

The International Academic Forum
Dubai Conference Series 2016

The InterContinental Festival City Event Centre

Official Conference Proceedings

ISSN: 2189 - 1044

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning 2016, Dubai, UAE

Official Conference Proceedings

ISSN: 2189-1044

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The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)
Sakae 1-16-26-201
Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi
Japan 460-0008
www.iafor.org

Table of Contents

17563	<i>Strategies to Teach English Communication to the Intermediate and Advanced Learners in University</i>	
	Yoshiko Matsumoto	pp. 1 - 12
20862	<i>The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and its Role in the Adult ESL Classroom</i>	
	Ronald H. Jones	pp. 13 - 21
21041	<i>Arabic in ESL Classrooms: A Blessing in Disguise?!</i>	
	Jana Muhieddine El Moabbi	pp. 23 - 36
21581	<i>Using Comic Strip Stories to Teach Vocabulary in Intensive Reading Comprehension Courses</i>	
	Bahman Gorjian	pp. 37 - 48
21749	<i>Translation: An Effective Tool for Teaching Yoruba English</i>	
	Taye Adetutu Kehinde Adebanjo Mopelola Omowumi	pp. 49 - 59
21905	<i>Teaching Technical Communication in the Flipped Fashion Way: A Boost in Active Learning</i>	
	Tara Al-Hadithy	pp. 61 - 75
21993	<i>The Practice of Language Advising at the Faculty of Modern Foreign Languages (FALEM) at the Federal University of Para (UFPA)</i>	
	Sadie Saady Morhy	pp. 77 - 89
23595	<i>Gendered Fluency and Dysfluency: Preliminary Findings</i>	
	Robert William Long	pp. 91 - 108
24797	<i>An Innovative Methodology to Transcribe Local Spoken Arabic Languages</i>	
	Ahcene Farah Sameh Ghwanmeh	pp. 109 - 115

25118

A Pilot Study on the Effectiveness of Co-Teaching: A Cross-Discipline Approach to Enhancing Teaching and Learning in the Trade Specific Context

Cheung Chor Wang, Alice

Ngai Sze Yee, Jessica

Ho Kai Yan, Clive

pp. 117 - 129

25128

A Pilot Study on the Effectiveness of a Modified OG Approach on "Struggling" English Learners in Hong Kong

Cheung Chor Wang, Alice

Ngai Sze Yee, Jessica

Ho Kai Yan, Clive

Kwok Lap Hang, Calvin

Wong Man Sum, Sam

pp. 131 - 148

25253

Foreign Language Anxiety and Learner's Willingness to Communicate in the L2 Classroom

Nada Alghali

pp. 149 - 163

25403

Grammatical Relations in Temne

Sullay Mohamed Kanu

pp. 165 - 178

25432

English Loans in Assamese : A Phonological Account

Hemanga Dutta

pp. 179 - 189

Strategies to Teach English Communication to the Intermediate and Advanced Learners in University

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning - Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The purpose of this field report is to demonstrate some effective strategies to teach English communication to the intermediate- to advanced-level university students. The report is based on my English communication class (at Rikkyo University in Japan) which is designed to develop the students' discussion skills necessary for academic purposes. The strategies center on input and output activities. The former activities use reading and listening materials so that the students will deepen their knowledge and understanding of selected topics. The latter activities train the students in the areas of group discussion and research presentations on the basis of the materials they have learned through their input activities.

Keywords: teaching communication, input and output exercises, intermediate/advanced learners

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Introduction

This paper presents some effective strategies for teaching English communication skills to intermediate- and advanced-level students at a Japanese University. It is a field report based on my English communication class at Rikkyo University in Tokyo.

Central to the strategies concerned are what can be called “input and output activities.” The former activities use reading and listening materials so that the students will deepen their knowledge and understanding of selected topics. The latter activities train the students in the areas of group discussion and research presentations on the basis of the materials they have learned through their input activities.

The paper proceeds in four steps. First, it will explicate the background of the English communication class I have been teaching. Second, the paper will explain my teaching methods. The third section elaborates some tips to motivate students when implementing the strategies under study. The paper concludes with some future prospects.

1. Background

Let us start with outlining my English communication class. The purpose of this class is to develop students’ discussion/communication skills necessary for academic purposes. The maximum number of students in class is 10, ranging from 2nd to 4th year students. This small class allows the students to have more opportunities to communicate with each other. There is no designated textbook for the course. Instead, the instructor provides materials specifically prepared for the class. For example, carefully selected reading and listening materials are given to the students for their input exercises. The topics that the students discuss include Language Learning, Education, Globalization, Design & Technologies, Human rights, Gender, and Communication.

The students in class vary considerably, both in terms of English proficiency and in terms of disciplinary backgrounds. As for varying levels of student proficiency in English, Figure 1 presents a typical class. The vertical line shows 9 students’ self-reported TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) scores. From Student A to Student E, they have similar scores, around 600 points. However, from Student F to Student I, they have higher scores, around 800 points—a 200-point difference between the two groups, which is a significant gap. As a result, when a reading assignment was given, students in the latter, 800-point group read much faster than the former 600-point group. To fill the gap, extra work for these advanced students was provided.

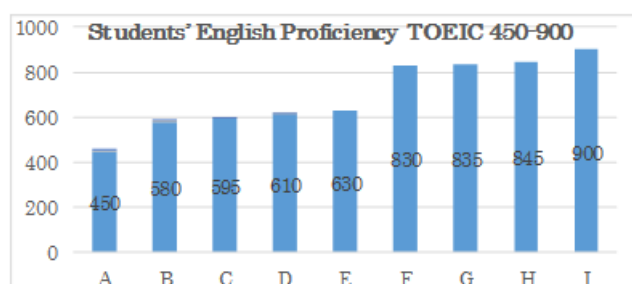


Figure 1: Students’ English Proficiency

My class is also characterized by the diversity of disciplines pursued by students. Figure 2 shows one typical situation. In this case, the students were majoring in Community Development, Social Work, Psychology, Tourism, and Intercultural Communication—five disciplines, indicated in the figure in alphabets. Such diversity provides benefits to the entire class, because the students can exchange their ideas among themselves from various academic backgrounds.

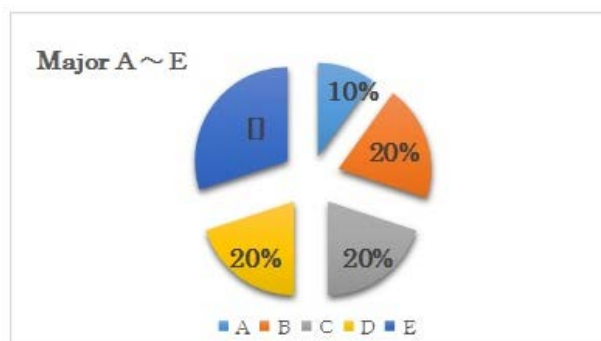


Figure 2: Students' majors

3. Teaching Methods

3.1 An Overview

Now that I have outlined the class environment, let us turn our attention to the teaching methods that I employ. The following list shows a standard set of activities in my communication class, starting with warming-up exercises. As was noted earlier, input and output activities constitute the core of the list. The input activities take the form of reading or listening. They are followed by output activities: the students discuss, as well as make presentations on, what they have read or what they have listened to. In addition, the students may present results of their independent research projects. Finally, they receive feedback from their peers and the instructor.

- | |
|----------------------------------|
| 1. Warming-up exercises |
| 2. Input Activities |
| ① Reading or ② Listening |
| 3. Output Activities |
| ① Discussions or ② Presentations |
| 2. Feedback |

Why are these activities put together in this manner? What is the logic behind them? The set of my teaching methods explicated above constitutes a system, which is presented in the diagram below. These methods constitute a virtuous cycle. First, competent learners (intermediate or advanced learners) start with warming-up exercises. Then, they get involved in the input activities (reading and listening), followed by the output activities (discussion and presentation). Finally, they receive constructive feedback from peers and the instructor (evaluation). After completing this set of exercises, the student should have become more competent learners, better prepared for

the next set of exercises. As they keep going through these cycles, then, the students can continuously improve communication skills.

Virtuous Cycle



Figure 3: Virtuous Cycle

Let us now take a closer look at each element of the virtuous cycle.

3.2 Warming-up exercises

The warming-up exercises have three types: speed speaking, impromptu speeches, and discussion exercises. In speed speaking, the students have to speak as fast as they can. Two methods are used. In one method, the students are instructed to complete their messages within a specified time frame while focusing on fluency and correct pronunciation. The second method involves no time limitation. In such a case, the students are reminded to pay a special attention to the logical structure of their phrases. In impromptu speeches, the students take turns becoming an MC every week. This idea is originally borrowed from Toastmasters International's table topic session, with some modifications for the language training purposes. An MC is responsible for the whole impromptu speech session, and he/she is to ask 4 or 5 questions to the audience.

Example: Q1. What is your ideal family like? Please describe.

Q2. If you were to die tomorrow, who would you want to stay with for the rest of your life?

The student who is appointed by the MC should stand up and answer the question on the spot by making an impromptu speech. For the first time, students looked nervous as they had no preparation time. However, after they got used to it, they managed to organize their thought while speaking.

few immigrants and foreigners. Japanese universities have thus far failed to attract the best students from abroad, the only option is a foreign education. Therefore, to internationalize themselves, the Japanese must seek a foreign education. Internationalization must include the elite since they are the ones who will have the most influence on Japan's future.

There are about 6.4 million college-age Japanese, compared to only 3.2 million for South Korea. Japan is also much richer, with per capita GDP more than twice Korea's. Yet, there are 39 Koreans studying at Harvard College, compared with only five Japanese (excluding immigrants). Overall, Harvard University has nearly three times as many Koreans as Japanese.

Why are so few Japanese matriculating at Harvard College, or other U.S. Ivy League schools?

As Harvard graduates with an international background living in Japan, we have thought about this question for years. What we have discovered reveals the failure to internationalize: Japanese high school education, in our view, makes it almost impossible, even for extremely bright students with a superb work ethic, to be competitive in an Ivy League admissions process.

English is badly taught in Japan; therefore, even the best high school seniors are almost always well below the level necessary to survive in a U.S. college. Schools do not foster discussion and a debate in a give-and-take atmosphere. Consequently, Japanese high school graduates appear inarticulate to Americans.

Unlike the best U.S. high schools (from which most Ivy League students come), Japanese schools do not require their students to write long essays that demand both research and analytical skills. Consequently, Japanese students are also weak when it comes to written expression.

Finally, Japanese high schools lack the flexibility of their best American counterparts, making it difficult for a student with exceptional gifts to stand out from the crowd. Students are not encouraged to pursue their extracurricular passions — be it writing, sciences, business or art. In an extremely competitive applicant pool, Japanese students, even with excellent test scores, fail to distinguish themselves.

Moreover, Japanese high school students are not rewarded for pursuing an American education. In Korea, the establishment knows that the top American universities are better than Korean ones. Therefore, young Koreans returning to their country with prestigious U.S. bachelor's degrees get the recognition they deserve.

In Japan, they will be welcomed with open arms by foreign-owned companies (a very small segment of the labor market) but generally not by Japanese institutions. Japanese employers fear that these overseas-educated returnees will resist assimilation into the rigid and communitarian atmosphere of Japanese institutions.

Moreover, the graduates of leading Japanese universities who run Japanese businesses know that by choosing an American school these young men and women are telling Japanese-educated executives "your (Japanese) alma mater isn't as good as our (American) one." Therefore, it is unfortunately logical for many Japanese students to avoid applying to colleges overseas.

Japan's underrepresentation in Ivy League institutions is indicative of Japan's growing insularity. As the rest of Asia is increasingly engaging the world in the exchange of ideas, Japan remains isolated. Unless the educational, political, and business establishment realizes that Japan must remedy this failure, "Japan passing" will relegate Japan to irrelevancy in the 21st century.

(Example: The following questions are created by the Rikkyo English Language Program, and the sample answers are written by the present author.)

Why can't Japanese Kids Get into Harvard?

Q1. This article states that “Japan’s underrepresentation in Ivy League institutions is indicative of Japan’s growing insularity.” Do you feel that Japan is becoming more insular? If so, please give some examples.

Yes, I feel that Japan is becoming more insular because the number of Japanese students learning at prestigious foreign universities is decreasing year by year. For example, the number of Japanese kids entering Harvard University was only 2 two years ago. Ph.D. candidates enrolling in the Ivy League are also becoming scarce according to the Japanese alumni.

Q2. Do you agree with the author’s opinions as to why Japanese students are not accepted by some American universities?

Yes, I agree with the author’s opinions. Japanese high school students do not meet the standard of the entrance of the Ivy League. We must improve the quality of English education by incorporating writing and discussion/debate classes in high school. Also, Japanese high school students should be encouraged to apply for universities overseas. The society should accept returnees with degrees from renowned foreign universities more actively.

Q3. Do you feel that it is an advantage or a disadvantage for one’s career in Japan to have graduated from an American university?

At present, it can be a disadvantage because as is indicated in the article, the seniors graduated from Japanese universities fear that returnees might criticize them for not being educated in prestigious foreign universities.

3.3.2 Listening

The other type of input activities is listening. The students listen to online listening materials such as TED presentations, university lectures, and CBS news reports. One example of the TED presentation, “The World’s English Mania” (Walker, 2009), lasts for about 4 minutes and is appropriate for the intermediate learners as the presenter speaks clearly and slowly. As is the case for the reading exercises, the instructor gives handouts in which students can answer comprehension questions and discussion questions. Additionally, there are fill-in-blanks questions for listening exercises. The following example is the transcript of the TED presentation mentioned above.

(Example)

TED TALK: The world's English mania

http://blog.ted.com/2009/05/26/the_worlds_engl/

By Jay Walker:

1:15 Let's talk about manias. Let's start with Beatle mania: hysterical teenagers, crying, screaming, pandemonium. Sports mania deafening crowds, all for one idea -- get the ball in the net. Okay, religious mania: there's rapture, there's weeping,

there's visions. Manias can be good. Manias can be alarming. Or manias can be deadly.

1:01The world has a new mania. A mania for learning English. Listen as Chinese students practice their English by screaming it.

1:11Teacher: ... change my life!

1:13Students: I will change my life.

1:15T: I don't want to let my parents down.

1:18S: I don't want to let my parents down.

1:22T: I don't ever want to let my country down.

1:25S: I don't ever want to let my country down.

1:29T: Most importantly ... S: Most importantly ...

1:32T: I don't want to let myself down.

1:35S: I don't want to let myself down.

1:38Jay Walker: How many people are trying to learn English worldwide? Two billion of them.

1:43Students: A t-shirt. A dress.

1:47JW: In Latin America, in India, in Southeast Asia, and most of all in China. If you are a Chinese student, you start learning English in the third grade, by law. That's why this year China will become the world's largest English-speaking country. (Laughter)Why English? In a single word: Opportunity. Opportunity for a better life, a job, to be able to pay for school, or put better food on the table. Imagine a student taking a giant test for three full days. Her score on this one test literally determines her future. She studies 12 hours a day for three years to prepare.25 percent of her grade is based on English. It's called the Gaokao, and 80 million high school Chinese students have already taken this grueling test. The intensity to learn English is almost unimaginable, unless you witness it.

2:53Teacher: Perfect! Students: Perfect!

2:55T: Perfect! S: Perfect!

2:58T: I want to speak perfect English.

3:00S: I want to speak perfect English.

3:03T: I want to speak -- S: I want to speak --

3:05T: perfect English. S: perfect English.

3:07T: I want to change my life!

3:11S: I want to change my life!

3:14JW: So is English mania good or bad? Is English a tsunami, washing away other languages? Not likely. English is the world's second language. Your native language is your life. But with English you can become part of a wider conversation: a global conversation about global problems, like climate change or poverty, or hunger or disease. The world has other universal languages. Mathematics is the language of science. Music is the language of emotions. And now English is becoming the language of problem-solving. Not because America is pushing it, but because the world is pulling it. So, English mania is a turning point. Like the harnessing of electricity in our cities or the fall of the Berlin Wall, English represents hope for a better future --a future where the world has a common language to solve its common problems.

4:20Thank you very much.(Applause)

(Example: Questions & Answers)

The world's English Mania

http://blog.ted.com/2009/05/26/the_worlds_engl/

<Comprehension Questions>

Q1. What kinds of manias does he mention as examples? What kinds of examples (actions) does he give for each mania?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Q2. How many people are trying to learn English worldwide?

Q3. In what grade do Chinese students start learning English, by law?

Q4. Why do Chinese students learn English so earnestly?

Ex. Fill in the blanks with numbers or words.

A student taking a giant test for _____ full days.

Her score on this one test literally determines her _____.

She studies _____ hours a day for _____ years to prepare.

_____ % of her grade is based on _____. It's called the Gaokao, and _____ million high school Chinese students have already taken this _____ test.

Q5. What is the speaker's opinion about English mania?

Q6. What was his last remark about English mania?

<Discussion Questions>

Q1. How do you feel about the English learning mania in China?

Q2. Is English mania good or bad for you? Why?

Q3. Please give three reasons why you are learning English. Explain in detail.

- 1
- 2
- 3

3.4 Output Activities

3.4.1 Discussions

After completing comprehension questions and discussion questions in the reading or listening exercise, the students start discussions in pairs or groups. Take, for example, the article entitled "Why Can't Japanese Kids Get into Harvard?" mentioned earlier. This article includes rather subjective opinions of the authors. By expressing their

opinions either by agreeing or by disagreeing with the authors' perspective, the students can easily initiate discussions among themselves.

As my experience shows, this is one effective method to simulate and develop students' critical thinking. Furthermore, it is a good idea to always designate someone to play the role of facilitator (students can take turns every week) to lead the group discussion. He/she is also responsible for organizing and summarizing the ideas and opinions debated so that the discussants can always stay focused.

3.4.2 Presentations

Each student must make the following set of presentations: (a) he or she performs the role of a discussion facilitator at least once a semester; and (b) he or she must report the results of their independent research three times a semester. All together, then, a student is to make at least four presentations in class. As for (a), a student designated as the facilitator of a group discussion presents an oral summary of what has been debated in front of the entire class. As for (b), each student gets assigned three small-scale research projects based on the planned discussion topics. These projects are intended to deepen their knowledge and explore new ideas and information about the topic, beyond the assigned reading requirements. When reporting on these projects, students can choose either a group presentation approach or an individual presentation approach.

The following steps describe a typical project process:

- 1 Students conduct research outside the classroom (more likely in the university Library system);
- 2 They read newspaper articles, journals, research articles and monographs, and/or online sources on a designated topic;
- 3 They write summaries and opinions about the studied reading materials; and
- 4 They present their written reports in front of the entire class, followed by a Q&A session.

This process helps the students to become independent learners.

4. Some Tips to Motivate Students

Let me suggest a few tips to motivate students in the context that I have explicated thus far. When implementing the package of teaching methods, the following these elements should be embedded as much as possible:

1. Motivate students by intellectually stimulating them. Tell your students that they are already good learners, and give a task that they feel challenging.
2. Encourage students to become independent learners. Give them the kinds of assignments that require research and preparation outside class, whenever possible. Praise them and have them learn more because they deserve it.

3. Give students a leadership task. Let them take the initiatives to lead group discussions and projects. This can develop their communication and leadership skills.

5. Conclusion: Future Prospects

In the future, I intend to evaluate the effectiveness of my teaching strategy in a systematic manner. For example, I plan to collect data to see the transition of the students' performance levels. This would involve data collection at the beginning of the course, in the mid-term exam, and in the final exam.

I am also planning to encourage my students to conduct a formal debate (e.g. National Speech & Debate Association, n.d.), which should help them to polish their speaking skills and critical thinking. The debate format requires the most challenging communication skill due to a series of complicated and highly skilled tasks. To do well, the students will have to research on a debate topic in advance, to cite sources, to make an affirmative/negative statement, to give rebuttal, to ask questions and answers, and finally to give a closing statement. Therefore, by learning to debate well, the students can become more competent learners.

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The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and its Role in the Adult ESL Classroom

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The International Conference on Language Learning – Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Why is it that Aisha never talks during group work? Why does Sultan always need me to tell him what to do? And why do they both insist on completing their projects at the last minute? These are the types of questions we have all asked ourselves during our teaching careers, and the answer may be quite simple: Personality. This workshop paper presents the Jungian theory behind the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) with the aim of raising awareness about how the theory can be applied in the ESL classroom through the use of simple and engaging activities. It will highlight the research projects that have used the tool to measure student performance and attitude, present activities teachers can use in the classroom to help students understand their differences and finally address some criticisms of the MBTI tool. The workshop asserts that in order to help students reach their full learning potential, teachers should provide a balanced curriculum in relation to personality in order to foster development of students' weaker cognitive functions.

Keywords: Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, MBTI, Jung, Personality types, extravert, introvert

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Instruction

The study of personality types in Western civilization dates as far back as Hippocrates' and Galen's four humors theory which remained largely unchanged until the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Arguably one of the most seminal works in this latter period appeared in 1923 with the publication of Carl Jung's *Personality Types* which introduced the world to the terms extraversion and introversion and later became the inspiration behind the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)- a psychometric assessment tool which helps to categorize people as one of sixteen personality types. In 1943, at the age of 68, Katharine Briggs and her daughter Isabel Myers launched the first MBTI assessment which was originally designed to help women choose a career that matched their personality. Since that time the MBTI has undergone more than a dozen revisions and today consists of a paper-based 96-item forced choice questionnaire and an online version of 124 questions. The MBTI is available in over 30 languages, is used by the majority of Forbes 100 companies and hosts annual conferences, including Miami, London, San Francisco and Dubai. According to CPP, the company which owns the rights to the tool, more than 1.5 million formal assessments are completed each year. Research using the MBTI is also vast. A brief search on EBSCOhost of "Myers-Briggs Type Indicator" will reveal over five thousand hits spanning several decades of research. In light of the MBTI's global appeal, it is therefore useful for educators to familiarize themselves with the concepts of the MBTI theory in order to better serve their students and thus gain a greater insight into the cognitive functions and psychological preferences at play in the classroom.

Overview of The MBTI

The sixteen personality types (Figure 1) are composed of one mode taken from each of four dichotomies which are identified by the MBTI questionnaire. These dichotomies include Extraversion - Introversion (E-I), Sensing - Intuition (S-N); Thinking - Feeling (T-F) and Judging - Perceiving (J-P). Note that because an I is used for Introversion in the first dichotomy, an N is used in the second dichotomy to signify Intuition.

ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ

FIGURE 1: The Sixteen Personality Types of the MBTI

At the outset of this theory, it must be stressed that no person functions on only one side of each dichotomy; we all use both- though not with equal comfort. An effective way to highlight this concept of preference on a dichotomy is to asking students to write their name on a piece of paper then ask them which hand they preferred to write with and why. The enquiry will most likely yield an answer such as, "It was more comfortable" or "I always write with this hand". Then, assuming students are not ambidextrous, if you ask them how it feels to write their names with their opposite hand, they will most likely reply "It's difficult" or "It feels un-natural". Hence, the

same can be said for the four MBTI dichotomies; we hold a preference for one side over the other because it is a natural, or innate, preference (Weinstein, 2015).

Extraversion – Introversion (E-I)

This dichotomy signifies how people energize mentally, or psychically. Extraverts energize by active engagement with the outer world, for example with people or animals, and they seek stimulation in oral discourse while Introverts seek the more private, reflective inner world of ideas. For instance, an extravert who learns she has successfully met the English language test requirements for university entry will share the news with peers and teachers inside and outside the classroom face-to-face or through social network sites; she will feel energized by the whole experience. On the other hand, an introvert achieving the same English language test requirements will feel energized merely by mentioning her success to a few close peers or celebrating the success intimately with family and friends.

Research into the E-I dichotomy

Briggs-Myers, McCaulley, Quenk & Hammer, (2009) suggest that during face-to-face communications, such as office hour and academic advising, extraverts see phatic communion as essential to the engagement whereas introverts may tend to see it as a waste of time. Extraverts may also see silence as a rejection, so it is therefore in the interests of the introvert advisor to contribute regularly to the conversation. Predictably, research also supports extraverts' preference for face-to-face classes unlike introverts who rate online classes more highly (Harrington and Loffredo, 2010; Goby, 2006). It has also been found that introverts become more complimentary of group work as they progress through university (Felder, Felder & Dietz, 2002). In terms of maturity and academic progression this finding seems to support the idea that being able to operate on both sides of the E-I dichotomy is an indicator of a more socially intelligent individual.

E-I Activity

After consulting the facets in the Appendix, the teacher describes the features of the E-I dichotomy on either side of the whiteboard then asks students to stand on the side of their preference. Students who remain ambivalent even after some coaxing can form a third group in the middle. Next, the teacher encourages discussion within each group by asking students to describe or even sketch their preferred study environment while the two group secretaries take notes on the board to describe that environment. The resulting board analysis should reveal contrasting descriptions such as, *activities, noisy, group work* (Extraverts) as opposed to *quiet, peace, nature* (Introverts). The middle group may show a blend of both dichotomies.

Sensing – Intuition (S-N)

The S-N dichotomy is the first of the two cognitive functions. The S-N scale denotes the cognitive function of learning style, or how people prefer to receive information. A sensing type prefers to learn in a more sensory environment with proven methods. Sensory learners have a great memory for aspects they consider important to them and are more aligned to curricula that are grounded in facts and details. Meanwhile, Intuitive learners are more comfortable with abstraction and prefer to explore their learning environment if it means they can innovate and create. Intuitives tend to be more focused on theories, are driven by the possibilities offered by what they learn

and are more likely to challenge the boundaries of traditional methods. In terms of learner ratios, teachers can expect around 1 in 3 learners to type as Intuitive.

Research into the S-N dichotomy

Studies on the S-N dichotomy support the notion that S types prefer a more practical, systematic, and proven method of learning with a focus on facts and memorization compared to N types who adopt a greater preference for more theoretical approaches. N types are also more comfortable working in an environment which offers exploration and creativity with little focus on step-by-step approaches (Barret, 1991; Felder, Felder & Dietz, 2002; Jenson & Bowe, 1997; Rosatti 1997; Ayoubi & Ustwani, 2013). As teachers, we tend to teach the way we like to learn, and given that approximately one in three students is an N-type, it would be fair to assume that most students would prefer an S-type teacher. However, research appears to contradict this assumption as N-types have been over-represented in educator of the year awards and on student evaluation surveys (Moehl, 2011; Rushton, Morgan & Richard, 2006; Kent & Fisher, 1998; Provost, Carson & Biedler, 1987). Moehl (2011) suggests this is because N-types' talent for innovation fosters a fresh and dynamic classroom-especially when matched with an Extravert preference. In relation to interpersonal communications, N-types as team leaders may frustrate S-type team members if the instructions they disseminate are vague and/or abstract. This is because N-types may have trouble explaining their abstractions as they tend to make cognitive leaps from ideas to outcomes with little regard as to what lies in between. Awareness of this cognitive behavior will serve a team well if the N-type leader is aware that S-type team members will require details as well as ideas.

S-N Activity

Using the facets in the appendix, describe the features of the S-N dichotomy and ask the students to self-select Sensing or Intuition as their learning preference. Again, students who remain ambivalent even after some coaxing can form a third group in the middle. Ask each group either to draw a map to a nearby location or plan a dinner for the class. Alternatively, they could observe a painting such as *Dogs Playing Poker* by C.M. Coolidge for one minute before brainstorming what they remembered on a shared flip board. The map and dinner party activity should yield marked S-N differences in the details, such as landmarks, street names or seating arrangements and menu etc. Likewise, the Coolidge painting should elicit S-type attention to colours, and setting while the N-types will attempt to see patterns and add a narrative element to the art work (Holm, 2012).

Thinking – Feeling (T-F)

The second cognitive function indicates how people reach conclusions, or make decisions. According to MBTI theory, Thinking types have a preference for using logic with a focus on equality whereas Feeling types prefer to make decisions based on the potential impact on people or the individual. Examples of the T-F dichotomy abound in the news media (the Syrian refugee crisis and the 2016 US presidential campaign to name a few) and in our professional lives when teachers resort to applying policies solely on the strength or weakness of their relationships to students.

To the Thinking type, a sound, logical argument is difficult to challenge whereas Feeling types seek outcomes which yield harmony and a win-win situation for all people concerned. It is important to note that Feeling is not the same as Intuition; the former identifies how we make decisions while the latter indicates how we prefer to receive information.

Research into the T-F Dichotomy

A longitudinal study over 5 years by Felder, Felder & Dietz (2002) tracked students on a Chemical Engineering major and found that attrition rates for T-types were lower than for F-types. The authors suggest that this was due to the impersonal nature of the discipline. They also found a significant difference in Thinkers' (53%) and Feelers' (27%) representation in graduate school. The T-F dichotomy also represents emotional intelligence (EI), or a person's skill in reading other people's emotions by decoding subtle paralinguistic and non-verbal cues.

T-F Activity

After describing the facets of the dichotomy (see Appendix), students should self-select either T or F and join their appropriate group to analyze and discuss the following scenario:

You are a final exam invigilator on duty outside the exam hall.

The exam policy states that students will not be allowed into the exam hall after 9:00am.

It is 9:02am. A final year student arrives late for the exam (worth 35% of his grade).

The student tells you he will fail his final year if he doesn't sit the test.

Will you allow the student inside the hall or not?

Allow several minutes for discussion and justification before eliciting feedback on the group's decision. A successful exercise will highlight the 'person or policy' ambivalence within the F-type group while the T-type group will be more inclined to apply the policy with regards to fairness for all. This exercise should help to amplify why groups will often find themselves locked in a disagreement and should therefore help them to deconstruct these disagreements and approach them with greater meta-cognitive awareness.

Judging – Perceiving (J-P)

In relation to students, this dichotomy is the one which requires the most attention as it represents how individuals organize their outer world; it is also the dichotomy which invariably raises conflicts in a team's time management and priorities. The Judging types are early starters who plan their time and gain satisfaction from the closure of tasks that may have been thoughtfully prioritized on a to-do list. On the other hand, Perceiving types have a more spontaneous, flexible and casual attitude towards life. They are stimulated and energized by the pressure of a looming deadline. They need to be sure they have all the information available, so remain open to change. Judging types are likely to interpret the Perceiving types as uncooperative, unwilling and even lazy, so it is in the team's and the teacher's interests to raise awareness of this potential difference during the norming phase of team projects.

Research into the J-P dichotomy

The J-P dichotomy provides an indicator of a student's level of preparedness for prioritizing and organizing their workload at university. J-types are known to be more effective at time management and consequently display a higher level of academic self-esteem. They are also more likely to report they completed more work than was required of them during group projects. J-types were also more likely to exceed employers' expectations and maintain job security (Felder, Felder & Dietz 2002; Schaefer, 1994).

J-P Activity

On one side of the whiteboard, write *Work before play* and on the other side write *I can play any time*. Ask students to stand beside the statement they most relate to before directing each group to generate discussion as to why they made their selection. At the plenary stage, elicit the thoughts of each group by asking them to justify their preference. Feedback should yield comments such as "It would be irresponsible of me to ignore my work. I couldn't relax" (J-types) and "I can't start any work until I am satisfied that I've at least had a good time" (I-types).

Criticisms of The MBTI

Contemporary personality assessment tools such as the NEO-Pi, E-Qi, the Murphy-Meisgeier Type Indicator for Children (MMTI) and Big Five can be sourced to the decades' long work of Katharine Briggs, Isabel Myers and Carl Jung, yet these tools have been dismissed by critics as pseudoscientific because they do not fulfill the codes of the scientific method (Grant, 2013). They argue that the results of an MBTI are often not repeatable and the dichotomies are not falsifiable (Krzmaric, 2013). It is therefore understandable that people may harbor reservations about psychometrics because they risk being pigeon-holed by unreliable tools. Nevertheless, unlike the sciences which can use tried and tested tools to measure temperature, height and weight etc., measuring a personality requires initiative and creativity on the part of psychologist because it deals with abstractions. To date, the MBTI is arguably one of the best tools we have available to analyze behaviours and attitudes of people. Moreover, with the increasing gains made in the emerging field of neuroscience, the task of mapping the human brain is surprisingly yielding results which appear to at least support the E-I dichotomy (Cohen, Young, Baek, Kessler, & Ranganath, 2005; Wright, Williams, Feczko et al., 2006; Grimm, Schubert, Jaedke, Gallinat & Baiboui, 2012).

Conclusion

Academic maturity in the context of the MBTI can be defined as a student's natural ability to apply the appropriate mode at the appropriate time across the four dichotomies regardless of his/her four-letter personality type. When applied individually, these dichotomies provide an accessible paradigm for both teachers and students to examine their own cognitive behaviors especially when this awareness raising is approached using the exercises outlined in this paper and thus gain greater intra and interpersonal awareness.

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Appendix

Facets of the Four MBTI Dichotomies

The facets, or sub-personalities, of the MBTI can be used to self-report preferences as a preliminary step in identifying a person's type until a full MBTI assessment can be completed with a certified practitioner.

Extraversion

Initiating
Expressive
Gregarious
Active
Enthusiastic

Introversion

Receiving
Contained
Intimate
Reflective
Quiet

Sensing

Concrete
Realistic
Practical
Experiential
Traditional

Intuition

Abstract
Imaginative
Conceptual
Theoretical
Original

Thinking

Logical
Reasonable
Questioning
Critical
Tough

Feeling

Empathetic
Compassionate
Accommodating
Accepting
Tender

Judging

Systematic
Planful
Early Starting
Scheduled
Methodical

Perceiving

Casual
Open-Ended
Pressure Prompted
Spontaneous
Emergent

(Quenk, Hammer & Majors 2001, p. 12-13).



Arabic in ESL Classrooms: A Blessing in Disguise?!

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning – Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The dispute over whether to use or not to use learners' L1 inside the classroom has always been the topic of discussion for many people for various reasons. The debate has also involved ESL students. Some maintain that such use may lead to more dependence of an ESL on his Arabic language, which may delay the progress of mastering the target language. Whereas others believe that the use of Arabic inside the classroom may ease the process of learning the target language, as the students become better at dealing with instructions, develop more motivation to learn, participate in group work activities because learners share the same L1, Arabic, and are no longer embarrassed to get involved in classroom discussions. This article studies the case of university students who have Arabic as their native language, taking an intermediate university requirement course in English. These students shall answer a set of questions developed in the form of a questioner. The data will be analyzed and studied with respect to the scenario that each question constructs on the use of Arabic language inside the ESL classroom. The findings gathered from the quantitative analysis of the data collected, inspect why and when do students incline to use Arabic language in the ESL classroom, and provide instructors with insights on when to allow its use in class to promote learning. The study aims to draw ESL instructors' attention on how to make use of Arabic language for better ESL classroom management and thus better learning outcomes.

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1. Introduction

The use of one's native language in ESL classes has been debated for a long time. Some believe that the use of native language is not a problem, but are concerned about its appropriate use and when it is necessary to use. Others are against its use because of the risk of creating native language dependence, and thus preventing students from enhancing their learning skills. Many maintain that Arabic has no necessary role to play in EFL teaching and that too much Arabic use might deprive learners of valuable input in English. But there are other, also strong arguments for using students' native language in ESL classes, believing that native language is helpful in explaining a complex idea, helps students learn new vocabulary more effectively, prevent the waste of time in explanations and instructions, and keep students motivated in class. Furthermore, one cannot deny the fact that the idea of avoiding native language is too stressful for many students and it is the instructor's responsibility to create a comfortable class and help students feel confident and interact independently inside the classroom.

2. Literature Review

Language teachers have been debating whether or not to use the L1 in the L2 teaching. Some teachers have the opinion that L1 may be used under certain limitations (Cole, 1998) while others believe that L1 should be banned because it prevents students from acquiring the L2 (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Nazary (2008) stressed the role of the L1 in the L2 classroom in several methods, such as the Traditional methods (Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Direct Method (DM), and the Audio-lingual Method and Communicative Methods). Furthermore, Tillyer (2002, as cited in Stanley, 2002) described it as absurd to talk a language other than the target language for any reason.

The above-discussed opinions, which call for avoiding L1, rely on two main weak assumptions, as identified by Cook (2001). The first assumption is the similarity between L1 and L2 learning processes, and the second assumption is that learning L1 and L2 is a separate process.

However, the literature of teaching EFL reveals that there are teaching methods, which use L1 deliberately. For example, besides the Grammar-Translation Method mentioned previously, a relatively new teaching method that deliberately employs L1 has appeared and is known as the New Concurrent Method. This method requires teachers to balance the use of L1 and L2 (Faltis, 1990). Code switching, which facilitates language learning, should be systematic and purposeful. Four areas of code switching to L1 have been identified: introducing concepts, reviewing a previous lesson, capturing learners' attention and praising learners (Faltis, 19).

Elsa Auerbach (1993) conducted a detailed study on the notion of using English only in the English language classroom. She investigated the two different views of that topic: to either use it or avoid it. She tracked the 'English Only' movement through history and provided the justifications and reasoning behind that movement. She offered the following explanations for using L1 in the L2 classrooms:

- a. Using L1 reduces barriers to language learning and develops fellowship between teachers and students and between the students themselves.
- b. It is found that students who are allowed to use L1 had acquired L2 faster than students who used only L2 in their classrooms.
- c. Auerbach said that although there are two points of view to this topic, it is the teachers who ultimately decide whether they need to use the L1 or not. Every classroom is unique and for that reason, the teacher is the best judge to decide whether to use the L1 or to avoid it.

A study by Carolina Rodrigues and Gina Oxbrow (2008) considered the students' beliefs of whether the use of the L1 in English classrooms is a facilitator or a hindrance. The study found out that most of the students said that the use of L1 (Spanish in the study) in the English classroom actually helped them improve their L2. Most of the students agreed that they preferred if the teachers explained the grammar points in their L1 and not in the L2. However, it was not preferred for the teachers to give instructions and carry out activities in the L1. They also favored it when the teacher pointed out the similarities and differences between their native language and the L2 they are learning.

3. Rational and aim of the study

The debate of using L1 in L2 classrooms has grown in significance in light of recent research. However, in Lebanese universities, the issue has not received sufficient attention, and is rather avoided. Heidi Jones work in 2010 was the driving force for this research. Her work outlines the prevailing arguments in favor of, and against the use, of the L1 in L2 education. The paper concludes that many of the claims denying the value of the learners' L1 are not founded in empirical research therefore; the author determines that while L2-rich input is essential, the L1 can also serve as a valuable tool in L2 education.

This paper intends to explore the role of Arabic in ESL university courses in Lebanon. The aim was to investigate the opinions and attitudes of students towards using Arabic language in the ESL classroom, and thus better inform the debate.

The paper concludes that Arabic can serve as a valuable tool in L2 education. The findings might encourage L2 instructors to recognize that students may naturally resort to Arabic throughout the ESL learning process, and to keep an open mind to the possibility of occasionally employing Arabic as an educational tool.

4. Research Questions

- 4.1. Why and when do students incline to use Arabic language inside the ESL classroom?
- 4.2. When should instructors allow the use of Arabic language to promote English language learning in class?
- 4.3. When and how should Arabic language be used to provide better ESL classroom management?

5. Methodology

5.1 Participants

The participants are 160 students of a General English course given as a university requirement at one of the universities in Lebanon. Since, this study is not investigating gender or age tendencies with respect to language acquisition, no attention was given to the count of males and females and their age.

5.2 Research Instrument and Data Collection

The method used for data collection was the questionnaire available in the appendix. The SPSS 20 software was used to provide a descriptive analysis of the closed questions it includes. The Cronbach alpha estimate measure of reliability was equal to 0.78. Since the study attempted to measure degrees of agreement, a Likert scale was used. Because the number of the participants was not big, the chi-square test was practical in identifying any existing relationships among the questionnaire variables (Salkind, 2008). It was a random sample, and gender was not one of the variables.

The questionnaire was given to ESL students sharing the same native language, Arabic. The aim of the methodology was to investigate the opinions and attitudes of students towards using Arabic language in the ESL classroom. The answers to the questions in the questioner were collected to set the data of the study.

6. Data Collection & Analysis

The section below sums the results obtained from the data analysis in the form of bar graphs. Important to mention that since the number of the participants was not big (160 students), the chi-square test was practical in identifying any existing relationships among the questionnaire variables (Salkind, 2008).

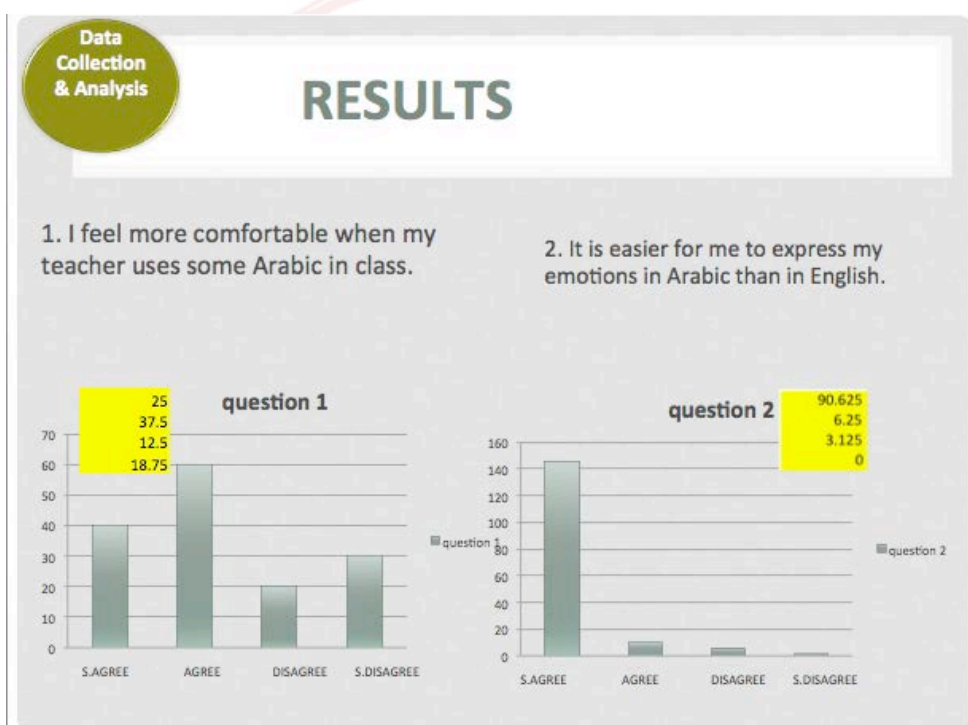
The quantitative analysis of the data collected on the use of Arabic language inside the ESL classroom with Arab students, revealed the student’s positive attitudes towards using Arabic language in ESL classes. Below is a screen shot to the accurate numbers of the answers. The yellow cells to the right calculated the percentages of each of the answers given to the 18 questions.

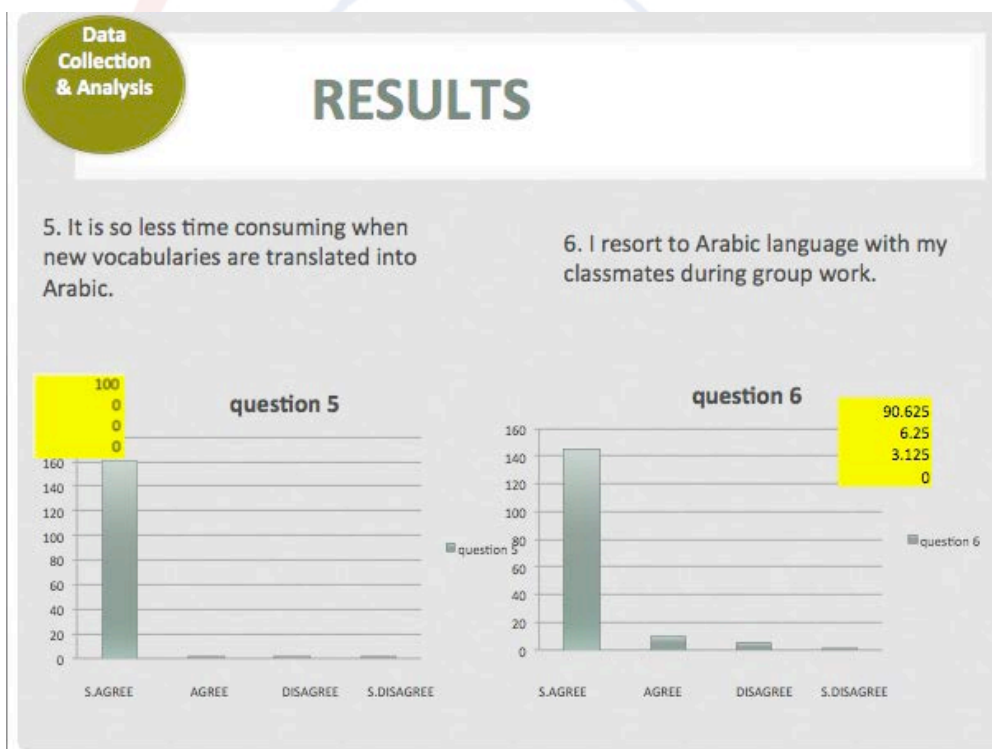
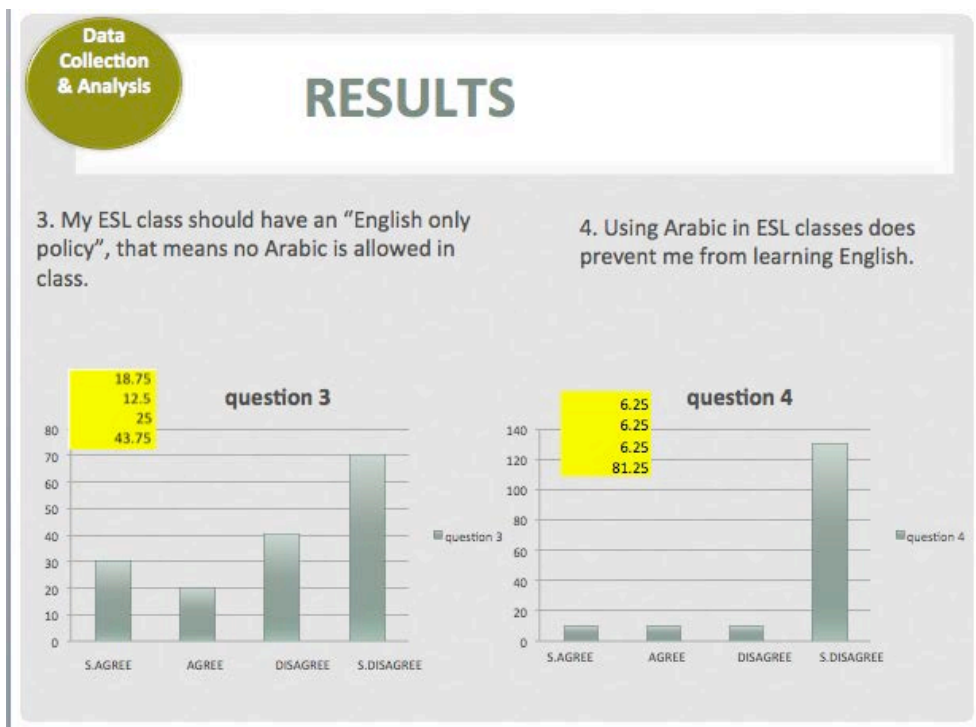
Question	s.agree	agree	disagree	s.disagree	Percentage
question 1	40	25	20	30	160
question 2	145	90.625	30	18.75	160
question 3	30	18.75	20	12.5	160
question 4	10	6.25	10	6.25	160
question 5	160	100	0	0	160
question 6	145	90.625	10	6.25	160
question 7	130	81.25	10	6.25	160
question 8	145	90.625	10	6.25	160
question 9	60	37.5	40	25	160
question 10	150	93.75	10	6.25	160
question 11	150	93.75	10	6.25	160
question 12	40	25	10	6.25	160
question 13	145	90.625	10	6.25	160
question 14	145	90.625	10	6.25	160
question 15	145	90.625	10	6.25	160
question 16	145	90.625	10	6.25	160
question 17	145	90.625	10	6.25	160
question 18	130	81.25	10	6.25	160

7. Findings

7.1. Why and when do students incline to use Arabic language inside the ESL classroom?

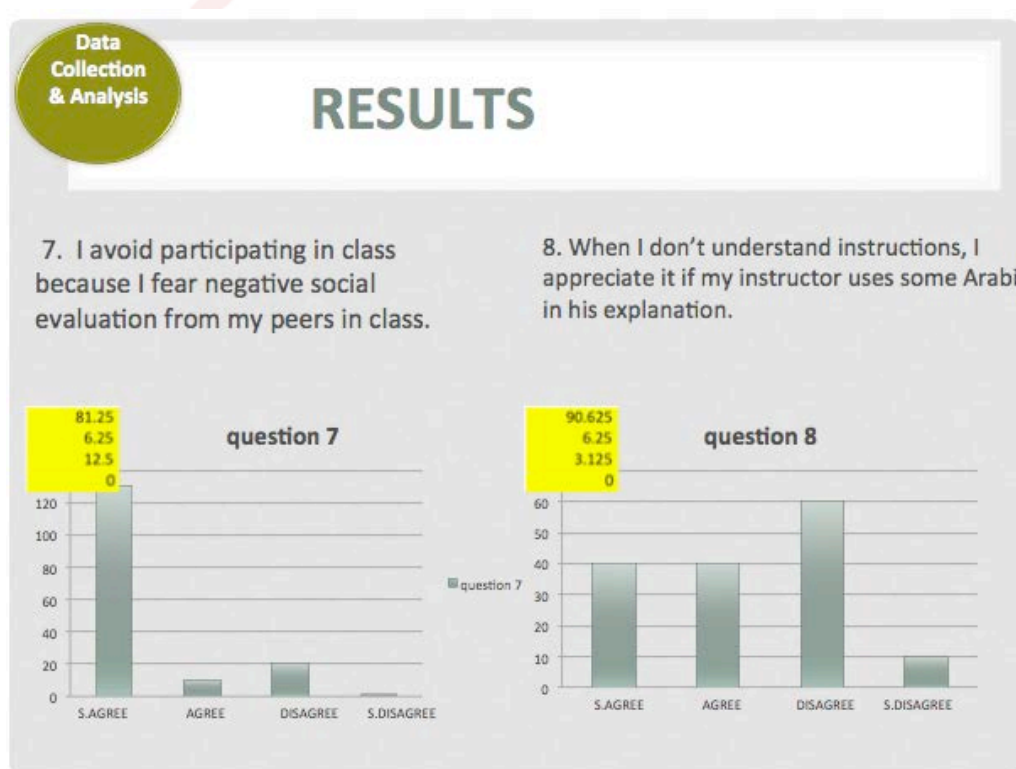
- Students tend to use Arabic language extensively rather than English while performing classroom tasks during group work tasks. L1 use is a normal psycholinguistic process that allows students to initiate verbal interaction with one another (Brooks & Donato, 1994) thus carrying out learning tasks through collaborative dialogue with peers.
 - Learners resort to Arabic language when learning new words as it saves a lot of time.
 - Arabic language saves a lot of time particularly when used to explain the meaning of difficult context and when organizing tasks.
- The slides below show the calculations of the data that led to these analyses in a graph form.

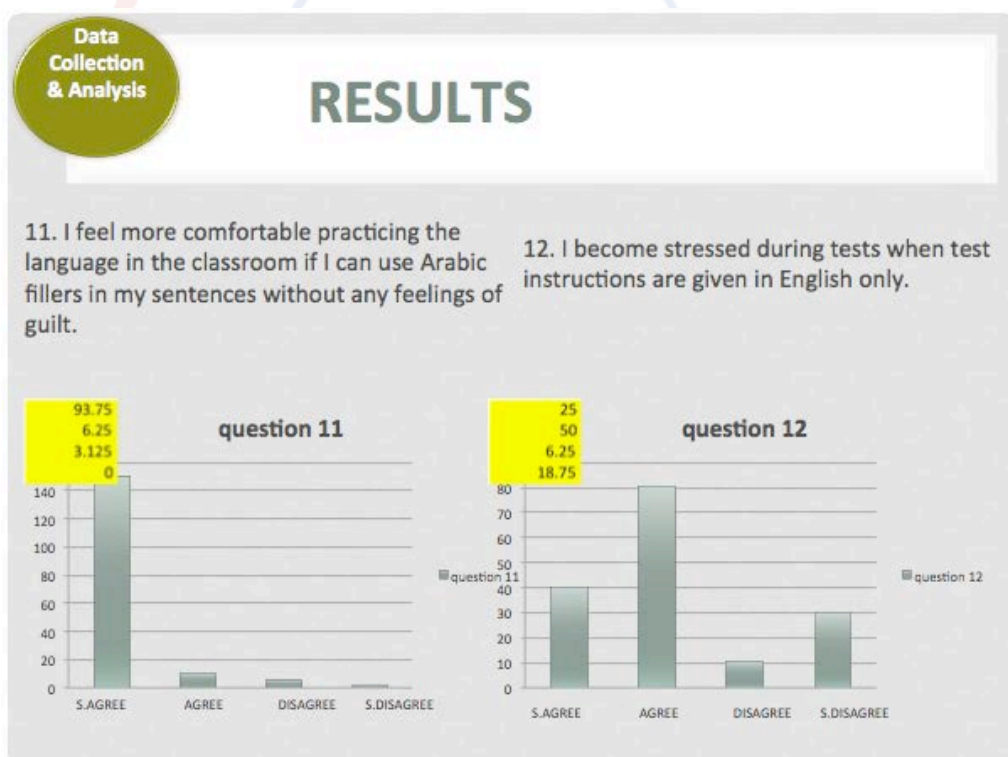
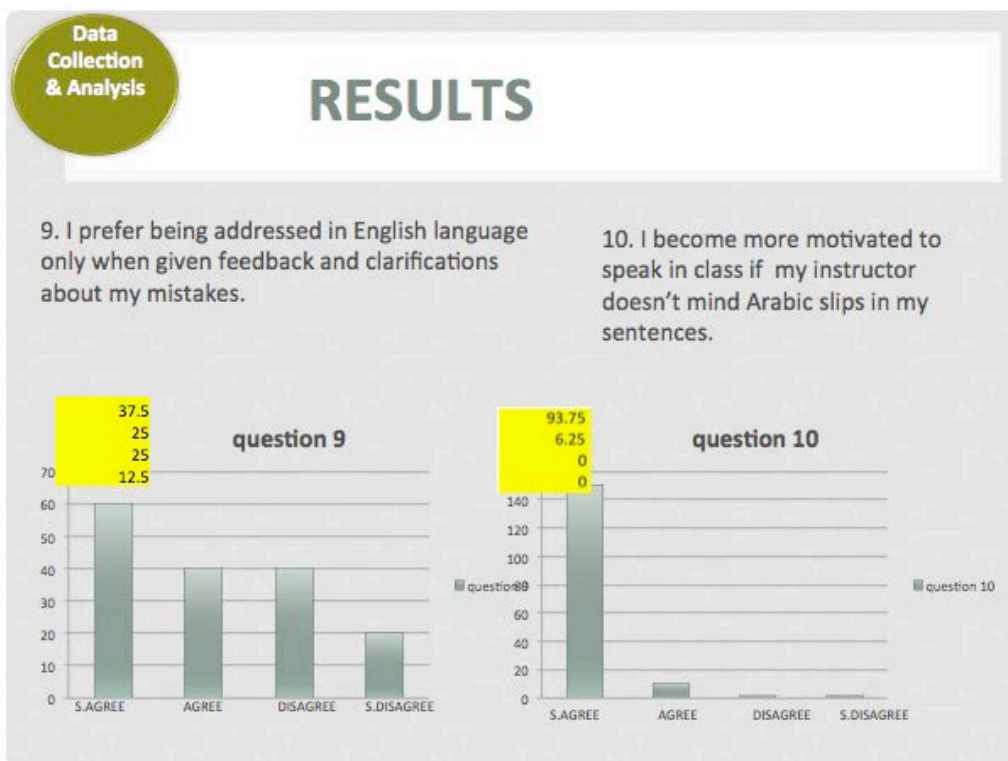


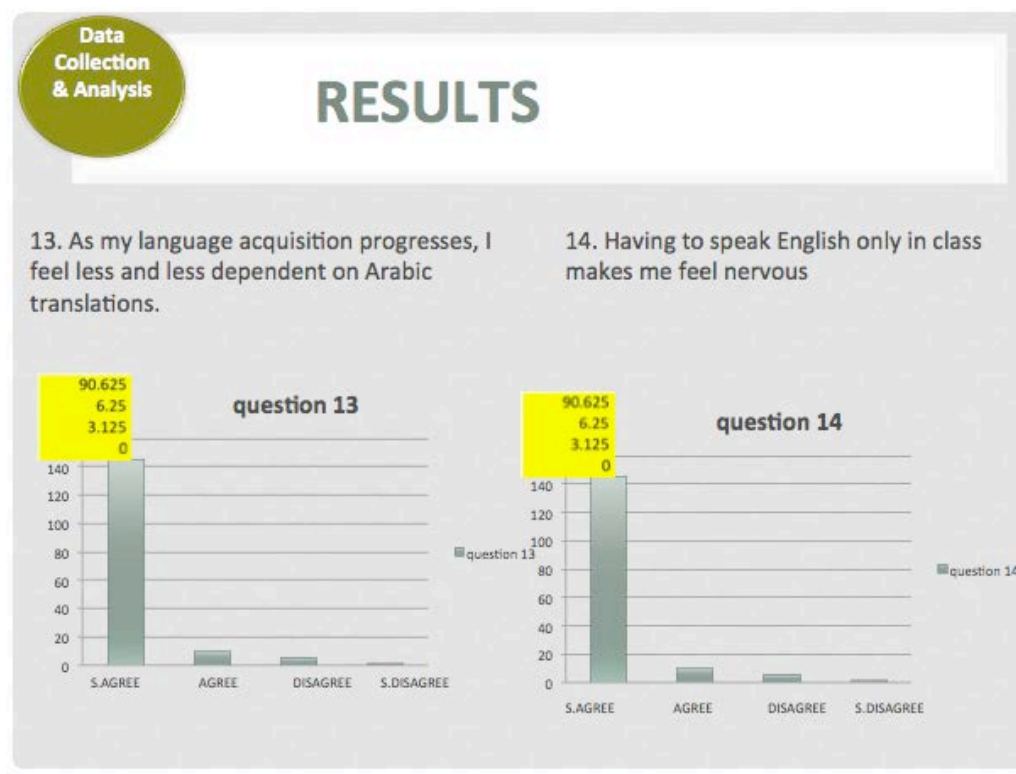


7.2. When should instructors allow the use of Arabic language to promote English language learning in class?

- Students do feel the need to express their ideas and thoughts in their own language. So, by being able to use both languages in their speech, they are more stirred to speak, and more likely to share their opinions and feelings. After all, one talks most when it comes to discussing either his feelings, or his opinions. This creates the perfect stimulus for moving students to practice the English language and participating in class.
 - The ability to use one’s native language, Arabic in this situation, in his/ her discourse empower him or her with a sense of security and confidence in front of his classmates. This armor against the criticism of peers inside the class grants the student a sense of security and helps him or her feel less stressful thus promoting the learning experience.
 - During group work, as it opens space for wider interaction among team members, and thus better involvement in the tasks assigned.
 - Allow the use of Arabic when learning new contexts to avoid the misapprehension of the meaning of new word.
- The slides below show the calculations of the data that led to these analyses in a graph form.



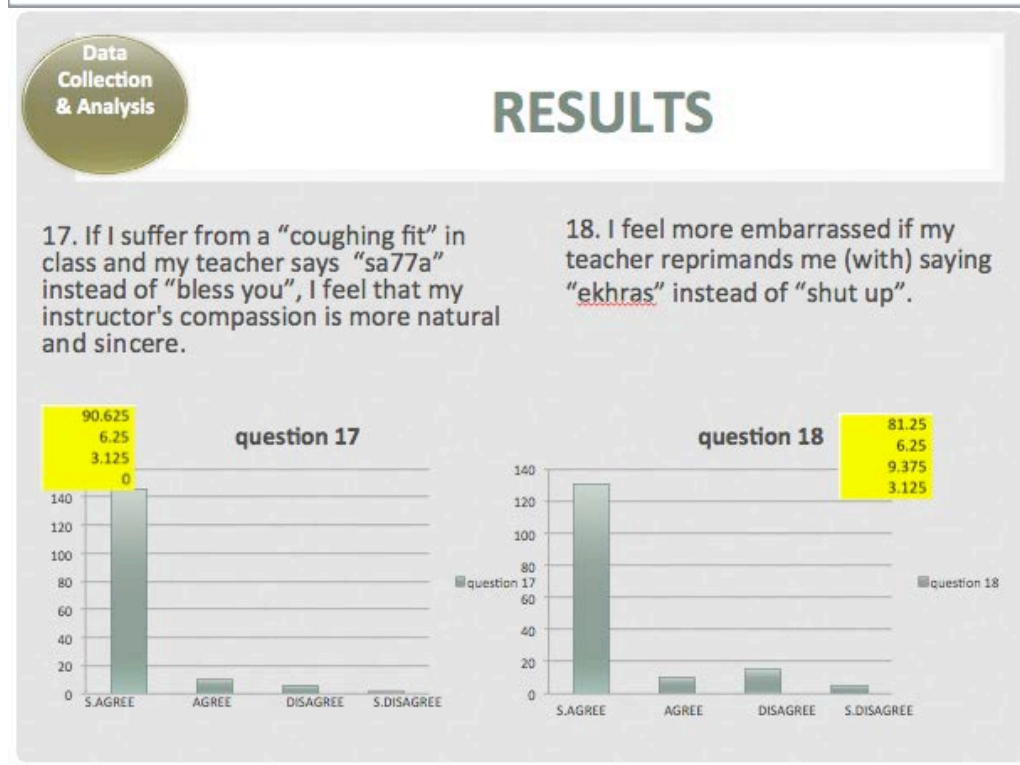
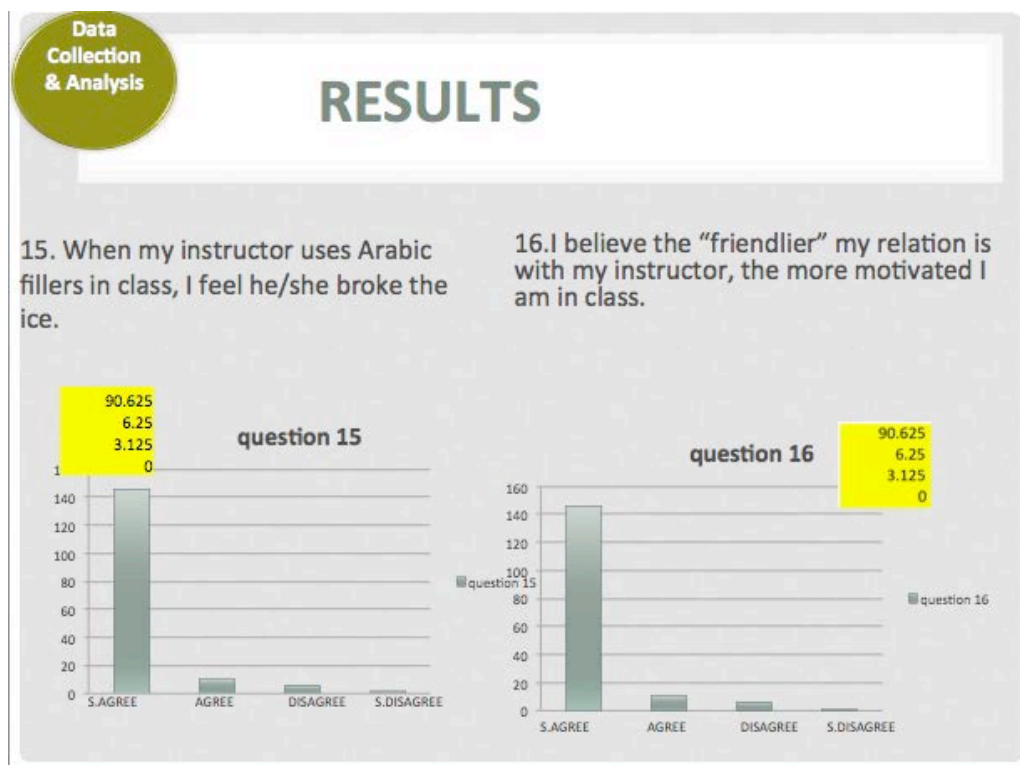




7.3. When and how should Arabic language be used to provide better ESL classroom management?

- The use of Arabic language by the ESL teacher does break the ice between her/ his students.
- Students feel the teacher to be more natural when she or he addresses them in Arabic during health fits, like coughing, hiccups or such, and thus establish a sincere connection with the instructor and start interacting and participating effectively in class.
- When the instructor addresses his or her students in Arabic language during disciplinary situations, the results showed that they are more embarrassed. This means that Arabic is more effective in such disciplinary situations than English. This will result in better classroom management and a better teaching environment.

The slides below show the calculations of the data that led to these analyses in a graph form.



This is why, one cannot but conclude that Arabic should not be rejected during ESL classrooms, since it fulfills several functions and purposes for learners, and rather than creeping in as a guilt-making necessity, it can be deliberately used in the classroom in the previous scenarios.

8. Recommendations for further research

The results of the current research encourage taking steps into further research investigating the students' attitudes towards first language use in English classrooms with respect to different proficiency levels, language backgrounds, age and gender. Other type of investigation involving the teachers' experience in the field and their opinion would also be valuable. It would also be interesting to conduct research investigating the amount of first language use among students at different universities with a larger number of participants.

This study has helped highlight the reasons Arab learners use Arabic in the English classroom. Furthermore, it gave us insights on the way Arabic language can help ESL teachers manage their classes effectively. This research, in other words, helps pave the road for a long journey of investigation for Arabs learning English.

9. Conclusion

The use of Arabic language in ESL classes has been discussed for a long time. One of the problems that teachers sometimes face with students, who all share the same mother tongue, is that they use their native language rather than English in different situations in class. They do resort to their mother tongue when performing classroom tasks, group work activities, and when learning new vocabulary. This may be because they want to communicate something important, and so they use the language they best know. Students will almost certainly find speaking in Arabic language a lot easier than struggling with the English language.

This research verifies the practicality in allowing the use of Arabic in the ESL classroom as it helps in creating a better learning atmosphere in which students feel more at ease, break the ice, deal with the process of the language acquisition as something that comes naturally, without stress, embarrassment, or fear form any social criticism. One cannot deny that all these do hinder any learning process.

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Appendix
Questioner:

Dear Student,

The aim of this study is to investigate your attitudes and reasons towards using Arabic in English Language learning classes by both your teacher and you. I would be grateful if you answer the following questions, as your answers will help instructors and educators to understand your needs and overcome any difficulties you may have learning the English language.

Please circle ONE answer which best reflects your attitude to the given statement:

1. I feel more comfortable when my teacher uses some Arabic in class.

a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

7. I avoid participating in class because I fear negative social evaluation from my peers in class.

a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

15. When my instructor uses Arabic fillers in class, I feel he/she broke the ice.

a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

8. When I don't understand instructions, I appreciate it if my instructor uses some Arabic in his explanation.

a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

9. I prefer being addressed in English language only when given feedback and clarifications about my mistakes.

a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

17. If I suffer from a "coughing fit" in class and my teacher says "sa77a" instead of "bless you", I feel that my instructor's compassion is more natural and sincere.

a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

16. I believe the "friendlier" my relation is with my instructor, the more motivated I am in class.

a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

4. Using Arabic in ESL classes does prevent me from learning English.

a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

10. I become more motivated to speak in class if I my instructor doesn't mind Arabic slips in my sentences.

- a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

3. My ESL class should have an "English only policy", that means no Arabic is allowed in class.

- a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

11. I feel more comfortable practicing the language in the classroom if I can use Arabic fillers in my sentences without any feelings of guilt.

- a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

5. It is so less time consuming when new vocabularies are translated into Arabic.

- a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

13. As my language acquisition progresses, I feel less and less dependent on Arabic translations.

- a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

12. I become stressed during tests when test instructions are given in English only, and I don't understand what is required.

a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse. Having to speak English only in class makes me feel nervous

- a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

6. I resort to Arabic language with my classmates during group work.

- a. agree b. neutral d. disagree e. refuse

Using Comic Strip Stories to Teach Vocabulary in Intensive Reading Comprehension Courses

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning - Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The present study investigated the using of comic strip stories on vocabulary learning intensive reading comprehension courses among intermediate English learners. To this end, two groups including 66 students were assigned to an experimental and a control group. A vocabulary pre-test was given to the groups to assess learners' knowledge at the beginning of the course. Then the experimental group read the comic strip stories while the control group received reading comprehension passages including the same vocabularies in the comic strip stories. The same topics such as journeys, sports, and food were covered in 15 sessions, each lasted 90 minutes. Intensive reading courses were the same in terms of time, and level of difficulty in materials. Finally, both groups took the post-test of vocabulary which included the same vocabularies of the pre-test but different in formats of items. Independent and Paired Samples t-test was run to discover the differences between the groups in pre and post-tests. The results showed that the experimental group had a significant improvement after treatment on vocabulary learning. In addition, there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The implications of this study may suggest that the use of funny materials may promote the intermediate English learners' vocabulary in intensive reading courses.

Key words: vocabulary learning, comic strip reading books, vocabulary

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Introduction

Vocabulary could be the backbone of reading comprehension in intensive reading courses since the learners should know the meaning, function and the use of the content and function words in studying the reading passages (Shoebottom, 2014). Having studied vocabulary learning instructions, many techniques are revealed. Pesce (2012) in her article describes five best ways to instruct new words to learners: show students illustrations, flashcards, posters, synonyms and antonyms, setting a scene or situation and the substitute it with a new word or phrase, miming and total physical response (*TPR*) which many teachers believe learners who learn best by moving their bodies, actions and imperative mood and the last one is the realia (real-life objects in the *ESL* classroom) which can help to present new words.

Many scholars (e.g., Hanies, 2012) in their studies divide the vocabulary learning into two instructional techniques: incidental learning and intentional learning. Several definitions about these techniques are given by many scholars although Yali (2010) points out the incidental learning is defined as the type of learning that is a by-product of doing or learning something else; whereas, intentional learning is defined as being designed, planned for, or intended by teacher or students. He describes that incidental learning defines the approach of learning vocabulary through texts, working on tasks or doing other activities that are not directly related to vocabulary, whereas the intentional learning always focuses on vocabulary itself, and combines with all kinds of conscious vocabulary learning strategies and means of memorizing words. As stated in Krashen (2013), a large portion of second language (L2) vocabulary knowledge is acquired incidentally in the sense that words are acquired as a natural by-product of children/learners performing everyday linguistics activities and tasks. Incidental learning is the process of learning something without the intention of doing so; It is also learning one thing while intending to learn another.

To acquire vocabulary in incidental mood, many kinds of methods are introduced. Reading comprehension is the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and/or nonverbal messages. Reading comprehension is important for effective communication because 50 percent or more of the time we spend communicating is spent reading comprehension. The optimal goal of L2 intensive reading comprehension development is to allow for the L2 to be acquired through reading comprehension. Vocabulary is precisely one of the language components that can be acquired through training in reading comprehension.

Nowadays, there is a tendency toward using media to aid and supplement educational objectives. At real life English, it is believed that language learning should be fun so the better way to enjoy learning the English language through comic strips. The most frequently mentioned asset of comics as an educational tool is its ability to motivate students. A comic strip is defined as a sequence of drawings arranged in interrelated panels to display brief humor or form a narrative, often serialized, and usually arranged horizontally, with text in balloons and captions (Liu, 2004; Haines, 2012; Merc, 2013). Based on Liu (2004), a comic strip is described as a series of pictures inside boxes that tell a story. Among visual genres, comic strips catch many researchers' attention because they are communicative, popular, accessible, and readable; Comic strips communicate using two major media—words and images—a somewhat arbitrary separation because comic strips' expressive potential lies in skillfully employing words and images together.

Comics can teach children to infer meaning from the visual first. Comics must include pictures; you can even tell a story without words. The benefits of using comics in the classroom in agreement with Hanies (2012) are certainly great, both in increasing literacy and in addressing the educational needs of differentiated learners, so the teacher chooses and uses world with particular care to keep the students and the other space for growth in vocabulary and language development.

Literature Review

Teaching English Vocabulary

The use of graphic novels in language classrooms has a short history; therefore its literature is rather limited. Although there are not many comprehensive studies assessing their impact as teaching tools, the feedback from educators and scholars as to the use of graphic novels in language classrooms is a clear indication of their worth as a pedagogical tool (Yildirim, 2013) . Comic Book Classroom was founded in Denver, Colorado in 2010. Comic Book Classroom is a standard-based curriculum that examines and explores age-appropriate comic literature with the intent of furthering literacy and introducing students to book culture in the larger scope. As Baker (2011) defines graphic novels are a subset of the comic genre. Both terms will be used in this research. Comics and graphic novels both use graphics and text to tell a story. In addition, the goal is to teach students not just reading and art skills, but engage them in discussions about the texts that may help them tackle problems in their own lives and communities. The use of comics in education is based on the concept of creating engagement and motivation for students.

Wright (2001) claims the effectiveness of comics as medium for effective learning and development has been the subject of debate since the origin modern comic book in the 1930s. The use of comics in education would later attract the attention of Fredric Wertham who noted that the use of comics in education represented "an all-time low in American science. The use of cartoons in your teaching has several advantages: they give life to classrooms, they promote students engagement, they improve students' learning, they prolong student's attention span, and they also enhance student's communicative and linguistic competences.

Liu (2004) in his article talked about the role of comic strips on ESL learners' reading comprehension .He has two different students' levels of proficiency (low & high) with and without a comic strip. This study suggests that the reading comprehension of the low-level students was greatly facilitated when the comic strip repeated the information presented in the text. He noted that the effect of comic strips on reading comprehension largely depends on the quality of the repetition effect. The study's results also imply that the advantage of providing comic strips with reading text diminishes when the student has difficulty comprehending the text. After analyzing the results, it was said that low-level students receiving the high-level text with the comic strip scored significantly higher than their counterparts receiving the high-level text only.

Lang (2009) evaluates comic strip has very consequential role in the English classroom, he defines comics are the most widely read media throughout the world – especially in Japan. As he describes problem of language teachers: constantly searching for new innovative and motivating authentic material to enhance learning in the formal classroom. A textbook is made of material that has been altered and simplified for the learner. He notes some characteristics that make comics thus attractive as an educational tool: a built-in desire to

learn through comics, easy accessibility in daily newspapers, ingenious way in which this authentic medium depicts real-life language, people and society and eventually variety of visual and linguistic elements and codes that appeal to students with different learning styles. Furthermore, he suggests comics can be used: a) to practice describing characters using adjectives (e.g., Garfield is a very troublesome cat), b) to learn synonyms and antonyms to expand vocabulary, c) to practice writing direct speech (e.g., 'Hey, move your car!') and reported speech (The man told him to move his car.), d) to practice formation of different verb tenses(i.e., changing the present tense of the action in the strip to the past tense), e) to practice telling the story of a sequentially ordered comic strip that has been scrambled up and finally, f) to reinforce the use of time-sequence transition words to maintain the unity of a paragraph or story (e.g., First, the boy left for school. Next, he . . .).

Based on Bowkett's (2011) book, he uses children's interest in pictures, comics and graphic novels as a way of developing their creative writing abilities, reading skills. The book's strategy is the use of comic art images as a visual analogue to help children generate, organize and refine their ideas when writing and talking about text. In reading comic books children are engaging with highly complex and structured narrative forms. Whether they realize it or not, their emergent visual literacy promotes thinking skills and develops wider Meta-cognitive abilities. Baker (2011) tried to examine the benefits of using comics with English language learners (ELLs). With their bright colors and familiar characters, comics are more appealing than traditional text. The comic represents something different and exciting without sacrificing plot, vocabulary, and other important components of reading comprehension. For these reason and many more, comics might also play an important role in ELL acquisition of literacy. She expresses many graphic novels are high interest with low reading levels, cover diverse genres such as biographies, and cover current events and social issues. Baker (2011) concurs with comics can be used to teach parts of speech, social situations, historical events, and more. She admits that incorporating text and visuals causes readers to examine the relationship between the two and encourages deep thinking and critical thinking.

According to Bowen (2011), comic strips can be very motivating for learners as the story-line is reinforced by the visual element, which can make them easier to understand. He designed many activities for teaching vocabularies through using comic strips in class: for example he used the comic strip stories in one activity that is cutting up the strip into individual boxes and getting the students to rearrange them into an appropriate order. Another activity is to blank out alternate boxes, so

Khoiriyah (2011) in his thesis used comic stories to improve the students' level of vocabulary. He believes the students identify and study words from the context on the comic reading. Story from comic offers a whole imaginary world, created by language which students can learn and enjoy; this story is designed to entertain. Khoiriyah (2011) endeavors to find out whether there is a significant difference in vocabulary score of student taught using comic stories and those taught using non-comic stories or not. The instrument to collect the data were; observation and test. Observation was only used to support the data about students' imagination on reflected on their engagement in learning processes. The researcher gave two times teaching to both classes, after the treatment the researcher analyzed the obtained data and concluded that the performance of experimental group that used the comic stories for learning vocabulary is better than the control group.

Karakas and Sariçoban (2012) in their study, considered the impact of subtitled animated cartoons on incidental vocabulary learning, and found out that the target words were contextualized and it became easy for participants to elicit the meanings of the words. For the aim of this study the researchers selected 42 first grade teaching students in Turkey. To collect data from the subjects, a 5-point vocabulary knowledge scale was used and 18 target words were integrated into the scale. After subjects had been randomly assigned into two groups (one subtitle group and the other no-subtitle group), they were given the same pre- and post-tests. The general findings of this study supported the common assumption that subtitles and captions are powerful instructional tools in learning vocabulary and improving reading and reading comprehension skills of language learners.

Cimermanova (2014) believes the role of graphic novels in foreign language teaching, too. Using pictures, storytelling, and creative writing are the activities used more or less regularly in foreign language teaching. She admits that in language teaching picture books present an authentic material. Her article discussed the possibilities of using picture books in language teaching and presents the qualitative case study results focused on effectiveness of using wordless picture books. Cimermanova (2014) conveys reading graphic novels brings authentic material to the EFL class and encourages students' critical thinking. She agrees that the use of picture books contributed to a recognition that it is important to "read" the illustrations that may influence our perception, that details are important for understanding the complexity of the whole.

To learn vocabulary incidentally, the learners may encounter many obstacles and restriction or problems, all researchers that studied these issues proposed to work out these problems. They used many techniques to learn vocabulary through four skills, this study tries to focus the reading comprehension techniques for learning vocabulary (the receptive learning) and as you read many articles, there are many ways for learning incidental vocabulary. As Mousavi and Gholami (2014) state new methods of English language teaching should use new materials to draw learners' attention for acquisition of English language. To put it another way, nowadays there is a tendency toward using media to aid and supplement educational objectives. This study focused on the research question of: Does using comic strip stories facilitate learning vocabulary in intensive reading courses?

Methodology

Participants

The participants of this study were 66 intermediate level EFL learners in Islamic Abadan University majoring in English Language Translation. They are male and female and with the age ranging between 18 to 46 years old. They were selected based on non-random judgment sampling in two intact classes, each included 33 learners. One class was assigned to an experimental group (i.e., learning vocabulary in intensive reading courses through comic strip stories) and a control group (i.e., received traditional textbook of reading comprehension at the intermediate level. The participants were non-native English speakers and their mother tongue was Farsi.

Instrumentation

The pre-test for both experimental and control groups included 40 items of vocabulary included in the comic strip stories and the textbook. The pre-test was a teacher-made test and its reliability was assessed through piloting on 10 learners other than the participants of the study with the same level of proficiency. The test final score was 40 and the time allocated to the responders was 40 minutes.

The reliability coefficient was calculated through KR-21 formula as ($r=.825$). The pre-test was administered at the beginning of the intensive reading comprehension course.

Procedure

The participants were selected in two intact classes and took a pre-test of vocabulary developed by the teacher and its reliability and validity were observed before conducting the pre-test. Then the classes were assigned to the experimental and control groups. The experimental group used the comic strip series while the control group dealt with the traditional text book included reading passages. The topics were used in both classes had the shared titles, level of difficulty (i.e., intermediate level), and the number of vocabularies. The participants in the experimental group read the series of comic strips and follow the story to arrive at the main ideas of the lesson. The teacher asked the learners to give definitions, synonyms, and antonyms to clarify the meaning of the texts. The control group received the same procedures but the difference was in the texts which were a whole passage without series of events. Thus the learners study the text and the teacher helped them to comprehend the passages. The treatment lasted for 15 sessions, each 90 minutes in Fall semester 2015. Finally, the post-test including 40 items was extracted from the classroom materials and administered to both groups. Data of the pre and post-tests were analyzed through Independent and Paired Samples *t*-test to find ant differences between the groups before and after the treatment.

Results

Descriptive statistics was calculated to show the participants' performance of the pre-test of vocabulary at the beginning of the course. The analysis on the pre-test was conducted to find any significant differences between the two groups' vocabulary knowledge on the pre-test through the Independent Samples *t*-test in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics (Experimental and Control Groups' pre and post-tests)

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pre-test	Experimental	33	18.5455	12.60479	2.19421
	Control	33	18.0303	11.20124	1.94989
Post-test	Experimental	33	28.1515	9.50698	1.65495
	Control	33	20.3636	9.64306	1.67864

Table 1 presents both groups' descriptive statistics on the pre and post-tests. The means of both groups are somehow close in the pre-tests but both groups are different in the post-tests. Since the means cannot show the significant difference, the Independent Samples *t*-test can depict the significant difference between the two groups in Table 2.

Table 2: Independent Samples t- Test (Experimental and Control Groups' pre and post-tests)

Tests		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Pre-test (Experimental vs. Control)	Equal variances assumed	.917	.342	.175	64	.861	.515	2.935	-5.349	6.379
	Equal variances not assumed			.175	63.12	.861	.515	2.935	-5.350	6.380
Post-test (Experimental vs. Control)	Equal variances assumed	.371	.545	3.304	64	.002	7.787	2.357	3.078	12.497
	Equal variances not assumed			3.304	63.98	.002	7.787	2.357	3.078	12.497

Table 2 shows the difference between pre-tests of the experimental and control groups is significant since the observed t (.175) is less than the critical t (2.000) with $df=64$. Thus the two groups' performance in the pre-test is homogeneous at the beginning of the course. The results of the both groups' post-tests show that the observed t (3.304) is greater than the critical t (2.000) with $df=64$. Thus the two groups' performance in the post-test is significantly different. Paired Samples t-test was run to find the difference between the pre and post-tests in each group. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Paired Samples t-test (Each Group's pre and post-tests)

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				(2-tailed)
Tests					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre-test (Exp.)	-9.606	16.505	2.873	-15.458	-3.75	-	32	.00
	Post-test (Exp.)						3.34		.2
Pair 2	Pre-test (Control)	-2.333	13.268	2.309	-7.037	2.37	-	32	.32
	Post-test (Control)						1.01		0

Table 3 indicates the descriptive statistics of each group's pre and post-test. Paired Samples t-test was run to find the significant difference between the pre and post-test of each group. Results show that the difference between the pre and post-test of the experimental group is significant since the observed t (-3.343) is greater than the critical t (2.042) with df=32. However, the pre and post-test in the control groups is not significant since the observed t (-1.010) is less than the critical t (2.042) with df=32.

Discussion

Findings of the study suggest that the mean scores of pre-test of both groups were very close to each other. It is assumed from this finding that both groups had similar knowledge about the target words before they were exposed to the treatment. The development in each group was measured through *t*-test which demonstrated that there was an improvement in each group and also the scores of all participants in two groups on post-test had been progressed. It is clear that high differences in mean score of each group show that both groups after passing the treatment accompanied by using comic strip stories have promoted on post-test scores. Results indicated the differences in mean scores in both groups were significant, ($p < 0.05$). To answer the research question and rejecting the null hypothesis, Independent Samples *t*-test was run among all participants' scores on post-test. Regarding the comparison of mean differences in groups A and B, it might be concluded that there were significant differences between two groups while progress in group A is slightly more than group B. Thus, it might be concluded that what facilitated the improvement in vocabulary knowledge was related to reading comic strip stories while using comic pictures can have more impact on acquiring incidental vocabulary in relation to only reading these stories. Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected and it is concluded that comic strip stories can affect on incidental vocabulary learning. However, by comparing the results of two groups by using independent *t*-test, the difference between two groups was significant, so the experimental group which used watching pictures of the stories could perform better than other group.

The present study confirms the findings of Lang's (2009) study, who evaluates comic strip has very consequential role in the English classroom, he defines comics are the most widely read media throughout the world. Lang (2009) describes problem of language teachers: constantly searching for new innovative and motivating authentic material to enhance learning in the formal classroom. A textbook is made of material that has been altered and simplified for the learner.

He agreed by using comic books, the learners can learn different kinds of topics in classroom. Like this current study, Liu (2004) in his article talked about the role of comic strips on ESL learners' reading comprehension. He has two different students' levels of proficiency (low & high) with and without a comic strip. The outcome of the present study is compatible with Bowkett's (2011) book, which in his book the author uses children's interest in pictures, comics and graphic novels as a way of developing their creative writing abilities, reading skills. The book's strategy is the use of comic art images as a visual analogue to help children generate, organize and refine their ideas when writing and talking about text. He agrees in reading comic books children are engaging with highly complex and structured narrative forms.

Bowen (2011) describes that comic strips can be very motivating for learners as the story-line is reinforced by the visual element, which can make them easier to understand. There are a number of different ways to use comic strips. He designed many activities for teaching vocabularies through using comic strips in class: for example he used the comic strip stories in one activity that is cutting up the strip into individual boxes and getting the students to rearrange them into an appropriate order. In another study, Khoiriyah (2011) uses comic stories to improve the students' level of vocabulary. He suggests the students identify and study words from the context on the comic reading. His findings infer that the performance of experimental group that used the comic stories for learning vocabulary is better than the control group.

Karakas and Sariçoban (2012) in their study, considered the impact of subtitled animated cartoons on incidental vocabulary learning, and found out that the target words were contextualized and it became easy for participants to elicit the meanings of the words. Their results were in related to the current study which the general findings of this study supported the common assumption that subtitles and captions are powerful instructional tools in learning vocabulary and improving reading comprehension skills of language learners. Moreover, Merc (2013) considered the effects of comic strips on reading comprehension of Turkish EFL learners. In his study students read the texts given and wrote what they remembered about the text on a separate answer sheet. The results of the quantitative analyses show that all students with a comic strip effect, regardless of proficiency and text level, performed better than the ones without the comic strips.

Conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating the effect of comic strip stories on incidental vocabulary learning of intermediate Iranian EFL learners group. This study showed Iranian EFL learners picking up the meaning of unfamiliar words encountered incidentally in task materials as they read comic strip books. The results of the study showed that comic strip stories had statistically meaningful effect on the performance of language learners on acquiring incidental vocabulary. Findings from the study show that after treatment both experimental group and control group have improved in their results on post-test. In addition, independent sample *t-test* between two groups indicates that the results of experimental group in comparison of the results of control group were better and their performance was more excellent too. As a whole, it seems that reading comic strips affected the L2 learners' performance on the incidental vocabulary learning. It can be concluded from the findings of the current study that comic pictures of such strip books can influence on better vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, the low acquisition rate of word meaning found here, as well as in other incidental learning studies, emphasizes once more the importance of combining incidental learning with some sort of explicit focus. Subsequently, the findings of this study

reveal that incidental vocabulary acquisition in reading modes by using various methods can indeed occur and that comic strip story might be an effective tool to support vocabulary learning. The findings of this study also present that vocabulary development is a long lasting process that needs to be supported by contextual clues.

Finally, as the research interest of this study, comic strip use had a significant effect on students' recall of both intermediate EFL learner groups who used the reading for fun method to acquire the new words. This study found that comic strip use noticeably facilitated the reading comprehension of students at the intermediate level. Once again, it was proved that students be provided texts with a visual material, the comic strips in particular, in their intensive reading comprehension classrooms.



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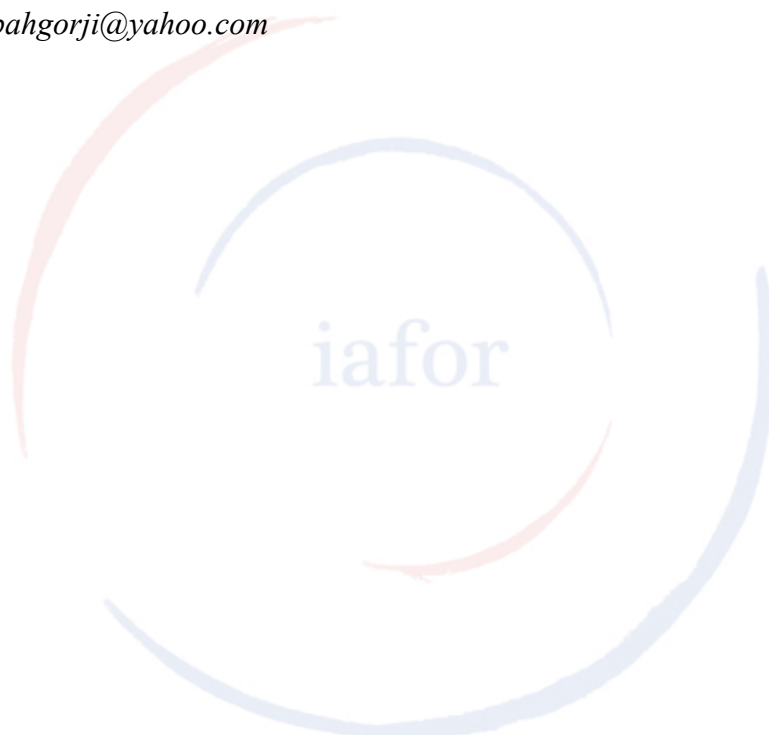
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Translation: An Effective Tool for Teaching Yoruba English

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning – Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Many scholars have defined translation in different ways (Bamgbose, 1985; Babalola, 1996; Adeoti, 1996; Adeleke, 2000 and Crystal, 2001). The importance of teaching and learning cannot be overemphasized especially in a multi-lingual society like Nigeria generally and specially Lagos state Nigeria, West Africa. This paper considers the importance of translation as a device in teaching languages in Nigeria especially English (Nigeria's lingua franca) and Yoruba language (a major language spoken in the Western part of Nigeria). The emphasis is on three tiers in translation- word for word (through semantic coinage and borrowings), literary translation and free translation which involves the adoption of suitable explanatory ways. It then makes examples of how translation in English and Yoruba can be most effective in expanding the scope of language in lexicon. This paper is based on a research carried out among selected Secondary Schools in Lagos state notably Amuwo Odofin, Ojo and Badagry Local Government Areas. The resultant effect is that, though there were interfering code switching and code mixing in language, but translation serves as a better way (a veritable tool of teaching languages) and therefore ameliorates the problems therein.

Keywords: Translation, Teaching, Yoruba and English Language, Multilingual

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Introduction

Language is basic for societal development. It is an indispensable fact that language teaches all phases of life, especially the cultural heritage which finds its expression mainly in language. The language of the environment encourages a balanced development of a child in a holistic way. In a multilingual environment where speakers employ two or more different languages to communicate, translation often occurs in day to day interaction. This is because it (translation) promotes effective communication in such multilingual setting (Kehinde, 2001).

Several scholars have argued that translation is not a tool for acquiring language. They claimed that translation is boring, irrelevant and restricts learning to mere reading and writing without fulfilling its communication role, (Newson, 1988 and Brown, 2002). Recently, there is a shift towards the use of translation to enhance effective teaching and learning of languages (Mogahed, 2010 and Mehta, 2011). Translation is a linguistic activity which involves the provision of semantic meaning of a source language to a target one. Crystal (2003) sees translation as the neutral term used for all tasks where the meaning of expressions in one language (the source) is into the meaning of another (target), whether the medium is spoken or written. The role of the teacher is to help the learners acquire language and improve on his knowledge of the language.

Adeoti (1996:3), views translation in line with Karla (1987) when he says;

Comprehending the author's meaning and restating that meaning in another language in such a way in which the author would most probably have expressed himself or herself, had he or she been a native speaker of the target language

Adeleke (2000; 156,) asserts that it is the translating of word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, quotation or a whole text from one language to another. In the academic circles (as said earlier) translation was an abandoned method of teaching language especially grammar.

This Adeoti (1996:3) asserted when he says;

...not much attention has been given to translation...
it's taught as a topic in Yoruba language and most often than not,
teachers and students don't pay attention to....

Translation as a Tool for Effective Teaching in Basic Class

As a tool, translation is an instrument to achieve desired goals, so the teacher can combine varieties of teaching strategy to impart and improve students' learning. The use of translation has the tendency to ensure great effects as it gives room for active participation in studying

The levels of translation include:

Word for word: This is done through semantic borrowing and loan words

Literal translation: This involves translation in a literary form not tampering with semantic meaning or the text. It gives room for the inclusion of rhetorical devices of the text.

The free translation: This involves adoption of suitable explanatory convention with semantic meaning

Basic Education in Nigeria is that which children receive after primary education otherwise known as (JSS1- JSS3) before moving to the Senior Secondary level. The specific goal of the Basic Class is to develop and promote Nigerian languages, art and culture in the context of the world cultural heritage. It is for the duration of three years. It involves children between the ages of 11-15 years. Basic education refers to the whole range of educational activities taking place in various settings (formal, non-formal and informal), that aims at meeting basic learning needs.

Nigerian Languages

The history of indigenous language for instruction in school dated back to 1935 when the missionaries encouraged children to be instructed at the early primary level in Nigerian languages and thereafter introduced the languages of the environment or mother tongue as a subject (Fafunwa, 1989 and Bamgbose and Akere1991) Researches have confirmed that there are more than four hundred languages in Nigeria. Therefore, the issue of mother tongue as a medium of instruction has attracted many researchers (Oderinde, 1990; Bamgbose, 1992) Also, experiments have shown that using the mother tongue or indigenous language in teaching is the best approach for a child (Afolayan, 1976) In fact, it has been confirmed that a child achieves better result when taught in indigenous languages. This is why the Federal Government of Nigeria has sponsored the standardization of indigenous languages (Alamu, 2009).

As rightly observed (Adeyanju, 1980; Bamgbose, 1991; Adeleke, 2000; Iwara, 2008; Adeniyi, 2013 and Kehinde, 2013) The Nigerian child is faced with challenges of language of instruction as the society is a multilingual one. This problem, however, is eradicated by the Federal Government policy which chose the major Nigerian languages –Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba (one of our languages of concern).

Yoruba, a Language being taught at the junior secondary classes has the following goals for its teaching:

- A Ni imo bi a se nlo ede Yoruba ni ona to yato ni siso tabi ni kiko sile
(To have the knowledge and ability to speak and write Yoruba)
- B Faramo asa isese abinibi
(Be a lover of traditional value)
- C Siso Yoruba to dan moran lenu
(Speak fluently the language)

For these objectives to be achieved there is a need to find a more appropriate way to disseminate information to the learners and the translation method is an ideal one. The complaint that pupils are not interested in taking Nigerian languages as a subject has been the major concern of the language educationists and policy makers (Kehinde, 2012 and Alamu, 2012) This situation has led to the cancellation of the teaching of the subject in some schools.

English Language as a Subject

English language is recognized as a Lingual Franca that links people of different cultures and languages. It is also the language of commerce. Bamgbose (1991) concludes that English language brings many ethnic groups together as it is a natural language in Lagos state which can be termed as “a mini Nigeria” (Lagos is a cluster of many ethnic groups living together in the same environment).

The impart of the language is succinctly stated in the words of Adejumobi (2009)

‘In the wildest exercise of its dominion it reduces other
languages to mere beggars’

Also, national speeches are made in English, as the constitution of Nigeria also encourages the use of it. i.e

The business of the National Assembly shall be conducted
in English and in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba when adequate
arrangements have been made.(Section 55 of Constitution)

Therefore, It is interesting to note that Yoruba, a major Nigerian Language (which is part of our focus) is expected to be used at this level. Based on the aforementioned, it is an understatement that effective teaching and learning of the language should be ensured.

Lagos State in Nigeria

Lagos is an administrative division of the Federal Republic of Nigeria created on the 27th of May, 1967. It is located in the South-Western geo-political zone of Nigeria. It used to be the political and economic capital of Nigeria that is why, it is referred to as the seat of power. But it ceased to be the Nigerian Political Capital with the movement of the Federal Capital Territory to Abuja.

It is an Island bounded in the North and East by Ogun State, then in the West by the Benin Republic. Yoruba is the indigenous language of the people of Lagos State (who are mainly Awori, Epe and Egun (Ogu). It remains the second official language of discussion and debate throughout the state.

English language which remains as a commercial and economic language, that is, the state is essentially a Yoruba speaking environment. However, the state has attracted a cross section of people moving from their environment to reside Lagos state, thus creating a new and unique culture. Indeed, Lagos is a meeting point of all ethnic groups in Nigeria.

Rationale for The Research

The decision to carry out this research is as a result of a number of observations in the teaching and learning of English and Yoruba. Most importantly, the challenges identified during the conference of Yoruba scholars on the teaching of Nigerian languages especially Yoruba in Lagos state.

Statement of Problem

That the teaching and learning of Nigerian languages is not taken serious is no news in Nigeria. Researchers from notable scholars show that the teaching and learning of this indigenous language which is as important as the people is being looked down on (Bamgbose, 1971; Awobuluyi 2010). It is an indisputable fact that language is the carrier of the culture and heritage of its speaker. The implementation of the laid down policy (National Policy on Education, 2014) is being faintly pursued (Kehinde, 2010, 2013; Iwara 2008). Therefore, there is need to look for a more effective way of teaching to enable the learners acquire, that is, a better way of teaching so that teaching learning process can take place and have impart on the learner.

Significance of The Study

The purpose of this study is to encourage the teachers of Yoruba (or rather of Nigerian languages) to make use of the translation technique in teaching the pupils. It will provide a constructive way of teaching English and Yoruba and vice versa to the students in Basic classes (Junior Secondary School) thereby making the learners to have interest in the subject. The study will help the students, teachers, curricular planners, policy makers and implementers to plan their strategies for teaching so as to achieve the desired objectives for teaching Nigerian languages as laid down in the National Policy on Education.

Population and Sample

The research was carried out in 30 schools within Education District 5 comprising: Amuwo Odofin, Ojo and Badagry Educational Zones of Lagos state. 10 schools were selected from each Local Government Area. 18 qualified teachers with Certificate in Education (NCE) qualification and first degree graduates with background in English and Yoruba were observed, all teaching Yoruba and English language.

The population observed for this study was randomly selected students and teachers in both private and public schools in Amuwo Odofin, Ojo and Badagry Local Government areas of Lagos state.

Data were collected using a questionnaire and teaching observation check sheets. The oral and written tests were employed to test the students' knowledge of the subject and whether they have really comprehended the subject or not.

Assessment Through Evaluation

There are 18 Yoruba teachers widely distributed to the zones, there are more female teachers in all the zones

Number of schools visited in each Local Government Area

Local government	No of school(s)
Amuwo odofin	10
Ojo	10
Badagry	10
TOTAL	30

This study was carried out in ten schools, in each of the three Local Government Area

Status of school:

Local government/Zone	Public	Private	Total
Amuwo odofin	5	5	10
Ojo	5	5	10
Badagry	5	5	10

Five Private and Five public junior secondary schools (Basic Classes) are the focus of this research

Number of Teachers:

Local government/Zone	Female	Male	Qualifications	
			NCE	Degree
Amuwo odofin	4	2	2	4
Ojo	4	2	3	3
Badagry	4	2	-	6

Six teachers were selected from each zone with a total of four females and two males. The reason for the selection of more female was due to the fact that the population of female to male teacher is averagely at the ratio of four females to two males in each local government areas.

Selected Population of students in each class:

Local government	Basic 1 (student in each School)	Basic 2 (Student in each school)	Basic 3 (Student in each School)	Multiple by 10 school
Amuwo Odofin	10	10	10	300 students
Ojo	10	10	10	300 students
Badagry	10	10	10	300 students
Total	300 students	300 students	300 students	900 Students

The research reached out 10 students in each secondary school (Basic Education only) summing up to three hundred students per Local Government Area and a total of nine hundred students in the three local governments Area

Teachers' assessment through evaluation

Response of students to learning Yoruba:

Local government	Very well	Well	Do not show interest at all	Total
Amuwo Odofin	67%	28%	5%	100%
Ojo	68.8%	20.1%	11.1%	100%
Badagry	59.9%	19.9%	20.2%	100%

Questionnaires were distributed to evaluate the response of the students

Attitude of students to continuous assessment

Local government	Positive	Negative	Nonchalant	Total
Amuwo Odofin	71%	22%	7%	100%
Ojo	80%	12.5%	7.5%	100%
Badagry	60.8%	22%	17.2%	100%

Evaluation at the end of the lesson (Performance)

Local government	70% and above	50% - 69%	49% and below	Total
Amuwo Odofin	88%	10%	2%	100%
Ojo	82%	13%	5%	100%
Badagry	85%	10%	5%	100%
Total				

At the end of the lessons taught, the students were assessed and the students' performance was on an average of 70% above, in all three zones.

Did you understand what you were taught?

Local government	Very well	Well	I can't say	Total
Amuwo Odofin	70%	30%	0%	100%
Ojo	60%	38%	2%	100%
Badagry	62%	37%	1%	100%

Achievement Questionnaire –been given to the students

	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	
Learning of Yoruba enhances my performance in class.	42	46	10	2	100%
Learning of Yoruba helps to interpret technological concepts in English and Yoruba.	48	32	17	3	100%
Learning of Yoruba helps in interacting with my peer group and other ethnic group different from my own.	52	28	19	1	100%
I feel proud that I am learning Yoruba	27	68	4	1	100%
Translation method is an effective way of imparting knowledge to me.	63	27	6	4	100%
It teaches me about virtue as viewed by Yoruba.	29	49	15	7	100%
I love to attend Yoruba classes.	10	72	10	8	100%
The class is interesting through translation.	71	16	11	2	100%
There is enough motivation on the part of teachers.	22	72	6	0	100%
There is active participation through exercises in Yoruba language.	82	16	1	1	100%
There is active participation through exercises in Yoruba grammar.	80	19	1	0	100%
There is active participation through exercises in Yoruba culture.	82	9	7	2	100%
There is active participation through exercises in Yoruba proverbs.	86	13	1	0	100%
There is active participation through exercises in Yoruba literature.	82	9	4	5	100%

42% strongly agreed that the learning of Yoruba helps to understand other subjects better while just about 10% of total respondents of a total of 900 students disagreed with that believe.

Five hundred and sixty-seven students (63% of total respondents) strongly agreed that translation is an effective tool in imparting knowledge, while a low percentage of about 6% and 4 % disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

The students strongly agreed that the translation classes are more active during the teaching of grammar, culture and literature. However, ninety respondents disagreed that learning of Yoruba through translation strategy ensures active learning.

The percentage of those who disagreed from question one to fourteen was just a minor percentage of total respondents. This tends to point to the fact that the use of translation is an ideal tool for the teaching Yoruba to non-indigenes and to indigenes to make them understand better

Findings of Study

From the research, it was confirmed that translation encourages thinking in one's language and transferring it to another language, this is very useful in transferring knowledge especially in the area of technology. Not only that, it develops students' ability to read and write very well but more efficiently to communicate in a way that the learners understand the concept of the topic better through translation and in an unconscious manner.

More importantly is the practical aspect of the language. The students enjoy the language especially those learning the language as the second one. They tend to better understand and be encouraged to speak the language.

Code switching as a habit is very common when using translation for teaching, for they tend to switch from one language to the other. Also, code mixing do occur, the learners tends to switch from one language to another unconsciously and mix up the lexical items in the two languages.

These problems are solved later because as time goes on, they master the use of the language and they speak fluently and communicate with one another. Hence, the purpose of national integration is achieved and interaction within the society is attained. The problem of scientific oriented words will be a thing of the past because they will be able to translate in their mother tongue or language of the environment and as time goes on they will be able to speak fluently the target language.

Recommendations

Translation as a method is an ideal one for instruction in the Junior Secondary School to achieve the desired learning in students, and also to attain the objectives set for education. In Yoruba and English, it is a better option for teaching because the students perform better when they are taught through translation method. However, for translation method to be more effective, there is the need for teachers to have a good knowledge of the subject matter so as to make it content based, and the students to be ready to learn and practice actively.

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*Teaching Technical Communication in the Flipped Fashion Way:
A Boost in Active Learning*

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning-Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Abu Dhabi University (ADU) is following the growing trend of offering students learning opportunities that are flexible, innovative and engaging. As an educator working at this university, I am embracing student-centered teaching and learning methodologies, which require continuous reflection and adaptation. To serve this end, the objective of this study is to explore how students experienced student-centered active learning. This project used the Hybrid-Flipped classroom approach to boost active learning that leads to deeper learning when teaching a project-based technical communication course to undergraduate engineering students in ADU. The project used an action research approach to improve the in-class instructional design in a way that maximizes opportunities of deeper learning among students. The flipped classes used a Hybrid-Flipped learning approach that was revisited in a subsequent semester. Hence, aspects of student-centered hybrid learning phases were merged with inquiry-based learning to aid students in exploring concepts necessary for them to complete their group research reports. Data was collected from short interviews held with a focus group taking the course. In addition, a reflective journal was conducted by the teacher. The findings verified that the Hybrid-Flipped classrooms transformed and remodeled the lecture classes into active-learning classes. Adopting inquiry-based activities in the Hybrid-Flipped classes proved successful since it resulted in engaging students in higher-order thinking skills that are necessary for boosting engineering students' academic performance.

Keywords: Hybrid-Flipped Classroom; active learning; technical communication; engineering students

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Introduction

As a student-centered approach to learning, the flipped classroom increases students' active learning making it a more feasible and useful alternative to the traditional classroom-based instruction. The flipped classroom model is designed to first expose students to the required learning material outside of the classroom. The most common forms of learning material include voice-over lectures, educational videos, or even written and audio material. During the face-to-face classroom teaching time, the instructor smooths the path for a student-driven discussion of the material via challenging and thought provoking questions or scenarios that engage students in complex problem solving, encourage peer interaction, and promote deep understanding of the targeted concepts.

Flipped Learning using digital technologies is a relatively new pedagogical model of education. Since more and more universities in the UAE are moving in the direction of integrating technology in the classroom, UAE university teachers are increasingly encouraged to adopt this new pedagogy for the following reasons: (1) it includes teaching and learning methods that meet the demands and expectations of the 21st "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001), (2) it enhances learning outcomes because it is a smartly designed classroom that manages class time in such a way where the use of higher cognitive skills is maximized during class time while the lower cognitive skills come into play in pre-class activities, (3) it creates an opportunity for instructors to both provide feedback that is more relevant to their students' learning needs and receive feedback from their students both about the activities that engaged them in learning and the gaps in their understanding.

Within the tertiary sector, Eric Mazure's work on peer instruction in flipped learning is often highlighted. He emphasized on how assistive technology allowed students to respond and give feedback during peer instruction sessions. This maximized the time available with the instructor and made it possible to increase the focus on higher order thinking skills. "Once you engage the students' minds, there's an eagerness to learn, to master" (Mazure cited in Berrett, 2012). Inspired by those words, this study aims to investigate how undergraduate engineering students experienced student-centered learning in the Hybrid-Flipped classroom designed to boost active learning that leads to deeper learning. This study used the Hybrid-Flipped classroom approach when teaching a project-based technical communication course to undergraduate engineering students at ADU. This course is a pre-requisite to introductory undergraduate engineering major courses. It is intended to equip engineering students with the technical communication tools necessary for them to produce technical reports in their major courses and capstone projects in their senior year.

Action research is adopted to improve the in-class instructional design in a way that maximizes opportunities of deeper learning among students. Students watch online lectures posted on Blackboard Learn (Bb)-the course management system adopted in ADU. The online lectures are created by using Lecture Captivate or via private YouTube videos designed and delivered by the instructor as homework. During the formal class time, students practice, complete assignments, engage in pair and group discussions, reflect via peer interactions, and most importantly have more one-on-one interaction with the instructor while delving into the tasks assigned only to advance towards meeting the desired course learning outcomes. The technical communication

course is project-based and centered on completing a group research report in several stages for a total of 45% within 8-9 weeks of the 13 weeks regular semester. Students need to be equipped with the right tools for their group research journey; thus, aspects of student-centered hybrid learning phases were merged with inquiry-based learning. A qualitative method was used by collecting data from short interviews held with a focus group of ten randomly picked female students from the second cohort who were taking the course. In addition, a reflective journal was conducted by the teacher. The study findings show that the Hybrid-Flipped classrooms transformed and remodeled the traditional lecture classes into active-learning classes. More importantly, the merging of inquiry-based activities with the Hybrid-Flipped classroom approach succeeded in further engaging students in higher-order thinking skills that are essential for enhancing the engineering students' academic performance.

Flipped Classroom: Rethinking Teaching...Rethinking Learning

In 2007, the pioneers of flipped learning, Bergman and Sams (2008) created videos of their science class lectures to deliver the instructional material to absent secondary school students. Surprisingly, students who had already attended the class were also watching the videos because they wanted to reinforce and review the lecture's key concepts. From then onwards, the flipped classroom was in the limelight as educators, researchers, teachers, and most and foremost learners started to evaluate its impact on their quest to gain knowledge and make use of it.

The Flipped Classroom approach entails reorienting the normal class set up by swapping class instruction and homework. Before class – during class- after class pattern of teaching re-orientates the traditional teacher-focused pattern into a student-centered one with goals set for each step of the pattern to actively engage learners of different levels and competencies in meaningful learning. In contrast, a traditional pattern of learning is a one size fits all pattern that transfers knowledge to learners in a passive way.

The flipped classroom approach addresses the learning needs of not only low-achieving students but also the advanced ones. It is adaptable to the learner's needs in the sense that it gives advanced students the opportunity to learn independently while allowing struggling students to revise content and synthesize the material at their own pace as opposed to feeling frustrated due to lagging behind. Learners can “pause to reflect on what is being said, rewind to hear it again, listen to as much or as little of the lecture as their schedules permit, and view the lecture on a mobile device rather than in a fixed location” (Talbert, 2012). Zownorega (2013) states another advantage of the flipped approach highlighting that, “With the flipped method, a student can refresh their memory before a unit exam or at any moment in the educational experience.”

During class time, students concentrate on internalizing the material. This is done with the support of their instructor and the help of their peers. As watching instructional videos turns into an established routine before the class time, learners become more autonomous and self-directed since they can identify their learning goals and make informed decisions. Pearson (2013) stresses that, “flipping the classroom creates the potential for active, engaged, student-centered learning, peer interactions, and personalized instruction.” To help learners overcome learning

hurdles, the flipped classroom approach offers differentiated instruction as it accommodates students' diverse learning styles. Active learning refers to effective student-centered approaches that increase student learning and achievement. It is generally associated with enhanced student academic performance (Michael, 2006; Freeman, 2007, Chaplin, 2009). It is defined as “the process of having students engage in some activity that forces them to reflect upon ideas and how they are using those ideas” (Michael, 2006). Teachers using student-centered active learning approaches engage students in actively constructing knowledge; working with students to evaluate their learning (Huba & Freed, 2000). In active learning, knowledge is acquired within the context in which it will be used; enabling learners to meaningfully apply the information, be responsible for, and have ownership over their learning. The flipped class approach rests on rethinking teaching and learning as “teachers shift direct learning out of the large group learning space and move it into the individual learning space, with the help of one of several technologies” (Pearson, 2013).

The Bold and the Blended make Flipping Work!

A successful flipped class does not happen by replacing yourself with a video or by being proficient in communicating the subject's content. It is about being bold enough to take the risk of transforming your all-knowing teacher role- the source and provider of all knowledge- to a guide who skillfully and professionally facilitates learning. Flipped classroom instruction is not a simple and artless video recording. Its success rests on a make-over of the teacher's role. No longer in the comfort zone of being a lecturer- the source of knowledge, the sage on the stage but transformed into a risk-taker, a guide on the side that designs and assembles rather than teaches. In fact, the role of the flipped classroom instructor includes the same features outlined for the transformed instructor as highlighted by McWilliam (2008, p. 265):

- reduced instruction time while more time is dedicated to being a participant in the learning action;
- transforming from risk-minimizing teacher to risk-taker;
- moving from classroom editor-teacher to designer and assembler;
- seeking authentic evaluation of students' work

As the flip in roles takes place and the sage becomes a guide, the flipped classroom sets off a paradigm shift in the teaching methodology. This shift from the transmission mode leads to more productive learning outcomes, allows more practical learning during class time, enables more student engagement and differentiated learning, and allows students to be self-directed learners who can build on their strengths and interests and take advantage of the instructional time inside the borders of the classroom. (Bergmann& Sams, 2014). The challenges that the professional educator face when teaching in the flipped fashion way are not be taken for granted.

By embracing Bloom's taxonomy, the flipped classroom approach works only when all the levels; high and low, are activated. This demands from the professional educator to design the in-class activities in a way that activates the higher levels of cognitive skills manifested in applying, analyzing, synthesizing and/or evaluating and creating. However, the low order cognitive skills of understanding and remembering are activated by pre-class activities using educational digital technologies to create an engaging blended learning experience for the students.

Background and need for the study

On an institutional level, blended learning has been advocated financially, logistically, and technically in ADU and other renowned private and governmental universities in the UAE. It is the new direction that is facilitated for faculty to adopt and apply in ADU undergraduate classrooms. The UAE is taking strides to employ information and communication technology (ICT) in the classroom. Yet, an overview of literature shows that very few studies have been conducted so far on the use of flipped learning in the UAE context. Only a scant number of peer-reviewed studies of flipped learning pedagogy exist at the tertiary level of education in the UAE context. A few exist at the high school level or college foundation level which include (Fallows, 2013; Farah, 2014; and Engin and Donanci, 2014).

ADU's General Education program offers Technical Communication (ENG-305) to undergraduate engineering students as a pre-requisite core course. As ADU's College of Engineering has been seeking ABET accreditation for a number of its undergraduate programs, this course had to be revamped to prepare undergraduate engineering students with the technical communication skills that would enable them to be lifelong and self-directed learners; traits sought after by the ABET accreditation (ABET, 2010). Re-designed to be project-based and focused on researching contemporary topics related to the different fields of engineering majors, the new version of the course as introduced in (Spring 2014-2015) is based on group problem-driven learning. However, a traditional classroom does not lend itself to a group based active learning environment because class time is dominated by lecturing and limited classroom interactions. A more suitable method of instruction necessary to meet the learning outcomes of engineering education should include aspects of importance to the engineering profession: inter-disciplinary, group projects tackling real-world problems, and being self-directed. (Hmelo-Silver, 2004; Smith, et al., 2005).

Introducing a Hybrid-Flipped classroom approach to teach Technical Communication enables undergraduate engineering students to capitalize on the facilitator's assistance, peer, and collaborative group projects to solve problems situated in a real-world context. Effective technical communication is required of the student or professional engineer throughout his or her career. Technical writing that communicates well depends upon being clear, concise, well organized, visually intelligible, and grammatically correct. Students find this course demanding since they need to gain linguistic, communicative, and teamwork skills and apply them in real-life professional and workplace contexts. How to facilitate this acquisition and help learners improve their technical communication skills presents a major challenge to faculty teaching technical communication. Studies investigating the flipped model are mostly concerned with students' experience. Little attention is dedicated to whether learning outcomes are enhanced by flipping.

Purpose of the Study

Engineering students confront many technical communication challenges in the usual 'one-size-fits-all' learning environment (Pearson, 2013). With the abundance of information and educational technology platforms, changing the methods of teaching is vital since online learning allows more individualized and modeled learning. The adoption of the Hybrid-Flipped classroom approach as part of blended learning is found to transform the learning experience and move it from inside the restricted

brick and mortar to almost anywhere while allowing the learner freedom in relation to time and content. It empowers students with the motivation and skills needed to enrich their learning and give them the opportunity to be active learners where they are more involved in their own learning. (Zappe et al., 2009). The Hybrid-Flipped classroom approach does not aim to replace existing student-centered methods. It, however, attempts to provide teachers with a new approach to teaching Technical Communication to undergraduate engineering students.

Significance of the study

This study uses an action research approach to examine the effect of flipping classroom instruction on undergraduate engineering students' achievement in the technical communication course. Its significance lies in meeting three goals:

- Contribute to the existing literature on the flipped model and its application in undergraduate courses within the context of UAE's higher education.
- Encourage the use of the flipped instruction in English language classes as a possible method of addressing the technical writing difficulties that undergraduate engineering students face.
- Provide a teaching method that could enhance students' motivation and autonomy and address individual needs.
-

The key factor behind this research study is related to the increased need of transforming the educational approach in a highly technological environment, and to equip engineering students with better technical communication abilities in a limited period of time. The Hybrid-Flipped approach might be potentially more motivating and promising for today's millennial learners.

Research Questions of the study

The present study aims at answering the following research questions:

1. Does the Flipped Classroom Model that is merged with inquiry-based learning maximize the engineering students' attainment of the course learning outcomes?
2. How does the Flipped Classroom model that is merged with inquiry-based learning boost the students' active learning in the group project research?

Research Method

The project used an action research approach to improve the in-class instructional design in a way that maximizes opportunities of deeper learning among students. The course is only 13 weeks with both theory and practice content interrelated and paired. This course was redesigned by the College of Engineering curriculum committee in coordination with University College which offers the course. The aim was to equip undergraduate engineering junior students with effective technical communication skills. The course is practical-based and the enrollment is capped at 30 in all sections. The flipped classes used a Hybrid-Flipped learning approach where students watch 7-20 minutes long online lectures designed and delivered by their instructor as homework and/or watch the videos and animations offered by the multimedia library of the course's smart e-book (Technical Communication Today by Richard Johnson-Sheehan 2015). This e-book facilitates student-centered learning as students are encouraged to be autonomous self-directed learners taking charge of their own

learning path. The instructor-created online lectures are 6 in total. Each online lecture is designed to be interactive and engaging. Learners don't just listen. They are guided to what is important, their deep learning is induced, and their understanding is self-assessed via concept-checking questions followed by feedback. Hence, first exposure to the new material is completed before they come to class. When they attend the next class, they are prepared to apply what they've learned guided by the instructor. The assimilation of knowledge gained is formatively assessed through discussion, problem solving, and application.

To complete this phase, students go through an online timed comprehension self-test that counts for their participation. Then students complete their assignments and practice in the class with the instructor as a guide on the side. Aspects of student-centered blended learning phases were merged with inquiry-based learning to aid students in exploring the course's concepts in general and those necessary for them to complete their group research projects in particular. To do this, a third instructional tool was utilized in this Hybrid-Flipped classroom which is the Bb Discussion feature. It is used to formatively assess students' understanding and the quality of the assimilated knowledge gained. It is used in the class or out of the class to create an interactive environment. Students give instant peer-feedback or get prompt instructor's feedback.

Data was collected from short interviews held with a focus group consisting of 10 randomly chosen female undergraduate engineering students. Those students were enrolled with the second cohort taking the course in its new version (Fall 2015-2016) where the 2nd Hybrid-Flipped classroom process model was used. The key questions with which the focus group were addressed with revolved around their experience in the flipped class in terms of learning and applying the concepts taught. In addition, the course file comprehensive review evidence of learning outcomes (LOs) attainment in (Spring 2014-2015) is reflected upon in comparison with that of (Fall 2015-2016) and a reflective journal was conducted by the course instructor-the researcher. The course has the following seven course learning outcomes:

- LO1: recognize different types of technical documents and their characteristics;
- LO2: apply effective verbal and visual technical writing techniques to promote usability and organization of different types of technical document;
- LO3: develop and apply effective communication techniques in career search
- LO4: develop effective technical writing skills as applied to major project reports on contemporary topics;
- LO5: document planning procedures and timeline throughout project progress;
- LO6: develop ethically and persuasively a range of writing processes to respond to different technical contexts and audiences;
- LO7: demonstrate ability to work in multidisciplinary teams.

According to the substantial body of current research on student-centered strategies, active learning has been associated with the following characteristics:

- *Improved student academic performance* which can be measured by the course comprehensive review results- an analysis adopted in ADU to be included in the course file. It has both quantitative and qualitative measures of LO attainment.
- *Increased student engagement and better attitude to learning* and this can be measured by the group project dynamics, Bb discussion boards, focus group short interviews, and the instructor's reflections.
- *Deep learning* and this can be measured by students' ability to retrieve information and apply it in the bigger context and look for meaning in their learning.

Hence, a boost in active learning in the flipped classroom model is examined within the scope of these themes

1st Hybrid-Flipped Process Model

In the 1st Hybrid-Flipped Process Model adopted in (Spring 2014-2015), the students' experience with the flipped classroom consisted of two steps, as illustrated in Figure 1. In the first step, students watch an online lecture as homework before class. This step is designed to provide students with outside the class first exposure to new material. The second step engaged the students in active learning in class. During this stage students worked on their contemporary engineering group project topics revolving around real-world problems. Class time is prearranged for hands-on activities with the teacher being a guide on the side. Group problem-driven learning activities plus formative feedback encouraged active learning and triggered higher-order thinking skills.

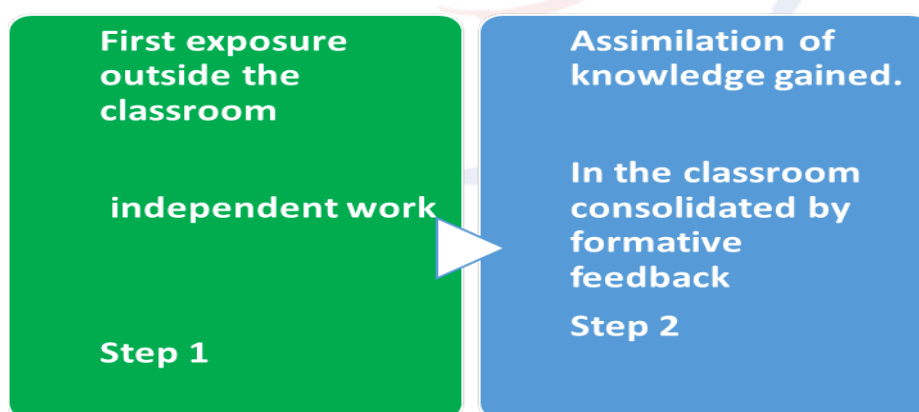


Figure 1. 1st Hybrid-Flipped Process Model

2nd Hybrid-Flipped Process Model

The 2nd Flipped Process Model adopted in (Fall 2015-2016) included three major steps as is illustrated in Figure 2. The first step involved in-class learning activities focusing on exploration of concepts where students would perform hands-on activities designed to investigate the concept, and included discussion on various probabilities with the intention to lead to an understanding of the concept. The course's smart e-book was effectively used at this stage since it provided the instructor with animations and videos designed to aid first exposure. The second and third steps were similar to the students' learning steps in the 1st Hybrid-Flipped Process Model, which was to preview an online lecture, followed by concept application in class. In the case of students who did not watch the online lecture before class, they were asked to watch it at the beginning of the lesson and, after watching it, resume class to take part in the active learning phase of the course.

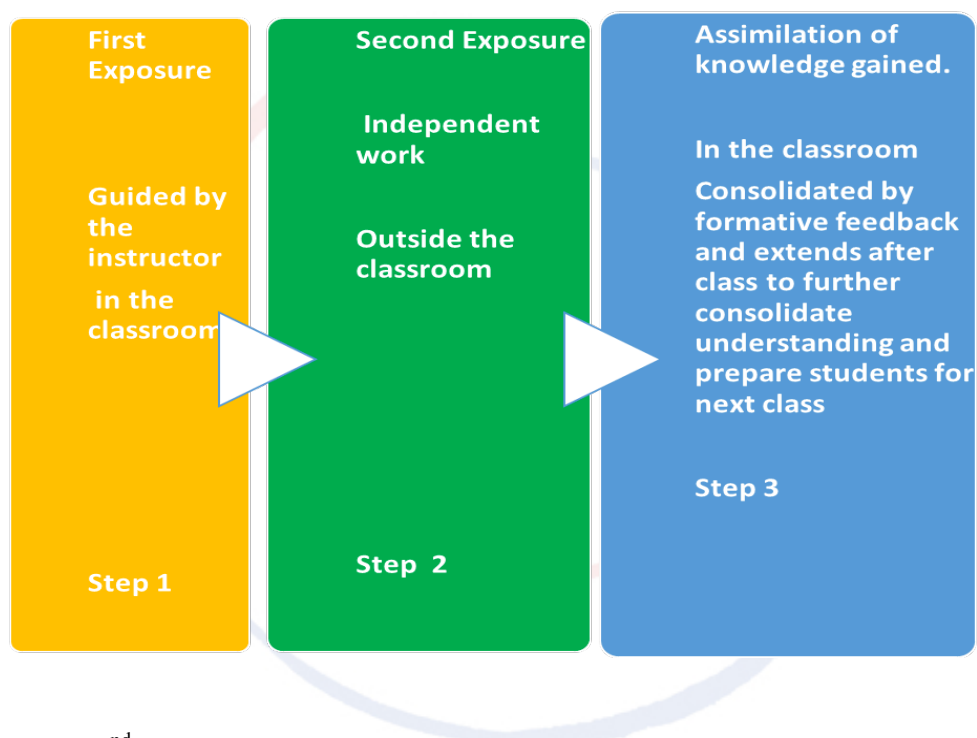


Figure 2. 2nd Hybrid-Flipped Process Model

In the second model there are two stages of priming or exposure (one in-class and the other out-of-class)-both are inquiry-based. This is where the second model diverges from the well-known flipped pattern manifested in the 1st Hybrid-Flipped Process Model. The 2nd Hybrid Flipped Process Model has proved more useful for the undergraduate engineering students as their expectation and focus deemed them unready for the responsibility and independence demanded to engage with flipped instruction without the scaffolding and support of double priming.

Important Findings and Discussion

The analysis of the qualitative data was based on the determined themes that indicate active learning. These themes fall within the framework of the study's research questions- how the Hybrid-Flipped classroom improved the students' attainment of the course learning outcomes, and whether the inquiry-based learning used to revisit the 1st Hybrid-Flipped Process Model boosted the students' active learning.

- The findings verified that the Hybrid-Flipped classrooms transformed and remodeled the lecture classes into student-centered active-learning classes.
- Adopting inquiry-based activities in the Hybrid-Flipped classes proved successful since it resulted in engaging students in higher-order thinking skills that are necessary for boosting the engineering students' academic performance.

The students' attainment of CLOs during Fall 2015-2016 (2nd Hybrid-Flipped Process Model + Inquiry-based learning) are overall higher than those of the CLOs during Spring 2014- 2015 (1st Hybrid-Flipped Process Model). CLOs attainment in 1st Flipped Model vs. 2nd Flipped Model are illustrated in Table 1 and Table 2 respectively.

CLO	Fall 2015-2016 class average of CLO attainment	CLO	Spring 2014-2015 class average of CLO attainment
LO1	81%	LO1	74%
LO2	83%	LO2	83%
LO3	83%	LO3	86%
LO4	89%	LO4	82%
LO5	86%	LO5	75%
LO6	89%	LO6	82%
LO7	93%	LO7	91%
Table 1		Table 2	

Table 2 shows that student performance and success in meeting the CLOs has increased in all the LOs with the exception of LO3. The slight decrease in percentage can be attributed to the fact that LO3 in (Fall 2015-2016) was assessed by incorporating a co-curricular assignment but a number of students failed to attend and thus lost marks. However, in relation to the first theme of active learning, the results shown in Table 2 prove that the 2nd Hybrid-Flipped Model Process which incorporated a double dose of concept exposure via inquiry-based learning further boosted the active learning of the undergraduate engineering students.

In analysis of the second theme- *increased student engagement and better attitude to learning*, the instructor's reflections on group project dynamics, Bb discussion boards and the qualitative feedback the focus group provided were overall positive. The focus group were asked the same two open-ended questions that are used in ADU's student evaluation of teaching survey (SET). Here are the students' quoted answers for the two questions that were used during the short interviews:

What do you like most about the course?

6 out of 10 students from the focus group stated the following:

1. "The way the instructor gives material and syllabus given is very flexible."
2. "It is perfectly organized. Topic is introduced, then video at home for more on the topic, then Bb discussion or laptop work."
3. "The teaching environment, timely feedback, and ease of communication gives students opportunities to learn better."
4. "The way of teaching is so good that it made me want to come to class."
5. "The course is fun and grabs my attention."
6. "The professor provides videos about everything which is needed while I revise that's the most interesting part."

When answering the same question, 4 out of the 10 respondents highlighted the importance of being involved in the in-class and online video tasks since this has an impact on their learning.

1. "The interactive lectures were good but you don't learn just by watching. For the class work I had to be active and working together to solve the worksheets made it all make sense to me."
2. "The questions in the teacher's videos were easy to answer. I like the class think, pair, share activities because it completed my learning."
3. "I can listen to the video anytime. Once I listened to it while I was getting dressed. I felt ready before taking part in the discussion on Bb and doing the group project work."
4. "The interactive lectures were not just to listen to. It pushes you to search for stuff that are useful for getting the group report done."

What is one way to improve the course?

All the students from the focus group stated their satisfaction yet recommended the following:

1. "increase online classes instead of face to face"
2. "have videos for the theory separate from the ones for practice, not together"

These results indicate that the Hybrid-Flipped classroom provided students with the opportunity to become active learners, engaged, and motivated to do the group problem-driven activities which foster inquiry-learning and build teamwork skills.

Inquiry-based learning fosters *deep learning*, which is the third theme salient to active learning. A common agreement among the respondents was on the usefulness of the interactive lectures and the in-class activities in enabling them to apply what they have learned to the most demanding assessment in the course - the group project research. All the respondents agreed here that the interactive lectures and the in-class activities ranging from the Bb group Discussion, the e-book's animations used to give them an overview of the homework videos, and the in-class group activities enabled them to connect the taught topics to the real world. In one of the interactive lectures, the concept of writing a research question and creating a hypothesis was introduced after an in-class preview on starting empirical research. In relation to how students found this useful, 3 respondents mentioned the following:

“The interactive lecture helped me see many examples of what makes research questions good ones; writing the right question that we did not have a ready-made answer to was the challenge, but we did it, and the teacher liked it”

“Too broad or not deep enough is not how I wanted my group research question to be. We got it in the end with the guidance of the instructor, online search, and group discussions.”

“In class, my group discussed our chosen topic and brainstormed to find an angle worth exploring. After watching the online lecture, we had to group again in class and write the research question and come up with a hypothesis to test. What made it easier is the interactive lecture we all watched because there were many examples. We started then searching online on the topic of sustainable buildings in the UAE. After that we agreed on what we wanted to investigate.”

In fact, the quality of the group research projects completed in the flipped classroom were generally higher when the 2nd Flipped Classroom Process Model was adopted. This is evidenced by the increase in the attainment of the two relevant CLOs: 4 and 6, which proves also that the revisited flipped model further boosts active learning. Ultimately, this raises the potential of producing well-written and better presented capstone projects.

Other important findings drawn from the researcher's journal notes about the benefits of the in-class activities that were designed to complement the flipped classes via inquiry-based learning included the following:

- The team-building process was smoother as the group discussions linked to the online lectures developed the students' soft skills, including communication, planning, resolving conflicts, coordination, and leadership.
- Bb discussions helped attract the majority of students into the learning process. Both strong and struggling students were more engaged as they experienced a fun and stimulating hub of meaningful learning that boosted their self-efficacy.

Conclusion

The exploratory adventure that students had while learning in a flipped model classroom with guided inquiry-based activities was a success in terms of boosting their active learning. Teacher-student interaction was maximized. Student engagement was boosted. Higher-order thinking was stimulated even further with the aid of group problem-driven learning that was enriched with problem-solving quests. Individualized learning was promoted. The study provides an insight into a flipped classroom experience in Abu Dhabi, UAE context. This study supports the view that the flipped classroom has much to offer the process of learning in higher educational institutions; however, the results it draws need to be further generalized using a quantitative method of research. The Hybrid-Flipped approach does not control the corners of the 21st century classroom. The learning is not just limited to the classroom but extends beyond its walls as the use of technology overcomes the limitations of space and time; enabling learners to be self-directed and self-paced.



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*The Practice of Language Advising at the Faculty of Modern Foreign Languages
(FALEM) at the Federal University of Para (UFPA)*

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning - Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This work talks about the practice of language advising at the School of Modern Foreign Languages (FALEM) at the Federal University of Para (UFPA). It defines language advising, informs how the practice is done, and who is involved in the procedure.

Studies have shown the importance of language advisers in the process of teaching and learning a foreign language (Gardner & Miller, 1999; Riley, 1997; Mozzon-McPherson, 2007; Carson & Mynard, 2012; Magno e Silva, 2012). One of the goals of language advising is to help students in their learning process by supporting them in finding effective ways to learn the language. Advisers help students to reach their objectives related to the learning process. They offer students alternatives and varied resources; strategies for learning; and provide ways for them to monitor their own progress (Mozzon-McPherson, 2007).

A group of researchers at FALEM, UFPA, has been developing and investigating language advising practices since 2011. This way, students of foreign languages that have difficulties have had a chance of receiving support. They have improved their learning how to learn the language they study, especially by exercising their autonomy and protecting their motivation.

Keywords: Language Advising; Foreign Languages; Autonomy.

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Introduction

My experience as a professor of English as a foreign language in the past few years has shown me the great diversity of students that search for learning this idiom. There has always been a concern the fact that some students are able to perform their learning trajectory successfully, while others are not, even when apparently dedicated to learning.

In 2012, when I started to participate in the research project of Language Advising (LA), coordinated by Professor Dr. Walkyria Magno e Silva, at the Federal University of Para (UFPA), I realized this kind of support for the students of languages could actually help them reach their objectives in the learning how to learn a foreign language. I have been involved with the LA since then. My dissertation for the achievement of a Master's Degree in Languages, carried out in the first semester of 2015, presented a case study of one of my students' advisee (Morhy, S. S., 2015). This study was analyzed through the concept of Complexity Theory, but will not be addressed here.

Our experience as professors and researchers has demonstrated that, when students studying for a degree in Languages initiate their courses, they bring with them – with rare exceptions – a very superficial knowledge of the language that they will become teachers. This leads to certain difficulties in the initial stages. These students arrive at the campus with some beliefs that can interfere in their learning trajectories. For instance, they think they will not be capable of becoming proficient in the language, and that the university will not be able to provide them with enough learning of the idiom. Others, when facing difficulties, think of abandoning the course or even changing courses.

After more than two years doing research on LA, I see the advisers' effort to make the language students become more linguistically competent. During these years, we have tried to make students with difficulties become more self-confident. Nevertheless, we still need to investigate how far LA has been able to help them.

What is language advising?

Even though some areas that deal with human relations frequently use the word 'advising', in applied linguistics the term still needs more definitions. This may happen due to the relatively new use of the word to the field of teaching and learning of languages, and so it demands more investigation and study (Magno e Silva, 2012).

Though a few authors may overlap themselves in their operational definitions of 'advising', when we check for these definitions' main characteristics, it is possible to identify three main categories. The first one describes 'advising' as a dialog between subjects; the other one places 'advising' as a provider of help and support; and the third one emphasizes that 'advising' aims at making the learners more autonomous. We will now show these categories in detail.

The first idea of 'advising' defines the term as a dialogue or a relationship between two people, the adviser and the advisee (Kelly, 1996; Gremmo, 2007, 2009; Reinders, 2008, 2012; Karlsson, 2012). Kelly (1996, p. 94) says that it "is essentially a form of

therapeutic dialogue that enables an individual to manage a problem”. This dialogue is particularly effective when certain personal choices are determined and when one needs to reframe his pre-established beliefs about himself and the world. For Gremmo (2009, p. 159) “advising is a one-to-one relationship where the two participants have equal status”. She thinks the advisor’s image should not cause anxiety to the student, as the advisor’s role is not that of someone who will give grades or judge students. Reinders (2012) refers to the language adviser as a facilitator-teacher and defines ‘advising’ as “a truly learner-centred approach to language education where the needs of the individual learner determine the interaction between a facilitator-teacher and the student” (Reinders, 2012, p. 170). Karlsson (2012, p.185) understands that advising is “a way of practicing reflexive autobiographical pedagogy”. He says this because during the dialogue between the advisor and the student opportunities arise for the interaction, and consequently, the exchange of stories between them; either through written narratives or simple conversations.

Another conception of the term places ‘advising’ as a kind of support and help to the student (Stickler, 2001; Mozzon-McPherson, 2001; Carson & Mynard, 2012; Reinders; 2012). Stickler (2001) thinks the term ‘adviser’ can designate various roles, all of which relate to offering some sort of experienced help in a particular area, whether this help is technical or simply empirical knowledge of the world. Mozzon-McPherson (2001) explains ‘advising’ when talking about the image of the language advisor, which emerges after the shift in language learning from a teacher-led to a more learner-centred approach. This has demanded “a repositioning of the teacher and a reappraisal of the teacher's skills [...] terms such as ‘facilitator’, ‘mentor’, ‘counsellor’, ‘adviser’, ‘helper’, ‘learner support officer’ and ‘consultant’ have appeared to try to characterise this change” (Mozzon-McPherson, 2001, p.7). Carson & Mynard (2012, p. 4) say that “advising in language learning involves the process and practice of helping students to direct their own paths”. Reinders (2008) sees language advising as a way of helping students in the process of teaching and learning, as it “is a form of language support [...] that consists of one or more meetings (online or face-to-face) between an advisor (a teacher or dedicated language support person) and a student, usually one-to-one” (Reinders, 2008, p. 13).

A third conception of language advising places itself as a forwarder of autonomy (Kelly, 1996; Carson & Mynard, 2012; Candlin, 2012), as it stimulates the students to reflect upon their own learning and search for ways to facilitate this process. For Kelly (1996, p. 94), language advising “enables an individual to manage a problem”. Carson & Mynard (2012, p. 4) say that advising aims at making students “become more effective and more autonomous language learners”.

These categories are well distributed: ‘dialog’ and ‘help’ are mentioned four times each word; and ‘autonomy’ is mentioned three times. This less constant category related to ‘autonomy’, should be part of all definitions, as without the focus in autonomy we can be in risk of having students dependent on the advising. Such cases are likely to happen between the adviser and the advisee, taking both of them to a zone where learning does not move forward.

It is possible to notice here that in their definitions, some authors privilege one or two aspects of each category, but none of them include the three of them to form one single concept. In fact, the most complete definition of the term needs to cover the

three aspects mentioned because advising is a ‘dialogue between two subjects’, that aims at offering ‘help’ and ‘support’ to the student with difficulties, trying to make them more ‘autonomous learners’.

The various aspects mentioned about language advising places itself as a new procedure that aims to contribute to the education of the language student. This recent tool involves autonomy and motivation; two processes that are directly linked to practice and that are difficult to separate.

Candlin (2012, p. 12) cannot define ‘language advising’ without talking about ‘autonomy’. The author thinks both are dynamic processes that cover the interaction between people with stories in a certain time and space. He believes that there are strong motivational components interwoven in the process, as the ways in which the constructs are interpreted, the evaluation of the relationships between the participants and the values that both bring with themselves.

Candlin (2012) adds that advising and autonomy are compromised with one another. In other words, if autonomy is an objective, advising is a means to reaching it. The same way, if advising is an intended pedagogic process, it should be directed and focused. Motivation and autonomy walk hand in hand, especially when we talk about language learning.

The language advising model

The model we use for language advising at the Federal University of Para follows the one proposed by Mynard (2012), inspired in the constructivism and sociocultural theory. It is based in three main aspects: dialog, tools and context. The author believes that: “1) the dialog is crucial in the construction of knowledge; 2) the tools facilitate reflective processes which in turn promote cognitive and metacognitive development; and 3) the learning environment and contextual factors play a role in the learning process” (Mynard, 2012, p. 26).

In his model, Mynard (2012) considers the dialog as the central principal of the advising, the one that moves the practice. It is through the dialog that the adviser uses his skills of questioning, reflecting, orienting and giving assistance to the student. While dialoguing with the advisor, the advisee has the chance to practice his self-reflection; to think and formulate hypothesis about his own learning. While dialoguing, both of them unfold expectations, motivational factors, initial beliefs, individual experiences and differences.

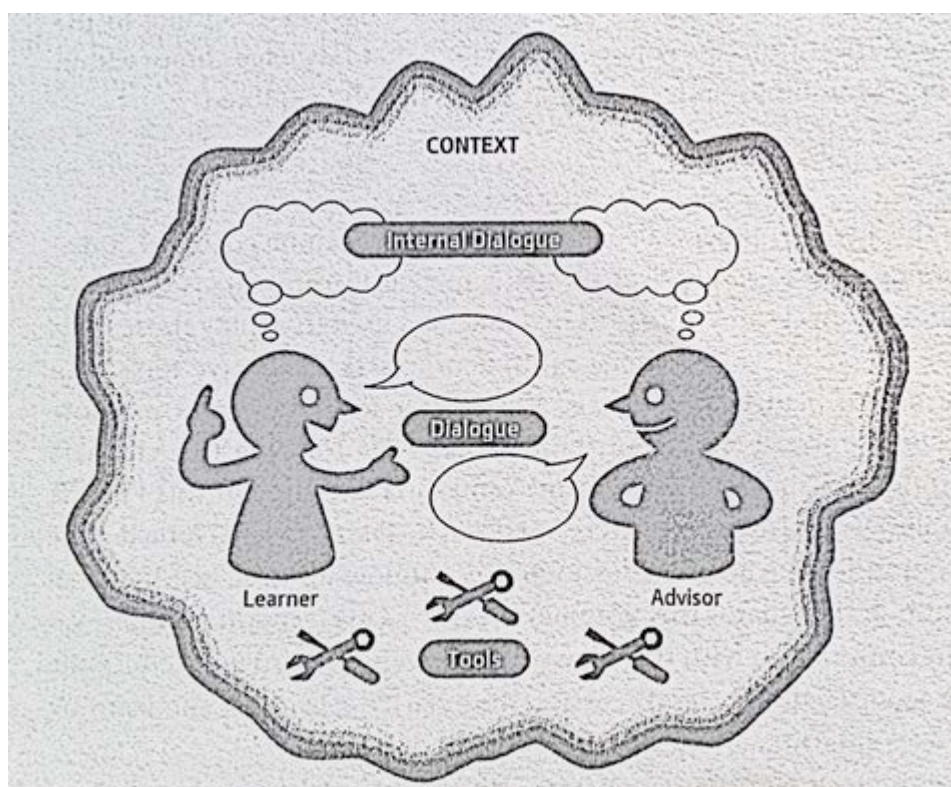
The tools are any tool that may help students’ cognitive processes; those that involve the learning of learning languages, for instance, either the cognitive or the reflexive tools. We will provide examples of tools in the next few paragraphs.

Aspects that deal with personal and physical contexts and contextual practices interfere in the learning process and therefore need to be considered (Mynard, 2012). The personal context can inform the student’s attitude towards the advising, what he brings with him, such as beliefs, expectations and motivation. Once the advisor knows about these matters, he is able to choose the best way to conduct the advising sessions. The physical context has to do with the place where the advising occurs. For instance,

if it is done inside the classroom, or in other places indoors, such as the library, hallways or snack bar; or if it happens outdoors, in the gardens etc; or if it is done via telephone or internet, not face-to-face. The physical context can also determine which resources the advisor can recommend to the student. The context may stimulate or limit the advisor's help to the student.

Contextual practices are those that are discussed together with the group of advisors, and considered acceptable to all involved in the advising process. These practices also refer to the methods, models, procedures, language use, and all the pre-established set known as social practices that define the meeting between the adviser and the student. Mynard's model is represented in figure 1.

Figure 1: The model of dialog, tools and context to LA



Source: Mynard, 2012, p. 33.

In this model the student is the one who is being assisted in a self-directed way. He negotiates with his advisor a few aspects of the learning process, such as the planning, the identifications of needs and goals, and the appropriate resources to reach these goals. In figure 1 it is possible to see, by the drawing of the mouth, how the dialogue between the advisor and advisee happens: the advisee (the student) speaks more than the advisor. This principle is recommended during the advising session, as it allows the student to express and reflect about his discourse. It also allows the advisor to elaborate strategies that aim at conducting the student to choose the learning tools. In general, the student should always be the center of the advising session.

The internal dialogue has to do with the internal reflections of each one, the advisor (that tries to find the best way to help the student), and the student (that attempts to reflect about what the adviser spoke to him and its implications to the learning process). It is also possible to see in figure 1 that the internal dialogue is represented by clouds of thoughts over their heads, representing the construction or elaboration of ideas of both of them; ideas that may, or may not, be expressed verbally.

The various tools represent what is used during the advising process to stimulate and motivate the learning of the student, such as the language laboratory, books, methodologies, technics and so on. We can also include here the practical tools used by the advisor during the advising sessions, such as recordings, notes made in diaries and reports, as well as the system established to the appointment of the sessions.

How is language advising done?

In cognitive behavioral therapy, the initial stage of the therapeutic process involves the evaluation, which represents the patient's entrance door to the treatment. Barros (2012) says that this phase is crucial to therapy, as it is the moment to explain how the process is going to happen and to establish goals. This way, initial bonds with the therapist are formed. The author says that it is common that children and adolescents have difficulties in establishing clear goals and be uncertain of the real motivation for the treatment. To the psychologist, this happens because "perceptions about the problem are limited due to the process of development or because they cannot associate their illnesses to a concrete cause" (Barros, 2012, p.73). In language advising, this is also the first stage of the process; the moment when we establish goals and plan on how to execute them; and the moment to discuss about their individual learning needs.

Barros (2012) also says that once initial data is collected it is possible to have a parameter of the patient's motivation; and, "in case he does not clearly notice it, it is important that a conception of his case is built in a very collaborative manner" (Barros, 2012, p.78). This type of help and support mentioned by the author is common in language advising, as there are moments the advisor needs to clarify to the student the possible reasons that led him to demotivation.

Stickler (2001) says that the technics she uses in her advising sessions are those inspired in Egan's (1998), who created methods to facilitate the relationship between the doctor and the patient. In his therapy sessions, Egan (1998) uses a method to reach a certain goal. It consists of making a 'miracle' question that leads the patient to imagine a world without a problem and detect which are the main differences between this world and the world the patient is living in. By doing this, strategies are made, step-by-step, to reach a certain change of the situation. After this, plans are made in order to enhance each achievement. This is the phase – which Egan calls 'planned action' – that deals with real situations, not imaginary ones anymore. It is the moment to list strategies that will be developed; to evaluate what is positive and negative; and to choose the most appropriate or promising action to be implemented. For Stickler (2001, p. 46) "Egan's model can serve as a structure for the course of counselling or language advising. The stages do not have to be taken as rigid or unchangeable. Indeed, in the course of counselling, a client would come back to previous stages frequently".

The humanistic schools that have stood out mainly through the work of Carl R. Rogers and his approach centered in the client, relied on the importance of respect for the person as a whole (Amatuzzi, 2010). Rogers revolutionized the practice of psychological support “that basically consists of an unrestricted trust stance on the potential of each to find ways to overcome their difficulties” (Amatuzzi, 2010, p. 11). The psychologist’s work was based in three main aspects: empathy, respect and authenticity. When taken to educational institutions, these characteristics may be seen as Rogers explains:

Genuineness on the part of teachers makes them transparent for the learners as full persons with flaws and weaknesses as well as strengths and expertise. Respect or unconditional positive regard means that the learner will feel accepted in his or her individuality and will not have to 'perform' to please the teacher. This, in turn, should lead to greater self-awareness on the part of the learner: if nobody tells the person what to learn, they will have to decide for themselves. Finally, empathy can be used to create and reinforce an understanding between teacher and learner on a personal as well as on a factual level. Listening to students' responses rather than talking over their heads has always been required in communicative language teaching (as cited in Stickler, 2001, p.44).

Roger’s considerations guide us to an adequate behavior during the act of advising, and suggest ‘how’ the adviser should behave and ‘why’. For Stickler (2001) some simple techniques may help during advising sessions, permitting the student to talk about his needs more deeply. These techniques are called “mirroring, paraphrasing and summarizing” (Stickler, 2001, pp. 44-45).

When using the mirroring technique, the advisor repeats the main words that the student uses, and by doing so he demonstrates that he has heard and understood what has been said to him. The advisor also uses this technic to show support and understanding of the enunciation’s meaning, which is manifested by non-verbal hints, such as the tone of voice, body posture etc. In this case, the advisor speaks what was said through another form of language.

The summarizing technic highlights important information mentioned by the advisee. By doing this, the adviser makes evident that he has been attentive during the whole session and has stored in memory the essential data the student has told him in order to comment later. In case there is any gap in this comprehension, the student may do corrections and value certain facts more than others. This technic is often used twice in a session. First, in the beginning of the session, when the advisor reports the previous meeting with the student. Second, after the advising session finishes, to evaluate what has happened in that meeting.

Some aspects mentioned by Egan (1988) and Rogers, are mentioned by Kelly (1996) when suggesting that language advisers should develop macro and micro skills for a better advising.

Figure 2: The macro skills of the language advisor

Skills	Description	Purpose
Initiating	Introducing new directions and options	To promote learner focus and reduce uncertainty
Goal-setting	Helping the learner to formulate specific goals and objectives	To enable the learner to focus on a manageable goal
Guiding	Offering advice and information, direction and ideas; suggesting	To help the learner develop alternative strategies
Modelling	Demonstrating target behaviour	To provide examples of knowledge and skills that the learner desires
Supporting	Providing encouragement and reinforcement	To help the learner persist; create trust; acknowledge and encourage effort
Giving feedback	Expressing a constructive reaction to the learner's efforts	To assist the learner's self-awareness and capacity for self-appraisal
Evaluating	Appraising the learner's process and achievement	To acknowledge the significance of the learner's effort and achievement
Linking	Connecting the learner's goals and tasks to wider issues	To help establish the relevance and value of the learner's project
Concluding	Bringing a sequence of work to a conclusion	To help the learner establish boundaries and define achievement

Fonte: Kelly, 1996, p. 95.

Figure 2 shows the macro skills that every language advisor should have or develop. Although these skills are also expected for a regular teacher or professor to have, they are fundamental for a language advisor in order to make advising successful. During the project meetings, when advisers discuss issues related to our practices, we talk about the importance of using these skills during the sessions with the advisees. We all agree that we ought to be attentive and not let ourselves become distant from these skills.

The chart with the micro skills suggested by Kelly (1996) has some similarities to the technics used by Stickler (2001) in her advising sessions, as we show in figure 3.

Figure 3: The micro skills of the language advisor

Skills	Description	Purpose
Attending	Giving the learner your undivided attention	To show respect and interest; to focus on the person
Restating	Repeating in your own words what the learner says	To check your understanding and to confirm the learner's meaning
Paraphrasing	Simplifying the learner's statements by focusing on the essence of the message	To clarify the message and to sort out conflicting or confused meanings
Summarizing	Bringing together the main elements of a message	To create focus and direction
Questioning	Using open questions to encourage self-exploration	To elicit and to stimulate learner disclosure and self-definition
Interpreting	Offering explanations for learner experiences	To provide new perspectives; to help self-understanding
Reflecting feelings	Surfacing the emotional content of learner statements	To show that the whole person has been understood
Empathizing	Identifying with the learner's experience and perception	To create a bond of shared understanding
Confronting	Surfacing discrepancies and contradictions in the learner's communication	To deepen self-awareness, particularly of self-defeating behaviour

Fonte: Kelly, 1996, p. 96.

These micro skills are more specific and reveal how an advisor should be careful during the sessions with the student. It is not easy to have control over all of the skills, which means that an advisor should try to develop the ones he considers he is less competent.

Aoki (2012) suggests some simple behavior during advising sessions that are similar to the micro and macro skills recommended by Kelly (1996). According to Aoki, some skills are essential for a language advisor to have or develop. She professor thinks that every language advisor should: 1) have the ability to establish rapport and empathy; 2) think positively and refrain from judgments; 3) show willingness to help; 4) know how to control a conversation; 5) learn to ask questions; 6) know how to hear; 7) have the ability of observation and interpretation; 8) know when to suggest

alternatives; and 9) be able to explain some of the causes of learning problems (Aoki, 2012, pp. 155-159).

After we are aware of some of the mostly used technics during the advising process, it is possible to understand the difference there is between a language advisor and a language teacher.

The main objective of a language advisor is that of developing the student's autonomy, which includes stimulating the student to identify his goals and personalize his learning experience, according to his needs (selecting appropriate resources, planning, monitoring and constant evaluation) and respecting the student's time. Although this can be done by a language teacher with a small group of students, in a traditional class, where there are usually many of them, the teacher does not have a chance to offer a quiet and personalized service to each learner. Besides, the language teacher is often stuck to a structured syllabus, sometimes rigid, or to a lesson plan or a schedule (Carson & Mynard, 2012), which means he has little or unavailable time. Flexibility in terms of time, place, and individual needs is what makes advising unique. In most advising sessions, the students are not under pressure for results. As Gardner & Miller (1999) say although designating teachers to work as language advisers may sound like a luxury, the practice allows for diminishing the number of unhappy students.

The sessions

The advising sessions go through specific stages. The first one involves the initial contact between the student and the advisor. It is during the project meetings that advisors get the name, e-mail and telephone number of their advisees.

In his first meeting with the student, the advisor is able to grasp the general impressions about his advisee, as well as the type of learning problem he has, his academic profile and so on. It is also during this first session that the advisor explains how the advising process happens. He discusses certain issues with the student, such as the roles of the advisor and the advisee, and clarifies some doubts the student may bring. In this first stage, the student is asked to bring a written learning narrative, describing in his own words how he started learning a foreign language.

After the first session, advisor and advisee agree on how the next meetings will be, what they will focus on and how the student will accomplish his goals in order to improve his learning of the language. Establishing goals is one of the first stages of the language advising process and it happens in every new cycle of the process. For instance, the student establishes his goals; then, decides how he is going to execute them (even if he needs the advisor's help); and finally, advisor and advisee analyze the results achieved. After this cycle, a new one begins, with the establishment of new goals and other ways and strategies to put them into practice.

The advisor and the advisee often fill in a form together, registering some specific data, such as the student's goals and his plans to accomplish them. This is necessary because while writing, the student establishes a form of commitment, allowing the advisor to ask him for results and to confront the student in moments of reflection, if needed. This form also foresees the student's self-reflection, as he is asked to evaluate

his learning process during a certain period. This is done this way: the student attributes himself a certain “grade”, in a scale of 0 to 5, which corresponds to his idea of progress after the period established to accomplish his goals. For instance, in case he is not happy with his own performance and thinks he should have done better, he attributes himself a 2 or a 3.

Advising sessions generally happen once a week at the university, when both the advisor and the advisee have some time available – usually before a class or after. There are cases that the advisor may adjust his schedule in order to favor the student. There are sessions that last 20 to 30 minutes, but this time is very flexible and it happens according to the student’s need.

Some advisors often use social networks for advising, but this should not replace face sessions, as it is through personal contact that both develop empathy and complicity, and these are two necessary skills for the adviser. Contact via cell phones and e-mails should be complementary to face sessions.

The advisor generally has a personal diary to help him keep track of the sessions. He uses it for note taking of all sorts, such as the things that happen during the sessions, reminders previously elaborated to guide him in future sessions; and other information considered important to him.

The advisee should also have his own personal diary, but the students seldom have one. When this happens, the advisor should ask the advisee to write something down; for instance, a short paragraph expressing the student’s considerations about the advising process, how this has helped him, and what changes in his leaning he may attribute to the advising. This way, the advisor may also evaluate his performance, and try to change something that, perhaps, was not effective.

Final considerations

As a language adviser, I have received some positive influences during the whole process, which have made me reflect about my own attitudes as a language teacher and professor. I have grown as a human being as well, for I have exercised my hearing side, frequently searching for a better way to help and understand my students’ difficulties and needs. I have become reflexive, since this aspect of empowerment follows us all the way through the advising process, and there is not a way to avoid its influence.

I have understood that even having given myself a great deal to advising, this does not guarantee the progress of my students. They are the ones who will determine their own learning paths and progress.

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Gendered Fluency and Dysfluency: Preliminary Findings

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning - Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Over the past few decades, interest in learning English has increased in Japan due to globalization and rising test scores in other Asian countries. While grammar and reading have been dominant features of standardized tests like Eiken and TOEIC, fluency has been one issue that has been ignored in education. This preliminary study, based on 20 videotaped discussions between males and females who did not know each other previously, examines possible differences in fluency indicators, and in acoustic, lexical and syntactic dysfluency as well as with correct/incorrect pausing. Results indicated for the variable of speaking time, males spoke 20.3% more than women; in addition, there was a strong difference found in fluency rates with males having a fluency rate that was 19.8% faster than female participants. For acoustic and lexical dysfluency, no significant differences were found though the speech of males had 21.2% more silence. For syntactical dysfluency, significant differences were found in mean length runs, the number of words and meaningless syllables, with males producing up to 39.8% more speech than females. No significant differences were found concerning correct pausing and incorrect pausing though males had higher rates of incorrect pausing. Important differences in fluency were evident with females speaking less, having shorter mean length runs than males, and slower speaking rates. The findings indicate that more attention needs to be paid to interactions between males and females and more assistance given to female students to help them to be more confident and aware of their own speech.

Keywords: Gendered discourse, fluency, dysfluency, Japanese learners, awareness, proficiency

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Introduction

Tests rule in Japan. They are the first and final gates that can swing open or close to allow students access to good schools and companies; thus, it should come as no surprise that Japanese spend large sums on test preparation guides, test tutoring services, and DVDs in which to improve their scores. As a result, there is little attention, time, and energy left over for improving actual fluency and real interactive communicative competency. Over the past ten years, these interactive skills have been in a steady decline with students spending even less time with family and friends and more time with the computer (Nie & Erbring, 2010); furthermore, this issue is a *world-wide* problem with 39% of Americans spending more time socializing online than through face-to-face interactions (Thompson, 2012). Students report it is far more convenient to rely on social media and texting than to communicate face-to-face which requires interactive awareness, adherence to conventions and consideration of pragmatic considerations. Using social media, however, allows individuals to minimize most cultural norms, the politics of identity, turn-taking issues, dominance, and problems relating to status.

One apparent consequence of this trend has been that the younger generation has been shunning conversations, particularly with the opposite sex. As a result, relationships are rarely entered into: Reports in the media have indicated that 45% of Japanese women aged 16-24 are not interested in any intimate relationships while more than a quarter of men feel the same way. This social phenomenon, referred to as *sekkusu shinai shokogun* or celibacy syndrome, has become so severe that the number of single Japanese has reached a record high. A survey in 2011 found that 61% of unmarried men and 49% of women aged 18-34 had never been in any kind of romantic relationship. Experts noted that this is an increase of almost 10% from data gathered five years earlier. While this lack of interest with conventional relationships with the opposite sex may appear to be just a social and interpersonal shortcoming of Japanese culture with younger people (under 40), Aoyama (2014) says the sexes, especially in Japan's giant cities, are "spiraling away from each other" (p. 40).

The failure of genders to interact and relate with one another is actually part of a looming national catastrophe as Japan has one of the world's lowest birth rates. In short, while education in Japan has succeeded in helping students to master English grammatical issues, and decode meaning, it has done little to address the problem of helping students to achieve actual communicative competency, specifically helping students to overcome their fear of initiating and sustaining a conversation. When it comes to the opposite sex, Japanese high school and *university students* are simply

ill-equipped in asking appropriate and intriguing questions, making relevant and stimulating comments, paying compliments or having the confidence to propose follow-up meetings.

The aim of this paper is to present preliminary data on the L2 speech in *gendered* speech. Interactions with male-female pairs were videotaped and transcribed so as to identify distinctive similarities and characteristics in the fluency and dysfluency. This paper, which examines fluency indicators as time talking, articulation rates, and speaking rates, tries to identify if there are also patterns of dysfluency in order to see which gender, if any, exhibits the most dysfluency. The study will also take into account rates of correct and incorrect pausing. By better understanding the patterns relating to fluency/dysfluency and how it impacts overall communicative competency, educators can be more aware of how to structure and facilitate interactions between the genders in their own classrooms.

Review of Literature

Gender issues and dysfluency

Gender is considered an important variable in investigating spoken language and fluency insofar that by simply hearing the pitch of person's voice, listeners will often make assumptions, expectations, and stereotypes that can influence how the discussion is framed, and impact decision-making. The listener can also be influenced by the speaker's intonation, resonance, speaking speed, among other variables. As West & Zimmerman (1983) point out, gender is a powerful ideological device, which can affect how a person produces and shapes content, as well as the degree of making and legitimizing certain discourse choices. Molm (1992, p. 303) notes "gender inequality is conceptualized as multidimensional, and theories span historical eras, societal types and multiple causation" and one aspect of this inequality is that of aggression in discourse.

These generalized expectations for sex differences are an important characteristic as it can lead to stereotypes of women and men. With the stereotypes functioning to create and maintain group ideologies, social actions or reinforcing cultural and value-laden norms are justified (Taifel, 1981). The degree of collaboration, which occurs in gendered discourse, is affected by these psycho-social values. Coates, (1996) reveals that a great deal of collaboration is needed in gendered discourse with each speaker paying close attention to the other, at all linguistic levels, through joint constructions involving simultaneous speech, sharing in search for the right word, and overlapping speech.

As for gendered L2 speech, expectations and stereotypes can easily be changed by having one of the participants being far more fluent, productive, and competent in his or her L2 use.

A second characteristic concerns the *interactive balance* in a discourse. Fishman's (1978, p. 138) research on casual conversations found an asymmetrical "division of labor" in talk between heterosexual intimates: "Women had to ask more questions, fill more silences, and use more attention-getting beginnings in order to be heard Some occasions are organized to routinely display and celebrate behaviors that are conventionally linked to one or the other sex category." Similar data may differ, however, with Japanese participants and L2 speech due to cultural norms. Research by Zimmerman and West (1975) showed patterns of silence that occurred because of a delayed minimal response by the male, an overlap by the male, and by an interruption by the male; however, it remains to be seen how minimal responses, silence, or excessive talking, for example, function in Japanese-centered, gendered L2 discourse. The issue of excessive mean length runs from males and patterns of silence from females needs to be further explored.

The Study

Rationale

Fluency research has focused on three dimensions: complexity, accuracy, and fluency CAF (Skehan, 1998; Ellis, 2003, 2008; Ellis and Barkuizen, 2005), yet one other dimension seems to have been ignored or misunderstood, that of production, which refers to not only how long a speaker can talk but also how articulate, credible and convincing he or she appears in any interaction. The literature is also still incomplete with regard to characterizing the specific nature of dysfluency between the genders, particularly in regard to Japanese learners. The question remains as to what specific differences exist (if at all) in fluency, dysfluency, and L2 production between Japanese speakers speaking in English. Does fluency or dysfluency differ significantly between the genders with one sex exhibiting more fluency and less dysfluency than the other? Which gender is more productive? Furthermore, while research on minimal responses is mixed, it seems that women use them more often than men, but is this necessarily the case with Japanese men and women? Is the variable of familiarity even an issue? Pause location is also a salient variable in regard to fluency; empirical researchers who were examining pause locations found that the syntactic location of pauses is a very strong indicator of fluency (Freed, 1995).

As discourse is a powerful ideological tool that can highlight, reproduce, or limit the opportunities for women, it is important to see if certain patterns can be identified in fluency, dysfluency and pausing in gendered speech.

Definition of Terms

Fluency variables. For this study fluency is evaluated with through the speaker's *articulation rate* (AR), which is computed by dividing the number of syllables by the cumulative time talking after deducting the amount for pausing. The *speech rate* (SR) differs in that it assesses the number of meaningful syllables within a narrative; this number is then divided by the number of seconds used to complete the task and multiplied by 60. Thus, this provides the fluency rate of A as identified by Wendel (1997), whereby the fluency rate of B shows data that in which all meaningless syllables, words, phrases that were repeated, reformulated, or replaced are excluded. A fluency differential could then be included which reflects the difference between both fluency rates to better understand the extent of a participant's dysfluency. *Mean length runs* (MLR) involve the number of syllables that are uttered until the speaker stops talking or pauses. *Pauses* are defined as any silence lasting two seconds or more so not to be confused with natural hesitation phenomena, which are normal features of most discourse. Thus, it is important to differentiate actual silence (which is often seen as a sign of dysfluency) from breathing space, or semantic hesitation at clause junctures, or even from lexical/morphological uncertainty. Pauses, which were less than two seconds, were counted as micropauses.

Dysfluency variables. Acoustic dysfluency was analyzed by examining micropauses, which were defined as any pause lasting less than 2.0 seconds. This helps to better differentiate actual pausing from slight rhythmic hesitations, and other variables like cross-talk pausing, the amount of silence, the percentage of silence, and mean length of pauses. Lexical dysfluency is based on the number of mispronounced words, word fragments, and the use of L1. The use of Japanese (L1) is another variable for this study, and as this study is focused on L2, any use of L1 (Japanese) was not considered as part of the data except when it was referring to the names of people and places or referred to words that had been absorbed into the language such as *karate* or *aikido*. Syntactic dysfluency takes into account abandoned sentences, retracing, repetition, average mean length runs, the number of words, and meaningless syllables (which did not include word fragments). Repetition included only actual words and not filled pauses whereas retracings represented reformulations and partial repetitions of previous phrases or clauses.

Research questions

This study seeks to identify distinctive similarities and characteristics in the dysfluency in gendered speech of seven males and six females who tested at a lower level of proficiency, as designated by standardized test scores such as TOEFL, EIKEN, IELTS, TOEIC scores, see table 1.

Table 1
Scores for Lower Proficiency Students

TOEIC	Eiken 英 検	IELTS	TOEFL IBT	TOEFL ITP	TOEFL PBT	TOEFL CBT
440 – 550	2 級	3.0 – 4.0	42 – 55	272 – 450	463 – 480	143 - 157

The research questions are as follows:

1. Is there a significant difference in fluency indicators of time talking, articulation rates, and speaking rate between the two genders?
2. Is there a significant difference in acoustic dysfluency (micropauses, amount of silence, mean length runs), lexical dysfluency (mispronounced words, word fragments, use of L1), and syntactic dysfluency indicators (abandoned sentences, retracing, repetition, average mean length runs, total syllables, number of words, meaningless syllables) in gendered and same-sex speech?
3. Is there a significant difference in correct and incorrect pausing between the two genders? Which gender, if any, had more incorrect pausing?
4. Is there more dysfluency noted with males or females?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this TOEFL range in regards to both fluency and dysfluency are as follows:

1. There will be no significant differences in fluency indicators noted in either gender.
2. There will be no significant differences in acoustic, lexical and syntactical dysfluency, as well as correct/incorrect pausing between the two genders.

Procedures

Two groups of students were selected based on their test scores (see table 1). All of the participants had to be unfamiliar with each other, for as Coates (1996) notes discourse between intimates is most likely to be more fluent. There is often less dysfluency when both participants are known to each other, as there are fewer

threatening issues, and the status between the two has been firmly established. By having gendered discourse between two strangers, issues relating to ease, politeness, silence, status, and pragmatics can be effectively evaluated as well as issues relating to fluency and dysfluency. Such discourse also helps in clarifying issues related to *dominance* and *subordination* and a better understanding how social distance is bridged.

Four participants, two females and two males, were then selected based on their test scores and with the acknowledgement that they did not know the other people in their group. Discussions, which ranged from 6 minutes to 15 minutes were videotaped; two gendered discussions took place simultaneously in different rooms after which when these discussions finished, the two males would then change rooms and two more gendered discussions would take place. Finally, participants would then change rooms for the third time, and two same-sex discussions would take place. These videotaped discussions were then uploaded to Youtube, see notes.

Discussion format

In order to avoid problems relating to conversational management or competency, the interview format, based on information gather, shared interests, and cognitive loading (see Appendix A) gave students three topics from which they could talk from. The first topic allowed students to gather information, the second focused on issues or interests they had in common whereas the third prompt asked them to discuss a social issue. If students finished the three topics before the time allotted, they could move on to the next three on the list.

Subjects

The 13 participants for this study were drawn from two major universities in Kitakyushu, one being a municipal university and the other a national university. All students had lived in Japan and had limited study abroad experiences.

Transcripts

The 20 transcripts were manually transcribed, beginning in July through October, 2015. The videos, which are located on Youtube,¹ totaled over 3 hours (218.4 minutes) with videos, averaging 10:09 minutes and they ranged in length from 6:23 to 14:59 minutes. The transcripts² for this study were made from various sessions in order to provide enough reliable data of students' fluency and dysfluency.

Data Analysis

Data related to fluency and dysfluency was analyzed with Excel and the statistical software WINKS-SDA 7 to conduct t-tests. Descriptive data were also compared.

Results

In regard to the first hypothesis, that there will be no significant differences in fluency between genders, was found to be false as a t-test for the two genders revealed some low significance at $t(38) = 1.8$, $p < 0.08$ for the variable of speaking time. However, for other fluency constructs, a strong significance was noted for articulation, $t(38) = 2.76$, $p < 0.009$, speaking rate A, $t(38) = 2.77$, $p < 0.009$, speaking rate B, $t(38) = 2.67$, $p < 0.011$, see table 2 below concerning descriptive data. For speaking time, males spoke 20.3% more than women whereas, with fluency rates A and B (Wendel, 1997), males had a fluency rate that was 19.8% higher than female participants.

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Table 2
Descriptive Data for Gender Dysfluency

	Males	Females
Speaking Time	328.47	267.78
Articulation rate	1.965	1.595
Speaking Rate A	121.17	99.19
Speaking Rate B	110.99	91.25
Acoustic Dysfluency		
Micropauses	6.5	5.8
Amount of silence	25.5	20.68
Mean Length of pauses	3.97	3.07
Lexical Dysfluency		
Mispronounced Words	1.1	0.35
Word fragments	1.65	1.2
Use of L1	1.95	2.7
Syntactic Dysfluency		
Abandoned sentences	1.6	0.8
Retracing	3.2	1.35
Repetition	12.55	13.15
Average Mean Length Runs	12.025	8.2
Total Syllables	622.6	431.6
Number of Words	458.55	306.05
Meaningless Syllables	57	36.2

Note: Data is shown in averages.

Concerning acoustic dysfluency, the hypothesis was true as no significance was noted for micropauses, $t(38) = .52$, $p < 0.603$, amount of silence, $t(38) = .57$, $p < 0.574$, mean length of pauses, $t(38) = 1.41$, $p < 0.167$. In comparing the genders in regard to silence, the speech of males had 20.8% more silence. For lexical dysfluency, some significance was also noted for mispronounced words $t(29.5) = 1.98$, $p < 0.057$, but none for word fragments, $t(38) = .93$, $p < 0.36$, or for the use of L1 $t(31.3) = -.74$, $p < 0.464$. As for syntactical dysfluency, high significance was noted for retracing, $t(31.1)$

= 2.91, $p < 0.007$, being evident in male speech more than twice as much, average mean length runs $t(32.8) = 3.05$, $p < 0.004$, number of words $t(38) = 3.03$, $p < 0.004$ and for meaningful syllables $t(38) = 2.15$, $p < 0.038$. No significance was noted for repetition, $t(38) = -.14$, $p < 0.888$. Finally, concerning pause location, we can see from table 5, that males paused correctly 29.7% more than females, due to the longer mean length runs, but that incorrect pausing also was 35.4% higher than with females, see table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive Data for Pause Location

Transcripts		Correct	Incorrect		Correct	Incorrect
2	Female	2	3	Male	1	1
1	Female	0	2	Male	0	4
4	Female	0	0	Male	0	8
6	Female	1	1	Male	1	1
8	Female	1	3	Male	1	9
7	Female	1	3	Male	1	3
9	Female	0	1	Male	2	13
10	Female	0	4	Male	9	0
11	Female	0	0	Male	0	1
13	Female	0	0	Male	0	4
14	Female	1	9	Male	0	5
18	Female	1	3	Male	0	2
21	Female	0	5	Male	1	4
22	Female	0	0	Male	0	4
23	Female	0	0	Male	0	2
24	Female	1	2	Male	0	3
25	Female	1	2	Male	7	7
26	Female	1	1	Male	1	4
27	Female	8	12	Male	1	2
28	Female	2	7	Male	2	6
Totals		20	58		27	83

Discussion

In regard to male's dominating in speaking time, a typical interaction, as seen in session 7, male 2 to female 2 [transcript #22], reveals the widespread tendency for males to hold the floor.

1. **F2:** Yeah, I watch, I watched "Baymax" last month.
2. **M2:** Last month? Ah:
3. **F2:** In English.
4. **M2:** Ok↓. In my cases is that, ah, my (.) classes, ah: now I'm↑ studying English
5. in this university, and, ah, my hobby is a lot. For example, ah, traveling some
6. countries or (.) um, even↑ now in Japan, I like visiting everywhere. So, ah: (.)
7. let's see, my, (.) my preference, umm: (.)yeah, I just like, ah, yeah↑, in my case I
8. like↑ watching movie, too. And, ah, listening music both Japanese and, ah,
9. English one.Yeah↓, (.) and, ah. Ok, go on the next topic. The (2.6)↑ discuss
10. question how are you both difference, ok↓. Let's talk about, ah: our difference.
11. Each differences, ok↑? What do you think about it, our, ah, difference
12. considering, the, our, discuss, (.) before heh?
13. **F2:** What do you mean heh?
14. **M2:** Yeah, you know the, this is the, first met for us, so(.) yeah, maybe the,
15. there are few↑, there are few↑ information about (3.9) Through our talking, ah,
16. did you find some different?
17. **F2:** Different↓(.) Ah...
18. **M2:** Between you and me, yeah.
19. **F2:** I don't talk that much, but you're talkative.
20. **M2:** Oh, really↑? Yeah, maybe yeah. I'm very talkative person. But, ah, I
21. think, ah, you are not shy. And, ah, sometimes talkative is not good, right?

However, it would be an oversimplification to say that because males hold the floor more by talking longer than females, that they then *control* the interaction. It is key to look at the inner dynamics of the interaction, and by examining question frequency, it is possible to see which speaker is, at least, more motivated in gaining information. In examining question formation, the data shows that in six of the 14 categories for question types that males asked more questions; in total, males asked 45.6% more questions than female speakers, see table 4.

Table 4
Gendered Questions

Question type	Males	Females
Who	3	1
What	57	38
Which	5	1
Why	10	6
When	0	4
Where	9	5
How	38	20
Do	76	52
Is	8	0
Are	9	3
Can	2	2
Have	2	4
Confirm	50	41
Other / tag questions	105	58
Total	374	235

The data also shows that males talked faster either reflecting more motivation than the females exhibited, yet from examining the videos themselves, this fact is not easily apparent. When examining syntactical dysfluency, the difference in mean length runs is also not easily evident from watching the video recordings, yet when comparing the textual data, it is clear that women tend to pause more frequently. With all of the participants, it should be noted that there was little acoustic dysfluency in either gender, and with syntactical dysfluency, the only important differences again relate to production, with males producing 39.8% more speech than women. Tannen (1984; 1990) states that lecturing is part of a male's conversational style and that women let them get away with it insofar that the style of most women is to listen attentively and not to interrupt or to deflect the listener. Tannen goes on to argue that when women and men interact in mixed-sex groups, men's norms prevail. Women adjust to them, and it is this aspect that tends to give the appearance of male dominance.

The indirect speech and minimal responses of the women in this data may be the result of various cultural factors, but a comparison with other students from foreign countries would bear this out. The data also did reflect some conversational dominance on the part of the males due to an interactive imbalance, which was accentuated by passivity and unawareness. Stylistic differences—politeness, hesitancy, and nonassertion—are seen from the transcripts as being influenced by gender, but to a small degree. In short, gender is an important ideological factor in Japanese L2 discourse insofar that those who talk the longest will have the most impact in framing discussions, clarifying ideas and values.

Conclusion

The results of this preliminary study indicate that gender differences are found only with syntactic dysfluency, and with the production of speech, articulation rate, and speech rate. Minimal responses tend to be a constant feature of both male and female speech in the data, but more so with female discourse. These minimal responses may be traced to cultural norms or to a degree of passivity. Thus, educators should help students to better initiate and maintain discourse through more effective strategic competency.

It should be noted that the issue of truly understanding one's fluency and dysfluency comes only through examining videotapes of one's speech, and (if time allows) transcription and analysis. Gains in fluency are hard to come by, but more so when there is little to no awareness of how poor one's fluency actually is and what needs to be addressed to make real progress.

Finally, the results also show that there may be fewer differences in typical male and female speech, particularly in regard to dysfluency, which confirms the notion that gendered speech should be revisited, from “gender difference to the difference gender makes” as Cameron (1992) notes. Thus, it is important to account for more complex patterns in gendered speech as it is found between strangers, acquaintances, close associates, and even in group settings so as to examine how issues such as balance, cooperativeness, solidarity might change, and how fluency and dysfluency are affected.

Notes

1. Gender Discourse Playlist:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLPRLY1xK6EnyL7w6auVV4nvQODZ4T_GiT
2. Gender videos, transcripts, and analysis are available at genderfluency.com

Acknowledgements

This research is supported by the Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology in Japan (No. 15K02788). I also want to thank Jose Cruz, a lecturer at Kitakyushu City University for his help in video and audio recording.



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Appendix A

Interview Prompts (Abridged)

MF Interactions

- Set 1. A. Share information about classes, hobbies, preferences
Information-gathering
B. Discuss the question: how are you both different?

Shared interests

- C. Compare schedules. Who is busier?
Cognitive loading

- Set 2. A. Share as much information about family, friends, major
Information-gathering
B. Discuss the question: what do you both have in common

Shared interests

- C. Compare parents. Whose parents are stricter?
Cognitive loading

- Set 3. A. Share information about your activities, books, movies
Information-gathering
B. Discuss the question: What kind of food do you both dislike

Shared interests

- C. Compare personalities. Who is more social and outgoing?
Cognitive loading

MM – FF interactions

- Set 1. A. Share information about what you like to buy this year
Information-gathering
B. Discuss the question: do you buy similar items and products?

Shared interests

- C. Compare viewing habits. Who has watched more anime?
Cognitive loading

- Set 2. A. Share 3 events you have heard on the news
Information-gathering
B. Discuss the question: what do like watching on TV?

Shared interests

- C. Compare viewing habits. Who watches more TV?

Cognitive loading

Set 3. A. Share information about sports you like or have done

Information-gathering

B. Discuss the question: What kind of sports are the dullest?

Shared interests

C. Compare personalities. Who is more active?

Cognitive loading



An Innovative Methodology to Transcribe Local Spoken Arabic Languages

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning – Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

In this research we propose an innovative methodology, named Saoutharf, for standardizing writing and reading spoken local or regional Arabic languages. The transcription of spoken Arabic languages or Arabic dialects uses the standard Arabic letters themselves with four modified letters to write the letters sounds which do not exist in the standard Arabic. The proposed methodology targets speeches, cinema and drama, TV-talk-shows, advertising and Arabic in the street, where spoken Arabic is prevalent. Likewise, it targets learning spoken Arabic to foreigners. The objective is to make the rules of this methodology a standard which permits spoken Arabic languages to be transcribed the same way making texts readable by everybody, and transportable between people and locations, which is not the case today. Furthermore, UNESCO recommends that “Mother Tongue Matters and local language is a key to effective learning”.

When writing Arabic texts in a classic way, the vowels are not written explicitly but they are kept implicit. Without knowing the word, we cannot pronounce it correctly; Saoutharf vocalize the word making it easy to read. The traditional letters (ا و ا) are no longer used to sustain the sounds (double vowel) of implicit vowels, but they are used as explicit vowels like in Latin languages (English, French,..etc.). Further the transcription orthography provides also a clear and easy way to read and pronounce correctly standard Arabic. The proposed methodology will be implemented as a real-time computer based algorithm and would be valuable for information retrieval and web search algorithms for Arabic dialect content.

Keywords: Saoutharf, Arabic Dialects, Writing spoken Arabic, Arabic morphology

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Introduction

After the speaking languages, the human being did a major step by the invention of writing, and thereafter making paper as a recording medium. Writing was and still a powerful instrument of communication, transmission and storage of information and learning. Fast learning a native or nonnative language depends primarily on the word formation or the morphology of the language, then its syntax (grammar rules) and semantics (word meanings). Colloquial Arabic or spoken Arabic has nor uniform morphology, neither same semantics due to its expansion through large geographical regions (Fig. 1), and the influence of non-Arabic local languages.

A document published by the UNESCO [1] in 2008 states that using mother tongue is highly recommended to effective learning. Standard Arabic is considered morphologically a complex language [2]. In a long article, Zaidan and Callison-Burch from Pennsylvania University state [3] that “The written form of the Arabic language, differs in a nontrivial manner from the various spoken regional dialects of Arabic speakers”. Further, it is well known that there is morphological ambiguities in Standards Arabic [4]; many words in Arabic have the same orthographic form, with different pronunciations. If we do not know Arabic, we cannot read Arabic texts. This problem militates for a new orthographic morphology to transcribe Arabic dialects even though we use the same alphabet as the Standard Arabic. In Saoutharf we use Arabic letters to overcome any psychological or cultural barriers that might be raised if Latin alphabet has been proposed (the term ‘dialect’ in the Arabic tradition of Arabic countries automatically carries a pejorative connotation due to the modern opposition between ‘dialect’ vs. Standard Arabic [5]).

In this Methodology we propose an innovative approach, named Saoutharf (literally letter sound), for standardizing writing and reading spoken regional Arabic languages [6]. We target the Morphology of these languages, that is to say the structure of words, with a little incursion in the syntax of the end of verbs and nouns in sentences. The transcription of spoken local Arabic languages or Arabic dialects uses the standard Arabic letters themselves plus four modified letters to write the letters sounds which do not exist in the standard Arabic. The transcription orthography provides a clear and easy way, without morphological ambiguities, for reading and stating the correct pronunciation for Arabic dialects as well as standard Arabic if this method is used, because it’s an effective phonetic writing. The proposed methodology will be implemented as a real-time computer based algorithm and would be valuable for information retrieval and web search algorithms for Arabic dialect content.

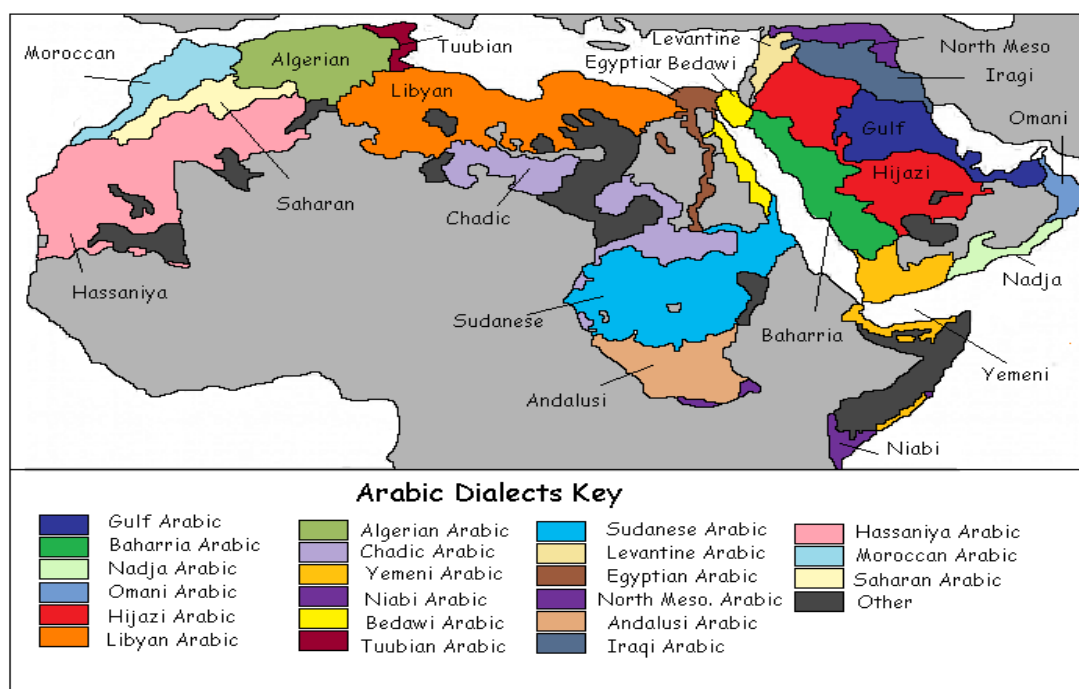


Figure 1: Arabic Dialects Regions

([http:// www.s1.zetaboards.com/anthroscape/topic/5837384/3](http://www.s1.zetaboards.com/anthroscape/topic/5837384/3))

Methodology

As we said previously, spoken Arabic dialects are largely used in communication, cinema scripts and theater plays. The fact that they are used in the two last areas supposes that these languages are written even they are not widely published. When they are written they do not use a standard orthography and different orthographies may be used even within a same text [6]. We thus need a standard rules that permit to spoken Arabic to be written in the same way in all Arabic countries.

Rule one (writing syllables): In the methodology Saoutharf, the traditional letters (ا و ي) are no longer used to sustain the sounds (double vowel) of implicit vowels, but they are used as explicit vowels like in Latin languages (English, French etc.) like in (ياكتاب [yaktab]). This rule applies almost to all letters of the Arabic alphabet (three exceptions only reported in rule two).

Rule Two: a letter without added-vowel is pronounced like in English, and it corresponds to a letter with *Sukun* in Arabic like in لقامار(القمر) [lkamar]. However, we have three exceptions: ا is pronounced (a) like in ادام [adam], ئ is pronounced like (i) in نسلام [islam] and ء at the end of the word is pronounced (a) like راء [ra a].

Rule Three: the letter for female nouns (ة) is no longer used like in مدراسا (مدرسة) [madrassa].

Rules Four: a letter with ashedda is doubled; the first letter is read with a *Soukoun*, the second is read as syllable with the next vowel like in ششامس [a shams], حاطام [hat tam], رريج [a rrih] or صصورا [as ssoura].

Rule Five: In Arabic dialects, many sound or syllables are coming from local languages (non-arabic languages or from Arabic but with different pronunciation or from English, etc.). For this purpose we have introduced four modifiers: Hamza, Ramza, Tarza and Elmed; The first three called Hamza, Ramza and Tarza) permit to transcribe the letters sounds which do not exist in the standard Arabic and the fourth one, Elmed which is generally not used in dialects speaking, may be used to write Sustained vowels (double-vowels) in standard Arabic or specific sound in spoken languages. These modifiers and some applications are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Modifiers in Action.

Modifier	Name	Examples
ء	Hamza	فأطما Mobile , Fatma مؤبائل
◌◌◌	Ramza	Papa بابا , game قايم , TV تيفي
◌◌◌◌	Tarza	Mentir مؤنتير , salon صلوة , matin ماتئ
◌◌◌◌◌	Elmed	Used to doubling vowel, = وو= وَا , = بي=ي

Rules Six (writing and reading sentences): The standard Arabic language grammar is well codified; but the formalism used tends to make reading and speaking more complex due the great variations of the words ends depending on the position, the type (subject, verb or complement), the number of people considered (singular, double, and plural-more-than-two) and the gender. Thus why the pronunciation of Arabic syntax is not used in dialects, even some time it is simplified by standard Arabic formal speakers on TV, Radio and conferences. We propose in Saoutharf methodology the followings:

- Use only singular and plural for verbs and nouns (no double) ;
- Use Soukoun at the end of nouns and singular verbs, when standard Arabic uses variations, like in حماد كتاب و امشا [Hmad aktab wa msha].
- Use gender only in singular verb like in حاكمات فاطيما [hakmat Fatima] كتبي يا فاطيما [ktbi ya Fatima].
- Use same and simplified plural for men and women like in لبنات وافقو [lbnat wafkou], رجال وافقو [rjal wafkou].

Writing Standard Arabic using Saoutharf Rules.

In the classic or modern Standard Arabic texts, the vowels are not written explicitly but they are kept implicit. Even when the word is included in a sentence, if we do not know the word, we cannot pronounce it correctly. Figure 2 shows an example cited from [4] which illustrate the case the word (يعد).

يُعدّ (أعد)	يَعُدّ (عد)	يعدّ (وعد)	يَعُدّ (عد)	يُعدّ (أعد)
yu'id ('a'aada)	ya'ud ('aada)	ya'id (wa'ada)	ya'udd ('adda)	yu'idd (a'adda)
[bring back]	[return]	[promise]	[count]	[prepare]

Figure 2: Legal Ambiguity in Arabic

The methodology Saoutharf overcomes this ambiguity. If we rewrite the words, the result is: يوعيدو (اعادا) [bring back], يواعودو (عادا) [return], يواعيدو (واعادا) [promise], (عاددا) [count], يوعيددو (اعاددا) [prepare]. Reading and learning Standard Arabic as first language or second language become very easy.

Southarf on the Web

We dedicated a Facebook page to the methodology. This page uses French language as explicative media and target essentially Algerian people; we have published three different texts chosen from Algeria: An extract from a popular song (Fig.3), an extract from a film dialog (Fig.4) and an extract from the national hymn (Fig.5) transcribed in Southarf from a text written in standard Arabic (<https://www.facebook.com/saoutharf/>).

سابحان للاه يالطيب * نتا للى تاعلام * كايمان شي ناس مان ستاحاهوم يقولو خاف
حاسبين كول شي خطيف * غير اجي وا زضام * و للى يابقا معا تتوالا يقولو زحاف
كاليمات مان ووغنيا لى لحاج موحامماد(محمد) لعانقا

Figure 3: An extract from an Algerian popular song

" لوكان تاعراف، يابوعلام، باب لواد تبادلات كيما قُاع حومات دزايار.
لموت تحوم علينا وا راجعات لخوف يوميا. عايشين معا لكوفارفئى...."

Figure 4: An extract from a film dialog

ميثال بيلعار ابيا لفوصحا : قاسامان
قاسامان بيننازيلا تي لماحيقات
وا دديماي زراكيبياتي ططاهيرات
وا ليونودي للاميعات لخافيات
فيلجيبالي ششاميخاتي ششاهيات
ناحنو ثورنا فاحاياتون ومامات
وا عاقادنا لعازما نتاحيا لجازائر
فشهدو فشهدو فشهدو

Figure 5: An extract from the Algerian national hymn

Some statistics, obtained between 1/10/2015 and 29/02/2016, are pictured into Figure 6 and Figure 7. The number of like mentions in 4 months is 7359 (around 11000 total number of visitors), of which 57% are between 18 and 24 old. These statistics can be considered as indicators not as measures.



Figure 6: Total like mentions (7359)

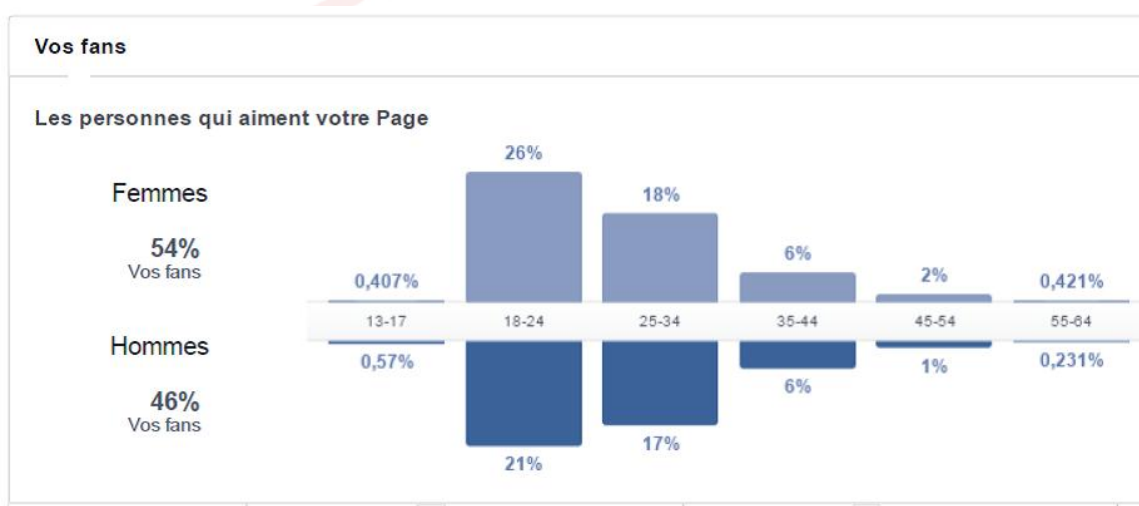


Figure 7: Distribution of like mentions by age and gender (women 54%, men 46%)

Conclusion and Perspective

We propose a methodology for standardizing writing and reading spoken local or regional Arabic languages. The objective is to provide spoken Arabic languages or dialects with a methodology for writing and reading the same way everywhere, and making texts transportable between people and locations, which is not the case today. Despite that the methodology has been tested only in a set of few people, it showed fast learning capability. However, it has to be tested in real field in large scale. We plan to collaborate with specialists in communication and education to confirm the efficiency of the methodology. Further, the proposed system will be implemented as a real-time computer based algorithm and would be valuable for information retrieval and web search algorithms for Arabic content.

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A Pilot Study on the Effectiveness of Co-Teaching: A Cross-Discipline Approach to Enhancing Teaching and Learning in the Trade Specific Context

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning - Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Most of the students admitted to the post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong often tend to appear lowly motivated and reluctant to learn English. What are the possible reasons? Lacking confidence? Lacking successful learning experience? Failing to see the value of English in relation to their future professions? Lacking the need to speak in English in their current study? Aiming at rekindling students' interest in learning English, this preliminary study was to find out students' perceptions on co-teaching and its impact on the learning and teaching in a vocational context.

In this study, 113 vocational students were arranged to take trial co-teaching lessons conducted in trade-specific workshops, in which they learnt vocational subject knowledge in English. Teaching materials were tailor-made to better fit the language needs of the industries after 3 industrial visits and 8 consultation sessions with vocational subject teachers. Data were collected from questionnaires, focus group interviews and discussion sessions so as to understand both students and teachers' perspectives on the learning and teaching of vocational subject knowledge and English through co-teaching. It was found that students were more motivated and active in learning as they experienced how English was meaningfully and practically applied in the trade-specific context.

Based on the preliminary observations from the trial lessons and analysis of the data, co-teaching seems to be an effective teaching method to increase students' learning motivation. Perspectives including benefits and concerns regarding co-teaching from both students and teachers will be highlighted in this paper.

Keywords: Collaboration, cross discipline, motivation, vocational education, language learning

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Introduction

Motivating students for learning has always been a key question for teachers in the vocational school. Cheng & Zoltan (2007) recognized that motivation is a critical factor for “determining success in second language (L2) learning” (p. 153). It is thus necessary for teachers to adopt strategies that could effectively motivate students to learn. The current study took place in a post-secondary institution in Hong Kong which specializes in offering vocational and professional education and training at Diploma level to Secondary three to six school leavers. Trade (Content subject) programmes covering the areas of business and services, engineering, design and technology are offered while students can choose to enroll on a programme that suits their needs and interests. All study modules except English are delivered in their first language (L1, Chinese). Upon successful completion of all modules, students can choose either to join the workforce of the relevant industry or to articulate to a higher level of study (e.g. higher diploma programmes).

As L1 Chinese is used as a medium of instruction for most of the modules, students have limited exposure to the target language L2 and may not understand the value and the relevance of learning English to their studies and future career. However, there has always been a strong demand for English proficiency to serve different needs regardless of their future progression pathway for work or study in Hong Kong. To raise students’ awareness of how English is practically and meaningfully applied in trade-specific contexts so as to further motivate them to learn English, cross-discipline collaboration between language and content subject teachers is considered to be one of the possible options.

Literature Review

Co-teaching: an example of cross-discipline collaboration

“Co-teaching” or “collaborative teaching” is generally defined as “two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to a classroom” (Villa, Thousand & Nevin, 2013, p. 3). This approach had already been used in the 1960s in US schools when it was popularized as an example of progressive education (Villa, Thousand & Nevin, 2013). Since then, there have been a number of sociocultural changes related to educational concepts and legal acts or laws which acted as the push factors of the development of co-teaching, such as the “Education for All Handicapped Children Act” (Public Law 94 – 142) in 1975, the “No Child Left Behind Legislation” in 2001, and the “Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA)” in 2004 (Thousand, Villa & Nevin, 2007). Co-teaching has consequently been closely related to differentiated education and inclusive education and became “the most popular inclusive educational model” (Mageria & Zigmund, 2005, p.79). As this method is more widely adopted, more recent research studies have also been done in different countries or regions without specifying inclusive education but merely a cooperation of teachers, such as the US (Weiss & Lloyd, 2003), Australia (Lee, 2013), Taiwan (Luo, 2014), and Hong Kong (Lo, 2015).

Among the six approaches to co-teaching, namely one teaching, one assisting (supportive teaching), station teaching, parallel teaching, alternative teaching, team teaching, and complementary teaching (Cook & Friend, 1995; Thousand, Villa & Nevin, 2007), one teaching, one assisting (supportive teaching) and team teaching were seen as more appropriate for the context of the present pilot study. One teaching, one assisting, or supportive teaching, is the type of co-teaching where one teacher

takes up the leading role to teach and the other teacher assists the students who need help while for team teaching, a team of co-teachers share the responsibility for teaching a class, including preparation, instructing, and assessing (Cook & Friend, 1995). In brief, these two models would allow more opportunities for teacher collaboration while serving the practical needs of students and teachers in the context.

The need for cross-discipline collaboration in the vocational context

An approach based on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is adopted to drive the co-teaching initiative. CLIL is “an umbrella term” that “encompasses any activity in which a foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non-language subject in which both language and subject have a joint role” (Marsh, 2002, p. 58).

Content-based programmes are practiced in various forms in different educational contexts such as Language Immersion, English for Specific or Academic Purposes (ESP / EAP) and Content-based Language Teaching (CBLT) (Lin & Cheung, 2016). Lying in the middle of the continuum is CLIL. With the concept of “integration”, CLIL differentiates itself from other similar language teaching methodologies and it emphasizes the equal status of content subjects and language subjects since “in essence it operates along a continuum of the foreign language and the non-language content without specifying the importance of one over another” (Coyle, 2006, p. 2). It also aims to safeguard the subject being taught whilst promoting language as a medium for learning as well as an objective of the learning process itself (Marsh, 2003, p. 37).

Previous research efforts have proven that CLIL brings about promising benefits to students’ L2 learning. For instance, Nold et al. (2008, p. 13, as cited in Kupetz & Woltin, 2014) found that “CLIL students are about two years ahead of language learners taught in conventional foreign language classes” as they demonstrated higher abilities in fields such as text reconstruction, listening and reading comprehension, and grammar. This encouraging finding could be explained by students getting “frequent L2 exposure” and “learning time within an authentic and communicative CLIL environment” (Nold et al., 2008, p. 13, as cited in Kupetz & Woltin, 2014). The successful implementation of CLIL requires efforts from both language teachers and content teachers. One of the suitable approaches to implement CLIL is co-teaching. Lo (2015) has further discussed the success factors of co-teaching namely the enhancement of teachers’ awareness of students’ needs, appropriate curriculum mapping and development and the changes in teachers’ pedagogical focuses.

According to Lin & Cheung (2016), their Genre Egg Framework can be adopted to enhance both the language and content teachers’ academic language-awareness and content-awareness. In this framework, academic language is divided into five levels, namely academic vocabulary, sentence patterns, academic functions, academic text-types (genres), and curriculum context. One of the main advantages of this framework is that co-teaching lessons can happen at any level. Co-teachers can examine the language use in the contexts of their content subjects using either a top-down or a bottom-up approach and develop suitable models for their needs (Lin & Cheung, 2016). For example, students from the Automotive Technology programme are expected to understand the manual of car maintenance. Co-teaching can thus be adopted at the academic text-types level, where students are taught to read the manuals in their second or foreign language.

Effectiveness of co-teaching

It is generally agreed that co-teaching brings a lot of benefits to students, teachers, as well as schools. When learning content subjects in L2, students are intensively exposed to L2 input and output opportunities within the authentic and meaningful contexts, they can then incidentally absorb L2 (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010). Teachers could also gain more support as they work together to share the responsibility of teaching a class. It is worth noting that team spirit can also be enhanced (Cook & Friend, 1995; Thousand, Villa & Nevin, 2007; Wilson & Blednick, 2011). With carefully designed learning tasks, co-teaching could also raise students' linguistic competence and confidence, help them develop a wide range of skills and increase the motivation in both students and teachers (Coyle, 2006).

In the Hong Kong context, teachers are normally divided into different subject departments and hence, they may not be well aware of other departments' teaching plan. Through co-teaching, English teachers would be more aware of the students' needs in order to learn content subjects through English whereas the content subject teachers would understand more about students' difficulties regarding language and how to incorporate language teaching in their lessons (Lo, 2015). Despite the benefits of co-teaching presented, there are also difficulties on implementation, for example, insufficient time for planning (Wilson & Blednick, 2011) and the lack of firm beliefs from teachers in the effectiveness of L2-content collaboration (Davison, 2006). When putting co-teaching into practice, these aspects have to be carefully considered.

Previous research studies on co-teaching: a literature gap

Although a considerable amount of research has been devoted to exploring issues regarding co-teaching in different regions and at various school levels (see, for example, Walther-Thomas, 1997, Weiss & Lloyd 2003, Luo, 2014; Lo, 2015), very limited research has investigated co-teaching lessons conducted in Hong Kong. Moreover, there has not been any similar research carried out in a vocational school context where the content subjects are delivered in L1 but not in L2. The present study aimed to address this research gap by exploring how co-teaching could be carried out in a vocational school context in Hong Kong and finding out the perceptions of students under the study. The research question of the present study was:

How do students perceive co-teaching lessons conducted in a trade-specific context?

Methodology

The collaborative project: pilot co-teaching lessons

As the content subjects are mainly delivered in L1 in the vocational school of the current study, the language team was tasked to explore how co-teaching could be practiced so as to increase students' exposure to L2 and enhance their learning of content subject modules. The collaborative project, conducted in two rounds of trial lessons, lasted for 12 months between January 2015 and December 2015. It was carried out by the language team in collaboration with 6 trade (content subject) programmes, namely Print Media, Mechanical Engineering, Building Services, Automotive Technology, Hairdressing and Beauty Care. The project leader was also the principal researcher of this study and hence the researcher was playing an "insider" role in this project. It was under such circumstances that this pilot study was conducted.

The collaborative project involved the design and implementation of 8 co-teaching lessons of cross-discipline collaboration in the form of co-planning and designing the lessons, making reference to the practice done by Lo (2015) and Mohan (1986)'s concept of content and language integrated learning. To facilitate success, several meetings were organized for each of the co-teaching lessons. Teachers involved in each lesson and a member of the research team attended all the collaborative meetings to ensure support. First, consultation meetings were arranged for the language teachers and trade (content subject) teachers together with the relevant trade programme leaders to confirm understanding of the purpose of the project and address concerns, if any. The two teams (language and trade teachers) then moved on to identify students' learning needs in relation to their trade specific context. After that, they discussed the trade module contents and mapped on a suitable topic for co-teaching. Teaching and learning materials were then prepared by the language teachers in consultation with the content subject teachers. Some content materials were translated from L1 (Chinese) to L2 (English). The learning materials were carefully rewritten with a scaffolding to facilitate learning by creating an authentic and meaningful context. With this principle in mind, the co-teaching lessons were conducted in simulated workplace situations in the trade-specific workshops.

Participants

The teachers involved were initially invited by the project leader to take part in this collaborative project and the students involved were randomly identified by the corresponding content subject teachers. A total of 10 language and 7 trade teachers with 113 students agreed to experiment the co-teaching lessons. The student participants (aged 16-18) were of different years of study (1 to 3 years) in the vocational school.

Research instruments

In order to answer the research question, that is to explore how students perceive the co-teaching lessons conducted in a trade-specific context, data were collected from 2 sources, including a student questionnaire as well as focus group interviews with students and teachers.

Student questionnaire

The purpose of the student questionnaire was to collect quantitative data concerning students' perceptions of the co-teaching lessons they experienced. Open-ended questions were also used to supplement the quantitative data with qualitative one.

A total of 3 classes were randomly selected out of the 8 classes to participate in this research. In other words, convenience sampling was adopted. The questionnaire survey was administered by the researchers immediately after the co-teaching lesson while students' memory of the lesson experience still remained fresh. Although the questionnaire was written in English, Chinese (L1) explanations were given by the researchers in administering the survey so as to avoid misunderstanding. Students were also allowed to give their responses in Chinese. All the 44 questionnaires distributed were returned and valid for analysis, achieving a response rate of 100%.

Focus group interviews with students

To get a better insight into students' perceptions of the co-teaching lessons, students were asked to participate in a focus group interview with the researchers on a voluntary basis. A student interview guide was prepared for the research team to conduct semi-structured interviews with the volunteer students.

In collecting opinions from students, 6 focus group interviews were conducted with 24 student volunteers. The interviews were done in L1 (Chinese) to facilitate communication and encourage discussion among the participants. The interviews lasted for around 30 minutes each and were hosted by the researchers.

Focus group interviews with teachers

With a view to understanding the teachers' perceptions of the co-teaching lessons, both trade and language teachers were invited, on a voluntary basis, to take part in a focus group interview with the researchers. A teacher interview guide was prepared for the researchers to conduct semi-structured interviews with the volunteer teachers.

A total of 6 focus group interviews were conducted with 10 language teachers and 7 trade teachers volunteering to express their views. To facilitate communication and encourage discussion, the interviews were conducted in L1 (Chinese). The interviews were moderated by the researchers and they lasted for around 30 minutes each.

Results

Students' perceptions on co-teaching lessons conducted in a trade-specific context

This section examines whether or not co-teaching is a motivating strategy to students. The results of the questionnaire and focus group interviews with students and teachers are presented separately.

Questionnaire – students were positive about the pilot co-teaching lessons

As shown in Figure 1 below, an overwhelming percentage of students commented that the pilot co-teaching lessons were interesting, motivating and useful while only a few of them had negative feedback. It is thus safely concluded that most students were positive towards the pilot co-teaching lessons.

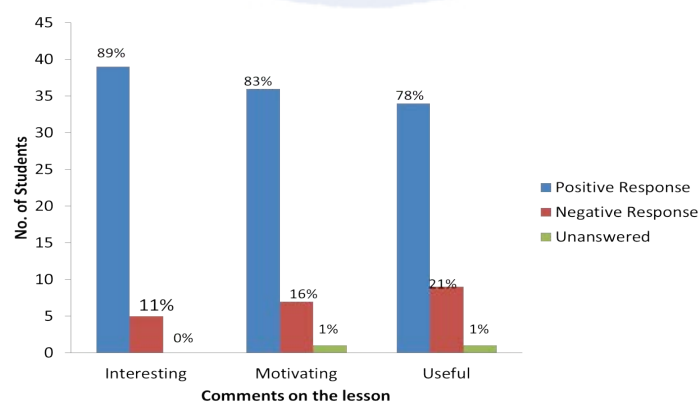


Figure 1: Student questionnaire results

According to the written comments of the students, they reflected that the co-teaching lessons were a freshly new experience to them and they were happy that they could learn more trade-related terminology in English. Most of them enjoyed the lessons because they could have more exposure to English in the trade-specific contexts. More qualitative feedback can be found under the part of focus group interviews.

Focus group interviews

Students' Feedback

Most students found the pilot co-teaching lessons unconventional and interesting since English elements were incorporated into the trade lesson. They enjoyed the workshop practice most while they found classroom instruction least enjoyable. Students explained that they preferred hands-on practice since the practical approach better suited their learning style. In addition, they expressed their interest in learning the terms related to their trade subject in English.

Students' own English proficiency, however, was highlighted as the biggest obstacle during the lesson. Although students enjoyed learning the trade terminology in English, they encountered some difficulties in understanding the trade topic in English, especially when it came to a topic that required a higher level of language proficiency for comprehension. They stated that they welcomed this kind of lessons on a supplementary basis, such as having one or two lessons per month, without incorporating it into their formal learning. Yet, they expressed their concerns over having this approach on a long term basis and being assessed in English. To students, as learning trade subjects in English has already presented challenges to them, they would probably be demotivated towards learning if trade knowledge were to be assessed in English as well. For this point, it is worth noting that students' language ability and attitude are critical factors to be observed.

Teachers' Feedback

In the focus group interviews, teachers reflected that students' participation in the pilot co-teaching lessons was very satisfactory. They were proactive in giving responses and participating in the activities because the lesson was something out of the ordinary to them and the variations of lessons could increase students' motivation level towards the target learning materials. The inclusion of the English language in a trade lesson could help students' acquisition not only of their English language learning but also their trade specific subject. This would also increase their motivation for learning and enhance their perceptions towards the English language with satisfactory learning outcome. It seems that conducting the lesson in the trade-specific context could be motivating to students as they recognize its meaning.

As reported, a great deal of manpower and time, however, had been spent on preparing for the lessons since all newly developed materials required extra amount of time and effort during the initial stage. Teachers also expressed that a co-teaching lesson enriched with English language elements would take more time to conduct than merely a trade lesson conducted in students' native language, L1. English teachers also revealed that not only was it difficult and time-consuming to digest the trade teaching and learning materials, it was also difficult to select topics for co-teaching as the theory-based subjects and complex instructions were not suitable for the co-teaching lessons. In addition, the trade learning materials were originally written in Chinese and it was time-consuming and strenuous to choose the right translation of

some jargons. Trade teachers also opined that if students were required to use English in a load of trade subjects, it would be too challenging for them and would probably hinder their learning effectiveness and efficiency and further demotivate their learning towards respective trade subjects.

Discussion

It has always been the language and trade teachers' will to explore effective ways to help students learn effectively in the vocational context. As reported above, there has been an inseparable relationship between language and content in facilitating learning in the educational and vocational contexts, hence, collaboration between L2 and content subject teachers is beneficial. However, to carry out co-teaching and warrant better effectiveness of this move in the vocational school on study, there are 3 areas to be addressed: student and teacher readiness, appropriate level of language use and support for collaboration.

Confidence building: student readiness

Despite the challenges identified, the present study has initially revealed some benefits of co-teaching while its effectiveness on L2 and content knowledge development is yet to be measured. As most of the students admitted to the vocational schools are mainly from Chinese (L1) medium schools with unfavourable experience in L2 learning, they currently feel more comfortable in learning the content subjects in L1. However, it is important to build up students' confidence in this innovative teaching approach so as to secure better success. It seems Lin & Cheung (2016)'s Genre Egg model could help address this issue. A bottom-up approach could be adopted to build up students' confidence before progressing to a higher level of content and language integrated learning. Since students enjoyed hands-on practice, teachers could consider including more authentic practice tasks in the teaching. In considering students' preference for co-teaching lessons to be arranged as "add-ons" instead of formal lessons, a thoughtful implementation plan supported by motivating activities should be carefully designed.

Confidence building: teacher readiness

As the project was done without adequate training for teachers, the two teams of teachers found it hard to cope with the experiment for various reasons. For language teachers, it was extremely challenging for them to understand the trade knowledge, and then translate it into English materials for co-teaching. For trade teachers, the need to put their teaching in English is another concern since they have not been trained in using English as a medium of instruction (MOI). It appears beneficial to students as both teams of teachers have become more aware of students' learning needs. Nevertheless, it is essential to build up trade teachers' confidence especially in using English as the medium of instruction. Hence, a structured staff training programme is needed.

Curriculum mapping and development: appropriate level of language use

Comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) facilitates comprehensible and meaningful output. Carefully designed learning materials with appropriate level of language use can help enhance students' learning of trade topics. The learning materials concerned have to be rewritten in L2 with appropriate level of language to assist students' understanding and learning including the correct use of grammar, vocabulary and sentence patterns. It is of paramount importance that students find the lesson

motivating, interesting and useful to them. As stated by Lo (2015), academic language involved in learning content subjects is different from everyday language in terms of lexis, syntax and discourse organisation (Coffin, 2006; Schleppegrell, 2004). These differences in linguistic features will lead to difficulties for L2 learners who have to learn content subjects through an L2 (Gibbons, 2009). Hence, topics selected for co-teaching have to be carefully mapped with the learning needs and redeveloped with clear scaffolding in consideration of students' language ability and attitude towards learning content subjects through L2.

Availability of resources: support for collaboration

As echoed by Lo (2015), Wilson & Blednick (2012) and the results of the current study, teachers need to invest ample amount of time for collaborative meetings, development of lesson materials and other preparation work, which has been a big pressure for them. It is of utmost importance for teachers to be released from their normal workload so as to enable their efficient contributions to future collaborative projects.

Conclusion

This study examined students' perceptions towards pilot co-teaching lessons conducted in the trade-specific context with a view to integrating the learning of content and language subjects. As presented above, the co-teaching lessons have provided a refreshing experience for each of the student groups as a one-off experiment. They were particularly designed with a careful scaffolding of learning activities to facilitate learning and find out students' reactions to this innovative approach. In general, students welcomed the lessons as additional opportunities which could enrich their learning experience without going through the pressure from assessment. Though the literature has informed that students can acquire an L2 incidentally through intensive exposure to L2 input and output (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010), the actual effectiveness of co-teaching in enhancing teaching and learning in the vocational context has not been empirically evaluated.

Although the present study has reported some positive comments from both the students and teachers, it has some limitations. First, the study was a small scale research, involving 1 co-teaching lesson for each trade programme only. As mentioned, the project leader played multiple roles including the language team leader and the researcher. The teachers involved were committed and cooperative in this project. Hence, the potential positive feedback collected in this study was to a certain extent based on some favourable conditions and so one has to be cautious when interpreting the findings of the present study. Second, there exist unbalanced roles and responsibilities between the language and trade teachers. The language teachers were playing a leading role in the planning, designing of learning materials and conducting the lessons. Also, the lessons were arranged to be conducted in the trade-specific workshops, which was a totally new experience for the participants. To a certain extent, it was quite unnatural for both the students and teachers to have the lessons conducted in such settings. Furthermore, the researcher did not want to put too much pressure on the teachers, so the lessons were not observed to closely investigate what actually happened in the lessons though they were video-taped.

Despite the potential benefits of co-teaching in the trade-specific context, there is a need to be sensitive in taking this new approach forward. Students' language ability and attitude towards learning trade knowledge in L2, teachers' confidence in using English as MOI and capability in developing appropriate learning activities in L2, and most importantly, the availability of resources to facilitate co-teaching to happen are all issues to be addressed. Nonetheless, mindset change, confidence building, teacher training, professional development and cross-discipline collaboration are all long-term processes. Short-term programmes and one-off experience are not sufficient to transform practice. Hence, a larger scale of research with comprehensive evaluation on the development of L2 and content subject knowledge (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010) through cross-discipline collaboration should be carried out with appropriate implementation plan and sustainable staff training programme in place.



Acknowledgements

We express our thanks to the leaders of the vocational schools, all the language and trade participating teachers and students who made this pilot study possible. We very much appreciated their cooperation and support.



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*A Pilot Study on the Effectiveness of a Modified OG Approach on “Struggling”
English Learners in Hong Kong*

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning - Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The teaching and learning of English has always been an issue to language teachers and students at a post-secondary college in Hong Kong. Entering the college with below Level 1 in English Language in the Diploma of Secondary Education Examination in Hong Kong, students are found very weak in phonological awareness. They find it very difficult to cope with their study needs at the college. They tend to arrive with much frustration in English language learning as they failed to grasp a satisfactory understanding of the English language system in their primary and secondary studies (approximately 12 years in total). With its effectiveness in college students who are learning disabled (Guyer & Sabatino, 2001), the current pilot study aims to find out if the modified Orton-Gillingham (OG) approach, found useful in the teaching of reading instruction to students with learning disabilities or dyslexia, can help this group of struggling English language learners in their awareness of the underlying phonological structure of words. The 32 subjects were very weak in English foundation and had obtained below Level 1 in English language in the public examination. Pre- and posttest results reflected that the subjects had shown improvement in phonological awareness. The study not only supports the effectiveness of the modified OG approach in teaching English pronunciation in a post-secondary college, but also indicates that it can be a structured quick-fix approach to help improve students' pronunciation and modify their attitude towards English language learning within a very short time.

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Introduction

Despite the fact that English language education is a key learning area in the 9-year basic education and the 3-year senior secondary education in Hong Kong, the HKDSE¹ English results statistics reveal that around 20% of the secondary school graduates fail to meet the minimum English entry requirement for admissions to first-degree courses in local tertiary institutions (HKEAA, 2015). Working in a local post-secondary institution in which nearly 95% of the students it admits failed the HKDSE English exam, it is important that the English teachers adopt effective strategies to help students regain their confidence as well as building up their English language foundation.

The current study took place in a local post-secondary institution which specializes in offering education and professional training at Diploma level to senior secondary graduates. Designed with the dual objectives of preparing students for further studies as well as employment, the programme offers an array of specialisations ranging from business studies, design and technology, fitness and sports to various engineering majors and so on. Depending on their own interests and needs, students can choose to enroll in any one of the specialist programmes.

To equip students with a solid foundation necessary for further studies and employment, the Diploma programme also comprises a suite of modules intended to develop students' generic competence (i.e. Chinese, English, Mathematics, Information Technology and Whole-person Development) alongside the industry-specific modules. Upon successful completion of all the industry-related and generic modules, the Diploma holders are eligible to apply for admissions to Higher Diploma programmes in the post-secondary institutions.

Since a large proportion of the students admitted to this Diploma programme are those whose overall performance in the HKDSE English exam was designated as "Unclassified"², most students apparently lack a basic understanding of the English language system. In particular, pronunciation is perceived by both teachers and

¹ HKDSE stands for Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, an exam taken by students at the end of their six-year secondary education; the minimum English entry requirement for admissions to local 4-year undergraduate programmes is an attainment with Level 3 in English Language.

² Standards-referenced Reporting (SRR) is adopted for HKDSE English exam. There are five levels of performance (1-5), with 5 being the highest and 1 being the lowest. The highest-achieving Level 5 candidates are awarded Level 5**. Performance below the Level 1 standard is designated as "Unclassified" (U).

students as one of the biggest challenges. Together with students' frustrating past experience in learning English, it is important that the English teachers adopt strategies that could effectively and efficiently improve students' pronunciation.

Motivated by the positive findings in numerous studies which reported the use of Orton-Gillingham (OG) instruction with dyslexic children, this pilot study aims to find out if a modified OG approach could be a practical solution to students' pronunciation problems.



Literature Review

The Orton-Gillingham (OG) Approach

The Orton-Gillingham (OG) approach was developed in the early twentieth century by Anna Gillingham and Bessie Stillman in association with Dr Samuel Orton, a child neurologist, and has been used since the 1930's mainly with children suffering from dyslexia. Characterized by its use of all learning pathways in the brain, including visual, auditory and kinesthetic-tactile, the OG approach is a multisensory, sequential, synthetic and phonics-based approach to teaching reading, spelling and writing. An OG or OG-based instructional program involves the systematic and explicit instruction of phonology and phonological awareness, sound-symbol correspondence, syllables, morphology, syntax and semantics (Ritchey & Goeke, 2006). To ensure mastery and to bring students to the automatic response level, ample practice is given throughout the OG course. Continuous assessment of students' learning is necessary in order that teachers can adjust the teaching pace and give individualized instruction to address the needs of each individual student.

Effectiveness of OG and OG-based Programs with Dyslexic Students

To investigate the effectiveness of OG instruction, Guyer and Sabatino (1989) conducted a quasi-experiment with 30 college students who were suffering from reading and spelling disabilities. The results indicated that students in the OG group made better progress in word attack, word analysis and spelling skills than the group receiving nonphonetic reading instruction as well as the non-intervention comparison group. In another college-level study, Guyer, Banks and Guyer (1993) reported positive results in the spelling performance of dyslexic students who were provided with 16 weeks of spelling instruction using the Wilson Reading System (Wilson, 1996).

In their study conducted in 2012, Giess, Rivers, Kennedy & Lombardino (2012) also concluded that the explicit instruction involved in an OG-based treatment was effective in improving the "word recognition and spelling abilities" of a group of adolescents with persistent reading problems. With an attempt to examine the efficacy of a one-year OG instruction based reading intervention program for primary-school-aged children with dyslexia in Singapore, the results published by Noel & Houghton's team (2011) revealed that OG-based instruction was "effective in bringing out significant improvements in the word recognition (aural-visual decoding) and word expression (visual-oral decoding) performances" (p. 146) of the dyslexic children.

Effectiveness of OG and OG-based Programs in General Education Setting

The effectiveness of OG-oriented programs was also examined in general education setting. Using a quasi-experimental design, Dooley (1994) revealed that middle school students who were given multisensory integrated reading instruction outperformed their peers in the control group in various aspects such as word attack and reading rate. In 2002, Joshi, Dahlgren and Boulware-Gooden conducted a quasi-experiment which involved the use of Language Basics, a curriculum based on Cox's 1992 Alphabetic Phonics (Cox, 1992), on two classes of first-graders. Compared to the control group who showed progress only in comprehension, the OG-based group demonstrated significant growth in word attack, phonological awareness and comprehension.

Contrary to the positive findings reported in the studies of Dooley (1994) and Joshi et al (2002), with an attempt to find out the effectiveness of OG instruction on the reading performance of community college students, Chandler, Munday, Tunnell and Windham (1993) reported that the group who received traditional reading instruction performed significantly better than the OG group, as revealed by their increased overall reading levels in the Nelson Denney Reading Test.

Although research concerning the effectiveness of OG or OG-based approach has been conducted with students from different backgrounds and in different settings, most of them were situated in the United States where the research participants are L1 learners. Considering the difference between an L1 context and an L2 industry-related setting with regard to institutional context, curriculum components, students' background and English language proficiency and so on, the current pilot study aims to fill the research gap and answer the following three research questions:

1. Can the modified OG-based instructional program help the “struggling” post-secondary English learners in Hong Kong?
2. In what ways can the approach help students in their learning of English pronunciation?
3. What are the implications of these findings for the teachers in this context?

Methodology

A pilot study on using a modified OG-based instructional program to teach English pronunciation was conducted in a post-secondary college in Hong Kong in the academic year 2014 to 2015. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative tools to collect data to answer the above research questions.

Subjects

Subjects were 32 post-secondary school students whose overall performance in the HKDSE English exam was designated as “Unclassified” (below Level 1). According to the subject descriptors written by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA, 2014), a typical candidate who achieved Level One could “understand speakers who speak slowly and clearly on very familiar and predictable topics”, “identify some simple factual information, record information such as names and addresses, numbers, and brief messages”, and “communicate some brief, factual information, take part in very predictable short conversational exchanges, and make brief contributions to discussions if given time and support from others”. In other words, the subjects of the present study failed to meet the aforementioned standards. They could not understand words and phrases even on very familiar and predictable topics. These students also failed to record and communicate brief factual information. Moreover, they could not successfully take part in very short and predictable conversational exchanges even if time and support from others were given.

The 32 students were selected from three programmes on a voluntary basis. Twenty two of them majored in Digital Electronics Technology, while eight of them majored in Aircraft Maintenance and the remaining two majored in Computer-aided Product Engineering.

Modified OG-based instructional program

In response to the needs of the subjects, some modifications had been made to the Orton-Gillingham Approach. First, the kinesthetic-tactile elements were kept to a minimum. For instance, “finger-spelling” was employed only with weaker students because of some adverse feelings shown in some classes. Second, a number of vocabulary items frequently used in the college’s English curriculum were included in the word list for practice as a “quick-fix” for students to handle their English modules.

Data Collection

Pretest and Posttest

The study employed the Reading Readiness Screening Tool (RRST) (Version 7.5) developed and published by the Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta in 2011 as the pretest and posttest. It tested subjects in two main areas including phonological awareness and handling phonics tasks. Details of the tasks are shown in Table 1.

Areas	Tasks	
Identification	Letter Sound Identification	Sound Identification
Rhyme	Rhyme Detection	Rhyme Generation
Detection	Syllable Detection	Phoneme Detection
Blending	Syllable Blending	Phoneme Blending
Deletion	Syllable Deletion	Phoneme Deletion
Isolation	Initial Sound Isolation	Final Sound Isolation
	Medial Sound Isolation	
Recognition	Non Word Decoding	
Encoding	Spelling	

Table 1 Tasks of Reading Readiness Screening Tool

Questionnaire Survey

In addition to collecting quantitative data using the pretest and posttest, the study conducted a questionnaire survey to collect subjects' views on English learning. Thirty two questionnaires were received and analysed.

Focus Group Interview

As the second means to collect qualitative data, two focus group interviews were conducted to collect subjects' views on the effectiveness of the modified OG-based instructional program.

Procedures

A pretest using the RRST was conducted in November 2014 before the students attended the modified OG-based instructional program.

After the pretest, students were arranged to attend program for fifteen weeks which added up to a total of thirty training hours. They were divided into four groups with the class size ranged from eight to eleven. In the program, students received a series

of “systematic, sequential, multisensory, synthetic and phonics-based” (Goeke & Ritchey, 2006) training that involved a systematic and explicit instruction of phonology and phonological awareness, sound-symbol correspondence and syllables. Language components were taught in a specially designed sequence so as to enhance learning and help students master the knowledge. During the program, individualised instruction was given to address the needs of each student. After attending the program, students were arranged to take a posttest to find out their improvement in phonological awareness and handling phonics tasks.

Upon completion of the program in May 2015, questionnaires were given to the students to collect their views on English learning. Four of them were randomly selected for focus group interviews conducted in August 2015 to further collect their views on the effectiveness of the modified OG-based instructional program.

Findings

The findings are shown in the following sections.

Relative Gain

Relative gain (RG) was calculated by dividing the maximum possible gain score by the absolute gain score, which was gained by subtracting the pretest score from the posttest score, and expressing in percentage. Theoretically, it reflected the individual progress and/or improvement contributed by the modified OG-based instructional program.

Overall Results

The results of the pre-test and post-test were analysed and compared. Overall, positive results were found. Results are shown in Table 2.

RG	Overall Results	
	No. of Students	% of Students
>10%	32	100%
>20%	27	84%
>25%	23	72%
>30%	15	47%

Table 2 Overall Results of RRST

After receiving the modified OG-based instructional program, all students (100%) showed an increase and improvement in phonological awareness and handling phonics tasks. Also, nearly half of them (47%) showed a general improvement of more than 30% in terms of RG.

Phonological Awareness

In the RRST, the phonological awareness of students was tested in the areas of rhyme detection, rhyme generation, syllable detection, phoneme detection, syllable blending, phoneme blending, syllable deletion, phoneme deletion, initial Sound isolation, final sound isolation and medial sound isolation. Results are shown in Table 3.

RG	Rhyme Detection	Rhyme Generation	Syllable Detection	Phoneme Detection	Syllable Blending	Phoneme Blending	Syllable Deletion	Phoneme Deletion	Initial Sound Isolation	Final Sound Isolation	Medial Sound Isolation
>10%	28%	84%	31%	84%	44%	81%	59%	63%	91%	53%	94%
>20%	13%	66%	13%	59%	28%	72%	28%	44%	56%	16%	63%
>25%	13%	66%	13%	59%	28%	72%	28%	44%	28%	3%	31%
>30%	13%	66%	13%	59%	28%	72%	13%	19%	28%	3%	31%

Table 3 Results of Phonological Awareness

Regarding phonological awareness, students showed different improvement in different areas. For instance, a majority of them showed a small improvement (RG>10%) in rhyme generation (84%), phoneme detection (84%), phoneme blending (81%), initial sound isolation (91%) and medial sound isolation (94%), whereas around half of them showed a 10% improvement in syllable blending (44%), syllable deletion (59%), phoneme deletion (63%) and final sound isolation (53%). In addition, approximately one-third of them showed a 10% improvement in rhyme detection (28%) and syllable detection (31%). Among all the tasks, students improved the most (RG>30%) in rhyme generation (66%), phoneme detection (59%) and phoneme blending (72%).

Handling Phonics Tasks

In the RRST, phonics tasks included letter identification, sound identification, non-word decoding and spelling. Results are shown in Table 4.

RG	Letter Identification	Sound Identification	Non-word Decoding	Spelling
>10%	13%	97%	88%	66%
>20%	6%	97%	81%	50%
>25%	0%	88%	81%	50%
>30%	0%	84%	72%	31%

Table 4 Results of Handling Phonics Tasks

Most students (97%) showed improvement (RG>10%) in sound identification, followed by non-word decoding (88%) and spelling (66%). Only 13% of the students showed a small improvement in letter identification.

In addition, many students improved more than 30% in sound identification (84%) and non-word decoding (72%).

Questionnaire Survey

The summary of the questionnaire survey is shown in Table 5.

Learning Outcome	Mean (scale of 1 to 10)	Percentage of Students Scored Higher than 8
My English vocabulary bank was expanded.	8.64	83.3%
My English listening skills have been improved.	8.60	83.3%
I experienced a sense of success during the lessons.	8.52	78.6%
I am able to pronounce English words using the strategies I learnt in the lessons.	8.48	76.2%
I have become more interested in learning English.	8.26	76.2%
I have become more confident in using English.	8.21	71.4%

Table 5 Summary of Questionnaire Survey

A majority of students commented that after attending the modified OG-based instructional program, their English vocabulary bank was expanded (83.3%) and their listening skills had been improved (83.3%). Moreover, approximately three-fourths of the students remarked that they experienced a sense of success during the lessons (78.6%), were able to pronounce English words using the strategies I learnt in the lessons (76.2%), had become more interested in learning English (76.2%), and more confident in using English (71.4%). Overall, students expressed a positive attitude towards the modified OG instructional program.

Focus Group Interview

Students being interviewed gave positive responses. They generally favored the approach and found the learning experience fruitful in helping them improve their English pronunciation. They were surprised by the effectiveness of the study. Also, they had realised that there was a relationship between the sound and letters (i.e. sound-symbol correspondence). In addition, they agreed that they had learnt to blend the phonemes and pronounce the words. These observations were supported by comments made by the students in the interview. A few examples are translated quoted below:

“I haven’t expected that my pronunciation could be improved that much” (Student A);

“When I saw a word, I could only read it as one word but now I can see and pronounce it as a combination of letters” (Student D);

“I have learnt how to pronounce a word by blending the sound of letters” (Student A).

Not only did the modified OG-based instructional program enhance students’ ability in English pronunciation, it also changed their perspectives on English learning and raised their confidence in speaking English. This positive change could be seen in students’ comments such as “I thought pronunciation was a basic and simple thing, but after attending the training, I have learnt that there are, in fact, many rules to help me pronounce a word more accurately” (Student A), “it helped me to talk to native English speakers” (Student C), and “the training has built my confidence in using and speaking English” (Student D).

Discussion

The present study sought to evaluate the efficacy of the modified OG-based instructional program to teaching English pronunciation in a post-secondary context. From the findings, positive results were generally observed, which suggested that the modified OG-based instructional program would be effective in bringing about significant improvements in students' English pronunciation including phonological awareness and skills of handling phonics tasks, and positive influences on their attitude towards English learning. Details are discussed along the following lines.

Phonological Awareness

It is of paramount importance to improve students' phonological awareness as revealed by Liberman and Shankweiler (1985), students' success in reading and writing is directly related to their awareness of the underlying phonological structure of words. Weak language learners usually find dividing words into their phonological elements challenging. As shown in Table 3, the highest degree of improvement was found in the areas of rhyme generation, phoneme detection and phoneme blending. All these three areas belong to the two lowest levels of the "four levels of metalinguistic skill" (Lane, Pullen, Eisele, & Jordan, 2002) as shown in Table 6.

Level	Meaning
Word Level	Ability to isolate individual words from the speech flow
Syllable Level	Ability to blend and segment chunks within words
Onset-Rime Level	Ability to manipulate intrasyllabic units
Phoneme Level	Ability to manipulate individual sounds within words

Table 6 Levels of Phonological Awareness

The findings seemed to suggest that after receiving the modified OG-based instructional program, students made the most improvements in "onset-rime" and "phoneme" levels, which means they gained the abilities to manipulate "intrasyllabic units" and "individual sounds within words" (Lane, Pullen, Eisele, & Jordan, 2002). In other words, the findings would appear to support the proposition that the modified OG-based instructional program could help the struggling post-secondary English learners in Hong Kong raise their phonological awareness from the lowest level and hence improve their English pronunciation.

This is further proven by the fact that a majority of learners (83%) agreed that their “English listening skills have been improved” and many of them (76%) said that they were then “able to pronounce English words using the strategies (s) he had learnt in the lessons”.

Handling Phonics Tasks

Other than raising students’ phonological awareness, the modified OG-based instructional program also seems to demonstrate a great efficiency in improving students’ skills for handling phonemic tasks (i.e. raising phonemic awareness). We can see from Table 4 that, in general, many students improved in handling all four phonics tasks, particularly in the tasks of sound identification and non-word decoding, which are both related to sound production. Concerning sound identification, students had to produce the sound of any letters the teacher pointed to. As for non-word decoding, students had to read out any words the teacher made up. 84% and 72% of students showed a significant improvement ($RG > 30\%$) in the posttest in sound identification and non-word decoding respectively, reflecting perhaps the modified OG-based instructional program would help raise students’ phonemic awareness.

Attitude towards English Language Learning

Research showed that there was a close relationship between learning a language and learners’ attitude towards the target language (Starks & Paltridge, 1996). Choy & Troudi (2006) averred that “the inner feelings and emotions of learners influence their perspectives and their attitudes towards the target language”. Karahan (2007) claimed that “positive language attitude let learners have positive orientation towards learning English” (p. 84). In other words, attitude has been generally believed to play an important role in language learning as they would appear to influence students’ success or failure in learning the target language. Therefore, an improvement in learners’ attitude would probably help them learn and master the target language better. From the results of the questionnaire survey, struggling English learners seemed to agree that the modified OG-based instructional program had made their attitude towards learning English more positive as they “experienced a sense of success during the lessons”, “became more interested in learning English” and “became more confident in using English” (students’ written comments). Because of these positive changes in attitude, theoretically, those students would appear to perform better and have more confidence in using and, especially, speaking English.

Implications

The modified OG-based instructional program could help raise students' phonological awareness, improve their skills in handling phonics tasks, and modify their attitude towards English language learning within a short period of time as reflected in the focus group interviews, a student commented that he did not “expect that [his] pronunciation could be improved that much”. So it seems fair to say that not only could the OG-based approaches help students with learning disabilities, the modified OG-based instructional program used in the present study, could also be a quick-fix or practical solution to helping students with prolonged failing experience in English learning and trouble pronouncing English words.

Limitations & Further Research

Though the modified OG approach is theoretically sound, there are limitations in the present study such as the lack of a control group for making comparison of results, small sample size, the short duration of the training period, the teacher factor and other variables like the regular English lessons and unknown language activities that might lead to different results. Hence, further research should be conducted to include a control group, a larger sample size, a longer duration and control of other factors to further confirm results.

In addition, there is an “important relationship between phonemic awareness and reading acquisition” (Kame'enui, et al, 1997). Lane (2007) stressed the importance of phonological awareness suggesting that one's phonological awareness is “directly related to [his/her] reading ability”, and “improvements in phonological awareness can and usually do result in improvements in reading ability”. Thus, not only would the modified OG-based instructional program seem to help raise students' phonological and phonemic awareness, but also perhaps contribute to the development of their reading skills. This could be another direction for further research under the same context.

Conclusion

The modified OG-based instructional program appears to increase the phonological awareness of struggling post-secondary English learners, improve their skills for handling phonics tasks, make them become more positive towards English learning, and increase their confidence in learning English. In conclusion, we now have some evidence that it is appropriate to expose weaker students to OG-based remedial programs that can help them make improvements in English language learning and pronunciation. It would be beneficial to students at large if there could be a large scale research on the effectiveness of a structured OG or OG-based program to draw the attention of the Education Bureau (EDB) of Hong Kong for the need to make the teaching of phonics compulsory in the local education system.

Acknowledgements

We express our thanks to the project team members and students who made this pilot study possible. We very much appreciated their cooperation and support.

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 several overlapping, curved lines in shades of blue and red, creating a circular, abstract design.

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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 several overlapping, curved lines in shades of blue and red, creating a circular, abstract design.

Foreign Language Anxiety and Learner's Willingness to Communicate in the L2 Classroom

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning – Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Learning English in a foreign context and communicating in English can be an anxious experience for learners, which is primarily related to their willingness to communicate (WTC) in that language. The tendency of a learner's communication defines the notion of WTC. One factor that is directly related to WTC is Communication apprehension that is one type of foreign language anxiety related to communication situations. With reference to the "heuristic model of L2 WTC, there are twelve variables that are explained to have an affective impact on one's communication level in L2. This paper reflects those variables on the preparatory year students' willingness to communicate in the L2 classroom at King Saud University and whether or not foreign language anxiety affects their degree of L2 communication. The paper also presents the Saudi learner's perceptions toward communicating in the L2 classroom in comparison to communicating in L1. This reflection is approached through understanding cryptic aspects of students' attitudes and investigating affecting situational variables through L1 and L2 classroom observations, student questionnaires, and teachers' evaluation scales. Results gave both implementations and suggestions for ESL and EFL educators in creating a better willingness to communicate environment.

Keywords: language learning, willingness to communicate, foreign language anxiety, L2 classroom.

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1.Introduction

Learning occurs within a social context where communication with others constructs our understanding of the world (Vygotsky and Cole, 1978). In the context of the second and foreign language classroom, language learners are assisted to acquire and develop language skills. It is through communication and interaction with classroom peers and the teacher that helps learners acquire the language. Meyer & Turner (2002) suggest that interaction inside the classroom provides opportunities for not only integrating students in thinking but also helps them to create a positive perspective towards thinking and speaking.

Contemporary second and foreign language teaching approaches such as communicative language teaching CLT emphasize the importance of interaction and communication in achieving L2 competence (Richards 2005). However, interaction of students in the second and foreign language classroom will not be attained until the learner is willing to communicate.

1.1 Willingness to communicate (WTC) in the L2

WTC is defined by MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei and Noels (1998) as: “readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person, or persons, using a L2” (p. 547). Many researchers have discussed that an ultimate goal of Second Language learning classrooms should be to encourage students’ WTC since it is anticipated to assist L2 learning and development (Cao 2012; MacIntyre et al. 1998; MacIntyre 2007)

McCroskey and Richmond, (1987) propose this orientation of WTC as personality-based. Many variables affect individuals’ WTC such as attitudes, motivation and language anxiety. These affective variables also represent critical factors in second and foreign language acquisition. From this fact, it was essential to investigate the variables affecting Saudi students’ WTC within the foreign language context to interpret EFL learners’ perceptions of L2 communication and improve pedagogical classroom practices.

MacIntyre, Clement, Dörnyei and Noels (1998) conceptualized bilingual L2 WTC into a pyramid model known as the heuristic model (Figure 1).

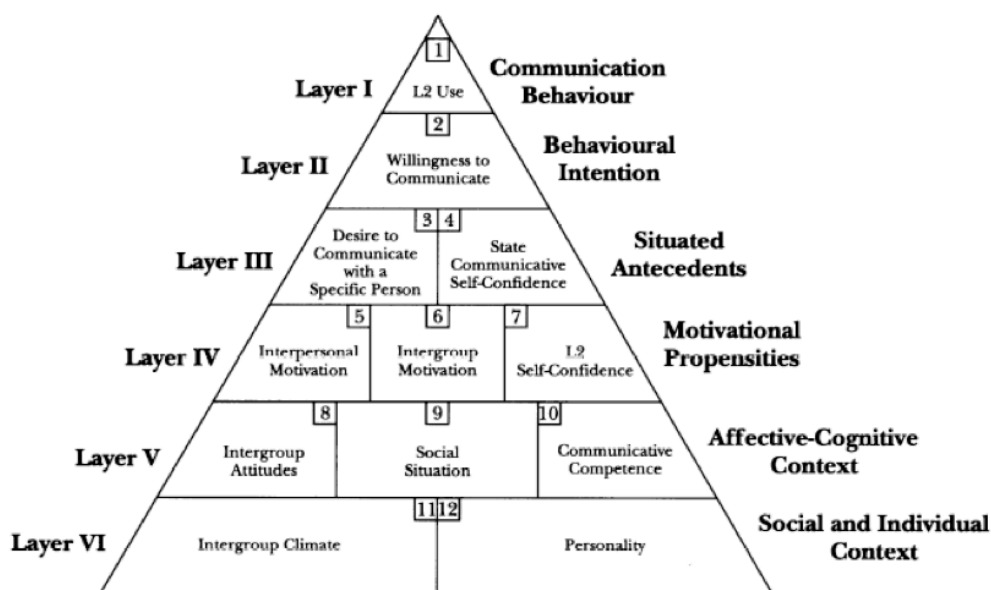


Figure 1: The Heuristic model of variables influencing WTC, (MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1998, p. 547)

This model integrates psychological, linguistic and communicative variables to describe, clarify, and predict second language communication. In this model, MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1998) hypothesize that all affective, social, situational, and cognitive variables influence one's WTC in the second or foreign language, consequently predicting one's actual use of that particular language.

1.2 Foreign language anxiety (FLa)

Studies have shown that anxiety exists in most aspects of second and foreign language learning classrooms and that a great level of anxiety is associated with understanding and speaking the target language. Speaking in public in the second language particularly provokes anxiety for many students, even for those who experience minimum levels of anxiety in other aspects of language learning (Horwitz et al., 1986).

They define FLA as: “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (1986, p.128). Furthermore, studies have stated that FLA is mostly associated with the speaking skill of the foreign language more than the other skills (Aida, 1994; Horwitz et al., 1986; Young, 1990)

Among the individual difference variables of WTC in the classroom are two key antecedents affecting WTC: communication apprehension and self-perceived competence (MacIntyre, 1994; MacIntyre & Baker, 2002).

To briefly explain these two variables, McCroskey and McCroskey (1988) propose that communication apprehension is the anxiety related to communication situations, and self-perceived competence is self-evaluation of one's communication ability. The understanding of WTC is incomplete without considering these variables and how they strongly affect one's WTC in the classroom context specifically.

2. Significance of the study and research questions

English is taught from the age of ten as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia, yet classroom interaction is still neglected because students regard their teacher as their only source of communication.

Nonetheless, the Educational System in Saudi is implementing a more communicative approach (Alamin & Ahmed, 2012). Many institutions have shifted to implementing the communicative language teaching approach (CLT) in the last five years or so. One of which is the Preparatory Year College at King Saud University. The Preparatory Year College was designed to link the gap between students' high school English education and the English proficiency level required for the university's academic programs that are taught in English.

Accordingly, foreign language teaching classrooms focused on using the language for communicative purposes as a modification to the traditional grammar-based teaching method. As a result, the issue of whether students are willing to communicate in English when they have the opportunity to has become prominent.

2.1 Research Questions

This research seeks to address the following questions:

1. To what extent is foreign language anxiety related to Saudi college students' willingness to communicate in the L2 classroom?
2. How do Saudi college students perceive their willingness to communicate in L2?

3. Methodology

To accomplish the investigative nature of this study, classroom observations were combined along with questionnaires. The main purpose of applying classroom observations was to monitor the attitude of students in both L2 and L1 classrooms, considering the other context factors affecting students' WTC. A third instrument that was implemented to reflect each student's communication inside the class is the teacher's scale that evaluates students' participation level.

In this study, it was discussed that if a link could be made between the three perspectives of questionnaires, classroom observations, and teachers' scale then the study would grasp, or come close to grasping, the real and the expected relation between FLA and students' level of WTC. The implementation of teachers' scale of students' participation in class revealed the conscious and unconscious levels of students' WTC. The triangulation of instruments provided depth to analyzing the students' attitudes and perception towards WTC in the classroom.

3.1 Participants

This study observed four classrooms of 80 intermediate and advance level students at the Preparatory year college, King Saud University. Participants' ages ranged between 18-22 years old.

Additionally, all participants have had the same exposure to English before enrolling into the Preparatory Year College through formal classes in intermediate and secondary schools. Correspondingly, since they all come from the same country that is Saudi Arabia, it is reasonable to assume that they all share a homogeneous EFL background.

3.2 Study instruments

The first instrument is a questionnaire which is divided into three sections: the first pertains to the personal background of the students; place of learning English and whether they have learned abroad or not followed by five multiple choice questions of their personality, favorite subject at the preparatory year college, and motive of learning English. The second section of the questionnaire is a Likert-scale of 16 statements adapted from the FLCAS ranging between (strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree). Scale items cover aspects of communicating in certain circumstances through L1 and L2 and measure the trait-like and situational variables of the heuristic model influencing students' WTC. The third and last section is an open-ended question that is designed for understanding students' perspective towards the difference between communicating in L2 and L1.

The second instrument is a structured observation. The observation scale was categorized to five main classifications: "educational climate for learning, opportunities for student participation, frequency of communication, responsiveness to student feedback, and L2 learning difficulties". Each classification contained statements that were observed in the classroom and rated along with supplementary reflective notes on the general classroom context.

An additional instrument to look at students' communication in the classroom from the teacher's perspective was the evaluation form. This form was given to the teacher at the end of the classroom observation session to rate the participation of students on a scale of 3 (1= low participation, 2= average participation, 3 = High participation).

4. Findings

The design of reporting data divided the results into quantitative and qualitative in which mixing the manner pertained to the discussion section of the study.

4.1 Quantitative findings

Out of the 16 statements in the questionnaire, 6 were negative statements such as "I feel afraid when I don't understand what the teacher is saying", 8 were positive reverse-scored statements such as "I believe that my English level is excellent and I can speak fluently", while 2 statements reflected communicating in L1 (Arabic).

The overall mean value of all students' response was (2.89 of 4) which represents the option "Agree", that indicates that participants agree on both negative and positive views of FLA statements. Results also showed variance responses of agreement to statements ranging between a mean value of (1.96 to 3.35) which represent the option "don't agree" and "strongly agree".

Looking at (Table 1) the mean value was calculated for each statement to know the rate of increase or decrease of responses on the likert-scale (strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree). The standard deviation value is also calculated to show the level of deviance for each statement, that is to say, the closer the value to zero, the more concentrate the answers and less distributed. To clarify results, positive reverse-scored statements are presented separately in (Table1) according to the highest mean value.

Table 1: Results of the reverse-scored statements of foreign language anxiety

Statement	Degree of Agreement				Mean	Standard Deviation	Array
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree			
16 <i>I have a great motive for learning in the English classroom</i>	35 43.80%	39 48.80%	5 6.30%	1 1.30%	3.35	0.658	1
9 <i>I prefer learning English together with my classmates</i>	29 36.30%	43 53.80%	7 8.80%	1 1.30%	3.25	0.666	5
5 <i>I would probably feel more comfortable speaking with/around native speakers of English</i>	24 30%	45 56.30%	9 11.30%	2 2.50%	3.14	0.707	7
8 <i>I prefer participating within groups and pairs to individual participation in the class</i>	27 33.80%	38 47.50%	11 13.80%	4 5%	3.1	0.821	8
14 <i>I feel confident when speaking in English and that does not embarrass me at all in front of my classmates</i>	25 31.30%	38 47.50%	16 20%	1 1.30%	3.09	0.75	9
13 <i>I enjoy communicating in English with my friends and family</i>	18 22.50%	41 51.30%	19 23.80%	2 2.50%	2.94	0.752	10
10 <i>I believe that my English level is excellent and I can speak fluently</i>	15 18.80%	47 58.80%	16 20%	2 2.50%	2.94	0.7	11
11 <i>I do not feel embarrassed about making language mistakes in the English skills class</i>	16 20%	44 55%	18 22.50%	2 2.50%	2.93	0.725	12

Turning to statements representing a negative attitude of foreign language anxiety, 6 items in (Table 2) are presented in a descending order according to the mean value as following:

Table 2: Results of the negative statements of foreign language anxiety

Statement	Degree of Agreement				Mean	Standard Deviation	Array
	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree			
6 <i>I feel very self-conscious about speaking the foreign language in front of other students</i>	29 36.30%	46 57.50%	4 5%	1 1.30%	3.29	0.62	2
7 <i>The verbal behavior of the teacher affects my desire to communicate in English</i>	35 43.80%	31 38.80%	13 16.30%	1 1.30%	3.25	0.771	3
3 <i>I get upset when I don't understand what the teacher is correcting</i>	7 8.80%	35 43.80%	33 41.30%	5 6.30%	2.55	0.745	13
1 <i>I feel more tense and nervous in the English language class compared to the other classes such as the communication skills class</i>	6 7.50%	12 15%	40 50%	22 27.50%	2.03	0.856	14
4 <i>I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English inside the classroom</i>	3 3.80%	20 25%	30 37.50%	27 33.80%	1.99	0.864	15
2 <i>I feel afraid when I don't understand what the teacher is saying</i>	1 1.30%	19 23.80%	36 45%	24 30%	1.96	0.77	16

Items 1 and 2 “I feel more tense and nervous in the English language class compared to the other classes such as the communication skills class” and “I feel afraid when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying” indicate a high percentage of disagreement. 50% of students disagree on statement 1 implying that they do not feel tense or nervous in the Foreign English classroom, and 27.50% strongly disagree. While only 15% agree. Referring to item 2, almost half of the students disagree on feeling afraid when they don’t understand what the teacher is saying and only 23.80% agree.

Table 3: The relation between students' level of FLA and WTC in L2

	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>T-test</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
<i>Constant</i>	3.178		14.684	0
<i>FLA</i>	-0.119	-0.135	-1.204	0.232

R square 0.018

Table 3 found weak correlation relation between WTC and foreign language anxiety. The correlation coefficient (-0.119) conformed a negative correlation between students' being anxious in the foreign language classroom and their WTC. Furthermore, the R square value (0.018) explains only 1.8% of students' anxiety level that is related to their willingness to communicate. This means that there is almost no influence of FLA on students' desire to communicate in the L2 classroom.

The results from the teacher evaluation form supported students' questionnaires. The form was given to the classroom teacher at the end of the lesson where she evaluated each student's participation on a scale of 3: (1= low participation, 2= average participation, 3 = High participation) .Findings are quantitatively presented in (Table 4) calculating the percent of each rate in the four classrooms.

Table 4: Results of teachers' evaluation forms of students' participation reflecting the four observed classrooms.

Participation Rate	Classroom1 (Arabic) morning Session	Classroom 2 (English) afternoon session	Classroom 3 (English) morning session	Classroom4 (Arabic) afternoon session
1	1 7%	5 19%	6 27%	1 6%
2	6 40%	10 39%	7 32%	5 29%
3	8 53%	11 42%	9 41%	11 65%
Total Students	15	26	22	17

4.2 Qualitative findings

The quantitative results showed variant degrees of agreement and disagreement to the FLA scale, where the majority rejected the influence of FLA on their WTC. However, results from the structured classroom observation scale and teachers' scale of students' participation showed conflicting findings.

The researcher observed two L2 classrooms in the morning and afternoon session. Both of which had different number of students and lesson topics. The first morning classroom consisted of 22 Saudi students guided by a native British teacher. The lesson lasted ninety minutes covering different activities and tasks about the planet and weather topic. This particular classroom is considered large in relation to the other English language classrooms at the Preparatory Year College. Yet, students were sensibly seated in groups of four and were acquainted to the lesson process.

It is important to state that the classroom observation took place during the eleventh week, which may be attributed to how students are familiar and comfortable with their peers, and show high levels of enthusiasm and enjoyment. Students are given different opportunities to participate through pair, group and individual work. Almost all of the students appeared motivated to communicate, therefore the teacher did not need to encourage participation. There was however a group of five students who were using L1 in their side talks and these were rated by the teacher in the participation scale as low level participants. On the contrary, the majority of students were noted on the scale as high and great input students, which was clearly reflected from the classroom observation. Student (59) having learned English at Private Schools for example, was very actively participating in the classroom where she strongly agreed in the questionnaire to statements 5 and 11:

“I feel more comfortable speaking around native speakers of English”

And *“I do not feel embarrassed about making language mistakes in the English skills class”*

The afternoon classroom observation took place during the same week. The classroom consisted of 26 students and were tutored by a Turkish teacher who's English was her second language. Although the classroom size is considerably large, students were very comfortable sitting in groups that one group was sitting on the floor while the remaining sat on their chairs. This fact indicates a very comfortable atmosphere for learning where students are familiar and relaxed with their peers. This classroom was different from the morning classroom with regards to how students are less enthusiastic and the teacher does not pay attention to how bored students become. Groups of students were dominating participation therefore turn-taking was not well managed and students were not all given opportunities to communicate individually. It was also observed that students tend to use L1 a lot to translate for their peers.

Overall, the two L2 classroom implemented CLT methods and different activities promoting communication were vivid. Both classroom atmospheres were very relaxed and comfortable thus, FLA was least anticipated.

5. Discussion

The first theme resulting from the findings of this study is students' inconsistent views to linking FLA and WTC in the FLCAS scale from the questionnaire. One statement that recorded the highest (mean value) among the other statements is:

“I have a great motive for learning in the English classroom”

Almost all participants agreed on having a motive for learning the foreign language. Comparing the results of students' answer to the question “Does my desire to learn English increase with a strong motive?”, 96% have answered, “yes” to this question. Having a motive for learning is an enduring variable that influences one's WTC situated at the base of MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels's (1998) heuristic model. Looking at previous studies, Hashimoto (2002) and Yashima (2002) specifically investigated how motivation influences WTC and one's self-confidence. Positive correlations of their studies are aligned with the current study. Results from the observation data also supported this view as teachers' role in motivating and encouraging participation was vivid.

Findings are consistent with Alshehri's (2012) study, where she emphasized the motivational approaches used by teachers to promote students' participation.

Other statements of the FLCAS scale that recorded high "mean values" are "*I feel confident when speaking in English and that does not embarrass me at all in front of my classmates*", "*I enjoy communicating in English with my friends and family*", "*I do not feel embarrassed about making language mistakes in the English skills class*" and "*I believe that my English level is excellent and I can speak fluently*".

These statements can be directly related to WTC through the affective-cognitive context layer of the heuristic model. Variables in this layer include: intergroup attitudes, social situation, and communicative competence. The Intergroup attitudes variable indicates students' aspiration and enjoyment of learning the L2 and relating to the L2 community.

The second variable of this level is the social situation that includes: participants, setting, purpose, proficiency level of the speaker and topic. MacIntyre et al., (1998) argue that such variables influence one's degree of self-confidence, and consequently affect their willingness to communicate.

The two statements "*I feel confident when speaking in English and that does not embarrass me at all in front of my classmates*", and "*I do not feel embarrassed about making language mistakes in the English skills class*" were agreed upon from the majority of students as the results have found.

This suggests that students' confidence level is high and hence they would be more willing to communicate. Drawing on the classroom observation results, it was observed that students showed high level of confidence when participating. This may also be a result of the relaxing social atmosphere that the teacher created in the EFL classroom.

The third variable of the affective-cognitive context level of WTC is communicative competence. MacIntyre et al., (1998) have proposed in their heuristic model different dimensions to competence; they include linguistic competence, discourse competence, sociocultural, and strategic competence.

58.8% of the total students have agreed to the statement: "*I believe that my English level is excellent and I can speak fluently*" and 18.8% have strongly agreed thus proposing a high level of their perceived communicative competence.

On the contrary, a number of 18 students out of 72 have stated in their answer to the open-ended question that they are willing to speak in Arabic more because of their low English competence and culture knowledge.

This view supports MacIntyre & Baker's (2002), which asserts the existence of communication apprehension impact in most classrooms as having a negative effect on students' L2 performance.

Findings have also demonstrated a very high number of disagreements to the statement: *“I feel more tense and nervous in the English language class compared to the other classes such as the communication skills class”*. More than half of the total numbers of participants have disagreed on this statement.

The other statements in the FLCAS scale that were found to have significantly high level of disagreement are *“I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak English inside the classroom”*, and *“I feel afraid when I don’t understand what the teacher is saying”*. The two statements complement the previous statement discussed of not feeling anxious and stressed in the L2 classroom.

Another critical statement of the FLCAS scale that students have strongly agreed on is: *“The verbal behavior of the teacher affects my desire to communicate in English”*. This factor pertains to the variable “desire to communicate with a specific person” which is a situational antecedent in the heuristic model of WTC. With reference to that, students’ desire to communicate in the classroom may be related to the situational influence of the teacher. In a corresponding study conducted by (Aydin, 1999) looking at student’s perceptions of anxiety in the Turkish EFL context, results attributed teachers’ manner as a major source influencing students’ anxiety level along with specific classroom activities.

Classroom observation findings also supported this statement, where all items in the structured observation scale indicated that teachers’ role was supportive, encouraging, and positive. This fact created a comfortable environment reducing the level of students’ FLA which in turn reflected the high level of students’ WTC.

Léger & Storch (2009) have discussed in their study of learners perceptions and attitudes towards WTC in the L2 classroom, that small group discussions are often seen as a method for reducing students’ language anxiety thus providing greater opportunities for communication. This is actually consistent with the high percentage of agreement that the students have expressed towards the statement: *“I prefer participating within groups and pairs to individual participation in the class”*.

5. Conclusion

Understanding the social context and background of students in this study was important for understanding the foreign context of learning English and hence interpret the relation between FLA and students’ WTC level in comparison to their desire to communicate in Arabic.

Findings of this study suggest that considering FLA and WTC as complementary tools was possibly useful for understanding students’ attitudes and perceptions of communicating in the language classroom. State, social, situational and cognitive variables all interactively influence students’ WTC.

The inclusive findings from the FLCAS scale found that the majority of students have disagreed with statements advocating FLA in the L2 classroom thus, confirming that there is no correlation between FLA and WTC. Students have disagreed on feeling more tense and nervous in the English classroom in comparison to the Arabic classrooms, and feeling afraid from other students laughing at them in the classroom and when they do not understand what the teacher is saying.

They have also strongly supported that they are greatly motivated to learn English, feel confident about their language competence and enjoy communicating in the English classroom. Yet, they have endorsed the influence of teacher's verbal behavior on their level of WTC, as well as the comfortableness of communicating with native speakers and also the preference of participating through groups and pairs to individual participation.

6.Limitations and recommendations:

It is important to confirm that this study was not a causal relation study of testing the cause of FLA on students' communication. It however, investigated the relations of situational and enduring variables of WTC within the framework of the foreign language context. Therefore, findings do not indicate cause and effect relations and further studies are needed to investigate that.

While this study examined a considerable number of participants at the Preparatory Year College at King Saud University, findings remain exclusive to the context of first college year students. One limitation that appeared to be most problematic was the fact that this study covered only one week of observation that took place on the eleventh week of the semester due to the restriction of time. If data collection was conducted during the beginning of the semester for example, results in relation to the level of students' anxiety level might have been different.

Pedagogic and research recommendations include:

- 1- Communicative aspect of language teaching needs to be emphasized at college and school levels in Saudi Arabia. Students should be aware of the importance of communicating in English efficiently with both native and nonnative speakers inside and outside the classroom context to enhance their language learning.
- 2- Students should be given more opportunities to discover the cultural knowledge of English to form realistic attitudes and reduce their FLA. Extending students' cultural knowledge in the classroom broadens their linguistic and discourse competence that contributes to raising the level of their WTC.
- 3- Communicative competence was an important variable that affected the level of self-perceived language anxiety and WTC. It would be interesting to investigate the gap between students self-perception as highly competent, confident and comfortable in the EFL classroom with their attitude of being more willing to communicate in the L1 classroom.
- 4- Another approach of looking at the findings of this study is to identify the reasons behind the reported low level of FLA in the classrooms of the Preparatory Year College. The circumstances of the current study's context could be applied to benefit high-anxiety contexts. Future research could draw comparisons between different contexts to find solutions for reducing FLA.

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Grammatical Relations in Temne

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The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning - Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

In this paper, I address the question of how grammatical relation (a term used here in the sense of Bickel (2011) to refer to the morphosyntactic properties that relate an argument to a clause, as example, its subject or its object) is defined in Temne. I show that syntactic processes, such as focalization and relativization do not distinguish arguments in Temne. Also, case marking and subject-verb agreement, which are often used to define grammatical relations, are not attested in Temne. In addition, thematic hierarchy does not pose an absolute constraint on the mapping and realization of post-verbal arguments in a clause in the language. Using data drawn from Temne spoken discourse, I show that word order defines grammatical relations in Temne. Moreover, building on Kanu (2012), I demonstrate that the order and realization of post-verbal arguments is determined by the participant hierarchy, precedence hierarchy, and prominence hierarchy.

Keywords: Grammatical Relations, Temne, Atlantic languages

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The subject and primary object in Temne

Although word order generally defines grammatical relations in Temne, the subject and the primary object have certain properties that distinguish each of them from other arguments in a construction. In this section, I discuss these properties.

Properties of the subject

The subject in Temne is characterized by certain syntactic and semantic properties. In a simple declarative sentence, the subject precedes the verb, and is the leftmost occurring argument in the clause. This follows from the view that Temne is a Subject-Verb-Object language. Also, nominal subjects are directly followed by a subject marker, and the subject agrees with the subject marker in number, definiteness, animacy and noun class. Semantically, the subject is generally assigned the semantic role of AGENT. The following examples illustrate these characteristics.

8. ɔ-wath ɔ shel
 NC1:DEF-child NC1.SUBJ:DEF laugh
 ‘The child laughs/is laughing/laughed.’
9. ɔ-wath ɔ shel ɔ-them
 NC1:DEF-child NC1.SUBJ:DEF laugh NC1:DEF-old man
 ‘The child laughs/is laughing/laughed at the old man.’
10. ɔ-ya ɔ nut ɔ-wath $\Delta\eta\text{-nak}$
 NC1:DEF-old woman NC1.SUBJ:DEF feed NC1:DEF-child NC3-DEF-rice
 ‘The old woman feeds/is feeding/fed the rice to the child.’

In examples (8) and (9) above, the argument *ɔwath* ‘the child’ is the subject, and is also the agent of the action described by the verb, *shel* ‘laugh’. In example (10), the subject of the verb *nut* ‘feed’ is the argument, *ɔya* ‘old woman’, and it is the agent of the feeding activity described by the verb, *nut* ‘feed’. As the examples illustrate, the subject agrees with the subject marker *ɔ* in number (singular/plural), definiteness, animacy and noun class. In all these examples, the subject precedes the verb and is the leftmost argument in the clause.

In anaphoric constructions (reciprocal and reflexive constructions) like the reflexive construction in (11) below, the subject is the antecedent of the reflexive verb.

11. ɔ-wath^i ɔ nut-ne^i k-ə-lop
 NC1:DEF-child NC1.SUBJ:DEF feed-REF NC2-INDEF-fish
 ‘The child feeds/is feeding/fed herself/himself a fish.’

In (11) above, the verb is *nutne* ‘feed-REF’, and the subject is the argument *ɔwath* ‘the child’. The subject is the antecedent of the reflexive verb, *nutne* ‘feed-REF’.

Furthermore, in a morphological causative construction, it is the subject of the basic verb that is demoted to the primary object, while the added argument becomes the subject of the causativized verb, as the examples in (12) illustrate.

- 12a. *aŋ-fəm* *aŋ* *mun* *m-ʌ-ber*
 NC5:DEF-people NC5.SUBJ:DEF drink NC10-DEF-alcohol
 ‘The people drink/are drinking/drank alcohol.’
- 12b. *ɔ-murthe* *ɔ* *mun-əs* *aŋ-fəm* *m-ʌ-ber*
 NC1:DEF-rebel NC1.SUBJ:DEF drink-CAUS NC5:DEF-people NC10-DEF-alcohol
 ‘The rebel made the people drink alcohol.’

In (12a), the subject of the basic verb is *aŋfəm* ‘the people’, and the primary object is *maber* ‘alcohol’. In the causative construction in (12b), a new argument, *ɔmurthe* ‘the rebel’, is added to the clause. This argument is the syntactic subject of the causativized verb, and it is frequently referred to in the literature as the “causer” argument (e.g., Kemmer, 1994; Dixon & Aikhenvald 2000; Shibatani & Pardeshi 2002.). As (12b) illustrates, combining the causative suffix *-s* with a verb has the syntactic effect of demoting the subject, *aŋfəm* ‘the people’, of the basic verb to the primary object.

Thus, the subject in Temne precedes the verb, and is the leftmost occurring argument in the clause. Nominal subjects are immediately followed by a subject marker, which agrees with the subject in number, animacy, definiteness and noun class. The subject is also normally assigned the semantic/participant role of AGENT. In addition, the subject is the antecedent of the reflexive or reciprocal verb. Also, in morphological causative constructions, it is the subject of the basic verb that is demoted to the primary object, while the added argument becomes the subject of the causativized verb. These characteristics are unique to subjects and distinguish them from post-verbal arguments in Temne.

Properties of the primary object

As mentioned earlier, Temne is a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) language. Thus, in a simple declarative sentence, the objects of the verb occur in post-verbal position. Also, since word order defines grammatical relations in Temne, the argument immediately after the verb is the primary object, and it is followed by the secondary object. This is illustrated in the transitive and ditransitive sentences below.

13. *ɔ-wath* *ɔ* *di* *k-ʌ-lop*
 NC1:DEF-child NC1.SUBJ:DEF eat NC2:DEF-fish
 ‘The child eats/is eating/ate the fish.’
14. *ɔ-wath* *ɔ* *nut* *ʌŋ-yari* *k-ʌ-lop*
 NC1:DEF-child NC1.SUBJ:DEF feed NC3:DEF-cat NC2-DEF-fish
 ‘The child feeds/is feeding/fed the fish to the cat.’

In (13), the object of the transitive verb is *kʌlop* ‘the fish’, and it occurs after the verb, *di* ‘eat’. In (14), the primary object is *ʌŋyari* ‘the cat’ and the secondary object is *kʌlop* ‘the fish’, and they occur after the verb, *nut* ‘feed’.

As discussed in Kanu (2012, 2009, 2004), Temne has a complex system of valence-increasing morphology, including the causative *-s* and applicatives: locative/directional *-r*, benefactive *-ʌ* and instrumental *-ʌne*. When these verb suffixes co-occur, up to three objects may be added to the clause, as the following examples illustrate.

The primary object is the only target of reflexivization even when all the post-verbal arguments are expressed as object markers, as the examples in (17) illustrate.

- 17a. ɔ-wath ɔ nut kɔ ki
 NC1:DEF-child NC1.SUBJ:DEF feed NC1:OBJ NC2:OBJ
 ‘The child feeds/is feeding/fed it (the fish) to him/her (the cat).’
- 17b. ɔ-wath ɔ nut-ne ki
 NC1:DEF-child NC1.SUBJ:DEF feed-REF NC2:OBJ
 ‘The child feeds/is feeding/fed it to herself/himself.’

In (17a), the primary object is expressed by the object marker kɔ ‘him/her’, while the secondary object is expressed by the object marker ki . When the reflexive suffix -ne is combined with the verb, nut ‘feed’, it is the primary object, kɔ ‘him/her’ that is targeted. Thus, examples like (16) and (17) where the object that is closer to the verb is the only target of reflexivization provide evidence that Temne is an asymmetrical object type language in the sense of Bresnan and Moshi (1990). In what follows, I discuss thematic hierarchy in Temne and argue that it does not pose an absolute constraint on the mapping and realization of post-verbal arguments in the language.

Thematic hierarchy

The view that thematic hierarchy is a constraint on the mapping and realization of post-verbal arguments is well known in the literature (Jackendoff (1990), Grimshaw (1990), Dowty (1991). Mapping assigns unique grammatical relations to arguments in a clause, hence the Little Alignment Hypothesis which states:

Little Alignment Hypothesis:

“For any one predicate in any one language, there is a fixed mapping which aligns each semantic role with initial grammatical relations. The alignment remains invariant for all clauses with that predicate.” *Rosen* (1984:53)

Jackendoff (1990), Grimshaw (1990), Dowty (1991), among others, have proposed that semantic roles map onto grammatical relations by means of a universal thematic hierarchy. For Bresnan & Zaenen (1990), this thematic hierarchy is: *Agent* » *beneficiary* » *experiencer/goal* » *instrument* » *patient/theme* » *locative*. Following Butt (2006), semantic roles map onto grammatical relations by means of “hierarchical linking”, whereby the highest ranked participant role maps onto the highest ranked grammatical relation, and the lowest ranked participant role maps onto the lowest grammatical relation in a construction.

As discussed in Kanu (2012), the thematic hierarchy, referred to here as the participant hierarchy, $A \gg X \gg S \gg W \gg \{L, C\} \gg R \gg Y \gg I$, governs the mapping of participant roles to grammatical relations in homogenous object constructions, as (18a) illustrates. In heterogeneous object constructions, where post-verbal arguments are a combination of nominals and object markers, thematic/participant hierarchy is not a constraint for the mapping of semantic roles to grammatical relations, as examples (18b) and (18c) indicate.

that the participant role assigned to X, usually the AGENT, PATIENT or EXPERIENCER, is the highest ranked role, and it precedes R, which is often the RECIPIENT. The RECIPIENT in turn precedes Y, which may be assigned the participant role of THEME, PATIENT or EXPERIENCER depending on the verb. The following examples illustrate the participant hierarchy in a ditransitive construction.

- 19a. ɔ-langba ɔ nut k-ʌ-yek ʌŋ-bana
 NC1:DEF-man NC1.SUBJ:DEF feed NC2-DEF-monkey NC3:DEF-banana
 ‘The man feeds/is feeding/fed the banana to the monkey.’
- 19b. ɔ-langba ɔ nut kɔ ŋi
 NC1:DEF-man NC1.SUBJ:DEF feed NC1:OBJ NC3:OBJ
 ‘The man feeds/is feeding/fed it (the banana) to him/her (the monkey).’

Examples (19a) and (19b) indicate that in a homogeneous object construction, the ranking of participant roles is X » R » Y. This means that the participant R and its participant role map onto the primary object, while the participant Y and its participant role map onto the secondary object. Ditransitive-based homogeneous object constructions like (19a) and (19b) indicate that Temne places the participant R (often the RECIPIENT) closer to the verb than Y, which is often the THEME. Therefore, Temne is a “primary object language” in the sense of Dryer (1986).

The participant hierarchy is more complex in constructions with a derived verb. Consider the following examples.

- 20a. ɔ-langba ɔ dif-ʌŋɛ ʌŋ-bok ʌ-sar
 NC1:DEF-man NC1.SUBJ:DEF kill-INST NC3:DEF-snake NC3:INDEF-stone
 ‘The man kills/is killing/killed the snake with a stone.’
- 20b. ɔ-langba ɔ dif-ʌŋɛ kɔ ŋi
 NC1:DEF-man NC1.SUBJ:DEF kill-INST NC1:OBJ NC3:OBJ
 ‘The man kills/is killing/killed it (the snake) with it (a stone).’
- 20c. ɔ-langba ɔ dif-ʌŋɛ mi kɔ ŋi
 NC1:DEF-man NC1.SUBJ:DEF kill-BEN-INST 1SG:OBJ NC1:OBJ NC3:OBJ
 ‘The man kills/is killing/killed him/her for me with it.’

In (20a) and (20b), the participant hierarchy is X » Y » I. This means that the participant Y and its participant role (PATIENT) map on to the primary object, while the participant I and its participant role (INSTRUMENT) map on to the secondary object. In (20c), the participant hierarchy is X » W » Y » I, which means that the participant W and its participant role (BENEFICIARY/MALEFICIARY) map onto the primary object, the participant Y and its participant role (PATIENT) map on to the secondary object, while the participant I and its participant role (INSTRUMENT) map on to the tertiary object. As mentioned earlier, the participant hierarchy, A » X » S » W » {L, C} » R » Y » I, governs the mapping of participant roles to grammatical relations in homogenous object constructions in Temne.

The precedence hierarchy

The precedence hierarchy, schematized as OM » NOM, states that a participant that is expressed by an object marker is closer to the verb and is assigned a higher grammatical relation than a participant that is expressed by a nominal argument. Thus, in heterogeneous object constructions, post-verbal arguments as well as their corresponding participant roles shift from one grammatical relation to the other, depending on the verb. The following examples illustrate this phenomenon.

- 21a. ɔ-bəkɔ ɔ $\text{thila-r-}\Lambda$ mi
 NC1:DEF-woman NC1.SUBJ:DEF sell-DIR-BEN 1SG:OBJ
 ɔ-them ɛ-lop
 NC1:DEF-old man NC7:DEF-fish
 ‘The woman sells/is selling/sold the fish to the old man for me.’
- 21b. ɔ-bəkɔ ɔ $\text{thila-r-}\Lambda$ mi
 NC1:DEF-woman NC1.SUBJ:DEF sell-DIR-BEN 1SG:OBJ
 kɔ ɛ-lop
 NC1:OBJ NC7:DEF-fish
 ‘The woman sells/is selling/sold the fish to him (the old man) for me.’

In (21a), there are three post-verbal arguments. The arguments ɔthem ‘old man’ and ɛlop ‘the fish’ are expressed as nominals. Therefore, they follow the argument mi ‘me’ which is expressed as an object marker. In (21b), there are also three post-verbal arguments; two of these arguments mi ‘me’ and kɔ ‘him/her’ are expressed as object markers, while the argument ɛlop ‘the fish’ is expressed as a nominal. Thus, as in (21a) and following the precedence hierarchy, the objects that are expressed as object markers are closer to the verb than the object that is expressed by a nominal. Examples like (21b) raise the question of what determines the order of post-verbal arguments when two or more arguments are realized as object markers. This question is addressed in the next section.

The prominence hierarchy

The prominence hierarchy states that “post-verbal arguments that are expressed by object markers must occur in the order of precedence: 1/2 » 3ANIM » 3INANIM” *Kanu (2012:72)*. Thus, in a construction where either the first person or second person object marker co-occurs with the third person animate and third person inanimate object marker, the first or second person object marker must occur immediately after the verb, followed by the third person animate object marker, which is followed by the third person inanimate object marker. The following examples illustrate the prominence hierarchy.

- 22a. ɔ-bəkɔ ɔ ləmə-r kɔ ŋi
 NC1:DEF-woman NC1.SUBJ:DEF throw-DIR NC1:OBJ NC3:OBJ
 ‘The woman threw it at him/her.’
- 22b. *ɔ-bəkɔ ɔ ləmə-r ŋi kɔ
 NC1:DEF-woman NC1.SUBJ:DEF throw-DIR NC3:OBJ NC:OBJ
 Intended meaning: ‘The woman threw him/her at it.’

In (22a), the third person object marker kɔ occurs immediately after the verb, and it is followed by the third person inanimate object marker ŋi . Thus, example (22a)

complies with the prominence hierarchy which requires the third person animate object marker to precede the third person inanimate object marker. Therefore, (22a) is well-formed. On the other hand, (22b) is blocked by the prominence hierarchy. In this case, the third person inanimate object marker, *ɲi* outranks the third person animate object marker, *kɔ*. Thus, whereas the prominence hierarchy allows the sentence ‘the woman threw it at him/her’, it disallows the sentence, ‘the woman threw him/her at it’.

Furthermore, the prominence hierarchy blocks semantically plausible constructions where the first person object marker *mi* outranks the second person object marker *mu*, as indicated by the ungrammaticality of (23a).

23a. *ɔ-bɔkɔ	ɔ	ləmə-r	mi	mu
NC1:DEF-woman	NC1.SUBJ:DEF	throw-DIR	1SG:OB	2SG:OBJ
Intended meaning: ‘The woman threw me at you.’				
23b. ɔ-bɔkɔ	ɔ	ləm	mi	ro
NC1:DEF-woman	NC1.SUBJ:DEF	throw	1SG:OBJ	to/in/at
mu	ro			
2SG:OBJ	THERE			
‘The woman threw me at you.’				

Example (23a) indicates that the sentence ‘the woman threw me at you’ is impossible with object markers. This is because this sentence requires the first and second person object markers to co-occur, which is forbidden by the prominence hierarchy. The intended meaning of (23a) is expressed by the periphrastic construction in (23b).

The ranking of object markers, as seen in the prominence hierarchy, suggests that animacy plays a crucial role in the order of post-verb arguments in a clause in Temne. As seen in the prominence hierarchy, the first and second person object markers, which mark humans, occur closer to the verb than the third person animate object marker which marks, among others, animate non-human arguments. Moreover, the third person inanimate object marker, which marks inanimate objects, occupies the rightmost position in the hierarchy. Thus, the prominence hierarchy mirrors the Animacy Hierarchy, which in Temne, as in other Atlantic languages, is: Human » Animate Non-human » Inanimate. The Animacy Hierarchy generally requires objects that are higher in the hierarchy to move closer to the verb than objects that are lower in the hierarchy. Thus, evidence from Temne subscribes to the view by Zeller (2011) that animacy plays a crucial role in determining the relative order of multiple objects in African languages. This view is closely connected with the observation by Kalinowski and Good (2014) that referential properties, such as animacy, are important for an understanding of the nature of grammatical relations.

Conclusion

In this paper, I showed that syntactic processes such as focalization and topicalization do not distinguish arguments in a clause. Grammatical relations, other than the subject, are generally determined by word order. In addition to word order, the subject in Temne can be easily identified. It precedes the verb, and is the leftmost occurring argument in a clause. Also, nominal subjects are directly followed by a subject marker, which agrees with the subject in number, animacy, definiteness and noun class. In reflexive constructions, it is the subject that controls the verb, and is co-indexed with it. In a causative construction, it is the subject that is the “causer” argument. These properties, which generally match with Keenan’s (1976) properties of a subject across languages, distinguish subjects from other arguments in Temne.

On the other hand, the primary object, which occurs immediately after the verb, is distinct from other arguments in a clause in the sense that it is the only target of reflexivization. Also, in a causative construction, the primary object is the ‘causee’. The remaining post-verbal arguments, namely secondary object, tertiary object and quaternary object, are distinguished by word order.

Concerning the constraints on the mapping and realization of post-verbal arguments, I argued that thematic hierarchy does not pose an absolute constraint. Alternatively, I showed that the order of post-verbal arguments is determined by three interacting hierarchies: the participant hierarchy, precedence hierarchy and prominence hierarchy. The participant hierarchy, $A \gg X \gg S \gg W \gg \{L, C\} \gg R \gg Y \gg I$, provides a ranked ordering of event participants based on their semantic roles, and it applies only to homogeneous object constructions (i.e. constructions where two or more post-verbal arguments are expressed as nominals).

The precedence hierarchy, $OM \gg NOM$, ranks objects expressed by object markers (OM) over those expressed by nominals (NOM), requiring that the former precedes the latter. The prominence hierarchy, on the other hand, requires post-verbal arguments that are expressed by object markers (OM) to occur in the order of precedence: $1/2 \gg 3ANIM \gg 3INANIM$. Thus, as with the participant hierarchy and precedence hierarchy, post-verbal arguments as well as their corresponding participant roles shift from one grammatical relation to the other, depending on the verb. Therefore, there is no one-to-one mapping between grammatical relations and semantic roles. The argument immediately after the verb is always the primary object, followed by the secondary object, tertiary object and quaternary object. Thus, like other Atlantic languages, grammatical relations in Temne is generally marked by word order.

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English Loans in Assamese : A Phonological Account

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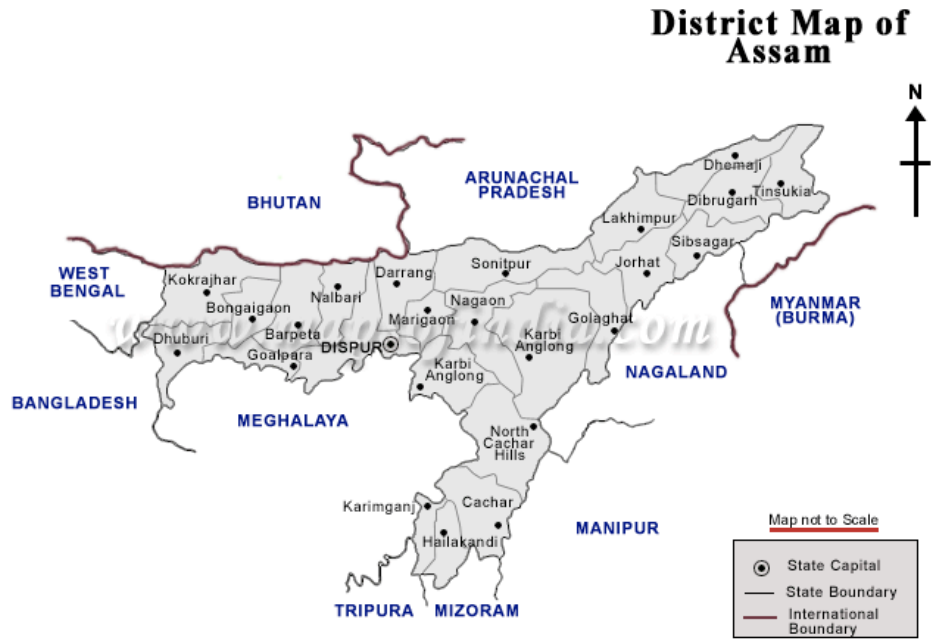
The IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning – Dubai 2016
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Loanword adaptation is always fascinating as it bears the traces of native phonology, default settings of Universal Grammar, and adaptation as perception and perceptual similarity (Kang, 2010). This paper deals with the loanwords in Assamese phonology which are borrowed from English with reference to the constraint ranking approach embedded within Optimality theory (Prince and Smolensky 1993). Although Assamese, an Indo-Aryan language spoken in the north-eastern part of India shares some commonalities with English phonology, both the languages are characterized by language specific phonemic inventories and phonotactic principles. This paper shows the phonological processes that loanwords undergo, and patterns that emerge as a result of this process of borrowing not only at the segmental level but also at the syllabic level. The main purpose of this paper lies in showing how the Assamese phonology repairs borrowed syllables and segments derived from English.

Introduction:

Assamese is spoken in the north-eastern part of India (in the state of Assam) and its neighboring areas. It is an Indo Aryan language.



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Assamese language has many varieties which are shown below in a figurative representation.

THE ASSAMESE LANGUAGE

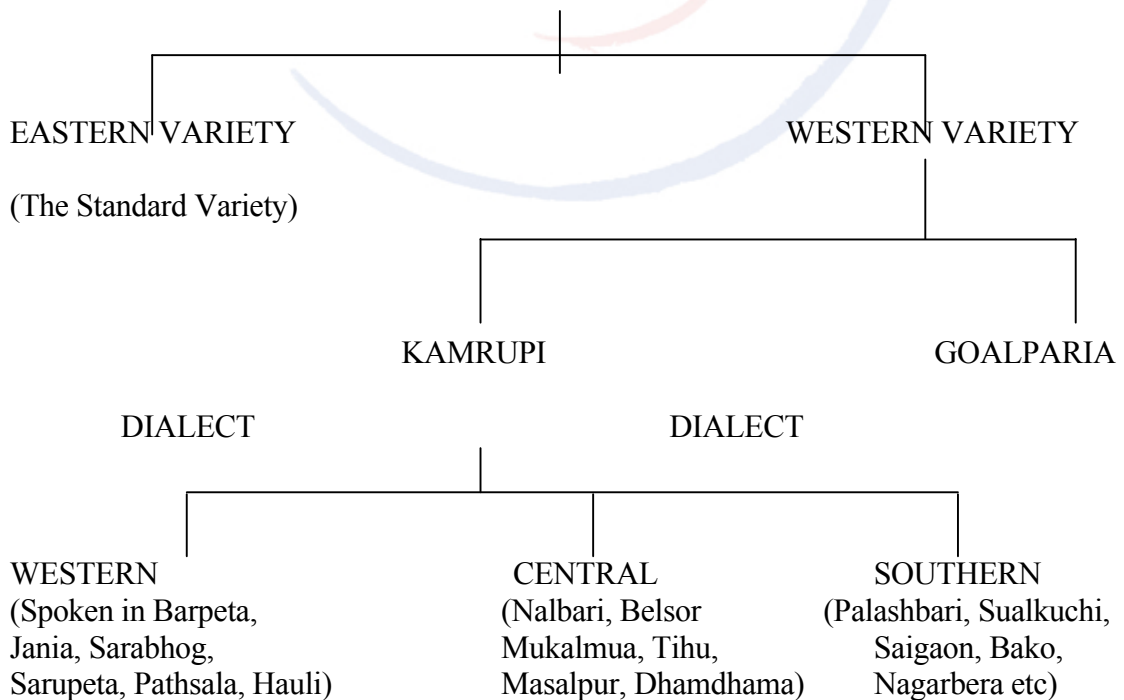


Figure: Dialects of Assamese according to Kakati (1941)

English and its influence in Assamese

In the present day Indian scenario, English is predominantly the language of wider communication. Kachru (1983) said “In India, English is the only language with an all-India circulation; it offered itself as neutral link language across diversity”. Its use has been increasingly persistent, which was not foreseen by the framers of the Indian constitution. The Indian constitution recognizes 22 National languages, with Hindi being the official language and English, the link language with a decree that English was to be replaced by Hindi in a period of 15 years. For obvious reasons, English has prospered very much in the post-independence era.

In the state of Assam too in government and academic institutes Assamese along with English are used as a medium of instruction. Most of the private corporate organizations use exclusively English for the optimal functionality and wider visibility. As a result, there is abundance of English loan words in Assamese vocabulary and in the course of time these words have been phonologized.

In the next section I am going to explore different phonological processes that loan words in Assamese have undergone. The changes in loan words are expressed in constraint ranking within Optimality theory (Prince and Smolensky, 1993).

Process of substitution involved in Assamese loanwords derived from English

While some sounds undergo deletion others adopt the repair strategy such as substitution by sounds which are available within the domain of Assamese phonotactics. The process of epenthesis is very common at the syllable level. The loanword adaptation in Assamese can be divided into two levels: segmental level and syllable level.

Substitutions in onset positions:

- a) Affricates turn into fricatives
- b) Fricatives become aspirated stops in onset position.
- c) Voiceless dental fricative also turns into an aspirated stop in the coda position
- d) Voiced dental fricative does not aspirate.

i. /ch/ becomes /s/ in the onset

English	Assamese	Gloss
Chein	sein	‘chain’.
Chicken	siken	‘chicken’

ii. /f/ is substituted by /ph/ in the onset

English	Assamese	Gloss
Frai	phrai	‘fry’
Fæn	phan	‘fan’

iii. /v/ becomes /bh/ in the onset

English	Assamese	Gloss
væn	bhæn	‘van’
vo:t	bhut	‘vote’

iv. /θ/ becomes /th/ in onset as well as coda position

English	Assamese	Gloss
θri:	thri	‘three’

vi. /ð/ becomes /d/ in onset

ð is	dis	‘this’
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Analysis of some of the processes in OT model:

/frai/	*[+cont, -strident]/ σ[IDENT[turbulence]	*[+spreadgl]	IDENT-[cont]
a) φ /phrai/			*	*
b) /frai/	*!			
c) /prai/		*!		*

Table: Representation of substitution of /f/ with /p^h/

The constraints considered in the above tableau are:

*[+cont, -strident]/ σ[- : Avoid clusters with continuant and non strident in word initial position.

IDENT [turbulence]: the turbulent airflow of aspiration is reflected in the frication of [f]

*[+spreadgl]: The feature spread glottis is prohibited.

Ident –[cont] : Corresponding segments must agree in terms of the feature continuant. Here to get the optimal candidate a) /phrai/ the ranking of the constraints I have proposed is:

[+cont, -strident]/ σ[- >> IDENT [turbulence] >>[+spreadgl] >> Ident –[cont]

In the same way the English phoneme /v/ is substituted by /bh/ in word initial position in Assamese. However, in Assamese word final position /ph/ and /bh/ spirantize to /f/ and /v/ in order to preserve aspiration as high turbulence in a context where the cues to aspiration are minimized (Dutta& Kenstowicz 2015, Steriade 1997). For, illustration consider the following tableau:

bh#	*[labial,+spreadgl]#	IDENT[turbulence]	ID-[contin]
bh#	*!		
φ v #			*
b		*!	

In the same way it is observed that in the Assamese phonemic inventory affricate sounds are not available. Hence the borrowed words from English with these sounds are always substituted by closest sounds with similar place of articulation Consider the following example :tʃikən>sikən

Explanation through OT tableau

tʃiken	[*delayed release]	*[Cor, -ant]	Ident[strident]	Ident[cont]
☞ siken				(*)
tʃiken	*!	*		
ʃiken		*!		(*)
tiken			*!	(*)

Here, the constraints [*delayed release] is higher ranked over *[Cor, -ant] and Ident[strident], Ident[cont].

4. Consonant clusters, syllabic consonants of English and loanword phonology:

Loan words adaptation patterns are perceived at syllable level too. In English phonology the segments /m/, /n/, /l/ /r/ functions as the nucleus or syllabic consonants. But in Assamese these consonants cannot act as syllabic consonants which leads to the emergence of epenthetic vowels in order to conform to the syllable structure of Assamese phonology:

/teibl/ <table> /tebul/
 /botl/ <bottle> /botol/
 /kotn/ <cotton> /koton/
 /pædl/ <paddle> /pædɛl/
 /sadm/ <sudden> /saden/
 /tækl/ <tackle> /tækul/
 /ga:gl/ <gargle> /gargul/ /
 /babl/ <bubble> /babul/
 /kazn/ <cousin> /kazin/
 /chænl/ <channel> /senel/
 /hospitl/ <hospital> /hospital/
 /neison/ <nation> /nɛsɔn/
 /pæʃn/ <passion> /pɛsɔn/

Explanation through OT tableau:

/teibl/	*Peak [+cons]	*OR	DEP-IO	ALIGN-R	Contiguity
a) ☞ tebul			*		*
b) teib	*!				
c) teibl		*!			
d) teblu			*	*!	

Here the constraint *Peak [+cons] bans candidate (b) from becoming the optimal candidate. Candidate (c) is not allowed as it violates the constraint DEP-IO and ALIGN-R in the sense that /l/ is more sonorous than /b/. So the winner is the candidate (a) which has the least number of violations.

From the examples of the loanwords it is clear that Assamese does not allow a word ending with a cluster /ʃn/ which is very common in English. Assamese employs the repair strategy of epenthesis to satisfy the phonotactic criteria of the language. In order to capture this notion in OT consider the following constraints:

*OR: words can't end with an obstruent followed by a sonorant

*[+cont, -ant] : ban the clusters comprising a continuant and non-anterior sounds
 DEP -V : don't insert a vowel
 ID [ant] : Corresponding segments must agree in terms of the feature [anterior]
 Consider the example :ʃn# >sɔn

ʃn #	*OR	* [-ant]	Dep-V	IDENT-[ant]
ʃn	*!	*		
sn	*!			*
ɔsɔn			*	*
ʃɔn		*!	*	

Here the optimal candidate is [sɔn#], as per the constraint ranking *OR >> * [-ant] >>Dep-V>>*IDENT (ant)

CC Initial Cluster with Plosive as the First Member and approximant as the second member not allowed in loanwords in Assamese phonology.
 First Member Second Member

/twin/ <twin> /tuin/
 /tju:n/ <tune> /tium/
 /kwik/ <quick> /kuik/
 /kjuə/ <cure> /kiur/
 /bju:ti/ <beauty> /biuti/
 /dwel/ <dwel> /duel/

/twin/	*C glide	Ident[syllabic]
a) twin	*!	
b) tuin		*

Here, the OT tableau shows that the constraint *C glide bans the candidate [twin] to become the optimal candidate.

Even the distribution of the epenthetic vowel is conditioned by phonotactic conditions.

C N - Cɔ N
 R - aR
 T L - Tɔ L/ T u L

teibl	*Peak (+cons)	*[p,k] [ɔ]	Dep [u]	Dep [ɔ]
ɔtebul			*	
tebol		*!		
Tebl	*!			

The distribution of vowel qualities can be highlighted with reference to two different loan words ‘sample’ and ‘medal’.
 English word [sæmpɫ] ‘sample’ becomes [sæmpul] in Assamese loan word adaptation

	* *ə	*C 	Max (Dors)	Dep (a)	Dep (e, o)	Dep (U)	Dep (i)	Dep (ə)
a. sæmpɫ	*! +cons)	(peak	*					
b. sæmpɫ	*! (OR #)		*					
c. sɛmpul					*			
d. sɛmpɪl			*!				*	
e. sɛmpəl	*! (ə)		*					*
f. sɛmpəl			*	*!				

But, ‘medal’ [mædɫ] becomes [mɛdɛl] not [mɛdul]

Here, I am considering one more constraint ‘Harmony’ to get this optimal candidate.

/mædɫ/	*C (+syllabic)	Harmony	Max (Dors)	Dep (a)	Dep (e,o)	Dep (u)
a. mɛdl	*		*			
b. mɛdul		*!				*
c. mɛdɛl			*		*	

Here, Harmony >> Max (Dors)

Harmony: V must agree in height (+/- high) and backness with a preceding mid vowel.

Geminates and loanword phonology in Assamese

Assamese speakers tend to pronounce some English words with word medial gemination of the obstruent followed by /r/ and /l/. But the original English words are not pronounced as geminates. The reasons can be attributed to orthography, and the native stress pattern of the borrowing language.

English	Gloss	Assamese loan word
/metrik/	<metric>	[met.trik]
/metro/	<metro>	[met.tro]
/petrol/	<petrol>	[pet.trol]
/saplai/	<supply>	[sap.plai]
/sapres/	<suppress>	[sap.pres]
/riplai/	<reply>	[rip.plai]
/riplei/	<replay>	[rip.ple]
/prokleim/	<proclaim>	[prok.klem]

However following are some examples where such changes are prohibited:

/atlas/	<atlas>	*[at.tlas]
/kaindli/	<kindly>	*[kaind.dli]
/badli/	<badly>	*[bad.dli]
/kastrol/	<Castrol>	*[kast.trol]
/pa:stre/	<pastry>	*[past.tri]

One way of approaching this issue is by correlating the stress with weight of the syllable or the Stress to Weight principle. Mohanta (2004) claims that Assamese initial syllables bears primary stress in majority of the cases. This constraint SWP is ranked above Syllable Contact Principle and it leads to the emergence of geminated loans in Assamese phonology.

SWP: Assign a violation if the stressed syllable is not heavy.

Now consider the candidate: /petrol/

/petrol/	SW P	SYLCONTAC T	Ident[long] -C	*COMPLEXON S	NOCOD A	NO- GE M
pet. rol		*!			*	
pe.trol	*!			*		
☞pet.tro l			*	*	*	*

As far as the prohibition of geminates in certain loans is concerned (such as atlas) we have to invoke a markedness constraint *tl which bans complex onsets with tl.

Now consider the example /atlas/

/atlas/	*tl Onset	Syllable Contact
☞at.las		*
at.tlas	*!	

Here the constraint ranking is
*tl >> Syllable Contact.

Loanword phonology and S-cluster English words in Assamese:

It is interesting to note that majority of the Assamese learners of English in rural areas insert [i] at the beginning of a cluster that starts with fricative /s/ (Baishya, A.K. 2010).

stei:fn	is.te.son	station
sku:l	is.kul	school
spi:k	is.pik	speak
skrin	is.krin	screen
skutər	is.kutar	scooter
split	is.plit	split
smaɪl	is.maɪl	smile
sneɪl	is.neɪl	sneil

However, whenever the word begins with sibilant /s/ and lateral /l/, the repair strategy does not result in prosthesis but epenthesis. The vowel is inserted not at the beginning of the cluster but in the middle of the cluster.

Slet	silet	slate
slo:	solo	slow
slop	solop	slope

Consider the following tableau given below:

/skul/	*COMPLEX	DEP	SYLLABLE CONTACT	CONTIGUITY
skul	*!			
☞ is.kul		*		
si.kul		*		*!

Table : Representation of the phenomenon of epenthesis at the edge in Assamese

In the above tableau SYLLABLE CONTACT is not violated and hence CONTIGUITY ensures that edge epenthesis is optimal. So from this tableau and the following one it is revealed that SYLLABLE CONTACT determines the epenthesis site: at the edge for falling sonority clusters like s-stop and internal epenthesis for rising sonority clusters. This outcome can be expected as long as SYLLABLE CONTACT is ranked above CONTIGUITY; its ranking in relation to DEP is not crucial. This pattern is an Emergence of the Unmarked effect. The same tableau can be used to describe the prosthesis process of s with nasal clusters.

As far as the questions pertaining to the disparities between the repair strategies for sl cluster words and st or sk or sn cluster words, we can address them by invoking the violation of the Syllable Contact Principle.

Syllable contact: Penalize a coda-onset sequence in which the sonority of the coda is x degrees lower than the onset i.e. avoid heterosyllabic clusters of rising sonority.

Consider the example : ‘silet’

slet	*Complex	Dep-V	SyllableContact	Contiguity
a)slet	*!			
b)is.let		*	*!	
☞ c)si.let		*		*
d)sleti	*!	*		

S+nasal clusters do not violate Syllable Contact Constraint since in this word the sonority distance between coda and onset cluster is not 2 or greater but only 1.

sneil	*Complex	Dep-V	SyllableContact	Contiguity
a)snel	*!			
b)☞ is.nel		*		
c)si.nel		*		*!
d)sneli	*!	*		

Conclusions: Here I have shown as how Assamese phonology adopts different repair strategies to incorporate borrowed syllables and segments in to its native phonotactic domains. Such kinds of analysis can give us insights in to the specific segmental patterns that loanwords exhibit. The patterns are not random but very systematic as the pattern of adaptation is a reflection of language specific facts of the native phonology.

Further research can be focused on the phonetic factors embedded within the loans adaptations and perceptual factors accounting for adaptation patterns. Even in the future an endeavor should be made to identify the grammar external factors for such loan adaptations.



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Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi
Japan 460-0008
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