you can do this and your teacher will discuss it with you when you do your outline. You need to discuss all three frameworks in your paper. If the company you choose does not currently focus on all of them, you can still explain why it may not focus on one of the requirements and how this may affect society / the environment / profit.

### Introduction

- What is this paper about?
- Sustainability and the TBL
- Company
- Thesis: Based on the TBL, how sustainable is the company?

### Background

- Background of the company (e.g. products, size, **company TBL**)
- Information relevant to the following three sections

### First Bottom Line (*People*)

- **Is the company positively impacting stakeholders?**
- How is this company affecting society/employees in its own country and abroad?
- What are the negative impacts it has on the society/employees?
- What are the positives things it is trying to do for society/employees?
- Are there any notable events which have happened?

### **Second Bottom Line (*Planet*)**

- **Is the company significantly reducing its negative impacts on the environment?**
- How is this company impacting the environment?
- What are the negative impacts it has on the environment?
- What are the positives things it is trying to do?
- Are there any events which have happened that have significantly impacted the environment?

### **Third Bottom Line (*Profits*)**

- **Is the company profitable?**
- How have profits been over the last few years?
- How strong is this company's business?
- What are the most profitable parts of the company?
- Is the business getting stronger or weaker?
- Is the industry getting stronger or weaker?
- What are the business strategies for profit?
- Are there any threats to their business?

### **Recommendations**

- Speculate on the future of the company; how will the company's TBL change going forward?
- How can the company improve its treatment of stakeholders?
- Indirect and direct stakeholders
- How can the company improve how it affects the environment?
- resource consumption and waste/pollution
- How can the company improve long term profits?
- Will its business get stronger or weaker?

### **Conclusion**

- Restate thesis: how sustainable is the business overall according to the TBL? How do the three parts of the TBL affect each other?



*Russian-Like Discourse in English Essays*

Olga Bondarenko, The Moscow State Institute for Tourism Industry n.a. Yu.  
Senkevich, Russia

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**Abstract**

The paper presents part of the research results revealing specific features of English discourse produced by Russian natives, and is a further development of the 'Russian English' issue investigated by the author recently. Russian accent in English discourse is considered as an EFL genre-teaching challenge.

The paper presents the typical Russian English users' discourse deviations of a multiple character, including specific choices, applications and avoidance of vernacular linguistic, stylistic, structural and other variables.

The methods used encompass contrastive analysis, discourse analysis, as well as compilation and analysis of a self-made corpus of Russian natives' English written samples of essays. The present paper focuses on the results of Russian students' essays analysis only.

Keywords: discourse analysis, discourse genres, Russian English.

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## **Introduction**

Discourse competence is a priority component of communication competence in EFL acquisition. According to R. White's definition, discourse competence is "the user's knowledge of rules of discourse, of how spoken and written texts are organized, and might influence whether they are considered to be well formed" (White, 1997). Recognizable and distinctive patterns of text organization are known as genres. Paltridge identifies genres as communicative events, that is ways in which people communicate with each other (Paltridge, 2012, 62). Genre texts may vary in their typicality, a text may be a typical example of a genre, or a less typical one (Paltridge, 2012, 64). Mastering the typical ways genres are organized at the discourse level is an important target, especially in EFL learning. As Swales justly stated, genres provide a frame enabling people to communicate successfully in particular situations (Swales, 2004).

One of the genres taught to EFL students is the essay. Learning to write essays in English, students explore the prototypical features of a particular genre, acquire skills in structured writing, cohesive and logical narration, and in syntactic organization of discourse.

The research undertaken was aimed at identification of typical and functionally meaningful Russian English discourse features. It was undertaken to find out if the Russian English discourse of the essay genre has the expected qualities of the corresponding English genre canon or not, and to reveal repeated and widely spread characteristic Russian English discourse qualities.

## **Methodology and Procedures**

The theoretical framework of the research was made up by the genre theory of discourse (J. Swales), and contrastive analysis (R. Lado).

The methods applied were content and genre analysis, written discourse analysis, as well as field notes. The focus of attention was on the structural and syntactic features of English essays produced by Russian natives.

The contingent of informants, chosen for this research, were Russian native learners of English of both sexes doing their Bachelor's course. The researcher's selection of Russian EFL learners' essays were gathered and investigated (40 samples). The data were received at the Moscow Institute for tourism industry named after Yu. Senkevich over the period of 2013-2015. First, distinctive general features of English written discourse were summarized, including the characteristics of the essay genre. Then the samples of Russian students' essays in English were analysed for the particular features of the researcher's interest. The size of essays was one page (1800 symbols maximum).

## **Findings**

As it was discovered, there are certain general differences between modern written English and Russian discourse. English texts are normally distinguished with laconism and prevailing simple sentences, as against long compound sentences in

Russian (Семенов, 2008). There is strong evidence that English written discourse is biased toward subordinating syntactic connection rather than coordination, as it is the case in Russian, where subordination occurs not so frequently as in English (Бархударов, 1975, 207). There is a stable avoidance of word repetition in written English. As a result, special word substitution means are used as anaphoric reference, like *one(s)*, *such*, *so*, *do(es)*, *this/that/it*, *these/those*, *the former*, *the latter* etc. There is a specific feature of *nominalization* in written English, marked by both English native and Russian researchers (Paltridge, 2012; Узленко, 2002). As Paltridge has it, “there is a high level of nominalization in written texts; that is, where actions and events are presented as nouns rather than verbs” (Paltridge, 2012, 137). As a rule, written English discourse is well structured and organized, which is facilitated by specific signposting insertions, such as *apart from that*, *first*, *second*, *finally* etc. There are additional qualities in English discourse determined by a particular genre of the essay. They are well known and encompass coherence, logic, being concise, and persuasive etc.

According to the previous longitudinal and wider-based research of the author, Russian natives’ English discourse errors are the most spread in written genres. These errors imply violations of L2 rules of layout, structure, register, discourse strategies and linguistic markers stereotypically applied by ENL users in the genre under investigation. Thus, the average percentage of student informants who made discourse errors in written genres was 48%, as compared to only 20% in oral conversation samples. Similar discrepancy goes for syntactic errors, as 66% of the informants committed them in writing, while 40% in speech. The individual peak counts (the top number of errors of a particular type throughout the samples of one informant) also showed that discourse error peaks ranked second (grammar error peaks ranked first). To be more exact, discourse errors, alongside with grammar errors, accounted for top individual scores of 27% of the informants (Bondarenko, 2014, Part 5.2). These data suggest that English discourse poses a serious challenge to Russian learners.

The investigation of Russian essays in English revealed the following deviations:

1. Structural deficiency was demonstrated in 21% of works. There was no conclusion, or a conclusion was not related to the title, the thesis statement was poorly made, the topics declared in an introduction were dealt with only partially etc.

2. English supra-segmental linking words appeared not quite homogeneous from pedagogical perspectives. Signposting link words (*first*, *besides*, *finally* etc.) were used by the majority of the informants quite appropriately, whereas connecting link-words were often missing where they belonged, were misused or replaced with particular substitutes of the students’ choice, the most common of them is ‘what about’:

E.g. **What about** *Russia*, it is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country (instead of ‘As to Russia...’).

The example below also looks foreign, because its writer used the Russian-like links and structure in English discourse.

E.g. *The gala dinner was very nice. **And** the dishes were very well cooked, **and** the restaurant service was perfect* (instead of 'Both the dishes were cooked well and the service was perfect').

This is a syntactic calc from Russian («И блюда были вкусно приготовлены, и обслуживание было безукоризненным»), and cannot but produce syntactic and semantic dissonance in English. The above examples show that some text markers must be harder for Russians to assume than others, and, hence, need more instructional attention.

3. A wrong word order in collocations with the first person singular pronoun produces an unwelcome effect as it violates the unwritten ethic conventions and sounds unusual to a literate ESL and ENL user:

E.g. We will need tickets for me and my assistant. I and my friend

It is more common communicating in English to place self second.

4. Such a feature of English written discourse as **nominalization** is not always observed by Russians when there is an alternative choice of a verb or a noun structure in the same context. The small-scale quantitative analysis of 40 essays showed that Russian informants preferred verbal structures to noun structures in about 40% of cases of alternative mini contexts.

E.g. *If we want **to self-improve**..... (cf: If we want self-improvement.)*

*After the story ended ..... (cf: At the end of my reading).*

This result, to some extent, echoes the conclusions of the Russian researcher Uzlenko about the prevailing verbal type of Russian thinking in contrast to the nominative pattern of English natives' cognitive process. Her study, based on animal associations in Russian and English folklore, revealed that the dominant associative construct of Russians for animals is predicative, whereas for English natives it is nominative, that is animal associations of Russians concern what animals do, not what they are like (Узленко, 2012).

5. English written discourse must be rather lexically dense, it tends to be more dense than oral one. It implies the ratio of content words to grammatical or function words within a clause. The lexical density of English native discourse mentioned by Paltridge is 7 (Paltridge, 2012, 136-137).

The quantitative analysis of informants' essays allowed to judge about their average lexical density, which equaled 6.4, thus, approaching the normal ratio. The calculation of sentence types dominant in Russian English discourse revealed the following: Three kinds of sentences were counted, they were simple sentences, compound sentences with coordinative syntactic connection and complex sentences with subordinating or both subordinating and coordinative connection. The results are shown below.

In 93% of samples the **compound sentences** made up the smallest share, most of them characterized by asyndeton. Compound sentences accounted for 8 to 30% of all sentences in each essay sample (the top and the lowest figures were discarded as incidental). Compound sentences were not used at all by 11% of informants, whereas zero usage was not registered for either simple or complex sentences.

57% of informants chose **simple sentences** as the prevailing type. Their number ranged from 18 to 62% of all the sentences per sample. Besides, 33% of the samples had more than half of their total sentences as simple sentences, which made that Russian English writing meet the requirement of laconism.

39% of samples used **complex sentences** as the predominant type. The quantity varied from 25 to 82% of this sentence type per sample. The high percentage of samples (77%) appeared to have less than half of all their sentences as complex sentences. It proves that Russian users of English underestimate subordinating syntactic connection or are not competent enough in using it. Anyway, as a result, the overall impression from the text may be a syntactic foreign accent.

**6. Wrong punctuation.** Most Russian users of English persistently abuse three marks, a semicolon, a dash and a comma. The semicolon and the dash are often combined with the omission of the copula verb, another typical syntactic error of Russian native speakers.

*E. g. The tour price - \$15 per person. Complimentary: one person for every 20 paying persons.*

The above Russian-like syntactic structures reproduce the Russian syntactic patterns and are quite appropriate in similar instances of Russian contextual writing, but look foreign in English.

The comma, on the contrary, was not used when it was required according to English rules of punctuation, for instance after modifiers of time preceding the subject of a sentence, or before 'and', or as a substitute for a non-repeated word (underscore shows the omission of the comma):

- (1) In 1940\_ he joined the army.
- (2) After the graduation\_ I'm going to set up my own business.
- (3) We visited Prague, Budapest\_ and the Athens.
- (4) Some people prefer fantasy literature\_ I - historical novels.

The punctuation mistakes in the above sentences can be explicated by the untoward impact of Russian punctuation practices, as modifiers of time, place or manner of action at the start of a sentence are not usually separated by the comma. Besides, it is never applied in the position of example 3 in Russian. As to a zero substitute (4), Russians use the dash in this function instead of the comma, which was transferred to English written discourse. It is also worth mentioning some typically Russian inaccuracies in writing numbers, for example *25 780 visitors; 9 000 000 people*

(instead of 25,780; 9,000,000), which occurs owing to the difference in English and Russian punctuation rules.

To put it honestly, punctuation sinks into secondary importance in EFL teaching in Russia, especially at non-linguistic institutes and universities, because of time shortage for this discipline, and in view of more vital and formidable instructional objectives.

7. The research data showed the latest tendency of replacing capital letters with small ones by Russian English users in a most unjustified and inexplicable way:

E.g., *euroman, russian, the internet, i mean.*

One of the explanations of this feature of Russian English written discourse may lie in the considerable influence of the Net communication which has worked out a lingo of its own, simplified and suitable for fast exchanges and online chatting. As Russians spend a lot of time on the Net, they cannot help being affected, transferring this effort-saving tactics on to English business discourse. As such innovations have not become common practice yet, especially with ENL and advanced ELF users, they strike as improper and foreign.

## **Conclusion**

This research contributes to the investigation of discourse peculiarities of World Englishes and may lead to similar studies of other English discourses.

The Anglophone community has their own particular written genre qualities, or canons, that must be explored and mastered by EFL learners. The present paper revealed inconsistencies of Russian users of written English in the genre of essay from the structural and syntactic perspectives. The most salient of them concern preference for the improper type of sentences, a narrow range of sentence types used, wrong punctuation, inadequate compositional and content structure. Such English discourse strategy as nominalization has turned out to be foreign to Russian linguistic mind and is not always applied in the contexts where it can.

Discourse errors are not on the surface, are harder to interpret and can be construed by cross-linguistic, cross-cultural and cross-communicative interference.

The discovered deviations do not correspond to the English expected canons, they cannot be justified as register variants and may be a kind of manifestations of a Russian accent at the discourse level.

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*orbon@mail.ru*





*The Role of Informant-Context Knowledge in Interpreting Hybrid Texts:  
A Pragmatic Study*

Venkanna Ithagani, The English and Foreign Languages University, India

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**Abstract**

Interpretation of any text depends on the interpreter's context knowledge, cultural background, memory skills and language skills. Interpretation is one of the most complicated human cognitive activities. The interpreter's knowledge of the subject (or lack of it) can affect the whole interpretation process, i.e., the process, the transferring process and the reproduction process. The influence is reflected not only in the quality, quantity, relevance and manner (Grice's Maxims) of the interpretations, but also in the interpreting strategies employed. My hypothesis is that with a higher level of informants' socio-cultural, context and area knowledge, interpreters will have more detailed and deeper understanding of the sentences or conversation; therefore, producing higher quality relevant or expected interpretations. In addition, equipped with more socio-cultural knowledge, interpreters may be able to use higher level of interpreting strategies at the discourse level and lexical level. This paper reports the results of a pilot study that was conducted as part of my PhD research with the aim of exploring the influence of socio-cultural background on interpreters' successive interpreting of hybrid texts. Fifteen post graduate students and research scholars from different states and country at The English and Foreign Languages University in India participated in the experiment. These participants were given a questionnaire based on hybrid texts where they had to interpret the content. These participants were all comparable in regards to their previous knowledge on the conversation and interpreting experience. Results indicate that with more socio-cultural background knowledge, participants' performance was better in specialized interpretation.

Key words: Grice's maxims, context knowledge, cultural background, hybrid texts.

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## Introduction

Interpretation of any text depends on the interpreter's context knowledge, cultural background, memory skills and language skills. Interpretation is one of the most complicated human cognitive activities. The interpreter's knowledge of the subject (or lack of it) can affect the whole interpretation process, i.e., the process, the transferring process and the reproduction process. The influence is reflected not only in the quality, quantity, relevance and manner of the interpretations, but also in the interpreting strategies employed. This has been one general belief in pragmatics especially Relevance Theory. Hence, the general belief has been that context knowledge and socio-cultural background are crucial in the interpretation of texts. In this paper we show that even though utterances are couched in particular cultures, there are nevertheless certain universal aspects which are common to all cultures. It is these aspects that enable speakers to interpret hybrid texts.

All linguistic forms must be associated with the interactive, physical, cultural and social environment in which they are produced to be interpreted correctly. Linguistic behavior is grounded in a particular context, which surrounds informs, underlies and shapes a linguistic event. A conversation will have a physical context (where the conversation takes place), a social context (the social relationships of the participants), a cultural context (shared knowledge about the culture in which the informants are living.) and an encyclopedic knowledge content (specific assumptions shared by speakers and informants). An utterance within a conversation will also have a discourse context or what was said before the utterance which informs the hearer about how to respond to an utterance.

Grice (1968?) views communication as a cooperative attempt between the speaker and the hearer. In order to be cooperative, participants in a discourse must abide by the following four maxims:

- **Maxim of Quantity:** Informants must be informative, that is providing just an adequate amount of information, neither too long nor too little.
- **Maxim of Quality:** Informants must only assert truthful and well-supported information.
- **Maxim of Relevance:** Informants must be relevant.
- **Maxim of Manner:** Informants must be brief, non ambiguous and orderly.

For example, let us examine the following conversation between Tony and Anagha:

1. Tony: Its dark, how will we search for the books?

Anagha: Mobile.

Anagha's response is just informatively adequate: it is relevant and short, and we believe she's truthful. It thus obeys all the Gricean maxims. But we must still draw a trivial inference that there is the advantage of modern technology so that the light from the mobile would enable the informants to see what they are searching for. In other words, in

order to see Anagha's response as bearing relevance, we need to add to know the implicit assumption. Let us consider another example.

2. Sonia: My mother likes dramas.

Seema: I'm not my mother.

In this example, it seems as though Seema isn't actually answering the question. She certainly doesn't actually say whether or not she likes dramas. The implicature of her response, though, is that she does not like dramas. She has conveyed a meaning, deliberately, without explicitly saying it.

The problem is that a context contains an immense number of assumptions. How can we make sure that just the relevant bit of information is adopted? Pragmatic theories explain how we master our illative powers in order to make efficient use of context in the communication and how we are able to infer the intended meaning of a linguistic expression, even when that meaning is not made fully explicit. Pragmatics is an ability to draw contextually imaginable illations, which balances linguistic meanings and expressions.

### **Relevance Theory**

Relevance theory was coined by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson (1995) which seeks to explain the second method of communication; namely, the one that takes into account implicit inferences. It is a psychological model for understanding the cognitive interpretation of languages. It is "an inferential approach to pragmatics". It argues that any hearer/reader/audience will search for meaning in any given communication situation and will find meaning that suits their expectation of relevance.

### **Main ideas of Relevance Theory**

#### **The First Cognitive Principle of Relevance**

Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance (Sperber & Wilson 1995:260)

#### **The Second Communicative Principle of Relevance**

Every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance (Sperber & Wilson 1995:260).

#### **Presumption of optimal relevance**

- a. The ostensive stimulus is relevant enough for it to be worth the addressee's effort to process it.

- b. The ostensive stimulus is the most relevant one compatible with the communicator's abilities and preferences (Sperber & Wilson 1995:270).

### **Relevance to an individual** (classical category)

An assumption is relevant to an individual at a given time if and only if it is relevant in one or more of the contexts accessible to that individual at that time (Sperber & Wilson 1995:144).

### **Relevance to an individual** (comparative)

- a. Extent condition 1: an assumption is relevant to an individual to the extent that the contextual effect achieved when it is optimally is large.
- b. Extent condition 2: an assumption is relevant to an individual to the extent that the effort required to process it optimally is small (Sperber & Wilson 1995:145).

Information, then, 'is relevant to somebody if it interacts in a certain way with his existing assumptions about the world.

### **Hybrid texts**

People must be able to do much more than decode and encode; they must use and interpret multiple languages in response to particular communicative and performative demands across a range of contexts. Hybrid texts, i.e. texts written by authors of a particular cultural and linguistic background in the language of a different culture, often pose problems of comprehension (i.e. 'comprehension of a text of one variety of English within the context or situation of another variety; Kachru, 1995:275), and hence interpretation (i.e. 'contextualization of the text within the variables which are appropriate for it within the context of its source language') for readers who do not share the author's cultural and linguistic background. Such texts have more than one interpretive context: 1) the surface meaning of the second language (in our case English); and 2) the underlying meaning of the first (or dominant) language of the author (Kachru 1986:166). The interpretation, then is bound to be influenced by this underlying meaning, which Zabus (1991:155) refers to as 'the source language in filigree'. A hybrid text is defined as: "a text that results from a translation process. It shows characteristics that somehow look 'out of place'/'strange'/'unusual' for the encountering culture, i.e. the intended culture".

Hybrid text regularly implies the processing of information originated in two distinct systems (i.e., culture and language). We call those texts hybrid texts when the pragmatic output or the appropriation of those two kinds of texts is not a simple addition of their pragmatic properties, but a factorial product. In order to understand hybrid texts, the informant must cognitively process the pragmatic difference or similarity between the mental, context and the text to allow him/her to build inferences. Informants must realize the significance of the appropriation of that particular context to that particular text.

In hybrid texts, we may have different situations. Sometimes, the context does increase immediately the exhibiting effect of the texts (the capability that verbal rhetorical strategies in descriptive, narrative, explicative or expositive texts can have to develop mental process in informant's mind), sometimes they do not. When texts are rhetorically complex (mainly when they show some kind of exhibit information or when context elements neither predictably match with the background knowledge of the informant or their expectations, nor can they be understood in an explicit way) they may convey a lot of conflicting meanings that might reduce the central effect of culture on the text or otherwise strongly direct the attention to text in an attempt to clarify the context with the information abounding.

Sometimes the text looks not sufficient to clarify the context. In those cases, the cognitive processing of the whole meaning of the text may depend on the context processing strategies. While trying to understand the whole meaning of the hybrid text the informant can exhibit a particular socio-culture.

Understanding a text is not limited to detecting similar appearance or different characteristics of objects or events it represents or to building a mental representation for its information content, but it also implies the identification of the objectives of its reproduction and the detection of pragmatic characteristics within the society.

In this research study, what I propose to do is present a literal English translation of Telugu texts which have a distinct local flavors to speakers of other languages and dialects and analyze the processing load involved and thereby its relevance.

For example, here is a literal translation of a piece of discourse from a Telugu text:

**1. Swine Flu is on the rise; double your efforts. Support Pongal Kites.**

The discourse contains stretches of language that are coherently organized. But what's the connection between swine flu being on the rise and doubling our efforts? Somehow we need to infer that the efforts are related to the previously mentioned swine flu. Since swine flu is considered dangerous, we infer that probably what is referred to is our efforts towards eliminating or reducing swine flu or its effects. We immediately face another confusing utterance: how is supporting an organization called Pongal Kites relevant to fighting swine flu? Once again, we need to rely on our general knowledge (here, very much culture-dependent) and access the fact that Pongal Kites is a charity that sells kites, and whose profits support fighting swine flu. In other words, the rather short discourse in (1) is actually interpreted as something like:

**2. Swine flu is on the rise. (Thus) please double your efforts (to fight it). Support Pongal Kites (because they fight swine flu).**

Example (2) is not only awkward; it feels unessential. Since we can infer the bracketed information easily, stating it explicitly in this manner is unnecessary. Speakers normally rely on informants' (receiver) cognitive abilities to draw such specific pragmatic

inferences. With the help of pragmatics, the language production and processing are made more efficient hence taking less time and effort.

Human languages are linguistically influenced, that is, they can never encode everything that we actually intend our addressees to understand as the message of our utterances. This is why the drawing of pragmatic inferences is critical in making language work as a communicative system. Consider again example (2). Although it seems a much more specific version of (1), it still does not explicitly encode every piece of intended information. Aren't the following added interpretations also part of the message contained in the text in (1)?

3. Swine flu (**in India**) is (**recently and anticipated to be in the future**) on the rise (**i.e., some people now died of it**). (**Thus,**) please double your efforts (**to fight it (and make an attempt to fight it even if you haven't)**). Support Pongal Kites because they fight on Swine flu (**and this will represent your effort in fighting on Swine flu**).

And even (3) does not weaken all information that goes into interpreting (1). How much is swine flu on the rise? We infer that it is rising significantly. How should the addressee support Pongal Kites? Presumptively, by buying many Pongal kites, which support the organization financially (rather than ethically, for example). We could specify more and more hidden assumptions. There's certainly a lot of interpretation that doesn't meet the semantic meaning. It is up to pragmatics to provide it.

### **Understanding Hybrid Texts: A Pilot study**

A pilot study was conducted to study people's understanding of Hybrid Texts. In this case, the Hybrid Texts used were commonly used proverbs in Telangana state in South India. These proverbs are usually couched in particular socio-cultural settings. So, the main task in this study was to see if the relevance of these hybrid texts increase (thereby leading to a better understanding of the hybrid text) when factors like language, culture or political background of the speakers are similar.

#### **The study**

The study was carried out in one phase with 15 informants. The study aimed to examine the interpretation of hybrid texts applying Pragmatics and relevance theory. Informal discussions were carried out with the informants to find out their cultural and social background. In addition to these, their context and cognitive levels, and their preference towards hybrid text were elicited.

#### **Aim**

The human tendency to maximize relevance makes it possible not only to predict some of other people's cognitive processes, but also try to influence them. How indeed could you aim at influencing people if you had no way to predict how your behavior would affect their thought? Human intended communication, and in specific verbal message, engages

the attribution, by the communicator and the hearer (informant), of mental states to one another.

This study aims to explore the efficiency of using hybrid text to know informants' contextual implicature. The study focuses on 'hybrid texts' which are not understandable to informants who have different culture and social background.

### **Research tool**

The main tool that was used for the present study was a set of questionnaires prepared for informants under study. The framework that was chosen for the analysis of hybrid text below was that of Relevance Theory. Relevance Theory states that although there may be huge variation in cultural backgrounds, the principles by which hearers use contextual information in interpreting utterances in conversation are universally the same.

### **The informants**

The informants were 15. All of them were between 20 and 42 years of age. The data were collected from fifteen subjects by means of a questionnaire. These fifteen people came from fairly varied backgrounds (different countries like Russia, Germany, Syria, Indonesia, Togo, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka and the Indian informants were from different states (and language backgrounds) Kerala, Tamilnadu, Assam, Bihar, Utter Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Odisha). The informants were given fifteen hybrid texts in the form of proverbs and were asked to interpret them providing the first accessible meaning they arrive at without discussing the hybrid text with others or thinking about them too long. The only information given to the informants was that they were asked to interpret proverbs. Neither the origin of the proverb nor the specific context in which the proverbs in question are used was provided in the questionnaire. It was hoped, however, that letting them know that they were interpreting not just any utterance but proverbs would bring into play their encyclopedic entry for proverbs and would allow them easy access to the assumptions one is supposed to have about proverbs (i.e. that proverbs condense common experience into a memorable form embodying traditional pieces of wisdom; that is being attributable not to a specific person but a people, they are from part of that people's cultural heritage: and they function deeply embedded in a social context, not only conforming social norms and values but also giving confidence to their users), thus creating a context for interpretation. This expectation seemed to be supported by the suggestion that perhaps a majority of contextual assumptions are retrieved or derived from memory.

In other words, the contexts for comprehension are drawn not only from the physical environment, but from what Sperber and Wilson call the speaker's and hearers' cognitive environment: the set of assumptions that are manifest in them. It does not mean that physical, social and cultural factors do not play a role in utterance interpretation. They do, but they affect interpretation by affecting the individual's assumptions about the world. Understanding proverbs has a number of complications. First, most proverbs can be understood both literally and metaphorically. Second, proverbs are so-called echoic

utterances echoing the thought, or if you like wisdom, of a people, so proverbs cannot achieve relevance simply by demonstrating that someone understands it. Third, by representing popular knowledge 'in a manifestly skeptical, amused, surprised, triumphant, approving or reproving way, the speaker can express her own attitude to the thought echoed and the relevance of her utterance might depend largely on this expression of attitude' (Sperber & Wilson 1995:239). These complications are, however, taken into consideration only as far as it is required for the purpose of the analysis.

### **The Objective of this study**

The objective of this work was to study the hybrid text by using relevance theory and Grice's Maxims principles thoroughly in the field of socio and cultural linguistics. The nexus between hybrid text, Pragmatics and Relevance Theory is an established fact. When I use my mother tongue, I am immediately identified as a person belonging to the Telangana region. It's because of the distinctive socio-cultural background I have in my usage of Telugu Language. By undertaking to do a close study of the hybrid text, I would like to study the language, Relevance theory and signifying practices that are present in the Telangana region.

### **The research questions addressed in this study are the following:**

- 1) How can Hybrid Texts, especially proverbs, be analyzed through Grice's Maxims and Relevance Theory?
- 2) How are hearers able to bridge the gap between the linguistic meanings encoded in an utterance and the speaker's intended meaning?
- 3) Can the set of assumptions the hearer/reader provide help them to arrive at the intended interpretation?

### **Methodology**

Ten Telugu proverbs used in the Telangana region were taken for this study. A literal translation of these proverbs was provided to the subjects. The ten proverbs varied in terms of frequency of use and transparency of meaning. The collection of data was done through self reporting questionnaires and structural interviews from multiple informants belonging to different language, social and cultural backgrounds. Interviews were conducted individually to know the possible implicatures. The responses were tabulated and analyzed.

### **Findings and Discussion of the findings**

Here, we have seen that the informants tried to give some interpretations of the given proverbs in their own way. Informants gave the correct implication which is close to the optimal relevance or intended meaning. In this cognitive process, the selected informants used less effort and more effect because the proverbs might be understandable in any



context of the informants. The informants used their world knowledge to interpret the proverbs. Given below are the findings:

**Proverb 1: Instead of taking a look and returning, he spoils it.**

**Implicature**

- a) **A person who does more than what is asked.**
- b) **Over enthusiasm creates problems.**
- c) **The wrong person to do the right work.**
- d) **When immature, we do not think about the consequences of our actions.**
- e) **People who are too smart and clever may create more problems than good.**

**Responses**

Informants A, D and K came up with one of the expected contextual assumptions, i.e. with identifying 'being active' with 'danger' and associating the ideas of over enthusiasm behaviour to trouble. F, G, J and N, however, seemed contented with the literal meaning and did not move on to the metaphorical level. B, C, E, H, L, M and O appeared more hesitant in identifying the literal meaning and metaphorical meaning due to cultural and contextual meaning of the hybrid Text. The informants had to spend more cognitive effort and energy to draw relevant interpretations. The informants all interpreted 'being hyper-active' as 'bringing trouble' and thus interpreted the hybrid Text correctly. Informant I, however, clearly associates danger with smoke or fire but also hinted at the consequent relief.

**Proverb 2: Meat is like mother and rice is like aunt.**

**Implicature**

- a) **People prefer meat for party and celebrations.**
- b) **People prefer to have meat only while drinking wine.**
- c) **In some regions or countries people do not eat rice.**
- d) **Rice is interesting but lacks a sense of purpose when not accompanied by a good cut of meat.**
- e) **There is no love more sincere than the love of food.**

**Responses**

This hybrid text represents the pattern in the following way. Informants A, B, G, J, L, M and O were unable to come up with any interpretation of this proverb. C and D tried to come up with the intended meaning but they gave irrelevant explanations for this. Informants E, F, I and K seemed contented with the literal meaning and didn't move on to the metaphorical level. However, Subject H clearly associated the intended meaning with identifying 'community and the importance of the meat than rice'. Informant N gave a different interpretation which was irrelevant to the intended/literal meaning of the

hybrid text. Here, we can say that this hybrid Text is cultural specific. By this reason, some of the subjects didn't come up with the intended meaning.

Informants may be successful or unsuccessful in understanding hybrid Texts. They look at the context of hybrid Texts and relevance of correct implicature. In this cognitive process the informants take time to draw the relevant implicature. They investigate factors that obstruct or enhance context relevance, such as the premises' content and the premises' complexity. This attribution is greatly helped by the relative predictability of relevance-guided cognitive processes. However in the case of hybrid Texts that are culture specific and community specific the selected informants (non-cultural informants) are not able to understand the specific meaning of the hybrid texts. Most of the cases, in this present study, the informants are not able to draw the relevant implicatures for the selected hybrid texts. It might be the case that the informants don't share the context and cultural background.

**Proverb 3: According to the season is the cultivation, according to wetness (moisture) is the crop.**

### **Implicature**

- a) Everything has its own time and plans to follow.**
- b) According to the situation and circumstances we have to act.**
- c) Human beings have some stages to grow up.**

### **Responses**

This hybrid text yields distinct patterns of interpretation. Subjects A, B, C, G, I, N and O clearly came up with the intended meaning whereas E and L associated the meaning to the image created by the literal meaning. Informants D, F, H, K, and M appeared more hesitant in identifying the literal meaning and gave the interpretation a different, only remotely related direction. Informant J was not able to interpret any interpretation. Here, we assume that this hybrid text being not cultural specific, all the informants were able to come up with their literal and metaphorical meaning.

By observing the responses we come to know that the informants gave the response which is somehow relevant to the correct implicature of this hybrid Text. Therefore, informants gave the information about that thought which is relevant enough to be worth processing and which should require little processing effort as possible.

A relatively high degree of relevance is what makes some inputs worth processing. Many of the potential inputs competing for an individual's processing resources may offer a modicum of relevance, but few are likely to be relevant enough to deserve attention. What makes these worth processing is, to begin with, that they yield comparatively higher cognitive effects. However, two inputs yielding the same amount of cognitive effect may differ in the amount of processing effort required to produce this effect.

Obviously, it can be noted that the lesser the effort, the better. The relevance of an input is not just a matter of the cognitive effect it yields but also of the mental effort it requires.

**Proverb 4: If reachable, hold the hair, if not, the legs.**

### **Implicature**

- a) **The cheat always waits for an opportunity.**
- b) **If circumstances are good, make maximum use of it. If not, be happy with what is available.**
- c) **Adjust according to the situation or place.**
- d) **Know the people's attitude before you react.**

### **Responses**

The informant I stated that 'do whatever the best that you can do'. This is not a direct assumption of the intended meaning but is only remotely applicable. 'Whatever the best' is according to our situation and needs, you fulfill your desires. If not, fight for them. E appeared more uncertain in identifying the literal meaning, and gave a different interpretation of 'being disrespectful' and 'intimidating'. Informant A stated 'try to get gold, if you cannot go for silver'. According to this sentence, we can assume that it is the literal meaning of the hybrid text because the interpretation 'gold' as 'having greater importance' and 'silver' as 'having less importance' has been used instead of 'hair' as 'high' and 'legs' as 'lower'. Informants B G K and M came up with one of the expected contextual assumptions, i.e. with identifying 'availability', 'convenience', 'grab the best if not settle for less', and 'tactics', which were within the agreeable or acceptable domain of meaning of the Hybrid Text. H and L however, seemed contented with the literal meaning and did not move on to the metaphorical level ('if reachable then use your brain otherwise, just hang on'). The rest of the informants (F C D and O) interpreted the hybrid text not drawing the intended or relevant expectations. And informant N and J did not come up with any interpretation of the hybrid text.

**Proverb 5: If lice were given supervision, they would shave the head extensively.**

### **Implicature**

- a) **Though permission is given, one may not leave the natural attitude which comes inherently.**
- b) **No change in behaviour although in a good position.**
- c) **What will happen if a thief is appointed a head of bank (finance)?**
- d) **Knowingly commit blunders or mistakes.**

### **Responses**

Informant B moves on to the metaphorical level that 'if cats were given wings there could be no more sparrows' and 'Everyone is given something based on his/her

content or capability. Informants H and M came up with one of the expected contextual assumptions, i.e. with identifying 'ruin' and associating it with bad nature, when encouraged, can do more harm than be useful. K, however, seemed contented with the literal meaning and did not move on to the metaphorical level ('one should not trust a person of deceiving nature.'). Informant C came up with the metaphorical interpretation i.e. 'a proper person must be given proper responsibility'. D appeared more hesitant in identifying the literal meaning, and gave the interpretation a different, only remotely related direction. Informants E, F and O came up with one of the contextual assumptions of the hybrid text. I and J came up with irrelevant contextual assumptions of the hybrid text. Informants G, L and N did not come up with any contextual assumptions, literal or intended meaning of the hybrid text.

A careful analysis of the interpretations by the informants shows that literary devices like antithesis (as in Proverb 1), simile (as in Proverb 2), metaphor (as in Proverb 3), synecdoche (as in Proverb 4) and personification (as in Proverb 5) help in the understanding of these proverbs to some extent. Moreover, if we were to categorize proverbs under different categories like didactic, rhetorical, philosophical and epistemological, we find that the rhetorical and didactic one are easier to mentally process than the philosophical and epistemological. These show that there are some universal aspects in pragmatics that facilitate the understanding of even hybrid texts.

## **Conclusion**

This study enlightens the importance of social-language communications. It emphasizes the importance of Relevance Theory in interpreting hybrid texts by facilitating in the understanding of the contextual meaning of language.

In current linguistic theory (Principles and Parameters approach), it is believed that universal principles guide languages of the world. However, the surface differences between languages are attributable to certain parameters that can be set in different ways for different languages. Likewise, we find that in pragmatics too, there are certain universal aspects (expectations that a particular text gives rise to) that are triggered when readers try to make sense of a text that they are not familiar with. Literary devices like simile, metaphor, synecdoche, personification etc. add relevance to the meaning conveyed and enable in understanding any text.

I have tried to elucidate in this paper the possibility of using hybrid texts to stimulate informants to cross their multiple barriers like linguistic, cultural and psychological with the help of the universal aspects of linguistic or pragmatic cues.

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Email ID: [venkateflu141@gmail.com](mailto:venkateflu141@gmail.com)



*The Power of Informality in the Con-Textual Design of English-for-Specific-Purposes Scripted Role Plays*

Irina Dimitrova, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Bulgaria

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**Abstract**

The study aims to analyze the theoretical underpinning of the design technique of formal-informal con-textual alternation in scripted role-plays for teaching and learning English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the practical effects it bears upon the communicative skills of ESP learners at levels above B1 (CEFR) as compared to a traditional predominantly-formal contextual design. The experiment was conducted with 30 adult participants employed in different areas of industry interested in learning Business English among other special varieties like Technical and Legal English. The experiment consists of two teaching modules with order counter-balance of the intervention. The paper focuses on qualitative results based on participants' opinions about the application of the formal-informal design technique for the purposes of teaching and learning ESP. Learners' comments are quoted, categorised and contextualised. Findings of significant importance are described and analysed. One of the important findings is the learners' higher in-class communicative willingness and strengthened confidence in dealing with specialised literature as a result of the applied formal-informal con-textual alternation technique within the ESP scripted role-plays. Another is related with the effect of the design technique on target ESP vocabulary retention rates. An emerging hypothesis based on researcher's observations at this point is that the amount of informality within the scriptural con-textual design is directly linked with the degree of imperceptible learning that takes place.

Keywords: context, confidence, design, informality, scripted role plays, ESP, vocabulary retention;

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## **Introduction**

The motivation for the study is practice-driven. As an ESP teaching practitioner, the researcher has often encountered the problem of students getting tired having to read a typical formal text prolific in terminology, archaisms, complex and long syntactical structures. Thus, the idea of making ESP more entertaining to learn posed as a positive teaching and learning challenge.

The researched technique of formal and informal con-textual alternation in scripted Business English role plays bears a relation to: 1) transformative learning because of the rich learning context it lends to the classroom experience; 2) strategies like using humour in the classroom to create a stress-free learning atmosphere; 3) educational drama, because of the role-play form and the possibility for the participants to act out the text, though passive internal experiencing is also a possible way of learning from the scripts; 4) the story-telling method of foreign language teaching.

### **1. Conceptualisation behind the Formal-Informal Con-Text Alternation Technique**

#### **1.1. Formal versus Informal**

In the attempt to fully grasp the essence of the formal and the informal context, the literature review led me to analyse their etymological roots, linguistic, pragmatic and meta-pragmatic implications. Speaking of formal and informal, there came up the question of what is a form, and even further what its counterpart is – the non-form, and if these are the two extremities, then what is in-between may be called the inform. Hence, depending on what the available resources are at each specific point in time, like: time, money, motivation, climate, etc. the perception path may end at each of the stages of non-form, inform or form. The Non-Form could be best defined as the unsuspected unknown, i.e. what one does not even suspect they do not know, but it may well be known to someone else or to no one else. It may also be interpreted as an uncognized inform. The Inform is a form under development or that which is struggling to become a form. It may also be interpreted as an uncognized form. The Form is a cognized notion or object which serves a particular function. As a whole, it is a matter of perception whether we see the world as composed of forms, informs, or non-forms. Perception on its part is dependent on available resources (time, money, effort, etc.) at any one point in time.

#### **1.2. The Formal and Informal Style in Linguistics**

Formal Style is characterized by the use of: passive structures; terminology, fixed phrases; polite expressions; long, abstract words, mainly of Latin origin; long, complex sentences; long, tight paragraphs. Overall, in Formal Style linguistic and pragmatic correctness is important.

Informal Style is characterized by the use of: active structures; colloquial expressions; slang; ellipsis, ambiguities; common, general words; loosely-structured and/or short sentences; short, loose paragraphs. Overall, in Informal Style linguistic and pragmatic incorrectness is admissible.



### 1.3. The Formal and Informal Style in Pragmatics

The Formal Style implies: limited emotional involvement and objectivity; impersonal tone; task-orientedness; clumsy communicative flow. Overall, in Formal Style Communication relationships are fixed and communicative clarity and focus are important.

The Informal Style implies: emotional involvement and subjectivity; dynamics; personal tone; person-orientedness; quick communicative flow. Overall, in Informal Style Communication relationships develop and meanings are constantly renegotiated.

### 1.4. Form versus Inform in Meta-Pragmatics

If we look further into the notions of Form and Inform, they can be described as: the form being: stationary, satisfied, balanced, settled, comfortable, limited, conditional and hence – capricious about interactions (as it has already found its limits); the inform being: changing, unbalanced, unsettled, uncomfortable, partially limited, quasi-conditional and hence – unpretending in interactions (as it will find its way).

## 2. The Formal and Informal Con-Text in the Experimental Script

The term ‘con-text’ is used in the current research to explicitly refer to the context generated both on the linguistic and pragmatic (pragmatic and meta-pragmatic) level, while ‘co-text’ refers to the surrounding text on a pure linguistic level and ‘context’ is used in its traditional pragmatic sense of ‘situational environment’.

The March Hare Cafe Script written especially for the purposes of the experiment employs the formal-informal con-text alternation technique. In the text, on the one hand, there are long paragraphs containing terminology, often in untypical informal linguistic context, used in a humorous manner and on the other, there are entirely *informal* passages of text and entirely *formal* passages part of a humorous discourse. Furthermore, love is present linguistically (as a word and its signified), pragmatically (as a theme) and meta-pragmatically (as hovering with the informal con-text). Meanwhile, humour and absurdity play havoc with pragmatic and linguistic expectations contributing in this way to the increased informality in the con-textual design.

It is of interest to compare the BOG index of the two scripts in StyleWriter. The BOG index indicates the degree to which the text bogs the reader down. Some legal writing, for example, can get a score larger than 1000. The StyleWriter analysis of the two scripts’ designs shows that the formal-only script is almost twice more “difficult and boring” than the formal-informal as seen from the BOG readability index or in other words the formal-informal ratio in the March Hare Cafe script is approximately 50:50. Both scripts’ BOG indexes fall within the excellent range of the BOG index (0-20), whereas the BOG value for the March Hare Cafe is 0/20 while the formal-only is 17/20. This is another way of looking at the formal and informal ratios within the scripts, assuming that the higher the BOG the higher the formality inherent in the text is.

### **3. Types of Con-Text Alternation**

A role transformation occurs within the first two parts of the March Hare Cafe Script – the client and the bartender turn out to be managers and owners of big businesses and in Part 2 already they are not only a client and a bartender but also franchise negotiators. The absurd franchising conditions put forward by the March Hare Cafe owner provide a suitable co-text environment for embedding terminology as well as humour into the con-textual design.

The interweaving of typical formal-con-text terms into an informal textual and/or situational discourse is at the heart of the design tested in terms of its effect on the communicative skills of ESP learners. It is worth noting that formal-informal alternation can be on the level of words, sentences, paragraphs or larger sections, between situations only or between discourses and sociolinguistic situations. In other words, alternation can be seen as linguistic or textual (at the level of words, sentences, etc.), pragmatic (at the level of social situational context) or as linguistic– or textual-pragmatic (where the linguistic aspects crisscross with their respective counter-pragmatic aspects, i.e. a formal text contextualised in an informal situation or vice versa). As far as stylistics is concerned, the alternation does not produce an erratic style but rather offers different frequencies of contextual co-occurrences. All specialised vocabulary is used in a linguistically correct context and co-text, only that it is highly untypical pragmatically in a sociocultural aspect.

The alternation possibilities thus provide a flexible creative ground for experimentation on the part of the study texts author. Variables that have to be kept in consideration while designing learning materials based on context alternation can be among others: density of the specialised terms within a text; occurrence of complex low-frequency words and idiomatic expressions; sentence structure and length; target proficiency level, learners' cultural and other specifics.

### **4. Initial Speculations about the Benefits of the Formal-Informal Con-Textual Alternation Technique in ESP Learning**

The main theoretical suppositions governing the choice of the research hypothesis and the experimental design were that the Formal-Informal Con-Textual Alternation Technique will yield the following effects: it will offer a wholesome ground for communicative learning interaction by encompassing all communicative skills necessary for interpersonal communication, both linguistic and pragmatic; it will engender learning about the difference between formal and informal target language and culture-specific ways of its socially appropriate use; it will induce creativity in language use due to the polarity of the two-style discourse; it will reduce the stress and strain typical of formal-style-related situations and allow for a fuller learning interaction to take place between the learners as individuals and the learning environment.

### **5. Similar Materials Design for Learning English for Specific Purposes**

Traditionally ESP is taught in formal-only or predominantly formal con-text of the reading study materials. Humour is hardly ever found in traditional reading texts for Legal English, Business English, Technical English, etc. Humorous phrases or

idiomatic expressions occur most often in listening excerpts as samples of real-life speech. The described formal-informal con-text alternation technique is partially inherent in the teaching approaches of non-traditional courses which offer a more 'natural' and informal speech discourse or aim for a humorous and friendly language-learning environment. "ELT Comedy" by Nick Michelioudakis (Michelioudakis, 2014), "Instant English" by John P. Sloan (Sloan, 2010), and "Read with pleasure" by Ina B. Lozanova (Lozanova, 2006) are among the English Teaching courses which employ the informal contextualisation and bear resemblance to the scripted role-play text type. There are a number of online resources created for the purposes of learning English in a fun way, e.g. [www.teacherjoe.us](http://www.teacherjoe.us) (English Vocabulary through Jokes, 2005) which offers jokes for studying vocabulary from different thematic areas, Business English being one of them. However, the effects of informal contextualisation in ESP learning and teaching materials remain largely unstudied.

## 6. Similar Research

Rich, informative contexts are the most conducive to acquisition according to a study conducted by Schouten-van Parreren. The study also finds out that occurrence of a word in inconspicuous or ambiguous context is an unfavourable condition in vocabulary acquisition. (Parreren, 1989) However, Mondria & Wit-deBoer establish that rich contexts divert attention from the lexical level and produce little acquisition. (Mondria, 1991) It is interesting to note that R. Zahar, T. Cobb, and N. Spada reach a conclusion that contextual richness was unrelated to learning when typical context is used for the lexical items. (Zahar R., June 2001) 'Natural text' supports lexical acquisition according to Zahar. (Zahar R., June 2001) Furthermore, natural texts meet both beginner and advanced learners' needs of lexical encounters frequency as they are uniform in contextual support levels. (Pinker, 1989) All of these research results point to the controversial situation of contextual richness in terms of vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the difference between vocabulary acquisition and vocabulary recognition when we talk about language learning as it is the first one that is most important while the second is a stage in the process. Recognising a word (partially or completely) does not necessarily imply that the person has acquired it and is able to use it adequately. Paul Meara writes about the difficulties of drawing a simple distinction between words one knows and words one does not know. Measuring vocabulary acquisition is difficult due to its dynamic nature and the possibility of words shifting from one category into another because of forgetting, i.e. words one knows really well can become partially known, or such that one knows he/she once knew, but does not remember anymore, or words one has totally forgotten, but would recognise if his/her memory is jogged. (Meara, 1989)

Another category of research related with the current study is that about humour and in the classroom and love as an attitude conducive to efficient and stress-free learning. According to Weimer humour in the classroom has established a number of benefits for the learners, such as: higher group cohesion, softened criticism, increased students' evaluation, better stress-coping abilities, and positive response among students. (Weimer, 2013) Patch Adams in his personal-view article "Humour and love: the origination of clown therapy" refers to love as 'a social glue' able to calm stressful situations and comfort countless griefs. (Adams, 2002) Love seen as an interpersonal closeness or a metapragmatic (Dimitrova, 2013, 2014) communicative motivation of personal acceptance inherent in the informal speech register is another

aspect of the informal con-text. Adams gives the example of how clowns in his school are trained mainly through those two attitudes – love and humour. (Adams, 2002)

## 7. Experimental Design

This is a within-subjects experiment with order counter balance. The sample was formed on the basis of participants': age (over 18), interest in learning Business English, results in the placement test (levels A2 and above). One group do an AB course (or: FIF – Formal-Informal, Formal), the other do a BA course (FFI – Formal, Formal-Informal), where A - implementing the technique, B - without implementing the technique. Different tailored tests were made (3 vocabulary tests and 1 oral test) for each of the two modules - A and B. Two role-play scripts were written: 'The March Hare Cafe' – based on the experimental technique of con-text alternation and 'ABCD Business Talks' – based on a predominantly formal con-textual design. Excerpts for the second script were used from Langenscheidt Kommunikationstrainer "Business English - Meetings" (2002) with the express permission of the publisher. Two sets of role-playing scripts were composed for the two modules with accompanying exercises on grammar, vocabulary, spoken and written practice. The number of tested terms in each module is 130 or 260 for the whole course. The scripts for the experiment were developed (in March 2014) explicitly for conducting the experiment and after its theorisation from a number of perspectives: linguistic, pragmatic and meta-pragmatic. (Dimitrova, 2013, 2014)

Three questionnaires are used: one before the first module, one in-between the two modules and one at the end of the course. The first questionnaire aims to check the learners' habitual language use of general and Business English, attitudes to role-play and self-confidence in FL communication with the aim of drawing conclusions mostly about the pragmatic aspects of the learner's communicative needs and habits in the second language (L2). The second and the third questionnaires are script-specific. Their aim is to establish the participants' subjective learning experience and their personal assessment of the textual design and the teaching methods effectiveness on their communicative skills development.

The vocabulary tests comprise lists of terms and business phrases to be completed into sentences. The sentences are written so that they provide a suitable, unambiguous and adequate context of the word without being explanatory of it. The lists contain 'buffer' vocabulary as well, i.e. words that do not go into any of the sentences. With a view to avoid overtesting the participants, only post-tests were done and learners were asked to circle the words they think they had learned from the listed vocabulary in each test. Altogether there were six vocabulary tests – three in each module.

There are three oral tests (1 pre-test and 2 post-tests after each course module), performed on business script-related topics. A criterion matrix is used to evaluate each participant's oral performance.

The scripts role-playing session comprises of a warm-up speaking introduction, a closed scripted role-play reading (with vocabulary elicitation focus), communicative practice exercises and open role-playing practice (i.e. a problem-solving practice in which learners are free to experiment with discourse and situational context within and beyond the session script). At the end of each course unstructured discussions

have been conducted with the aim to compare and contrast the two script designs and establish any other differences or effects that might not have been detected by the tests and questionnaires.

Altogether 16 participants took part in the pilot experiment in 4 consecutive courses and 14 in the 2 testing courses of the experiment. The conclusions draw on data collected from the 6 semi-structured informal group discussions conducted at the end of the experimental course with 30 adult learners. The SPSS results are based on data from 26 participants due to missing information.

## **8. Effects of the Formal-Informal Alternation Technique on the Communicative Skills of ESP Learners according to Participants' Comments in End-of-Course Discussions**

### **8.1. Pilot testing results:**

Several are the major conclusions from the pilot testing of the scripted role-play design technique, namely: learners are empowered to create their own original and compelling stories, their self-expression is promoted and their communicative willingness is encouraged. (Two of the students retold it to friends and colleagues.); learners are confronted with a problematic situation that is absurd, highly implausible and thus creating a safe practice environment protective of their inner feelings; the risk is that the unreal property of the script can be seen by some participants as irrelevant and thus have a negative learning impact as they will feel demotivated to tackle it further; on the whole, learners' self-confidence is fostered as they witness their own progress, i.e. the fact that they can cope with a bewildering con-textual and corresponding textual complexity.

### **8.2. Testing results:**

According to participants: (observed and explicitly confirmed by 3 participants) the predominantly formal scripts promoted vocabulary learning better than the formal-informal ones; (observed and confirmed by same 3 participants as above) the formal-informal scripts made learners focus on the overall plot, whereas the predominantly formal scripts made them pay attention to and remember specific words and expressions; the formal-informal scripts were shared beyond the classroom with people who are unrelated with the study course, such as friends and work colleagues. Two of the students retold it to friends and colleagues. One of them discussed it with other participants and non-participant colleagues of theirs.

According to researcher's observations: the formal-informal scripts promoted learners' confidence and communicative willingness, participants became more active and much braver speakers in the target language; the formal-informal scripts induced a great deal of smiles, laughter and bewilderment. (learners' and researcher's observation); the formal-informal scripts triggered creativity in some of the participants who created their own funny stories by analogy; on the whole the formal-informal scripts were accepted positively with 3 exceptions (out of 30 participants). Two of them blamed themselves for having little imagination and one referred to the texts as 'made-up' and 'unrealistic'. Two participants whose level was A1-2 and whose data is not included in the main sample preferred learning with the formal-only

design. This confirms the result that the formal-only design induces focus on distinct vocabulary items rather than the whole plot and situation in the script. Focus on separate lexical items and their meaning is a much simpler task than making sense of overall meaning, syntactical structures, implicature and establishing interrelations within the plot. One of the most interesting observations which will remain to be tested in further research is the fact that 5 of the participants whose level of proficiency in English is within the range of B2-C2 and whose speaking skills were all quite fluent, kept asking for explanations, definitions and translations into L1 of specialised and non-specialised vocabulary in the formal-informal scripts and later claimed they had had only 1-2 or few new vocabulary items they had learnt from the scripts.

### **Some possible explanations for the last of the abovementioned occurrences:**

The formal-informal alternation contributes to the perception of the texts as easy. The texts flow quickly and induce laughter and fun, so 'there cannot have been too many words we did not know, we had so much fun after all'? The processes of assimilation and accommodation take place so quickly, almost unnoticeably and this leads the participants to believe they have not been learning because learning is usually something difficult.

The informality boosts learners' confidence and if they have been noting down in class the words whose meanings they were unsure of, then at the test, they feel so confident of their meanings that they would not admit even to themselves they had learnt the words from the scripts.

Another alternative is that the con-text makes up for the uncertain meanings and engenders their facile recognition and retention, because although implausible it is not incorrect.

Writing down a word, asking about the meanings of words does not necessarily mean that the participant has learned the word from the script in class; it may simply be due to the fact that they felt unsure about the usage or some of the meanings of the word due to the untypical con-text they encountered it in. Thus, confirming the meaning they have always known but got to doubt due to the implausible con-text or some other reason, leads to a heightened confidence.

### **8.3. Results Categorisation**

Finally, the positive comments about the formal-informal script could be summarised in the following categories: 'Interesting, Puzzling and Fun' – memorable, induces empathy, triggers attention and concentration, offers a pleasant way of learning; 'Stimulates Speaking' - the focus is on plot rather than words; participants retold the story to other people; participants spoke more in the target language though off-topic at times; 'More Learning Took Place' - enriching, transformative content; more participants state they learned more vocabulary, while fewer - more grammar.

The negative comments about the formal-informal script could be summarised in the following categories: 'Irrelevant' – abstract, impractical, unreal, a bit crazy; 'Hard' - to

understand; to adjust to; demands imagination; 'Easy' – "It was so easy, I learnt almost nothing."

According to researcher's observations: the formal-informal script made learners speak more in 3 out of 5 groups; in one of the FIF groups, they kept talking off-topic during the formal-only module 2, discussing funny issues and it was hard to get them speak about the formal-only topics; in two of the FFI groups, participants started to behave more empathetically during the formal-informal module; there have been several cases of impressively creative language use, both in writing and speaking.

A question which still remains to be answered in further studies is to what extent imperceptible learning is related to informality and to which aspect or aspects of informality, if any.

## **9. Individual Cases of Supposedly Implicit Learning**

Participant PFIF8 after asking for vocabulary explanations and definitions on a great number of cases throughout the classes on the formal-informal scripts had reported only 2 of the 130 tested vocabulary items as learned from the scripts and because of my great disbelief he had additionally listed 12 items (mostly informal ones) which he had learned from the formal-informal scripts. He had got 11 mistakes in total on the tests for the formal-informal module. Yet, apart from the possibility for implicit learning, there may be other explanations, like: he wrongly believed he had learned the mistaken items; he learned them but forgot them by the time of the test, he had learned them wrongly, etc.

In the fourth pilot testing course two participants PFFI.7 and PFFI.8 who also kept asking for explanations during the course, suggest that the formal-informal script is easy for them and they did not learn much, while, in parallel there are statements by three participants from the third pilot testing course FFI.3, FFI.4 and FFI.5 that the formal-informal design makes learning imperceptible and "serves terminology with a spoon of sugar, so that it does not taste bitter anymore." Which is truer? – a question whose answer may be confirmed in further research.

There are two questions that remain to be answered in further case studies as far as vocabulary learning is concerned: first, to what extent does this occurrence correlate with the fact that the noted down words are times more than the ones marked as learned from the scripts in general and second, to what extent is there a correlation between the formal-informal design and the number of words participants mark as learned from the scripts as well as the informal-formal design and the far smaller number of words marked from the scripts for those five learners. It is uncertain to what degree the noting down of an item indicates not knowing its meaning, its usage, pronunciation, spelling or just being uncertain about it in one way or another, but whatever the reason, the closer inspection of participants' notes might reveal regularities worth a further analysis in order to ascertain the number of implicitly learned items. Altogether 5 out of 30 participants stated they did not learn much because the script was easy but had been observed to ask for lexical explanations, definitions and translations very often throughout the course. The number of words noted by them by far exceeds the words they marked as learned from the scripts.

## **10. SPSS Results about the Influence of the Design Technique on Speaking and Vocabulary Skills**

Both modules lead to a significant change in terms of vocabulary and oral test results. The formal-informal design shows a greater change in terms of oral test results. The formal-only shows a significantly greater change in vocabulary test results.

### **Conclusion**

Both modules lead to a significant improvement of vocabulary and speaking skills among learners. The formal-informal module fosters the development of speaking skills more while the formal-only module induces more focus on vocabulary. The formal-informal design preconditions a more relaxed environment which leads to an increased communicative willingness and self-confidence in terms of reading comprehension especially and speaking in the context of English for Specific Purposes and General English as a whole. The untypical blending of formal and informal con-text naturally triggers a meaning negotiation process and therefore promotes not only speaking but reactivates an intrapersonal process for assigning meaning to words and looking for interpersonal and inter-realia clues for confirming their meanings. The formal-informal design induces empathy, laughter and creativity, which according to some participants makes it the more successful script design.

It is difficult to measure at this point what is the amount of implicit learning in both modules and for what kind of learners in terms of factors such as: occupation, language level, age, learning styles among others. Further research is also necessary to establish the interrelation between the design technique and vocabulary retention in a long-term perspective.

The current research results are applicable in English for Specific Purposes and General English materials design as well as in the communicative language learning classroom to help the teacher's more conscious choice of approach when focusing on speaking, reading or vocabulary practice.



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**Contact email:** [dimitrova\\_irene@yahoo.com](mailto:dimitrova_irene@yahoo.com)



*Can Machine Translation be As Effective as Human Translation?  
A Cross-Linguistic Analysis of Machine Translation Ambiguity between English,  
French and Armenian*

Gohar Ghalachyan, Yerevan State University, Armenia

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**Abstract**

Statement/Research Question: Machine Translation (MT) still remains a tough challenge for both linguists and programmers. In spite of all the promises and hopes, it failed to meet the satisfactory standards. Actually, translation itself is a tough process, even for human beings. Can MT be compared with Human Translation? The paper discusses the difference between MT and Human Translation focusing on the effectiveness of each and pointing out semantic ambiguity in English, French and Armenian translations. Ambiguity still results in huge barriers on the effectiveness of Machine Translation.

Methodology: We carried out an experiment by translating many texts of English, French and Armenian through different Machine Translators and analyses the error patterns<sup>1</sup> by a dictionary method technique. We paid proper attention to translation of words, idioms, preservation of source text information in the target text, grammatical structure etc.

Findings: Finally, this paper also discusses the factors causing ambiguity in MT from three main perspectives:

- a) Linguistic,
- b) Extra-linguistic,
- c) Security.

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## Introduction

Inevitably, human beings are in a race of developing new gadgets to make our lives easier. With the innovation of computers have been a great blessing. With time it has made things unbelievably faster and efficient. Similarly, we use computers / gadgets specifically developed for converting one language into another which is called Machine Translation. Now we use Machine not only to translator for us, but also instead of us. Machine Translation, which came to replace human in the process of translation, is yet to get purified a lot. But is Machine Translation a challenge for human translation nowadays? How long will it past until Machine Translation will dominate over the human translation from the perspective of effectiveness and will it ever happen? Will it ease the hard translation task of each person who needs a very specific piece of text to be translated from one natural language into another?

Why did human create Machine Translation? Was it merely a scientific achievement or it was directed to meet the daily translation needs of people? Or is there something beyond this very expensive and much investment depending scientific goal?

These questions are yet to be discussed in this paper, which consists of two main parts. In the first part we will discuss the factors causing decrease of effectiveness of Machine Translation. The second part will be dedicated to analysis of the level of language ambiguity created by Machine Translation in English, French and Armenian.

### Can Machine Translation be as effective as human transition?

The general view for Machine Translation<sup>1</sup> is that the main task of Machine Translation is to translate a text from one natural language into another, i.e. from source text into target one. But before continuing we should note that in linguistics this simple act of translation, which Machine Translation fulfils as a result of programing, is not enough. We expect Machine Transition to produce and present a better target text keeping the style of the source text, be clear and interesting. It is one thing to expect Machine Translation to produce a target text, which is equivalent to the source one, but it is something else to expect Machine Translation to produce an interesting and valuable target text at the same time keeping the style of the source text.

Building a Machine Translator is not an easy task. One needs a huge knowledge base to generate and describe the information that will be used while translating. Saying knowledge, we, roughly speaking mean world knowledge: beginning from such basic information as *most people have two legs, tiger is predator* and finishing with deep linguistic information as *the subject always stands before the verb in English*. Coding this information into the system for later to be decoded as a result of translation also implies a hard task which requires vast amount of programming knowledge.

It is crystal clear that we only ever expect from Machine Translation is just a draft quality text. But what do we expect from human translator?

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<sup>1</sup> In this this paper we will not focus on any specific type of Machine Translation, everything stated must be accepted generally.

Language, no matter how many disciplines have since been created to describe it, is a hard phenomenon. According to scientists approximately 6500 spoken languages exist. No language is like other language. Their differences stand in many aspects: writing system, morphology, grammar, syntax etc. To understand a very specific phrase or sentence in a language and interpret in another one can be dealt only by a competent speaker of both languages. Nonetheless, translating is a many faced skill that goes well beyond mere competence in two languages (Arnold, 2000). Roughing speaking the task of human translation is to take the source text and produce it in the target one, but human translation is expected to do more than just this. Human translator is expected not only to have a good knowledge of two languages but also be aware of the background information of the culture that language covers. To understand a text in one languages is not enough. Human translator is also supposed to be flexible enough to present already understood text in a correct way according to linguistic norms of the target language. Humans have been very successful in their translation activates so far.

A Somalian proverb says, 'The last camel in the line walks as fast as the first one'. Unfortunately, this last camel sometimes come to be Machine Translation. With its very slow development it bans and shadows the development of both Computer Science and Linguistics along with Translation studies. At least it is one thing to ask computer to produce a target text, which is (in some sense) equivalent to the source text, it is something else to ask the computer to make it interesting (Arnold, 2000).

Below we will discuss some main factors which cause the delay in the development of Machine Translation decreasing effectiveness of it and increasing ambiguity. As Machine Translation is not a merely linguistic or computational phenomenon, hence it will be useless to cover only one of these aspects. For this purpose we will have two main categories: linguistic and extra-linguistic factors, which will come with their sub-categories.

1. Linguistic factors
  - 1.1 Polysemy
  - 1.2 Lack of idioms and equivalentents
  - 1.3 Syntax/ill-structured sentences
  - 1.4 Cultural words
  - 1.5 Non translatable words
  
2. Extra-linguistic factors
  - 2.1 Programming
  - 2.2 Lack of word knowledge
  - 2.3 Performance time
  - 2.4 Lack of linguistic purposes
  - 2.5 Lack of linguists
  
3. Security

## 1. Linguistic factors

### 1.1 Polysemy

Polysemy grounds problems not only for Machine Translation, but also for human translation. Hence, unlike Machine Translation, human translation process is rather flexible as human mind is flexible and analytic. Human mind is fully capable to understand the context of the sentence meanwhile mapping out the exact meaning of the word presented. Machine Translator not fully able to understand the context of the sentence, has the highest possibilities to fail while choosing the right meaning of the word.

*e.g He deposited money in the bank account with a high interest.*

*Sitting on the bank of Thames, a passing ship piqued his interest.*

The word ‘interest’ which is presented in different contexts and accordingly with different meanings in these two sentences, is not translated correctly by most Machine Translation systems, if not by none. But in contrary to this, the word ‘bank’ has been translated accurately in both sentences as the words ‘money’ and ‘Thames’ played a good role of determiner. Undoubtedly, human translation process will not face any problem while dealing with polysemy.

### 1.2 Lack of idioms and equivalents.

It is a well-known fact that natural languages are highly ambiguous, they do not always express the same context, expression and sometimes even words in the same way. There are lots of cases in all language when one language lacks the equivalent in another.

E.g. the dictionary meaning of the idiom ‘to feel blue’ is ‘to feel bad’. Machine Translator will face a problem while translating this idiom. It does not recognise the combination of these words as one unit with one meaning and do word to word translation.

Gender cases come as another ambiguity reason. Gender case exists in some languages and does not exist in other ones.

*e.g. My friend is very hardworking.*

It is not an easy task for Machine Translation to decode this sentence in English and then encode in French. Machine Translation has to choose between male ‘ami’ and female ‘amie’. Usually in this case computer automatically use the masculine gender. The possibility that the noun is in feminine gender is approximately 50 percent, which means that the possibility that Machine Translator will create ambiguity is 50 percent, which in turn will lead to wrong translation. The problem is the same while translating from English into Armenian.

Competent human translator is fully capable to overcome the hardships of idioms, but genius human mind can also stumble while dealing with gender in case the context is not allowing the translator to guess the gender.

### *1.3 Syntax/ill-structured sentences*

The syntax of English is very strict. Each new learner of English language is taught with the sentence word order: subject-verb-object (SVO). This word order is not necessarily the same for other languages. Unlike English, Armenian doesn't have strict syntactic rules. Because of its word order source text can often be considered to be ambiguous by Machine Translator again leading to hardships while working out the context.

Sometimes the source text will contain ill-structured sentences. Machine Translation components analysis will probably fail while mapping out the subject and other members of sentence.

Human translator will start to bring together the lacking parts of puzzle as much as possible and act more effective.

### *1.4 Cultural words*

Another limiting factor for good translator is cultural words. Cultural differentiation implies different words typical only for that specific culture. Global software development requires close cooperation of individuals with distant cultural background (Calafato, Lanubile, Minervini, 2010).

Cultural differences are manifested in two forms: organisational and natural culture. While the first one embarrasses norms and values of units, the latter encompasses an ethnic group's norms, values and spoken language, often delineated by national boundaries. (Carmel, Agarwal, 2001) Here, not only Machine Translation can face hardships, but even human translator as it is a challenge for gaining a shared understanding of the requirements, especially due to language disparities between stakeholders involved. (Carmel, Agarwal, 2001). Language is an important component of a national culture, but when language difficulties begin to cause confusion, cultural differences can worsen awkward situation. (Herbsleb, 2007). But sometimes even being aware of the cultural differences is not a sufficient base to avoid wrong translation or ambiguity.

e.g. լավաշ[lavash]-Armenian word

Lavash is traditional thin Armenian bread mainly famous only in Armenia and among Armenians in the world. An equivalent in no other language exists. Human translator will have the advantage to explain the word in footnotes or in a quick remark. Nevertheless, only explaining is not sufficient to a good translation; one must not only be able to extract the meaning from a text, but also to be able to think about what meaning a potential reader would extract (Arnold, 2000).

### *1.5 No translatable words*

The existence of these words can sometimes be described as a matter of culture, but basically they are not.

e.g. French word '*peck*', which means '*donner de coupe de la bec*' will be '*attack with the front of the beak*' in English.

In spite of the hardship that human translator can come across it will be overcome again by either footnote explanations, if the translation is done in written form, or with proper words and syntactical structural giving ground to the real essence of the translated word to be understandable. Machine Translation system failure will more vivid.

## **2. Extra-linguistic factors**

### *2.1 Programming mistakes*

Computers are fundamentally just devices for following the rules, mechanically and literary, albeit with considerable speed and precision. Hence, each machine software or gadget are created based on rules. They are given specific rules and they follow those rules. The quality of the written rules of the Machine Translation system, the professionalism with which the rules were written and described into system are bases for high quality Machine Translation.

Unfortunately many of Machine Translation systems are done with rough programming mistakes about which the programmer becomes aware rather later, especially in the case of small Machine Translation systems. The process of overcoming those challenges faces with problem of permanent and rapid development of language and computers.

### *2.2. Lack of world knowledge*

Machine Translation is one of the most exciting examples of artificial intelligence, but its intelligence is still artificial: it does not have the real world knowledge. This is the core problem as all other factors mentioned above could be easily solved if computer knew more about culture, could orient better in the case of ill-structured sentences and had the knowledge of each language in such extend not to get lost while searching for proper equivalent. This problem is otherwise called lack of 'common sense' reasoning. It literary implies millions of fact about the world, like man never get pregnant, dogs bark, stars are shining in the night etc. D. Arnold says that most of coding up the vast amount of knowledge required is daunting. (Arnold, 2010) Basically, all what is understood by common sense reasoning is far beyond the reach of modern computers. How long it will take until computer have the world knowledge is yet to be answered by programmers and by time.

### *2.3 Performance time*

Translation quality and effectiveness are directly connected with the speed of performance. We can find good time responses for many of Machine Translation systems available nowadays. However we found out that performance time of one translation system can vary from another Machine Translation system which is basically based on the type of Machine Translation: statistic, semantic, phrase-based etc. The average performance speed is considered to be between 30ms to 70ms. At the



time of our test Google Translation<sup>2</sup>, which is the most famous Statistical Machine Translation system, was not doing better job than Translation.am<sup>3</sup>: But we also noticed that the response time of Translation.am becomes longer with the length of sentence while Google Translate performance is rather stable in this perspective.

#### *2.4 Lack of linguists*

Nevertheless, no matter of existence or absence of many linguistic or extra-linguistic factors, which come up as a restriction to high quality Machine Translation, the most important guarantee leading to better quality Machine Translation is the joint work of both high qualified linguists and high qualified programmers. Unfortunately, I should mention that the very important and utmost role of a linguist is minimised as much as possible sometimes deliberately and sometimes by different circumstances. Programmers and engineers are mainly engaged in the process of creation of Machine Translation. Linguists are only part-time staff members or short term workers. They are hired by the company or organisation working on the creation of this or that specific Machine Translation for fixing some definite linguistic problems or helping with the categorisation. Their role is limited in assisting the programmers in this or that stage of development. Surely, I must admit, that it is much more easier for a qualified programmer with good or basic linguistic knowledge to launch a Machine Translation software than for a highly qualified linguist with basic or good programming knowledge. But the fact is that Machine Translation is not a serious threat to the employment prospects of human (Arnold, 2010).

#### *2.5 Lack of linguistic purposes*

Machine Translation is two sided system one of which is programming and the other one is linguistics. Only the permanent existence of these two sides can make Machine Translation more balanced. As we try to understand the minoring of the role of linguists in majority of Machine Translation systems, we better look down deeper to roots of the reasons for creating that very specific system. Some systems were created by world famous electronic companies based on non-English speaking countries and they have an aim to make their product more available for international market by giving their customers the possibility to conquer language barriers. Once this was widely accepted practice in Japan, one of the world leading countries of high technology. While observing different Machine Translation systems we found out that some machine Translations produce high quality target text, but in one sphere only, e.g. law or economics. Big organisations or even governmental sections sometimes fund the development of one aspects of a specific machine Translating system to make their work easier. Instead of paying much money to a human translator, they can

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<sup>2</sup> <https://translate.google.com/>: Google Translator is an example of Statistical Machine Translation, it does not apply grammatical rules since its algorithms are based on statistical analysis. It implies statistical learning techniques to build a language and translation models for a large number of texts, both monolingual text in the target language and text consisting of examples of human translation between the source and the target text (Calafato, Lanubile, Minervini, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> <https://translation.am> : Transalton.am is a Semantic Machine Translation which is widely used in Armenia.

make investments in development of law text translation quality thus saving money and time.

### **3. Security**

From the first look it is like security has nothing to do with Machine Translation effectiveness. While doing translation with the help of Machine Translator we provide the system with information. That information can be a short part of an online chat with friends, a part of scientific text or an important document. Alike with other software most Machine Translation systems have a server for keeping the information provided to Machine Translator for translation. No one can ever be sure who get the information that users provide the system and how much is the possibility that the information will not be used by the third person. If the users' information is not secure, hence the effectiveness of the system is not high.

Studying different Machine Translator and mainly online ones, as they have more accessibility and high usage, we found out that some specific Machine Translation systems were very effective for a language. In a few years that language was replaced by other one, i.e. the system switched its effectiveness to other language. We also compared the historical, political and socio-economical situations of the countries where that languages were spoken by majority of population, and found out that during these periods those countries faced social, political or economic crisis. And the consequence was that some governments banned the use of some Machine Translation systems in their countries.

#### **Cross-linguistic analysis**

We have carried out a cross-linguistic analysis to map out the percentage of efficiency of work done by Machine Translators in English, French and Armenian and determining the level of ambiguity. The ambiguity level will be evaluated not only from the perspectives of ambiguity caused by word meaning, but we will take into consideration grammatical correctness, syntax etc. Basically, evaluation of the quality of translating is an extremely subjective task and disagreement about analysis evaluation methods are rampant. Nevertheless, evaluation and analysis are essential.

We have translated 50 text in three languages: English, French and Armenian. The evaluation was done in terms of ambiguity which was caused by word meanings not translated words, mistranslations or wrong translations and grammatical errors. We also paid proper attention whether translation, i.e. the target text contained the information of the source text. Context were also taken into account.

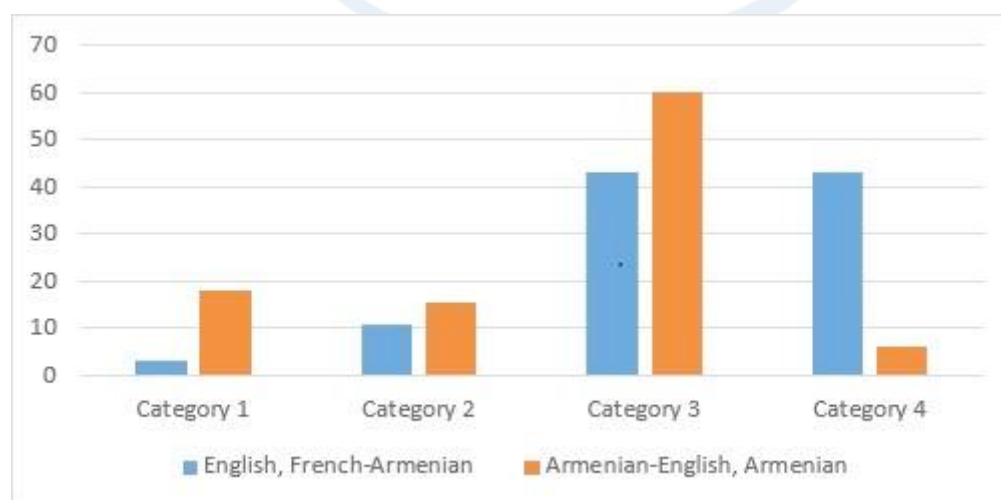
We have chosen Google Translator for the experiment. In order to identify the quality of translation produced by Google Translator, we has chosen 4-point scoring scheme, i.e. we evaluated how many sentences were evaluated as non-ambiguous, poorly ambiguous, fairly ambiguous and completely ambiguous (see Table 1). The text used for analysis were ordinary texts from news stories in English, French and Armenian. English and French were translated into Armenian and Armenian was translated into English and French.

**Table 1: Ambiguity scale**

Value	Description
1.	Non-ambiguous The target text reflects the information contained in the source text. The target text is perfectly clear, intelligible, and grammatically correct and reads like ordinary text.
2.	Poorly ambiguous The target text generally reflects the information contained in the source text, despite some inaccuracies or infelicities of the translation. In general the target text is intelligible and one can immediately understand what it means.
3.	Fairly ambiguous The target text poorly reflects the information contained in the source text. It contains grammatical errors, wrong choice of word pairs. One can get the general idea of the source text only after considerable study.
4.	Completely ambiguous It is not possible to obtain the source text information from target text. It is hopeless to study the meaning of the words posted next to each other as target text. Guessing would be unreliable.

### The results

Before coming to the results I would like to reiterate once again that Google Translator is a Statistical Machine Translator. The essential role in the main translation process is not carried out by the translating application, but by its searching engine. Google Translator searches for already translated source texts or parts of them. Here we found lots of grammatically incorrect sentences, i.e. gender cases, time cases, singular and plurals were sometimes omitted. Table 2 shows the results.

**Table 2: Results**

As we can see from the chart Armenian- English and French translations are relatively better as it is a common practice for Armenian media to have multilingual web many

Armenian news stories appears on the web pages with translations, which allows Google to find already translated texts by human translators or parts of them and present them. Therefore, it is not surprising that English, French-Armenian is not meeting even the satisfactory standards. Besides, Armenian has very complex grammatical structure which is also another boundary toward a good translation.

We also carried out an additional experiment. We translated the same English text into Armenian through *Translation.am* and vice versa. It is a semantic Machine Translation system. *Translation.am* is not included in our main experiment as it does not provide French translation. As this system was built by Armenians, it understands Armenian grammatical and syntactical system very well, which is not done by Google Translator. But this Machine Translating is yet far from being good.

## **Conclusion**

Some existing Machine Translation systems, which has been developed for many years, became very successful, especially from the practical viewpoint. These systems and especially statistical ones, rely on dictionaries and phrase tables which require much efforts to generate and their performance is still far behind the performance of human expert translators.

Unfortunately, the Machine Translation systems and software existing nowadays both on-line or off-line, to which people have full access and are free, don't give any other chance to expect more than just a draft quality target text. The development life cycle seem very slow but at the same time it is also recognised as a very established technology with over 50 years of history and is making significant achievements from an end user perspective. That's why the effectiveness of Machine Translation and its domination or weakness over human translation is particularly appealing to researchers as day by day developing technology facilitate new possibilities and chances of creating much superior quality machine translation. Specific Machine Translations has been impressively successful and well known with widely used languages.

Much efforts has gone in the development of Machine translation and much more has been constantly going in to further improvise the quality of the output with many more languages. Probably soon self-learning Machine Transitions will come to replace statistic, semantic and other types of traditional machine Translations bringing programmers most ambitious goals in reality. But it is yet a matter of time and hard work.

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Contact email: [gohar.ghalachyan@gmail.com](mailto:gohar.ghalachyan@gmail.com)





## *Learner Autonomy: How Teacher Trainers Understand and Apply?*

Anıl Kandemir, Pamukkale University, Turkey

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### **Abstract**

In last decades, being autonomous language learners has been the spotlight of researchers and accepted as crucial and worth to think carefully about it's applications in teacher training institutions. As a consequence, the Ministry of Education in Turkey always emphasises the learner autonomy in their language curriculums and official documents related to language learning. Even in European context, especially in CEFR, it is also stressed that to learn a language, an individual should be autonomous and monitor his own language learning process. Autonomous learning has been defined by Holec (1981, p.3) as "to determine objectives, to define the contents and progressions, to select methods and techniques to be used, to monitor the procedures of acquisition and to evaluate what has been acquired". One of the results taken into account is being autonomous learner while learning a language really helps and speeds up learning process. In this context, the main question of the study is "What are the views of academics working in an English Language Teaching (ELT) department about 'learner autonomy' and how they implement it in their classes?". This study was designed as a basic qualitative research. The study group was consisted of six teacher trainers of ELT department of a state university in Turkey. Results indicate that teacher trainers know the importance of autonomy, value it and try to implement and foster it. They also thought that they are supporting students to become autonomous and to some extent they are successful in doing so in spite of difficulties.

Keywords: learner autonomy, teacher training, basic qualitative research, Elt, language learning.

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## Introduction

In last decades, being autonomous language learners has been the spotlight of researchers and accepted as crucial and worth to think carefully and precisely about its application in teacher training institutions. As a consequence, the Ministry of Education in Turkey always emphasises the learner autonomy in their language curriculums and official documents related to language learning. Actually even in European context, especially in Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) it was also stressed that to learn a language, an individual should be autonomous and monitor his/her own language learning process. Autonomous learning has been defined by Holec (1981, p.3) as “to determine objectives, to define the contents and progressions, to select methods and techniques to be used, to monitor the procedures of acquisition and to evaluate what has been acquired”. One of the results taken into account is being autonomous learner while learning a language really helps and speeds up learning process.

Over the last two decades ‘learner autonomy’ has become a 'buzz-word' within the context of language learning (Little, 1991; p. 2). Learner autonomy is currently one of the most widely discussed concepts in second language pedagogy and a common goal of second language curricula (Little, 2010). The concept of learner autonomy was first introduced into the ongoing debate about L2 learning and teaching by Henri Holec in a report published by the Council of Europe in 1979 (Holec, 1981). According to Holec, autonomous learners are capable of setting their own learning objectives, defining the “contents and progressions” of learning, “selecting methods and techniques to be used”, monitoring the learning process, and evaluating learning outcomes (1981: 3). The ability to take charge of one’s learning in this way it is “not inborn but must be acquired either by “natural” means or (as most often happens) by formal learning, i.e. in a systematic, deliberate way” (ibid.). Little (2009) defines learner autonomy as “in formal educational contexts autonomous language learners are able to take charge of their own learning”.

Also in Little (1995; p.4), learner autonomy has been defined as a “capacity for active, independent learning and learners accepting responsibility for their learning and sharing in the decisions and initiatives that give shape and direction to the learning process”. Aoki (2002) defines learner autonomy as “a capacity to take control of one’s own learning in the service of one’s perceived needs and aspirations”. Aoki (2002; p.154) also express that “autonomy only develops through practice which leads to a recognition of the students as legitimate members of decision-making body concerning their learning”. Hence, the primary task of in-service and pre-service teacher education programs should be to create conditions for present and prospective teachers to need to move away from a method-based pedagogy to a post method acquire the necessary knowledge, skill, authority, and autonomy to construct their own personal pedagogic knowledge. Thus, there is an imperative pedagogy (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). The relationship between post-method era and learner autonomy is really so obvious. In a post method era, language teachers are expected to be capable of choosing and combining and reshaping the methods or techniques they would like to use in accordance with their own situation and context. To this end, teachers needs to be autonomous, as well. Here is the value of being an autonomous teacher can be seen. Nowadays, as in many curricula in various countries, language curriculum in Turkey also emphasizes the importance of autonomous learners. In



curriculum especially with the reference to the CEFR and its applications such as language portfolio, teachers are expected to implement portfolios as an assessment tool and design their courses in accordance with the principles of CEFR. In other words, teachers should be aware of value of being an autonomous learner and fostering learner autonomy in their classes. As an education system, namely in language teaching if we aim to train autonomous learner, our language teachers should also be autonomous and have flexibility while teaching the target language. So, “learner autonomy depends on teacher autonomy” (Little, 1995). Teachers cannot be expected to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they do not themselves know what it is to be an autonomous learner (Little, 1995). Little (1995) also stresses that “we must provide trainee teachers with the skills to develop autonomy in the learners who will be given into their charge, but we must also give them a first-hand experience of learner autonomy in their training” as a consequence, “language teachers are more likely to succeed in promoting learner autonomy if their own education has encouraged them to be autonomous”. As Little points out, we need to give experience of being an autonomous learner to our prospective teachers while they are learning how to teach it. Here we can say that in teacher training institutions, namely in ELT departments, we need to create a place for learner autonomy and give our prospective teachers a chance to see and taste of learner autonomy while they are still students before being practitioner teachers. Whatever orientation one pursues, what should be remembered is that practicing and prospective teachers need a framework that can enable them to develop the knowledge, skill, attitude, and autonomy necessary to devise for themselves a systematic, coherent, and relevant personal theory of practice that is informed by the parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility. While the purpose of such a framework is to help teachers become autonomous decision-makers, it should, without denying the value of individual autonomy, provide adequate conceptual underpinnings based on current theoretical, empirical, and experiential insights so that their teaching act may come about in a principled fashion. (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). However, Little (1991, cited in Aoki, 2002) says that “the learner who displays a high degree of autonomy in one area may be non-autonomous in another”. So, as teacher trainers, we need to develop a holistic way to train prospective teachers who can be autonomous in many areas and show at least some degree of it in any other areas about their teaching characteristics.

Ellis and Sinclair (1989) outline the teachers can play an instrumental role in learner training by:

- Negotiating with learners about course content and methodology, if appropriate
- Sharing with learners, in a way that is accessible to them, the kind of information about language and language learning that can teachers have but that is not always passed on to learners
- Encouraging discussion in the classroom about language and language learning.
- Helping learners become aware of the wide range of alternative strategies available to them for language learning,
- Allowing learners to form their own views about language learning, and respecting their points of view
- Counselling and giving guidance to individual learners when possible.

Dörnyei (2006) also lists some tips what teachers can do to promote learner autonomy in classes:

- Increased learner involvement in organising the learning process.

- Allow learners choices
- Give students positions of genuine authority
- Encourage student contributions and peer teaching
- Encourage project work
- When appropriate, allow learners to use self-assessment procedures.

Before starting on this process of negotiation, the teacher should decide on the areas in which she will seek to promote learner autonomy. She must decide, in other words, whether and to what extent it is possible for the learners to determine their own learning objectives, select their own learning materials and contribute to the assessment of their learning progress. In this she will be guided by such factors as the institutional framework within which she is working, and the age, educational background and target language competence of her learners. It is important to emphasize that even aims and learning targets prescribed by a government department can, by process of negotiation, become the personal aims and learning targets of a group of learners; and that by the same token, highly structured learning materials can be exploited in ways calculated to develop learner autonomy (Little, 1995). Littlewood (1999, p.71) interprets that taking responsibility involves learners in taking ownership (partial or total) of many processes which have traditionally belonged to the teacher, such as deciding on learning objectives, selecting learning methods and evaluating progress. If teacher trainers cannot create an atmosphere and show how learner autonomy in classes be assured and supported, teacher candidates would be no experience of learner autonomy and most probably they will not be able to create such environments in their own classes when they are appointed as English teachers in primary, secondary or high schools throughout the country. The main assumption of this present study is that an individual should have a first-hand experience and should have seen what a learner autonomy is, and how it is achieved to become a teacher who can foster and provide a lesson situation which students have somewhat autonomy and can take their own decisions about learning. Students are expected to have autonomy while learning a language so, as teacher trainers, we should train our prospective teachers in such a way and as a result they would be teachers who can train autonomous learners in their classes, as well. If teacher trainers aim to create an autonomy-supportive environment in classes, before designing such an environment, teacher trainers firstly need to know what autonomy is, how autonomy can be fostered, what kind of behaviours and activities support or damage students' autonomy in language learning classrooms. Autonomy and learner autonomy has been thoroughly discussed in the literature but still there isn't many studies related to learner autonomy in ELT teacher training programmes, institutions and what teacher trainers understand from it and how they are fostering, creating and supporting such an environment aiming that their students to become autonomous learners in the Turkish higher education context. So, in that sense, the main question to be addressed in this study is;

What are the views of academics working in an English Language Teaching (ELT) department about 'learner autonomy' and how they implement it in their classes?

### **English Language Teaching Training in Turkey**

All teachers in Turkey obtain a university degree. Primary and secondary school teachers take a 4-year course of study in subjects such as English, physics and so on. Prospective teachers do not take content courses only, but take additional courses in

pedagogy and educational psychology. Practice teaching in a school is a nationally required course conducted collaboratively by mentors in the university and the school. Currently, despite the fact that some people from other professions can get a teaching certificate, the responsibility for preparing qualified and competent teachers rests primarily with teacher education programmes in universities (Haznedar, 2012, p.52).

## Method

This study was designed as a basic qualitative research. The intent of basic qualitative research is to understand the meaning individuals have attached to a certain phenomenon they have experienced. Merriam states that researchers conducting basic qualitative research would be primarily interested in “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, 2009, p. 23). Researchers conducting basic qualitative research typically collect data through analysis of documents, observations, and interviews. Data analysis then occurs with data being organized according to themes, or reoccurring patterns (Merriam, 2009).

## Participants

Six teacher trainers teaching in ELT department of a state university in Turkey were the study group of the study (see Table 1.). Participants were coded as T1, T2, and so on and their quotations were given with these codes in the findings.

Table 1. Participants

Code	Gender	Academic Status
T1 (T1 means teacher trainer one, she is women and has PhD).	Female	PhD
T2	Male	PhD
T3	Male	PhD
T4	Male	PhD
T5	Female	PhD Candidate
T6	Male	PhD Candidate

## Data collection tools

A semi-structured interview form (see Appendix-1) consisted of nine questions was designed and shared with one colleague who has PhD. With colleague’s comments, form was redesigned and used in interviews. Also, an observation form was designed by the researcher.

## Data collection process

Each interview took approximately 30 minutes. Interviews were conducted in each lecturers’ own offices. Observations for each lecturer were at least three class hours, each class hour took nearly 45 minutes. But for one of the lecturers, six class hours of observation and for one another lecturer’s course four class hour of observation were done. And in total 22 class-hours observations were done for seven different courses given by six lecturers. Observation notes were taken by the researcher himself. Generally, while observing the lecture those points were taken into account; how

lecture starts, what kind of activities or how lecturer use and arrange the procedure, whether or not the lecturer creates a place for autonomy and if so how do this, does lecturer really share the power or not?, teacher and students' talking time during lecture.

### Data analysis

Content analysis was applied to data collected through interviews and observations with the help of QSR-NVivo 10 programme. Eight themes and 17 codes have been formed as a result of the analysis.

### Findings

Themes and codes under themes emerged in the analysis are presented in this section according to interview and observation data (see Table 2.).

Table 2. Themes and codes

Definition	Procedure	Role	Learner	Teacher	Advantages	Difficulties	Facilities
<i>Defining the concept</i>	<i>Application</i>	<i>Teacher role</i>	<i>Learner characteristics</i>	<i>Teacher characteristics</i>	<i>Competition to teach in ELT department</i>	<i>Educational</i>	
	<i>Evaluation</i>		<i>Learner reactions</i>	<i>Teacher own experiences</i>	<i>Current situation</i>	<i>Cultural</i>	
	<i>Situation in other cycles</i>			<i>Teacher expectation from students</i>	<i>Benefits</i>	<i>Family</i>	
						<i>Institutional</i>	

### 1. Definition

The first theme is definition.

#### 1.1. Defining the concept

Under this code teacher trainers gave their own definition and how they see autonomy and give clues of understanding and applying it in their own context. (see Table 3.)

Table 3. Defining the concept

*Being an autonomous learner is very similar to literature for personal enrichment approach*  
*Autonomous learner knows their capacity. If you are an autonomous learner you are honest with yourself. You ask yourself what do I know what I want to know*  
*Well, to be autonomous you have to take a lot of responsibility, self-learning is a huge responsibility and it is not something that everyone would like to do. (T5, interview)*

<i>learner autonomy is letting students take their own responsibilities for learning (T1, interview)</i>
<i>learner autonomy as name suggests deal with the learners' own choice of learning and as the way how the students take learning actually I mean it is total different from the classical perception of learning. That leads to students to learn on their own the basic principle of learner autonomy is to make to students aware of what they are going to learn and what they want to learn and how they can do it (T6, interview)</i>
<i>learner autonomy is about learners' freedom, learners' willingness in doing on their own, learner autonomy without the teachers pressure in then students carry on their studies basically that's what I understand from learner autonomy. I mean learner autonomy that not something that you achieve in a minute, it is a kind of process (T3, interview)</i>
<i>as an autonomous learner they are self-directed they make decisions on their own to choose what to do and how to do what to read what to listen to. It involves decision making (T4, interview)</i>
<i>the learner will have three qualifications first freedom to choose what to learn when to learn how to learn they have got this freedom they are going to be independent learners the most important thing in autonomous learning is you take charge of your own responsibility (T2, interview)</i>

## 2. Procedure

The second theme is procedure.

### 2.1. Application

Under this code teacher trainers extracts show that they are trying to apply autonomy and they explain how they are trying to implement it. They also mentioned what kind of techniques they are using in class to foster autonomy. (see Table 4.)

Table 4. Application

<i>In the beginning of the year we give them syllabi we tell them exactly what we are expecting we make them by books there are chapters in the course they have to prepare presentations, autonomous learner will look at the chapter even if he or she is not presenting Group work, presentations because unfortunately listening class is limited they can listen they adapt maybe I can ask them to create materials. And share it with other learners. Ask them what they like to do in their free time Even the second the acquisition class because you learn how you learn languages when you are doing this when I am doing this I give examples of myself and I ask my students to give examples from their own learning, their siblings, their environment. (T5, interview)</i>
<i>we should let them discover things we should let them present things, we should let them discuss things in class I let them interact with each other, we start a discussion we have a certain topic of the day whatever the topic is they have to prepare at least one question at the end of each PowerPoint slide, they first present some theories but at the end they pose some questions to their friends</i>

*I expect them not to accept everything in the book but to you know approach things critically. Are they all fine in turkey do you think we should accept them you know all together localizing knowledge how we can localise that knowledge could be another name for the things we're doing in class and preparing questions in my group designs I ask them to work with their close friends I don't design the group members myself I let them choose (T1,interview)*

*I usually ask questions so how do they perceive language, English as language and then how to improve their English how to improve their language skills. And then I can give some more examples and how they can do it and of course assignments are practical in that situation because you know more or less we are all test oriented I give assignments from the internet sources which we can follow in to see how they are good at it because these students are coming from multiple choice test and they are good at some grammatical points and some points those assignments and ... should also be appropriate for their levels so it should be carefully decided I guess and I think project work is also another point I think it is also you know a point to take into consideration. (T6,interview)*

*there are a lot of activities that can foster learner autonomy reflective activities, reflection on their own learning. Maybe but basically I mean the project work group work, pair work project work field work the rest upon the learner or the learners themselves they search for information and they gather information they present information with others. it is what can we say not only application but also of course synthesis analyse and then you know in the end also you know for example as part of the school practice students reflect on their own learning They write weekly reports and then they come and share their views with other classmates and with me as well I think you know the idea is here to give them an idea of who they are how they teach how the students learn and then you know critically review on this kind of experience in my writing courses I used to teach writing at prep level and themselves opened up of their own blogs, students has the blog and the so it is a real autonomous leaning setting up their own blogs and then afterwards they uploaded all their materials to the blogs. (T3,interview)*

*they can be guided to read something on their own out of the class they can join a discussion on it they can make a summary of it we can give them topics alright they can write about it on their own again out of the class they can come back to the class they can have a little discussion on it which will be done orally ok. They can share opinions they can get the support of the technology in the class, within the class, so technology or smart phones can be incorporate into classroom use Give them an assignment today that was a creative writing and I just gave a beginning of the story I expect them to create an imaginary story about that person. They are going to discuss their own stories with their friends Inside the class we focus on PowerPoint presentation, we discuss in class we talk about it prepared by me I am sharing it they can also obtain so they have to study on their own as well. through activities, through assignments, through tasks, ok in class and out of the class, so that they can have a better awareness about the fact that they can do something independently on their own without any dependence on the teachers on their instructor. We provide extracurricular material (T4, interview)*

*I teach Approaches and methods in language teaching I have to you know help to students encounter those ideas hopefully learn hopefully digest some of the*

information  
 So, I cannot change the topic, it is fixed then in that case where is the place of autonomy  
 I say okay each week one group will present one of the methods and then what I tell my students you know freedom to choose, you can choose your friends to work with as a team as a group work, so they decide first they try to understand syllabus  
 I give them a week I say these are the contents go to YouTube go to google read about them check them if you believe that you enjoy it choose them an ok also decide your group members so they have a week to think to plan and then the following week decide who is going to, which group and which method they are going to study or present  
 I never tell them you are going to be the first person, second person they sit together, they decide who is going to present what they decide about the content they divide, but what I do control is that before they present they bring it to me and I check the content, especially the outline the main points if everything is alright no problem. It is a kind of last check before the presentation.  
 from time to time I stand up I asked I pose questions but I padlock from the list so make them responsible. You see we have to force the responsibility  
 when we start another week, a new topic, we do the revision again and the students have to go home reread outlines  
 I encourage them to watch some people for example some interviews with Krashen Chomsky, Gardner so they can see, watch the interviews from YouTube, at the end of each method, we always discuss where can we use or what can we take from this method to Turkish context like kindergarten, primary, secondary school, university prep, ELT department etc. so as a pair and group work they discuss and then present it in the classroom  
 I encourage them to read journals and write review and what do them to and also what I ask them to do write, put their reviews on the Moodle ,  
 we encourage students to watch anything they like and do some presentations regarding that in the classroom or least introduce  
 the syllabus is on the Moodle throughout the semester (T2, interview)

## 2.2. Evaluation

From the point of assessment, autonomy is also related and connected to the evaluation. Teacher trainers explain how they design their assessment procedures to help learners become autonomous. (see Table 5.)

Table 5. Evaluation

<i>because of the system, testing system the students are very used to being spoon fed          Being spoon fed, they are not autonomous learners I realised that for every year of study. First year students last year students(T5, interview)</i>
<i>I give them grades for their in class performance, attendance, participation          50 % of their mid-term comes from their actual presentations and participation into classroom discussions (T1, interview)</i>
<i>that blog is their assessment,          as portfolio as well ok, yes as part of assessment so you can make use of that project work kind of things everything that they do we don't have to test them (T3, interview)</i>
<i>Their portfolio will be part of their part of the assessment procedure          They will be monitoring their progress and they will be assessing their self-</i>

<p><i>evaluation as well. so phonemic transcription is a kind of an assignment done by distance individually on their own and it is also part of assessment (T4, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>they may say well I have no idea all the time but also I give them marks because of their participation another hint or clue so that they will become autonomous is that I believe in liberal market which means in liberal market if you produce something you should earn money at the end of the day so that's the same in autonomy at the end of the day you do a lot of homework reading project etc. if they are assessed as marks, (T2, interview)</i></p>

### 2.3. Situation in other cycles

Teacher trainers also mentioned the situation in other education cycles in terms of autonomy. Mainly, they stress that autonomy should be started in primary schools and should be supported throughout the other cycles which students go through. However, they are not so positive about the current situation of autonomy in primary, secondary and high schools. (see Table 6.)

Table 6. Situation in other cycles

<p><i>if the same teacher can control instruct the class in years he or she can easily design activities that will prompt learner autonomy (T1, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>at the present situation it seems that it is not that easy to implement learner autonomy in Turkish high schools it should start at the primary school level and all teachers working in primary schools and high schools should be hoped should be guided should be trained in service training (T4, interview)</i></p>

### 3. Role

The third theme is role.

#### 3.1. Teacher role

Teacher trainers also aware that teacher role is so important and effective while implementing autonomy. They have clear ideas how they behave and what a teacher should do to promote it. (see Table 7.)

Table 7. Teacher role

<p><i>although I am there I do not interrupt and I try to stop myself sometimes sharing responsibility not the whole control of the teacher teachers must be also ready to share power with students (T1, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>the only thing to me the teacher can do is that is to release students to aware themselves and can raise their awareness convincing them, persuading them to do so In that sense, the only thing you can do to me to make them more excited and motivated to the class and to let them know their weaknesses and strengths so that they can train and educate themselves (T6, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>without teacher intervention teacher is only the guide and the source there, facilitator Encourage them, and then make them believe in themselves (T3, interview)</i></p>



*I am the facilitator, guide, counsellor, so that is my role  
I push them to be autonomous (T2, interview)*

#### 4. Learner

The fourth theme is learner.

##### 4.1. Learner characteristics

Teacher trainers believe that learner characteristics is also important while fostering autonomy and it also has impact on the success of promoting autonomy. (see Table 8.)

Table 8. Learner characteristics

*They are not just passive learners when they learn to approach things critically they will start criticise you as well (T1, interview)*  
*students' perceptions and view of learning is very important, students should be eager to do so*  
*If they don't want to learn, if they don't want to study, but they want to pass I know when they want to, they can do it (T6, interview)*

##### 4.2. Learner reactions

They also mentioned what kind of reactions they got throughout the years on what they are doing in class and outside the class. They gave some examples of learner reactions they have received. (see Table 9.)

Table 9. Learner reactions

*I receive positive reactions from learners as we liked doing presentations, we liked acting like teachers in class kind of (T1, interview)*  
*first they resist they say this is too much*  
*they criticised they just try to compare me with another instructor (T4, interview)*  
*I also give them questionnaire at the end of each semester, they always complain that there were really some irresponsible people in the teams groups that they cannot you know work*  
*when I read their feedback there are cases that they really lose their friendship because of that and they said I got to know that person thanks to this project and he/she is not my friend anymore they say (T2, interview)*

#### 5. Teacher

The fifth theme is teacher.

##### 5.1. Teacher characteristics

They also stress that teacher characteristics might also affect autonomy and they are aware that firstly teacher should be open to be criticised and their style, techniques and method should be open to be questioned and they should believe and accept that they are not the only source of knowledge. (see Table 10.)

Table 10. Teacher characteristics

*Our students usually come and ask any questions any time whenever they wish I am an autonomous learner in order to continue teaching I have to learn constantly*  
*I am not doing enough for my students for them to be autonomous. I am impatient*

<p><i>maybe what I should do is make them do more pair work, more group work more research</i></p> <p><i>I realise that I am not autonomous even buying a T-shirt I have to ask someone I don't have any opinion. And all of a sudden I realised that I really don't have a personality (T5, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>it is modern teachers who are ready to be criticised or who are ready to learn from students (T1, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>if you become imaginative with yourself and then if you believe in it in the students you know let's say students potential in achieving the task on their own yes they can (T3, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>again my slogan is when you teach English, teach English from the books is over it belongs to before 2000, book era is over what they can do, they can use books to introduce stories, novels that the students may be interested</i></p> <p><i>I hope all teachers or future teachers prospective teachers will be brought up with this awareness that especially in this century we need autonomous learners in order to have life-long learning. Otherwise the other system creates dependent people, not independent people (T2, interview)</i></p>

## 5.2. Teacher own experiences

Teacher trainers also shared their own experiences they have with autonomy from their own academic and social life. (see Table 11.)

Table 11. Teacher own experiences

<p><i>And to tell you the truth do I feel myself too late at this age, yes I do, at age 20, at age 18, it is not impossible but difficult (T5, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>that is the main point that I want to achieve and I have been here in from you know my newly graduates, newly appointed teachers and they say that they try to apply it is hard but they are trying</i></p> <p><i>most of them try and they see the rewards as well, that's what I feel is ok I mean they are achieving, I achieve, what I achieve and then also they are also transferring whatever they learned here in real classes even in the hardest situation even in the eastern part of turkey (T3, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>even in the family we have to give options to pupils to have or to feel this autonomy not just learner but the autonomy you can give simple responsibility to children let's say at the age of ten. For example they can go to market and buy a bread or they can you know telephone the water company to bring some water</i></p> <p><i>another hint or clue so that they will become autonomous is that I believe in liberal market which means in liberal market if you produce something you should earn money at the end of the day</i></p> <p><i>that's the same, so that's the same in autonomy at the end of the day you do a lot of homework reading project etc. if they are assessed as marks (T2, interview)</i></p>

## 5.3. Teacher expectation from students

They also expressed what they are expecting from students. They also explained how they clarify their expectations to the students and how they support students to meet those expectations. (see Table 12.)

Table 12. Teacher expectation from students

<p><i>No exception, I have to tell them that they have to read this and this chapter or read this and this article for next week if I don't, this is what I get they say you didn't tell us teacher,</i></p> <p><i>they have to prepare presentations, autonomous learner will look at the chapter even if he or she is not presenting (T5, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>I tell them not to memorise things in the book just you know approach thing personally, how to use your own words while you know describing</i></p> <p><i>The first thing to let them know what are, what things are expected of them. The instructions must be clear.</i></p> <p><i>They have to be personally engaged with the issues they need to consider their past learning their high school education their prep year education.</i></p> <p><i>I expect them sometimes to criticise what they read in the book and they have to localise the knowledge, Expect them to collaborate with others, expect them to take the responsibility of teaching something in class, you know help them improve themselves professionally that's why the academicians admire (T1, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>the rest upon the learner or the learners themselves maybe through project works, group work, pair work and they search for information and they gather information they present information with others.</i></p> <p><i>I ask learners and who come up with their own activities that in future they can you know implement apply. I want them to be a little bit I mean researchers and collect information and make use of available sources then in the end come up with their own ideas about it. (T3, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>I expect the students keep a portfolio</i></p> <p><i>They will be monitoring their progress and they will be assessing their self-evaluation as well.</i></p> <p><i>they are also expected to read some course material out of the class.</i></p> <p><i>we expect them to work on some tasks ok and read their own reports in line with what they practice here what they've learned here what they've read teaching methodologies (T4, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>first of all the learners should have self-discipline and they should have clear objectives they should have priorities so they will attain their objectives</i></p> <p><i>what I tell my students you know freedom to choose, you can choose your friends to work with as a team</i></p> <p><i>everybody is expected to read the related chapter before they come to the classroom</i></p> <p><i>we encourage students to watch anything they like and do some presentations regarding that in the classroom or least introduce</i></p> <p><i>I encourage them to read journals and write review and what do them to and also what I ask them to do write, put their reviews on the Moodle, I used Moodle system so that they will be autonomous learners so I just give a due time so before the due time they have to read write down report and then upload (T2, interview)</i></p>

## 6. Advantages

The sixth theme is advantages.

### 6.1. Competition to teach in ELT department

One of the teacher trainers also mentioned that their students' being autonomous can also create a competition among academics of other departments to teach in their department and it is an advantage for them. (see Table 13.)

Table 13. Competition to teach in ELT department

*many academicians like teaching our students because they know how to discuss issues they are not just silent or passive learners everybody in educational sciences I know they are in a competition to teach in our programme. It is because of learner autonomy as well I think (T1, interview)*

### 6.2. Current situation

Teacher trainers also mentioned how they see their current situation in terms of autonomy. Their ideas show that they believe as the department they are literally trying to support an autonomous learning area and making it to be a part of their courses. (see Table 14.)

Table 14. Current situation

*learner autonomy should be part of our courses I mean maybe some courses, in different courses we should assign such readings and they should be aware of this topic, they should be knowledgeable about it they should have sort of awareness in other words, it should be part of curriculum in various courses. (T4, interview)*

*in our department I believe that we support autonomous learning how if you look at the projects that the students have so they have they do some library study, they read articles they do annotated reading and then I ask students to read at least two or three articles each unit (T2, interview)*

### 6.3. Benefits

Teacher trainers also expressed that they have benefited from autonomy because it also helps to deal with students' psychological side of their character. (see Table 15.)

Table 15. Benefits

*we are dealing with their inhibitions you know they lower their anxiety levels. Many issues of course but by giving such level of responsibility (T1, interview)*

## 7. Difficulties

The seventh theme is difficulties. Teacher trainers stated that they have faced with some problems while trying to implement autonomy in their classes. They expressed that those problems mainly stem from students, institution, family, culture, curriculum, class size and etc. They are aware that it is not so easy and have difficulties and they are determined to overcome those issues and continue to try to implement and take advantage of autonomy. (see Table 16., 17., 18., and 19.)

## 7.1. Educational

Table 16. Educational

<p><i>It is not maybe so easy with first year or second year learners Now I am ready to admire kind of feeling I have but I don't think it is ok to give that much responsibility in the first years of college educations because you know exposure to language is necessary in the first year (T1, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>I have a curriculum I have to finish up (T5, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>it is really hard to motivate students all the time you know I think this is one of the bad sides of our century actually because they have a lot of things to do around and they cannot concentrate on one thing curriculum or something, yes it is difficult to make it in that scale I guess and because it is usually applied in the classroom based environment it is also related to the again the teachers the students as well as the content of the courses (T6, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>freshman level they should be guided. No disadvantage but there are advantages (T4, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>we have some problems like this they start university together one student is thinking about getting this is no nothing wrong I mean in the implementation but the problem is during application I have some resistance one of the problems so it is difficult to have work as a group or team (T2, interview)</i></p>

## 7.2. Cultural

Table 17. Cultural

<p><i>Culture, we are not taught to be autonomous, we are taught to be obedient, and respectful of the elderly unfortunately, being autonomous is seen as being disrespectful, We are not allowed to be autonomous starting from our family Because we are not really allowed to be autonomous because if we are really autonomous then we are accused of being disrespectful or irresponsible, which is such a shame being autonomous doesn't mean being irresponsible. On the contrary you are taking your own responsibility in your hands Parents have to allow the children to be more autonomous as well. (T5, interview)</i></p>
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## 7.3. Family

Table 18. Family

<p><i>if you let them take the control some of the parents may complain that teachers are not teaching anything, You are just listening the songs and you are watching films you are not doing much that's why my sons SBS (central exam) score is this they can say so they have lots of constrains and restrictions (T1, interview)</i></p>
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## 7.4. Institutional

Table 19. Institutional

<p><i>another problem that I usually encounter is the population of the classrooms so it is very hard to control class over 35 or more so it is very difficult to organise the things (T6, interview)</i></p>
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<p><i>Even in university context it is problematic teachers we are not free to do whatever we want we have curricular restrictions, administrative restrictions, (T1, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>as an institution I mean as a faculty we have a problem we don't have a room in which they can easily work with computers</i></p>
<p><i>I need to get institutional support I have to use alternative assessment system but in the system I am very limited (T2, interview)</i></p>

## 8. Facilities

The eighth theme is facilities. Teacher trainers also mentioned what kind of facilities they have in their department. They also expressed their ideas on what facilities they need and how they can use of those facilities to promote autonomy in students. They also expressed that they have institutional restraints while fostering autonomy. (see Table 20.)

Table 20. Facilities

<p><i>we are trying creating a small space at least for our students' individual silent work or to do further work in their studies because the library has both literature books and books on our field (T1, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>we have a lot of opportunities and facilities to enhance our learning through even social media and all other stuff</i></p> <p><i>I wish we had some self-access laboratories to information</i></p> <p><i>there are some examples in some universities in turkey, just having education with the connection with the outside university and then they can have lecture they can attend a lecture (T6, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>we have a little library in which there are some materials so sometimes students are guided to borrow books from the library and read them on their own we use internet sources so they can self-access and benefit. We don't have a self-access centre ideally there could be a self-access centre where they can borrow, listen, do things (T4, interview)</i></p>
<p><i>not a library but we need a computer library, self-access centre in which students can in their free time can sit down and then work with the computer printout whatever they like etc. so they don't have such facility here in each faculty on the other hand as our department we use online library Moodle and then we have online library, smart boards and we use internet a lot, YouTube as I said before, because there are a lot of facilities that students can make use of so we have enough facilities so that students can be autonomous (T2, interview)</i></p>

## Observation notes

Teachers were generally letting students to present topics and trying to create a friendly and stress free environment to discuss issues during the courses I observed throughout the data collection process, but in some theoretical courses such as approaches and methods in ELT, the lecturer of the course has interfered much during the lecture and did not share the power with learners on a desired level. Especially with first and second grades, teachers' talking time were high and students were a bit passive compared to last year students however with third and fourth grades' courses were so supportive to become autonomous and created a way to questioning and a place for fruitful discussions. It might be because of the content of the courses of first graders but still those courses may be designed as an effective way and lecturers

might be more careful about their power and talking time in class. As a conclusion, there is mostly a consistence between interview data and observations. Teacher trainers were mostly doing what they were saying in interviews. Hence, observation notes and interview data validate each other.

## **Results and Implications**

As a result of the study, it can be said that in an ELT department of a state university in Turkey, teacher trainers know the importance of autonomy, value it and they try to implement and foster it. They also thought that they are supporting students to become autonomous and to some extent they are successful in doing so. On the other hand, as a limitation of the study, only teacher trainers' ideas were reflected, students own ideas and how they see autonomy and how they feel in such activities were not taken into account, it is one of the restrictions of this study. Further qualitative or mixed method researches about learner autonomy can be done both with teacher trainers and students. Also this study only focused on ELT department but in further studies other departments in teacher training institutions can be investigated in terms of learner autonomy.

Autonomy and self-determination theory has been discussed and some says that it is not suitable for eastern cultures such as Asia, Middle Eastern, and some countries that have some another cultural background from western countries Europe and America- namely Turkey and etc. But, I believe that our students who are learning a foreign language has the potential to become autonomous as much as students who live and raised in western cultures. With the help and support of the teacher, our students can easily realise their potential to improve autonomy and decide on their learning, how and what they want to learn. They can also easily be adapted to such activities which foster autonomy in language learning process if they are encouraged to do so. Because, most probably throughout the education process, those students might have experiences that they were forced not to be autonomous, expected to do only what the teacher says and requests. In many years, throughout the country with the use of traditional methods such as grammar traditional and audio lingual method, teachers were seen and became always the main authority in the class and students were expected to obey rules and just listen. But with the understanding and improving in approaches of language teaching, students are now expected to interact with the teacher and also with their classmates, in doing so they are expected to develop somewhat autonomy and monitor their learning and be aware why they are learning the language, how they can learn more easily and what they need to learn and with what materials they want to learn, as well. I believe before promoting and developing autonomy in learners, teachers should question their belief of language teaching and their own roles in the classroom, are they still thinking that they are the only authority in the class, or they see themselves as a facilitator or a prompter who helps students during their learning process, as a guide who design activities and let the students find ways during the process and help when only requested and etc. I also think that only teachers who always question their own role and their applications in language classes can set a place which develops and promotes autonomy in learners, otherwise it will only be a fantasy with a teacher who believes he or she is the only authority and decides everything on his/her own. Consequently, teachers should be aware of their roles and find ways to develop autonomy even in most difficult situations such as in a central structured education system as in Turkey. Countries such as Turkey, all

curricula and materials are decided centrally in the capital city by MONE and sent to the schools, teachers don't have such a huge amount of autonomy on those documents and processes. Yet they still have some control in differentiating what and how to teach. There are main topics and attainments to reach in the curriculum that restrict teachers but they can choose how to apply and design activities in language classes. Also, they can use activities that can foster autonomy in his or her learners. In addition, teachers can also use a language and show behaviours that give some responsibility to students during learning and teaching process and those indicators can help to share responsibility with the students and hopefully may foster autonomy in them and help them to demand more.

## **Discussion**

Pekkanlı-Egel (2009)'s study shows that although learner autonomy means a reshaping of the view that the learner is responsible for learning, teachers do not abdicate their responsibilities of teaching in the language learning process and on the contrary teachers become the primary agents on fostering the development of learner autonomy within the classroom context. This study's findings also support this result in terms of teacher trainers' views and showing their awareness that autonomy does not mean that teachers become useless in that process instead they have much more responsibilities. Nakata (2011) in the study named "Teachers' readiness for promoting learner autonomy: A study of Japanese EFL high school teachers" concluded that many Japanese EFL high school teachers, while displaying different dimensions of autonomy in different ways, they are not fully ready to promote autonomy in their learners. This result doesn't coincide with the present study's findings. Teacher trainers in this study believe that they are ready and have enough ability to promote it in their department. This can be because of different education levels and teacher trainers also have much more autonomy while making a decision and designing their own course while high school teachers might have some restraints. Yıldırım (2011)'s study found that the use of portfolios assisted the student-teachers in becoming autonomous in regard to their personal and professional development and that the student-teachers perceived the portfolio process they went through positively. The present study also showed that using portfolios as an evaluation technique helps student teachers to become autonomous according to views of teacher trainers. Kahraman (2015) found in her study that the ELT program of a university in Turkey has covered most of the aspects included in the checklist and the teacher educators shared positive views about the program in terms of autonomy development, and seven teacher educators also gave some suggestions about the program and the context of the courses. This study supports this result, too because participants claimed that their department is ready enough to support autonomy and they have not big problems with the program used. However, they had some suggestions to improve the facilities, as well. Also, Shahsavari (2014) in the study named "Autonomy Based on Teachers and Learners Point of Views" found that nearly all the teachers and learners who participated in the study in Iran agreed on the fact that learner autonomy allows language learners to learn more efficiently than they otherwise would, and all the participants agreed that it is more desirable than feasible. The participants of this study also told that it has lots of advantages and believe in it and it is more desirable than feasible.



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## Appendix 1

### Interview form

#### Consent Part

This study seeks to answer the research question “What are the views of academics working in an English Language Teaching (ELT) department about ‘learner autonomy’ and how they implement it in their classes?”. Here is the list of questions that I would like to ask you to this end. I plan that this interview session will take nearly 30 minutes. As it is a semi structured interview, you can give more details to any of the questions or you can add new ones or you can choose not to answer any/all of them. At the beginning or during or any time of the study, you can finish and you can wish not to take part in the research at all. All data gathered from the interviews will be used for scientific purposes only in a paper and identity information of participants will not be shared as code names will be used while presenting findings. When requested, all findings and results related to this study will be shared with the participants. I assure you that data will only be reached by the researcher himself.

#### Questions

1. How do you define “learner autonomy”? Could you tell me about the principles?
2. What kind of activities do you think can foster learner autonomy and can create a suitable place for it?
3. How do you implement “learner autonomy” and it’s principles into your own classes?
4. Can you give examples of activities that you think and do to foster learner autonomy in your own classes?
5. In your opinion, can your students who take courses from you design and support activities related to learner autonomy in their own classes when they are appointed as English teachers within a few years? If you have any experiences, can you give details? How do you understand that?
6. In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of implementing learner autonomy?
7. Have you had any problems while implementing learner autonomy, if so, how did you solve them? What was your reaction?
8. In Turkish education context, do you think it is easy/hard to implement learner autonomy even in university level? If it is, how do you solve those problems?
9. Do you think that in the ELT department of PAU, you -as a group of teacher trainers, can create and support a place for learner autonomy for your teacher candidates?

**Contact email:** kandemiranil@hotmail.com / anilk@pau.edu.tr

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*Intertwining Language with Perception: A Case of Internalizing a Globalized Language*

Ibrahim Yabagi Mohammed, Jubail University College, Saudi Arabia

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**Abstract**

Globalization is viewed from different angles, with three universally accepted theories used to explain it. All the theories can be summed up as saying that globalization is the “form of institutionalization...involving the universalization of particularism...”(Robertson:1992:102).

English language is viewed as the vehicle that propels this institutionalization. We all live in this globalized world defined by our imaginations. No one really knows what this world is like, as its characteristics can be inferred only from how we perceive it. The way we act is shaped so powerfully by what we perceive. Teachers, therefore, walk into their classrooms influenced by their beliefs, which are closely linked to their values, their views of the world and their conception of their place within the classroom. These beliefs are nurtured by the teacher’s perception which in turn is expressed through the classroom language. This paper discusses how teacher’s efforts to internalize this globalized language in their classroom are affected by their perception of the learners. It further shows that: perception is expressed through language; that there is significant correlation between language and perception; perception is innate and personal, therefore, no one individual perceives the world for another; the more the teacher talks, the more he expresses his personal perception; teachers should talk less so that the learners can discover their own world and build up their personal perception of the world.

Keywords: Assess, Clients, Democratic Explorer, Deterritorialization, Evaluate, Expressivists, Globalization, Implement, Individual Explorer, Institutionalization, Interconnectedness, multi-pronged, Particularism, Partner, Perception, Plan, Raw material, Receptacle, Resisters, Spatial, Temporal, Universalization, Velocity

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## Introduction

“The principle goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done—men who are creative, inventive and discoverers.”

Jean Piaget

Teaching is that aspect of human science in which individuals called teachers try to shape the future of other individuals called students or learners. This act of teaching and learning is conducted in a world which is daily shrinking. Events around the globe get the world compressed. This compression of the world is termed globalization. Globalization is viewed from different angles, with three universally accepted theories used to explain it. All the theories can be summed up in the words of Roland Robertson (1992:102) that says globalization is the “Form of institutionalization...involving the universalization of particularism...”

Most human interactions are made possible by the use of language. The more the world gets shriveled, the more a language gets widely accepted as the language of globalization. This language is English. It is viewed as the vehicle that propels the institutionalization of the world into oneness and sameness. Our understanding of this ever shriveling world is defined by our imaginations. No one really knows what this world is like, as its characteristics can be inferred only from how we perceive it. The way we act is shaped so powerfully by what we perceive. Teachers, therefore, walk into their classrooms influenced by their beliefs, which are closely linked to their values, their views of the world and their conception of their place within the classroom. These beliefs are nurtured by the teacher’s perception which in turn is expressed through the classroom language.

Knitting all the points above, this paper looks at the place of English language in our globalized world; effects of teacher’s perception in classroom activities, and their implications on teaching and learning. The paper further suggests ways teachers and the teaching process can be made more effective.

## Globalization

The term globalization means different things to different people depending on the rung of the ladder where one stands to view it. To some it is the pursuit of classical liberal or “free market” policies in the world economy which is termed “economic liberalization”. To some others it is the growing dominance of the West, which in a narrow sense is seen as American and its allied forms of political, economic, and cultural life referred to as “westernization” or “Americanization”. For the techno savvies it is referred to as the proliferation of new information technologies seen as the “Internet Revolution”; while to others it is the believe that human race is gradually moving towards the realization of one single unified community in which major sources of social conflict are vanishing. This they term as “global integration”.

Whatever meanings we give to the term, a point of convergence is that globalization is the gradual and slow human activities, over time, and across the globe, that have “allowed for changes in the spatial and temporal contours of social existence, according to which the significance of space or territory undergoes shriveling shifts in the face of an acceleration in the time structure of crucial forms of human activity.”

Tracing the history of globalization, it will be noted that no time in human history would the term globalization said to have begun; but the industrial revolution of Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, probably, started the move toward what one can term as global oneness. In 1848 Karl Marx formulated what might be referred to as the first insight into globalization. For him capitalist productive activities had driven the bourgeoisie to “nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, and establish connections everywhere.” And industrial capitalist pursuit constituted the most basic avenue of technologies resulting in the disappearance of space, helping to pave the way for “intercourse in every direction, and the universal interdependence of nations,” in contrast to a blinkered provincialism that had beleaguered humanity for untold eons (Marx 1848, 476).

Scholars have reached a consensus about the basic defining characteristics of globalization. These characteristics, for the purpose of this paper, are compressed into four.

- The first one is deterritorialization:- here globalization is seen to increase possibilities for action between and among people in situations where “latitudinal” and “longitudinal” locations seem unimportant to the social activity at hand. Geographical location remains crucial for many undertakings but deterritorialization manifests itself in many human social activities. Business people from different continents engage in electronic trades; television allows people situated anywhere to observe the impact of events happening around the world from the comfort of their living rooms; academic environment makes use of the latest video conferencing equipment to organize seminars in which participants are located in different geographical locations (Skype, Yahoo Messenger, Viber, etc); the Internet allows people to communicate instantaneously with each other notwithstanding the geographical distances separating them. Instant messaging, chatting and other forms of social activities over mobile phones and computers all lend credence to the shrinking of the globe which we live in.
- The second one is called social interconnectedness:- this is directly connected with the compression of territories because the growth of human social activities is interconnected across existing geographical, political and economic boundaries. Since the vast majority of human activities are still tied to a concrete geographical location, the more decisive facet of globalization concerns “the manner in which distant events and forces impact on local and regional endeavors.” To this end globalization then refers “to processes of change which underpin a transformation in the organization of human affairs by linking together and expanding human

activity across regions and continents” (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt & Perraton 1999, 15).

- The third is referred to as speed or velocity:- human social activities are measured within the speed of time taken to get them connected to people across the global. The linking together and expanding of social activities across borders is predicated on the possibility of relatively fast flows and movements of people, information, capital, and goods. Therefore, this swift technology plays an important role in the movement of human affairs. However, many other factors contribute to the overall pace and speed of this social activity, such as organizational structure of the modern capitalist, liberal and free market factories.
- The last one is termed multi-pronged process:- this means that the three mentioned earlier - deterritorialization, social interconnectedness, and speed or velocity- manifest themselves in many different facets of human social activities such as economic, political and cultural lives; each with its complex and relatively autonomous series of practical developments.

Central to all this is the fact that in globalization we identify that the compression of the spatial and temporal world we are living in allows for interconnectedness of human social activities accelerated by technological inventions. Summing up the concept of globalization therefore, one can safely borrow from the words of Roland Robertson (1992: 102) that globalization is "a form of institutionalization of the two-fold process involving the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism". Therefore, our globalized world is incorporated as one universe but it is never united; it is a single place but also not all-embracing; and an assembly of “shared consciousness” but susceptible to fragmentation.

### **English Language**

These social activities are primarily conducted through human socializing agent known to all as language. Samuel Daniel, *Musophilus* (1599) succinctly predicated the place of English language in the universe. He said:

*And who in time knowes whither we may vent  
The treasure of our tongue, to what strange shores  
This gaine of our best glorie shal be sent.  
T'inrich vnknowing Nations with our stores?  
What worlds in th'yet vnformed Occident  
May come refin'd with th'accent that are ours?*  
Samuel Daniel, *Musophilus* (1599)

This was said about 412 years ago and today no one doubts the place of English language in our globalized world. According to Paul Lewis, (et al; eds.; 2013) of the 6912 living languages listed on the Ethnologue language database, English language is the second



most widely spoken language. Chinese Mandarin, which is seen as the number one spoken language does not command international acceptability.

Since we can comfortably trace the emergence of globalization to Industrial Revolution of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and also trace its origin to England, it is safe to conclude that social activities of economic, political and cultural stocks of globalization are primarily conducted in English language. So the more people and nations get engaged in global activities across the hemispheres, the more widely use English language becomes.

### **Perception/ Thinking and Language**

We live in a world defined by our imaginations. No one really knows what that world is like, as its characteristics can be inferred only from how we perceive it. Therefore, the way we act is shaped so powerfully by what we perceive. Boulding (1975) observed that, “ it is what we think the world is like, not what it is really like, that determines our behavior ...we act according to the way the world appears to us, not necessarily according to the way it is.”

### **What is Perception?**

The Oxford Dictionary of Sports Science and Medicine defines perception as, “the mental process by which the brain interprets and gives meaning to information it receives from sense organs.” This means that perception is the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world. This according to Sabo Bako (1999) “...is true that what we see is what we get, subconscious predispositions therefore are also central to the formation of thought. What we think about affects what we do. Hence we all are to some extent captives of our perceptual habits. And what we see in and think about the world as a consequence of our selective perception influence our views and corresponding mental images of the world.” The illustrations below add weight to the argument.



Source: <http://www.google.com/search?q=perception+images>

The images show the power of perception. Two individuals taking a cursory look at them are likely to perceive them differently. For example, one might see a coffee table in the

first image and see an old man in the second image. Another person may see two people looking straight into each other's eyes in the first image and possibly see a young lady in the second image.

Summing up the place of perception in our daily lives, Ihar V Babitski (2009) observes that, "We obtain information from the external world from our senses: taste, hearing, smell, touch, sight. Than (sic) we somehow integrate and analyze perceived information and make our decision. Decision is an "outcome of mental processes (cognitive process) leading to the selection of a course of action among several alternatives. Every decision making process produces a final choice."

### **Connection between Perception/Thinking and Language**

Expressivists believe that the primary function of language is to enable speakers to convey the content of their thoughts to hearers. That when language is used in the normal way, the speaker has a thought with a certain content and chooses words such that on the basis of those words the hearer will be able to recognize that the speaker has a thought with that content.

This implies that internal perception is done through language; and analogically, Mr. X's perception of the world is understood by Mr. Y through the use of language employed by Mr. X and understood by Mr. Y. The German educator, linguist, and philosopher, Wilhelm von Humboldt gives us an agreeable conclusion of the relationship between language and perception/thinking; thus saying, "Language is the formative organ of thought. Intellectual activity, entirely mental, entirely internal, and to some extent passing without trace, becomes through sound, externalized in speech and perceptible to senses. Thought and language are therefore one and inseparable from each other."

Citing student's perception of the place of English language as a language of study, three dominant views are expressed by some students of Jubail University College, Jubail, Saudi Arabia. For them, their perception of English directly motivates them to learn or de-motivates them. To some:

English is the language of the "perceived" enemy. Here religion plays a significant role in determining their perception of English language. This class of students does not see any reason why English language should be acquired or learnt.

Another group of students sees English an enforced language, and are only learning it because it is part of their overall curriculum designed by the university which requires them to learn it.

The third group sees English as a bridge to reaching out to the rest of the world. For this group there is the need to study and if possible master the use of the language. They are highly motivated and always willing to put in their best.

## The Teacher in the Classroom

Every teacher walks into his classroom influenced by his beliefs, which are closely linked to his values, his views of the world and his conception of his place within the classroom. All this influence his definition and understanding of his students. Meighan and Meighan (1990) identify seven (7) different ways in which teachers can and do construe their students and by extension such construction reflects individual teacher's view of the world; and also has profound implication on his classroom practice. The teacher sees his students as:

**Resisters:-** the notion of students as resisters looks at learners as people who do not want to learn but only do so because they are made to. This notion believes that force or punishment is the most appropriate way to overcome such resistance in the classroom.

**Receptacle:** one other conception of the learner is the one in which the learner is seen by the teacher as 'receptacle' to be filled with knowledge. Sometimes it is called "the jugs and mugs" theory. The teacher is seen as having a large jug of knowledge which is poured into the learner 'mugs' or receptacles, which in turn can only accept a certain amount of that knowledge according to the size of the learner's IQ.

**Raw material:** this notion metaphorically sees the learner like clay to be molded into a fine art or building material to be constructed into a solid and well-designed building. The teacher is seen as inspirational and his view shapes the learner's future.

**Clients:** this notion places greater emphasis upon the "identification of educational needs and begins to alter the nature of the relationship between teachers and learners." The prospective learners are likely to know what they want to learn and how much time and money they are prepared to invest in doing so, while the role of the teacher can be seen as attempting to meet those needs.

**Partner:** this notion assumes that the teachers and learners are equal and share relationship within which teachers recognize that they are also learners. The fundamental notions here are of mutual trust and respect leading to growth and development for teachers and all their learners.

**Individual Explorer:** with this view the role of the teacher becomes almost entirely one of facilitator working mainly by organizing the classroom in such a way as to enable the learners to explore for themselves and come to their own conclusion with minimum interference from the teacher.

**Democratic Explorer:** in here it sees teaching as "the function of any learning group to set its own agenda, decide upon its goal and proffer ways of working, and how it wishes to draw upon this particular knowledge and expertise of the teacher."

The two explorers above, it should be noted, put the teacher's role as that of provider of appropriate comprehensible input, which the learners act on in their ways. This is the

focus of this paper because it has immense positive impact on language learning, which in turn leads to language acquisition.

### **Implications for Teachers and Teaching**

Having explored the concept of globalization; the place and role of English language in our globalized world; perception and the relationship between perception and language, the question that readily comes to mind is, what are the implications of all that have been discussed for the teacher and the teaching and learning process? As English language teachers we should note that:

We live in a globalized world whose latitudinal and longitudinal territories have been shriveled by the speed of our social interconnectedness in our economic, political and cultural lives.

This social interconnectedness is regulated by the language we teach- that is English language.

Our perception of the world around us influences our teaching and our view of the learners we teach.

The individual learner, just like the teacher, lives in an unknown world; his understanding of that world is shaped by his own perception.

No one individual perceives the world for another individual.

Our individual perception is formed by the language we use, just as our language is formed by our thoughts or perceptions.

As teachers our responsibility to the learners is to create an enabling environment that allows the individual learner's perception of the world to thrive, albeit, positively.

### **The Role of the Teacher**

To douse the effect of all the points mentioned above, the teacher should be able to define his/her role in the classroom; and by extension in the life of the learners. Since our duty as teachers is to help the learner shape his perception of the world, the teacher's role is that of a learning guide, an educational facilitator and a broker of learning opportunities. The teacher observes, assists, suggests and when things are going well in the class, he "fades into the corners of the classroom."

There are four (4) processes that the teacher should act upon and to also undertake as a facilitator of the learning process. They are:

Assess the learners;

Plan the learning;

Implement the plan; and

Evaluate the process.

**Assess the learner:-** in here the teacher tries to “get to know” his learners. He develops in the learners self confidence, willingness to take risks, positive beliefs about the learning process and positive view of themselves as learners.

**Plan the learning:-** having assessed and followed the learner’s assessment, the teacher is now in a better position to plan the learning opportunities that will strongly cater for the learner’s needs and interests and therefore optimize the learner’s opportunities. This is achieved by the teacher’s “interplay of what is contained in the course documentation, the teacher’s personal theories about teaching and learning and the teacher’s assessment of learner’s needs.” After this, he plans the unit outline and individual lessons.

**Implement the plan:-** in here the teacher includes the classroom management and the teacher’s strategies that will cater for the varied learning styles of the learners. The plan should also include the emotional climate of the classroom and the quality of the interactions between the learners and the teacher.

**Evaluate the process:-** here the teacher takes a second look at the learner’s assessment. At the completion of a classroom session, the teacher should assess the learning that took place. This way he/she will be informed about the next lesson or teaching.

## **Conclusion**

It has been shown that teachers carry different views about their learners and the teacher’s performance in the classroom is entirely influenced by his perception; and that every individual learner’s view of the world around him is conditioned by his own perception; we as teachers therefore, need to speak less in the classroom since our perception is expressed through what we say. Ours is to serve as facilitators of learning by attempting to provide circumstances that will enable learners to engage with the learning opportunities and construct for themselves their understanding of their world. This role reduces the amount of talk we do in the classroom and makes us learners, colleagues and community partners of our learners, thereby encouraging independence in the learners.

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**Email addresses:** [iymohd@gmail.com](mailto:iymohd@gmail.com)

[mohammedib@ucj.edu.sa](mailto:mohammedib@ucj.edu.sa)





*The Problems of Interpretation of Ironic Speech Acts*

Manana Rusieshvili, Tbilisi State University, Georgia  
Ilona Kenkadze, Tbilisi National University, Georgia

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**Abstract**

This article is dedicated to the problems of interpretation of irony in the light of speech acts theory and provides a general idea of recent developments in the research of irony as a combined category of form, meaning and context. The utterance becomes ironic only in the context which helps the hearer to determine the discrepancy between the speaker's intention and the literal meaning of the words he actually uses. In the article which discusses the issues regarding decoding irony in the light of speech acts, the semantic model of irony is considered to be a hierarchical structure of three interdependent layers: explicit, implicit and background cultural levels. On the surface level the proposition is actualised whereas the deep level is tied in with the contextual parameters on the one hand and with the background cultural knowledge level on the other.

**Key Words:** irony, speech acts, negative and positive intention, implicit, shared knowledge

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## **Introduction and theorising irony**

Irony, which is a complex, interdisciplinary category comprising the form, meaning and context of an utterance, remains one of the central problems for pragmatics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, theory of communication and philosophy of language.

Irony is frequently actualised in everyday life and reveals specific emotional relationships between the participants of the communicative act, their individual psychological values and experience. As well as this, it is gradually becoming a significant part of the world perception. Being a changeable concept, irony tends to modify together with the time and development of the society. This somewhat instable nature of irony makes it interesting for scholars who aim to understand its functions and mechanisms in specific speech situations as well as in the language system. Our particular interest in irony is determined by the multifaceted nature of irony and its complex actualisation in the context.

It should be mentioned that in modern linguistics there is still no agreement reached regarding universally accepted formal definition of irony that would be acceptable for at least the majority of interested scholars. The reason for this is that, in order to come up with the definition which would include all important traits of irony, it must be borne in mind that different methodologies rely on various criteria and suggest different mechanisms of the exploration of irony. Gibs and Colston argue that the word “irony” can mean different things to the speaker, the hearer and the researcher that adds complexity to this issue. (Gibs and Colston, 2001). Fernandez claims that “one person’s irony is always possibly another person’s sincerity”. (Fernandez, 2001:13)

Scholars hold different views regarding the decoding conditions of irony as well. To name a few, Attardo believes there are three main conditions for this: ambiguity that helps to recognise utterance as ironical; inappropriateness of the utterance explicit meaning to the context it is used in; the speaker’s real intention. (Attardo 2000). Giora claims that irony is an indirect negation ‘forcing’ the hearer, in the first place, to activate the salient meaning of the utterance in the process of its decoding. (Giora, 1999). Sperber and Wilson consider that in certain circumstances any object can cite any other object and this citation should always be relevant to the hearer so that he could adequately interpret the ironic utterance. They see irony as ‘use and mention’, i.e. using an utterance and echoing it. (Sperber and Wilson, 1981). Scholars also contemplate on irony in the context of politeness theory with the ability of the speaker to be critical and not aggressive at the same time when activating irony. Clearly, face threatening situations (disapproval, accusation, or complaint) are very common in everyday life and play an important role in interpersonal communication. (Brown, 1987:61) Thus, being polite to the interlocutor and prevent their face loss becomes the issue and challenge of the speaker’s communicative competence. A good example of this is below where Oscar Wilde indirectly criticises youngsters for their universal claim to possess an overwhelming knowledge of the world implicitly addressing young generation although on the explicit plane speaking only about himself preserving politeness:

1. "I am not young enough to know everything." Oscar Wilde

Having familiarised ourselves with the main theories of irony (32 types of irony have been identified, according to our study) it can be claimed that scholars base the traditional definition of irony on the idea that irony, looked at as the interaction of the proposition's explicit, implicit and contextual meanings with a usual 'clash' of positive and negative connotations, expresses something other than or opposite to the literal meaning of the utterance. During its actualization the speaker deliberately attaches the opposite meaning to his utterance tying it in with a specific ironic context which contains emotional and evaluative components of condemnation, irritation, protest or criticism. It becomes obvious that the interpretation of irony especially in its complicated cases of realisation should be based on the whole complex of meanings of the words that create irony in correlation to the specific context. (Kumon-Nakamura et al., 1995; Utsumi, 2000)

2. You got the worst mark in your yesterday's test, you genius!

The speaker in this example reveals his irritation and anger by addressing irony and criticising the hearer for bad test results, by intentionally assigning the opposite meaning to the word "genius".

Any communication is intended to be mutual and consists of coding and decoding processes, therefore in order to decode an ironical proposition both parties of the communicative act require a certain specific contextual knowledge to select a particular structure relevant to the particular situation. Thus, to communicate irony means to achieve a correct understanding of the utterance by means of intentional mutual exchange of information using verbal and, sometimes, non-verbal cues and elements such as gestures, mimics, intonation. This confirms the necessity of cooperation between linguistic competence and mental structures (psychological condition, belief, intention of the speaker) in the process of irony decoding.

We look at irony as a phenomenon with a dual nature. On the one hand, it is a pragmatic strategy frequent in the process of a verbal interaction characterised by the speaker's contextual pragmatic intention to implicitly communicate a specific (often negative) message. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that irony is a systemic trope which can be characterised by several layers of expression. We consider the semantic model of irony to be a hierarchical structure of three interdependent layers: surface, deep and background cultural level. (Rusieshvili, 2005) The explicit meaning of the utterance is revealed on the surface layer, whereas its implicit layer expresses contextual meaning the speaker intends to convey. A shared cultural knowledge that the speaker and the hearer must possess in order to decode the speech act successfully, can be viewed as a layer which is tied with the contextual parameters of the irony and determines the degree of the hearer's readiness to effectively interpret the utterance. Therefore, irony decoding can be achieved by contextual analyses and interpretation of these three layers. Thus, the reason of unsuccessfully uttered irony can be not only non-sufficient linguistic competence, but also, lack of knowledge of socio-cultural values and norms. (Kenkadze, 2012:267)

Each example of irony shows specific features of the speaker's communicative intention to impress, criticise, protest, forbid, deny, ask, accuse, blame, reprimand, disapprove and the meaning he discloses accompanied by his emotional state, e.g. being annoyed, furious, angry, irritated, insulted or sympathetic; that's why the role of communicative competence should be considered as one of the main significant issues in irony interpretation. (Hymes 1967).

3. There's an acrid smell in the air and suddenly I realize the Bolognese is burning. Wanda is just standing there by the stove..., not even noticing. Gently I take the spoon out of her grasp and start to stir. Thank God you don't need a Nobel Prize to do this. (Kinsela 2012:95).

The utterance (3) conveys a strong ironic meaning which can be decoded on the deep layer of the model of irony suggested by us, tied with the background cultural level which in this particular example (3) is as follows: the speaker, Poppy Wyatt, works in a small office and is going to marry a man, Magnus Tavish, a handsome University lecturer who writes books; his mother, father and a brother also write books representing a top academic family. Poppy is being annoyed when her future mother-in-law, Wanda, who is constantly speaking about her scientific achievements during the reception party forgets about such a "mundane" thing as stirring the food so the former uses irony to express her disapproval of the situation and at the same time to protest against being considered not suitable for her future family as she has no proper education, does not have a Nobel prize but still can cook the Bolognese well enough.

As mentioned above, irony is not an utterance with a ready-given "frozen" form but a changing-in-time unique communicative phenomenon and an important part of a language, a thought and human experience that in each separately taken context, is created anew. As an example we would like to present the following utterance:

4. I have \$20 and I feel like I can compete with Bidzina Ivanishvili.

This utterance is a good illustration of a recently created ironic speech act which clearly reveals additional ironic meaning between \$20 and Bidzina Ivanishvili who is a Georgian multi-millionaire. This ironic proposition cannot be successfully decoded without employing the background cultural level. Specifically, all the citizens in Georgia can easily capture the implicit ironic meaning of this utterance as currently when the inflation rate is too high in the country, having \$20 is considered to be equal to being rich. Once again, the adequate decoding of the situation is tied with the relevant background knowledge of the situation.

### **Irony and the speech acts**

In order to discuss the issues of ironic speech acts interpretation we need to say a few words about speech acts in general starting with the traditional school that claims that any language is an inevitable part of action and introduces a speech act as a human interaction of social character acted through words in a form of a request, offer, refusal, compliment, greeting, thanking depending on the situation it is used. (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) A speech act is closely connected to sociocultural factors and is

based on the speaker's intention and psychological state of mind, i.e. relation between the words and the world.

5. It's such a pity that everybody who knows how to rule a government have already been employed as taxi drivers or hairdressers. (François Maurice Adrien Marie Mitterrand (The 21st President of France, 1981-1995))
6. I have 2 Diplomas as I graduated from 2 Universities so I can start working as a taxi driver.

These two examples belong to two different social contexts but share the same meaning. The first describes the situation in France, the other belongs to a Georgian native speaker, but in both countries, we believe, these utterances can be easily decoded as examples of ironic speech acts as the hearer easily identifies the general picture which reflects all three layers of irony perception that are involved in the process of decoding. Based on these examples we can say that interpretation of irony is based on contextual pragmatic grounds on the one hand and on the relations between the speaker and the hearer, on the other. Obviously, these are the cases when the speaker "masks" his utterance which implicitly contains something negative and the hearer, familiar with the situation, decodes the meaning of an utterance as ironic.

As known, there are 5 main speech acts: 1. assertives - the meaning of the utterance is true and the speaker believes in this truth; 2. directives - the speaker tries to make the hearer commit further action in future that can exist in the form of a request, advice, permission or warning, demand, instruction, order, command; 3. expressives - the speaker demonstrates his attitude to the action completed prior to the utterance or his psychological state of mind by expressing negative feelings, complaint, irritation, regret or thanking, gratitude, apology, congratulation, excuses, greetings; 4. commissives - the speaker obligates himself to act in future, that can be an offer, a promise, an oath, a threat, abet, a guarantee and 5. Declarations - in this work we will not look into this group as there is no declarative speech acts being identified as ironic. (Trosborg, 1994)

The table below reflects the percentage of all 4 types of ironic speech acts examples that we came across in our research. It should be emphasised that in our investigation we were not restricted by any parameters that gave us the opportunity to distinguish and illustrate different kinds of utterances conveying the ironic meaning. The data illustrates utterances of "natural situations" representing classical patterns of echoic theory, rhetoric questions, close to sarcasm utterances, ironic compliments from literature, illustrations, online publications, empirical material, TV shows and everyday speech situations in the English language.

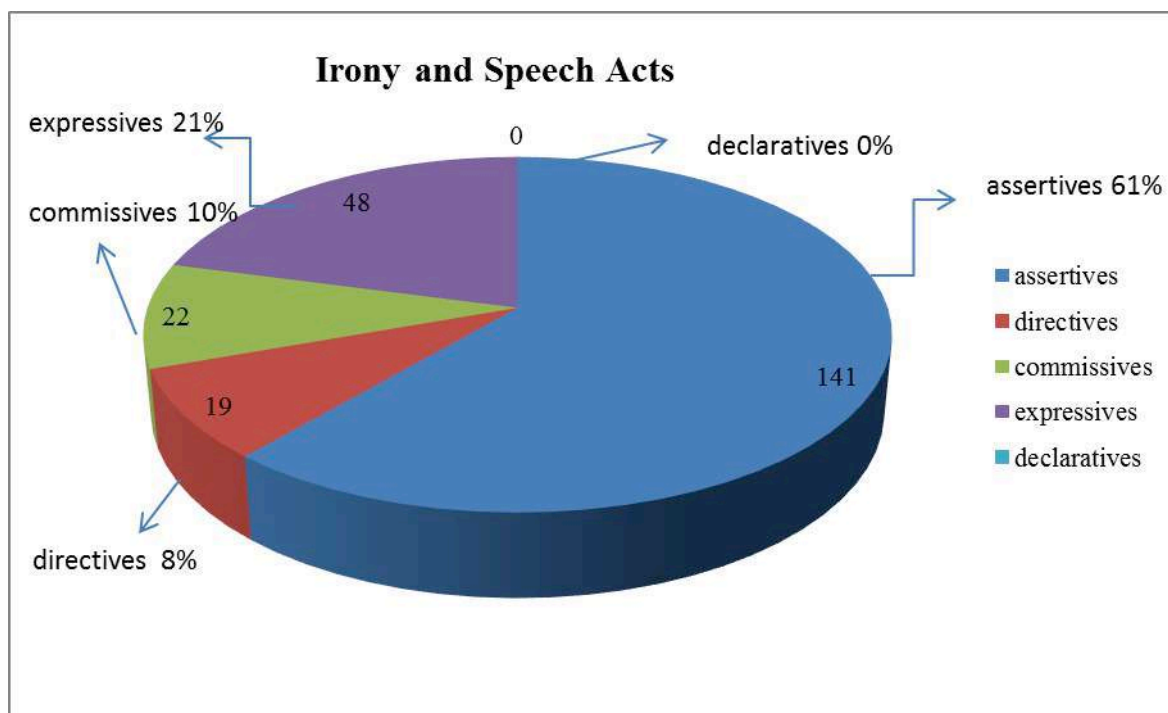


Table 1

The main objective of any ironic speech act is its successful performance when the interlocutors participate in a complex process of semantic, stylistic and pragmatic characteristics in specific contextual situations achieving the hearer's understanding and adequate reaction to the utterance, i.e. a competent decoding of a complicated ironic illocution. Therefore, the best way to interpret ironic utterance is to go further than what was meant in the utterance, to what remains beyond it. The difficulty in this process lies in the speaker's and the hearer's communicative competence. Thus, to decode irony and to understand what the utterance really means in the given context is to adequately "read between the lines". (Colebrook, 2004).

One question that arises here is why the speaker makes a choice in the favour of irony? The answer to this rhetoric question, from our point of view, lies in the following:

1. Every society has its norms and traditions that regulate a communicative behaviour of its citizens banning some kind of verbal actions being offensive.
2. The speaker has an inner intention to create a specific ironic effect which can help him to influence the hearer making him to change his view on a certain situation. Each example of irony shows specific communicative intention to affect, condemn, object to, accuse, blame, reprimand or disapprove.
7. The nice thing about egotists is that they don't talk about other people. (Lucille S. Harper, public figure)
8. To those who are interested in my private life I can say that I am still young and happy and even am not dieting.

By using irony in the above two utterances (7) and (8) the speaker takes an opportunity to express his/her opinion which is not allowed to be delivered directly by the norms of ethic and simultaneously creates a specific ironic effect, which helps him/her to ease the psychological tension and persuade the listener in this specific speech situation not to intrude in other's private life. However, if the hearer lacks the relevant knowledge of socio-cultural values and norms of the society in question, this speech act can fail to achieve its real aim.

According to our research, the speaker uses irony with a certain intention that is reflected in perlocutionary acts, such as alarming, persuading, convincing, misleading to effect the hearer and to make the hearer recognize his opinion and emotion to correctly interpret the utterance containing a wish, an idea or a feeling. (Kenkadze, 2012) "People adjust their language to their addressees and the situation in order to achieve interpersonal effects". (Locher, 2010:2)

Another example (9) has been taken from London weekday newspaper that had an article describing Ed Miliband's tour in London in 2013. He was promoting his cost-of-living campaign when he was greeted by the opposite party fans with eggs thrown at him in protest. In his utterance Ed Miliband makes everybody understand his emotional and psychological state implicitly criticising the situation while explicitly thanking for warm welcome using irony as because of ethical norms he could not have achieved his goal and disapprove the violent action towards him directly.

9. Thanks to all at East St Market for the warm welcome today. Can recommend it for easy availability of eggs. Ed Miliband. (Metro 2013:7)

Each case of ironic utterances is accompanied by the speaker's varying emotional state. For instance, the speaker may feel upset, frantic, cross, irritated, offended, dissatisfied, but also be somewhat sympathetic to the situation, which may cause another problem in the process of irony interpretation. There are very few examples when irony reveals positive connotation. In such instances the speaker usually expresses a positive meaning through the negative proposition, in other words, the speaker means something positive (on the deep layer) by uttering something negative (on the surface layer). This technique, as is known, is referred to as asteism. It contains a great chance for the speaker to be misunderstood if the hearer is not able to grasp irony in the utterance (due to the lack of the shared cultural knowledge) and, as a result, decodes the utterance as a kind of criticism which, in its turn, leads to negative emotions. Our research follows the opinion that positive irony happens very seldom (Brown, 1980; Attardo, 2000; Booth, 1974) which must be caused by its specific nature and particular difficulty of decoding.

We came across a few examples of "positive" irony which have one thing in common: they can all be adequately decoded only if both participants of the communicative act, the speaker and the hearer, share common cultural knowledge and, in addition, the hearer has an appropriate ability to make out the difference between the speaker's implicit and explicit meanings.

One of the examples is from Sophie Kinsella's "I've got your number". The parents of Magnus and Felix came back home after being away for some time. Their elder son

greet them saying that he missed his Mum and Dad but the younger son sincerely mentions that he did not. Mother intentionally uses irony in a negative form by calling her son a “terrible boy” at the same time expressing positive feeling of love.

10. I'd also like to say a big “welcome back” to Mum and Dad. Magnus raises a glass and they both nod back. We missed you while you were away!  
I didn't, chime in Felix, and Wanda gives a bark of laughter.  
Of course you didn't, you terrible boy!. (Kinsella, 2012:97)

Another example is taken from Hemingway's novel “A Farewell to Arms”.

11. You are such a silly boy. She kissed me. (Hemingway, 1977:76).

In this sentence Katherine speaks to Henry and kisses him when he, being in hospital after the operation on his leg, asks her if she still loves him. The speaker (Katherine) is successful in using irony as the hearer (Henry) correctly decodes her intention to cuddle him. As we mentioned above, utterances of “positive” irony are always vague and ambiguous and there is always possibility for the hearer to misunderstand the speaker or to interpret the irony in a different way.

12. Do you love me still on these water-worn, cold and old stones?  
Yes. I'd like to spread a bed roll here and prove it.  
That would be more barbarous than the pigeon shooter.  
I'm barbarous, the Colonel said.  
Not always.  
Thank you for the not always. (Hemingway, 1977:119)

This situation (12) contains two ironic utterances one of which illustrates asteism. Renata and Colonel are in love with each other. They are having a walk in the city centre when Colonel ironically refers to himself as barbarous in order to invite praise words from Renata. She correctly understands his words but replies “not always” that provokes the second ironic utterance from the Colonel, in the form of explicit thank you act, for not admiring him enough.

In the following example (13) we can see that, according to the *mention theory of irony* interpretation, (Sperber and Wilson, 1981) Andrew echoes Christine words in the ironic utterance revealing its propositional negation and his intention to imply the opposite meaning to the words “nice time”. This utterance represents an assertive speech act.

13. Christine remarked happily: “We did have a nice time, didn't we, love?”  
“Oh, a very nice time!” Andrew said bitterly. (Cronin, 1993:41).

Another example of assertive ironic utterance we would like to present is taken from Mark Twain's “The Prince and the Pauper”: “The Master of Ceremonies was not present; there was no one who felt safe to venture upon this uncharted sea, or risk the attempt to solve this solemn problem.”

14. Alas! There was no Hereditary Scratcher. (Twain, 2011: 36).



In this utterance the situational irony that bears not the opposite, as in 'usual' cases, but different interpretation to the meaning delivered by words when the intention being explicit shows that in those times the King had Masters of Ceremonies, in other words, Masters of Everything, who could assist him in any situation. However, when Tom (disguised as Prince Edward) wanted to scratch his nose and he did not know what to do, there was no Hereditary Scratcher who could help the king by advising how to behave in such a situation without violating an ancient tradition or a custom. Tom's expectations are violated, he criticises the system of "Masters-Helpers" and this is a necessary condition for irony to exist and for the hearer to comprehend it. Overall, this act can only be decoded successfully only if the listener/reader has adequate background cultural knowledge of the Court of that period.

In the below example (15) we deal with indirect speech act of commissives which contains information in the form of a question as the explicit act and a promise and threat "to be nasty" as the implicit one.

15. "He can't go. How am I supposed to be nasty to him if he isn't here?" (De Bernieres, 2001:28)

For this ironic utterance to be successfully decoded, the speaker (the Doctor) sincerely reveals his psychological state and shows that he utterly dislikes the person who, having invaded his country, was going to stay at his place. The doctor honestly desires to encourage the captain stay at his house although his question (15) is insincere as posing it, he already knows the answer. Thus, in this context, the question becomes a rhetoric question, which represents an interrogative syntactic structure but doesn't ask for any information and contains a discrepancy between the form and the function. Being the most favourite rhetoric tool of expression, irony gives the hearer in this example a deeper level of meaning and spices up the utterance.

One more example of commissives is the following.

16. "When I was a boy I was told that anybody could become President; I'm beginning to believe it." (Clarence Darrow, an American lawyer (1857 – 1938).

Irony here (16) works out very well with different layers of meanings hidden in it particularly when the speaker, Clarence Darrow, talks about becoming a President enriching the utterance with an obviously negative connotation.

Our research convinced us that speech acts become ironic only in the context and in order to better understand the process of irony interpretation, it is necessary to learn more about its specific contextual parameters. Specific context of irony implies its communicative purpose, situation, (official, neutral), cultural traditions (that is ability to express his/her negative emotions and opinions), social characteristics (gender, profession), psychological aspects (mood, emotion), physical characteristics, socio-psychological relationships between the speaker and the hearer, their belief (friendly, relative, strange, cold, hostile) and their subjective perception and finally assists the hearer to determine the discrepancy between the speaker's intention to say something

and literal meaning of the words he uses. Austin makes it clear that “words need to be “explained” by the context in which they are used.” (Austin, 1962: 100)

To illustrate this, we would like to give a good example of expressives:

17. I love Germany so. (LaFeber, 1994: 491)

Taken separately, without the context, this sentence can't be analysed from the point of view of speech acts theory, as we don't know whether it is an oath, a promise, a remark, a suggestion or a thanking until we know the context it is used in. What the speech acts have in common is their propositional content, what they differ in is their illocutionary force. [Bierwisch, 1980]. Only after the context (decoded with the help of the deep and background cultural knowledge layers of the model suggested by us) is added to the proposition, the hearer interprets the utterance as ironic:

18. “I love Germany so”, a Frenchman wrote sarcastically. “Every day I thank God that there are two of them”. (LaFeber, 1994: 491)

The Frenchman speaks about Germany as an occupant country during World War II and shows his dislike to the existence of two parts of Germany. The hearer who does not have a specific knowledge on historical context, will not be able to interpret irony in this utterance adequately.

19. I believe there is something out there watching us. Unfortunately, it's the government. (Woody Allen, an American actor, writer, director)

Another example of expressives is the utterance in which Woody Allen expresses his psychological state revealing the feeling of deep regret that he does not believe in existence of extra-terrestrial life but is being controlled by the administration. In this case is not necessary for the hearer it to possess the extra-linguistic knowledge to decode this ironic intention.

In the light of speech act theory the speaker uses directives in the form of a command, request, advice, warning, demand or instruction to force the hearer to perform the action in future which is specified by the intentional state of proposition of the utterance.

20. Please don't kill me, I am innocent. (De Bernieres, 2001:27).

This is a request not to be killed which is pronounced by the Captain of the enemy army, the invader, Captain Corelli, who entered the house he lived in and saw a young woman, a native citizen of the occupied Greek island with a large cooking knife preparing dinner in the kitchen. The way he uttered these words using dramatic pronunciation and intonation is also worth mentioning “The captain fell to his knees before her and exclaimed dramatically” (De Bernieres, 2001:27).

Two other examples of a directive speech act were taken from everyday life. In both cases, in order to adequately interpret the utterance, the hearer needs firstly to assess “the ironiness” of the utterance, then understand the disagreement between the context of the uttered saying and its ironic implication (a hero who rescues wine (21) and a

request to be tortured (22)) and finally has to have enough background knowledge to identify the speaker's belief and communicative intention to advise. In example (21) the words belong to an employee who is looking forward to having a relaxing weekend with his friends enjoying his time and drinking wine. In example (22) the speaker reveals his wish to live or to die a sudden death by saying the opposite.

21. It is Friday time to be a hero and rescue some wine trapped in this bottle.

22. How do you prefer to die: a sudden death or torture?-Torture, please.

Thus, every ironic speech act consists of the members of the communicative act (the speaker and the hearer), the utterance itself which has three planes of expression: explicit, implicit (with the context-bound ironical meaning) and the background cultural knowledge plane. In addition, an ironic speech act possesses its specific communicative goal and emotional expressiveness. Through all these we have outlined a further way of our study of the ironic utterance interpretation in a specific context taking into consideration that a successful pragmatic decoding of the ironic speech act example reflects the main goal of the speaker: to be correctly understood.

## **Conclusion**

In modern linguistics ironic speech acts theory has become crucial and important focusing on speaker's intention, belief and attitude, context, illocutionary force, specific speech situations as the process of defining of ironic connotation is impossible without employing concepts of pragmatics.

To summarize, having taken into consideration that pragmatics deals with speech acts and the context these speech acts are used in, we can assume that the most difficult issue in the interpretation process of ironic speech acts lies, in the first instance, in identifying the logical relation between two meanings of the ironic utterance (expressed and implicated, surface and deep) which emphasises discrepancy between expectations and the actual turn of events. In the second instance, it lies in understanding which one of two levels is true or false following by a competent decoding of the utterance that meant something different/opposite to what was said based on shared cultural background level as cross-cultural research suggests that speakers of any two given communities can understand irony differently. Other problems of adequate irony interpretation that we tackled in this paper and are considered to be critical in the process of a complex ironic speech act perception are caused by mental ability of the hearer to detect, assess and understand complicated aspects of the speaker's beliefs, attitudes towards the utterance and intention to communicate and reveal certain negative (rarely, positive) moods.

Thus, for a full understanding of irony and for its adequate interpretation, on the basis of the model of interpretation of three layers suggested by us. Specifically, on the surface, explicit layer the interlocutor will hear the proposition which opposes general meaning of the situation; on the implicit, deep and background cultural levels he/she will find clues about the real meaning and if the listener is ready enough, he/she will be able to decode the meaning of the utterance successfully.

To sum up, irony interpretation is a complex mechanism of the process called psychological adaptation of the human being. “Irony itself is an occupational hazard of being human, present in every age.” (Fernandez and Huber, 2001).



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*Negotiating the Syllabus: Autonomy and the Teaching of Literature in French Lycées*

Ashira B. Greene, University College London, United Kingdom

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**Abstract**

Although multiple benefits of teaching literature in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom have been cited in contemporary academic discourse, including gaining cultural awareness, enhancing creative abilities and developing critical skills in a second language, there has been a dearth of empirical work on what resources teachers actually use in their courses. Studying the use of literature in secondary school classes provides valuable insights, as language courses at this level are part of the standard curriculum and secondary school students have typically become fluent enough to begin studying literary texts. In France, the role of literature teaching is in flux, currently existing both in the periphery of the general English course and leading the Literature in a Foreign Language course for students in the literary section of Baccalauréat preparation. Within these spaces, teachers must follow the national objectives for their courses, though they are able to make their own choices about what texts to bring into their classes and how to teach them. This paper shares part of a mixed-methods study on how literature is taught in French EFL lycée classes that included face-to-face interviews, textbook analyses, and a survey of more than 250 teachers. In the data, teachers raised concerns about teaching literature and described how they have overcome various challenges in order to expose their students to exciting authentic materials.

Keywords: EFL, Secondary schools, Teachers, Literature, Mixed-methods, France

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## 1. Introduction

The teaching of literature in the English as a Foreign Language classroom has been credited with the improvement of students' linguistic competence in multiple ways. Early on, De Huneus (1955) writes about creative problem solving, proposing that engagement with literature helps readers to see the differences between one culture and another and to consider ways of working through those differences. McKay (1982) expands on this idea and proposes that literature has the ability to teach tolerance as well as enhancing creativity through engagement with cultural differences and personal writing as well.

Pattison (1963) takes an altogether different position, claiming that literature provides similar contexts to those that students may encounter in real life. As he writes "reading and dramatizing and inventing stories is not only livelier than drill and pattern practice and exercises: it is more like the language in actual use" (p. 62). In his view, literature provides substance for further thought as well as the consideration of hypothetical situations where certain vocabulary could be used.

Contemporary discourse further emphasizes the linguistic and emotional benefits of teaching literature, as well as a potential return to De Huneus' (1955) original point about individual creativity. Al-Tamimi (2012) writes that teaching literature exposes students to different grammatical structures. Lazar (1994) promotes literature for the "intellectual, emotional and linguistic" skills it can help students to exercise through classroom activities and Sargsyan and Sivasubramaniam (2013) agree, stating that literature can be used to support students in expressing emotions and points of view in the classroom. Overall, it has a great deal of potential for aiding in student growth and language acquisition, but the teacher is responsible for providing a way to work with this material. While describing the benefits of literature is inspiring, finding out what considerations teachers take into account when using this material adds another layer of understanding to this matter.

This paper reports on interviews with secondary English teachers in France, who were enthusiastic about using literature while also being honest about the challenges they face in the classroom, highlighting national objectives, student abilities, and personal knowledge and interest in the content as some of their considerations. What develops is a nuanced view of this material, which is made that much more interesting by the fact that these teachers are able to exercise a great deal of autonomy in regards to the structure of their courses. First, the paper provides background information regarding ideas of teacher knowledge frameworks and autonomy. Then the current context of the EFL curriculum in secondary schools in France is explained, along with the framework for the study. Finally, data from the teachers is provided and analysed, and issues for future research are proposed.



## 2. Pedagogical content knowledge and teacher autonomy

In studying teachers' practices, researchers have become interested not only in what teachers actually do in the course of a classroom session, but of the mental formulations and sociocultural contexts that affect their practices (Breen, Hird, Milton, Oliver & Thwaite, 2001, Graden, 1996). Multiple names for the understandings teachers bring to formulating their classroom actions and activities exist, including personal knowledge constructs (Pajares, 1992), personal practical knowledge (Golombek, 1998), teacher perspectives, and teacher beliefs (Borg, 2003). The primary distinctions between these terms are their emphases on attitudes, classroom applications, and the ways in which teachers explain or justify their practice. These elements lead to a teacher's overall beliefs about her profession, subject matter, and students. For this paper, however, Shavelson and Stern's (1981) term pedagogical content knowledge is the most appropriate, as it continues to be used in relation to knowledge of teaching and knowledge of content (Abell, 2008), and provides the possibility of active negotiation of these two bodies of knowledge in making decisions regarding the material to present in the classroom and the activities to facilitate.

The negotiation of content, an awareness of teaching methods, and decisions made about what material to bring into the classroom as well as the structure of activities could be seen as an exercise of teacher autonomy. Benson (2008) asserts that a teacher's view of autonomy is "primarily concerned with institutional and classroom learning arrangements within established curricula" (pg. 15). His view of autonomy is further emboldened by the idea of emancipation from classroom and institutional constraints, echoed by Trebbi (2008), who sees the curriculum as part of the institutional constraints placed on teachers. In this paper, teacher autonomy refers to the independent decisions a teacher makes about her teaching, taking into account her knowledge of the subject, knowledge of teaching, a critical appraisal of student ability and an understanding of curricular objectives. Or, to use Trebbi's (2008) terminology, how a teacher navigates internal and external constraints to structure and deliver a course.

Smith and Erdoğan (2008) focus on three dimensions of decision-making: what a teacher does, her ability to take action, and her freedom from external control over her actions, while La Ganza (2008) proposes a model of 4 "dynamic interrelational spaces...all of which are connected socially and culturally, as part of the same society, and psychologically, through the common element of the teacher" (pg. 72).

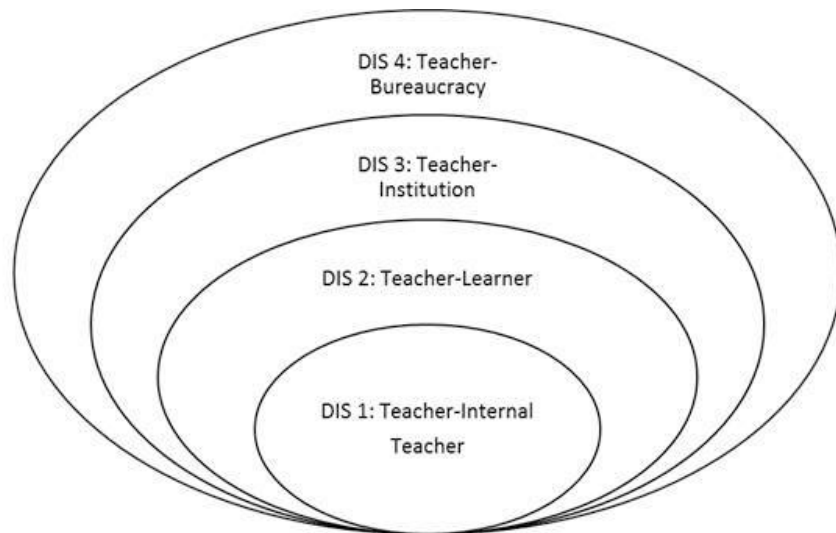


Figure 1. La Ganza's (2008, pg. 72) model of teacher autonomy

In La Ganza's model, autonomy is exercised in regards to the following elements:

1. The teacher's own attitudes and personal relationships
2. The way the teacher relates to students
3. The teacher's institution, which provides a frame in which she can do her work
4. The institutions and bureaucracies outside of the teacher's school, which provide guidelines of how her work should be done

La Ganza's model provides a useful way in which to view the dimensions of teacher's decision-making in general, but could be improved if it were brought down to the level of an individual course. In this study, which looks at secondary English teachers in France, the situation is similar to that of the one described in Linder (2000), where the Ministry of Education's curriculum specifies contents and skills objectives but does not prescribe the routes one must take nor the classroom organization or procedures one must follow to achieve the specified final objectives. Thus, in this case La Ganza's third and fourth dimensions can be consolidated into one larger dimension of curricular objectives. The following model provides a way to consider teacher autonomy regarding an individual course.

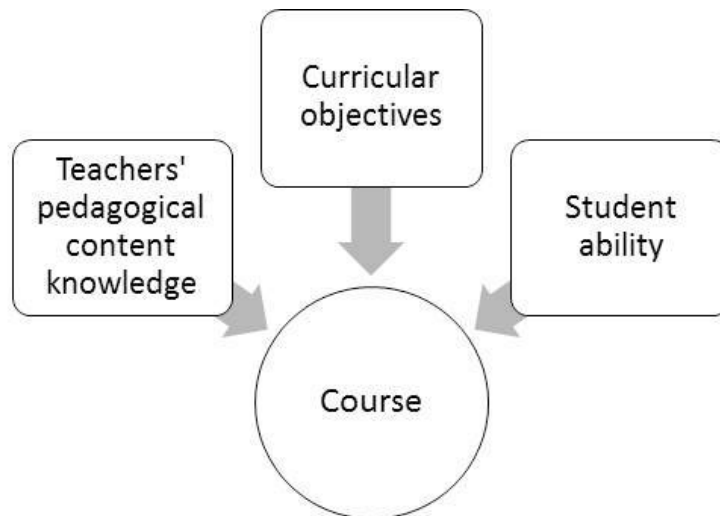


Figure 2. A model of the issues affecting a teacher's decision-making in regards to a particular course

In this model, the course is at the center, and it is affected by 3 dimensions:

1. The teacher's pedagogical content knowledge, defined as her knowledge of teaching methods as well as the material to be studied
2. Her perception of the ability of her students, which affects her choice of activity and materials
3. Curricular objectives, which provide goals for her to meet throughout the course

As with La Ganza's (2008) model, the teacher is the constant, and her continual negotiations of her own knowledge, her students' abilities, and institutional guidelines create a dynamic situation that actively influences the structure of the course. The course itself is not fixed, but instead constructed by the teacher.

### **3. The English curriculum in the French lycée**

At this juncture, it would be helpful to understand recent changes to the English curriculum in French secondary schools. In April 2010, the French Ministry of Education published new goals for the teaching of foreign languages in *Seconde*, the first year of secondary school (MEN, 2010a). The intention was to have students working towards independent language use by the end of the second year of secondary school. Literature was referred to under the heading "Entry to Writing," where the Ministry articulated that gaining skills in writing should help students enjoy both reading and writing in a foreign language. Students should be encouraged to explore key themes in texts through class work and they should find, with the help of teachers, authentic materials to study in class (MEN, 2010a, p. 2). Multiple types of texts are recommended for study, including excerpts of key literary works, novellas, and newspaper articles. (MEN, 2010a, p. 3).

The document also includes a section on “Cultural Enrichment” (MEN, 2010a, p. 4). Art and literature are said to provide a special access to understanding society. It is asserted that studying authentic materials in all mediums as cultural products of a society will promote this understanding. According to the document, these materials should expose students to different schools of thought in the humanities and social sciences. Furthermore, the document formally endorses the connection between language and culture and states that an understanding of language cannot be made outside of context. The materials used to support cultural enrichment should provide students with an understanding of the social and linguistic heterogeneity of the speakers of the given language. Gaining this understanding will help to teach tolerance and provide a greater awareness of current issues in the world (MEN, 2010a, pp. 4-5).

Another significant change to the secondary school curriculum was the addition of a course on the teaching of literature in foreign languages for students in the final two years of secondary school who have chosen to follow the Literature section of high school studies (MEN, 2010b). The course, entitled “Littérature étrangère en langue étrangère,” or LELE, began during the 2011-2012 school year. The language of the literature to be studied is not specified nor are specific texts prescribed for use. The goal of the course is to expose students to the main literary movements over the course of history through the study of multiple genres and types of texts including memoirs, legends, war novels, poetry and plays. Texts should cover the themes of identity; discovery of the other, love and friendship; avatars, heroes and anti-heroes; history and literature; voyage and exile, and imagination (MEN, 2013). The documents describe ambitious goals for developing student abilities in oral comprehension and writing through this course.

While the Ministry of Education documents propose using literature as a means to improve student abilities in comprehension, writing and cultural competence, it is essential to discover how teachers have chosen to use literature to further these aims.

#### **4. The research aims**

This study is a direct response to Paran (2006, 2008), who identifies a clear gap in empirical research on the use of literature in the classroom. Furthermore, the teaching of English in French lycées is an under-researched field. While Afanas'yeva (2012) looked at the state of Russian teaching in France with a country-wide study, no similar study has been undertaken for English prior to this one.

The research methods used follow the work of Gilroy (1995), Janssen and Rijlaarsdam (1996), Alvstad and Castro (2009), and Fjellestad (2011). Gilroy (1995) interviewed university-level English teachers in the UK about their use of literature. Janssen and Rijlaarsdam (1996) surveyed Dutch teachers in the Netherlands about their goals when using literature. Alvstad and Castro (2009) collected syllabi and comments from university-level Spanish teachers in Sweden about the role of literature in their courses, and Fjellestad (2011) looked at popular English textbooks published for the Norwegian market and analysed the amount and types of literature present.

Taking these studies into account, secondary school English teachers in and around three large cities in France were interviewed, online questionnaires were distributed to teachers throughout the country, and textbooks that were frequently mentioned in both of the interactive data forms were collected. In support of this plan, 2107 schools throughout France were contacted, encompassing all lycées which taught the general curriculum of Sciences, Economics and Literature. The resulting sample of 301 teachers represents staff throughout the country. This paper reports on interview data collected from 34 teachers.

## **5. Data and analysis**

The interviews were intended to gather information about teachers' understanding of literature as well as their approaches and attitudes towards it. In order to do this, two approaches were taken. First, teachers were given a questionnaire to fill out and asked to think aloud while completing it, and then they were asked a series of 17 questions in a semi-structured format. The questionnaire requested information regarding the frequency of use of excerpts of novels, whole novels, plays, poetry, and short stories as well as general information regarding the teacher's opinions of these different types of literature and whether they were more difficult to teach than non-literary texts.

The intent of the interview questions was to find out the following information:

1. What are teachers' criteria for the choice of literary texts in their classes?
2. What do the teachers see as challenges when teaching literary texts?

Between March and June 2014, 34 teachers in and around 3 large cities in France were interviewed. The 34 interviewees were largely experienced urban teachers. Over two-thirds of the group had 12 or more years of experience. Twenty nine of them held advanced degrees, and 14 of them had passed the Agrégation exam, the most competitive teaching certification in France. A few of them had spent time in English-speaking countries. Ten had spent some time on an exchange program in university, and 10 had been French teaching assistants in English-speaking countries.

### **5.1 Criteria for the choice of text**

The criteria that interviewees gave for their choice of literary texts can be grouped into 3 main categories: the syllabus, accessibility and personal taste. In their accounts, curricular objectives and student abilities together provide a concrete frame for their decisions regarding what texts to bring into the classroom, with personal taste providing an emotional dimension affecting their choices.

#### **5.1.1 Syllabus: "It's got to be coherent"**

17 interviewees mentioned the syllabus as a key factor in their choice of text. Some spoke about the national curriculum directly, as Liliane did when she explained "the guidelines from the Education Nationale are that you have to organize your lessons in sequences,

and each sequence has got a theme, basically. So the idea is just to pick up the right documents, the things that will concur with your theme, and which you'll be able to use properly in your class according to your students." Others spoke more broadly about this issue, referring to themes they studied or, as Mathilde said quite generally, "it's got to be coherent with the rest of what I'm doing."

### **5.1.2 Accessibility: "Not too easy...but not too difficult either"**

Although the actual accessibility of the texts mentioned in the interviews could be debated, 16 of the interviewees mentioned striking a balance in some way between the level of difficulty and the length of the text while taking student ability into account. Nadine explained that the determination of a text's difficulty is nuanced by the fact that her class has a range of English abilities. She explained "not too easy, because the students will get bored. But not too difficult either—that means I would have to spend hours and hours on the same text, and that gets boring, too. Some of them are very good. Some of them have very real difficulties understanding English, reading in English, so I have to think of texts that suit, you know, students of different levels."

### **5.1.3 Personal taste: "It has to speak to me"**

12 interviewees mentioned personal taste as one of their criteria. Georgette spoke directly about factoring in her personal taste to the constraints of the syllabus, saying "it's texts that I've loved and that I want to sort of want to transmit to them. There's not much sort of thinking about it, as long as I'm given one of those themes, I try to find...just texts I love." Annick and Veronique considered that their personal taste would affect the students' enjoyment of the text. Annick argued "it has to speak to me. I'm going to live with it for a while, so if I haven't found any redeeming quality in the text, I'm not going to live with it, and I can't expect the kids to want to" and Veronique asked "if I like it, why wouldn't they like it? So now, it will be my job to try to transmit this pleasure to them. Say "look at that. I read something very interesting, and I want you to read it, too. And I'm sure you'll enjoy it. You know, trust me."

## **5.2 Challenges of using literature**

Although the teachers interviewed had a strongly positive attitude towards the use of literature in their courses, they pointed out multiple challenges that they take into consideration when using this material. The challenges raised were the fact that literature is a complex resource, concerns about student ability, recent changes to the syllabus caused by the 2011 educational reform, and the teachers' own confidence in their abilities. These are very similar issues to the criteria affecting their choice of material, thus showing the depth of these categories.

### **5.2.1 Content: "There's always something behind the words"**

Almost two-thirds of the interviewees mentioned a concern with content; namely, that teaching literature was in some way more difficult than teaching other types of texts. The

majority of this group noted that what is distinctive about literature is that grasping the words and the storyline is not sufficient to get a concrete sense of what the text is about. Nadine proposed that “you want students to understand what’s behind the words. Because there’s always something behind the words, usually, if it’s a good text.” Yvonne articulated this issue more clearly when she said that “you know, when they just understand it, it’s very frustrating because it’s not the goal. The goal would be to—you know, to catch the beauty, the music, the poetry, the subjectivity. And they rarely do, you know? They get the message, the story...okay, ‘I know, I understood, I get the story.’ But no, there’s more to it than just the story.”

### **5.2.2 Students’ abilities: “They don’t make links”**

The second greatest challenge, raised by half of the teachers, was the students’ lack of ability, whether due to a lack of vocabulary, critical thinking skills, or cultural knowledge. Leonie pointed out that “if they want to read books that are supposed to be for them—it’s too difficult for them, and if they want to read something in English which is at their level, the story is too simple for them.” Yvonne highlighted weak critical thinking abilities, saying that “they don’t make links, you know.” Manon felt similarly, noting that it “was difficult, you know, getting them to think.”

Estelle explained that a lack of cultural references caused students to miss out, stating that “sometimes they can just be lost and misunderstand a text because of a few cultural elements, historical elements that they haven’t heard of.” Noelle discussed the necessity of providing background information when teaching Pygmalion, explaining that “the students didn’t understand what happened that day at that time, so they had to go back and understand what happened to women and to--the political and social issues and the position and the situation of women at that time.”

### **5.2.3 Curricular objectives: “It’s a lot of pressure”**

The third major challenge, mentioned in more than a quarter of the interviews, centered on the national curriculum and preparation for the examinations. Prior to the reform, teachers had more autonomy in choosing units for their classes, but with the most recent reform came the introduction of 4 themes to be covered over the course of the year in the general Première and Terminale classes and 6 themes to be covered over the two year LELE course. Ambre noted that “it’s a lot of pressure,” and Estelle argued that “the curriculum does not give us enough leeway to focus on poetry or literature and we do a little bit of everything.”

The LELE examination also came under scrutiny, with teachers feeling that the students were given an overly ambitious curriculum compared with what they were expected to present at the Baccalauréat. Faye noted that, with the examination, the nature of teaching literature has become more utilitarian. Every text taught in class becomes an opportunity for students to prepare their portfolios for the examination, and she said that “if you study an excerpt from a novel...You have to see what questions they’re going to raise about it; how they’re going to use it.” Constance combined the utilitarian realities of examination

preparation with the feelings of being limited by the syllabus in saying that “when you’re doing it for the exam, it restricts your possibilities because the students have to produce this and that and to be able to present it in front of the jury, so you really have to make sure they’re ready for the exam. And you have to restrict the things you would like to do yourself.”

#### **5.2.4 Teachers’ abilities: “I wouldn’t know what to say”**

A lack of confidence emerged in almost a quarter of the interviews. This lack of confidence often led to a teacher choosing not to use a particular type of literature, or avoiding discussions of style. Serge, who uses both novel excerpts and plays, felt at a loss with poetry. He said that “poetry--I cannot teach poetry. I just can’t. I don’t know if it’s because I never had a good teacher who taught poetry in school or at university...I wouldn’t know what to do or what to say.”

Cécile and Claire echoed Serge’s feeling that he had not been fully prepared to teach literature while in university. Cécile said that “it’s a lot of analysis, so it’s harder for me because I’m not a Literature major, so I’m not that used to studying poetry, and so it’s difficult for me to help students actually enjoy studying poetry.” Claire felt similarly about drama, admitting that “normally, I specialize in grammar and phonetics. So I love novels, but I’m not good at drama, and I don’t feel confident. Of course, I could try—find a play and just teach it, but I don’t think I know enough to do it.” Veronique’s lack of training led to her unease with discussions of style. She said that “I’m not really 100% confident about my knowledge about literature and how to analyze a text. But when I’m sure, yes, I talk about the style and some of the elements that characterize the style. That’s what I try to do, as much as I can. But when I’m not sure, I don’t talk about it.”

## **6. Conclusion**

The use of literature in the secondary English classroom is dependent on teachers and the decisions they make regarding what materials to provide and how to teach them, while factoring in national guidelines and student ability. In French lycées, teachers have a great deal of autonomy and are allowed to bring in documents they find personally affecting as well as being able to structure activities as they see fit in order to build linguistic competence in reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The teachers interviewed felt strongly that literature was a valuable resource that added to their courses. They spoke about finding ways to make literature relevant to their units, using texts that provided a reasonable challenge, and choosing pieces that they personally enjoyed. At the same time, they admitted that literary texts are challenging for their students, the objectives from the Ministry of Education may limit what they are able to do, and their assessments of their own knowledge may also confine them. The data reveals that the choice of what material to use is bounded by these three elements, which provide reasons to use literature as well as obstacles to overcome.



Admittedly, this study is reliant on the teachers' own views and does not analyse the way the material is used in the classroom. Future studies could contrast the accounts of teachers with classroom observations. Additionally, work could be done to consider whether student autonomy is a goal of the English teacher in France and, if so, whether it has a direct or indirect relationship with the teachers' own feelings regarding the way they do their work.



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## *The Reflections of Mental Processes in Language: Verbs Of Perception*

Fatma Özkan Kurt, Istanbul University, Turkey

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### **Abstract**

Words relating to actions – which occupy an important place among different types of words – not only provide information about the occupation, existence, action and current situation of an entity, but also confer a concept of person and time through suffixes. These verbs relating to action can have meaning associated with physical and non-physical activities. Examples of action verbs reflecting physical activities include “to run,” “to walk,” to “jump,” etc.; while action verbs reflecting mental activities include “to think,” “to understand,” “to know,” etc. Such verbs which describe mental processes are known as mental verbs.

Mental processes are further sub-divided into three different stages, which are perception, affection and cognition. Perception verbs formed during the perception stage (the first of these three stages) are associated with sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. The aim of this study was to identify and evaluate the perception stage as well as the perception verbs associated with this stage in Modern Turkish. Our study was performed by using the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the Turkish Language Association’s (TDK’s) Dictionary. Nearly 71 perception verbs were identified in this dictionary. The verbs, which involve the use of the five basic senses for perception, were evaluated using Viberg’s study of hierarchy. Thus, within this general hierarchy, we were able to identify the status and position of perception verbs in Modern Turkish

Key words: Mental verbs, perception, Modern Turkish, mental process

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## Introduction

In this paper, we first provide a classification regarding mental processes, and the mental verbs associated with these processes. We then describe the process of perception, which constitutes the first stage of the human mental process. Perception, which is performed with the aid of the five sensory organs, is expressed through the use of perception verbs, a form of linguistic element. We observed that most previous studies regarding perception verbs have focused more on the semantic aspect of these verbs; several examples of these studies are provided in this paper. We then provide a description of a hierarchy regarding these verbs developed by Viberg, who studied the semantic aspects of perception verbs. By taking this hierarchy into account, we investigated the perception verbs in Modern Turkish relating to five senses. A list of verbs perceived through these senses is provided at the end of this paper.

### 1. Mental Process and Mental Verbs

The human mind is based on highly complex system that operates according to a certain framework. This system enables us to perceive events and the surrounding world. The processes of this system are entirely mental, and is mainly the subject of study of psychologists. Although linguists have also studied these processes, their studies have generally focused on how these verbs were acquired/developed. The mental process involves various stages, and these stages might be described or designated differently by different researchers. This is due to the fact that mental processes represent a very large and complex area (Ayan; Türkdil 2015: 98). Based on their comprehensive study on mental processes, Booth and Hall have developed up with the following classification:

1. Perception: The speaker reports the act of perception.
2. Recognition: The speaker acknowledges familiarity with some person or concept.
3. Recall: The speaker refers to factual information that he or she remembers.
4. Understanding: The speaker refers to a conceptual framework or reasoning.
5. Metacognition: The speaker focuses on discussing the awareness of mental acts.
6. Evaluation: The speaker refers to attitudes and beliefs about the truth of statements. (Booth and Hall 1995: 532).

Emotions, thoughts and perceptions that appear during mental processes are expressed through the use of verbs, a linguistic element. Such verbs used in language are called *mental verbs*. Numerous previous studies have been performed regarding these verbs. The mental verbs classifications developed or identified in these studies generally have parallels with actual mental processes.

Although Levin does not organize mental verbs separately under a different group in his study on the classification of verbs, he nevertheless classifies verbs relating to mental processes as follows:

- ...
- 30. Verbs of Perception
- 30.1. See Verbs
- 30.2. Sight Verbs

30.3. Peer Verbs

30.4. Stimulus Subject Perception Verbs.

31. Psych-Verbs (Verbs of Psychological State).

...

(Levin 1993: 185).

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 172), there are seven different process types in clause in representation. Mental processes are ones of the six processes proposed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 197). Regarding to mental processes, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 208) divide four classes of verbs that are included in mental processes, namely cognition, perception, desiderative, and emotion. Cognition processes convey 'thinking'. Verbs of cognition include the verbs of thinking, knowing, and understanding. Perception processes convey 'perceiving through the five senses' (Gerot and Wignell, 1995: 58). Verbs of perception include the verbs of hearing, seeing, tasting, and smelling. Regarding to desideration type, Halliday also mentions this as one of the types of mental processes in his latest version of *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* that was published in 2004. On the other hand, instead of using the same term, he uses the term desiderative as the type of verb such as want, desire, and wish. (Wanodyatama P. et al. 2013: 78-79)

The Grammar Book entitled *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, co-authored by *Douglas Biber, Stig Johansson, Geoffrey Leech, Susan Conrad and Edward Finegan*, provides a classification of verbs according to their meanings in the chapter regarding verbs. In the third item of this chapter, mental verbs such as "think, like, know, want, decide, work, believe, feel, prefer..." are defined as verbs that do not involve a physical action, and which instead have a more semantic meaning. Mental verbs can reflect communication (reading, hearing), certain emotional statuses, attitudes, wishes, desires (loving, wanting) and cognitive situations (thinking, knowing) (Biber et al., 2004:362-364; as cited by Şahin 2012:51)

According to Croft, the class of mental verbs (also known as 'psych verbs') includes verbs of perception, cognition and emotion. (Croft 1993: 55)

Turkish researchers studying the subject of mental verbs have also developed certain classifications regarding this subject.

Yaylagül evaluated mental verbs in Old Turkish by classifying them under four groups;

1. Perception verbs
2. Emotion verbs
3. Cognition verbs
4. Description verbs (Yaylagül 2005: 24)

Erdem similarly evaluated the semantic aspect of mental verbs in Turkmen Turkish, classifying them according to the following groups;

1. Perception
2. Cognition
3. Affection

Şahin also classified mental verbs in Turkmen Turkish as follows:

1. Cognition verbs
2. Affection verbs
3. Perception verbs (Şahin 2012: 52)

## 2. The Perception Process, and Verbs relating to Perception

Perception is defined as “sensing and comprehending an event or object through the use of the sense organs” (TDK Dictionary 2011: 92). Perception also has a similar definition in the Macmillan Dictionary: “to notice something using your senses (=your ability to see, hear, smell etc.)”. (<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/perception>). As reflected by these definitions, perception constitutes the first step of the mental processes that enables us to make comments about the surrounding world. This process, which is referred to as perception process, involves the conscious or unconscious transfer with the aid of sense organs of stimuli from our surroundings and our body to the language centers in our brain for interpretation. In addition to being a physiological event, the process of perception is also strongly affected by the past experiences, the expectations, and the motivations of the individual

### Perception Process

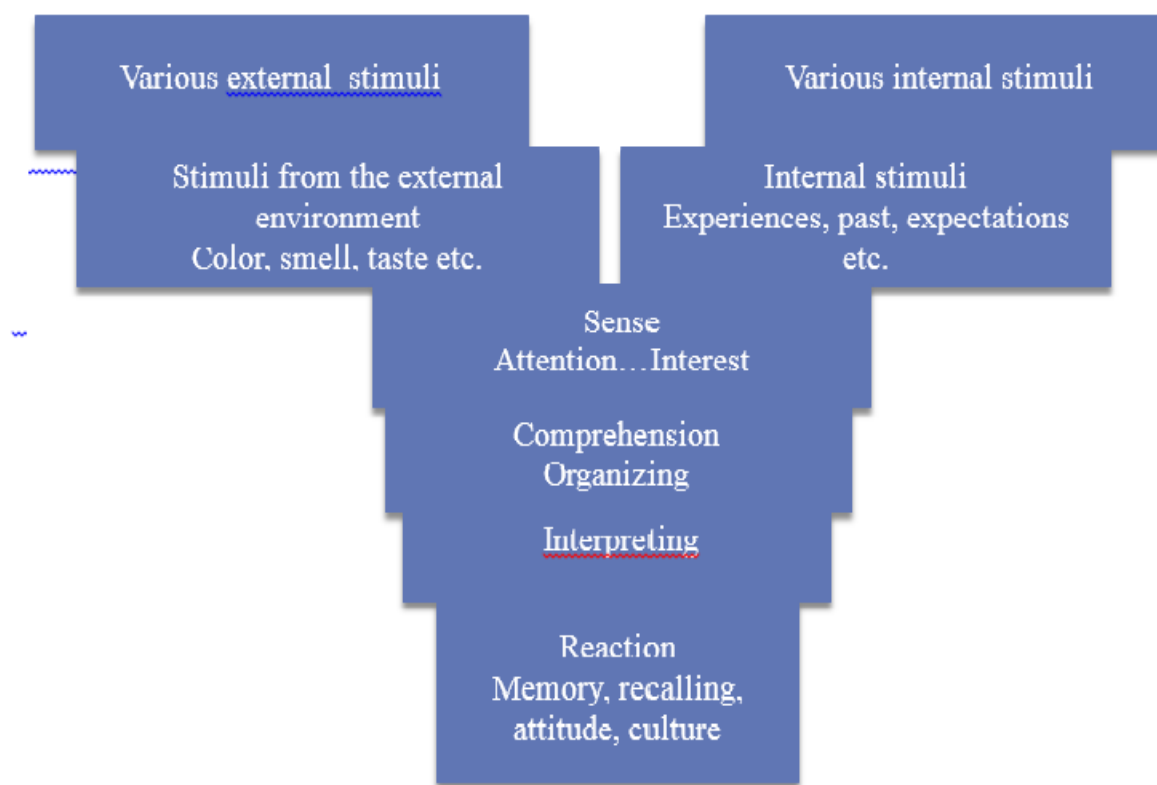


Figure 1: Perception Process (<http://notoku.com/algilama-sureci-ve-isleyisi/>)

As described above, external and internal stimuli reaching the language centers of the brain is organized and interpreted according to previously coded information in these centers. This stage is then followed by the process in which the person reacts to perceived stimuli and expresses him/herself. In the expression/communication stage, a person conveys his/her thoughts verbally. *Perception verbs* are the linguistic elements that allow thoughts to be conveyed and expressed. These verbs, which are



associated with basic senses such as sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste, are also designated as *sensory verbs* by certain researchers studying this subject.

Previous studies on perception verbs have generally focused on the semantic aspects of these verbs. There are two universal hypotheses on this subject. The first is Viberg's (1984) proposed unidirectional pattern of extension from higher to lower sensory modalities (i.e. intrafield extensions, like 'see > hear'). The second hypothesized universal is that put forward Sweetser (1990) regarding the extension of perception verbs to cognition readings (i.e. transfield extensions, like 'see' > 'know') Ibarretxe (1991), another researcher studying the semantic characteristics of perception verbs, describes that perception verbs are associated with meanings and concepts such as closeness, contact, inwardness, immediateness, evaluation, willingness, brevity, anticipation and skepticism (Ibarretxe 1999: 172). Kamchybekova also conducted a study regarding the semantic meaning of these verbs, where he classified perception verbs according to the following groups: movement, willingness, goals, contact, finiteness, sentimentality, and negativity (Kamchybekova 2011: 33).

We will now focus on the hierarchy and typology used by Viberg for perception verbs. We will also use his hierarchy of perception verbs to evaluate the perception verbs in Modern Turkish. Having worked on developing a typology for perception verbs in over 53 languages, Viberg also subjects these verbs to a particular hierarchy, providing a universal hierarchy applicable for them all. When establishing his hierarchy for perception verbs, Viberg especially focused on their evidentiality and reliability. Viberg's hierarchy ranks sight verbs in the highest position. Sight verbs are then followed by hearing verbs, which in turn followed by the touch, taste and smell verbs.

Sight > Hearing >      Touch  
    Taste  
    Smell

Figure 2: Sense-modality hierarchy (Viberg 1984, 2001)(Citation from Gamerschlag, 2012: 5)

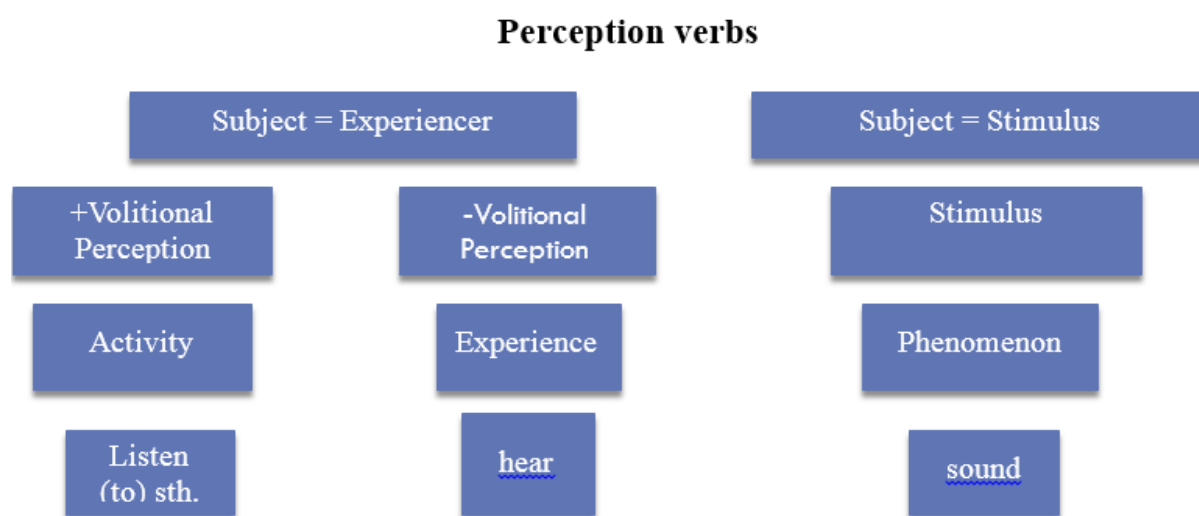


Figure 3: Types of perception verbs (Viberg 1984, 2001) (Citation from Gamerschlag, 2012: 5)

When forming the typology of perception verbs, Viberg evaluated and organized these verbs based on the person who is perceiving; the entity/person being perceived; and whether the perception process is taking place voluntarily or involuntarily. In the first group of perception verbs described by Viberg, the subject performs the act of perceiving involuntarily; this group of verbs is consequently referred to as “experience” verbs. Other terms used for “experience” verbs include “passive perception” (Palmer 1966: 99), “inner perception” (Leech 1971: 23), “cognition” (Rogers 1971:206, 1972: 304), and “stative with experience subject” (Lehrer 1990: 223).

In the second group described by Viberg, the subject performs the act of perceiving voluntarily; for this reason, this group of verbs is referred to as “activity” verbs. Other terms used for “activity” verbs includes “active perception verbs” (Poutsma 1926:341, Leech 1971: 23, Rogers 1972: 304), and “active experiencer subject” (Lehrer 1990: 223).

In the third group described by Viberg, the stimuli is the subject, with the action being performed/realized by the stimuli itself; for this reason, this last group of verbs is referred to as “phenomenon-based” verbs. Terms used by other researchers for “phenomenon-based” verbs includes “flip verbs” (Roger 1971:206), “stimulus subject” (Lehrer 1990:223), and “percept” (Gisborne 1996:1) (Citation from Tashi, 2010: 112).

We can apply Viberg’s classification regarding perception verbs to the perception verbs in Modern Turkish based on the five basic senses as follows:

	EXPERIENCE-BASED		PHENOMENON-BASED
	ACTIVITY	EXPERIENCE	
SIGHT	Ali <u>köpeğe baktı.</u> Ali <b>looked at</b> the dog.	Ali <u>köpeği gördü.</u> Ali <b>saw</b> the dog.	Ali <u>üzgün göründü.</u> Ali <b>looked sad.</b>
HEARING	Ali <u>annesini dinledi.</u> Ali <b>listened to</b> his mother.	Ali <u>gökgürültüsünü duydu.</u> Ali <b>heard</b> the thunder.	Ali'nin <u>sesi üzgün geldi.</u> Ali <b>sounded sad.</b>
TOUCH	Ali, <u>ağaca dokundu.</u> Ali <b>touched</b> the tree.	Ali <u>ayağının altında bir taş sezdi/hissetti.</u> Ali <b>felt</b> a stone under his foot.	<u>Kumaş yumuşak geldi./ hissedildi.</u> The cloth <b>felt soft.</b>
TASTE	Ali <u>yemeği tattı.</u> Ali <b>tasted</b> the food.	Ali <u>çorbadan sarımsak tadını aldı.</u> Ali <b>tasted</b> garlic in the soup.	<u>Çorbadan sarımsak tadı alındı.</u> The soup <b>tasted of garlic.</b>
SMELL	Ali <u>çiçeği kokladı.</u> Ali <b>smelled</b> the flower.	Ali <u>çorbadan sarımsak kokusu aldı/duydu.</u> Ali <b>smelled</b> garlic in the soup.	<u>Corba sarımsak koktu.</u> The soup <b>smelled of garlic.</b>

Figure 4: Verbs Relating to the Five Senses in Modern Turkish (English data partially adopted from Viberg 2001: 1295 and Gamerschlag 2012:4)

When Viberg's classification of perception verbs is applied to the perception verbs in Modern Turkish, we can see that in the "activity" group, there is structurally only a single verb in Modern Turkish for each sense.

When performing the verbs of "to look, to listen, to touch, to taste and to smell" ("*Bakmak, dinlemek, dokunmak, tatmak and koklamak*" in Modern Turkish, respectively), the subject (Ali) is aware of his actions, and performs them voluntarily. In other words, there is deliberate effort to carry out these verbs. The action in question is hence active. It is possible to include the verbs "to check, to watch, to caress, to observe to glance, etc." to this group ("*göz atmak, seyretmek, okşamak, gözetlemek*" in Modern Turkish, respectively).

The first three verbs (or senses) of the "experience" group, which are "to look, to hear, and to touch," there is structurally only a single corresponding verb in Modern Turkish ("*bakmak, duymak and dokunmak*" in Modern Turkish, respectively). For the senses of taste and smell, on the other hand, the very "*almak/ duymak*" is used instead. In this context, the verbs "*almak/ duymak*" are used differently from their original meanings.

On the other hand, when performing the acts of "Seeing, hearing, sensing, enjoying and sniffing" ("*Görmek, duymak, sezmek/ hissetmek, tadını almak, kokusunu almak/duymak*" in Modern Turkish, respectively), the subject (Ali) who is experiencing the events in question are not performing the act of perceiving voluntarily. In other words, his actions are not deliberate; it is passive perception that is not based on an additional effort. For this reason, the action is passive; in other words, it is a momentary experience. It is possible to add "harking, glimpsing and noticing" to this group of verbs ("*işitmek, gözüne ilişmek, fark etmek*" in Modern Turkish, respectively).

In "Phenomenon-based" verbs, which is last group of verbs in Viberg's hierarchy, the person is not involved in the experience, and the stimuli itself is considered as the subject. It is known that structurally, there is no person performing or perceiving the relevant event; however, on the surface, the event is still described as being perceived or performed by someone. In Modern Turkish, these verbs are used together with structurally passive verbs (such as *görünmek, hissedilmek*) or with other structurally assisting elements (noun, adjective, postposition) that are associated with different verbs (*sesi... gibi gelmek, tadı alınmak*). In this group, it is possible to see that only the sense of smell has a structurally single verb (*koklamak*). To this group we can also add the examples of "*görülme, bakılmak, duyulmak*" etc. In this context, the verbs "*almak/ duymak*" are used differently from their original meanings.

## Conclusion

The process of perception constitutes the first stage of mental processes. A person with complete and healthy five senses will both consciously and unconsciously perceive external and internal stimuli, which will be conveyed to the language center of his/her brain. Following this, the ensuing stages of the mental process will take place, and perception verbs will be used. Perception verbs allows perception to be expressed through language. Our five basic senses are expressed with the verbs to see, to hear, to touch, to taste and to smell (*görme > görmek, duyma > duymak, dokunma > dokunmak, tatma > tatmak and koklama > koklamak* in Modern Turkish, respectively). Viberg classified these verbs according to a hierarchy, which places the

verb “to see” above all of the other verbs/senses. The second-ranking verb/sense is hearing, which in turn is followed by the other verbs/senses. We have applied this classification to perception verbs in Modern Turkish. While only a single verb is used for seeing and hearing (*görmek* and *duymak* in Modern Turkish, respectively), the other perception verbs used in other groups showed a diversity of structures. This difference and diversity is associated with the use of passive affixes, or the use of more than one word to express these verbs. To avoid overextending the scope of the study, we did not provide above all of the perception verbs we identified in Modern Turkish. These verbs are instead provided as a list at the end of our study.

#### List of Perception Verbs in Modern Turkish

Turkish	English	Turkish	English
<a href="#">abanmak</a>	to stop over	<a href="#">gözetlemek</a>	to peep
<a href="#">acılaşmak</a>	to go bitter	<a href="#">gözlemek</a>	to await
<a href="#">acımak</a>	to ache	<a href="#">gözlemlemek</a>	to observe
<a href="#">almak</a>	to take	<a href="#">gözlenmek</a>	be monitored
<a href="#">araştırmak</a>	to search	<a href="#">haşlanmak</a>	To be boiled
<a href="#">asılmak</a>	to be hanged	<a href="#">ısınmak</a>	to get warmer
<a href="#">avuçlamak</a>	to <a href="#">grasp</a>	<a href="#">işlemek</a>	to espy
<a href="#">bakınmak</a>	to look around	<a href="#">işitmek</a>	to hear
<a href="#">bakayazmak</a>	-	<a href="#">işitilmek</a>	-
<a href="#">bakışmak</a>	to look at one another	<a href="#">kakmak</a>	to inlay
<a href="#">bakabilmek</a>	(can) look	<a href="#">kakılmak</a>	-
<a href="#">basmak</a>	to step	<a href="#">koklamak</a>	to smell
<a href="#">bırakmak</a>	to leave	<a href="#">kokmak</a>	to smell
<a href="#">buruşmak</a>	to wrinkle	<a href="#">kokutmak</a>	to stink up
<a href="#">çarpmak</a>	to hit	<a href="#">kucaklamak</a>	to hug
<a href="#">çınlamak</a>	to tinkle	<a href="#">kucaklanmak</a>	-
<a href="#">dayanmak</a>	to hold	<a href="#">okşamak</a>	to fondle
<a href="#">değdirmek</a>	to touch	<a href="#">okşanmak</a>	to be fondled
<a href="#">değmek</a>	to touch	<a href="#">ovmak</a>	to rub
<a href="#">dikizlemek</a>	to peek	<a href="#">ovalamak</a>	to chafe
<a href="#">dokunmak</a>	to touch	<a href="#">ovalanmak</a>	-
<a href="#">dokunulmak</a>	to be touched	<a href="#">sarılmak</a>	to hug
<a href="#">donmak</a>	to freeze	<a href="#">sıcaklamak</a>	to warm
<a href="#">dövmek</a>	to beat	<a href="#">sürmek</a>	to finger
<a href="#">duymak</a>	to hear	<a href="#">sürtünmek</a>	to rub

<u>duyulmak</u>	To be heard	<u>sürtmek</u>	to rub
<u>dürtmek</u>	to nudge	<u>sürünmek</u>	to grovel
<u>dürtüklemek</u>	to nudge	<u>süzme</u>	to lay eyes on
<u>ellemek</u>	to touch	<u>tatmak</u>	to taste
<u>elleşmek</u>	to touch	<u>tatlanmak</u>	to sweeten
<u>ellenmek</u>	-	<u>tinlamak</u>	to ding
<u>ermek</u>	to reach	<u>uğuldamak</u>	to whistle
<u>görmek</u>	to see	<u>yanmak</u>	to burn
<u>görünmek</u>	to seem	<u>yemek</u>	to eat
<u>gözetmek</u>	to look out for	<u>yenilmek</u>	-
<u>gözetlenmek</u>	-		



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*Phonological Processes in Mising Language: A Privilege Theoretic Account*

Loreina Pagag, The English and Foreign Languages University, India

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**Abstract**

This paper is a descriptive study of Mising- an endangered language spoken in Assam. Mising is a Tibeto-Burman language which has lost certain characteristics of Tibeto-Burman languages due to the influence of Assamese. So, in this paper an examination has been done on some of the phonological processes that apply to Mising words in various contexts. These phonological processes are explained in terms of the Privilege theory propounded by Jill Beckman, “Positional Faithfulness, 1998”.

A large, faint watermark of the iafor logo is centered on the page. It consists of the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue font, surrounded by two overlapping circular arcs, one in light blue and one in light red.

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## **1.0.Introduction:**

Phonological processes are those through which we can observe and study the change in the segments of a morpheme. When a segment undergoes any change it is better represented through a phonological process. Phonological processes give a solid evidence of any kind of change a language goes through at any span of time. According to Beckman phones can show changes while undergoing any process while combining with other sounds to form morphemes/words. We need these phonological processes to link the two levels of representation: underlying (phonemic, mental) and surface (phonetic) representation to show when a particular allophone should show up on the surface. In surface representation some phonemes show enough strength not to undergo any change but to influence the other phonemes instead. This strength and weakness of the phonemes depends largely on the place where they are positioned in a morpheme. That is why some of the positions of a morpheme are privileged to influence and conduct the change to the phonemes placed in the less privileged or non-privileged positions.

This issue of strength and weakness is the soul of Jill N. Beckman's privilege theory.

## **2.0. Beckman's privilege theory:**

In privilege theory Jill Beckman has discussed privileged positions and non-privileged positions. The privileged positions of a morpheme are root-initial syllables, stressed syllables, syllable onsets, roots and long vowels while non-privileged positions are non-initial syllables, unstressed syllables, syllable codas, affixes, clitics, function words and short vowels.

There are a variety of phonological asymmetries exhibited by segments which appear in perceptually or psycholinguistically prominent positions such as roots, root-initial syllables, stressed syllables, and syllable onsets. In such positions, segmental or featural contrasts are often maintained, though they may be neutralized in non-prominent positions. Segments in prominent positions frequently trigger phonological processes such as assimilation, dissimilation and vowel harmony; conversely, they often block or resist the application of these processes.

## **3.0. Descriptive phonology of Mising language from the perspective of Privilege Theory: A Preliminary study**

Phonological processes give an identity to a language. Phonological processes of an endangered language are more important to keep the language alive in future. Language is such a property which can be lost in future if less practiced and this is the condition of this particular language, Mising, which is spoken in the North-east region of India. Mising language belongs to Tibeto-Burman language family. Original words of this language are slowly diminishing because of cross cultural habits and getting replaced by borrowed words from its neighboring language, Assamese, which is the main language of Assam. Both Assamese and Mising belong to two different language families which have different sets of characteristics. Despite of being from different language family background they interact and Assamese being the dominant, leaves its mark on Mising. The dictionary, grammar and sound system of Mising are getting affected by Assamese.



The pedagogical or education system seems to be a decisive cause for this effect of losing the language inheritance of Mising. Further not using Mising as a subject of study or medium of instruction has also collaborated with academic suffering of Mising. The role played by growing urbanization in encouraging aspirant parents to send their children to English medium schools or, in some cases, the Assamese medium school has to be considered while negotiating with the problem of Mising. The biased mindset of people seems to confine Mising, their mother tongue, as a language of ephemeral communication with their people in villages, and consider English or Assamese as more essential in everyday life. In the perspectives of villagers, the trade and business seem to have played a crucial role in acclimatizing themselves to Assamese for a better communication.

Religion is another big issue in Mising. Mising people generally worship the Sun and the Moon as their Gods but now they have taken Hinduism as their ultimate religion. In some Mising sacred rituals performed for someone the priests recite the prayers using the code mixing of both Mising and Assamese as some words are lost today in this process of better communication using the dominant language. It is not only Assamese that has influenced Mising. English too made its way into the language through some official dealings. But in this paper the main focus is given on borrowed words from Assamese and other phonological processes found in Mising.

#### **4.0. Objectives of the study**

The current study has the following objectives:

1. To commonly survey the phonological processes used in Mising.
2. To see if the phonological processes present in Mising work in loan word phonology.

#### **4.1. Research questions:**

I will try to look into matters like –

1. Which phonological processes are allowed in Mising?
2. Which are the most marked phonemes in Mising.
3. How are the onset, nucleus and coda of the borrowed words dealt with?

#### **5.0. Findings:**

##### **5.1. Assimilation:**

The term assimilation usually refers to contextual variability of speech sounds, which is said to be caused by the influence of one sound upon another. It is often defined as a process of replacing one sound (or changing some properties of a sound) under the influence of another sound which occurs near to it. It has also been characterized as an adjustment of speech sounds to their environment. Assimilation is a common phonological process by which one sound becomes more like a nearby sound. This can occur either within a word or between words. There are three types of assimilation; progressive, regressive and reciprocal but Mising language was found responding to only one of them, that is, regressive assimilation.

### 5.1.1.0. Regressive assimilation:

If the phoneme changes to match the following phoneme, it is regressive assimilation. (anticipatory/backward/right-to-left) **assimilation** occurs when in the sequence of segments AB segment B exerts influence on segment A. In other words, segment B is the assimilator while segment A is the assimilee:  $A \Leftarrow B$  (Malmberg 1963: 61; Abercrombie 1967: 134; Daniloff and Hammarberg 1973: 242; Gay 1977: 183; Webb 1982: 310; Král' and Sabol 1989: 151, *inter alia*). Regressive assimilations are very frequent and are found in all languages. For example, consonants followed by a rounded segment tend to be labialized, e.g. *took* [tuk] (Benguerel and Cowan 1974; Benguerel and Adelman 1976; Lubker and Gay 1982; Fowler and Saltzman 1993: 185–187); vowels followed by nasal tend to be nasalized, e.g. *ten* [te n], although the degree of nasalization in different languages may differ (Malécot 1960; Král' 1966; Ali et al. 1971; shijima and Hirose 1974; Fowler and Saltzman 1993: 187–188). Mising language shows both partial and total voicing and devoicing regressive assimilation.

#### 5.1.1.1. Partial voicing regressive assimilation:

In this process maintaining the Faithfulness theory, the voiceless plosive of the coda position gets triggered by the voicing of the onset of the following word or suffix /d̥ə/ (definite marker) and takes the voicing and turn themselves into a voiced phoneme in the final output.

In source language	Assimilation	Output	Glossary
/pukap/ + /gəla lətə/	p → b / _ g	/ pukab gəla lətə /	Cover it and keep
/kaṭək/ + /d̥ə/	k → g / _ d̥	/ kaṭəg d̥ə /	The knife
/ṭabat/ + /d̥ə/	t → d / _ d̥	/ ṭabad d̥ə /	The comb

#### 5.1.1.2. Total voicing regressive assimilation:

Here we can see the voiced plosive turning to nasal when followed by a nasal and in this case we get a geminated form. Here the coda position of the first word gets triggered from the onset of the following suffix /ma/ (negative marker).

In source language	Assimilation	Output	Glossary
/kab/ + /ma/	b → m / _ m	/ kamma /	Not cry

#### 5.1.1.3. Partial devoicing regressive assimilation:

Here the voiced velar plosive of the coda position from the first word turns to its voiceless counterpart when followed by voiceless dental plosive in the form of an imperative marker /t̥ə/.

In source language	Assimilation	Output	Glossary
/kəpag/ + /t̥ə/	g → k / _ t̥	/ kəpakt̥ə /	Sell it
/d̥əmpag/ + /t̥ə/	g → k / _ t̥	/ d̥əmpakt̥ə /	Asking someone to beat up someone

#### 5.1.1.4. Total devoicing regressive assimilation:

Here the voiced dental and bilabial plosives turn to their voiceless counterparts when followed by the same voiceless counterparts in the form of an imperative marker /t̥/ and negative marker /p̥j̥/ and results in a geminated form.

In source language	Assimilation	Output	Glossary
/ad/ + /t̥/	d → t̥ / _ t̥	/ att̥ /	Write
/kab/ + /p̥j̥/	b → p̥ / _ p̥	/ kapp̥j̥ /	Don't cry

#### 5.2.0. Deletion:

Deletion is a process that removes a segment from certain phonetic context. This is a simple way to alter the structure of a word or to omit particular speech segments. There are two main speech segments that are typically deleted: consonants, and weak syllables. There are three deletion processes: Procope, Syncope and Apocope but only Apocope is found in Mising where it shows consonant deletion from the coda position.

#### 5.2.1. Apocope:

In Apocope there is a loss of final sound, that means the coda position is prone to deletion because of its non-privileged position. Coda position is considered as non-privileged position because of its weakness to get changed or deleted when triggered by an onset of the following

word. In Mising language it is seen that the velar nasal is being deleted from the coda position of the first word when preceded by an open vowel and followed by the velar dental plosive in the form a definite marker /d̥ə/.

In source language	Deletion	Output	Glossary
/d̥iŋɔraŋ/ + /d̥ə/	ŋ → Ø / _____ d̥	/d̥iŋɔrad̥ə/	The pot made of bamboo to catch fish
/d̥i:ba:ŋ/ + /d̥ə/	ŋ → Ø / _____ d̥	/d̥i:ba:d̥ə/	The bamboo

#### 5.3.0. Loan words in Mising:

Mising people live in Assam and hence Assamese has a considerable influence on the language because of the habitat and close connection with it. Even though Assamese is an Indo-Aryan language, Mising has borrowed from it to a considerable extent and has now begun to use them on a daily basis. Mising has several loanwords taken from other languages in contact like Hindi and English and all these loans have undergone several phonological changes based on the native Mising phonology. Generally the native speakers modify the borrowed words according to their needs to fit in the native language. The borrowed words from Assamese go under some modifications because of its difference from the native language phonology of Mising. The modifications can be seen through some phonological processes like:

### 5.3.1. Assimilation:

Assimilation in Mising loan word phonology is also found following the criteria of Jill Beckman's Positional Faithfulness Theory.

#### 5.3.1.1. Partial voicing regressive assimilation:

This process shows the voiceless plosives of the coda position getting triggered by the voicing of the onset of the following word or suffix /d̥ə/ (definite marker) and taking the voicing and turning them into a voiced phoneme in the final output and maintaining Beckman's Privilege theory by changing the coda position but keeping the onset position intact.

In source language	In borrowed language	Assimilation	Output	Glossary
/kitap/	/kitap/+ /d̥ə/	p → b / _ d̥	/kitabd̥ə/	The book
/b <sup>h</sup> aluk/	/b <sup>h</sup> aluk/+ /d̥ə/	k → g / _ d̥	/b <sup>h</sup> alugd̥ə/	The bear
/kakət/	/kakət/+ /d̥ə/	t → d / _ d̥	/kakədd̥ə/	The paper

### 5.3.2. Insertion:

Unlike Mising word phonology, Mising loan word phonology shows the processes of insertion. The insertion is found in initial consonant clusters. When a word with initial consonant cluster is borrowed vowel insertion happens in the initial position and in between the initial two consonants and giving us the processes of Prothesis and Epenthesis.

#### 5.3.2.1. Prothesis:

This process in Mising loan word phonology denies Beckman and results in adding an extra sound in form of a vowel in the initial position of a morpheme. According to Beckman's

Privilege theory initial positions resist changes but we see the opposite of that in the following examples.

In source language	Prothesis	Output	Glossary
/spɔndɔn/	# Ø → /i/	/ispɔndɔn/	Heart beat
/smɔxɑ:n/	# Ø → /i/	/ismɔxɑ:n/	Graveyard

#### 5.3.2.2. Epenthesis:

The process of Epenthesis in borrowed words too does not follow Beckman's theory and results in a vowel insertion in the root initial syllable which is considered as strong and privileged position and is not supposed to go under change.

In source language	Epenthesis	Output	Glossary
/praptɔ/	Ø → a / C__C	/paraptɔ/	Deserved
/kruti/	Ø → u / C__C	/kuruti/	Mistake
/klex/	Ø → e / C__C	/kelex/	Misconception

### 5.3.3. Deletion:

Unlike the original Mising word phonology the loan words show all the processes of deletion but some irregularity as well if noticed from the perspective of the Faithfulness theory.

#### 5.3.3.1. Procope:

Here the onset position of the borrowed word gets deleted in the borrowing language denying the Positional Faithfulness Theory of Jill Beckman. Beckman has said that onsets are the privileged positions which trigger changes but do not get triggered. So, Procope in Mising loan word phonology can be considered as an irregular phenomenon considering Jill Beckman's Positional Faithfulness Theory.

In language	source	Deletion	Output	Glossary
/xanti/		x → Ø / __ v	/anti/	Peace
/xukurbar/		x → Ø / __ v	/ukurbar/	Friday
/xuk <sup>h</sup> /		x → Ø / __ v	/uk/	Happiness

#### 5.3.3.2. Syncope:

In this process the /h/ sound gets deleted from the medial position which is considered valid according to Beckman as non-initial syllables are also considered as non-privileged positions which are prone to change or deletion in a phonological process.

In language	source	Deletion	Output	Glossary
/gahɔri/		h → Ø / v __ v	/gaɔri/	Pig
/bihari/		h → Ø / v __ v	/biari/	Someone from Bihar
/pahɔra/		h → Ø / v __ v	/paɔra/	To forget

#### 5.3.3.3. Apocope:

This process of deletion is similar to the original Mising word Apocope where it is seen that the velar nasal is being deleted from the coda position of the first word when followed by the velar dental plosive in the form of a definite marker /ɖə/.

In source language	In borrowed language	Deletion	Deletion	Output	Glossary
/pɔisa/	/pɔisaŋ/	/pɔisaŋ/+/ɖə/	ŋ → Ø / __ ɖ	/pɔisaɖə/	The money
/t <sup>h</sup> urija/	/turijaŋ/	/turijaŋ/+/ɖə/	ŋ → Ø / __ ɖ	/turijaɖə/	The ear ring
/murk <sup>h</sup> ɔ/	/murkɔŋ/	/murkɔŋ/+/ɖə/	ŋ → Ø / __ ɖ	/murkɔɖə/	The dumb

#### 5.4.0. Neutralization:

##### 5.4.1. Absolute neutralization:

In this phonological process the segment turns into another sound in all environments. This process could happen in loan words because some phonemes from the source language do not exist in the borrowed language. To cover that weakness, those phonemes are changed by phonemes which exist in the borrowing language. All the aspirated sounds undergo this process and become unaspirated in Mising irrespective of its position of occurrence in that morpheme. This process follows as well as denies Beckman.

The process follows Beckman's theory in examples 3 and 4 where the non-initial syllable gets changed. The second similarity is shown in examples 5 and 6 where the coda position is considered as a weak position prone to change.

The process denies Beckman in examples 1 and 2 where the strong and privileged position, the onset gets changed rebelling Beckman.

In source language	Neutralization	Output	Glossary
/t <sup>h</sup> ali/	# t <sup>h</sup> → t	/tali/	Plate
/t <sup>h</sup> ɛla/	# t <sup>h</sup> → t	/tɛla/	Cart
/kɔt <sup>h</sup> a/	t <sup>h</sup> →t / v__v	/kɔta/	Talk
/pɔt <sup>h</sup> ar/	t <sup>h</sup> →t / v__v	/pɔtar/	Field
/kɔt <sup>h</sup> /	t <sup>h</sup> →t / ___ #	/kɔt/	Mat
/pɔt <sup>h</sup> /	t <sup>h</sup> →t / ___ #	/pɔt/	Road

##### 5.4.2. Partial neutralization:

The partial neutralization absolutely follows Beckman's case of Positional Faithfulness. In this process of partial neutralization the velar fricative /x/ in the final position of a word gets substituted by voiceless velar plosive /k/.

In source language	Neutralization	Output	Glossary
/xahɔx/	x→k / ___ #	/xahɔk/	Bravery
/pɔlax/	x→k / ___ #	/pɔlak/	Name of a tree
/nirɔx/	x→k / ___ #	/nirɔk/	Tasteless
/nira:x/	x→k / ___ #	/nira:k/	Disappointed

#### 6.0. Conclusion:

This preliminary study shows the importance of the phonological processes of the language. It shows the importance of the Privilege Theory in interpreting the processes to find the exact privileged positions in the morphemes of the language and how they behave in similar and different atmospheres. The study shows some phonological processes following and some denying the Positional Faithfulness Theory proposed by Jill Beckman (1998). In this study I have shown that the original Mising words follow Beckman's Theory in the phonological processes present in the language while the borrowed words showed some disagreement with the theory.

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loreina.pagag@gmail.com





*Krashen's Monitor Model Theory: A Critical Perspective*

Tahamid Ar Rabbi, East West University, Bangladesh

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**Abstract**

Krashen's Monitor Model Theory is grounded on his view of language acquisition. Krashen expounds his theory with five central hypotheses that respectively deal with what distinguishes language acquisition from language learning, what natural order prevails in the acquisition of certain grammatical structures, how learning monitors and/or edits acquisition, how humans can come to acquire language, and how affective factors obstruct or optimize the acquisition. All these hypothetical assertions hint at Krashen's penetrating insight into the complex phenomenon of language acquisition. However, despite having been recognized by both linguists and psychologists as the most comprehensive theory of language acquisition till date, Krashen's theory has continued to draw numerous critical responses from multiple angles (Mitchell, Myles & Marsden, 2012). That conscious learning is not conducive to language competence, that comprehensible input amply accounts for language acquisition, that there is a generally predictable and invariant order of acquisition, and that focus on language forms restricts acquisition are some, among a lot of, loosely held assertions that put Krashen's theory in question (Tickoo, 2009), pose a potent challenge to the substantiality of the theory, and call for a rigorous scrutiny to redress the deficits thereof. Yet, needless to say, despite facing multiple critical challenges, the theory still has a number of significant implications for teachers' roles, learners' roles and teaching method as well. The present study seeks to critically explore the properties of the theory and then bring out in detail the implications the former entails.

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## **Introduction**

Krashen's Monitor Model Theory consists of five hypotheses that deal with the acquisition-learning distinction, the natural order of acquisition, how learning monitors acquisition, how we acquire language, and how affective factors affect the acquisition. It is called the "natural approach" to language learning where the emphasis is on exposure, or comprehensible input. But the theory is flawed in a number of respects. "Krashen's tendency to make broad and sweeping claims for his theory" (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 58) makes it controversial to scholars of language acquisition. As we will see later, most of his claims emanating from his hypotheses are barely substantiated. They considerably lack empirical scrutiny-led justification. Thus what actually accounts for language acquisition remains in a dubious position in Krashen's theory.

However, the theory bears significant implications for teaching and learning in the language class. The teacher's task is to provide adequate language input in the class to maximize learners' exposure to language for the sake of effective learning. Teaching methodology, therefore, has to proceed in a manner that provides comprehensible input in low anxiety situations, incorporating messages that are interesting to learners. In order for learners to achieve mastery over language, their work should centre on meaningful communication, not the form or structure of language. Classroom should be managed in such a way as to optimize emotional preparedness for learning and to ensure a relaxed classroom environment.

### **The five hypotheses**

The five central hypotheses of the Monitor Model (Krashen, 1982) are critically discussed below.

#### **I) The acquisition-learning hypothesis**

The acquisition-learning hypothesis makes a distinction between acquisition and learning. Acquisition is a subconscious process. In this process language acquirers are not aware of the fact that they are acquiring a language. They are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication. Acquisition is thus an informal learning in a natural way. On the other hand, learning is a conscious process. It involves both conscious knowledge of the rules of grammar of a second language and practical use of the knowledge. It is, therefore, a formal learning in an explicit way.

But Krashen's use of the terms 'conscious' and 'subconscious' are questionable, since he does not clearly define them. The vagueness of these terms impedes the reliability of the hypothesis. Then the way Krashen draws a hard and fast boundary between acquisition and learning is also disputable. Although he draws a distinction between them, he does not think of the possibility that both of them can form a synergic relationship rather than become mutually exclusive (Ellis, 1985).

## II) The natural order hypothesis

This hypothesis states that grammatical structures are acquired in a predictable order. Certain structures tend to be acquired earlier than others. For example, the following chart shows the order in which people learning English as a second language acquire grammatical morphemes.

- a) ing (progressive)
- b) plural
- c) auxiliary (to be)
- d) auxiliary (progressive)
- e) article (a, the)
- f) irregular past
- g) regular past
- h) third person singular (s)
- i) possessive ('s)

(Krashen, 1982)

However, it is not clear how to decide whether a morpheme has been acquired or not - the fact that a learner uses a specific grammatical feature does not necessarily mean that he uses it in an appropriate fashion, or that he understands how it works. As Krashen himself recognizes, a learner may use the feature in one context and not in another. The way he presents the morphemes in a specific order raises question- can they be predicted exactly in the naturally predictable order as he has predicted? Indeed, he does not recognize that a different order is also possible in a different context (McLaughlin, 1987).

## III) The monitor hypothesis

The acquired linguistic system initiates utterances when we communicate in a second language. The monitor hypothesis maintains that conscious learning can function only as a monitor or editor that checks and repairs the output of the acquired system. This means that we may call upon learned knowledge to correct ourselves when we communicate.

### Three conditions limit the successful use of the monitor:

- a) **Time:** There must be sufficient time for a learner to choose and apply a learned rule.
- b) **Focus on form:** The language user must be focused on correctness or on the form of the output.
- c) **Knowledge of rules:** The performer must know the rules. (Krashen, 1982)

A major criticism of the monitor hypothesis is that Krashen relegates language monitoring to a peripheral position in language acquisition. It is seen as simply being a post-learning process, a tool for use of language in certain restrained conditions. However, researchers have pointed to monitoring as a basic learning strategy (Rubin & Naiman). They have been particularly interested in studying whether people who have been identified as 'good learners' have any specific characteristics.

#### IV) The input hypothesis

According to the input hypothesis, humans acquire language by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input. They move from  $i$ , their current level, to  $i+1$ , the next level along the natural order, by understanding language containing  $i+1$ . Here the structure is  $i+1$  where  $i$  represents, as stated above, the current level of competence and  $1$  represents the new input that is to be added with  $i$ . The following figure is a representation of the process.

$$i + 1 \rightarrow \text{current level of competence} + \text{new input.}$$

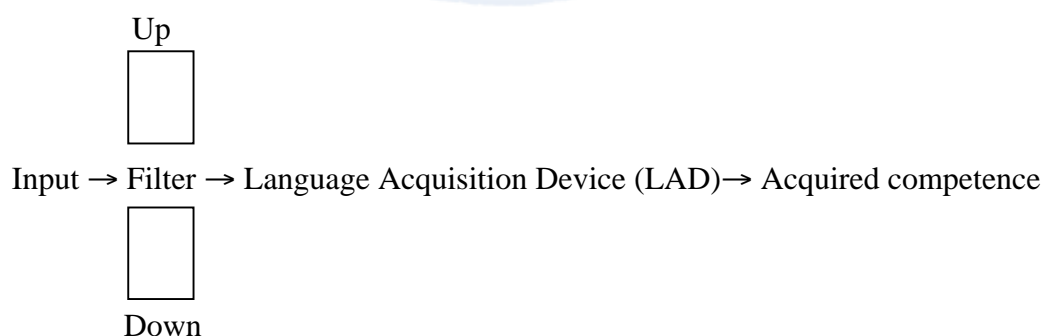
Therefore, humans acquire language by going a step beyond their current level of competence.

However, Krashen's position is hotly contested. He talks about comprehensible input. But it is not clear what he exactly means by this. He appears sometimes to mean that the input should be written or spoken in such a way that the language itself is comprehensible to the student - hence he refers to Motherese, caretaker language and foreigner talk. This kind of speech, he says, is 'roughly tuned' to the learner's language level, and tends to get more complex as the learner progresses. In this case, it is the language input itself that is modified. Then, what actually makes up comprehensible input remains seldom explained.

Krashen has done language teaching a favour in drawing teachers' attention to the fact that previously courses were overly based on grammar, and did not provide the amount or the variety of input that was needed (Krashen, 1982). But it oversimplifies considerably the processes of acquisition, begs the question of how input aids acquisition, and plays down the role of production.

#### V) The affective filter hypothesis

The affective filter hypothesis states how affective factors relate to second-language acquisition process. The affective filter is a part of the internal processing system. It subconsciously screens incoming language based on affective factors such as, the acquirer's motives, attitudes, and emotional states. The operation of the affective filter (based on Krashen, 1982) can be seen in the following figure.



Only when the filter shown in the figure is down or low, the input can reach the LAD and result in acquired competence. According to Krashen, it is necessary for the acquirers to be open to the input. When the affective filter is up, the acquirer is able to understand what is seen and read, but the input does not reach the LAD. This occurs on account of the acquirer's lack of motivation, confidence, and his concern with

failure. The filter is down when the acquirer does not feel worried and finds interest in becoming a member of the target language group. The acquisition then gets easy and comes to fruition.

Krashen further holds that the affective filter acts as the main source of individual differences in second-language acquisition. His hypothesis determines the relationship between affective variables and second language acquisition process. It shows that the strength or level of affective filter varies from acquirer to acquirer. If the attitudes of the acquirers are not in favour of second language acquisition, they will get a minimal input and then the affective filter will be high or strong. Even if they understand the message they will not be able to take the input into the definite part of the brain responsible for language acquisition. But if their attitudes are in favour of second language acquisition, they will successfully seek and obtain more input and then the filter will get weaker to prevent the acquisition. Therefore, only a strong or high affective filter can obstruct the input from reaching the LAD, and in this case second language acquisition is not likely to occur.

Researchers note several problems with the affective filter hypothesis. Krashen seems to indicate that the affective filter manifests itself at around the age of puberty. However, he does not make any serious attempts to explain how and why this filter develops only with the onset of puberty. Further, he does not explain how this filter would selectively choose certain “parts of a language” to reject. Laser-Freeman and Long (1991) state that “to provide...empirical content, Krashen would need to specify which affect variables, singly or in what combinations, and at what levels, serve to ‘raise the filter’” (p. 247). Clearly no explanation exists as to how this filter works. For example, is it sufficient for one aspect of a learner’s affective state, such as motivation, to be positive, or do all aspects have to be positive in order to lower the filter, and if so, to what degree? People who are unmotivated, stressed, or worried will not learn as well. In fact, this idea is not just applicable to language learning, but for any kind of learning. However, unlike Krashen, this idea applies to prepubescent children as well.

### **Implications of the five hypotheses for language classroom**

Despite the criticisms, Krashen’s Monitor Model Theory entails important implications on different aspects of language classroom. Implications of the five central hypotheses of Krashen's theory are as follows:

#### **Implications of the acquisition-learning hypothesis**

The acquisition-learning hypothesis implies that conscious learning plays a comparatively minor role in second language learning. Acquiring a language is more successful and longer lasting than learning. It is, therefore, more important to focus on meaningful communication. Focus on language forms is less important. Meaningful learning, such as communicative and interactive exchanges, is required. Different meaningful activities are of use in the process of acquisition.

### **Implications of the acquisition-learning hypothesis**

The natural order hypothesis provides an order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes. It suggests that we should follow the order when we go on with our learning. It further suggests that error correction has a limited effect on reducing mistakes. Teachers should not focus on errors during class. The errors that learners make are a natural part of the learning process. It is no good trying to get the learners to correct errors which are as yet beyond their competence.

### **Implications of the monitor hypothesis**

According to the monitor hypothesis, if we are exposed to incorrect language and pick up wrong expressions, our learned knowledge will monitor the acquired knowledge. This monitor operates only when there is sufficient time, the focus is on form, and the language user knows the rule being applied (Krashen, 1982). Therefore, in order to ensure successful use of the monitor the three conditions must be met. However, overuse or underuse of the monitor is not desirable, which may lead to hesitant and inconsistent utterance. Monitoring should be optimal in which performers use the monitor when it is appropriate and when it does not interfere with communication.

### **Implications of the input hypothesis**

The input hypothesis suggests that if communication is successful, and there is enough of it,  $i + 1$  is provided automatically. Therefore, input need not be deliberately planned to contain appropriate structure ( $i + 1$ ). The input hypothesis further suggests that fluent speaking cannot be taught but rather emerges naturally over time (Krashen, 1982). The best way to teach speaking according to this view is simply to provide comprehensible input. The requirements for optimal input are that it be (a) comprehensible, (b) interesting and relevant, (c) provided in sufficient quantity to supply  $i + 1$  and (d) delivered in an environment where students are "off the defensive". (McLaughlin, 1987).

### **Implications of the affective filter hypothesis**

According to the affective filter hypothesis, comprehensible input can have its effect on acquisition only when affective conditions are optimal (McLaughlin, 1987). It suggests that learners learn best when they are relaxed. Therefore, we have to make sure that learners are emotionally secure in the classroom. This means that the classroom has to be made learner- friendly so that the learners don't feel bored, angry, frustrated, or nervous. The affective filter must be lowered.

### **Implications for teachers' roles, learners' roles, teaching method and classroom environment**

The Monitor Model Theory has significant implications for teachers' roles, learners' roles, teaching method, and classroom environment as well. The following is an attempt to point out the implications.

#### **Implications for teachers' roles**

Teachers' roles include organizing class activities, facilitating acquisition processes and the explanation of language input. Depending on learners' language proficiency,

teaching content and atmosphere of class, teachers have to modify their language to meet the need of classroom teaching. Teachers can use simple vocabulary and less complex syntactic structures, slower speech rate and provide comprehensible input for learners. Teachers can modify their language by using frequent vocabulary and grammatically well formed sentences to facilitate the learners' comprehension. Frequent stimulations to student's can help them remember the knowledge they learnt and give them opportunities to comprehend. Moreover, appropriate introduction of background knowledge is crucial in language class. To make students acquire more input, teachers should teach the language from the perspective of culture. They can provide learners background instruction that draws on their experiences. They can organize warm-up activities introducing background information to activate learners' prior knowledge to facilitate comprehension in the class.

### **Implications for learners' roles**

Learners are largely responsible for their learning. They have to put emphasis on the primacy of meaning rather than on form. Since communication is the primary function of language, they have to be frequently engaged in meaningful communication to grasp language. Understanding the messages of the language is important. In this regard, Krashen and Terrell hold, acquisition can take place only when people understand messages in the target language (Krashen and Terrell, 1983). Thus the learners need to properly understand the messages of the language for acquisition to take place.

### **Implications for teaching method**

The traditional teacher-centered teaching method does not contribute to effective learning. It is known that language learning is a process of active construction. Learners need to actively notice and choose the outside information according to the proceeding cognitive structure and construct the meaning. Therefore, learners should be made to actively take part in class activities on the basis of learner-centered teaching method. Lessons have to be planned in such a way as to ensure full use of the limited time in class to provide more opportunities for language practice. Learner-centered teaching method gives learners more chances to gain enough comprehensible input which is essential for their learning.

### **Implications for classroom environment**

Classroom environment is required to be optimal. It must be conducive to low affective filter (i.e. high motivation, low anxiety etc). It needs to create a supportive atmosphere so that learners can feel relaxed. Teaching-learning aids in the class also deserve emphasis. To provide sufficient input, multimedia technology can be used in the class. With the help of multimedia technology it is possible to bring the whole world into a classroom and create a highly facilitated learning environment. Besides providing learners with much information, it can help them focus more on meanings and messages than forms, which is put forward in the Monitor Model Theory.

## Conclusion

Krashen's Monitor Model Theory, also called the "natural approach" to language learning, sees communication as the primary function of language. With its communicative approach to language it explores the language acquisition process itself and a number of factors that come into play in the acquisition process. In sum, "Krashen proposes that: (a) the core ingredient of additional language learning is meaningful, comprehensible input; (b) the processes of additional language acquisition are implicit and subconscious and any explicit and conscious processes that may be summoned in the classroom can only help carefully monitored performance but will have little effects on true language knowledge or on spontaneous performance; and (c) the main obstacles to additional language learning for adults stem from affective inhibitions. Despite its popularity, the Monitor Model is evaluated as being too metaphorical to lend itself to proper empirical investigation. The strongest critiques are leveled by SLA scholars who are well versed in skills acquisition theory from the field of psychology (e.g. McLaughlin 1987), and also by scholars who apply Universal Grammar theory from the field of linguistics to the disciplinary SLA project (e.g. Gregg 1984). In both cases, the criticisms also serve to carve intellectual spaces for a better understanding of Krashen's theory and bringing the theory to a new altitude.

However, the implications for language learning the theory already entails cannot be overlooked. As it was noted earlier, the teacher is mainly responsible for providing as much comprehensible input as possible in the classroom. Whatever helps comprehension is important. Learners need to be exposed to a wide range of language practice. They have to be actively engaged in communication that contains meanings and messages. Accordingly, the teaching method needs to focus on much participation of learners in the learning process. Krashen's theory suggests that a well conducted learner centered teaching method has the potential to bring success in language classroom. The classroom environment needs to be positive, supportive and relaxing so that learners can work with ease and interest in a friendly atmosphere. Indeed, a critique of Krashen can come to a fruitful end when the critique is tempered with judicious appreciation rather than just staunch criticism.



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- Contact email: t.rabbi55@gmail.com.



### *TESOL Programs: Theory Surpasses Practice*

Jalal Albaqshi, Alahsa College of Technology, Saudi Arabia  
Alaa Alshakhs, Alahsa College of Technology, Saudi Arabia

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#### **Abstract**

This study explores the structures of TESOL programs in which student-teachers of English gain theoretical foundations and practical techniques for teaching English. Based on stages of actual teaching methodology, this paper questions the efficiency of current programs in Saudi Arabia to answer the research questions: 1. Do TESOL programs include adequate practice to come out with well-trained teachers and 2. If there is a practical shortage in TESOL programs, is it attributed to the program's design or to educators' teaching styles and strategies? Another objective of this paper is to determine and outline the correct timing and pairing of theory and practice in the context of TESOL programs. This suggested model is called Snowball Practice Model which synchronizes theory to practice in TESOL programs. This study's survey-based presents a conceptual framework of actual TESOL teaching stages and suggests an alternative option for effectively integrating theory-practice model rather than a model similar to the current methodologies. Participants of English teachers have been selected who graduated from Saudi universities and a survey is conducted to investigate the teaching methodologies, curricula, facilities of the TESOL programs and teaching field. The results show that most TESOL programs focus on theory than practice, and that this focus leads many novice teachers to struggle at the beginning of their careers.

Keywords: TESOL programs, Snowball Practice Model, theory-practice synchronization,

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## **Introduction**

This study investigates the practice and theory within the English teachers' preparation programs in Saudi Arabia. This issue has been a popular research topic over the past five decades, as teaching quality in schools is a direct result of the preparedness of novice teachers from their university programs. Actually, teacher education at a university is featured by gaining "knowledge" while the actual practice of teaching in schools after graduation represents skills, ability and talent. Therefore, knowledge should be a supportive tool for the development of innovative practical skills. Richards and Crookes (1988) described TESOL programs that attempt to achieve their goals by offering balanced curricula which emphasize both theory and practice. However, "theory sometimes wins out over practice" (p 9). There is no consensus between researchers regarding the content of TESOL programs focuses on theory or on practice, as the teaching methodologies applied to the different programs. Each leans more toward one aspect or another.

Farrell (2012) defines a novice teacher as "anyone teaching a new course for the first time" (p 437). A novice teacher by definition lacks experience, socialization and mastery of theory to effectively transform theory into meaningful practice. Therefore, they are usually in a state of confusion to respond instantly to students' needs in different teaching cases. Induction years can have significant effects on TESOL teachers, as teaching skills are often solidified for future years during this phase. Induction years allow teachers to build the base for their cumulative skills; the teachers' subsequent practices then depend upon these skills bases. If, during the induction, a base of practical and creative skills is developed, the teacher will likely be very successful later in his or her skills career. However, if the base is developed using incompetent or random practices, these inefficient practices will be reinforced making later training a real challenge.

## **Literature**

Several studies have examined the field of teacher education. Brannan & Bleistein (2012) identified three categories of support for novice teachers: "mentors, coworkers and family" (Brannan & Bleistein 2012, p. 519). Their results show that teachers consider coworkers and mentors as the most significant providers of support. This indicates the important role external factors play in teaching in terms of influence, experience and skills. The fact that mentors and colleagues as major resources for novice teachers implies a lack of sufficient practical duties within university programs. Another study by Baecher (2012) included 77 graduates from TESOL programs. Baecher (2012) focused on the working lives of these graduates as well as the teaching preparation in the TESOL programs. She administered a questionnaire to these graduates to receive feedback about perceived quality of the MA TESOL programs they attended. She concluded that teacher educators must ask themselves: "How well-prepared are the language teachers to face the service practice and the skills they need at their classrooms?" (p. 578). Baecher (2012) also questioned the practical output of these graduates and whether they can stand in service practice as successful, confident teachers or if they struggle until they embark on their teaching paths. Similarly, Faez and Valeo (2012) carried out a study using a survey and follow-up interviews with 115 novice teachers to investigate those teachers' perceptions of their own preparedness for teaching a) after graduation and b) after gaining some

classroom experience. Faez and Valeo (2012) found that practicum and 'real' teaching experience were the most influential aspects of teachers' induction years. These experiences raise teachers' awareness and allow them to gain experience inside a classroom. This study also examined novice teachers' perception of real and authentic practice and its importance for teaching. Farrell (2012) outlined a practical suggestion for bridging the gap between pre-service and in-service education. Farrell's suggestion was based on the attrition often experienced by novice teachers during the induction period. The challenges faced in this period include lesson planning, lesson delivery, classroom management and identity development. Farrell (2012) also suggested "including a practice reflection during the pre-service courses and a supplementary course that focuses on first year induction through reflective practice" (p. 446). Farrell (2012) collected a comprehensive overview about the needs of novice teachers to be "teacher socialization, mentorship, collegial support, classroom management, self-confidence, professional identity and competence" (p. 599).

The practicum courses are primary sources of teaching practice for TESOL students when they tend to get field socialization. Practicum allows students to building the necessary skills providing authentic teaching situations. Richards and Crookes (1988) conducted a study about practicum courses by surveying 120 TESOL programs in the United States aimed to identify objectives of the teaching practicum. They focused on "settings, logistics, components, supervision and curriculum" as prominent components to be considered (p 9).

Silberstein's article (2008) discusses theorizing TESOL programs. She emphasizes theory and adaptive frames for the English language teaching (ELT) application and practice to assert the important role the theory plays as a guide for teaching practice. Silberstein affirms that "it is difficult to imagine a non-theory field (p300). To evaluate the perspective of teacher education, Kiely and Askham (2012) carried out a study to receive feedback about the teacher preparation programs. Kiely and Askham (2012) held semi-structured interviews with 27 TESOL graduates from Britain who worked in seven countries in Europe, Asia and North America. Results showed two major points: First, that the teachers had more positive attitude after completing the program than they had before completing it. Second, they felt well prepared for evaluations of longer courses (p. 515).

The ability of teachers to mediate between theory and practice after completing a TESOL program is a component of success in EFL/ESL classrooms. To achieve this balance between theory and practice, theory must be fully understood first and then to be put into practice. McNamara (2008) proposed how to practically and meaningfully apply theories into a learning environment where there is a gap between what the different theories propose and what actually is being done. Chappell and Moore (2012) emphasized the importance of linguistic component beside the methodology and practicum. They asserted that equipping pre-service teachers with linguistics training and capabilities lead to more successful teachers (p. 598).

### **Programs in Saudi Arabia**

Teacher education aims to meet high and consistent standards in both the teaching of theory and of practice. However, practicum courses are not always major components of Saudi universities. There are three plans of study in English departments across 11

Saudi universities: Applied Linguistics, English Literature, and Translation. It is disappointing when graduates of Translation and Literature apply and sometimes receive teaching jobs without compatible preparation. Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the structure of English bachelor degree in 11 Saudi universities. The numbers were calculated using averages. Table 1 shows that teaching practice proportion is completely absent due to the natures of Translation and Literature programs. Some graduates are asked to study one more year at a college of Education to join a teaching profession. Table 1 represents eight universities or colleges as listed

**Jizan, Dammam, King Faisal University, Um Alqura, Aljouf, Huraimalla , Qassim, College of Arts Female Section**

component	language skills	TESOL courses	practicum	observation	linguistics	Literature and Translation
Year 1	90 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Year 2	75%	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	14 %
Year 3	0 %	16%	0 %	0 %	31%	37%
Year 4	0 %	40%	0 %	0 %	20%	40%

Table.1 Structure of English Programs in above Universities

There are three universities which require students to take a practicum course. This course usually takes place in the students' last semester.

**Almajmaa , King Saud University, College of Teachers Male Section**

component	language skills	TESOL courses	practicum	observation	linguistics	Literature and Translation
Year 1	85 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %	0 %
Year 2	70%	0 %	0 %	0 %	10%	20%
Year 3	15%	15%	0 %	0 %	23%	46%
Year 4	0 %	5%	10 %	0 %	30%	50%

Table.2 Structure of English Programs in above Universities

## Methodology

### Research Questions

1. Do TESOL programs include adequate practice to produce well-trained teachers?
2. If there is a practical shortage in TESOL programs, what is an optimal method to integrate practice successfully?

### Data Collection and Sample

To evaluate TESOL programs chosen for this study, four independent variables have been selected: (methodology, curriculum facility and teaching field). These independent variables were studied to determine how they influence the teachers' readiness in the field of teaching (the study's dependent variable). Data were collected through an online survey of 147 male and female Saudi English teachers who had graduated from eleven Saudi universities and who teach at the elementary,

intermediate, secondary schools and college level. The survey is a five-rank Likert scale to measure the attitudes of these teachers towards the teacher preparation programs they attended.

Descriptive statistics regarding the participants' age, experience and gender will first be given to help define the sample of the participants. Approximately 80 % of the sample is in the range above 28 years old. Regarding gender, male participants constitute 72% of the sample and only 28 % female English teachers who participated in the survey.

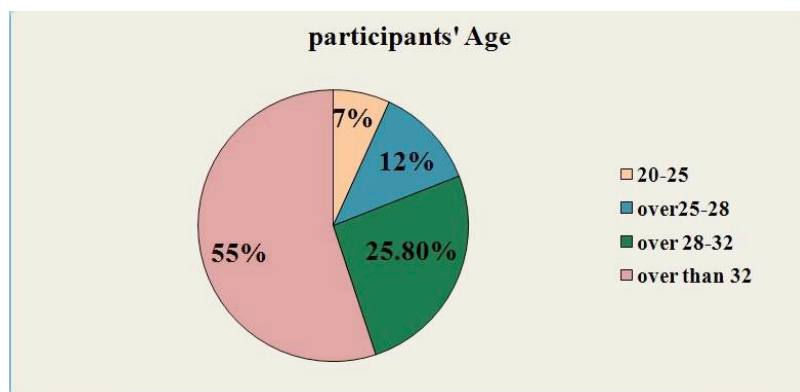


Figure 1: Participants' Age

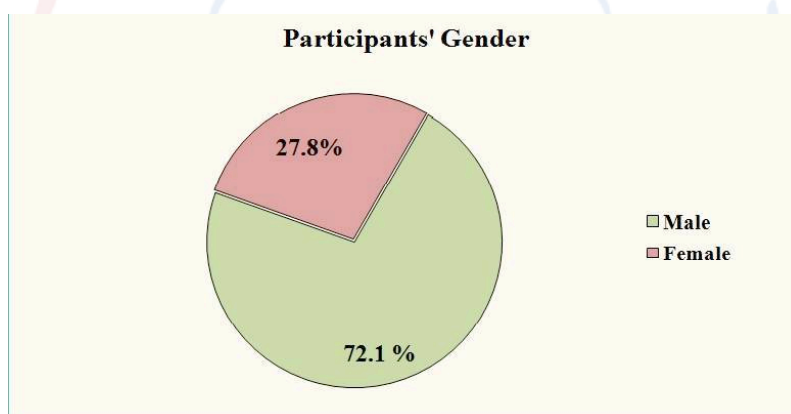


Figure 2: Participants' Gender

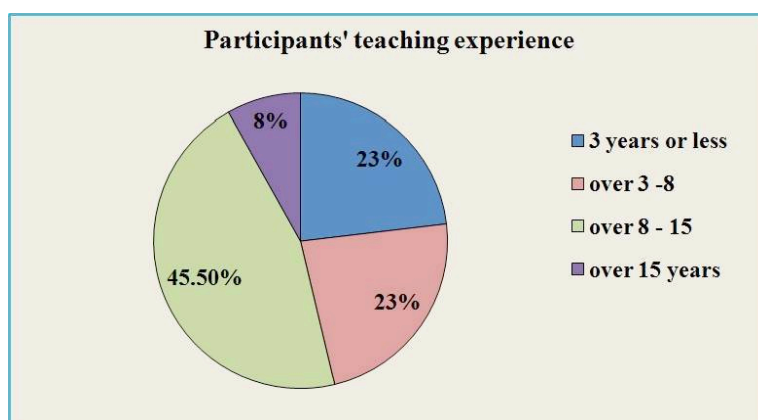


Figure 3: Participants' Teaching Experience

## Results

In Table 3, the first column shows the survey questions related to the program educators' methodology. A summary of the frequency of each response is also displayed. Then mean (M) of each response and standard deviation have been calculated to show whether theory or practice was prevalent; this was determined using a five-rank scale in the last column, which shows the overall attitude of the participants towards the item.

<b>Methodology of the Program Factor</b>									
Clause	Measure	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	I don't know	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation	The Result
1. Each theory about teaching English taught in the program was employed in a practical situation	Freq.	15	54	31	43	4	2.77	1.06	I don't know
	%	10.0%	37%	21%	29%	3%			
2. While you were studying, you watched or observed how methods of teaching were practiced.	Freq.	49	66	10	19	3	2.05	1.05	Disagree
	%	33%	45%	7%	13%	2%			
3. The program professors always presented the topic orally.	Freq.	0	13	9	50	75	4.27	0.92	Agree
	%	0%	9%	6%	34%	51%			
4. In the program, we were always asked to teach short lessons to the class as training on the theories.	Freq.	38	51	12	40	6	2.48	1.25	Disagree
	%	26%	35%	8%	27%	4%			
5. We, as students in the program, were always encouraged to bring up and to suggest ideas which enhanced the teaching practices.	Freq.	28	61	34	20	4	2.39	1.030	Disagree
	%	19%	41%	23%	13%	3%			
6. In the mid-term and final exams of the program, we were tested only in the theories of teaching rather than practice.	Freq.	7	18	26	56	40	3.70	1.136	Agree
	%	5%	12%	17%	38%	27%			
7. Page: 6 The personalities of the program's professors facilitated the spirit of practicing educational theories	Freq.	18	57	44	26	2	2.57	0.965	I don't know
	%	12%	38%	30%	18%	1%			
8. The supervisors from the program who supervised my	Freq.	20	40	44	38	5	2.78	1.082	I don't know



practicum always guided me to relate and match my classroom practice to the theories.	%	14%	27%	30%	26%	3%			
9. We were asked to do practice-oriented assignments for teaching.	Freq.	25	58	32	26	6	2.52	1.093	I don't know
	%	17%	39%	22%	18%	4%			

Table.3 Results of Participants' Responses Regarding the Program Methodology

Findings clearly show that the participant's found that theory was often focused on more than practical application within their respective TESOL programs. The questions of Table 3 and their scores are listed here individually.

Item 1:  $M = 2.77$  (I Don't Know). There is no absolute or affirmative decision regarding whether theory is prioritized over practical application. It is in the hesitation area.

Item 2:  $M = 2.05$  (disagree). The participants believe that they were not exposed to or involved in the practical aspect of teaching methods.

Item 3:  $M = 4.27$  (Agree). This indicates that professors depend primarily on lecturing and oral presentation to enrich students' understanding of theory rather than focusing on practice.

Item 4:  $M = 2.48$  (disagree). There is a lack of putting theory into practice, such as demo lessons.

Item 5:  $M = 2.39$  (Disagree). There is no obvious encouragement from educators to student-teachers to bring up ideas of practice.

Item 6:  $M = 3.70$  (Agree). This gives an impression of what an assessment might look like. It is supposed to be fully based on theory.

Item 7:  $M = 2.75$  (I Don't Know). This item involves the participants' opinions about their professors. "I don't know" indicates that professors' methods have some balance between theory and practice.

Item 8:  $M = 2.78$  (I Don't Know). This result indicates that the participants doubt the effectiveness of their professors' teaching supervision during the practicum period and the adherence of this supervision to a theoretical base.

Item 9:  $M = 2.52$  (I Don't Know). This item focuses on types of assignments given to student-teachers. The mean indicates a focus on theory rather than practice.

Curriculum of the Program Factor									
10. The textbooks in the program contain detailed practice by situations.	Freq.	19	57	35	33	3	2.61	1.035	I don't know
	%	13%	39%	24%	22%	2%			
11. The textbooks in the program reflect much theory without enough practical situations.	Freq.	3	11	13	68	52	4.05	0.963	Agree
	%	2%	7%	9%	46%	35%			

Table.4 Results of Participants' Responses Regarding the Curricula

There were only two items for measuring the second factor (Curricula). Both items were direct questions regarding the curricula which aimed to determine if the textbooks used focused on theory or practice.

Item 10:  $M = 2.61$  (I don't know). There was some hesitation amongst the participants to assert that the textbooks used contained guided practice.

Item 11:  $M = 4.05$  (Agree). This item indicated that the textbooks had been enriched with theory. As a whole, curricula for the different programs were obviously rich with theory but likely not practice-driven.

Facilities Factor									
12. The classrooms were equipped with multimedia devices.	Freq.	54	63	13	13	4	1.97	1.030	Disagree
	%	37%	43%	9%	9%	3%			
13. The buildings are suitable for teaching practice when we need to practice teaching.	Freq.	46	42	19	33	7	2.40	1.270	Disagree
	%	31%	29%	13%	22%	5%			
14. There is a rich library containing resources about teaching English.	Freq.	31	28	34	42	12	2.83	1.277	I don't know
	%	21%	19%	23%	29%	8%			

Table.5 Results of Participants' Responses Regarding the Program Facilities

The items measuring the facility factor (see Table 5) refer to non-supportive facilities for teaching practices, such as multimedia and library resources. The first three factors of this study—methodology, curriculum and facilities—are components of the teachers' preparation programs. Together, these components identify the internal factors. However, the fourth factor examined in this study (Teaching Field) is meant to represent the programs' output (external factor). Table 6 demonstrates that—through colleagues, mentors and trial and error approach—teaching field is a primary source of experience for novice teachers.

Teaching field factor									
15. I got over the challenges of teaching in my first three years of teaching by trial and error	Freq.	2	10	31	72	32	3.82	0.894	Agree
	%	1%	7%	21%	49%	22%			
16. I got over the challenges of teaching in my first three years by mentors' guidance.	Freq.	25	33	41	42	6	2.80	1.150	I don't know
	%	17%	22%	28%	29%	4%			
17. I got over the challenges of teaching in my first two years by observing my colleagues	Freq.	5	16	33	63	30	3.65	1.030	Agree
	%	3%	11%	22%	43%	20%			
18. The first three years of my teaching, my students were not as lucky as the students of the fourth and further years because I got much experience in the fourth and further years.	Freq.	7	20	40	62	18	3.43	1.027	Agree
	%	5%	13%	27%	42%	12%			
19. When I teach, I always relate the theory taught in your preparation program to what you are doing.	Freq.	11	45	45	38	8	2.91	1.039	I don't know
	%	7%	31%	31%	26%	5%			
20. I found difficulties in my teaching during the first three years because I was not prepared well in the program on the real practice of teaching.	Freq.	2	22	36	59	28	3.60	1.003	Agree
	%	1%	15%	24%	40%	19%			

Table.6 Results of Participants' Responses Regarding the Teaching Field

Table 7 shows Cronbach's Alpha for the reliability of the questionnaire items. The reliability of the 20 items was found to be 0.711 in the acceptable range.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.711	20

Table.7 Reliability of Items

### Discussion

Marx (1975) accurately described the relationship between theory and practice stating that "Practice without theory is blind. Theory without practice is sterile." (p. 182). Marx sees theory and practice as being part of one interwoven relationship in which neither one can stand alone or functions effectively without the other. If practice is delayed after Theory is learned, that practice maybe less than functional since the pairing and timing of both concepts is essential. One of the major objectives of this paper is to determine and outline the correct timing and pairing of theory and practice in the context of TESOL programs. Theory is concerned with declarative knowledge "knowing that", while practice is concerned with procedural knowledge "knowing how". Whenever there is a significant gap or any other kind of separation between the acquisition of declarative and procedural knowledge, both aspects are affected negatively. Procedural knowledge will not follow the theory properly because of the

experience shortage in the right timing. Thus, the details of the theory will not be as fresh as they were at the time of reception.

Practice can be looked at from various approaches. Some researchers have developed diagnostic techniques for practice. Ghaye (2011) summarized Reflective practice as follows: “It is a link between what we do and how we improve it. This is related to our feelings and emotions about our work. The reflection can be assessing ourselves here and now and analyzing the past problematic areas to perform better as well as focusing on the strengths as well” (p 5). Farrell (2012) suggested including a practice reflection during the pre-service courses and a supplementary course called *Teaching in the First Years*, which would focus on first-year induction through “reflective practice” (p. 446). This painstaking reform is commendable and can lead to valuable results during the induction years of teaching. However, for a novice teacher, Reflective Practice could be considered a part of self-assessment and monitoring which could be categorized under the trial and error approach. Reflective practice during induction years unfortunately can deprive students from consistent high quality teaching, since the trial and error approach is the prominent feature of self-assessment. However, reflective practice is very successful with experienced teachers as it helps them start working on more innovative practices.

The most prominent deficiency of TESOL programs is that theory is introduced, enhanced, and reinforced separately from delayed, authentic practical implementation. Theory is thus learned as an abstract concept, creating an extra challenge for those who have audio-visual and kinesthetic learning preferences. These students therefore grasp only the surface level of these theories. Rogers and Babinski (2002) confirmed this challenge by describing novice teachers’ feeling. “Novice teachers may feel discouraged when idealized images of teaching differ from the reality of classroom” (p 68). Another challenge of TESOL programs is that practice and authentic teaching come too late after the completion of theoretical preparation. Practice is therefore not based on or related to a solid theory, as shown by Item 20 of the survey. This may be attributed to inadequate theory-practice synchronization during the TESOL programs. This corresponds with Senior’s (2010) view that “many teachers have a good grasp of how to set up communicative activities, many lack a fundamental knowledge of learning theory” (p 171). There is evidence that some teachers avoid focusing on aspects of the language (including error correction) in their lessons. It is sought that theory and practice together form a “Meta-teaching” in which practitioners are aware of how and why they do what they do in ESL/EFL classrooms.

The TESOL field should be primarily practical, and its practices should be based on a theoretical foundation. This practical approach should be the goal of a TESOL program as opposed to a focus on an accumulation of theoretical knowledge to be later implemented in a delayed practice. Johnson (2009) (as cited in Kiely 2012) observes that teacher education “for much of its history a field of practice rather than one of research” (p 503). One implication of this is that knowledge building has been performed through practice, rather than through conventional research methods. This manifests the role of theory as an initial phase that is employed concurrently with practice which is the primary component of the whole process.

The survey items and results of the present study reveal some key items which illuminate the balance between theory and practice in TESOL programs.

Undoubtedly, the responses indicate a clear attitude from former TESOL students that these teacher preparation programs deliver more theory than they do practice. For instance, Item 2 is crucial because it asks a key question: Were student-teachers trained in practicing different approaches, such as the Direct Method, the Silent Way, the Communicative Method, the Audiolingual Method and the Grammar-Translation Method, so that they would be capable of implementing the appropriate method depending on the situation at hand. The responses to Item 2 indicate that most students simply read a list of features for each of these methods and discussed those features in class. For instance I asked some English teachers about the Natural Approach and the Silent Way and I received one answer "Yes, I studied that method at the university but I cannot remember the exact details". As Brown (2007) states that some teachers do not distinguish between different approaches when they observe them. This is the result of being only exposed to theories without practice in the TESOL programs.

Merriam Webster defines teaching as "the act, practice, or profession of a teacher". Merriam Webster's definition explains the nature of teaching to be in action not in theory. This action includes the act, practice, and profession of teaching. This practice is meant to be reciprocal experience (actual interaction) inside the classroom. Merriam Webster's definition supports the view that teaching skills require interpersonal interaction not only intrapersonal interaction. Troike (2006) explains interpersonal interaction as "communicative events and situations which occur between people" (p 112). This means a teacher must interact with real students. The studying phase at a TESOL program is replete with Intrapersonal interaction which is "communication that occurs within an individual's own mind" (p 113). One advantage of putting theory into action in TESOL classes is the availability of instant guidance, coaching and scaffolding by a course professor. In other words, theoretical lectures, written assignments and presentations cannot be considered reciprocal actions. Item 9, in the survey, shows that most respondents did not find assignments to be practical, since the average answer to this item was "I Don't Know".

There are interesting results to be considered in regard to the teaching field. Item 17 of the survey emphasizes the significant role played by colleagues in the transference of teaching experience. This study conforms partially to Brannan and Bleistein's (2012) results which identified a considerable influence of colleagues and mentors but this study is neutral to the influence of mentors on new teachers. The discrepancy regarding mentors may have to do with the different demographic input between Brannan & Bleistein's study and our study. The role of mentors may depend on the macro educational strategy, while colleague factor is emphasized significantly in both studies. This motivates us to create a simulated environment of practice providing these teacher preparation programs with solid theory and practice methods.

### **Actual vs. Snowball Practice Model (SPM) in TESOL programs**

This study presents a suggested model of adapted structure of TESOL programs. This model emphasizes *how* practice is integrated into a program rather focusing on *the quality* of practice. Table 8 shows the actual structure of programs in Saudi Arabia while Figure 4 illustrates our conceptual framework for an alternative model. This alternative model, the Snowball Practice Model (SPM), is to make a practicum course available throughout the entire program. It would be free ESL/EFL courses offered

for the public as an act of corporate social responsibility (CSR). This method would address two issues at once: hits two birds with a single stone. On the one hand, it allows a practicum course to be available at a low cost, because student-teachers could take on faculty and management roles as part of their training . On the other hand, it could be an act of CSR. A classroom could be dedicated to this part of the program. Including such a service into the program could facilitate the adaptation of the program structure for balancing theory with authentic practice. Table 8 and Figure 4 show a comparison between the two structures.

Years	Methodology		Learning Reference	Assessment	Assessing practical
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	Linguistic Skills		Audio-Visual		
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	Theoretical Awareness Empowerment		Audio-Visual		
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	Interactional Stage Multidisciplinary		Audio-Visual		
4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Theoretical Reinforcement	Practical Training Feedback	Audio-Kinesthetic	Assessing theoretical	

Table 8. Actual Structure of Teacher Preparation Program in KSA

**Linguistic skills stage:** This stage involves Saudi student-teachers enrolled in the program learning English language skills. The Course topics in this stage are writing, reading, grammar, speaking and listening, and study skills.

**Theoretical Awareness and Empowerment stage:** In this stage, concepts, terms, approaches, methods, theories of applied and pure linguistics, and pedagogy in lecture mode are delivered. This is a crucial stage for laying the foundation of students' knowledge bases. Newly learned theories are also supported during this stage with scholarly views, group discussion, opinions, assignments and demo practice are implemented.

**Interdisciplinary and pedagogy through interaction:** In this stage, student-teachers are asked to broaden their knowledge and perspectives by studying courses in related disciplines, such as Translation and Literature along with their TESOL courses. Student-teachers interact with one another by completing presentations, interactive reflections, and written assignments. They also prepare lesson plans and present them to the rest of the class.

**Theoretical reinforcement and practical training:** In this stage, theory is still being introduced. However, it is also being reinforced during one semester of practicum in some programs. The Practicum course acts as the authentic practice to prepare student-teachers for the real teaching field. A practicum supervisor usually makes five to eight observations of each student during their practicum to provide feedback on their work.

**Assessment:** Students' understanding of theory is assessed throughout the second, third and fourth years of the program, while practice is assessed during the last semester.

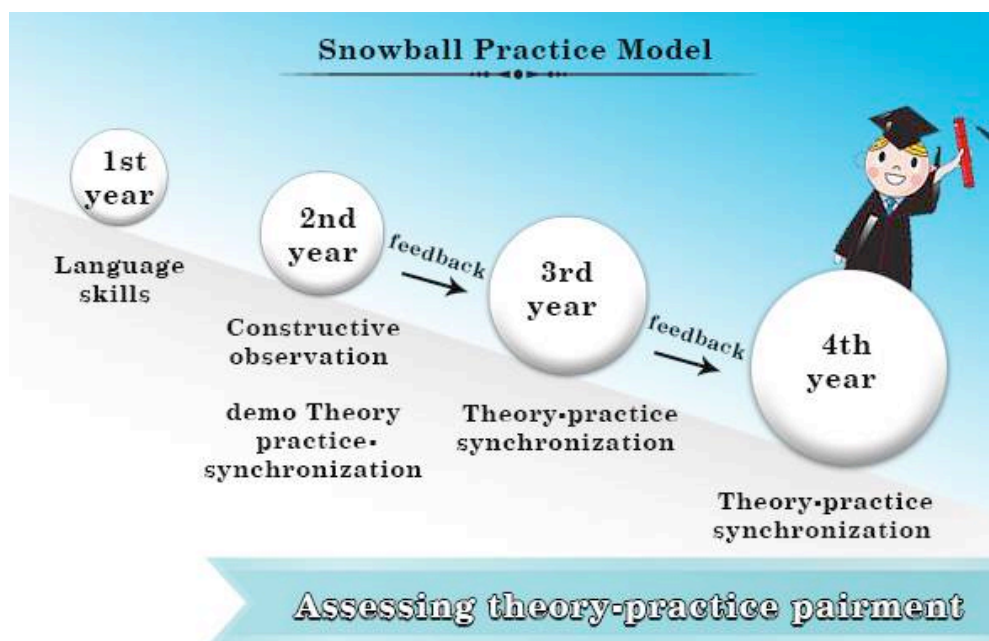


Figure 4: Snowball Practice Model (suggested structure)

The Snowball Practice Model (SPM), designed by the authors of the present study, relies on providing free English learning courses to the public. One classroom can be devoted to this purpose as this would help make the most of the availability of free resources (student-teachers). The SPM can provide student-teachers with easy access to authentic practice and observation. This model also introduces an optimal theory-based practice which is currently absent from TESOL programs as Ramani, Richards, Nunan and Widdowson 1990 state that "in the field of second language acquisition, teacher educators have frequently lamented the ever-present gap between theory and practice" (as cited from Senior 2010). In traditional TESOL programs, theory is studied far earlier and far more than practice. This stops student-teachers from learning how to imagine or to optimize how theory can be applied practically in different situations. By synchronizing the teaching of theory and practice, theory is used as the basis for practice. Moreover, practice also can enhance theory comprehension with successful linkage. Widdowson (1984) suggested that "fostering dependence on teaching techniques alone, without the awareness of how techniques relate to theoretical principles, militates against healthy development in the ELT profession" (as cited in Senior 2010 p. 172). In the SPM, feedback is provided constantly by peers and supervisors. In this model, student-teachers begin to gain experience in their second year and they continue to gain more experience as they go, creating a snowball effect. The more they roll over years, the more experience they gain, until eventually they are equipped with enough practice to skillfully teach in ESL/EFL classrooms. Additionally, this model involves the assessment of theory being carried throughout student-teachers' teaching in classrooms rather than writing tests. This gives more reliability and validity to the assessment process. The following are the definitions of the terms used in Figure 4.

**Constructive observation.** This involves continuously observing real classes via either attendance or video recordings. Discussion is then carried out either individually or in a group. This allows student-teachers to apply the theory they have learned and discuss it in meta-teaching sessions.

**Demo theory-practice synchronization.** This involves teaching mini lessons (demos) to theorize applicable practices. This occurs on a weekly basis and is done to increase the socialization involved in teaching.

**Theory-practice synchronization.** Due to availability of practicum opportunities at hand during the second, third and fourth years of the program, this synchronization involves student-teachers to teach some classes all year long, while theory is being learned. In other words, it is to study theory, discuss it, and understand it, and then to apply it in a real classroom no later than one or two weeks.

**Assessing theory-practice pairing.** Assessment of the student-teachers' performance depends primarily on observing *how* well theory is implemented in an authentic teaching environment rather than doing paper-based tests. However, some paper-based tests are still conducted.

Richards and Crookes (1988) assert that "teaching maybe viewed as an art, as a craft"(p. 11). The SPM provides a good opportunity for student-teachers to form and shape their skills, art, and creativity during the program rather than shaping their talent in the field and being forced to learn as they go.

**Characteristics of SPM.** The following are the characteristics of SPM:

1. Building a theoretical base through reciprocal theory and practice (theory-practice synchronization).
2. Reliable and valid assessment based on synchronization progress.
3. Providing continuous, influential feedback and guidance.
4. Balancing theory with practice for graduates.
5. Besides teaching, providing educational management skills.
6. Providing CSR by offering free courses to the public.
7. Instilling confidence, autonomy, and socialization in students of the program.

Student-teachers who graduate from an SPM-based TESOL program would be completely prepared to start teaching as fairly experienced teachers applying different levels of teaching skills in different situations as levels shown in Table 9. On the contrary, novice teachers who graduate from traditional TESOL programs usually develop their teaching skills gradually moving from a surface level of teaching to a deeper one using trial-and-error, mentors' guidance, colleagues' help or developmental training. Table 9 was designed by the authors of the present study.



component level	Input Generation	Student/Teacher Interaction	Assessment	Feedback
Level 1	Oral presentation	Drills	Homework	Negative correction
Level 2	Visual presentation	Reciprocal discussion and technology	Written test	Positive correction
Level 3	Audio-visual	Communicative activities	Constructive assessment	paraphrasing
Level 4	Kinesthetic and Tactile	Authentic conversation	Real Recordings	Student/teacher conference

Table 9. Levels of Teaching Skills

## Conclusion

The research questions are intriguing and speculative. Therefore, this study was carried out to pinpoint the theory-practice jigsaw relationship with an alternative model (SPM) to the traditional model of the TESOL programs. Based on the results, theory surpasses practice in which restructuring TESOL programs is a demand to utilize an optimal integration of a core and complimentary segments of teaching process. On the whole, the attitude of Saudi teachers of English is negatively expressed towards the proportion of practice in the current TESOL programs, while they assert that colleagues and trial-and-error approach are primary sources of experience gaining. This leads to an initiation of a structural reform movement in English teachers' preparation programs in Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, this study, not only serves the Saudi educational system, but also it can be generalized to all programs which have similar structures and conditions to the Saudi programs. A recommendation for further studies is to take TESOL professors' views about enriching practice in the programs and methods of its implementation.

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**Author's Contact email:** [bagshij@act.edu.sa](mailto:bagshij@act.edu.sa)





*Reflections of AB-English Students on Their English Language Learning Experiences*

Roger G Pagente Jr, Misamis Oriental State College of Agriculture and Technology,  
Philippines

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**Abstract**

This study seeks to investigate the language learning experiences of the thirty-nine AB-English majors who were selected through fish-bowl technique from the 157 students enrolled in the AB-English program. Findings taken from the diary, questionnaire and unstructured interview revealed that motivation, learners' belief, self-monitoring, language anxiety, activities and strategies were the prevailing factors that influenced the learning of English of the participants.

Keywords: Diary, English Language Learning Experiences

A large, faint watermark of the iafor logo is centered on the page. It consists of the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue font, surrounded by a circular graphic element made of two overlapping, curved lines in light blue and light red.

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## **Introduction**

Language is the most effective medium of communication, which allows a person to explain and express his thoughts and ideas may it be in oral or written form; hence, language is essential in every activity of man. This among other reasons spurred the need to study how language is learned by non-native language learners and the need to better understand the factors that facilitate learning as one of the requirements to help learners approach their language experiences. These factors come in a variety of situations and forms that are exploited by human beings as input of the target language.

Among the studies conducted on language learning involve the perspectives of the learners themselves. Understanding the perspectives of students on what helped them learn English as a second language has pedagogical values. The factors that contributed their language experiences suggest ways on how the teachers should instruct their learners. The teachers could look for strategies that best suit for the type of learners in their classes. Also, the students will be able to assess their language learning experiences that could be used by those who want to design programs that consider the students' perspectives. Indeed, taking into consideration the learners' perspective is a useful tool in understanding the factors that contribute to effective language learning.

Studies have shown that learners of English are capable of identifying the sources of learning by looking at their reflections, especially when they are given diary prompts that guide them to reflect on their language experiences (Curtis & Bailey 2009; Fong 2005; Matsuda 2004; Matsumoto 1996; Mori 2007). These studies have demonstrated the learner's ability to identify the factors that helped them learn the target language. Most of these studies however, focused on foreign language learners. There are still no studies conducted as to the language learning experiences of second language (L2) learners of Bukidnon State University (BSU). Thus, a link to research in this area would greatly help teachers on how they will instruct Cebuano learners in English.

In this study, the researcher is focused on the language experiences of L2 learners and the factors that assisted them in learning English. Also, this study presents valuable information on the field of English language studies. Thus, the researcher hopes that this study will would help both L2 learners and teachers in learning and teaching English effectively.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This part explains the theories that support the conduct of the study.

The first theory is the socio-cultural. The socio-cultural theory operates on the assumption that human cognitive development is highly dependent upon the social context where the language is used. It also occurs as a result of meaningful verbal interactions between novices and more knowledgeable interlocutor such as parents, peers, or teachers as well as the mediating technologies (Vygotsky, 1980). This means that learning a language is facilitated through interactions and use of mediating tools like reading materials, computer, educational videos and other forms of media. This proposition is based on the assumption that people take part in communication and

that they sometimes use tools to express themselves and to learn more about the ideas of others.

This study also capitalizes on the social learning theory explains that humans are capable of observational learning. Learners acquire knowledge by observing others – their styles, efforts and successes. Social learning also involves four stages: the attention phase in which the learners observe a model, the retention phase in which they processes what they observed, the reproduction phase in which learner repeats the behavior that has been modeled and the reinforcement phase in which learner reinforced as they repeat such behavior (Bandura, 1997). This signifies that a learner of a language often imitates the behavior of others. Learners are keen observers and the language expressions that they hear and the content of communication serve as language inputs. They, therefore, learn not only by actively getting involved in the process of communication but also by listening, reading and observing the use of language.

Another theory is on engagement. Engagement theory provides direction to educators on how to help students become more engaged in learning. It also emphasizes motivational, conceptual, and social aspects of learning in which learners became more engaged in learning. This theory also states that engaged learners are those who are intrinsically motivated to learn and frequently engaged to activities related to it (Guthrie 2004; Guthrie & Wigfield 1997, 2000). This implies that language learning takes place when students become more engaged in the lessons or topics or when they are intrinsically driven to learn the language. This proposition is based on the assumption that learners are also self-propelled. They have their own objectives in learning a language and this can prompt them to do tasks that will help them learn a language.

Embedded in the theory of engagement is motivation. Motivation is the drive of people to reach their goal or to accomplish something (Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Thus, if students are motivated enough to achieve their purpose they are more likely to engage in classroom activities to enhance their skills. Also, being engage means they are more enthusiastic to learn in class and practice at home to attain their goals.

These theories are very much helpful in the study, since they talk about how learning takes place. Specifically, the said theories can be used to support language learning.

### **Statement of the Problem**

What are the reflections of the AB-English students about their English language experiences?

### **Methodology**

This study used phenomenological research design. This design is concerned with the study of experiences from the perspective of an individual.

This study was conducted in Bukidnon State University, particularly in the College of Arts and Sciences. This college offers five courses. One of these is Bachelor of Arts major in English. The first semester of academic year 2011-2012 was the

implementation of the new curriculum of AB-English which is far different from that of the previous curriculum that is more focused on literature. The new curriculum focuses more on courses concerning the study of language.

There were the thirty-nine AB-English students who participated in the study. These students were drawn from 157 enrollees of the AB-English program of the College of Arts and Sciences in the academic year 2011-2012, 25% of the enrollees were selected to participate in the study. In selecting the participants from each year level, the researcher used the fish-bowl technique. Except from a thirty-four year old student, the age bracket of the participants ranged from 16-26 years old. Table 1 below presents the number of students included in this study including the number of male and female participants.

Table 1.  
*Description of participants in the study*

Level	Selected No. of Participants	Gender	
		Male	Female
1 <sup>st</sup> year	12 students	4	8
2 <sup>nd</sup> year	12 students	3	9
3 <sup>rd</sup> year	12 students	1	11
4 <sup>th</sup> year	3 students	2	1
<b>Total</b>	39 students	9	30

The researcher employed triangulation in gathering the data. Triangulation is employing various techniques in answering the research problem to ensure validity of result.

First, the researcher used the diary as the main data gathering tool. As gleaned from the review, the researcher provided guide questions. These questions were patterned from the questions used by Fong (2006) in his study. These questions only served as their guide in writing their diary.

The reflections were gathered during class hours. The researcher asked permission from the instructor of the participants to conduct the study in the classroom during the teacher's instructional time. Before the participants answered their diary using the diary prompts, the researcher oriented the participants to recall all their experiences in the language. They were also allowed to write their answers in Cebuano, Filipino or English; they can also code switch. Second, the researcher used a questionnaire to further capture the participants' experiences in learning English. The questionnaire is modified from the questionnaire of Narayanan et al. (2008) on factors affecting English language learning. The participants responded to 27 items about the different causes that affect their English learning (see Appendix 1). The use of this questionnaire is intended to support the diary to make sure that the different language learning experiences are indeed captured.

Lastly, the unstructured interview was used. Unstructured interview is an informal conversational form of interview in which the participants were asked open-ended questions on their English language experiences. The questions were based on items



that were not fully explained in the diary. A voice recorder was used to document the interview making it easier for the researcher to transcribe their responses.

Average and percentage were applied for checking the factors that affect language learning such as, motivation, learners' belief, language anxiety, activities and strategies and social factors. The results gained in this questionnaire were used to support the qualitative account of the study.

In presenting the results of questionnaire, the researcher used the percentage computation and not the Likert's computation. This is because the study was focused on the number of students who have responded to an item. Thus, it is relevant to look into the range of students agreed to a particular factor.

The diary of the learners was evaluated by three raters. The researcher with the help of the research mentor has undergone training on how to code the entries.

Aside from the researcher, two instructors from Bukidnon State University were selected by the thesis committee to read and identify the diaries, if it supports the concepts of the study.

The raters read each diary and label the parts that contributed to the English language learning of the students. The researcher compared the coding of the coders. The researcher did not meet the intercoders anymore after the papers were returned to him because in general, the raters agreed in the coding. In cases where a rater had a different coding, the researcher followed the rating of the two coders.

## Results and Discussion

### 1. Language Learning Experiences of AB-English Students

The table below presents the result.

Table 2.  
Factors that affect English language learning are motivation, learners' belief, teacher's role, language anxiety, activities and strategies and social factor

Factors	n = 39				
	5 (Strongly Agree)(%)	4 (Agree) (%)	3 (Neutral) (%)	2 (Disagree)(%)	1 (Strongly disagree)(%)
<b>A. Motivation</b>					
1. I do enjoy learning English.	<b>53.8</b>	43.6	5.13		
2. English will help me acquire new ideas and broaden my outlook.	<b>69.2</b>	28.2	2.56		
3. I can learn more about the world through learning English.	<b>51.3</b>	38.5	10.3		
4. English is necessary to get a good job.	<b>59</b>	35.9	7.69		
5. English will be helpful for my future career.	<b>87.2</b>	10.3	2.56		
6. English will help me to pass my exams and graduate from the college.	<b>69.2</b>	20.5	7.69		2.56
7. English will help me if I should ever travel abroad.	<b>74.4</b>	23.1	2.56		
8. I can reach my goals and dreams in life if I learn English.	<b>56.4</b>	35.9	7.69		
9. I study English for me to get higher grades.	33.3	<b>38.5</b>	20.5	5.13	2.56
Total	<b>61.53</b>	30.5	7.40	0.57	0.56
<b>B. Learners' Belief</b>					
10. If I have high English proficiency, others think I am cool.	17.9	<b>41</b>	30.8	23.1	
11. It is natural for me to learn English	<b>46.2</b>	41	12.8		
12. Learning English can boost my confidence in school	<b>46.2</b>	35.9	17.9		
13. I feel confident when asked to participate in English language class.	25.6	30.8	<b>51.3</b>	10.3	
Total	33.98	<b>37.18</b>	28.2	8.35	
<b>C. Teacher's Role</b>					
14. My teacher helps me in learning English by giving effective strategies	<b>56.4</b>	38.5	2.56		2.56
15. I learn more in English when the teacher is approachable.	<b>64.1</b>	23.1	12.8		
Total	<b>60.25</b>	30.8	7.68		1.28
<b>D. Language Anxiety</b>					
16. I feel anxious if someone asks me something in English.	10.3	25.6	<b>43.6</b>	15.4	5.13
17. I can hardly explain my answers in class using English.	7.69	20.5	<b>46.2</b>	23.1	2.56
18. I feel nervous when I speak English.	7.69	23.1	<b>46.2</b>	20.5	2.56
19. It embarrasses me to volunteer answers in our English language class.	2.56	25.6	<b>38.5</b>	20.5	12.8
20. I am afraid the other students will laugh at me when I speak English.	17.9	<b>30.8</b>	28.2	20.5	2.56
21. I feel more tense and nervous in English language class than in other classes.	20.5	<b>46.2</b>	28.2	2.56	2.56
Total	11.11	28.63	<b>38.48</b>	17.09	4.70
<b>E. Activities and Strategies</b>					
22. Instructional materials are really helpful in learning English.	<b>69.2</b>	25.6	2.56		2.56
23. Reading books can enhance my ability in using English	<b>87.2</b>	10.3	2.56		
24. I try to use English as much as possible in class time.	33.3	<b>48.7</b>	15.4		2.56
Total	<b>63.23</b>	28.2	6.84		1.71
<b>F. Social Factor</b>					
25. I prefer to learn English with someone's help.	20.5	<b>38.5</b>	25.6	12.8	2.56
26. I can socialize with others if I learn English.	25.6	<b>48.7</b>	23.1	2.56	
27. I learn English because I have friends who are speaker of English on the web.	5.13	17.9	<b>33.3</b>	30.8	12.8
Total	17.08	<b>35.03</b>	27.33	15.39	5.12

Note: Boldface indicates the highest percentage given to a particular scale.

Table 2 shows the result of the survey conducted among 39 AB-English students. As shown in the table, the students' learning of English was an outcome of a host of factors. Among these factors, the students agreed that in general, the activities and strategies of both the teachers and students were helpful in learning English. This is followed by motivation and teacher's role in English language learning. Thus, L2 learners tend to be more effective in learning English when their teachers gave relevant activities and strategies that suit the learner's interest.

The findings are in consonance with the statement that there are numerous factors that affect language learning (Fong 2005; Narayanan et al. 2008; Matsuzaki 2006). The table above also supports the factors which were revealed by the students in their summative diary. These factors are presented and discussed further below. Data from the interview are also provided.

### 1. *Motivation*

In the diaries of the participants it was revealed that students were extrinsically motivated. The study of Fong (2006) had the same findings pertaining to extrinsic motivation. This extrinsic motivation is caused by several factors. This includes the aims of the students to increase their job opportunities in the country and even abroad and to earn good grades in school. This is also evidenced by the percentage of students who recognized that English is instrumental in looking for a good job and finding a better career in the future (see Table 2). Gonzales (2010) supports this finding that learners were extrinsically motivated because they wanted to gain in return and for their future occupation. Also, students were motivated because of their teachers and families. This is also proven true in the theory of Vygotsky (1980) that the interaction of learners with their teachers and parents or any family members can facilitate the learning process. What follows are unedited extracts from the students' diaries.

#### A. Job Opportunities and Travel Abroad

Students were extrinsically motivated in their language learning as summed up in their diaries. One of which is the aim to have a good job after college and a greater chance to work abroad.

##### Entry # 1

*"As what they've said, they really want me to have a nice job in my future. And taking up AB English Language is the best way for me to learn more in English."*

The extracts show that English is a vehicle to increase the participants' chances of looking for a high paying job within and outside the country. They also recognized the need to learn English so they can communicate effectively. In the questionnaire on motivation, item numbers 5 and 7 were the highest rated statements which only support the instrumental value of English in the field of employment and travel. This is perhaps due to the fact that in the Philippines, English language has received the status of prestige; it is the language of business and institutions. Also, one of the most lucrative places to work is found in English-speaking countries. Gonzales (2010) supports this finding that Filipinos are extrinsically motivated learners because of career development and the chances of working abroad.

### B. Earn Good Grades

Some students reported that their aim of having good grades in the subject is what motivated them in their learning.

Entry # 3

*“I am eager to learn when my subject is difficult and what motivated me most in my English learning is to gain more knowledge and to aimed higher grades.”*

Kong (2009) also found out that students study in order to get higher grades and an achievement in class. In the questionnaire, the answers of participants in items number 2, 6, and 9 (see Table 2.) support the reported qualitative finding that learning English is important to earn good grades and to acquire more knowledge. In college, majority of the subjects are taught in English and those students who are good in using the English language are at an advantage because they can better understand the content and express themselves than those whose English skills are poor.

### C. Teacher's Role

It is evident on the diaries of the learners that their teacher has an important role in their English learning.

Entry # 12

*“I failed in our examination but he told me if you want to learn more about English just practice yourself by reading books and also watching English movies to make practice your skills in English...”*

As revealed on their diaries, they were motivated because their teachers were helping them in all aspects of the course in order to learn English. Also, students were also adaptable in learning when the teacher has a good characteristic towards the students. Students have also pointed out that they were also encouraged when the teacher is really proficient in teaching English. In fact, students find it remarkable to encounter such teacher that motivates them to learn more. In items number 14 and 15 (see Table 2.) from the questionnaire, the results are also true and in consistent with what revealed from the reflections. Thus, it is important to note that the teacher who encourages the learners to make good in the subject and provides a harmonious relationship in the classroom has an upgrading effect in the learning progress of the students. Dornyei (1988) and Fong (2005) support this finding that teachers are very much important in the learning process since they can influence the performance of the students in learning English.

### D. Self-motivated Learner

There were only two students who have reported that they were intrinsically motivated in learning English.

Entry # 31

*“I enjoy learning English, that is why I enrolled this course. I love English and wanted to learn more about it.”*

As revealed in entries #25 and #31, the students enrolled in an English course because they just want to learn the language. According to Kong (2009), intrinsic motivation is the willingness of the student to learn the new knowledge in order to fulfill the

purpose of their curiosity. Thus, it is the need to know and to enhance their self-growth that motivated the students to learn. There are only two students reported that they want to enhance their skills in English.

## 2. *Language Anxiety*

The identified sources of anxiety in the study of Cubukcu (2007) were also found in the current study. The anxiety of learners is caused by making mistakes in using English, the teacher's behavior and the difficulty of the activities in the classroom. These factors are also documented in the diaries of the students.

### A. Teacher's Role in Student's Anxiety

English language learning involves different components, and as discussed earlier, teacher has a crucial function in the learning process. However, the teacher cannot only be the source of motivation but they can also be a source of anxiety in the learning environment.

#### Entry # 2

*"I afraid the english especially the teacher talk to me."*

*"Before my teacher during the high school is very strict, that's why many student not like him and afraid those teacher."*

As revealed in this diary, the teacher hinders the student from learning English because of how the student was treated by the teacher. Crawford (1993) explains that the environment in the classroom must be convenient for students to learn and that interaction must be free flowing so learners can really give their best in class. Also, teacher must keep the class unthreatening to learners because it can augment learners' performance.

### B. Class Activities that Causes Anxiety

Activities in the classroom can also be a source of learning (Guthrie 2004; Guthrie & Wigfield 1997, 2000). However, there are also students who are anxious because of the activities done in the classroom.

#### Entry # 29

*"...in speech I am not good to deliver my speech in front of many people because I feel so nervous..."*

As accounted in the entries above, students were afraid to express themselves in English during their class because they were scared if others would give negative comments and criticize their grammar. Cubukcu (2007) supported this finding on language anxiety that students were anxious to submit themselves in class because of the inability to express one's self, presenting in class and the committing of mistakes. It is then threatening for learners if there are a large number of students in the class. It affects their confidence that there are others watching and listening to them. Thus, learning is hampered and activities became useless.

### 3. Learners' Beliefs

English learning has viewed to be multi-factorial in nature. One of these factors is learners' belief. This includes how the student sees himself as a language learner. Accordingly, optimistic learners have higher chances of acquiring the language. The more confident they are, the more active they will be in using the language (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003).

#### A. Good Language Learner

There are only a few students who have optimal belief about themselves as language learners. These are summed up on their reflections below:

##### Entry # 17

*"I think of myself as a good student of English language because I know that I could already compete with others and hopefully I could also be globally competitive soon."*

As revealed in their diaries, students who have positive belief as learners of English tend to look at their language skills as more superior than others which also mean that they can do better with language related tasks than their peers who are not confident as they are. Kong (2009) discussed that learners form their learning progress on how they perceive themselves as language learners. In fact, learners belief can also build the motivation of the learners as stated on entry # 17. The positive belief of a language learner raises his motivation in learning English (Kong, 2009).

#### B. Poor Language Learners

Most of the students identified themselves as poor language learners of English. These can be seen on the entries below and how these students conceive themselves as a language learner:

##### Entry # 35

*"I think I am poor English learner because of all the subject. English has my lowest grade. I can just understand English but don't know how to speak and write."*

Evidently, students who are reported to be poor language learners pointed out their weaknesses in the language are in the aspects of writing, speaking, and understanding English. Their performances were also their bases on how they look at themselves as language learners. This finding was also true in the study of Ajzen (1988) that performance is also a determinant of the learners' belief.

#### C. Learners Perseverance Despite Negative Belief

Despite negative belief of students on how they perceive their language learning, they have also shown positive attitude in learning the language.

##### Entry # 7

*"I think myself as a language learner is that I'm not too good, but I try my best to become a good language learner cause, this is a challenging course that I'm taking up."*

The attitude and behavior of students toward the learning of English can help the learners improve their language skills (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003).The learners'

knowledge of who they are and what they can do with the English language can actually help them on how to improve their language skills. As seen in entry #16, the learner knows that he needs more time to learn the target language. Thus, if the learners are able to identify their strengths and weaknesses of using the language, they can capitalize on this belief to improve their skills.

#### D. Influence of Belief on Language Learning as Perceived by the Participants

Since, there are factors that are not clarified in the reflections and questionnaire in the learners' belief, the unstructured interview was conducted. The excerpt below explains the influence of belief as perceived by participants:

*How do you consider yourself as a language learner, are you a good or poor language learner?*

##### Excerpt 1

*“Average language learner ko, kay lisod pud kayo i-assume nga maayo ko kay I’m on the process pa of learning. Naa man koy salig sa akong kaugalingon, feeling baya kaayo ko nga anad ko and kung Inenglishan ko mag-inenglish pud ko.”*

Excerpt 1 shows that learners can examine their belief in using the language. In fact, the learners' positive belief as a language learner is linked on their self-confidence and on the progress of their learning. The more positive their views as language learner, the more confident they are in using the language, and the higher is the probability of using the English language. Items number 10, 11, 12 and 13 (see Table 2) verifies the quantitative finding of this account. Thus, the learner based this belief on how they experience in using English. This finding is also proven true in the study of Tanaka and Ellis (2003) that learner's belief is a factor that affects how they will learn the language.

##### Excerpt 2

*“Average language learner ko kay dili pa man gud nako ma consider akong self nga good language learner kay on the process pa man ko nga mahimo gyud kong good language learner. If ever lugar maka-meet ko ug mga sentence structure nga masabtan na nako deretso so ayha pa nako maconsider akong self nga good language learner gyud ko.”*

Similarly, excerpt 2 proves that learners' belief depends on the consideration of the learners' ability in exercising the technicalities of the language. Hence, learners can rely on how proficient they are in English. Moreover, learners' belief can uplift the intention of the learner to strive hard in order to be an effective English user. This notion is also true on the finding of Ajzen (1998) that the belief of the learner may considerably form the intention and action of the learners towards the learning process.

#### 4. Evaluation of progress and self-monitoring

Previous researches have also shown the importance of self-monitoring in English language learning since, it can be a guide to both students and teachers simultaneously in the learning process (Harris, 1997; Gardner 2000). It is good to note that students were able to evaluate their progress in reading, writing, listening, speaking and vocabulary. They have also pointed out their previous performances in various

aspects. Below are the assessments and evaluations of the students on the four macro-skills of learning English:

#### A. Reading

Entry # 1

*“At that time Before, when Im reading Books (stories), I really don’t understand what I am reading and I cant pronounce it also very well. But because of my willingness to be more progressive in Such Area.In Reading. I did it very well. Now I can fastly understand what I am reading and pronounce it correctly as well. I am progressive than Before.”*

#### B. Writing

Entry # 19

*“I rate myself in writing an essay because when our teacher in Eng 102 taught us how to write an essay and Thesis Statement. And it has different when I am in high school because if our teacher ask us to make an essay, I don’t know how to make or write in Introduction, Body and Conclusion, now when I have my Eng 102 I know how to write an Introduction, Body and Conclusion and I know how many sentence in the paragraph.”*

#### C. Listening

Entry # 25

*“I am more in listening to gather informations and formulate ideas to have a better vocabulary.”*

#### D. Speaking and Vocabulary

Entry # 4

*“It is maybe in speaking and vocabulary, Because I can already speak better, and I have learn a lot of vocabulary compared to my high school life, in the since that in high school I did not really exposed myself, Publicly or in the school campus in speaking using English, but now in my college I already exercising or exposing myself to practice conversing using English.”*

Generally, the diaries of the students provided a rich vein of information on the evaluation of their English learning. This only goes to show that students were aware of what they have learned and on what their language strengths and weaknesses are. Thus, self-monitoring can build learners’ awareness on the learning process (Harris, 1997; Gardner 2000). This is because they can assess on the particular area they need to improve or in which area they are more effective. In fact, they can even remember exact events or experiences that involved in the learning of English.

Also, students have written suggestions on what they need to do in order to improve their English skills (e.g. writing, speaking, listening, reading etc.).

### 5. Activities and Strategies

Students can identify the activities inside and outside the school that can help them foster their English learning. Some activities that they have pointed out are tests, examinations, discussions, reading books, reporting and role playing. They also used mediating tools that keep them on track with their learning from computers, films, and

other forms of media (Vygotsky 1962, 1978). Other students used strategies in learning English such as enriching vocabulary, searching meaning for unfamiliar words when reading, and speaking English as much as possible.

#### A. Learner's Activities in Class

There are plenty of activities that the teacher utilized in class. However, it is vital to solicit the ideas of students on what particular activities they like in order for them to be motivated in learning. These activities are documented below:

##### Entry # 26

*"The aspect of the course that help me to learn best are the activities, materials and test. Because it is very helpful dahil kung wala ito hindi tayo nagkakaroon ng mga kaalaman. (because if there's no activities we cannot have knowledge. ) At ito ay nakakatulong para maimprove mo ang iyong mga kaalaman at ito ay madadagdagan pa. (And it is very helpful for us to improve our knowledge and to gain more)."*

As revealed in their diaries, students were more used to activities like having tests or written activities. This is because their papers are checked; they can immediately have the feedback. Thus, they can maximize the opportunity to reflect and to strive hard if they do not get good marks. Also, they prefer having assignments since they can review their past lessons and they find it useful when they have to do at home because it helps them recall their previous activities.

In the questionnaire, items number 22, 23, and 24 (see Table 2.) support the qualitative findings in this study that learners have their own preferences in English activities. To sum up, the preferred activities of learners should be studied carefully and as much as possible incorporate this in classroom instruction (Littlewood 2010; Spratt 2001). It is then important to note that teachers and curriculum developers should prepare activities that are suitable for English students.

#### B. Learner's Strategy

It is evident, on the learner's diaries that they have used strategies in learning English. These are shown in the entries below:

##### Entry # 4

*"The methods or strategies I have found useful in improving my English? It was applying and using the new encountered words or vocabulary. And continue practice and use them in order to gain and develop my skills in English. Aside from that I used different reading materials books magazine etc."*

When students have already identified useful strategies in learning English they often used it to develop their learning. Entry #1 used cognitive strategy in reading, when he encountered difficult words; he searched it in the dictionary and look for the meaning. On the other hand, Entry #4 used vocabulary enrichment as a learning a strategy. Thus, it is important to practice the use of English in all aspects (e.g. reading, speaking, etc.) and that learners have their specific action if in case they encounter troubles while learning the target language (Liang 2009). Others strategies that learners used are as follows: soliciting ideas from peers when they meet hard to pronounce words, taking down notes to recall important details when reading, looking for references when writing when it comes to grammar and practicing in using



English as much as possible. Hence, teachers should also incorporate learning strategies in the teaching of English in their classes.

### **Conclusion**

The results seem to show that there is no single factor that helps the learners learn English. Rather, the identified factors appear hand in hand with other factors also as documented in their diaries. It is then possible to say that learners learn better when they are strongly motivated; have low-level of anxiety towards English; have positive belief about themselves as language learners; can cope with different types activities in class and more strategic when learning English; and can monitor their progress and assess what area in learning English they are more effective.

### **Conclusion**

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**Contact email:** roj\_p622@yahoo.com



***English as a Second Language at Kindergarten – Importance of Non-Verbal Language and Use of Total Physical Response to Elicit Communication***

Manuela Marchitelli, Italian State School System, Italy

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**Abstract**

As more and more experts urge the adoption of second language education from early childhood, an increasing number of kindergartens all over the world have included activities in L2, or bilingual programmes, in their curriculum. This paper is based on eight years observation and teaching at St. Anna's Institute of Rome as an English teacher at kindergarten and primary school levels; and is aimed to provide indications and suggestions for English L2 teaching, to groups of very young learners - from three to five years old.

These years of teaching with a communicative approach proved how non-verbal language worked as a catalyser for the later spontaneous use of words. TPR (Total Physical Response) methodology provided a number of techniques to motivate children. Reflection-in-action and on-action helped to discriminate how metalanguage (L1 or L2) affected contents of the lessons and results; and helped detect a stronger need for non-verbal language when L2 is metalanguage. As a result of the experience, it is possible to say that activities such as storytelling can be adapted to fit the need for body expression, and role play and *realia* can be used for the same purpose. Paramount importance must be given to the role of games, surprise, discovery and experience-making. With this in mind, careful lesson planning and extreme flexibility are fundamental. Hints will be given on how to present and introduce audio-video material in the lesson; and, finally, observations will be made on the different classroom settings.

Keywords: Second language teaching, pre-primary education, TPR

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## Introduction

Most people tend to believe that teaching at kindergarten may not need much specialization and it is an activity comparable to baby-sitting. Nonetheless, whoever is faced with the opportunity of teaching very young children is confronted with a number of questions concerning how to present a second language (from now on indicated as “L2”) properly to an audience of people who are so young that they cannot articulate in their own native language.

Experts in the field of neurosciences, linguistics and pedagogy, however, insist on the high potential of early language learning. Indeed, in 2011, the European Commission issued a handbook to provide guidelines and examples of good practice for pre-primary school level. In the document, it is clearly stated that “tailored education programmes; suitably qualified and motivated staff; specific support to schools, staff and families; and monitoring and evaluation”<sup>1</sup> are factors contributing to creating high quality teaching standards; and they can be achieved through “an effective use of resources”.

Granted that education is the result of a joint action of families, teachers and society, the present paper is meant to be a resource to support second language pre-school teachers in their daily challenges. Here, the concise theoretical basis is accompanied by practical examples, elaborated in eight years of observation and teaching as English L2 teacher at kindergarten and primary school levels, at Istituto S. Anna in Rome - Italy, from 2006 to 2014. The strategies and the activities proposed were carried out from the reflective practitioner’s<sup>2</sup> point of view, with planning, observations, consistent analysis of every lesson, discussion with the other staff members and appropriate adjustments.

Lessons consisted of one hour a week for the 5-year-old children and half an hour for the 3 and 4 -three-year-olds; the classes were made up of 25 to 30 children from relatively homogeneous social backgrounds – on average from the upper middle class. Given this, there was obviously an urgent need to maximize the small amount of second language exposure time, and to find the most effective strategies within the communicative approach. Therefore, I found myself trying to answer some major questions on how to structure a syllabus and to plan my activities. For starters, I had to decide whether to use a monolingual or a bilingual exposure method; I then had to choose vocabulary and structures suitable to the development stage of the children. Bearing in mind that children at this age tend to favour an enactive mode to represent information, I eventually espoused the Total Physical Response methodology by James Asher and adapted it to almost all my activities, such as, for example, storytelling. In addition, I had to select and sort all the good audio-video resources for the different age needs and learn how to use them effectively. Finally, I considered the effect of the classroom setting on didactics. Only with this awareness was it possible

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<sup>1</sup> Commission Staff Working Paper, *European Strategic Framework for Education and Training (ET2020), Language Learning at Pre-Primary School Level: making it efficient and sustainable, A Policy Handbook*, Brussels, 7/7/2011, p. 11

<sup>2</sup> cf. Elliott, John, *Action Research for Educational Change*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1991

to work out sound and useful lesson plans suitable for 3, 4 and 5-year-old children. Examples of all the above are provided in the following paragraphs.

### **Bilingual or monolingual exposure?**

According to the European Commission Staff's Handbook, both systems have been successfully implemented in several countries with concrete results. I have personally experienced both methods with my students: the first four years, bilingual exposure and, the following four years, monolingual exposure. Later on, I could appreciate the outcome of my choices when the children entered primary school - in which I was ESL teacher as well.

The starting point of this work is the language acquisition theory by Stephen Krashen, which states: "all that is necessary for the language acquisition is input that is interesting and comprehensible."<sup>3</sup>

"Interesting" here stands for meaningful, in other words, we do not teach language *per se* to children, but as a means of communication.<sup>4</sup> In fact, Commission Staff recommends integrating early language learning "into contexts in which the language is meaningful and useful, such as in everyday or playful situations, since play is the child's natural medium of learning in pre-primary"<sup>5</sup>.

Having said that, we come to the second requirement of language acquisition: comprehensible input. This is the key issue of the matter and implies a different teaching action whether we choose to use a monolingual or a bilingual exposure system.

#### *Monolingual exposure*

A monolingual exposure system clearly has the advantage of providing a rich input, which we know to be a significant factor in language acquisition. Furthermore, since early language learning is proven to enhance the cognitive development of the child, facilitate concentration skills and flexibility<sup>6</sup>, it would seem that a longer exposure to the second language could potentiate this process. However, when using target language exclusively, comprehension of the message content is limited and, according to the acquisition theory, only comprehensible input is eventually acquired. Another side effect of incomprehensible input is the rise of anxiety level. Therefore, monolingual exposure turns out to be counterproductive, in some cases, especially at the beginning, if the language teacher is in class only for few hours a week and has no time to establish an affective relationship. Children may feel uneasy because they do not know how to express their basic needs to an adult who does not seem to understand their first language (henceforth "L1").

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<sup>3</sup>Krashen, Stephen D., *Second Language Acquisition, Theory, Applications, and Some Conjectures*, Cambridge University Press, Mexico City, 2013, p.3

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Schick, Carla, *Il linguaggio*, Giulio Einaudi Editore, Torino, 1960

<sup>5</sup> Commission Staff Working Paper, op.cit., p. 14

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

### *Bilingual exposure*

On the other hand, bilingual classes allow the teacher to present himself/herself to the children in a pleasant and friendly way and introduce new vocabulary and structures providing a full understanding of the language contents. Children can be reassured in L1 and move at their own pace. Eventually, they spontaneously take part in the conversations, imitating the teacher or taking part in games when they feel comfortable.

Nonetheless, this way of teaching produces a smaller amount of target language input. This, in the long run, results in less familiarity with the second language, a stronger resistance when children are faced with longer chunks of dialogues, and a tendency to ask for confirmation and translation. As a result, bilingual exposure requires longer time for language acquisition.

### *A blended solution*

After trying both the possibilities and other variations, I found what seems to be my ideal solution. It has the advantage of a longer exposure to the second language, with less anxiety. I am talking about a blended solution: a monolingual exposure with the following compromises.

- During the lessons, L2 teacher speaks only in target language, whereas an L1 mother tongue assistant helps with the basic needs of the children, especially during the first two years of kindergarten.<sup>7</sup> Thus, L1 assistant works as a reassuring presence to lower the affective filter, and steps in only in case of necessity.
- The learning pace of every single child must be respected. We do not want to put undue pressure on the pupils<sup>8</sup> by forcing them to speak L2 during their silent period<sup>9</sup>. We will allow, instead, a limited bilateral communication<sup>10</sup> until they are finally ready to switch to target language. This means they can answer in a language different from L2 and even in a non-verbal modality.

Parents tend to have high expectations of children's performance in the second language, but it is important to bear in mind that children must be free to speak L2 whenever they feel comfortable.

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<sup>7</sup> This solution recalls tandem language teaching, in which tandems of staff speaking different languages engage in everyday activities with the children, in both languages, for the same amount of time. The blended method hereby presented differs from tandem language method for the exposure time allowed the staff. In this background, L1 is the prevailing language while L2 is considered an extra activity.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Commission Staff Working Paper, op.cit., p. 11

<sup>9</sup> "Children are usually allowed to go through a "silent period", during which they build up acquired competence through active listening." This period could last six months or more. Several scholars have suggested that providing such a silent period for all performers in second language acquisition would be beneficial." Krashen, Stephen D., *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*, University of California, 1981, p.8

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Dulay, Heidi, Burt, Martina, Krashen Stephen, *Language Two*, Oxford: New York, Oxford University Press, 1982



, That being the case, we can say that the proposed blended solution requires considerable collaboration with co-teachers, long preparation and patience, but the amount of input is high and the affective filter is low. These, we know, are crucial elements for a successful L2 acquisition and I could observe, indeed, that at primary school, even the children that would not speak English at kindergarten were able to follow and participate actively in L2 lessons.

### **Vocabulary and syllabus**

“It is essential that [...] the pedagogical processes correspond to the age range of the children.”<sup>11</sup>

Piaget called the stage from two to six years old “pre-operative” period and it is characterised by the development of the concept of representation. Within representation modes, language is a system of symbols and not until age five do children develop a strong symbolic system. Concepts of permanence and reversibility are not mastered. That is why children’s language at this age belongs to the realm of concrete reality; it pertains to things and events that can be measured, observed and conveyed through experience; things within the *here and now*. Every word has to correspond to what Krashen calls a “concrete referent”<sup>12</sup>.

When designing a syllabus for pre-primary school children, we will include vocabulary representing the children’s world in a concrete way, and will limit abstract concepts to a minimum. Flash cards, *realia* and audio recordings will serve the purpose. We adults have grown accustomed to abstract words and do not easily recognise them in everyday speech. For example, the simple word “family” could have a really extended definition. When I was asked to teach 3-year-old children the word “family”, I did not think it was a problem, until I realised I could not say the word in L1. To create a concrete referent I had to show a family of puppets (mother, father and baby) and later, put on a little role play where children would replace the puppets and perform actions commonly associated with family.

The idea of the concrete world, in turn, brings us to think about how children come to know reality, which is through experience. Language teaching is not just a matter of words, but an experience. Learning through experience makes the language lesson meaningful. At this age, children are on their path to learn how to discern things by classifying them. They judge size and other physical properties from their appearance. Therefore, in our syllabus we will include adjectives indicating colour, size and numbers. The activities we choose to deliver these pieces of information, however, will be based on manipulation<sup>13</sup> and physical involvement, rather than on repeating and memorising the words. For example, in a lesson on the body parts, the words *eyes*, *nose*, *ear* and *mouth* can be associated with their correspondent sense. Children will have to see pictures, smell perfumes, listen to sounds and noises, and taste food. They will enjoy it more if the activity is presented in the form of a game and has elements of surprise (e.g. taking objects out of a box etc.)

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<sup>11</sup> Commission Staff Working Paper, op.cit., p.13

<sup>12</sup> Concrete referents are subjects or events which can be seen, heard or listened to when using the language. Cf. Dulay, Bart, Krashen, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Sharp, Evelyn, *Pensare a tre anni*, Armando Editore, 1970, p. 34

## Representing information through actions with TPR

According to Jerome Bruner, there are three modes of representing information: enactive representation (through actions), iconic representation (through images) and symbolic representation (through language). The enactive mode is the earliest form of communication for human beings in their first year of life. From two years old, iconic representation is added and, only finally, significance is conveyed through symbols<sup>14</sup> - which means that we become capable of speaking languages with growing accuracy. Ergo, for children up to five years old, actions and images prevail in communication.

How can we teach a second language, a symbolic system, to students who do not master this communicative mode? The answer is by using their main modes of representation, i.e. through images and, above all, through actions. Even more so in a monolingual exposure environment, in which pupils and teacher rely a great deal on non-verbal information to complete the understanding of a word or a concept. James Asher's Total Physical Response (TPR) method provides an effective solution. Here, learners act out commands given by the teacher. At first, the command is easy as in *stand up*, later on it gradually becomes more complex, combining words and other commands. This strategy allows children to use both parts of their brain so as to develop other skills; it satisfies their need to be active; attracts their attention; keeps them involved in the learning process; and works as an experience, which favours acquisition. For the teacher it works also as a form of assessment, especially when children are still in their silent period. If they react to a command it means they have understood and possibly acquired the information. A chant or a song with actions could work as - I would say - "musical TPR activity" and it has the additional advantage that the sound and the rhythm appeal to the children - who naturally start singing after a while. A well-known song like *Head and shoulders* can be an example of musical TPR. If we want children to be more engaged in the activities, we can use a puppet. When there is no assistant to help and no child in the class who understands the command the teacher is uttering, the puppet could serve as a model to imitate. For instance, I would invite my puppet to sit down or to stand up and make it move accordingly. Afterward, I would look at the children and give the same command. Initially, only one or two children would respond correctly, but I would clap my hands, smiling in approval; I would then repeat the command and more children would join in; eventually, the whole group would act out the commands properly.

What we have to bear in mind is that children have not yet developed body awareness and are not capable of imagining some else's point of view<sup>15</sup>. For this reason, if a 3-year-old pupil is asked to bend his/her knees, he/she may not be able to perform the action and would bend his/her torso, for example. This means that when we show them how to do the action, we have stand next to the children and do the action until they are able to reproduce it. For complex movements which involve other people and a better management of personal space - such as forming a circle - we have to show pictures and, most importantly, we have to be patient, since it may take months for the children to perform these tasks.

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Bruner, J. S. *Toward a theory of instruction*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belkapp Press, 1966

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Sharp, Evelyn, *op cit*.

## Using movement in storytelling

Children love stories and storytelling is an effective activity to teach a new language. A story in a second language cannot be presented without pictures, otherwise it would be void of significance to very young children and they would not pay attention to it. Story cards<sup>16</sup> have to be prepared to accompany the narration so that words are associated with images and the meaning is explicit. However, preparatory activities are necessary to introduce the main vocabulary items. For instance, if we are going to tell a story about farm animals, we will ask the children to listen to the animal sounds first, and guess what they are. If their guess is right, we can introduce the name of the animal. We can also use flashcards<sup>17</sup> or toy animals. After one or two games with the new words, we can present the story. If we establish a routine for the storytelling, children will understand what is going to happen and start listening. If the story is accompanied by a recording with sounds and actors' voices, children will appreciate it more. Like any other activity for children, the story has to be short and repeated. After listening to the story, we can assess the general understanding of the text with a movement game, such as miming. Once we are sure they have grasped the general meaning, we can propose a role-play activity using *realia* as props. If a prop is assigned to every character they will be able to associate the person with the character in the story. They will perform in small groups, one group at a time, with the recording going on while the teacher is showing the story cards. When they feel comfortable, they will spontaneously repeat the lines of their characters. So doing, we respect the children's pace, expose them to a lot of input, use pictures and action to convey meaning, and transform the learning activity into a playful experience.

## Which audio-video material and how to present it

Experience is achieved through all the senses. Audio-video material appeals to sight and hearing and it is certainly helpful in language teaching. However, it must be adapted to the age of the children. Therefore, it has to be well-targeted, brief, well prepared and part of a learning experience. I used it as much as I could to allow children to familiarise with diversified input, pronunciation and intonation. Following are some examples of practice with both audio and video material.

Considering a 5-10 minutes span attention for children of this age, introducing songs or chants after every activity can be very productive. An example of a successful lesson with 3-year-old children is the one about night and day. The main idea behind it was that day is "playtime", while night is "sleeping time"<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, I wanted to convey a lively mood opposed to a quiet, peaceful mood. The vocabulary was: "good morning", "good night". The rooster was associated with "day", and the owl with "night". A story narration would show how to use the new words. Every activity was based on sounds and music: the crowing of the rooster and the calls of the owl, a lively song and a lullaby, the "good morning, good night" song and the story. Audio files were alternated with pictures and movement games, in blocks of maximum ten minute activities.

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<sup>16</sup> Story cards are pictures representing the sequences of a tale.

<sup>17</sup> Flashcards are images bearing information.

<sup>18</sup> At this stage children need to familiarise with the concept of time. A simple way to stimulate a growing awareness of time is by associating a period of time with its related activities.

Videos, as well, have to be short. No more than 10 minute long videos for 3/4-year-old children, and maybe 15/20 minutes for 5-year-old children. Needless to say, they have to be related to the contents of the lesson plan and specifically designed for young children: with small amounts of text and frequent repetitions. They are part of the lesson, not its core. The teacher should frequently ask for feedback from the pupils, where necessary, interrupting long video sequences. Language items of the video must be introduced before the viewing, whether with puppets, pictures or props. For instance, a lesson based on a video that my children enjoyed very much, was about body parts. I chose to present the topic with a short clip of the film “Pinocchio”. Before showing the video, I prepared games based on it. One of these consisted of pulling out pictures of parts of the body from a sack and asking children to guess their names; I would then stick them on a board in the form of a puzzle and let them discover<sup>19</sup> who the character was. At this point, I still would not start the video, because I wanted more interaction, therefore I would start a movement game with commands in TPR methodology, which included actions associated with the related part of the body. Next, I introduced a musical TPR and only after that, would they be ready to watch the video, understanding its contents without acting restlessly.

### **What’s the most effective classroom setting?**

Over the years I have had the chance to try different classroom settings. A standard setting in which children are sitting around their tables in groups does not allow much space for movement, and interaction with the teacher is seldom possible. If bored, children start talking with each other and can be easily distracted. Furthermore, children in the front rows feel more involved than children at the back. The setting should allow a wider central space in the room for children to stand, come forward, walk, dance, perform a role play and form circles. An ideal setting for me is having a set of chairs fashioned in a U-shape, and groups of tables in the corners of the room. A blackboard at the back would come in handy. The teacher is then able to see everybody and the children can see each other since they already form an ideal circle. However, from time to time a change in the position of the seats and desks contributes to letting more children be involved and participate actively in the learning experience.

### **An example of lesson plan adapted to children’s age**

For children to be at ease and understand the general meaning of a lesson, it is important to set a routine: a sequence of actions, working as a container programme, which children can expect to happen and which can reassure them. Teaching in a routine allows changing the contents of the lesson with no stress on the children’s side. However, an element of surprise must be introduced, from time to time, to keep their attention. Furthermore, children of this age can be remarkably unpredictable, and indeed, they will not react as we expect them to, if they are tired or restless. Kindergarten teachers must be really flexible and prepare a variety of activities and a good number of handouts in case of “surprises”.

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. the discovery learning concept by J. Bruner on “the powerful effects that come from permitting the student to put things together for himself, to be his own discoverer.” Bruner, J. S., *The act of discovery*, *Harvard Educational Review*, V. 31, 1961

Below , I attach an original lesson plan example adapted for the children of different ages. It shows the routine and the use of audio material and *realia*, and it is suitable for children’s short attention span.

**Class:** 30 students

**Age:** 5

**Level of the class:** 3<sup>rd</sup> year kindergarten

**Lesson length:** 1hr.

**Topic:** The sea world

**Target language:** numbers 1-10; sea creatures: fish; actions: swim, fish, splash.

**Objectives:**

- Improving listening skills
- Speaking: saying numbers and new words; answering questions
- Singing a song reproducing pronunciation and intonation

**Prerequisites:** knowledge of the colours and the numbers 1-5, acquaintance with the language for the general instructions such as *stand up, sit down, form a circle, go, sing*.

**Resources:** story cards, a paper spyglass, a puppet fish, 30 fish drawings to hand out (or plastic toy fish), cd player.

Activities	Timing	Rationale
<b>The Hello Song</b> After the song the teacher introduces Mr. Fish (a puppet)	5 min.	The subject is presented to the children; speaking skills are activated with questions like “ <i>Who’s that?</i> ” or “ <i>What’s his name?</i> ” The word <i>fish</i> is introduced.
<b>Let’s swim</b> Mr. Fish moves around, shows movements and asks the children to join in.	10 min.	The vocabulary related to the actions is presented with TPR methodology: input is first given by the teacher to the puppet; then the fish “talks” to the children and asks them to stand up, form a circle and act out his commands ( <i>swim, splash in – jumping in the centre of the circle - stop and go</i> )
<b>I’m a fish</b> Children sit down and receive a toy fish (or a drawing) and they are asked to hold them up or put them down.	5 min.	Again a vocabulary activity with TPR methodology. This activity is quieter and prepares children to the story coming up. They usually do not want to sit down, but giving them a little surprise, a toy to play with, makes them want to play the game.

<b>I can see one fish, two fish, three fish...</b> Holding a pipe like a spyglass the teacher starts looking for fish. Children have to hide the fish and pop it out.	5 min.	With this game structures and song chunks are presented. Most of the children love to be in the spotlight and to fool adults with little tricks. While they will enjoy to be spotted through the spyglass, the teacher can repeat a number of times the target structure: <i>“I can see one, two, three fish...”</i>
<b>Story time</b> The story here is based on the lyrics of the nursery song <i>One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive</i>	10 min.	Teacher has to prepare material in advance. When I say “story time”, I show the puppet sitting down and point to my ears. Story cards are showed during the narration.
<b>One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive</b> The song is played while the story cards show their meaning.	5 min.	With this step, children associate the song lyrics with its meaning.
<b>Role play</b> Children are asked to mime the story.	10 min.	So far, children have been sitting for more than 15 minutes. The role play serves as a feedback for the teacher and as a physical activity for the children, which helps them in experiencing the language.
<b>Goodbye song</b>	2 min.	Ideally closes the lesson and fits it in the routine.

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The following adaptations were carried out for younger children

**Age:** 4

**Level of the class:** 2<sup>nd</sup> year kindergarten

**Lesson length:** 30 min.

**Topic:** The sea world

**Target language:** numbers 1- 10; sea creatures: fish; actions: swim;

**Objectives:**

- Improving listening skills
- Speaking: telling numbers and new words;
- Singing a song reproducing pronunciation and intonation

**Prerequisites:** knowledge of the colours and the numbers 1-5, acquaintance with the language for the general instructions such as *stand up, sit down*.

**Resources:** story cards, a paper spyglass, a puppet fish, 30 fish drawings to hand out (or plastic toy fish), cd player.

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Timing</b>
<b>The Hello Song</b>	2 min.
<b>Let's swim</b> After the song the teacher introduces Mr. Fish (a puppet) Mr. Fish moves around, shows movements and then asks the children to join in.	10min.
<b>One, two, three, four, five, once I caught a fish alive</b> The song is played while the story cards show their meaning.	5 min.
<b>Role play</b> Children are asked to mime the story.	10 min.
<b>Goodbye song</b>	2 min.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, there is a variety of possibilities to teach pre-primary children. There are no right or wrong answers. The lessons can be carried out in target language only, or with bilingual exposure, provided that children do not feel the pressure of speaking L2 at command. They must be respected in their times and ways and get involved in playful activities and meaningful experiences. Children should be allowed to convey information through movement, pictures and, when they cannot express themselves in a different way, in their own first language.

The teachers, for their part, must be thoroughly prepared, both on the theoretical basis, being well aware of the needs of children of this age and of their learning goals; and on the practical side, having sound lesson plans and proper material. On the other hand, they have to keep in mind that, even if they prepare everything meticulously, children at this age hold lots of surprises, therefore flexibility is a must.

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**Contact email:** manuela.marchitelli@istruzione.it

The logo for the International Association for Foreign Language 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.



*A Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis of the Highest-Frequency Vocabulary in  
Advanced and Native English*

Yunus Emre Akbana, Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam University, Turkey  
Gülten Koşar, Social Sciences University of Ankara, Turkey

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**Abstract**

Corpus linguistics has vastly developed and been addressed to mirror the frequencies of naturally occurring lexical items not only in English but also in many other languages. Learner corpora represent the written interlanguage performance of L2 or foreign language users coming from different mother tongue backgrounds. International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) is the first computer learner corpus comprised of the argumentative essays written by advanced learners of English representing 16 different mother tongue backgrounds. In this study Turkish subcorpus of ICLE (TICLE) which represents the written performances of Turkish users of English has been analyzed and ten most frequent words have been listed. TICLE is preferred to be compared with a comparable reference corpus, Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS).

The results of this data-driven study have been discussed on the basis of Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA); firstly, the top ten high-frequency words have been illustrated; secondly, the top ten high-frequency words in L2 usage have been compared with that of the native performance and then the overuse, underuse and statistically significant difference tests have been conducted to reveal any properties of interlanguage and native use. The findings revealed that the top ten words are linguistically functional words rather than content words. In addition, seven of the top ten words are commonly used by Turkish learners and American university students. Finally, the linguistic properties of those top ten words have been discussed in detail with implications to ELT in Turkey.

Keywords: ICLE, TICLE, Learner Corpus, Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis

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## Introduction

Corpus studies have been representative for reflecting the real usage by native or non-native users of a particular language. Regarding English language, there have been many corpus-based investigations in an attempt to mirror the language use in both written and spoken registers. Tognini Bonelli (2001) defines corpus as a collection of real life texts coming from different genres and established on systematic procedures which provide authentic written or spoken language use. In this study the written register has been analyzed by retrieving the data from two corpora in order to reflect the written productions of second/foreign language and native users of English. As corpus provides opportunities for researchers to study any language feature with a high load of data, this has paved the way for building a branch of language investigation; corpus linguistics.

Corpus linguistics has been much popularized and a field of interest with a vast number of studies on English language by researchers most particularly in the last few decades. McEnery and Wilson (2001) state that corpus linguistics is an analysis of linguistics in addition to providing a large number of examples of language use by various groups, individuals or studies on any branch of linguistics. It can be obviously stated that corpus linguistics is an approach that can be employed in any linguistic investigation.

As English has gained importance globally, learners of English seek ways to learn the authentic use of language much more than ever. Corpus assists language learners to easily access to the real language usage via a vast number of software programs. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, learners of English have become autonomous in finding ways to access to the authentic language use by the assistance of technology. The ultimate aim of using learner corpus in language teaching programs is to assist language learners to approximate their interlanguage performance to the target language as much as possible. One of the most important learner corpora has been regarded as International Corpus of Learners English (ICLE) by Pravec (2002). It has been accepted in the corpora studies by being a representative of written interlanguage performance of L2 users of English. In addition, Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS) is a native corpus which represents the authentic native language use by American speakers of English. Therefore, these two corpora have been preferred in this study so as to reveal the language use frequencies both in learner and native English usage. Lozano & Mendikoetxea (2013) state that large-scale learner data assist researchers to explore and describe the investigated language patterns more easily and add that more than 400 articles on L2 studies have made use of ICLE. Granger (2004) suggests that the learner output has been collected by Second Language (SLA) and Foreign Language Teaching (FLT) researchers “for descriptive and/or theory-building purposes”. That is to say, listing the frequency of words in corpora is of high importance to SLA and FLT researchers who investigate the over-/underuse of language patterns in interlanguage phraseology or other aspects.

The ultimate purpose of the study is to investigate the top ten words used in both learner and native English and compare them quantitatively. In order to do so, the following questions have been posed to seek answers to:

- 1) What are the top ten high frequency words used by Turkish-speaking learners of English in TICLE and by American native speakers of English in LOCNESS?
- 2) Is there any over-/underuse of the top ten words in the written essays of Turkish-speaking learners of English in comparison with that of American native users of English?

### **Review of Literature**

There have been a plethora of corpus based studies on revealing the use of any language pattern that is the concern of researchers for different purposes. There is a list of more than a thousand bibliographical references related to learner corpora research on <https://www.uclouvain.be/en-cecl-lcbiblio.html>. Granger (2003) points out some of the topics from this list analyzed by using ICLE: “high-frequency words, romance words, recurrent combinations, collocations and formulae, prefabricated language, lexical profiling, lexical variation, adjective intensification, the verb make, progressives, passives, modality, noun phrase complexity, demonstratives, contractions, logical connectors, causal links, conjunctions, participle clauses, direct questions, tense errors, lexical errors, part-of-speech tagging, and parsing”.

The variety of the quantitative studies is in the cross roads of low-/middle-/high frequency of the investigated language pattern or linguistic enquiry. To illustrate with an example from many in the literature, Chuang (1993) conducted a quantitative corpus based study on vocabulary and the effects of word frequency and part of speech on vocabulary acquisition. The researcher examined 83 textbooks used in the curriculum of Taiwan as a reference corpus and the exam papers of students which show their interlanguage performance. One of the milestone findings of the study points out the idea that “word frequency is far from a good predictor for students’ vocabulary acquisition” (p.102). By the assistance of such studies, there has occurred a bridge between the input and output on the basis of effects of frequency findings on the vocabulary acquisition of the language learners for corpus investigation, SLA and FLT as well. One of the many other corpus based studies on word frequency is the research of Li & Fang (2011) who focus on the grammatical composition of child language with a comparison to maternal language in terms of word classes. In order to reveal a correlation between the input and output frequency, they investigated the maternal language as a source of input and child language as a source of output. The word class frequencies of both input and output based corpora showed less similar word class patterns between the child and maternal language due to the children’s mental development. As an implication for SLA or FLT studies, they claimed that “a principle comprehensible input should be highlighted in adults’ speech to children in order to make them achieve larger vocabulary” (p.95) In addition, it is also of high importance to present L2 learners of English the most common mistakes committed by L2 learners. As the learners of a foreign language experience the learning process and make similar mistakes, there occurs a common share of mistakes. That is to say, learner corpora can reflect the common mistakes of a community of learners, and other learners can be more conscious about their interlanguage development.

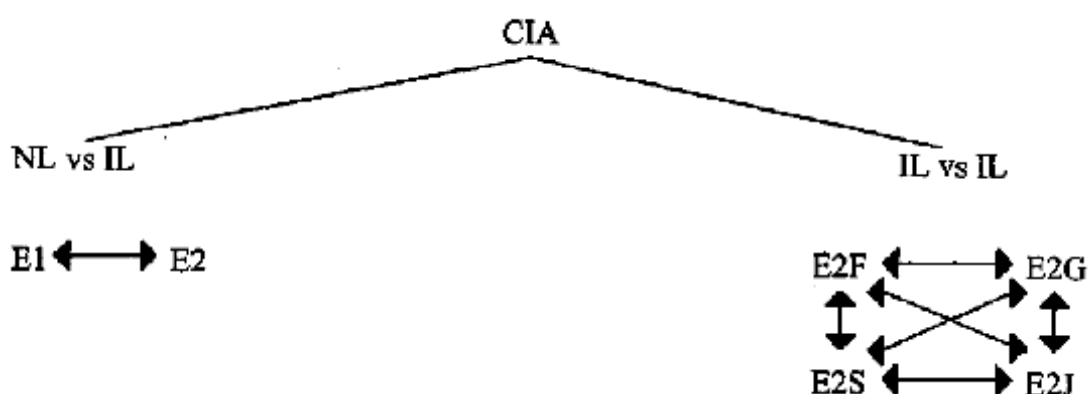
Gilquin and Granger (2010) state that learner corpora assist second language or foreign language learners to find the grammatically correct use of language functions by means of paying attention to the mostly committed grammar mistakes. For this

reason, the modern dictionaries are corpus based; specifically, learner corpus based for L2 English learners. It is of high significance to state that learners can learn with a particular attention to the grammar mistakes, the most frequent lexicogrammar functions of English, and foreign language teachers can be more conscious about the types of difficulties that learners may face in their development process of interlanguage.

In order to reveal the features of interlanguage, Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA) is an approach which has been used in carrying out corpus studies to compare the retrieved data from one corpus to another. CIA consists of two types of comparison: the native and learner language (L1 vs L2) and /or different varieties of interlanguages (L2 vs L2). (Granger, 1996, 2003, 2004). Granger (2004) suggests a bulk of studies which adopt CIA in comparing the learner and native language concerning; “high frequency vocabulary, (Ringbom 1998, 1999; Källkvist 1999; Altenberg 2002), modals (Aijmer 2002; McEnery and Kifle 2002; connectors (Milton and Tsang 1993; Field 1993; Granger and Tyson 1996; Altenberg and Tapper 1998; L. Flowerdew 1998b), collocations and prefabs (Chi Man-Lai et al. 1994; De Cock 1998, 2000; De Cock et al. 1998; Howarth 1996; Granger 1998; Nesselhauf 2003)”.

Figure 1 below depicts the method of CIA. CIA paves the way for revealing any similarities or differences between a native language and mainly its second language use. The left side of the figure represents clearly the core of the present study by investigating the high-frequency words. NL in the figure stands for English, that the data is provided from American native users of English in LOCNESS and IL stands for Interlanguage for which the data is provided from Turkish-speaking L2 users of English in TICLE.

Figure 1: Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis by Granger (1996)



In addition, CIA gives a path for researchers to compare different varieties of interlanguages; however, it is not within the scope of this study. This type of comparison would provide a large opportunity for revealing any interlanguage properties that exist amongst different interlanguages. In this regard, the property of target language and the varieties of interlanguages would be clearer and the learner language would set up its own system of language. In this study, CIA is much of use to depict the over-/underuse of high frequency words excerpted from TICLE in comparison with that of LOCNESS.

## Research Design

This data driven study has been carried out with a descriptive and quantitative research design to depict the most frequently used words and their overuse and underuse by the materials, LOCNESS and TICLE. The data retrieved from LOCNESS and TICLE have been analyzed on the basis of CIA and the Log-likelihood values of the data in each corpus material have been examined. This data driven study has collected the data from LOCNESS and TICLE which were developed by a set of certain criteria and are detailed below.

Log Likelihood Statistics (henceforth; LL), which has been previously used and suggested in many studies conducted in corpus linguistics to reflect any overuse or underuse of the investigated linguistic enquiries (e.g. Can, 2011; Granger and Rayson, 1998), has been utilized for the same purpose in this study as well. The top ten words in TICLE data have been preferred to be compared with that of the statistical values in LOCNESS.

## Materials

For the current study, a learner (ICLE) and a reference/ native corpora (LOCNESS) have been preferred which are comparable to each other in many aspects and chosen in such studies. There are many issues and criteria raised when to compare a learner and a native corpus. Within the project of ICLE, which allows to compare varieties of L2 English, LOCNESS was established in order to be a comparable corpus with the same variables of age, gender, written register, writing conditions, genre et cetera. LOCNESS is the best matched comparable corpus to ICLE (Hasselgård & Johansson , 2011).

The learner corpus dimension is carried out by utilizing ICLE *version 2* data. ICLE consists of the argumentative essays written by advanced learners of English representing 16 different mother tongue backgrounds. As stated in Granger, Dagneaux, Meunier, and Paquot (2009), there are 16 subcorpora of ICLE which represent the written interlanguage productions of Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish and Tswana users of English as L2 or foreign language. In this study, Turkish subcorpus of ICLE (TICLE) has been preferred in order to create a list of highest frequency words performed in the argumentative essays. TICLE has been compared with a comparable reference corpus; LOCNESS, in that it reveals another list of high-frequency words in native usage.

TICLE is made up of 199,532 words from 280 argumentative essays produced by B2 to C2 (according to CEFR experts' ratings) level EFL learners aged between 21 to 23. The average word length of essays produced by Turkish users of English is 712 words on argumentative topics from education to environment and society. In order to compare the TICLE data with the closest token number to LOCNESS, 208 essays totaling about 149,304 word tokens have been preferred from TICLE data. Table 1 represents the features of TICLE.

Table 1. The features of TICLE

Task Variables		Learner Variables	
<b>Medium</b>	Written	<b>Mother tongue</b>	Turkish
<b>Genre</b>	argumentative essay	<b>Age</b>	21-23
<b>Topic</b>	education, society	<b>Gender</b>	Female 81% -Male 19%
<b>Technicality</b>	academic essay	<b>Language Proficiency</b>	B2 – C2
<b>Task setting</b>	untimed essay	<b>Learning context</b>	EFL classroom setting

Can (2011)

LOCNESS is made up of three sub-corpora totaling with a number of 324,304 word tokens. That is to say, it includes British pupils' A level essays: 60,209 words; British university students' essays: 95,695 words; and, American university students' essays (comprised of literary and argumentative essays): 168,400 words. In order to carry out a comparison between TICLE and LOCNESS, LOCNESS has been preferred to be as a control corpus and it represents similar topics that are examined in TICLE. To approximate the data of LOCNESS to TICLE which consists of argumentative essays, a sample of 175 written argumentative essays totaling a number of 149,574 word tokens produced by 17 to 23-year-old American university students has been preferred. Granger et al. (2009, p. 42) point out that "to ensure comparability with the ICLE data, the Louvain team has collected a corpus of essays written by native English students, the Lovain Corpus of English Essays (LOCNESS), which is the mirror of the ICLE". In addition, LOCNESS is suggested and available to researchers who conduct learner corpus studies involving a comparison of learner and native usage as a control native corpus in many studies. The following studies have made use of LOCNESS and/or suggested it as a control comparable corpus to learner corpus: (Aarts and Granger, 1998), (Abdullah and Noor, 2013), (Aijmer, 2002), (Altenberg and Tapper, 1998), (Can, 2011), (Granger and Petch-Tyson, 1996), (Guo, 2002; 2003), (Lin, 2002), (Lorenz, 1998), (Narita, Sato, and Sugiura, 2004), (Ringbom, 1998; 1999), (Tapper, 2005), (Tono, 2004) and (Virtanen, 1998)

The data analysis procedure has been carried out firstly by investigating the data. Rayson (2008) has developed Wmatrix to retrieve the data from corpora. Wmatrix is the web interface of USAS and Claws tools and has been used in more than 60 studies and applications up to now. (Please see a full list of the Publications and Applications using Wmatrix on <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix/> ). Particularly, Wmatrix has been used in this study in order to retrieve the data from TICLE and LOCNESS. As an initial step, the frequency analysis of the target data has been carried out by Wmatrix. Then, the occurrence of the patterns in concern has been surveyed and the following table has been constructed. Table 2 represents the list of high frequency words by Turkish and American participants.



Table 2: The list of top ten words used by Turkish (TICLE) and American (LOCNESS) participants

	TICLE		LOCNESS	
	Word	<i>f</i>	Word	<i>f</i>
1	the	7605	the	9060
2	and	3517	Of	4114
3	of	3354	and	3523
4	is	3118	A	3048
5	to	2818	To	2951
6	a	2777	Is	2651
7	in	2663	In	2352
8	they	2288	<i>that</i>	2042
9	are	2035	<i>It</i>	1431
10	not	1869	<i>Be</i>	1404

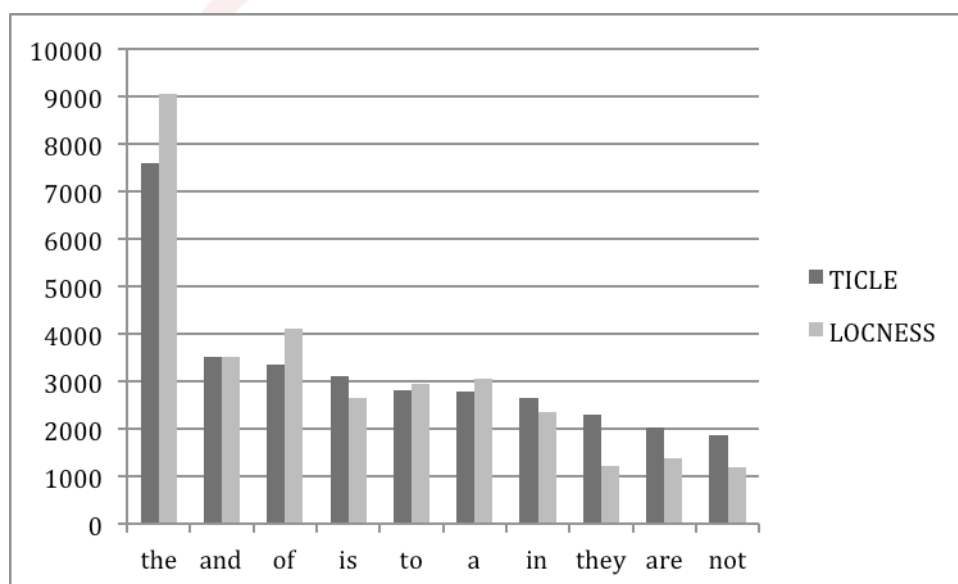
Table 2 shows the most frequently used words in nonnative (TICLE) and native (LOCNESS) usage. Seven out of ten words are determined the same in each corpus: “the, and, of, is, to, a, in”, but the order changes. The top three words have been determined the same in each corpus and the highest frequency belongs to “the” in each corpus. “The” has the highest frequency of 7605 in nonnative usage. Besides, “the” is the most frequent word in native usage with 9605 frequency and in LOCNESS data. The second high-frequency word is detected as “and” with a frequency of 3517 in nonnative usage though it is in the third rank in native usage showing frequency of 3523. On the other hand, the second high-frequency word is detected as “of” with a frequency of 4114 in native usage though it is in the third rank manifesting a frequency of 3517 in nonnative usage. Another common share among the first three high-frequency words is that nonnative usage shows underuse of “the, and, of” in comparison with native usage. The fourth high frequency word identified in the nonnative usage is “is” with a frequency of 3118 though the word “is” is observed as the sixth high frequency word with frequency of 2651 in native usage of LOCNESS data. “To” has been illustrated in Table 2 as the fifth high frequency word in both nonnative and native usage. Analysing the data with Wmatrix3, “to” as the infinitive marker has been observed with a frequency of 2818 by nonnatives less than to those in native language use with a frequency of 2951. The sixth high frequency word observed in nonnative performed essays is the singular article “a” with a frequency of 2777 in TICLE. The singular article “a” is observed as the fourth high frequency word in native usage showing frequency of 3048 in LOCNESS. The component of Wmatrix 3, USAS CLAWS7 tagged “in” as general preposition with the same rank order in the frequency list. The seventh high frequency word “in” is used by nonnatives more than natives showing a frequency of 2663 in TICLE though it is used natives with a frequency of 2352 in LOCNESS.

The eighth high frequency word observed in the TICLE data is “they” which is tagged as 3rd person plural subjective personal pronoun by CLAWS7 POS tagger of Wmatrix3. This particular word “they” showed a usage frequency of 2288 in TICLE though it does not take place in the top ten words in LOCNESS. It is used by natives as the fourteenth high frequency word with a frequency of 1215 in LOCNESS. In

addition to the 3rd person plural subjective personal pronoun “they” used by nonnatives, the linking verb “are” and the adverb “not” have been observed in nonnative usage among the top ten word list though these words have not been analysed in the top ten word list of native usage. Instead, “that” as conjunction, “it” as the 3rd person singular neuter personal pronoun, and “be” as the infinitive be are observed in native usage. The ninth high frequency word in TICLE list is “are” with a frequency of 2035. Though this word is used in LOCNESS list as the eleventh high frequency word with a frequency of 1391. The tenth high frequency word used in TICLE list is “not” with a frequency of 1869 though it is used as the fifteenth high frequency word showing frequency of 1202 in LOCNESS.

As this paper seeks to find out to what extent Turkish speakers of English use the top ten words in comparison with that of the usage represented by native speakers of English, Figure 2 shows an overall of usage of the words used by nonnatives. Figure 2 below stands for a clear outlook of the difference laid out by the two corpora usage.

Figure 2. The Overall Frequency Distribution of NNS Performance



It is clear in Figure 2 that there are four words used more by native speakers of English than nonnative speakers of English. Namely, “the”, “of”, “to” and “a” represent more usage frequency by American speakers of English than Turkish speakers of English. The most used word in both corpora is “the” at a stake and it is clear from Figure 2 that native speakers of English use it more frequently than Turkish speakers of English. The close frequency of “and” is conspicuous in Figure 2 that the usage frequency in TICLE data is 3517 and 3523 in LOCNESS data. In addition to illustrating the data in a figurative way, the over/under use of the words in both corpora seems clear at a stake; however, Table 3 below provides statistically overuse or underuse of the words examined in both corpora usage.

*Table 3: The list of top ten over- and underuse of words used in nonnative writing in comparison with native writing*

		NNS	NS	LL Ratio (*p< 0.05)
1	the	7605	9060	-126.02
2	and	3517	3523	-0.00
3	of	3354	4114	-76.86
4	is	3118	2651	+38.23
5	to	2818	2951	-2.96
6	a	2777	3048	-12.39
7	in	2663	2352	+19.55
8	they	2288	1215	+334.88
9	are	2035	1391	+154.61
10	not	1869	1202	+146.57

+ indicates overuse in TICLE relative to LOCNESS,

- indicates underuse in TICLE relative to LOCNESS

Table 3 represents five of the words; “is”, “in”, “they”, “are”, “not”, in the top ten words lists as overused in TICLE relative to LOCNESS according to the observed significantly high LL values. Another significantly high LL values determine the underuse of the following three words in TICLE relative to LOCNESS; “the”, “of”, “a”. The remaining two words “and” and “to” have been observed without any significantly high different values in TICLE relative to LOCNESS. Following is the detailed LL values based on Table 3.

Using Wmatrix as a frequency profiling assessment software programme, we have utilized LL values as Rayson (2008) suggests. The higher the LL value, the more significant is the difference between two frequency scores. For this particular study, we have preferred the LL cut-off value as (p<0.05) which stands for a critical values of 3.84; thus the more LL critical value is, the more significantly difference is among the items. The results obtained Table 3 shows that the five overused words in TICLE relative to LOCNESS; “is”, “in”, “they”, “are”, “not”, have been confirmed by the LL calculation that the LL values are +38.23, +19.55, +334.88, +154.61 and +146.47 respectively. Hence, Table 3 displays the most overused word by Turkish speakers of English as “they” with a LL value of +334.88 indicating a very high statistically significant difference between two corpora though it is the eighth most frequent word in the TICLE list and the fourteenth in the LOCNESS list. The second most overused word by the Turkish speakers of English is “are” with a LL value of +154.61 though it is the ninth most frequent word in the TICLE list and the eleventh most frequent word in the LOCNESS list as confirmed also by the results of Table 2. Table 3 displays the third most overused word in the written productions of Turkish speakers of English as “not” though it takes the fifteenth rank order of frequency in the written productions of American native speakers of English. This result like the others obtained from Table 3 is confirmed in the same way with the frequency analysis of each items in both corpora in Table 2. Again, as confirmed by the results of Table 2, Table 3 suggests the fourth most overused word in the TICLE data in comparison with that of LOCNESS data is “is” with a calculated LL value of +38.23 indicating a statistically significant difference between two corpora. Finally, the least overused word used by Turkish speakers of English relative to the performances of American native speakers has been

demonstrated as “in” with a LL value of +19.55. The particular word “in” is used in both the TICLE and LOCNESS lists as the seventh most frequent word confirmed by the results of Table 2 as well.

Table 3 displays three underused words in TICLE relative to LOCNESS; “the”, “of” and “a”. Comparing the usage between the TICLE and LOCNESS corpora, “The” has been observed the most used word with the highest frequency in Tables 2, 3 and 4 in addition to Figure 1. However, Table 3 demonstrates the highest underuse LL value regarding “the”. Hence, Table 3 clearly shows that “the” has been used the most underused word in TICLE with -126.71 LL value ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating a statistically very high difference between two corpora. The second most underused word in TICLE has been observed as “of” with -76.86 LL value ( $p < 0.05$ ) showing statistically significant difference between TICLE and LOCNESS. Finally, the least underused word indicating statistically significant difference between the two corpora shown in Table 3 is “a” with -12.39 LL value ( $p < 0.05$ ). Apart from those above mentioned underused words in TICLE data relative to LOCNESS, there remains two other items; “and” and “to”. These two items have been investigated and found that they do not indicate any statistically significant difference with respect to any kind of underuse or overuse between the two corpora. More specifically, the use of “and” between the two corpora shows no underuse or overuse as the observed LL value is -0.00 ( $p < 0.05$ ) that we need at least a LL value of 3.84 to claim any underuse or overuse of the item. Regarding “to” the LL value is -2.96 which indicates no statistically significant difference between two corpora.

## Conclusion

By exploring the most frequently used ten words in the essays of Turkish speakers of English in Turkish International Corpus of Learner English (TICLE) and American native speakers of English in Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS), our study aimed to investigate the use of the top ten words in a Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA) manner and the following remarks have been drawn:

Overuse and/or underuse of the words tend not to show any native use property but interlanguage use. Hence, most properties of interlanguage use have been observed with the overuse and underuse of the words observed in the written productions of Turkish speakers of English. Out of the top ten words, only two words have been found to reveal native use “and” and “to” as there are no statistically shown overuse or underuse of the items in concern. This is also a proof of the fact that Turkish speakers of English can use these particular two items almost at the same rate with that of the American native speakers of English.

The findings revealed that the top ten words illustrated in the body of this study are linguistically functional words rather than content words. In order to see a larger list of the highest frequency words Appendix 1 has been presented with parts of speech of each item in the argumentative essays of both Turkish learners and American university students.

Our first research question investigated the top ten high frequency words used by Turkish-speaking learners of English in TICLE and by American native speakers of English in LOCNESS. Findings revealed that Turkish learners use “the, and, of, is, to,

a, in, they are, not” and American university students use the first seven words of Turkish learners but differ in the last three words with the use of “that, it, be”. As Table 2 shows Turkish learners and American university students use seven common words out of the top ten words. Hence, Turkish learners can use as many highest frequency words as American university students. The argumentative essays of the two corpora examined in this study include similar frequency scores in the order of top ten words.

The second research question of the study was posed to find out whether there is any over-/underuse of the top ten words in the written essays of Turkish-speaking learners of English in comparison with that of the American native users of English. The statistically overused words by Turkish learners in comparison to American university students in both TICLE and LOCNESS data are “is, in, they, are, not”. The statistically underused words by Turkish learners relative to American university students’ written productions are “the, of, a”. (see Table 3)

### **Implications to Language Teaching in Turkey**

The present study has revealed that Turkish learners and American university students show a strong tendency to use similar words with highest frequencies. This leads us to conclude that Turkish learners approximate their interlanguage performance to the native use performed by the American native speakers of English in LOCNESS data. This conclusion stands as a proof for the fact that how successful advanced users of English language in Turkey. However, in order to prevent any probable difficulty that an elementary user of English can face in their interlanguage process, this list can be posed to their textbooks and the textbook authors should well be informed about corpus driven tools to show how the native usage performs. In a similar manner but similar design of a study, the similar implications were drawn in the study of Shin and Nation (2006) that they conducted a study of investigation of spoken highest frequency words and made implications for elementary speakers of English L2 learners. They investigated ten million word BNC spoken section and suggested for inclusion of the most frequent 2,000 words of English, that many of these collocations could be usefully taught in an elementary speaking course.

This study sheds light on the idea that the inclusion of the most frequently used words into the textbooks in the language teaching programs in Turkey is a good requisite for providing comprehensible input in the process of acquiring English as L2 or FL.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

This particular present study is limited to argumentative essays of Turkish learners and American university students; that, the further research might involve a broader research body of including literary texts as well in addition to other interlanguage productions other than Turkish learners’ from ICLE or other learner corpora. By doing this, it can lead the further research depicting the performances of other L2 users of English. That is to say, we can see how well a Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, and Tswana user of English performs the highest frequency in their own system of interlanguage and we can compare it with that of native use with LOCNESS data or any other larger data sets. Furthermore, as the American native usage has been

investigated in this study as a control corpus to depict the native usage, British native can also be included to stand for a more comprehensible native usage. In addition, this study can also be broadened to a wider setting of spoken corpus and the most frequent words in addition to collocations can be drawn to the attention of textbook authors and dictionary writers. Finally, the reasons why some certain items are used more or less frequently than likelihood items by Turkish learners might well be researched.



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**Contact email: [gencoglugulten@gmail.com](mailto:gencoglugulten@gmail.com)**

### Appendix 1. The top a hundred word frequency and part of speech list in TICLE and LOCNESS

	TICLE			LOCNESS		
	Word	POS	<i>f</i>	Word	POS	<i>f</i>
1	the	AT	7605	the	AT	9060
2	and	CC	3517	of	IO	4114
3	of	IO	3354	and	CC	3523
4	is	VBZ	3118	a	AT1	3048
5	to	TO	2818	to	TO	2951
6	a	AT1	2777	is	VBZ	2651
7	in	II	2663	in	II	2352
8	they	PPHS2	2288	that	CST	2042
9	are	VBR	2035	it	PPH1	1431
10	not	XX	1869	be	VBI	1404
11	it	PPH1	1663	are	VBR	1391
12	be	VBI	1547	for	IF	1303
13	for	IF	1468	this	DD1	1216
14	that	CST	1449	they	PPHS2	1215
15	can	VM	1358	not	XX	1202
16	people	NN	1315	to	II	1119
17	their	APPGE	1217	with	IW	813
18	this	DD1	1155	people	NN	791
19	we	PPIS2	1148	their	APPGE	777
20	to	II	1126	or	CC	683
21	you	PPY	996	on	II	663
22	or	CC	924	would	VM	654
23	I	PPIS1	789	was	VBDZ	627
24	do	VD0	781	i	PPIS1	623
25	but	CCB	781	have	VH0	620
26	money	NN1	726	has	VHZ	609
27	there	EX	699	by	II	605
28	with	IW	696	can	VM	572
29	have	VH0	692	an	AT1	569
30	students	NN2	666	's	GE	529
31	should	VM	649	but	CCB	513
32	life	NN1	643	if	CS	506
33	will	VM	638	that	DD1	489
34	if	CS	628	from	II	474
35	who	PNQS	606	will	VM	471
36	these	DD2	592	these	DD2	470
37	some	DD	568	we	PPIS2	432
38	from	II	543	many	DA2	431
39	them	PPHO2	537	should	VM	431
40	by	II	508	there	EX	427
41	all	DB	482	who	PNQS	424
42	our	APPGE	469	what	DDQ	417
43	also	RR	462	as	CSA	412

44	on	II	456	because	CS	399
45	when	CS	451	he	PPHS1	392
46	which	DDQ	450	also	RR	384
47	about	II	441	were	VBDR	374
48	an	AT1	433	you	PPY	371
49	because	CS	427	all	DB	367
50	have	VHI	416	have	VHI	349
51	women	NN2	413	do	VD0	345
52	as	CSA	397	our	APPGE	325
53	many	DA2	396	women	NN2	321
54	has	VHZ	390	been	VBN	314
55	that	DD1	373	could	VM	304
56	he	PPHS1	367	one	MC1	302
57	world	NN1	356	when	CS	299
58	as	II	350	them	PPHO2	298
59	what	DDQ	350	society	NN1	292
60	education	NN1	348	some	DD	290
61	so	RR	329	which	DDQ	283
62	very	RG	328	n't	XX	279
63	important	JJ	324	his	APPGE	279
64	universities	NN2	308	at	II	278
65	person	NN1	307	life	NN1	274
66	at	II	295	as	II	263
67	think	VV0	285	children	NN2	260
68	want	VV0	279	about	II	255
69	other	JJ	276	money	NN1	242
70	men	NN2	274	does	VDZ	236
71	university	NN1	274	more	RGR	236
72	nt	XX	273	she	PPHS1	232
73	children	NN2	268	more	DAR	231
74	problems	NN2	262	other	JJ	229
75	may	VM	258	being	VBG	216
76	do	VDI	253	than	CSN	207
77	she	PPHS1	251	just	RR	206
78	your	APPGE	250	students	NN2	205
79	knowledge	NN1	250	one	PN1	201
80	his	APPGE	242	how	RRQ	198
81	most	DAT	235	may	VM	197
82	being	VBG	230	time	NNT1	195
83	good	JJ	228	argument	NN1	194
84	things	NN2	227	very	RG	191
85	abortion	NN1	227	my	APPGE	191
86	one	MC1	226	had	VHD	186
87	real	JJ	222	those	DD2	185
88	euthanasia	NN1	222	any	DD	183
89	n't	XX	215	person	NN1	182
90	no	AT	208	then	RT	174
91	way	NN1	208	no	AT	172

92	was	VBDZ	204	only	RR	166
93	even	RR	202	sex	NN1	166
94	more	RGR	200	her	APPGE	165
95	must	VM	197	problem	NN1	164
96	most	RGT	197	another	DD1	163
97	family	NN1	196	even	RR	162
98	any	DD	195	however	RR	162
99	how	RRQ	193	family	NN1	161
100	just	RR	193	's	VBZ	158



***On an Effective Approach of Foreign Language Acquisition: Newspaper Reading***

Wen Bohua, Graduate School of Inner Mongolia University, China

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**Abstract**

Foreign language acquisition has been a global academic issue for both teachers and students. This paper aims at providing an effective approach of foreign language acquisition: newspaper reading. Subjects in the paper are students with foreign language education and some language learning experiences, esp. college students. In the first part, the advantages of newspaper as reading materials are to be elaborated in three aspects. a) language in the qualified newspapers is carefully selected and organized; b) newspapers contain various topics and information; c) electronic distribution and convenient Internet access make newspaper reading efficient. In the second part, learning strategies for students to read newspapers are proposed. a) initiative of the learners is the key; b) to realize the practicability of a foreign language values; c) various learning methods can be put together. In the last part, challenges for teachers to make use of the newspapers are to be discussed. For teachers, they need to realize that a) affirmation and exploration of newspapers' value as teaching materials is important; b) "quality time" in classroom is limited; and c) carefully arranged assignments after class are necessary. This thesis aims at providing a relatively new way for both foreign language teaching and learning.

Keywords: Foreign Language Acquisition; Newspaper Reading; Autonomous Learning Strategies; Teaching Strategies

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## **Introduction**

Foreign language acquisition has been a global academic issue for both theoretic studies and classroom practice. As comprehensive globalization trend develops deeply and widely, more and more individuals all over the world equip themselves with a second language; within China, more often than not, English course, is regarded as a requirement from the middle school to university. But “because of the impact of exam-oriented education through the ages, the college English teaching still focuses on classroom instruction and the teaching of basic knowledge and skills, which are obviously not conducive to the students’ personalized learning and autonomous learning”<sup>1</sup>. To grasp a foreign language and to put it into practice, higher education phase requires students of more autonomous learning ability and some other shift on learning strategy as well.

Foreign newspapers can be considered as a wonderful reading material for foreign language learners. The selected language and topics can both improve the reader’s foreign language skills and widen their horizons. Also, the convenience of the Internet makes it possible for students to encounter this material. Some areas have limited equipment and it is to be difficult to implement the proposition; however, the pity is that hundreds and thousands of the schools do have the necessary human resources, computer equipment, and multimedia devices but they do not read foreign newspapers at all.

The paper aims at providing an effective approach of foreign language acquisition: newspaper reading; learners in the paper are supposed to be students with foreign language education and some language learning experiences. English is the prior foreign language to take into account; and four groups of 2013 freshmen from Inner Mongolia Agricultural University provides a lot of inspiration and help to this research. Some related ideas from autonomous learning theories are adopted. The point of this paper is to provide some reasonable and practical advises for both foreign language students and teachers.

## **The Advantages of Newspapers as Reading Materials**

Different reading materials have different features. Compared to reading passages on the textbooks, reading newspapers possesses more advantages. When I taught English in Inner Mongolia Agricultural University, I had found that few students developed reading newspapers as a habit, no matter in English or in Chinese, even those who loved reading. To some extent, the reason is that they, like many other foreign language learners and teachers, have not recognized the advantages of foreign newspapers as reading materials.

### **1 Language in the qualified newspapers is carefully selected and organized**

From vocabulary, diction to grammar, syntax, most of the articles in the newspapers are formal, natural, and understandable. By reading new words in foreign newspapers, written and spoken vocabulary can be enlarged; by analyzing a paragraph or the

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<sup>1</sup> Xiaoxin CHEN, & Xiao SHANG(2015). A study on the construction of a multi-Level autonomous learning mode in college English teaching, *Studies in Literature and Language*,10 (1), 16-20.

layout , the way to naturally extend a paragraph or an article can be learned; by reading between lines, native culture can be sensed; what's more, once newspaper reading has been developed into a habit, the reader sooner or later is able to express himself/herself in a clear, decent way.

## **2 Newspapers contain various topics and information**

There are so many sorts of newspapers. Some of them focuses on economy, fashion, geography or other special fields; however, most of them cover comprehensive fields and contain various topics. Take *THE TIMES* for example, different columns such as news, opinions, business, money, sport, life, art, papers, Irish news are provided; these different fields and various topics make room for readers to select the most appropriate parts to read.

## **3 Electronic distribution and convenient Internet access make newspaper reading efficient**

To read online is no longer a fresh experience. With the Internet becomes more and more accessible, more and more people have been ready to adopt this new way of reading. For those who have found newspaper reading is beneficial and have developed it into a habit, newspaper distribution institutions, in response, provide electronic version online. Although reading is a really good habit, but with the boom of information, the rapid pace of life and the frequent change of the established knowledge systems, individual learners needs to seek some efficient ways to gain more information within scattered time. To this point, reading news paper online can be a good choice.

In addition, the list for the advantages of newspapers as reading material can be continued. Colorful pictures, radio, video, words are put together in an organized way, which will impress the readers and make most of the material; also, each article has limited words, and it allows the reader to read it in several minutes or even just scan the title and leading sentence in less than one minute; the up-to-date issues also link readers to the world, too. In sum, newspapers can be taken as an available reading material for foreign language learners and teachers.

## **Learning Strategies for Students to Read Foreign Newspapers**

By students above, it means the students who learn a foreign language and has some basic knowledge. Four groups of 2013 freshmen from Inner Mongolia Agricultural University, 120 in total are typical examples. Most of them spent a lot of time on basic vocabulary and grammar in middle school, but in their higher education phase, this kind of learning methods may no longer meet the practical use of a second language acquisition. With certain basic knowledge on grammar and vocabulary, undergraduates need to enhance their comprehensive language skills with more practical approaches. "Learning strategies include any thoughts or behaviors that help us to acquire new information in such a way that new information is integrated with our existing knowledge, learning strategies also help us retrieve stored information"<sup>2</sup> Here, some learning strategies can be references.

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<sup>2</sup> Weinstein, Claire E(1987). Fostering learning autonomy through the use of learning strategies. *Journal of Reading*, 30(7), 590-595.

### **1 Initiative of the learners is the key**

To read foreign newspapers efficiently, students are supposed to conduct their study in an active way; in addition to the teacher's guidance in the classroom, learners are expected to identify their interest and their real contemporary capability on the foreign language, to select their own specific learning materials and to make the practical everyday learning plans by themselves. By means of reading newspapers, Students, indeed, are allowed to actively select the interesting learning materials according to levels of their different language skills; but meanwhile, it also challenge their initiative in learning.

### **2 To realize the practicability of a foreign language values**

Language, in nature, is created for communication; to remember vocabulary, grammar, and to take all of the different forms of the tests are merely methods to serve this final purpose. Students are expected to realize this fundamental quality of a language, and to practice the foreign *while* learn it, rather than *after* learned it. Newspapers can actually help the readers to interact with the immediate world; the advantages of newspapers determines that this kind of interaction is different from that with other reading materials. To read newspapers make the students to realize the practicability of a foreign language, and further encourage them to internalize another language system with more initiative.

### **3 Various learning methods can be put together**

When we read newspapers in another language, not only our language skills but our other learning ability can be developed. a)Students can encounter and may develop a different thinking pattern with reading foreign newspapers. Foreign newspapers are composed by native speakers; they may have a totally different attitude towards the same issue. By observing and understanding these different opinions, one is establishing a new thinking pattern and is learning to think in an open-minded way. b)Students can learn how to collect, process information in a proper way. Articles in the newspapers is carefully organized; a qualified newspaper report will convey the most available message in the most concise words. By reading newspapers, one gradually learn how to grasp the main idea as soon as possible, and one can further analyze how to extend an essay exactly in the same way.

We learn a foreign in order to learn another way to communicate with others and the world, and to learn a language is to interact with the world. Take the practicability of the language into account, a foreign newspaper is a privileged reading material for foreign language learners. To read newspapers in foreign language challenge the learners of initiative and also enhance their initiative in return. Various learning methods can be put together, for one thing, students can encounter and may establish a different thinking pattern by reading newspapers in a foreign language; for another, students can learn how to deal with the information, too. Reading newspapers in an efficient way requires students to acquire some learning strategies, and meanwhile, enhances their learning ability in comprehensive aspects.



## **Challenges for Teachers to Make Use of the Newspapers**

“Communication is the ultimate aim of language teaching, so we should attach unprecedentedly greater importance to the role of the learner or the communicator, which demands us to re-locate the roles of the teacher and student...”<sup>3</sup>, The traditional teaching-learning pattern puts emphasis on “teachers”, and it treats teachers as an authoritative existence. But nowadays, according with the rapid change of the social life, the knowledge systems update so quickly that no one is confident enough to be “omnipotent”, including teachers. To encourage students to truly grasp another language by themselves, teachers needs to treat their students as the active learners and help them to learn by themselves.

### **1. Affirmation and exploration of newspapers’ value as teaching materials**

Most schools have not take newspaper reading as part of a curricular; compared to other already formed subjects, it calls for some teaching preparation. Before the presentation in class, foreign language teachers themselves need to realize the availability lying in the newspapers and make efforts to explore how to demonstrate the newspapers’ value to their students in an organized way. Before conducting the teaching, teachers need to know that there is no authoritative textbooks or correspondent readily available teaching plans, and that newspapers’ value as teaching materials first needs to be affirmed and explored by teachers themselves.

### **2. “quality time” in classroom**

Once foreign newspaper reading is formed into the curricular, class hours are supposed to put emphasis on processing information, introducing reading strategies and assessing assignments rather than reciting new vocabulary and other specific language points. By doing so, teachers affirm students learning ability and their capability to achieve self-fulfillment; this, meanwhile, requires students of more active efforts after class. “Pygmalion Effect” tells us that high expectation leads to increase in performance; therefore teachers would rather expect their students to be active, diligent learners than inert “sofa potatoes”.

### **3. Carefully arranged assignments after class**

As it can be seen in the analysis above, reading foreign newspapers really challenges students’ initiative and self-discipline; however, this learning-teaching pattern seems to release the teachers from the repetitive preparation for class, but in fact, this pattern requires more creativity and logic. In addition to the “quality time” in classroom, teachers also needs to deliver some targeted assignments which will remind the students of the significance of practice. The assignments are supposed to be carefully selected and can also adopt various flexible forms according to the size of the student group and their basic language skills.

To learn a foreign language, the learning materials, learning devices and strategies are

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<sup>3</sup> Gai, Fangpeng(2014), The application of autonomous learning to fostering cross-cultural communication competence. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4 (6), 1291-1295.

too various to choose for learners; under these circumstances, the significance of a teacher in students' autonomous learning process actually increases, instead of decreases. This also challenge teachers of their creativity and logic in organizing the systematic teaching activity before, during and after class. Teachers' task is to encourage the students to learn to read foreign newspapers by themselves, and help them to read a newspaper in an efficient way. In order to achieve this goal, teachers need to realize and explore the value of related reading materials, to make most of the class hours and to deliver appropriate assignments after class, too.

## **Conclusion**

Reading foreign newspapers is an effective approach of foreign language acquisition. First of all, Newspapers possess privileges over other reading materials. Native language, various topics, and convenient access make it possible to be an sort of excellent learning and teaching material. For students, initiative of the learners is the key; to realize the practicability of a foreign language values; various learning methods can be put together. For teachers, to recognize and to explore the value of foreign newspapers come first; the class focus needs to shift from specific vocabulary, grammar items to general learning strategies and analysis on typical ability training; carefully arranged assignments after class also composes an important part of the complete teaching process. One thing to mention is that the quality of selected newspapers directly relates to both students' learning enthusiasm and teachers' teaching effects.

**Contact email:** : [swbhdyx@hotmail.com](mailto:swbhdyx@hotmail.com)

## *Cross Cultural Communication*

Vineeta Kaur Saluja, Indian Institute of Information Technology Design and  
Manufacturing, India

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Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

With the imperatives of globalization, it has become inevitable that people of diverse cultures, backgrounds & linguistic orientations will meet and interact with each other at some juncture whether it is an educational institution, trading or companies having diverse work force participating in global economy. Where different perspectives cross ways, it becomes essential for thoughts to get across to all stakeholders with explicit clarity to avoid misunderstandings. There may be a possibility of communication casualties like missing the main idea of the conversation, misunderstanding or misinterpretation of one's words and being offended by use of certain non-verbal gestures. Each individual belonging to a particular culture has social habits or values that influence the verbal expression of emotions and even aspects of non-verbal communication, like gestures, facial expressions and body language. Symbols and images necessarily do not all translate well across cultures and need deeper than skin understanding to interpret and conclude justifiably. This paper, while suggesting cultural sensitivity and related aspects as the vectors to cross cultural communication, also highlights the major barriers to effective communication elucidated through a Primary research survey, conducted among Engineering students of one of India's premier institutes. The student profile are natives of the same country - India, they belong to different regions, culture, societal grade segregations and hence use different paralinguistic and prosodic features while communicating. The survey analysis examines the obstacles in effective communication, cross culturally, using evaluative parameters like difference in cultural norms, status and various other factors.

Keywords: cross cultural communication, culture, values, perception, paralinguistic, prosodic, non-verbal

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## **Introduction**

Most of us mistakenly assume that for successfully communicating we need to have command over use of language. We fail to recognize that effective communication between people cannot result unless we are fully aware of the corresponding culture of language. People use their own beliefs, customs and values to guide their words, their thoughts and even their actions. And they consider all of these as parameters to evaluate the words and actions of others. We define cross-cultural communication as a subject which focuses on the communicative activities of people from different cultural backgrounds and the essence and rules of the communicative activities (Jia, 1997, 563). When people are communicating cross cultures, there are breakdowns in communication primarily owing to different cultural perspectives each right in their own respect. As we are living in a shrinking world, cross cultural communication is critically important to be understood in all dimensions of human co-existence.

As my research substantiates and as I elucidate with few examples from that research, the underlying idea of “cross- cultural” I have also attempted to include speakers from the same country of different states, class, region, age and gender.

## **Overview**

During cross- cultural interaction, the behaviour of the person whom you are interacting with is often categorized as incorrect and inappropriate due to unfamiliar signals. The person is expected to adjust himself in order to adapt to the environment, which results in decrease in problem solving ability, adaptability and sometimes, increase in stress. This stress which accompanies the cultural adaptation can be termed as culture shock in today’s world. One must have the ability to communicate inter culturally in order to realize the purpose of communication. Both parties need to explicitly express their intentions while communicating. They need to scrutinize or monitor the minute details of the use of paralinguistic and prosodic features like tone of voice, pacing and pauses to show their attitude towards what they are saying with the aim of considering the other side’s preferences, establishing cordial acknowledgement and understanding and finally reaching a juncture of concurrence on opinions or discussions. It is very difficult to become actually competent in all areas, but to attain cultural awareness is not a herculean task. Many a time cultural errors are responded with anger and antipathy which leads to major breakdown in communication. To communicate effectively within a new cultural framework is a challenging task and one may face many painful experiences. Under such circumstances, one is expected to be focused on the inappropriate behaviour of the person rather than the person himself.

## **Examples Of Cross Cultural Differences**

In one of the sections of the instrument which I had designed for this research, I had asked my subjects to relate to an incident when they were put into complex situations while communicating cross culturally. The major barrier in cross cultural communication arises due to non-sharing of expectations about how paralinguistic signals are used to indicate what is meant by what is said. Upon clarification of cause of misunderstanding, it is amazing to notice that certain speech choices or pitch tonalities were intended to mean something but were interpreted to mean something

completely different. For example my research analysis shows that when North Indians especially students from Haryana use increased voice volumes to perform conversational business- as-usual, it seems to students from south that they are angry. Another interesting episode of cross cultural difference from my research analysis is - Intended friendly act of keeping a conversation going by a student of one culture was misunderstood or misinterpreted by another student from a different background as an unfriendly act of not allowing him a chance to talk and misjudged the situation as conversational dominance. However after sometime, it was realized that the cause was differences in their turn taking habits and ways of showing friendliness. Students of U.P. especially Hyderabad & Lucknow, as per their culture, wait until the other has finished talking before taking their turn to express themselves. But, the durations of this pause differs from culture to culture. In U.P, the pauses are longer in duration and students from Delhi consider a turn-taking pause as an uncomfortable silence indicating that the other person doesn't have anything to say. So they go on to fill the silence with the intention of smooth interaction between them. But the student from U.P. in this episode felt humiliated as he was interrupted and was not given a chance to speak. Yet another episode of cross cultural difference was conveyed by the students of Jammu and Kashmir pitted against their friends from Rajasthan. As per the culture of Rajasthan, people show their friendliness by asking direct and personal/darting questions which is quite untoward in Kashmiri style of communicating. In this incident too one of the students expressed his dislike to a series of questions that were personal in focus, and abrupt which were intended to show interest in him but had quite the opposite effect as he felt that he was caught off guard. After talking to both the groups, I realized that these darting questions were a sign of showing friendliness and they never expected answers from their friends. But the Kashmiri students felt offended and were very resistant to continue their conversation with their Rajasthani friends and resented the imposition.

Different values and ethics too attribute a lot to cross cultural differences. For example, North Indian students feel that South Indians are very cold and dull as they do not believe in many habits of North Indians like standing close, holding hands while talking and talking at the same time. On the other hand, South Indian students feel that North Indians are ridiculously talkative, insincere and superficial, trying to act like close friends when they are not. My research also reveals that in many cultures, overt expression of emotions are taken as a natural thing, while some believe that public display of excessive emotions is as an act of impoliteness, lack of control over one's feelings and even a kind of intrusion into someone's personal space. Similarly, 'Silence' is golden and a sign of respect towards the other person in some cultures, whereas the other cultures interpret 'Silence' as shyness or lack of dynamism. 'Touch' too has different interpretations in different zones.

The few examples stated above clearly show that inter-cultural communication competence has become a pre-requisite for cross-cultural communication. Inter-cultural competence is the multi-faceted ability, which requires not only linguistic command, but the preparedness of a person to be able to perceive and interpret various socio-cultural events and to manage confidently with cross-cultural encounters. Language and culture have to be dealt from a cross- cultural perspective to define various approaches to foster inter-cultural communicative competence. These include learning to respect and share one's own culture while developing a positive outlook towards other cultures; progressing from subjective and individual

state of understandings to mutual and wider interpretation of language of audiences not necessarily from the same background.

### **What Is Meant By Culture?**

According to Barnow (1973) “culture is a way of life of a group of people, the configuration of all of the more or less stereotyped patterns of learned behaviours which are handed down from one generation to the next through means of language and imitation” (P.6) Culture means the ways of thinking, acting and behaving that people have internalized in them and which are transformed into reality through their actions in the society. Values, beliefs and material products are the three most important components of a culture. Beliefs are basic personal orientation towards what is true or false, good or bad; beliefs can be descriptive or prescriptive which give people insight into how they should feel, think or behave. On the other hand, values are deep-seated orientations and ideals generally based on how we’ve learned to believe things ought to be or how people are expected to behave in terms of qualities like integrity, honesty etc. Also culture is reflected through material products like the food we eat, clothing that we wear and to some extent music.

Modern researchers are of the opinion that culture is a dynamic, organic entity that is developing gradually and continuously changing irrespective of geographic boundaries. Schwartz (2009), considers culture as a “dormant, hypothetical variable, existing outside the individual that influences the distribution of individual beliefs, actions, goals and styles of thinking through the press and expectations to which people are exposed”(p.128). Hong (2009) defines culture as “network of knowledge, consisting of learned routine thinking, feeling and interacting that exist as a body of knowledge and perceptions about a given people’s cultural reality” (p.4). If we look at different viewpoints given by different researchers, there are few elements of culture which are common in almost all the theories, which is; All of them view culture as a pool of cognizant but not consciously recognized thoughts, behavioural displays, belief and value sets that reach people across similar or dissimilar backgrounds and are deployed in inter personal behaviours of people in their every-day lives.

Thus we can say culture plays an important role in providing people with ratiocinative frame work for an understanding of the world and for functioning in it. It is culture which acts as a conciliator to bring about relationship among men and between men and their environment.

Culture is the barometer to assess a person’s interpretation of reality and the sub conscious communication that he encounters and the meaning he derives of the situation set, he finds himself in, individually or collectively.

### **Theoretical Dimensions of Cross Cultural Communication.**

Geert Hofstede in his study links dimensions of cultural variability directly with the cultural norms and rules that influence the communication behaviour. The major dimensions of cultural variations are:

- (a) Power distance
- (b) Individualism v/s collectivism

- (c) Self-construal
- (d) Low and high context.

Power distance is the degree to which cultures include status and power hierarchies against relative equality. It is the extent to which less powerful members of society tolerate unequal distribution of power. The extent to which people feel threatened by ambiguous situations, decide how they create beliefs and institutions to try and avoid unforeseen consequences. The culture that believes in high power distance interaction, its people often restrict dating, free contacts, which are taken for granted among people from low power distance interaction.

Another basic dimension of cultural variation is individualism versus collectivism or in other words the extent to which cultures value individual personal identity versus community identity. Tocqueville (1945) points out, "Individualism is mature and calm feeling, which disposes each member of the community to serve himself (or herself) from the mass of his (or her) fellow and to draw apart with his (or her) family and friends, so that he (or she) willingly leaves society at large to itself" (p.104). The psychological makeup of an individual is the result of this cultural dimension. Tomkins (1994) had reported that people in western countries are inclined towards positive or negative self-celebration, whereas Asians consider harmony between human and nature as another alternative. Individualism hypothesizes the focus on the person himself and establishes his own existence as being of prime importance. On the other hand, collectivism "pertains to societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong cohesive in-groups, which through people's life time continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty" (Hofstede, 1991, p.51).

Collectivism hypothesizes collaborative cultural considerations and regards mutual or co-operative social reckoning as over archingly important. Collectivist culture is more traditional in the sense that they value interdependence whereas individualistic culture which is less traditional seeks independence and emphasizes on pursuit of personal goals, interests and self-expression.

Self-construal is the way one looks at one self that is the self-concept: who I am and what is my ultimate aim in life? This dimension can be related to 'The masculinity-femininity dimension', where in masculinity symbolizes the cultures that assesses strength, aggressiveness, material success whereas femininity exhibits cultural preference for affection, compassion, nurturance and emotionality.

Low and high context is the degree to which a culture relies on unspoken reasonable gestures versus direct verbal communication. Hall (1976) identifies two types of cultures on the basis of communicating behaviour of an individual, namely 'high' and 'low' context cultures. He labelled communication style of collectivistic cultures high- context cultures and the style of individualistic cultures low- context. This division was based on how people interpret messages. People from low context culture, value verbal expressions and are more communicative as compared to people from high context culture, who are less verbal and thus give more emphasis on non-verbal communication. People from low context cultures are more direct, have low level of trust and take decisions on facts, whereas individuals from high context cultures are more interested in knowing the person with whom they are interacting so

as to enable them to take a decision. They are more oriented towards group success rather than individual achievements and believe 'I' wins only when 'we' does.

### **Importance of Cultural Transfer in Cross Cultural Communication**

The most prominent element in cross cultural communication is the cultural transfer of first language. Culture transfer is the cultural intrusion caused by cultural dissimilarities. There are two types of culture transfer: surface-structure transfer and deep structure-transfer. Surface-structure transfer is due to the difference in the culture of language forms and use of linguistic words. It is not possible for an individual to avoid transfer of the first language vocabulary. Here, the only way to avoid miscommunication is to know the implication of the word in accordance with an understanding of the corresponding culture.

The deep-structure transfer is psychological in nature in the sense the influence of life values and thought patterns are not clear through words resulting in miscommunication. People from one culture express themselves through indirect course and leave the rest for others to understand. In my data analysis of the conducted research, one of the students expressed his anger by saying that during the project work which involved three students, they agreeably decided to work on Sunday. The conversation among these three students went as follows:

Student I – Lets all of us work on Sunday to complete our project.

Student II – Oh! Great! We will be able to submit on time.

Student III – Yes, I think so. Sunday is a special day for me, do you know?

Student II – Why? What is so special about this Sunday?

Student III – It is my Dad's birthday!

Student I &II – Oh! How nice, hope you all have a good time.

In the above dialogue, student III, though didn't want to work on Sunday, didn't refuse directly, which he should have. His thought pattern according to his culture expected his friends to get the hint of his desire to spend that time with his father instead of working on the project. The other students didn't understand him because of the difference in the way of communication and thought pattern. This is an illustration of deep-structure transfer which exists in communication. According to the British linguist, Jenny Thomas, there are two types of failure in cross-cultural communication; Paralinguistic and Socio-pragmatic failure. (Thomas, 1983, 3): paralinguistic failure is the surface-structure transfer and socio-pragmatic failure is the deep-structure transfer. Thus culture transfer; both surface-structure and deep-structure are the major causes of cross cultural misunderstanding in communication. The most important method to overcome failure in cross cultural communication is to find out the methodology to improve the communicative competence.

### **Cross Cultural Communicative Competence**

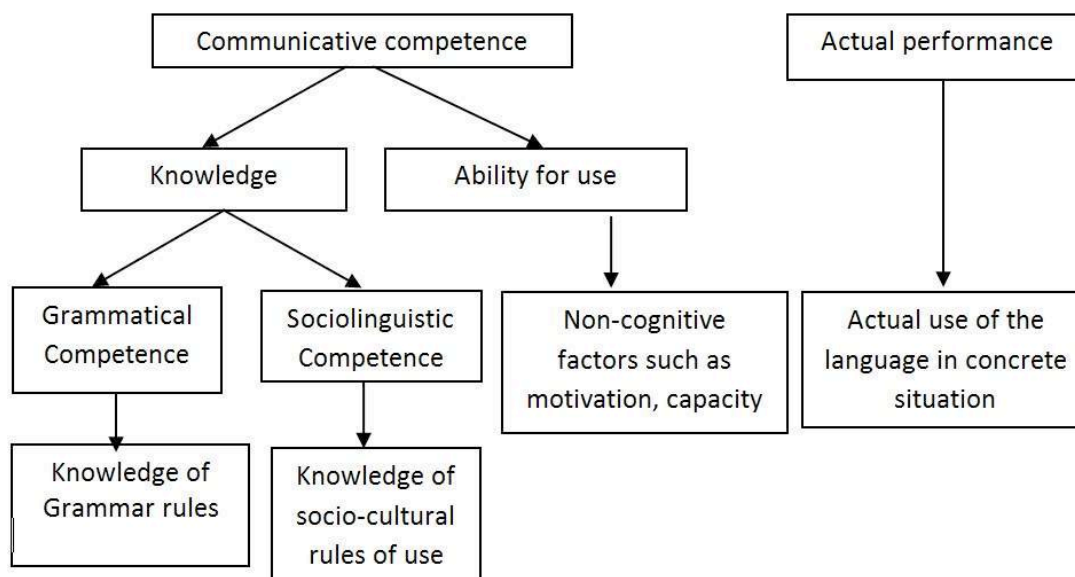
#### **What is Communicative Competence?**

Communicative competence as pointed out by Hymes (1971, 1972) laid more emphasis on the importance of language users to comprehend the social rules of a language for everyday interactions. According to Hymes, there are two areas of



competence: grammatical, socio-linguistic competence and ‘ability for use’. Communicative competence may be displayed differently depending on the situation.

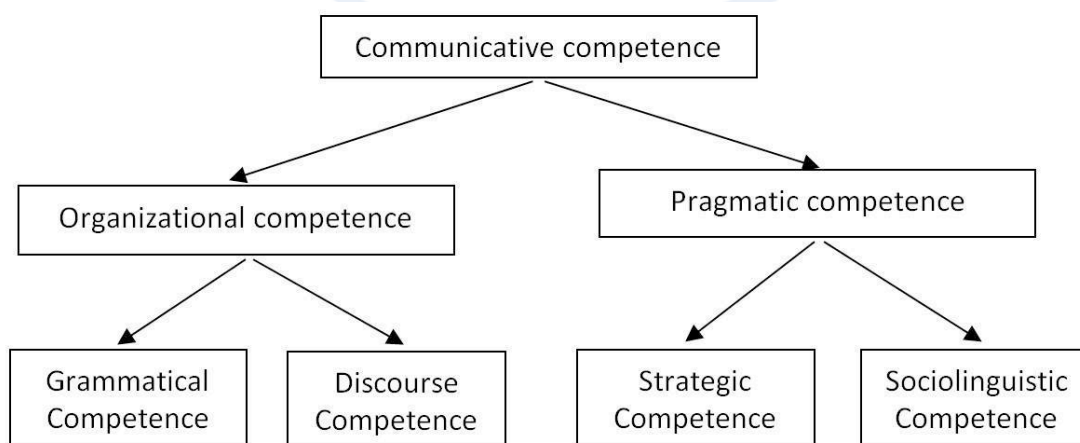
Hymes’ communicative competence model can be explained as follows:



**Figure 1 Hymes’ Communicative Competence Model**

According to the above model, communicative competence doesn’t only mean applying grammatical rules of a language to construct correct sentences but one should also have the knowledge of when and where to use these sentences. In other words it is the development of the learner’s cognitive capability and his ability to deal with communication casualties resulting from cross cultural differences.

Canale & Swain (1980, p.20) defined communicative competence as “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 principle of discourse”.

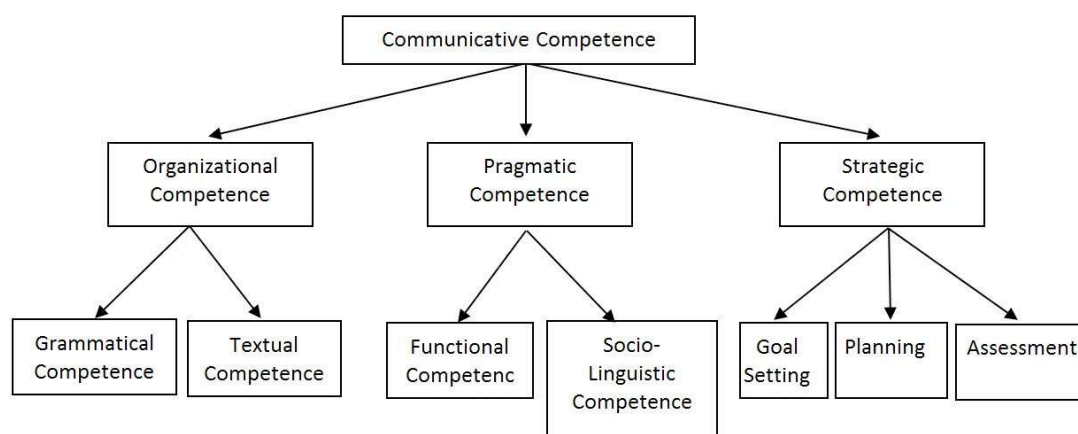


**Figure 2 Canale’s Model of Language Competence**

According to the above model, linguistic competence refers to correct use of language & skills while sociolinguistic competence is ability to select correct/opt way of expressing as per the demand of situation. Discourse competence means the ability to

plan and organize the discourse. Strategic competence is the ability of the learner to take corrective recourses during possible communication breakdown.

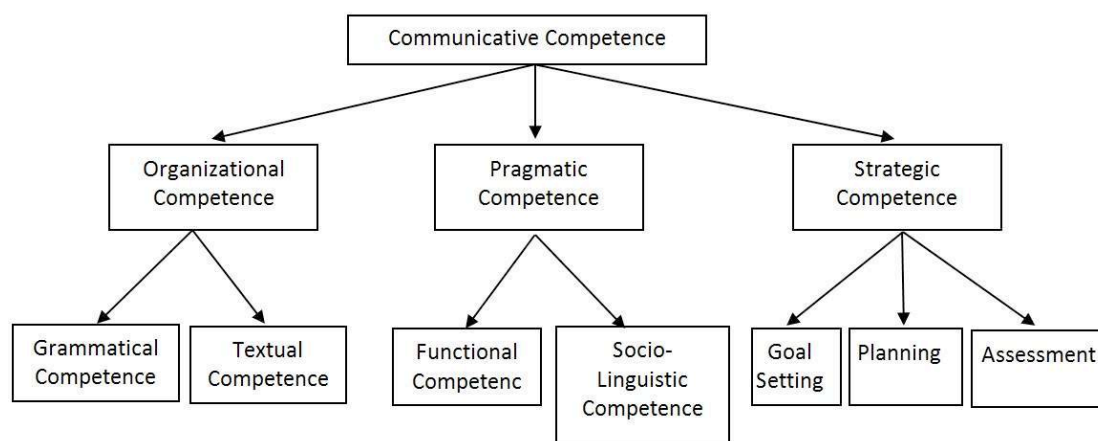
But, the 1996 model of Communicative competence by Bachman & Palmer (1982, 1996), consists of three components: “Organizational knowledge”, “Pragmatic knowledge” and “Strategic competence”. Organizational knowledge includes both grammatical and textual knowledge. Sociolinguistic rules and functional knowledge together form Pragmatic knowledge. Strategic competence is conceived of “ a set of meta-cognitive components, or strategies, which can be thought of as higher order executive processes that provide a cognitive management function for language use as well as in other cognitive activities”.(Bachman & Palmer, 1996,P.70)



**Figure 3 Bachman’s Communicative Competence Model**

This is a more complicated model, dealing at the micro level in the sense; knowledge of grammar includes skills in textual level along with knowledge and skills in syntax, morphology and phonetics. Pragmatic Competence includes functional and situational use of language and strategic Competence includes accurate assessment of self and the others’ script, style and context of communicating to finally arrive at the aim of communication.

Although there have been reformulation of the different components of communicative competence as proposed by different researchers, they have failed to pin-point explicitly the competence of how to deal with cultural differences in their models. Based on the analysis and comparison of different models of communicative Competence, Wen (1999) proposed her own model of Cross-Cultural Communicative Competence, which consists of three components: Sensitivity to cultural difference, tolerance towards cultural difference & flexibility in dealing with problems of cultural differences.



**Figure 4 Wen's Model of Cross Cultural Communicative Competence**

Sensitivity to cultural differences includes both surface and deep cultural difference. One doesn't need special training to identify the surface cultural difference. But, the cultural difference in deep structure is difficult to comprehend as it is concealed in people's behaviour & thoughts. As such it is even more important to develop the sensitivity to the cultural differences consciously. Knowledge & Sensitivity to cultural differences are two different entities and knowledge of foreign culture is not an end but a means.

Tolerance towards cultural difference is the degree to which a person is ready to understand, respect or accept the cultural differences. Some people regard their own culture far superior as compared to other cultures as they feel that their culture is the integral part of their body language. To cultivate acceptance towards cultural differences, one has to accept that culture is not inborn and tolerance should be predicted on a broader relative horizon.

Flexibility in dealing with problems of cultural differences is the ability to resolve the communicative conflict resulting from cultural differences by adjusting to the listener's behaviour, in the light of mutual cultural background understanding. A communication process can be attempted to be made complete and successful through a continuous process of explicit communicative consultation and adjustment.

As discussed earlier also, the two main barriers during cross-cultural communication are linguistic and cultural communication barriers. If both parties don't possess the capability to sense cultural differences, it is not possible to come to 'tolerance' and 'flexibility'. Thus, Cross Cultural Communicative Competence can be acquired step by step by first sensitizing both parties to differences, then have them adopt a correct attitude towards it, so that they can respect each other's culture and lastly train them with special skills to deal with such differences.

### **Different Approaches for cultivation of cross-cultural communication competence in ELT.**

With phenomenal growth in globalization, the world continues to shrink and cultures collide. To overcome the cross-cultural communication gap, specific skills and knowledge are required. To preserve mutual respect and to minimize antagonism, the following approaches are suggested.

### **A. Knowledge Approach**

Since the broad concept of culture penetrates the field of religion, traditions, law, politics & economy, the students should be exposed to a significant quantity of information about historical, cultural, political & psychological issues. This knowledge will help the students develop cognitive/ psychological understanding of other people's customs, beliefs and values which are important in cross-cultural communication. The best way is to make the students read different literary texts, political & historical novels and biographies of great personalities of the world.

### **B. Situational Approach**

This approach involves creation of situations where students will be asked to interact with people from different cultures or they should be made to do video chatting with people from different countries, which will help students intensify their skills on listening and speaking.

### **C. Social Pragmatic Communicative Approach**

Grice's cooperative principle (1975) suggests that successful communication should observe the following four criteria: the maxim of quantity, the maxim of quality, the maxim of relation & the maxim of manner. The approach here will be the search for patterned systems of interactions within a given cultural system. Students should be made to use different communication models describing the interface of communication variables in different communication situations. Students should be taught to encode and decode topics of different cultures in order to help them understand the process of communication.

### **D. Meta-Cognitive Approach**

In meta-cognitive approach, the learners in learning activities are required to plan consciously, create learning environment and overcome the unfavourable factors. Here learners experience variables in learning situation, as well as the relationship changes these variables. They choose their own learning method according to the relationship. They adjust and control their learning method based on characteristics of the learning tasks. Checking the outcomes of their performance, learners adjust to appropriate measures and make learning smooth. For this approach, students need to have positive learning attitude, self-confidence and self-consciousness. This approach increases learner's autonomous learning ability.

### **E. Role Playing Approach**

Here the students will be subjected to play with characters and the things that happen in a certain situation in foreign language and certain actions. This will help the students improve their communicative competence like listening to the application, observation, imagination, flexibility, use of language and improvisation. They can be made to view others performance, which will help them to understand and learn, means of non-verbal communication.

### **F. Games and Exercises**

Games and exercises also play important role in the development of understanding and empathy in cross cultural situation when they are set up to parallel real life situation. Students overcome many of their initial inhibitions while playing games.

## Conclusion

To stay in today's global community; cultivation of cross-cultural communicative competence is obvious. It is imperative for all of us to be more sensitive to various cultures with unique customs, values and languages. The best way to avoid cross-cultural casualties is having knowledge of 'cultural awareness', 'cultural sensitivity' along with respect for other's cultures. Impressing one's own belief in solidarity without a sensitization of the diversity of cultures is not the most ideal way of establishing connections leading to acquaintances and further, relationships. Through the analysis of cross-cultural communication, various models of communicative competence and effect of cultural transfer on cross-cultural communication, it is suggested to design a course ware to develop cross-cultural competence, in the curriculum, aiming at acclimatizing the students to global cultural diversity and teaching them the art of acceptance , understanding and respect for differences in communication. By observing different strategies of communicative accommodation, other skills like integrity, positive attitude and leadership qualities can also be cultivated among students. If the students are able to understand the impact of cross-cultural communication, it will not be a difficult task to put the methodology into practice.

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**Contact email:** [vineeta.saluja@gmail.com](mailto:vineeta.saluja@gmail.com)







*Studies on Global and Partial Processing for Chinese Children with Dictation Difficulties*

Tan Yaqian, Beijing Normal University, China  
Qi Tingting, Beijing Normal University, China  
Liu Xiangping, Beijing Normal University, China

The European Conference on Language Learning 2015  
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**Abstract**

Dictation difficulty refers to people who possess normal reading ability but poor dictation ability. Orthographic representation deficit of Chinese children with dictation difficulties might stem from backward in global processing, preferential effect in partial process or deficit in paired associative learning. However, there is a vacancy in this research field. Therefore, the current study aimed to examine features and preferences in both global and partial processing as well as their relationships. Participants are selected according to their scores on reading, dictation and intelligence text. By calculating discrepancies on reading and dictation scores, 22 dictation difficulties and 24 controls were chosen. Two 2 by 2 factor-designed experiments were conducted respectively. In experiment 1, a "+" was presented on screen for 500ms, followed by a target stimuli with a specific shape composited from small shapes last for 1000ms, then a probe stimuli, a global- or partial-changed version of the target was presented. Subjects were asked to judge which version was the probe stimulus. In Experiment 2, a "+" was presented on screen for 500ms, followed by a stimuli with a specific shape composited from small shapes last for 1000ms. Subjects were asked to whether the stimuli has a round as well as triangle shape. Both experiments recorded accuracy and reaction time. Both experiments reveal that Chinese dictation difficulties were significantly deficient in global processing, but excellent in partial processing. One possible explanation is that it is the preferential effect in partial processing that influences global processing. Further studies were expected to investigate this assumption

Keywords: dictation difficulties, Chinese, visual process, global and partial

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## Introduction

As a main type of learning disability, specific spelling difficulties has the main feature of specific and significant impairment in the development spelling skills in the absence of a history of specific reading disorder, which is not solely accounted for by low mental age, visual acuity problems, or inadequate schooling (ICD-10, version; 2015). In China, such kind is called dictation difficulties.

According to the feature of normal reading and poor dictation performance, it might be that children with dictation difficulty has deficit in orthographic representation. But relevant studies have shown conflicting results in dictation difficulties' global representation of Chinese character. Also, relationship between global and partial process remains unknown. Finally, previous studies focus mostly in Chinese characters and ignore common graphs. Thus, this research aims at resolve these problems.




## Methods

Participants were selected according to their scores on reading, dictation and intelligence test. The selecting procedures were as followings: (1) dictation test, the contents were read by teachers and students wrote on designated paper; (2) reading test after two days, students wrote phonetic notations or homophones on designated paper. (3) Progressive raven standard reasoning test, whose scores were under 75% were eliminated. By calculating discrepancies on reading and dictation scores, 22 dictation difficulties and 24 controls were chosen.

Both experiment 1 and 2 were designed as two-factor mixed experimental design, groups of participants were between-subject factors.





Experiment 1 explored features of global and partial process respectively as well as their relationship. Experiment 1 used shape-change-detect paradigm. Materials were global and partial shapes including triangle, roundness, square and rhombus (See table 1). The experiment process were as follows: a "+" was presented on screen for 500ms, followed by a target stimuli with a specific shape composited from small shapes last for 1000ms, then a probe stimuli, a global- or partial-changed version of the target was presented. Subjects were asked to judge which version was the probe stimulus.

Table1 Examples of Materials in Experimental 1

Probe stimuli	Target stimuli	
	Global-changed	Partial-changed
		

Experiment 2 also explored features of global and partial process respectively as well as their relationship. Materials were global and partial shapes including triangle, roundness, square and rhombus (See table 2). The experiment process were as follows: In Experiment 2, a "+" was presented on screen for 500ms, followed by a stimuli with a specific shape composited from small shapes last for 1000ms. Subjects were asked to whether the stimuli has a round as well as triangle shape.

Table2 Examples of Experiment 2

Target stimuli		Distractible stimuli	
			

## Results

Both experiments recorded accuracy and reaction time.

In experimental 1, results were: (1) in accuracy, main effect of group were significant,  $F(1, 44)=19.23$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $\eta^2=0.32$ ; main effect of type of change were not significant,  $F(1, 44)=2.80$ ,  $p>0.01$ ; interaction effect were significant,  $F(1, 44)=9.59$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $\eta^2=0.18$ . (2) in reaction time, main effect of group were not significant,  $F(1, 44)=3.36$ ,  $p>0.01$ ; main effect of type of change were significant,  $F(1,44)=119.82$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $\eta^2=0.73$ ; interaction effect were significant,  $F(1,44)=5.20$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $\eta^2=0.11$ .

In experiment 2, results were: (1) in accuracy, main effect of group were significant,  $F(1,43)=18.84$ ,  $p<0.01$ ,  $\eta^2=0.29$ ; main effect of type of judgment were not significant,  $F(1, 43)=0.61$ ,  $p>0.05$ ; interaction effect were significant,  $F(1,43)=133.45$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $\eta^2=0.74$ . (2) in reaction time, main effect of group were significant,  $F(1,43)=21.21$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $\eta^2=0.33$ ; main effect of type of judgment were significant,  $F(1,43)=78.94$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\eta^2=0.65$ ; interaction effect were significant,  $F(1,43)=49.42$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $\eta^2=0.53$ .

## Conclusion

In conclusion, both experiments revealed that Chinese dictation difficulties were significantly deficient in global processing, but excellent in partial processing. One possible explanation is that it is the preferential effect in partial processing that influences global processing. Further studies were expected to investigate this assumption.

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**Contact email:** 295037138@qq.com



*The Function of “Turkish Language” Course in Colleges in the Teaching of Turkish as a Mother Tongue in Turkey*

Didem Akyıldız Ay, Istanbul University, Turkey

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**Abstract**

In Turkey, in order for the individual to use his native language correctly and efficiently, courses such as “Turkish, Turkish Language and Literature, Language and Expression” are taught throughout school life. This process of learning the native language continues with the course named “Turkish Language” in universities and it is given to all students in their first year in all faculties for two semesters. The specialty of this course is that students who begin the university have to take it compulsorily. This practice began with the foundation of Higher Education Council in 1981. The aims of teaching this course include presenting information about the general linguistic structure of Turkish, improving written and spoken expression of the individual in his native language, and raising young people with the awareness of native language. The course is given by Turkish language lecturers. However, there are some problems for both teachers and students related to the content of the course and its being compulsory. Recently, there have been debates among academicians about whether this course should be taught or not. Some academicians think it does not contribute to learning of native language and it must be removed. One of the other debate topics is about that the course can be selective instead of compulsory. In this paper, the aim of the course, its content and problems will be discussed with researches done before and surveys made with students. After all, the contribution of the course to native language will be evaluated with this data.

Keywords: Turkish, mother tongue teaching, courses of Turkish language

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## Introduction

What is a mother tongue? “Mother tongue is the language learnt from the mother and close family members at first, then from the environment that one comes into contact with, the language that exists in the subconscious and forms the strongest tie that an individual has with the society.” (Aksan, 1975; 427)

When a child first starts learning a language, he or she acquires the vocal structure of the tongue which consists of sounds, emphases and tones characteristics of that language. This vocal structure is usually the structure of the mother’s language, and is deeply imprinted upon the developing child’s tongue. These characteristics are very difficult to change, and for some, even impossible.

The official language of Turkey is Turkish. The majority of Turkish citizens speak Turkish as their mother tongue, but there are also people who speak other languages, most prominently Kurdish, but also Arabic, various Turkic languages, Balkan languages, Laz, Circassian, Armenian, Caucasian languages, Greek and other languages. Most people whose mother tongue is not Turkish learn their first language in their families, and then learn Turkish as a second language at school or at work because it is the common language of communication in Turkey. Learning Turkish as a second language is outside the scope of this study and will not be mentioned in this article.

This study aims to examine how Turkish, acquired as a mother tongue, is taught in Turkey’s education system, especially in the “Turkish Language” courses at colleges, and make some recommendations.

“Acquisition of the mother tongue is a process that works from the birth onwards, automatically and continuously, in a cultural milieu stretching from the family to the social environment.” (Demir, Yapıcı: 180)

“However, mother tongue education begins when the parents and the close family members start correcting the mistakes, and continues in the pre-school period as the child learns the rules of the mother language.” (Karataş, 2013; 1882)

In the Turkish education system, Turkish as a mother tongue is taught in the following courses:

1. ‘Turkish Language Activities’ in pre-school education
2. ‘Turkish’ in elementary school (grades 1 through 8)
3. ‘Language and Expression’ in secondary school (grades 9 through 12)
4. At the last stage of this process, in college, Turkish is taught in the mandatory course ‘Turkish Language’ in all undergraduate programs except the Departments of Turkish Language and Literature. (Karataş, 2013; 1882)

1. At the pre-school stage of mother tongue education, “Turkish Language Activities” course includes the following activities:

• Tongue twisters
• Poems
• Finger games
• Riddles
• Fairy tales and stories
• Mother tongue practice activities (acting, monologue...)
• Audio slideshow stories

2. The contents of the ‘Turkish’ course taught in elementary school are as follows:

• Listening
○ Practicing rules of listening
○ Listening comprehension
• Speaking
○ Practicing rules of speaking
○ Verbal expression
○ Genres, methods and techniques of speaking
• Reading
○ Practicing rules of reading
○ Reading comprehension
○ Establishing meaning
○ Developing vocabulary
○ Genres, methods and techniques of reading
• Writing
○ Practicing rules of writing
○ Written expression
○ Genres, methods and techniques of writing
• Visual Reading and Visual Presentation
○ Visual reading
○ Visual presentation
• Grammar Acquisition

3. The contents of the ‘Language and Expression’ course taught in secondary school (grades 9 through 12) are as follows:

• 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade:
○ Communication, language and culture
○ Classification of languages and the place of Turkish among the world languages
○ Phonetics and pronunciation
○ Vocabulary
○ Syntax
○ Paragraph structure
• 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade
○ Presentation, discussion and panels

○ Expression and its characteristics
○ Types of expression
• 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade
○ Classification of texts
○ Educational texts
○ Verbal expression
• 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
○ Identifying the characteristics of literary texts and examining literary texts
○ Literary texts (Fables, fairy tales, stories, novels, poetry, theater)
○ Verbal expression (Conference, panel, symposium, forum)
○ Identifying scientific texts' characteristics and writing scientific texts

As the contents of these courses indicate, mother tongue education starts at the pre-school period and continues until the college education.

At the college level, the mother tongue education continues with the 'Turkish Language' course, which is mandatory in all undergraduate programs except in the Departments of Turkish Education, and Turkish Language and Literature.

#### **Why is this course even needed at the college level?**

The common view on this question is that the previous levels fail in teaching the skill to "speak Turkish in a correct and elegant manner". And together with some psychological factors arising from socio-economic realities to this lack of skills, this lack of knowledge leads to the emergence of many negative attitudes towards Turkish, which should be the most important symbol of national pride.

In 1981, the Higher Education Council of Turkey (YÖK) was established. With the establishment of YÖK, 'Turkish Language' course became mandatory at all universities and departments to teach mother tongue. The course was taught over eight semesters until 1991, but since 1991 it has been taught for two semesters to freshmen students only, with a total of 60 class hours.

In its framework curriculum, YÖK explained the rationale for introducing the course as follows:

"Because grammar and Turkish courses in elementary and secondary school levels are not in sufficient amount and quality, students starting college education lack the skill to speak Turkish in a correct and elegant manner. This means their Turkish skills are inefficient for college education, which necessitates having the Turkish Language course in colleges." (Vural, 2007: 496)

In the same curriculum, the aims of the course were defined as follows:

"To make sure that every young college graduate has a firm grasp of the structure and functioning of his or her mother tongue; to help students acquire the necessary skills



to use both written and spoken Turkish in a correct and elegant manner; to create a unifying and integrating language and to educate mother tongue-conscious youths.” The “Turkish Language” course introduced by YÖK with the above considerations has been taught for 35 years now, and it is obvious that despite all the time spent, the benefits expected from this course are not efficiently realized.

### **General problems regarding the Turkish Language course:**

At this point, we can consider the following general problems regarding the Turkish Language course: (The following points were taken from Mustafa Karataş’s article titled “*Attitudes Towards Turkish and the Turkish Language Course in Universities*” Turkish Studies, Volume 8/1 Winter, 2013, p. 1884, and expanded upon.)

#### 1. Problems with the name of the “Turkish Language” course.

The first thing that comes to mind when one hears the “Turkish Language” is the different variants of Turkish spoken by different Turkic people living in different countries. Kyrgyz, Azeri, Uighur, and Turkish spoken in Turkey are all Turkish languages. However, it is only Turkish that is spoken in Turkey covered in this course as it can be understood from the content. In addition, this course is not only a language course, its contents also include Turkish culture and history.

#### 2. Problems with lecturers

- Selection of lecturers
- Compensation of lecturers

Although this course had grand aims, the necessary planning and preparation for the lecturers to be employed to teach this course could not be developed. Initially, the need for lecturers was met by employing Turkish teachers serving at secondary schools run by the Ministry of National Education. Later, graduates of Turkish Education and Turkish Language and Literature departments were employed as lecturers even though they did not have specialist training.

#### 3. Physical infrastructure (crowded classes)

Most classes are very crowded, which is among the most important problems preventing efficient instruction.

#### 4. Problems with implementation (Teaching to freshmen, without credit)

This course is taught in the freshmen year of all undergraduate programs in all universities, for two hours a week. Students do not earn any credits for this course even though it is a mandatory course, which creates negative attitudes towards the course among students. Many students regard the course as simply “a waste of time”.

#### 5. Problems with curriculum (Framework curriculum)

- Continuation of grammar teaching
- Subjects that are out of touch with modern needs and realities
- Lack of harmony between goals and contents

- Focus on rote learning, failure to teach awareness, self-respect and self-esteem

Grammar of mother tongue is taught at all levels of education, always accompanied by clichés and in the form of rote learning. This approach to teaching also applies to the Turkish Language course taught in universities. Students do not get a chance to grasp the structure of their mother tongue and use it in practice. The problem stems both from the education system in general, and from a lack of commitment of the students to learn how to use their mother tongue in a correct manner. The lack of commitment, is associated with the language awareness of the family and in general of the society. Another problem in this regard is that the aims YÖK set out when introducing the course are not in harmony with the contents of the course. Contents of the course vary from university to university due to factors including some of the problems mentioned here.

#### 6. Problems with teaching materials

- Lack of high quality books
- Lack of harmony between goals and book contents
- Lack of educational technologies such as computers and projectors in some universities

When Turkish Language course was first introduced, there was a lack of teaching materials designed for the course. Over time, various books were written by academicians to meet this need. However, many of these books fail to follow criteria set by YÖK, and provide encyclopedic information rather than encouraging practice. In addition, some universities are not able to offer basic educational technologies, which is another factor preventing the applied teaching of this course.

#### 7. Problems arising from the education system and socio-cultural environment

- Failure to instill love of mother tongue and mother tongue awareness
- Failure to provide efficient Turkish language education

A commonly accepted view about the Turkish education system is that it is based upon rote learning. Even though there are efforts to move beyond rote learning, changing the deeply held attitudes is a difficult undertaking. The Turkish education system conceives of teachers as conveyors of information. Students, in turn, are expected to receive the pre-packaged nuggets of information provided by the teachers and convey them back to the teachers during the exams. During this process, students are not expected to engage in deep learning or creative expression, they are only required to reproduce information in an accurate manner. As a result, following the exams, most of the information memorized is lost because they are irrelevant to the daily needs of the students.

In addition, there is a certain lack of awareness in the wider society regarding mother tongue, and insufficient love of mother tongue. Speaking Turkish in a correct and effective manner is considered to be a professional skill only. Sloppy grammar, broken sentences, and misspelling are treated as minor slips by most people. As a result, many students majoring in other fields, even some academicians, have an easy time finding excuses for their poor Turkish.

#### 8. Problems with the students

- Lack of previous learning
- Lack of interest
- Negative attitudes resulting from lack of self-esteem, self-respect and negative self-concept

Many students in Turkey start their college education without mother tongue awareness and without a grasp of the rules of their mother tongue. This results from the following factors:

- Failure to teach Turkish in a sufficient and comprehensive manner in secondary education
- Lack of attention to correct usage of the mother tongue in family, at school and in other social environments
- Mothers' low level of education
- Low levels of reading in Turkey

As is clear from the preceding discussion, mother tongue education in Turkey is a serious problem deserving attention, one that has long been debated in academic circles. Many scholars defend re-structuring this course, whereas others argue that it is better to cancel the course altogether because the expected benefits are not realized and the course is seen as an "unnecessary burden". In this confusion, some universities already started offering this course in the form of "distance education", allowing their students to follow the course online only. The "distance education" formula resulted in minimizing student-teacher interaction, and made achieving the aims of the course even more difficult.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the first priority in Turkey should be raising awareness about the mother tongue. To this end, mother tongue education at elementary and secondary school levels should be conducted with the seriousness it deserves. In addition, a sufficient number of efficiently well-trained teachers should be educated, and students should be encouraged to develop a strong reading habit. YÖK is well advised to provide the necessary infrastructure in universities for this course. Only then would we be able to eliminate many of the problems in universities mentioned above.

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**Contact email:** didemakyildiz07@gmail.com

*Content and Language Integrated Learning: In Search of a Coherent Conceptual Framework*

Zehra Gabillon, University of French Polynesia, French Polynesia  
Rodica Ailincăi, University of French Polynesia, French Polynesia

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**Abstract**

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has gained widespread acknowledgement in numerous education systems not only in Europe but also in other continents since its onset in the 1990s in Europe. However, despite its extensive reputation, CLIL has not yet attained a fully developed educational model. This study highlights the need for a coherent theoretical framework compatible with competency-based CLIL practices. The first part of this paper reviews the literature on CLIL, and relevant literature on foreign language teaching and sociocultural theories of learning. In the second part of the paper, the authors, drawing on the outcomes obtained from the CLIL research studies they have carried out, propose a socially mediated activity (SMA) framework for CLIL practices designed especially for young learners. In the conclusion part the authors refer to their future research projects, discuss some potential CLIL research perspectives, and suggest some research tasks that could enable researchers to develop well-informed theories and models for successful CLIL practices.

Keywords: CLIL, sociocultural theory, competency-based approach, ELT, action-oriented learning, task-based instruction, communicative language teaching

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## **Introduction**

Content and Language Integrated Learning (hereafter CLIL) has gained widespread acceptance in diverse education settings not only in Europe but also in other continents since its outset in the 1990s in Europe. However, despite its extensive reputation, CLIL has not yet attained a fully developed educational model. In this paper we attempt to highlight the importance of a coherent theoretical framework that is compatible with competency-based CLIL practices.

In the first part of the paper we review literature on CLIL practices and research done in various educational contexts. In this literature review section, we provide our readers with a comprehensive definition of CLIL and highlight the principles on which the approach is founded. In this literature review section, we also compare the key features of CLIL with the sociocultural (SC) theory and competency-based foreign language Teaching (CBLT), a contemporary foreign language teaching approach that CLIL is part of.

In the second part of this paper we refer to the research studies we have carried out on CLIL since 2012 in a French Polynesian primary school context. Drawing on the observations made during these studies, and relevant literature on the topic, we propose a socially mediated activity (SMA) framework for CLIL practices designed especially for young learners.

In the conclusion section, we discuss potential CLIL research perspectives and suggest some research tasks which could provide CLIL researchers with an informed understanding of CLIL issues.

## **What is CLIL?**

CLIL is an educational approach that uses a language other than the learners' L1 to teach a school subject. The term CLIL was coined by a group of language experts and researchers who participated in the bilingual/multilingual education movement prompted by the European Commission in the late 90s (see European Commission publications 1995, 2003, 2008; Eurydice Network 2006). CLIL has a dual educational focus with the aim of developing language skills and disciplinary content knowledge. Alongside these two general objectives CLIL also supports a range of additional objectives such as: "...cultural awareness, cognitive advantages, deeper content learning, internalization, self-confidence, motivation, pluriliteracy, learner autonomy, and others." (Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2013 p. 547). For benefits of CLIL see Lasagabaster (2008) and Várkuti (2012 ). The primary features of CLIL can be summarized as follows:

- CLIL has a dual educational focus with an objective of helping learners acquire both language skills and disciplinary content knowledge.
- CLIL implementations do not exclusively focus on language or academic skills but also aim to develop cognitive and general life skills which learners can transfer and use in similar situations.
- CLIL approach requires efficient use of instructional techniques to support both language and disciplinary content learning.

- CLIL practices aim at providing learners with a naturalistic learning environment that could enable authentic language use.

CLIL bears close similarities with other L2 education approaches, and is often confused with content-based instruction (CBI) and immersion programs (French immersion), which are widely used in North American contexts. Although CBI is used in diverse foreign language settings around the world, the approach was originally conceived: a) to give extra support to non-native university students on the L2, which is used as the medium of instruction at the university they attend to (Sheltered Model); b) or to prepare children (foreign pupils or immigrant children) for mainstreaming (Adjunct Model) (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Immersion programs on the other hand have been implemented in bilingual educational contexts in which learners' second language (L2) is used as the medium of classroom instruction (see Lasagabaster, 2009 for similarities and differences between CLIL and immersion programs).

For the last decade, the significant growth in the number of CLIL implementations in diverse educational settings across continents has generated networks of information-sharing opportunities. This increase in CLIL activities and transnational interaction in both professional and research planes contributed to the improvement of practical and pedagogical CLIL issues (see Dalton-Puffer & Smit 2013). These dynamic activity networks have encouraged CLIL practitioners to reflect on their teaching and collaborate with other stakeholders and researchers about their experiences. The setbacks encountered by CLIL practitioners and the outcomes of classroom-based case studies have provided the CLIL community with invaluable practical information and helped them to maintain an up-to-date research agenda (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh 2010).

For the last decade various studies have investigated CLIL practices in some EU states and other countries. The areas researches have looked into in these CLIL studies can be summarized as follows:

- Several CLIL research studies attempted to compare the learning outcomes obtained from CLIL practices with regular non-content foreign language classes, especially in terms of foreign language learning achievement (e.g. Järvinen, 2010; Llinares & Whittaker, 2010; Lorenzo & Moore, 2010; Yamano, 2013).
- CLIL practices were also compared with subject lessons and examined in terms of disciplinary content and language learning outcomes (Gabillon & Ailincăi 2013).
- Some research studies attempted to identify differences between weak and strong versions of CLIL practices as regards their efficacy (Ikeda, 2013).
- Some other studies examined interaction patterns (Dalton-Puffer & Smit, 2013), learner and teacher exchanges in CLIL classrooms (Gabillon & Ailincăi 2013, 2015b).
- A number of research activities also investigated learner and teacher needs (Ruiz-Garrido, & Fortanet Gómez, 2009).
- Although some research studies attempted to develop contextualized CLIL pedagogy or teaching methodologies (Vázquez & Gaustad, 2013), so far only

a few CLIL research studies attempted to establish a theoretical framework for CLIL (e.g. Gabillon & Ailincăi 2015b).

Despite the wide international acceptance of the CLIL approach, its theoretical frame is not clearly developed (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Lasagabaster (2008) stated that 2006 Eurydice Survey, which surveyed CLIL practices in 30 European countries, found out that different labels were used to describe the CLIL concept. Lasagabaster (2008) listed some of the terms which have been interchangeably used with the CLIL label as follows: content-based language instruction, content-enhanced teaching, integration of content and language, theme-based language teaching, content infused language teaching, foreign language medium instruction, bilingual integration of language and disciplines, learning through an additional language, foreign languages across the curriculum, or learning with languages, and so forth (Lasagabaster 2008 p. 32).

In short, CLIL practices employ diverse instructional implementations depending on the institutional expectations, curriculum options, teachers' pedagogical orientations, learners' age and language levels and so forth. Often these variations in the implementation of CLIL practices are described as different models. For instance Ball (2009) situated CLIL practices within the field of bilingual education and presented them on a continuum as regards the changing degree of emphasis given on content-learning. He then labeled the opposing ends as 'strong version' (complete immersion programs) and 'weak version' (language classes with focus on content) of CLIL (Ball, 2009, Ikeda, 2013) (see Figure 1. for the continuum proposed by Ball, 2009).

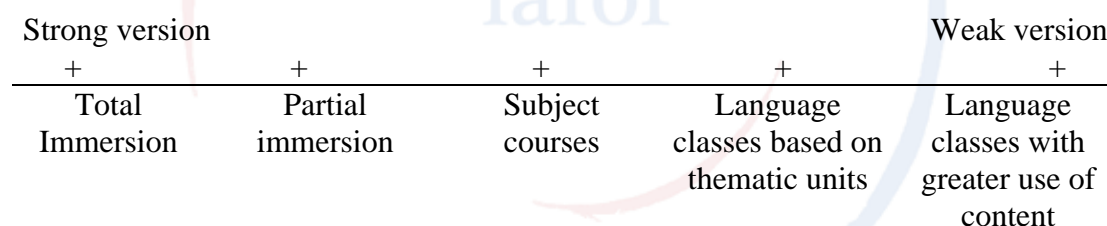


Figure 1: CLIL models described by Ball (2009)

Coyle (2005) also viewed different CLIL implementations as distinct models and interpreted these variations in CLIL implementations as 'the flexibility of CLIL'. She stated that CLIL employs a flexible context-specific approach in which contextual factors influence the development of different CLIL models. She maintained that this flexibility in CLIL implementation in return impacts the learning focus and the outcomes. Coyle (2005) labeled different CLIL models as follows:

- Subject/topic syllabus: This approach involves teaching a subject in the target language to explore the subject from a different perspective (e.g. Geography through the medium of an L2).
- Cross curricular projects: This approach requires both language teachers and subject teachers to plan together to teach different aspects of the same topic.
- Content/theme-based approach: This approach is based on a comparative study of a theme to see the difference of the same concept in different countries/cultures (e.g. the concept of home in an African country compared to a western country).



- Integrated curriculum: This approach involves re-conceptualization of the curriculum in an integrated way. In a CLIL class the learners might study a concept in a foreign language from different perspectives (e.g. 'water' can be investigated from scientific, geographical, historical perspectives etc.).
- Project-based approach: In project based learning identical topics (e.g. global warming) are studied by learners in different countries and the outcomes of the research projects can be compared by the learners.

Coyle's (2005) topic or project planning framework '4Cs curriculum' is one of the frameworks which has received wide acceptance by CLIL practitioners. This practical framework contains four guiding principles upon which teachers can build a CLIL program. Coyle's (2005) 4 Cs curriculum framework promises to ensure the quality in terms of guidance for: a) content: progression in knowledge and skills; b) communication: interaction and language use for learning; c) cognition: cognitive engagement, thinking and understanding; and d) culture: self and other awareness/citizenship. However, although this framework provides some practical guidance concerning CLIL implementation, it lacks a coherent theoretical framework that points to the key pedagogical issues specific to CLIL.

In order to provide teachers with some help, a number of practical guidelines have been proposed by experts. However, many of these guidelines answer only certain practical survival needs rather than providing teachers with deeper understanding of pertinent pedagogical issues. In brief, not having sufficient pedagogical guidance and a clear theoretical framework causes many CLIL teachers to set out their CLIL task with insufficient professional knowledge. The majority of these CLIL practitioners use curricular guidelines, institutional/ educational policies, and pragmatic pedagogies to guide them in their CLIL experience without having clear understanding of the underlying principles on which CLIL is based. Pavon Vazquez and Rubio's study indicated that not having a comprehensible pedagogical and theoretical framework might result in pedagogical misperceptions and operational uncertainties in CLIL implementations (see Pavon Vazquez & Rubio, 2010). Besides, integrating language learning with content-learning requires considerable pedagogical and procedural changes in the way the teachers teach. In order not to cause teachers to feel ill-equipped and uncertain in their teaching, these pedagogical and operational differences need to be explained clearly. Thus theoretical assumptions and pedagogical issues are recommended to be elucidated from the beginning.

CLIL belongs to a family of foreign language approaches which are grouped under Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT). Communicative language teaching (CLT), action-based/oriented approach (ABA or AOA), task-based instruction (TBI) and project-based learning (PBL) are the other contemporary approaches, which belong to the same group (Adler & Milne, 1997; Lier, 2007) (See Figure 2). From the CBLT perspective successful language performance and skill acquisition depend upon repeated opportunities of practice (Richards & Rogers 2014). This group of foreign language learning approaches are recommended by Council of Europe publications such as the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for Languages (CEFR Council of Europe, 2001, see also Richards & Rodgers, 2014). The learning approaches, which are part of CBLT, are complementary to one another and consider foreign language learning as compiling skills (language, life, academic and cognitive skills) through integrating sets of behaviors that are learned through repeated practice.

### Competency-Based Approaches

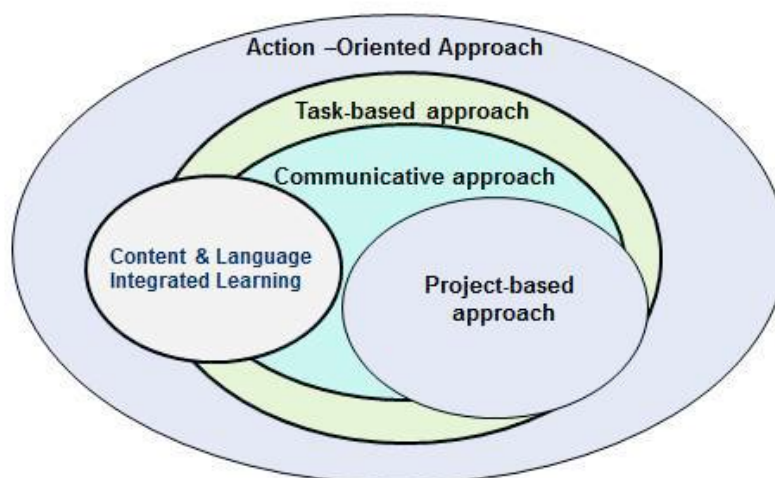


Figure 2: Competency-based approaches

CLT, ABA or AOA, TBI, PBL and CLIL are based on the following principles of foreign language learning (CEFR, Council of Europe, 2001):

- Learners' cognitive, emotional and volitional resources are taken into account.
- Learning takes place through tasks which are purposeful actions with a specific goal and are not exclusively language related.
- Language is used as a tool for learning.
- Learning activities are open ended and complex tasks that require a variety of knowledge and skills.
- Learners/language users are viewed as social agents (social actors) who are responsible for their own learning.
- The aim is to build in sets of skills (language, life, academic and cognitive skills) such as:
  - a) communicative competence which comprises linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences;
  - b) Individual and general skills such as knowledge (savoir), know-how skills (savoir faire), existential skills (savoir-être), and ability to learn (savoir-apprendre).

Auerbach (1986) summarized the key features of CBLT as follows:

- A focus on successful functioning in society: The major aim of learning is to build in skills that enable learners to cope with the demands of society autonomously.
- A focus on life skills: Auerbach (1986) describes this feature as '...rather than teaching language in isolation' teaching language using concrete tasks.
- Task or performance-centered orientation: This feature emphasizes the importance of what learners can do (overt behaviors) rather than ability to talk 'about language'.
- Modularized instruction: language teaching is broken into sub-objectives to allow both learners and teachers to get a clear sense of progress.

- Outcomes which are made explicit a priori: Outcomes are specified in terms of behavioral objectives and agreed upon by both by learners and teachers.
- Continuous and ongoing assessment; learners' skill levels are pre-and post-tested and they are expected to work until they master the skills in question.
- Demonstrated mastery of performance objectives: assessment is based on the ability to demonstrate pre-specified behaviors rather than measuring learners' language ability via paper-and-pencil tests.
- Individualized student-centered instruction: The curriculum is designed taking into account learners' prior knowledge and individual needs (Auerbach, 1986 pp. 414-415).

The key features of CBLT conform with the ideas conveyed within the following theories: a) SC theories of learning (learning through activity, tasks, mediation and scaffolding) (Brunner, 1978; Engeström, 1987; Lantolf, 2002, 2006; Leontiev, 1974, 1978; Wood, Brunner & Ross, 1976; Vygotsky 1978); b) interactionist theory of SLA (noticing hypothesis, negotiation of meaning, output hypothesis) (Long 1996; Swain, 1993, 2001); and c) skill and competency-based learning theories (Auerbach, 1986; Findley & Nathan, 1980).

### **Sociocultural (SC) perspective and CLIL**

For the last two decades there has been a growing interest in SC theories in foreign/second language learning. Foreign language specialists that take an SC perspective consider language learning as a social activity in which language operates as a tool for thought (Lantolf, 2002, 2006; Mitchell & Myles, 2004). According to Vygotsky (1978) optimal cognitive development is mediated through interacting with others and social artifacts during a social activity. In other words, from this SC perspective, L2 learning is viewed as a socially constructed activity which is mediated through face-to-face interaction and social artifacts. In this SC perspective 'mediation (Vygotsky, 1978)', 'scaffolding (Brunner et al, 1976), 'help' or 'guidance' is considered crucial. Vygotsky's ZPD refers to the difference between what a learner is capable of doing without guidance and what s/he is capable of doing with guidance. Mitchel and Myles (2004), relating to the concept of ZPD, explained that the learner could not obtain a successful outcome if s/he functions only on his/her own. They claim that the learner could only achieve the desired learning outcome if s/he receives scaffolded assistance.

The SC theory considers all human made material and objects as artifacts. Swain, Kinnear and Steinman (2011) claim that all artifacts, such as symbolic (e.g. language) and material (e.g. books) can become tools for mediation. Swain et al (2011) assert that all sort of human mental activity is mediated through individuals' interactions with these social artifacts (symbolic and material world) around them. The role of artifacts in mediating learning is clearly explained and theorized in the activity theory (AT), which was developed as an extension of Vygotsky's SC theory (Leontiev, 1974, 1978; Engeström, 1987).

Learning with the help of mediation, social artifacts, collaboration, and real life tasks in naturalistic learning environments constitutes the core elements of SC theories of learning, CBLT and CLIL. Table 1 provides a summary of the key features shared by SC theories, CBL, and CLIL (see Table 1).

	<b>SC perspective</b>	<b>CBLT</b>	<b>CLIL</b>
<b>Learning</b>	Social activity Through the use of social artifacts  Compilation of life-skills Interpersonal & intrapersonal Through mediation/ scaffolding	Real-life/social activity Through the use of social artifacts  Compilation of life/academic skills Social & Individual/cognitive Through mediation/ scaffolding	Real-life/social activity Through the use of social artifacts  Compilation of life/academic skills Social & Individual/cognitive Through mediation/ scaffolding
<b>Language</b>	Social artefact/tool for mediation	Tool for learning & Objective of learning Authentic language use	Tool for learning & Objective of learning Authentic language use
<b>Learners</b>	Social agents	Social agents	Social agents
<b>Tasks</b>	Real-life Goal-directed Complex and open-ended	Real-life Goal-directed Complex and open-ended	Real-life Goal-directed Complex and open-ended
<b>Skills</b>	Social/cognitive	Social/cognitive	Social/cognitive
<b>Interaction</b>	Collaborative interaction with others and social artifacts	Face-to-face in pairs/groups Interaction with real life & learning materials	Face-to-face in pairs/groups Interaction with real life & learning materials

Table 1: Some common features shared by SC theories of learning, CBLT, and CLIL.

### CLIL studies carried out by the authors

We have been doing CLIL research since 2012, in a primary school context in French Polynesia (Gabillon & Ailincal, 2015a). The CLIL experience described in this paper is based on the principles of an SC framework and competency-based language teaching (Gabillon & Ailincal 2015b). In this paper we concisely describe two classroom-based experimental CLIL studies that we carried out in two public schools located in Tahiti, French Polynesia. Our CLIL experiments involved 9-10 year old elementary school pupils and the classes were composed of small groups of 10-11 children. These experimental sessions were short lessons of about 25-30 minutes in which English was used as the medium of instruction. The corpus/data for our studies were collected via observations and video recordings and discourse analysis was used as the major data analysis method. The classroom exchanges, which we recorded, were later transcribed and the data were then coded and analyzed focusing on the phenomenon that was investigated. The analyzed data were presented using both qualitative comprehensive methods and descriptive statistics (e.g. presentation of percentages, frequencies using histograms etc.).

Our first CLIL study took place between 2012 and 2013. The aim of our first experimental study was to: investigate if CLIL was possible with breakthrough level young learners; and to explore if there were observable differences between a CLIL science lesson (in L2 which was in English) and a regular science lesson (in L1 which was French).

The results obtained from this study indicated that CLIL is possible with beginner level young learners but required the use of: a) language simplifications; b) careful

scaffolding techniques that could enable gradual progression of teacher-learner mediated activity to peer-mediated activity patterns; c) naturalistic learning situations d) artifacts and gestures); and d) collaborative interaction which could enable lower affective filters.

Following the results obtained from our first study we designed a second study which investigated the role played by artifacts and gestures in socially mediated CLIL lessons with beginner level learners. Thus for this study we designed CLIL lessons that used socially mediated activity (SMA) designs to teach science lessons using science experiments. In these science experiments we aimed at creating naturalistic learning settings which could enable the use of sensory input (e.g. seeing, touching, smelling etc.). In this science laboratory setting we were able to make use of a variety of artifacts available for immediate use both by the learners and the teachers. During the study we observed that the use of artifacts enabled both the teachers and the learners to mediate learning and improve the length and the quality of the collaborative dialogue. The activities also provided the learners with hands-on experience and helped them to make meaning from direct experience which also supported both language and disciplinary content learning.

We analyzed the data gathered using discourse analysis. We split the coded data according to the data-segmenting model offered by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1998). We also applied Paul Grice's (Grice, Cole, & Morgan, 1975) conversational maxims to evaluate conversational quality of the exchanges. During the analysis, we examined the transcribed classroom discourse and video recordings as regards the quality of language and disciplinary content, the use and the role of extra-linguistic elements, and other observable social aspects of the exchanges used. Our data analysis clearly suggested that the use of an SMA framework: a) enabled the use of scaffolding via artifacts and gestures; b) extended the length of dialogues/classroom exchanges; and c) improved the quality of the exchanges.

The outcomes of this second study indicated that without the use of an SMA design, which enabled a naturalistic learning environment with the use of accessible artifacts, the majority of the exchanges would have been truncated exchanges with constant communication breaks. In these classroom tasks, which used an SMA framework, the learners were able to communicate in the target language and carry out the activities naturally despite their low level of English. This framework allowed the construction of new concepts using collective mediation (both teacher and learner) with the help of artifacts and gestures, and collaborative interaction.

### **Socially Mediated Activity (SMA) framework for CLIL**

In the light of the results obtained from our CLIL experiences we, recommend the use of an SMA framework for CLIL implementations which target young learners. The following table summarizes the principles that we used in our SMA framework (see Table 2):

<b>Socially Mediated Activity (SMA) Framework</b>	
<b>Collective mediation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMA paradigms view learning as an active and constructive process where learners collectively construct new information through collaborative interaction and joint attention</li> </ul>
<b>Joint attention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMA framework uses goal-directed activities which require learners to work together to fulfill tasks</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative interaction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMA framework encourages natural face-to-face pair/group interactions. This type of collaborative interaction uses language as a means to exchange information and construct knowledge</li> </ul>
<b>Social artifacts &amp; gestures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMA design enables the use of artifacts and gestures to mediate learning</li> </ul>
<b>Experiential learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMA framework provides learners with hands-on activities to enable learning through direct experience (e.g. laboratory experience, gardening etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Naturalistic learning environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMA framework allows learning to take place in naturalistic learning settings (e.g. laboratory experiments in labs, gardening in the garden etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>Active involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMA framework uses activities which necessitate each individual learner's active participation to complete tasks</li> </ul>

**Table 2:** Socially mediated activity (SMA) framework for CLIL practices designed for young learners

## Conclusion

Since January 2015 our CLIL project has become part of two larger projects which aim at investigating multilingual practices at French Polynesian primary schools. The first project involves the ensemble of French Polynesian primary schools and intends to build a corpus of classroom exchanges. Our part in this research project consists in gathering data from CLIL practices and regular English classrooms. The second project is an experimental project which will be launched in August 2015 and will involve experimenting with our SMA framework in a multilingual context using Tahitian or English as a medium for CLIL practices in a state primary school, in Tahiti.

CLIL practices which take place in diverse educational contexts have a great deal to reveal. In order to have a better understanding of CLIL practices researchers need to look into classroom exchanges. We believe that discourse analysis is an appropriate method to scrutinize and reflect upon events taking place in CLIL classes. Working with audio or video recordings of authentic classroom interactions; looking into verbal, non-verbal and other social aspects of classroom actions; using systematic methodological processes and careful discourse analysis methods, would enable researchers to develop well-informed theories and models to improve CLIL practices.

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**Contact email:** zehra.gabillon@upf.pf



*Integrated Skills: Grammar and Home Reading in a Legal English Class*

Elena Amochkina, Moscow State Lomonosov University, Russia

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**Abstract**

Grammar is traditionally taught as a separate block within the course of English. The result often is that the students successfully cope with grammatical drills and tests, but fail to use this perfectly drilled knowledge in speaking and writing activities, especially when discussing their professional topics and thus focusing on the content, rather than on the linguistic form. The roots of the problem seem to be in the disconnection of grammatical material with the content side. This paper aims to describe an experiment undertaken in a university class of English for law students where the discussion and practice of grammatical issues was based on the student's home reading materials. The new technique allowed to relate grammar material to the particular contexts and topics the students were dealing with in other parts of the course, to fill grammatical structures with the vocabulary they were mastering and gradually make those structures part of the students' own speech. The paper also provides specific examples of exercises and activities that were used in class and could be adapted to other language learning contexts.

Keywords: integrated skills, grammar, home reading, legal English

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The present paper concentrates on teaching English grammar as part of a course of English for specific and academic purposes, with a special focus on how to integrate grammatical competence of the students with perceptive and productive skills. It will also describe a methodological experiment conducted in several groups of law school students that study English as a compulsory part of their curriculum.

Although the main accent in this paper is made on teaching Legal English in a university setting, the teaching techniques and the types of activities that will be described, as well as the underlying principles, can be effectively adapted to a wide range of settings, from different areas of specialization for ESP students to different age groups and proficiency levels (pre-intermediate and higher).

Approaches to teaching grammar have long been the focus of attention and subject for much debate for language teaching practitioners and theorists. Thus, following the recent trend for purely communicative methods and task-based teaching, there has now been a return to the more traditional way of explicit and curriculum-based presentation and practice of grammatical material (Richards & Rogers, 2001; Walter, 2015). Moreover, several researchers have come to the conclusion that explicit knowledge of grammar proves to be a more sound base than implicit, that integrating grammar in a task is not necessary and does not lead to better linguistic performance (Spada & Tomita, 2010; Swan, 2005, 2006; Walter, 2015).

While these conclusions refer to language learning in general, some additional problems come to the fore when English for specific purposes is concerned. Several years' experience of teaching English grammar in groups of law school students has revealed an interesting paradox: when concentrating on grammatical issues the students make few mistakes in tests and exercises, they do show sound explicit knowledge of grammar (provided that they are normally diligent learners), but as soon as they switch to discussing their professional topics in English, which forms the greater part of their course, they seem to forget much of what they know about grammar. This concerns both the mistakes they make and the range of grammatical structures they try to use. So, here comes the question of contextual integration of grammar.

Whether drills-based or task-based, grammar is traditionally taught as a separate block within the course of English, partly because many of the popular and reliable grammar books that are usually used in class, are not subject-oriented and are intended for the broadest audience of language learners. The result often is that the students successfully cope with grammatical exercises and tests, but fail to use this perfectly drilled knowledge in speaking and writing activities, when it comes to their professional contexts. The roots of the problem seem to be in the disconnection of grammatical material with the content side. They simply don't see the link between what they discuss in grammar class and the material they deal with in other kinds of activities.

Hence the solution: where English for specific purposes is concerned, not only the illustrative material should preferably be taken from the same range of topics that the students are supposed to discuss, but also the extensive practice should be based on these

topics and, what is most important, integrated with perceptive and productive skills, speaking and writing in the first place, in the contexts and genres that the students are supposed to master.

In this respect, grammar-book drills and mere correcting and explaining mistakes when they occur in speech or writing are simply not enough. A kind of intermediate stage that proves to be effective here is specially elaborated for each class, 'custom-made' activities that enable grammar acquisition based on and integrated with specific-content-oriented materials.

Home reading in this perspective can provide plenty of textual material and potential activities to build on. The books should be chosen to reflect the students' professional sphere of interest and to provoke extensive discussion. Grammatical tasks may be made part of the discussion process and arranged according to the length of the chunks of speech expected from the student (from the shortest to the longest), so that grammatical models gradually become part of a phrase, of a short paragraph, a lengthy deliberation on a subject and finally - part of the students' active language.

In the experiment that is going to be described herein, this teaching strategy was used in several groups of first-year law school students who study English for two years as part of their curriculum. They had 6 hours of English per week and three different classes – Introduction to Legal English, Grammar and Home Reading and Lectures on the history of English-speaking countries, all the three taught by different teachers. Grammar and home reading were combined in one class, which facilitated the process of their integration. The students' proficiency levels ranged from low-intermediate to advanced – this allowed to use a broad variety of activities, while, on the other hand, the differences in the students' levels and background knowledge made the task of the teacher more challenging. The basic books used in the course were *Grammar and Vocabulary for Cambridge First* by Luke Prodromou (2012) and different novels about lawyers or law students by John Grisham (1991; 2010; 2011), Scott Turow (1997) and Brandt Goldstein (2006) – depending on the group's average proficiency level. The examples of activities mentioned in this paper were based on John Grisham's novel *The Firm* (1991).

The students were supposed to cover one unit from the grammar book and one or two chapters of reading each week and a large part of the activities in class were a combination of grammar practice with the discussion of the book content. As the course of grammar was remedial and most of the material was more or less familiar to the students, usually a brief presentation of the new topic by the teacher was followed by extensive practice. The drills from the grammar book would usually be assigned for homework, as they can easily be checked with the key and discussed only where problems occur.

Normally, the teacher would present a new topic using both the examples from the grammar book and the ones based on the book for home reading; ideally, the examples would be found in the recent chapters, read out and discussed. The context of current university life could also provide plenty of material to be used as additional examples.

This small modification to the otherwise traditional way of presenting grammatical issues can bring a considerable positive effect, because from the very first stage grammar is put in a familiar and relevant context, in which the students are supposed to use it and thus it turns from something abstract into something really tangible.

The tasks were arranged in a way that a grammatical structure would gradually become part of longer and longer chunks of the students' own speech, but particular strategies could vary from class to class depending on the topic and material under discussion.

Thus, for example, the practice of past tenses based on *The Firm* by J. Grisham (1991) began with drills like gap-filling or phrases for translation prepared by the teacher and based on the plot of the first two chapters. Then the students suggested similar phrases to each other in pairs or teams.

The next exercise was summarizing the chapters sentence by sentence: each student added one sentence to the summary and the next person had to continue. This allowed the students some flexibility in what they wanted to say; they had to think about the content and the grammatical form at the same time; this also provided the students with an incentive to listen to each other attentively – something that is really important in a big class, but often hard to achieve. This exercise can also be done in the form of a game to add some excitement to it – the students divide the chapters and summarize them in teams; each time somebody makes a mistake he is dropped out, the winners are the ones who stay in the game till the end.

The final activity consisted in writing a letter from Mitch or Abby (the main characters of *The Firm*) to their parents describing the events of the first chapters and using as many different past tense forms as possible. This can also be used as a final revision exercise for all tenses. The first chapters of Grisham's novel are full of events, they describe Mitch's final weeks at law school, job interviews and a visit to a law firm that was offering to hire him. The students were free to choose the events they wanted to mention, so there could be no two similar letters. The letters were then read out to the group or shared and corrected in pairs.

The practice of other grammatical topics was organized in a similar way. For instance, studying modal verbs, the students concentrated on the predictions about the development of the plot and made guesses about the activity of the strange law firm where the main character became an associate. Practicing conditionals, the students discussed different possibilities for the main character, who started to guess what the real work of the firm was about and how dangerous his own position was. They also made hypothesis about the things he could have done differently. This was done through questions and answers in pairs (like "What do you think would have happened, if Mitch and Abby had found the bugs in their house earlier?" – "They wouldn't have talked about their suspicions at home") and short narratives made orally in teams or individually in written form. Making hypothesis can be turned into a great fun if it is done in teams and each next speaker continues and develops the idea of the previous person.

The practice of reported speech began with a brainstorm or a team game in which the students had to remember as many different report verbs as they could. Then they discussed the shades of meaning and tried to use these verbs in contexts. The next task was to turn the dialogues from the current chapter of the book into reported speech trying to avoid the four most frequently used verbs – ‘say’, ‘tell’, ‘ask’ or ‘answer’ – often overused by the learners, but any other verbs or expressions that were suitable. The final task was to retell a chapter focusing on the details of the conversations (which were plenty in the novel), again trying to avoid the four basic report verbs or using each of them only once.

The result of the experiment was that being presented and practiced in this way, grammatical models started to associate with particular content, familiar and important to the students, and, consequently, their performance while speaking on these topics improved in terms of grammar.

This integrated approach to teaching grammar and home reading combines the “four strands”, that Paul Nation (2007) suggested should be present in any course, in each class - meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development, which are all linked by the same context. Grammar is thus integrated with content, which makes the transition from theory to speech much easier.

Although this paper focuses on a very narrow setting, the strategies and materials presented here can be adapted to a broad variety of teaching contexts, starting from different books selected for home reading and finishing with different areas of professional interests of the students, different ages and levels of proficiency.

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**Contact email:** whamsound@gmail.com



***Process-Genre Approach to Teaching Writing University Foundation Course Students in Pakistan***

Abrar Ajmal, Forman Christian College, Pakistan

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**Abstract**

This paper is written to talk about the importance of teaching and learning English writing through process-genre approach in the context of Pakistan. English as Second Language students in Pakistan are not fully aware of the process of writing and purpose of writing due to the prevalent old-fashioned product approach; therefore, it has not achieved its intended outcomes highlighted in many studies. In my opinion, students as well as teachers are not familiar with new pedagogical research in the field of writing that has undergone many major shifts over many decades. Purpose of this paper is to investigate the effects of teaching writing through process-genre approach on the writing performance among English as second Language (ESL) university foundation course students in Pakistan and students' and teachers' perception and consciousness about a comparatively new approach to teach writing in the context. The results obtained by using Classroom Action Research methodology, indicate that the process-genre approach is conducive for improving students' writing ability and both students and teachers interviews responses support the implementation of the approach.

Key words: Process-genre approach, ESL writing pedagogy

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## Introduction

Writing is undoubtedly an important component of learning English as a second language and should be given more concentration in ESL classes in order to organize learners to deal with the communicative needs of real life situations, which are embedded in aims and objectives of university academic courses. The communicative approach has been introduced for ESL students in universities on all sides for the last few years and the problems for students are there, when they enter university as they do not have the required abilities and skills to deal with writing courses. In fact, great importance is given to writing skill at universities, keeping in view the real life long leanings; therefore, effectual teaching writing approaches need to be focused on with the intention to help those learners, who are not ready to put together an appropriate piece of academic writing in order to meet the standards of universities.

Many students come to the ESL writing courses with different levels of language proficiency and different learning styles. ESL students particularly in Pakistan need to meet the standards for admission and continuation of their university studies particularly in writing English Language. As a matter of fact, in Pakistan school and college curricula have a long history of traditional language teaching methods like many other ESL contexts where students are taught their second language chiefly through memorization grammatical formations and secluded expressions and such prevalent teacher-centered setting actually dispirits thought process and originality. Teaching academic writing to ESL learners at the university level can be a complicated task because some teachers and large number of students are not entirely committed to process and genre a comparatively new approaches in the context. These conditions are not much different for other ESL/EFL contexts, the role and place of English Language especially in academic settings (Evans 2000).

I personally believe that ESL students, like in Pakistan write without fully understanding the process of writing and purpose of writing. Despite a much enriched curriculum with very effective aims and objectives and lots of planning efforts, a considerable number of students is nevertheless unable to write on their own. The old-fashioned product approach, however, has not achieved its intended outcomes proved in many studies. In my opinion, students as well as teachers are not familiar with new pedagogical research in the field of writing that has undergone many major shifts over many decades e.g. from Product to Process and Genre approach. Personally, having both learnt and taught English writing as an ESL student and teacher, I think that the product approach should gradually be replaced with some new concept a combined process-genre approach, which seems would prove more conducive and helpful for ESL university foundation year students.

The prevalent teaching writing theories and practices in Pakistan, however I always feel, here something is missing with reference to teach writing in my context particular and ESL context in general. Therefore, this research has two basic aims:

- To find out the improvement in students' academic writing performance with the help of process-genre approach.
- To investigate students' and teachers' responses and perception of the introduction and implementation of the process-genre approach to teach academic writing.

## Literature Review

There are several different and overlapping approaches to teaching ESL writing students. However, according to Raims (1983) “there is no single answer to the question of teaching writing in ESL classes”. ESL writing pedagogy has shifted its focus in different times mainly due to the impact of L1 writing pedagogy and the results of different studies in the field (Ferris and Hedgcock 2005). The different approaches of writing instruction for the development of writing ability among ESL students are mainly divided in three major divisions: text-oriented, writer-oriented and reader-oriented (Myhill and Locke 2007).

Despite all new trends and academic requirements, in my context, the teaching of writing still emphasizes the final written product, a product in which aspects of usage and correct form are focused on. Furthermore, many instructors following the product approach believe that writers should know what they are going to write. Model texts are therefore, read and memorized in the writing classrooms to enable students to pass their exams.

Teaching writing from a process perspective is a complex, recurrent process or set of behaviors. Learning to write entails developing an efficient and effective composing process. The writer is at the center of a process, engaged in the discovering and expression of meanings, focusing on content and ideas. The composing process was seen as a “non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (Zamel, 1983:165). In essence, composing means the expression of ideas, conveying meaning or, more concisely, composing means thinking (Raimes, 1983: 261).

In general, approaches have focused on the constraints of structure and substance that have to be obeyed when a writer is concerned with the social purpose of a text. This has come to be associated with the notion of the ‘Genre approach’ where “a genre comprises a class of communicative events, the numbers of which share some set of communicative purpose” (Swales, 1990 cited in Tribble, 1996).

Process approach has good many features that need to be highlighted for clear writing pedagogy to achieve the communicative ability. And if we see both process and genre approaches together, again it looks quite practical to learn and acquire the processes of different genres (Flowerdew, 1993, Badger and White, 2000). Though, it is not easy to judge the importance and highlighted features or to focus on some particular genres, however students’ need and appropriateness should be considered while proposing any suitable ESL writing pedagogy (Gao, 2007).

Process-genre combined approach; is basically a combination of models both from the process-based approach and the genre-based approach seems more useful to put up a text in a familiar genre (Kim & Kim, 2005). According to Raimes (1983, 266), the focus of writing courses should be on “join form and content, ideas and organization, syntax and meaning, writing and revising, and above all, writing and thinking.” Writing instructions should be connected to real-life situations, inspiring students and organize them to compose for extensive audiences (Badger & White, 2000, Nordin & Mohammad, 2007).

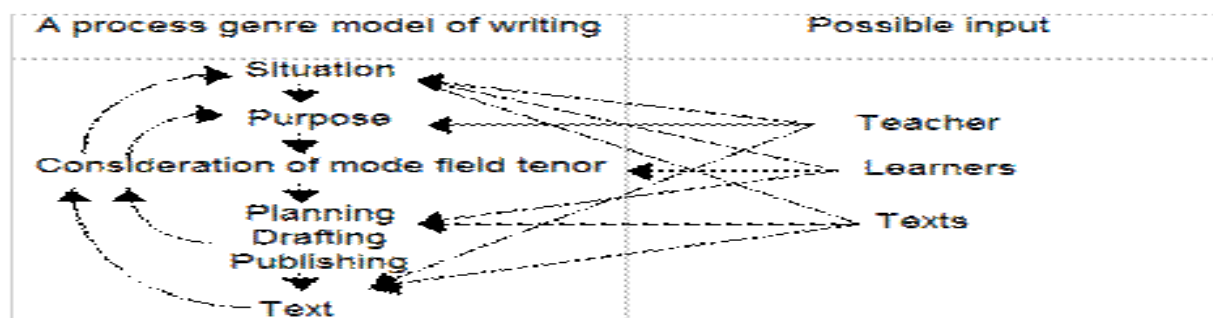


Figure 1: A Process Genre-Approach to Teaching Writing (adapted from Badger and White, 2000:159)

## Methodology

In this study Class room action research (CAR) is used and the participants are from Forman Christian College (A Chartered University), Lahore. In three terms gradually the process-genre approach to teaching writing was introduced and implemented. Thirty (30) university foundation year (Class XII age 17-18 Years) students and two English Language Teachers helped the researcher to carry out this study. It was also ensured that teachers and students were well introduced and envisioned the instructional process for the process-genre approach, as separated into the subsequent six stages: '(1) grounding, (2) modeling, (3) planning, (4) joint constructing, (5) independent constructing (6) revising, according to Badger and White (2000).

In order to collect data, research instruments are used including observation sheet, essay and paragraph writing tests and interviews. Observation sheet helped to record classroom activities during the process of introducing and using process-genre approach to teach writing, whereas, the terminal essay and paragraph writing tests and both the learners and teachers who implemented the approach were interviewed at the end.

In this study, both paradigms qualitative and quantitative data analysis were used. Qualitative data were collected from the observation sheet and students' and teachers' answer to interview open-ended questions, whereas, quantitative data were collected from students' essay and paragraph writing tests scores and answers to close-ended questions of interviews from both students and teachers. The result of writing test was assessed using scoring rubric developed by the Examination Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Lahore.

## Data Presentation and Discussion

In the first term spanning two months, the process-genre approach of teaching writing was introduced and implemented. At the end of the first term mean score of writing tests was 55, with 72.5 as the highest score and 44 as the lowest score. It means 54% students got B grade and above (B grade is awarded on achieving 83% as per college assessment framework). Teaching writing was contained in the second term, test results reflected at the end of term as 78% students got B grade and above.

In the final term, the mean score was 83.6 with 91 as the highest and 73 as the lowest score and 84% students got B grade and above. It means that there was a continuous improvement in students' writing scores in writing tests with the help of process-genre approach to teach writing. There is statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the students writing tests over three terms. The results of this study established an improvement in students writing scores as similar to the study results by Kim and Kim (2005) and Hilda (2013).

If we take stock the students and teachers' responses to the introduction and implementation of process- genre approach to teach writing, was largely positive. In the interview students' made remarks in favor of this approach as really helpful in better understanding of the writing process along with purpose and context of writing. Furthermore, students thought the approach to be was helpful in improving their writing ability as compared to the traditional product- based approach.

If we see from teachers' perspective this approach of teaching writing give more importance as teacher has many important roles to play: audience, assistant, evaluator and examiner (Nordin & Mohammad, 2007 ) In this study, it also established from the students views that that teacher's feedback during the writing process is helpful in giving them clear idea of the entire writing process along with its context and purpose especially in planning , drafting and later revision stages of writing process. Furthermore, peer feedback is also prove positive by using this approach to write academic essays as found in the study carried out by Gao (2007).

In my view, this combination of process-genre is a comparatively new way of looking by merging of approaches in my context. This example of amalgamation of the process and genre approaches, which Badger and White (2000) have given name the 'process-genre approach'. It is to facilitate students and teachers to learn the association between function and form for a particular genre including the demand of writing skills for coming academic years.

## **Conclusion**

Learning and teaching to write in a second language is a challenging task. It becomes more dispiriting when students are producing writing products only by memorization and imitating model texts to pass writing exams. Accordingly, the development of the writing ability among students to use the language in real life situations is quite limited, as observed in the Pakistani context. In order to overcome this problem, ESL writing teachers need to play their role by implementing the process-genre approach of teaching writing during university foundation year. The objective of the introduction and implementation of this devised teaching writing approach together with the improved curricula would be to strengthen the student writers with their developed writing ability to write different genres for different purposes in diverse contexts. We must keep in mind that students are not to prepare for exams only. The process-genre approach to writing allows students to be familiar with the process of writing for different purposes to create a written text which should be less stressful, more applicable and motivated.

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**Contact email: [abrarajmal@fccollege.edu.pk](mailto:abrarajmal@fccollege.edu.pk)**

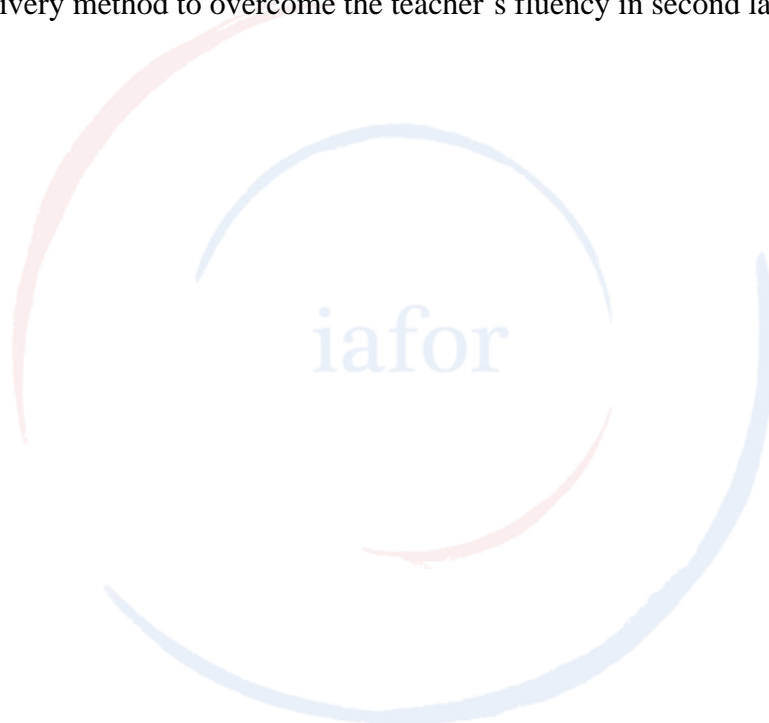
*Learning and Teaching Experiences of Second Language in Sri- Lankan Schools*

Ulaganathar Navaratnam, National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka

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**Abstract**

This paper studies the methodology applied to upskill non-language specialist teachers to learn and deliver second language lessons in Sri Lankan schools. The implementation approach of this project provides insight in to the benefits of incorporating second language specific learning theories and also paves way to a different delivery method to overcome the teacher's fluency in second language.



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## **Introduction**

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic country and understanding the second language is considered as a critical success factor for improving social cohesion (Jayaweera, 1999). Tamil is the second language for Sinhalese and likewise Sinhala is the second language for Tamils (Jayaweera, 1999). Education for Social Cohesion (ESC)<sup>1</sup> is a programme implemented by the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education in collaboration with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to promote teacher competencies in Sinhala and Tamil as second languages.

A pilot programme was implemented among 200 secondary schools across five provinces in Sri Lanka. The implementation involved 60 “train the trainers” and 300 teachers who have been educated in second language content and teaching methodologies, since 2010.

Difficulty in finding qualified teachers to implement second language curriculum underpins the framework used in this pilot programme to develop second language teacher competencies to non-specialist language teachers.

The implementation framework incorporated concepts of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), meaningful learning (Ausubel, 1963, 1978), different learning styles (Gardner, 2006) and scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) along with previous experiences in teaching and learning second languages within GIZ.

The first section of this paper examines the purpose of the Education for the Social Cohesion (ESC) program to understand the second language teaching requirements in Sri Lanka. The implementation approach deployed to meet the teaching requirements is reviewed next with special consideration to teaching second language to non-language specialist teachers with exclusive fluency in the first language. This is followed by a closer examination of how the learning and teaching principles were customised to address the needs of the learners. Finally, the feedback from the ESC pilot is reviewed to evaluate the impact on the learning process.

## **Background to the Education for the Social Cohesion (ESC) Program**

Second language has been taught at schools from grade one (age 5) to GCE ordinary level (age 16). In the primary schools, students are expected to learn limited number of words in the form of transliteration. At the secondary level, from grade six to nine, it is a core subject and two lessons (40 mins each) are allocated per week, which is equivalent to 5% of the total learning time for this subject. Second language is taken as an elective among grade ten and eleven<sup>2</sup>.

A study carried out on the exit level competencies in second language education after the completion of primary education (NIE, 2014) showed learners were not competent in listening and speaking in the target language at the basic level (NIE, 2014).

The ESC project initiation work identified lack of second language teachers, mismatch in curriculum and text book, lack of second language teacher education program, deficit of second language trainers and less focus on oral communication as opportunities for improvement (ESC, 2010). The supply shortfall of second language



teachers in the school system was recognised as a key challenge to the delivery of this programme.

For example, first language lessons in class rooms start with script writing to reading letters and words, because the learners have language fluency (Birch, 1992) before they begin school. Deploying the same approach to second language lessons in the absence of language fluency is unlikely to result in meaningful learning (Oxford et al, 1991) yet the use of methods such as grammar translation is still prevalent in the second language teaching (Karshen, 1985).

Similarly, learning aids such as text books need to cater to the student's maturity level, previous learning experience and learning styles to achieve the required competency levels (Griggs and Dunn, 1984, Oxford et al, 1991). During the project initiation work, the difficulty levels of the second language text books were identified to be in par with the first language text books.

Whilst the ESC project has taken several initiatives to address these shortcomings, this paper will focus on the approach taken to upskill the non- language specialist teachers.

### **ESC Implementation Approach**

To address the shortfall of teachers during the pilot project phase, 300 hundred teachers were selected who had no skills or aptitude in teaching the second language in the school system. These teachers were upskilled with exposure to basic language competencies and teaching and learning methodologies in second language. The methods used in this program have goals to ensure that learners:

- Enjoy learning the second language (Sinhala and Tamil)
- Appreciate the benefits of communicating in Sinhala and Tamil (as a second language)
- Able to communicate in a simple way

The key aim of promoting second language was to develop language skills among the selected teachers but majority of these teachers did not have knowledge of the target languages. Therefore the ESC focused not only in educating the competencies and methodologies of the second language education but also adopted an approach to teaching the target language to this cohort in a simple way to assist delivery in the class room. The teaching methodology uses minimal first language (Atkinson, 1987) and leverages on the benefits of the teachers understanding the learning anxieties (Oxford, 1999) of the students as they themselves have gone through the second language learning process (Birch, 1992).

### **Learning and Teaching principles**

During the implementation process, the same second language learning principles were provided to the teachers. Therefore they were recipients as well as delivery agents of the methodology to the class room. The implementation process leverages on concepts of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), meaningful learning (Ausubel,

1963, 1978), different learning styles (Gardner, 2006) and scaffolding (Vygotsky, 1978) to deliver the learning process.

In this program the “experience learning theory” (Kolb, 1984) is used to introduce the basic concepts of language learning. In essence, experience means that the learner will learn the concepts in an authentic situation. For example, you bring an umbrella and show it to the learner, and say this is an “umbrella”. The learner will visualize the umbrella and pronounce the sound as “umbrella”. At this point, the learner observes and sees the physical product and brands it as an umbrella. In this way, several characteristics of an “umbrella” are introduced to the learner.

When the teacher pronounces a characteristic of an umbrella, the learner identifies the respective word with the characteristic of an umbrella. In this way, the learner can retain the sound in the long term memory. By using this method, at the primary level, it is possible for us retain the sound in the long term memory. At this stage, the phonological sound is used as stimuli and the corresponding object characteristic or component becomes the response.

Similarly experience is used as the vehicle to introduce abstract and concrete concepts. For example, if you want to learn to say the taste of a candy in the second language, you get the learner to taste a candy and say, it is sweet. In this example, candy is concrete and the taste is abstract. In the same way several concrete and abstract concepts are introduced.

In our facilitation, the activities are not limited to the classroom situation (Karshen, 1985). The learners play, dance and sing to learn the language because learning is gaining experiences (Ingram, 1989). In our model, the learners gain a lot of experience in the target language. At the beginning, the learners are given the opportunity to gain experiences in real world situations (Ingram, 1989). For example, it is possible to introduce an action verb with the action in the target language. This type of monolingual approach (Brown, 1994) encourages target language development and is considered very useful in practice to upskill the non-language specialist teachers in the second language. This approach is very practical given the cohort are limited in target language knowledge.

Bilingual approach (Atkinson, 1987) was also used to complement the learning process by adopting the below approach. When learning a second language, if the learners see the objects, they place the second language sound with first language sound. However, the learners are not expected to pronounce the first language but pronounce the second language. The ESC adopted this philosophy when training the train the trainers as well as the teachers.

Meaning and context is pivotal for second language acquisition (Ausubel, 1963; 1968). Meaningful learning has two basic concepts, one is retention and the other is application. During our intervention in the second language context, anything the learner learns need to have meaning (Ausubel, 1963; 1968).

In the human learning process it is very difficult to apply a linear and standardised process (i.e. Input + Process = Output). Humans are varied and their ways of learning is different (Oxford et al, 1990). Therefore, the facilitator should be aware of the

different type of learning styles to meet the learners' needs. The ESC applied different learning styles when conducting second language workshops.

Developing the second language competencies among learners play a major role in the teaching and learning process. ESC applied the scaffolding principles (Vygotsky, 1978) for developing activities. These principles were applied horizontally and vertically to pave way for step by step acquisition of second language skills.

Below is an example Scaffolding methodology (Vygotsky, 1978) application. You use a bottle to introduce this activity for listening and speaking

- Show bottle
- And say this is a bottle

At the beginning, learners have zero knowledge in the target language. The facilitator step by step introduces listening and speaking. After the introduction, learners are expected to practice in pairs or in groups to develop listening and speaking competencies. The sequence of the introduction is important because without developing the listening competency, it is not possible to ask, what is this? But if the learner knows that it is a bottle, then if you ask the learner what is this? Then the learner is able to say that it is a bottle.

The formulation of tasks is very crucial in the human learning process. The tasks should be challenging to the learners. In a classroom situation, it is not easy to develop a task to match all the individual learning styles. The tasks for this pilot were developed to match learners' skill levels by assessing their entry level competencies. In addition to this, all four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) are taken into account in developing activities.

### **ESC Pilot Feedback**

This section provides a summary of feedback received from Train the trainers, Trainers and Teacher Learners.

#### **Feedback from Train the Trainers**

Train the trainer candidates were selected from a resource pool identified by the relevant provincial ministry of education. These candidates already had a good standard of knowledge in the target language. With the help of these train the trainers, the training materials were developed and teachers trained in the target language. Target language was the first language for some of the train the trainers, whilst for others it was the second language. Having trainers with target language being their second language provided additional insight to second language learning experience (Birch, 1992).

Second language competencies could not be achieved in a day or two, learning a language is a lifelong process. These trainers have been working on the ESC programme for more than five years.

Every three months, they meet and reflect previous workshop experiences and create strategies for improving the learner experience.

### **Feedback from the Trainer**

Second language trainers served as teachers and advisors in the system. Their experience has helped them differentiate the first and second languages, the need to accommodate different learning styles, how learning takes place, adult and student learning (pedagogy and Andragogy) styles, different type of games to apply in the teaching learning process and understand different types of learners and evaluation methods.

- Innovative methods are applied in the training programs.
- Listening and speaking are given importance in the training.
- Know what the teachers need
- Real-time feedback is used to tailor learning methodology and learning materials
- Use activity based learning principle
- Use different types of indoor and outdoor games

### **Feedback from Teacher Learners**

ESC has trained nearly 300 teachers, who are continuously taking part in the second language teacher training workshops. They have the content knowledge as well as pedagogical knowledge of the second language with the expectation to implement the activities at the classroom.

- Children show a keen interest in speaking the target language.
- Activity oriented teaching make us and children to be creative
- Updated our knowledge and experience through trainings
- Realise how language skills could be developed in children
- Cross application of methods in other subject areas
- Listening and speaking should be used as a method for other non-language teaching
- Conducting training with Sinhala and Tamil language teachers help us to learn other languages informally

An exit test was carried out on candidates completing ESC pilot. The pre and post test score comparison showed a statistically significant improvement as a result of the training programme.

### **Conclusion**

The ESC pilot used the theoretical learning concepts to develop a customised framework to upskill non-language specialist teachers where majority of them do not know the second language. This demanded an innovative approach where target language had to be delivered with heavy reliance on meaningful experience. Whilst the feedback received from the pilot is encouraging, more in-depth research is required to understand if this approach is applicable in other second language training programs.

## Foot Notes

1 The Education for the Social Cohesion program (ESC) is a collaborative program of the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education,(MOE) and the German International Cooperation( GIZ) to achieve the long term program objective of education and psycho social care to enable school and society to live together in a multilingual and multicultural society. To achieve this program objectives, the ESC facilitate technically and financially with the stake holders who are directly and indirectly involved in developing social cohesion of the school system. Under this program, there are four projects initiated to achieve the long term goal of the social cohesion. The four projects are Peace and value education, second language education, psycho social care and school safety education.

2 There is no text book at the primary level but in the levels above there are text books for each grade.



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*Pecha Kucha: How to Improve Students' Presentation Skills*

Rachel Robinson, University of Leeds, UK

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**Abstract**

Giving a presentation can often be one of the more challenging tasks asked of our students and even the most confident of speakers can sometimes give a presentation which lacks clarity and focus. Add to this the additional challenge of presenting in a language other than their mother tongue and some students may well begin to feel overwhelmed. This can lead to a tendency to over prepare, with students adopting a number of strategies such as making detailed notes which can ultimately distract them when they present, learning (parts of) their presentation by heart, and ultimately focusing almost completely on the content of their presentation as they try to include as much information as possible. Presentation delivery often comes as an afterthought with little consideration being given to pace and timing. Recent research has suggested that by using the Pecha Kucha presentation format with students, many of these issues can be addressed. Introducing students to this format on EAP (English for Academic Purposes) courses helps to raise their awareness of the importance of timing, delivery and visual aids when giving a presentation. In addition, it can help to build confidence, particularly with non-native speakers of English preparing to present in another language. It would also appear to be a more engaging style of presentation for the audience. This presentation will begin with a Pecha Kucha outlining some of the experiences of both staff and students on pre-sessional EAP courses who have adopted this presentation approach at a UK university.

Keywords: pecha kucha, visual, communication, presentation

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## Introduction

Pecha Kucha, or the art of giving a concise presentation, (Klein & Dytham, 2015) is the name given to a unique presentation style which was introduced in 2003 by Astrid Klein and Mark Dytham, two Danish designers based in Tokyo at that time. They wished to breathe life into the rather long-winded, time-consuming presentations which were common in the design world and as a result they came up with a much shorter, more dynamic style which helped to make presentations more engaging and more memorable. Pecha Kucha presentations are sometimes referred to as 20 x 20 presentations because they follow a strict format of 20 images with 20 seconds for each slide, so that the presentation will take exactly 6 minutes and 40 seconds. The slides are visual rather than text-based and are set to proceed automatically, making it impossible for the presenter to over-run and removing the pressure on the presenter of deciding when to move to the next slide. Over the last few years, the technique has become more widespread and the fields of business and education in particular are taking advantage of this increasingly popular delivery style.

When international students come to the UK they are faced with many challenges before they are accepted into the academic community in which they wish to study. They must cope with not only language skills but also academic skills in order to be successful in their chosen discipline and as such, many overseas students follow courses in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) before commencing their university studies. Such courses typically entail learning and practising techniques for reading academic texts, analysing different genres, researching, planning and writing academic essays and employing critical thinking skills. They must also be able to participate in seminars and discussions in English and collaborate with their peers to give group presentations as well as individual presentations. All this is done in a foreign language. Presenting in particular is often considered to be stressful even in one's own native language, but when the task requires the presentation to be given in a foreign language, this anxiety is magnified.

## Drawbacks of Traditional Presentation Classes

On many EAP courses, the presentation skills component will often include input and discussion in class around such questions as what makes a good presentation? *What is the best way to prepare for a presentation? How should a presentation be structured?* and *What kind of information should be included?* Students seem to be aware of the fact that they need a clear introduction, body and conclusion, they know that they will be graded on such criteria as language, content and structure, yet still it is a challenge for them to be able to turn this knowledge of techniques and grading criteria into practical knowhow by producing a presentation which reflects their true ability. One of the reasons why this may be so is that students often attribute a greater weighting to the content of a presentation than to the actual delivery of the presentation and allocate their preparation time accordingly. That is, as students learn in other classes about how to research academic articles, the importance of academic style and the use of topic-specific vocabulary, they wish to gather as much information as possible in the belief that the more data and information they have, the better the presentation will be. Less thought is given to such issues as selection of key information or pronunciation practice of the topic-specific vocabulary they so desperately wish to incorporate. Therefore, students' presentation slides often have a tendency towards

information overload. As a result, final presentations may be deeply researched but poorly constructed, minimally practised and difficult for the audience to follow. Even when students have been given a time limit, their presentations often run over their allotted time, which is extremely problematic for grading purposes as teachers have a tight schedule to follow if they are to watch and grade students fairly. Problems with timing can lead to a situation where one student who has met the timing requirement feels dissatisfied if other students are allowed to over-run and appear to have been given an advantage of more time, while those whose presentations are cut short by teachers are left feeling penalized because they were not allowed to finish. By using a Pecha Kucha presentation format, many of these issues can be addressed and the very process of producing a Pecha Kucha will in fact focus on the skills students wish to hone, such as time management.

### **Making Presentation Practice Interesting**

One way of approaching this is to integrate presentations into other classes, so the aim is not simply to give a stand-alone presentation, but to create a task where the presentation is part of this task. In this way students can practise other key skills such as researching, collaborating with others and selecting material. Several recent articles have focused on the use of Pecha Kucha with business students in particular. Levin and Peterson (2013) used the format with MBA marketing students and observed that "...students like being exposed to a tool they can use in other settings" (p. 61). Anderson and Williams (2012) found that when they introduced this format into their business classes, "...students and professors...responded positively to this presentation style" (p. 5). This would suggest that such an approach to giving a presentation is extremely beneficial both for the presenters and the audience.

With this in mind, the Pecha Kucha format was introduced on an EAP course for international business students to help them address some of the issues mentioned above such as timing and lack of practice. As Shiobara (2015) notes, "...the presenter is forced to consider their words very carefully to fit into a 20 second slot and they need to practice carefully" (p. 575). This is particularly true for non-native speakers of English who may hesitate while searching for a particular word or who may not have checked the pronunciation of a key word beforehand which could have disastrous consequences and lead to misunderstanding for the audience. The task involved students working together in pairs to prepare an *elevator pitch* style of presentation focussing on the visual element and would require the presenters to feel confident and competent if the pitch was to be successful. Students were first introduced to the format of a popular TV programme which invites would-be entrepreneurs to present an idea briefly in the hope of gaining financial backing for their business plan from a successful business person, but not before they have been questioned on it. Students watched some examples of pitches in order to understand the concept of the task, and this also allowed for some language input as they listened carefully to the sales talk of the presenter and the subsequent questions to be fielded. Next, students worked together on their idea and made their slides. They were given a generous deadline for preparation because engaging with the subject matter, thinking critically about what should be included and why and being creative enough to produce suitable visuals requires time. An additional time limit was added purely for the practice stage so as to ensure students did not skip this. They were told to focus on their delivery, and not to memorise their presentation word for word, but to become familiar enough with the

language and vocabulary they wanted to use so as to reduce the possibility of long pauses and hesitations in what essentially is meant to be a fast-paced, dynamic sales pitch. In order to achieve this, they had to be selective in terms of what they said and how much they could say while keeping within the strict time limit. The resulting presentations were more engaging than standard 'data and text-only' slide presentations and the time limit helped to ensure that speakers maintained their pace – a key factor of a successful business pitch. Anecdotal evidence from students at the time indicated that the exercise had made them more aware of the importance of the practice stage, while teachers felt that the format had helped students to produce a more 'polished' performance and noted that the audience appeared to be much more engaged and attentive, as demonstrated by the number of questions they wished to ask at the end of the presentation.

## **Conclusion**

By restricting presentations to their traditional format of a random number of slides packed with data and text, we are in fact missing an opportunity to simplify, clarify and smooth the communication process, and as Klentzin, Paladino, Johnston and Devine (2010) claim that we need "...creative solutions based on sound pedagogical theory" (p. 159) in order to address this issue. By shifting more emphasis on to the visual element of a presentation, students are no longer simply reliant on oral and written input for comprehension. This is something that Lehtonen (2011) argues when he says that "...written and oral communication might not always be sufficient..." (p. 467) and that this use of the visual element in order to aid comprehension is crucial for knowledge transfer. For teachers it is worth bearing in mind that while Pecha Kucha presentations are certainly brief they should not underestimate the time required to prepare the visuals and then to practise. On a final note, it is also worth remembering that 'a picture is worth a thousand words'.

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**Contact email:** r.c.robinson@leeds.ac.uk

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The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)  
Sakae 1-16-26-201  
Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi  
Japan 460-0008  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)