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\*This article has been retracted\*

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***Color Coding Japanese Kana for Second Language Acquisition***

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**Abstract**

In this research, the pedagogical effects of endowing Japanese Hiragana with alphabetical properties by phonetically mapping the Kana syllabary to their respective vowel phonemes with a color code as well as mapping diacritical marks color coded to each character's respective consonant group are studied. This phonetic color coding system mapped to Japanese Kana was tested on a group of native English speakers with no prior knowledge of Japanese, and the results of a series of six tests examining Kana acquisition, pronunciation accuracy, and vocabulary retention were weighed against the results of a control group who received instruction without said color coding system. This phonetic color coding system proves to be far superior to the instructional methods used without the system in three distinct categories. First, the phonetic color coding system, once learned, allows the learner to forego all romanization and instead use only the Kana characters during study thus increasing the speed of Kana acquisition. Second, by not using romanizations to guide pronunciation, the learner is unaffected by the phonetic rules governing the English Latin alphabet thus improving the accuracy of pronunciation. Third, mapping a phonetic color code to a writing system arguably increases the retention rate of vocabulary. The implementation of this phonetic color coding system elicited striking improvements in the abovementioned categories throughout all six tests carried out in this study.

Keywords: Japanese as a Foreign Language, Second Language Acquisition, Phonology, Phonetic Color Coding, L2 Vocabulary Acquisition

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## Introduction

Japanese is considered to be one of the most difficult languages for native English speakers to acquire proficiency in. According to the Foreign Service Institute of the US Department of State, it is estimated to take 2,200 hours of continual study to reach a level congruent with “general proficiency” in both reading and speaking. Japanese is a “Category V” language for native English speakers, the same category as Chinese (both Cantonese and Mandarin), Korean, and Arabic. Even amongst these other Category V languages, Japanese distinguishes itself again in terms of difficulty in second language acquisition by earning an asterisks footnote imparting that Japanese is considered to be more difficult to learn than other languages in the same category. To put this level of difficulty into perspective, a Category I language for native English speakers, such as French or Spanish, takes approximately 600 hours to reach general proficiency in reading and speaking. It is quite understandable then why a native English speaker might be intimidated by the prospect of beginning to study the Japanese language. From a pedagogical perspective, it is the duty of Japanese language instructors teaching non-native students to help unravel the complexity of the language and to structure the learning process in such a way so as to increase the efficiency of studying one of the world’s most difficult languages. A logical start to understanding the pedagogical difficulty of teaching the Japanese language to native English speakers is to look at how Japanese is different than the English language.

Despite originating from a completely separate language family than the English language, Japanese originating as a language isolate in the Japonic Language Family (Kindaichi, 1988), and English originating from the West Germanic Language Family (Crystal, 2003), there is plenty of shared vocabulary thanks to large amounts of foreign words from numerous European languages and phrases adapted for Japanese use. There are, in fact, so many adopted foreign words commonly used in Japanese that one could make the case that, even though there is a disproportionately large amount of vocabulary completely foreign to European languages, the presence and usage of these foreign-born words in Japanese should provide a native English speaker with an innate knowledge of some common, everyday Japanese. Japanese grammar is also relatively easy when compared to some of the more grammatically difficult languages in the European linguistic family. German, for example, is arguably much more grammatically nuanced than Japanese. German however, even with its complicated three gender article system each with their own grammatical declensions, is only a Category II language according to the Foreign Service of the US Department of State. One is left to wonder as to what it exactly is that makes Japanese so much more linguistically complicated than other languages. The answer to this riddle may lie in the Japanese writing systems. Despite its simplified grammar and plethora of adopted foreign words (the grand majority of which come from English), the Japanese writing system is well outside the linguistic comfort range of the average native English speaker. Being well versed in Japanese grammar does one little good when one cannot write; similarly, being armed with an innate knowledge of the majority of adopted foreign words used commonly in everyday Japanese does one little good when one cannot read what is written. Unlike many European languages that use, with the exception of a few accent marks or unfamiliar letters, essentially the same Latin alphabet as English, Japanese has its own unique writing systems, and they just so happen to be extraordinarily complicated.

Japanese uses three completely different writing systems in conjunction with one another, all of which operate very differently than the Latin alphabet that English speakers are familiar with. The hybrid Japanese writing system utilizes two phonetic syllabaries, Katakana and Hiragana (otherwise known as simply Kana), and ideogrammatic characters called Kanji which are adopted from Chinese characters. These writing systems are similar to the writing systems used in modern day Korea (Hangul) and in Chinese speaking countries, however there are a number of unique properties inherent to the Japanese writing systems that make them more linguistically complex than those used by these aforementioned neighboring cultures.

Korean Hangul shares syllabic features similar to Japanese Kana. For example, the word “Hangul” is comprised of two syllables: “han” and “gul.” Therefore, when written in Hangul, each syllable will be written as one character: 한 for “han” and 굴 for “gul.” Similarly, the word “Kana” is also comprised of two syllables: “ka” and “na.” Therefore, when written in Kana, each syllable will be written as one character: か for “ka” and な for “na.” However, Korean Hangul also incorporates alphabetic principles, whereby every phoneme in Hangul is represented by one letter independent of the character syllable, and can be used interchangeably with other character syllables: ᄒ is an “H,” ᄒ is an “A,” and ᄒ is an “N.” Any one phoneme can be replaced from the character syllable to alter the pronunciation, and the remaining phonemes are the same: 한 is “han” and 난 is “nan.” On the other hand, Japanese Kana operates on non-alphabetic, purely syllabic principles, and cannot replace phonetic components of a character syllable without changing the symbol entirely: preserving the phonemes “K” and “N” and replacing both “A” vowels with “O” in かな (Kana) results in この (kono); despite the consonant phonemes remaining the same, due to the vowel shift, the whole character is changed (with the arguable exception of diacritic denotation of the unvoiced to voiced consonant shift, e.g. “K” to “G,” or “S” to “Z”) whereby か (ka) becomes が (ga) with two diacritical dashes to the right of the original character, and さ (sa) may become ざ (za) using the same process. This distinct lack of alphabetic features in the Kana phonetic syllabaries results in there being almost twice the amount of written characters when compared to Hangul, with each Kana syllabary containing 46 unique characters, and Hangul containing a mere 24 letter phonemes. Moreover, Japanese utilizes two syllabaries. Hiragana is principally used for all native Japanese vocabulary, and Katakana is principally used for all adopted foreign vocabulary. This raises the final character syllable count to 92, almost four times the amount of characters compared to Korean Hangul. This count of 92 characters does not even begin to consider the 2,136 Jōyō Kanji (literally: regular use Kanji) now considered necessary for general reading proficiency as reported by the Nihon Keizai Shimbun on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2010.

Despite having plenty of vocabulary in common with English, and despite the highly regular, straight forward grammar, Japanese remains one of the most difficult, if not *the* most difficult language for English speakers to learn. One reason for this might be in part due to the exceedingly complex hybrid writing system made up of two syllabaries (Hiragana/Katakana), as well as thousands upon thousands of ideograms each with numerous pronunciations (Kanji). From a pedagogical perspective, if an instructor wanted to make the process of second language acquisition of the Japanese language more efficient, or otherwise less overtly complicated for English speakers, approaching the instructional method pertaining to the writing systems would be a

logical place to start. Of the three writing systems used in modern Japanese, the two syllabaries Hiragana and Katakana would be the far easier option to start any attempt on simplifying the educational process. This does not preclude the possibility of the creation of a pedagogical method to make acquiring general proficiency in Kanji more efficient, however even with improvements to the pedagogical method of instruction, the process of acquiring general proficiency in Kanji requires years of commitment. Hiragana and Katakana, on the other hand, are each comprised of only 46 unique characters, and would therefore be the more likely candidates to see immediate results from the implementation of an improved pedagogical method. This research presents just such a pedagogical method utilizing a color coding system applied to Hiragana and demonstrates the ability to increase the speed of acquisition in English speaking students with no prior study in the Japanese language. The following sections will discuss in detail how a color coding system is used to endow Japanese Kana with alphabetic properties, and how the implementation of this system in a test group of 20 research participants with no prior knowledge of Japanese improved the acquisition rates of the Hiragana syllabary, Japanese vocabulary retention, and pronunciation.

## Japanese Kana Color Coding System

### Introduction to the Color Coding System

Due to the pedagogical versatility of Hiragana within the Japanese language, Hiragana is the Kana system that was chosen to be used in this study. Although there are arguments in favor of starting English speakers with Katakana instead of Hiragana due to the majority of English derived foreign vocabulary written in Katakana, Hiragana is by far the most utilized of the two Kana in pedagogical settings, and so Katakana was not mapped or tested within this research. With that being said, the identical structures of Hiragana and Katakana combined with the universal compatibility of the color coding system with either of the two Kana syllabaries should yield near identical results if Katakana were to be mapped and tested in an identical fashion to the color coded Hiragana presented within this research. The following sections will delineate how the color coding system operates, as well as the pedagogical benefits that the implementation of this color coding system would bring to non-native learners of Japanese Kana.

The color coding system tested in this research applies one of the six primary and secondary colors (yellow, orange, red, purple, blue, and green) to the five Japanese Kana vowel groups in the same color order just mentioned: あ (A) to yellow, い (I) to orange, う (U) to red, え (E) to purple, お (O) to blue, and the lone consonant ん (N) to green. Each subsequent vowel/consonant monograph is also coded to the aforementioned vowel color sequence: か (ka) to yellow, き (ki) to orange, く (ku) to red, け (ke) to purple, and こ (ko) to blue. This color coding system also modifies the natural form of Hiragana by adding color coded diacritical marks to all monographs to denote the consonant. By adding color coded diacritical marks to each monograph, alphabetic properties are imposed on all monographs. In natural Hiragana, when the Dakuten diacritical mark ( ゛ ) is added to a monograph with a voiced phonetic pair (e.g. K/G), the Dakuten diacritic denotes the voiced “G” consonant, and no diacritic is used to denote the unvoiced “K” consonant: か (ka) and が (ga). In this color coding system, color coded Handakuten diacritics ( ゜ ) are used on all monographs that are either in unvoiced/voiced phonetic pair groups (K, S, SH, T, CH, TS, H, P, F) as well

as voiced consonants with no Dakuten phonetic pair (N, M, R, Y, W), and color coded to each respective consonant group. For those unvoiced consonant groups with voiced phonetic pairs, the voiced consonant Dakuten diacritic is coded to the same color as the unvoiced phonetic pair denoted with the Handakuten diacritic. The color code for か<sup>◦</sup> (ka) is therefore yellow for the monograph か to denote the “A” vowel group, and cyan for the Handakuten ( ◦ ) to denote the K/G consonant group; the color code for か<sup>゛</sup> (ga) is the same, yellow for the monograph か<sup>゛</sup>, and cyan for the Dakuten ( ◌゛ ). By denoting all consonant sounds with the Dakuten and Handakuten diacritics already used in natural Hiragana, alphabetic features are created so that students do not have to rely on Latin alphabet equivalents. For a complete list of all coded Hiragana monographs and diacritics, refer to Figures 1 and 2 (for monochromatic versions, refer to appendices 1 and 2).

Vowels	◦K	◦S	◦SH	◦T	◦CH	◦TS	◦N	◦H	◦F	◦P	◦M	◦R	◦Y	◦W
A	あ	か <sup>◦</sup>	さ <sup>◦</sup>		た <sup>◦</sup>		な <sup>◦</sup>	は <sup>◦</sup>		は <sup>◦</sup>	ま <sup>◦</sup>	ら <sup>◦</sup>	や <sup>◦</sup>	わ <sup>◦</sup>
I	い	き <sup>◦</sup>	し <sup>◦</sup>	ち <sup>◦</sup>			に <sup>◦</sup>	ひ <sup>◦</sup>		ひ <sup>◦</sup>	み <sup>◦</sup>	り <sup>◦</sup>		
U	う	く <sup>◦</sup>	す <sup>◦</sup>	つ <sup>◦</sup>			ぬ <sup>◦</sup>	ふ <sup>◦</sup>	ふ <sup>◦</sup>	ふ <sup>◦</sup>	む <sup>◦</sup>	る <sup>◦</sup>	ゆ <sup>◦</sup>	
E	え	け <sup>◦</sup>	せ <sup>◦</sup>	て <sup>◦</sup>			ね <sup>◦</sup>	へ <sup>◦</sup>		へ <sup>◦</sup>	め <sup>◦</sup>	れ <sup>◦</sup>		
O	お	こ <sup>◦</sup>	そ <sup>◦</sup>	と <sup>◦</sup>			の <sup>◦</sup>	ほ <sup>◦</sup>		ほ <sup>◦</sup>	も <sup>◦</sup>	ろ <sup>◦</sup>	よ <sup>◦</sup>	を <sup>◦</sup>
N							ん							
Silent	く	す	し		ち	つ								

Figure 1: Unvoiced Hiragana monographs mapped to the color code

	"V	"G	"Z	"J	"D	"(D)J	"(D)Z	◦N	◦H	◦F	"B	◦M	◦R	◦Y	◦W
A	あ	か"	さ"		た"			な <sup>◦</sup>	は <sup>◦</sup>		は"	ま <sup>◦</sup>	ら <sup>◦</sup>	や <sup>◦</sup>	わ <sup>◦</sup>
I	い	き"	し"	ち"				に <sup>◦</sup>	ひ <sup>◦</sup>		ひ"	み <sup>◦</sup>	り <sup>◦</sup>		
U	う"	く"	す"		つ	つ	つ"	ぬ <sup>◦</sup>	ふ <sup>◦</sup>	ふ <sup>◦</sup>	ふ"	む <sup>◦</sup>	る <sup>◦</sup>	ゆ <sup>◦</sup>	
E	え	け"	せ"		て"			ね <sup>◦</sup>	へ <sup>◦</sup>		へ"	め <sup>◦</sup>	れ <sup>◦</sup>		
O	お	こ"	そ"		と"			の <sup>◦</sup>	ほ <sup>◦</sup>		ほ"	も <sup>◦</sup>	ろ <sup>◦</sup>	よ <sup>◦</sup>	を <sup>◦</sup>

Figure 2: Voiced Hiragana monographs mapped to the color code

Digraphs are color coded to the dominate vowel sound, and the diacritics remain color coded to each respective consonant group. Normally the color code for the

monograph き° (ki) would be orange for き to denote the “I” vowel group, and cyan for the Handakuten ( ° ) to denote the “K” consonant group. However, the color code for the digraph き°や° (kya) is yellow for both き (ki) and the 3/4 sized や (ya) to denote the dominance of the “A” vowel group, and cyan and salmon respectively for the Handakuten to denote both “K” and “Y” consonant groups. Finally, the 3/4 sized geminate consonant っ is coded to the same consonant that it duplicates, whereby the code for も°っ° (mo-tsu) is blue for も (mo), gray for the Handakuten on も°, red for っ (tsu), and violet for the Handakuten on っ°; when the 3/4 っ is used in も°った° (mo-tta), the color code becomes blue/gray for も°, yellow for た (ta), and violet for both the 3/4 っ and the Handakuten in った° (tta). For a detailed list of color coded digraphs and geminate consonants, refer to Figure 3 (for monochromatic version, refer to appendix 3).

"V	°K	"G	°SH	"J	°CH	°N	°H	°F	°P	"B	°R	°M
う"あ	き°や°	き°や°	し°や°	し°や°	ち°や°	に°や°	ひ°や°	ふ°あ	ひ°や°	ひ°や°	り°や°	み°や°
う"い								ふ°い				
	き°ゆ°	き°ゆ°	し°ゆ°	し°ゆ°	ち°ゆ°	に°ゆ°	ひ°ゆ°		ひ°ゆ°	ひ°ゆ°	り°ゆ°	み°ゆ°
う"え			し°え	し°え	ち°え			ふ°え				
う"お	き°よ°	き°よ°	し°よ°	し°よ°	ち°よ°	に°よ°	ひ°よ°	ふ°お	ひ°よ°	ひ°よ°	り°よ°	み°よ°
っ	っ		っ	っ	っ	っ	っ	っ	っ	っ	っ	っ

Figure 3: Voiced/unvoiced Hiragana digraphs and geminate consonants

In a syllabic writing system without signifiers to denote both what the vowel and consonant are such as all 46 Japanese Kana monographs, there is only one way to become proficient: rote memorization. Although the same case may be made that one must also memorize the individual letters of an alphabetic writing system, when studying a true alphabetic system, phonetic characters will be used over and over in vocabulary and will therefore have a cumulative effect on the memorization process. For example, when looking at the following syllabic characters written in Korean Hangul 카 (ka), 키 (ki), 쿠 (ku), 케 (ke), 코 (ko), it is easy to identify that the “K” consonant is represented by the letter ㅋ; similarly, when the following phonetic sequence is written out in Hangul 아 (A), 카 (ka), 사 (sa), 타 (ta), 나 (na), 하 (ha), 라 (ra), 마 (ma), it is easy to identify the letter ㅏ as the phonetic marker for the vowel “A.” Due to the fact that the same phonetic markers will always appear in vocabulary utilizing the aforementioned consonant and vowel, the memorization process connecting the phonetic marker ㅋ to the “K” and ㅏ to “A” is considerably sped up.

When the same phonetic sequences are written in Japanese Hiragana か (ka), き (ki), く (ku), け (ke), こ (ko), for the “K” consonant group, and あ (A), か (ka), さ (sa), た (ta), な (na), は (ha), ら (ra), ま (ma) for the “A” vowel group, there is absolutely no

visual connection tying each of the above monographs to either the shared consonant phoneme “K,” or the vowel phoneme “A.” This means that to learn every possible combination vowel/consonant monograph with the phonemes listed above, one need only learn 12 phonetic letter components of Hangul syllabic characters (the five vowels ㅏ (A), ㅣ (I), ㅓ (U), ㅕ (E), ㅗ (O), and the seven consonants ㅋ (K), ㅌ (S), ㅍ (T), ㄴ (N), ㅎ (H), ㄹ (R), ㅁ (M)), however one must learn all 40 monograph characters in Japanese Hiragana (five vowel monographs multiplied by five vowel/consonant monographs for each of the consonant groups K, S, T, N, H, R, and M). It is precisely the lack of alphabetic representation in both vowel and consonant phonemes in Japanese Kana monographs that this color coding system addresses. By mapping specific color sequences to the monograph, the vowel phoneme may be distinguished; likewise, by mapping specific color sequences on both the Handakuten ( ° ) and Dakuten ( ̣ ) diacritics, the consonant phoneme may be distinguished. Should the color coding system proposed in this research be applied to the same phonetic sequences above, then one need only remember 12 colors (the same number as in the Hangul sequence) to be able to effectively read all 40 monographs. Through the implementation of this color coding system, the speed and effectiveness of the memorization process of Japanese Hiragana would be, on a theoretical basis, positively affected.

The increased speed at which a learner of Japanese as a foreign language could utilize the Japanese syllabaries with the color code intervention proposed in this research is not the only hypothesized benefit. Indeed, through the use of a color coding system, phonetic irregularities existing within the Kana syllabaries may be visualized as well. Unlike all other unvoiced/voiced phonetic pairs denoted by a Dakuten diacritic (K/G, S/Z, SH/J, T/D, and P/B), the F/V consonant pair is the only pair that is not visually linked by the same base monograph. The reason for this lies in the fact that there is no true “F” consonant group formally represented in Japanese Kana. The “F” consonant is a subcategory of the “H” consonant group and can only be denoted with the monograph ふ (fu/hu). Technically speaking, this monograph is not truly an “F” and is only used to denote the “F” phoneme due to the similarity between the Japanese pronunciation of ふ (hu), the “H” of which sounding more similar to an “F” than an “H.” Therefore the monograph ふ has become its own digraph subcategory (ふぁ (fa), ふぃ (fi), ふ (fu), ふぇ (fe), ふぉ (fo)) to be able to denote foreign born vocabulary using the “F” phoneme. The voiced phonetic pair to the “F” consonant is “V,” however due to fact the monograph ふ (fu) is actually a part of the “H” consonant group, when the Dakuten ( ̣ ) diacritic is utilized to denote a voiced consonant shift, the “H” consonant group becomes the “B” consonant group: ふ (fu) becomes ぶ (bu). The usual unvoiced/voiced consonant shift between the F/V consonant pair cannot be denoted in Japanese Kana with a simple Dakuten diacritic and is therefore shifted to the vowel う (U) which becomes っ (vu) when the Dakuten diacritic is added. Much like its unvoiced ふ (fu) counterpart, the voiced っ (vu) may use digraphs to complete the vowel phonetic sequence: っぁ (va), っぃ (vi), っ (vu), っぇ (ve), っぉ (vo). The visual link between the unvoiced/voiced phonetic pair F/V is lost in natural Japanese Kana, however, this visual connection may be reestablished when mapped to the color coding system. By mapping the Dakuten diacritic to the same color (in this circumstance, dark green), the Handakuten diacritic in the digraph ふぁ (fa) is visually linked by color to the Dakuten diacritic in the digraph っぁ (va).

There are other irregularities within Japanese Kana that may be visually denoted when mapped to the color coding system. The most readily discernible irregularities lie within the “S” and “T” monograph consonant groups and in their subsequent voiced diacritic groups. The Japanese “S” consonant group encompasses both “S” and “SH” phonemes in the monograph group, as well as the voiced phonetic pairs “Z” and “J” in the diacritic group. The “T” consonant group encompasses the “T/D” phonetic pair, the “ch” phoneme in the monograph ち (chi) as well as the “ts” phoneme in the monograph つ (tsu). However, when the ち (chi) and つ (tsu) monographs within the T/D consonant group are accented by the Dakuten (゜) diacritic, the pronunciation shifts away from the T/D consonant group to the S/Z and SH/J consonant group, whereby ち (chi) becomes ぢ (dji), and つ (tsu) becomes づ (dzu), whereby the “D” inserted into the romanizations represents a stressing of the “J” and “Z” consonants, and not a true voiced “D” pronunciation.

From a phonetic standpoint, this irregular phonetic shift in the diacritic group is hardly surprising. Even though the unvoiced/voiced T/D phonetic pair is reflected in the characters た/だ (ta/da), て/で (te/de), and と/ど (to/do), the monograph ち (chi) is more accurately classified as a stressed し (shi); likewise, the monograph つ (tsu) is more accurately classified as a stressed “S” consonant. These phonetic relationships are reflected in the near identical pronunciation of the diacritic ぢ (dji) and じ (ji), as well as in the near identical pronunciation of the diacritic づ (dzu) and ず (zu). Although this relationship is reflected in pronunciation, the visual relationship between these phonetic pairs has been lost due to the stressed consonant phonemes ち (chi) and つ (tsu) being classified in the “T” consonant group instead of being denoted with different diacritical markings in the S/SH monograph group and the Z/J phonetic pair. However, when these irregular stressed diacritics are mapped to the color coding system, these phonetic relationships may be reestablished.

Not only do all the non-stressed/stressed phonetic outliers from both monograph groups “S” and “T” receive their own color code separate from their respective consonant groups, but the diacritic shifts may also be denoted. The color code for the consonant “S” is magenta, but the color code for “SH” is pink. Similarly, the color code for the “T” group is violet, but the color codes for “CH” and “TS” phonemes are rose and crimson respectively. Therefore, when mapped to the color coding system, the character し<sup>o</sup> (shi) is color coded orange in the monograph し to reflect the “I” vowel group, and the Handakuten diacritic (ゝ) is coded pink to reflect the “SH” consonant; the diacritic じ (ji) is mapped to exactly the same color code but uses the Dakuten diacritic to reflect a shift to the voiced phoneme “J” in the SH/J phonetic pair. Similarly, the character ち<sup>o</sup> (chi) is mapped orange in the monograph ち to reflect the “I” vowel group, and the Handakuten diacritic is coded rose to reflect the “CH” consonant. In the diacritic group, however, the Dakuten diacritic in ぢ (dji) is coded pink not only to reflect the near identical pronunciation as the voiced “J” Dakuten diacritic, but also to establish a visual phonetic connection between the CH/SH consonants normally not reflected in natural Japanese Kana. Finally, the character つ<sup>o</sup> (tsu) is coded red in the monograph つ to reflect the “U” vowel group, and the Handakuten diacritic is coded crimson to denote the “TS” consonant. However, when the character づ (dzu) is mapped to the color code, the Dakuten diacritic is mapped to

magenta to denote the near identical voiced pronunciation as the voiced “Z” in the S/Z phonetic pair group.

The color coding system described in this section seeks to simplify the acquisition of Japanese Hiragana by endowing the monograph syllabic characters with alphabetic properties. This alphabetic transformation is accomplished by color coding each monograph to a vowel group, then applying either Handakuten or Dakuten color codes to a consonant group to each monograph. The next section describes the pedagogical basis for this study as well as the methods used to measure how well the color coding system described in this section aids native English speakers in acquiring proficiency in Hiragana.

## **Methodology**

### **Pedagogical Basis for Study**

In this study, color is used to represent phonetic information in conjunction with the phonetic information contained in the Hiragana syllabary itself. In this way, the color code presents to the learner two layers of information, the image of color as representing phonetic information as well as the symbolic representation of phonetic information in Japanese Kana. If we assume that the learner is processing the visual information presented in the color code as an analogical representation of a phonetic sound, then we can liken the use of the color code system to utilizing images simultaneously with educational material in the L2. Not only has there been research suggesting that the processing of analogical representations (imagery) forms stronger mental bonds than symbolic representation (Chun and Plass, 1997), but there is also a wealth of research suggesting increased comprehension of L2 material when presented simultaneously with imagery (Mueller, 1980; Carlson, 1990; Chung, 1994; Jones, 2003; Wrobletz, 2018 [2]). The color coding system presented in this study was created with the intention of mimicking this process by way of a dual representation (analogic and symbolic) of phonetic information.

By not relying on romanizations to represent phonetic information, native English speakers learning Japanese as a foreign language must retrieve the phonetic information with “non-automatic elaborations.” When the Latin alphabet is used to signify the phonetic information of Japanese Kana, a native English speaker will automatically fall back on the information denoted in the Latin alphabet and invest very little mental effort to make connections between the two pieces of phonetic information. However, due to the fact that the learner using the color code cannot automatically retrieve the phonetic information being represented, increased mental effort must therefore be invested in order to retrieve the phonetic information. These “non-automatic elaborations” have been shown to increase retention of L2 material (Salomon, 1983). Furthermore, the state of non-automatic elaborations fit in very nicely with the psychological state of “desirable difficulty,” whereby long term retention of memorized material has been shown to be positively affected by increasing the mental effort needed to comprehend information (Bjork and Bjork, 2011). The next sections will describe both the study materials and testing methods used to test the efficacy of the color coding system in a simulated educational environment.

## Study Materials and Testing Method

The color coding system described in the previous section of this article has been used to test how the use of color coded phonics affects the acquisition of Japanese Hiragana for native English speakers with no previous knowledge or study of the Japanese language. Two sample groups comprised of 10 students each were administered a series of six tests (total sample size of 20). The participants in the Hiragana acquisition tests are between the ages of 19-70 (mean age of 32) and represent a random selection from varying educational, professional, and cultural backgrounds. Although some participants have experience in foreign language study, all participants' mother language is English. None of the participants had had any Japanese language instruction at the commencement of the study. Half of the 20 total participants were divided randomly into two groups of 10, a control group and a test group. The control group was tested on their acquisition rates of Hiragana, pronunciation accuracy, and vocabulary retention through study guides not utilizing the color coding system. The remaining half of the participant sample was assigned to the test group and tested on their acquisition rates of Hiragana, pronunciation accuracy, and vocabulary retention through the use of color coded Hiragana and study guides featuring explanations of the color code. The next sections will describe the testing procedures.

The efficiency of Hiragana acquisition in each sample group was measured by a series of six study guides and tests for each respective sample group. The Hiragana syllabary has been divided into the following sections for individual testing: Test 1 comprises the vowel group plus N, and K/G group; Test 2 comprises the N group, M group, and R group; Test 3 comprises the H/F group and P/B group; Test 4 comprises the S/Z group, SH/J group, Y group, and W group; Test 5 comprises the T/D group, CH/J group, TS/Z group, and geminate consonants; Test 6 comprises the F/V digraphs, Y group digraphs, T/D group digraphs, (T)S/Z group digraphs, (C/S)H/J group digraphs, and W group digraphs. Prior to testing, each participant was given up to 30 minutes to read through a study guide explaining pronunciation, the romanization, as well as introducing a selection of Japanese vocabulary with English definitions utilizing the Hiragana monographs and/or digraphs being tested in each respective test section. After the time period for the study guide was finished, a test covering that particular section was administered. Although there was a time limit of 30 minutes governing the use of each corresponding study guide, there was no time limit established for the subsequent tests.

Each test consists of three sections (hiragana acquisition, pronunciation accuracy, and vocabulary retention) and is designed to test the participants' ability to correctly romanize individual Hiragana monographs/digraphs (Figure 4), pronounce individual monographs/digraphs (Figure 5), read a selection of Japanese vocabulary utilizing the Hiragana monographs/digraphs being tested (as well as review characters from previous test groups), and provide an English definition of the same vocabulary (Figure 6). The questions featured in Figures 4 and 5 pertain the participants' score on how efficiently Hiragana has been acquired and accuracy of pronunciation, and Figure 6 pertains to the participants' score on how efficiently Japanese vocabulary has been retained.

	Kana	Latin Alphabet		Kana	Latin Alphabet
EX.	け	<i>ke</i>	8	く	
1	あ		9	こ	
2	が		10	ん	
3	う		11	か	
4	え		12	ぐ	
5	ぎ		13	お	
6	き		14	い	
7	げ		15	ご	

Figure 4: Romanization test for Hiragana monographs/digraphs

EX.	ん	<i>F</i>		A	v <u>o</u> te
1	あ			B	<u>o</u> ffer
2	い			C	c <u>a</u> t
3	う			D	f <u>oo</u> d
4	え			E	<u>ea</u> t
5	お			F	Kha <u>n</u>
				G	t <u>oo</u> k
				H	<u>e</u> gg
				I	<u>go</u> t
				J	<u>Kha</u> n
				K	<u>A</u> frica
				L	<u>i</u> sland

Figure 5: Pronunciation test for Hiragana monographs/digraphs

	Vocabulary	Latin Alphabet	English Definition
EX.	かな	<i>kana</i>	<i>Japanese writing</i>
1	げんき		
2	えんぎ		
3	あかい		
4	ぎんこう		
5	あう		
6	あんき		
7	あい		
8	かお		
9	あかん		
10	あおい		

Figure 6: Vocabulary retention test

Through the use of the above mentioned testing methods, the efficiency of Hiragana acquisition, pronunciation accuracy and vocabulary retention in both the control group and test group was tested. While it is the hypothesis proposed by this research that the alphabetization of Japanese Kana by mapping phonetic groups to a color coding system will positively affect acquisition rates of Hiragana, supported in part by similar research conducted in the same field on how the color coding of phonetic markers in English positively promotes correct English pronunciation for Japanese elementary school students learning English as a foreign language (Wrobetz, 2018 [1]), this research is also attempting to measure the effect, if any, the same color coding system has on the retention of Japanese vocabulary in native English speakers. In the next section, the results of the testing methods described in this section are analyzed.

## Results and Discussion

The test group who received the color coding system applied to Japanese Kana outperformed the non-color coded control group in the Kana reading/romanization sections, pronunciation sections, and vocabulary retention sections in all six tests. In addition to providing an in depth analysis of all six tests in Kana comprehension, the following section will also delve into the possible reasons why instruction with the color coding system positively influences correct pronunciation and vocabulary retention.

In Figure 7, the total percentage of correct answers from all six Hiragana and vocabulary tests taken by the test group (instruction with the color coding system) and the control group (instruction without the color coding system) are charted, and the test group is shown to vastly outperform the control group. The test group answered on average with an 84.6% rate of accuracy throughout all six test blocks compared to an average 41.3% rate of accuracy in the control group. Both groups showed similar

rates of improvement over the course of the six tests, although the test group demonstrated a higher average rate of improvement at 20.4% from the first test to the last test compared to a 9% average rate of improvement in the control group. Both groups additionally show similar curves reflecting the difficulty of the tests with sharp increases in the rate of accuracy in tests two and three, and a gradual decline in accuracy carried through to the end of test six. These fluctuations in test scores can be explained very simply by the fact that the tests continually review Hiragana monographs and digraphs covered in previous tests, and that the gradual buildup of the number of characters learned have no regular review outside of the testing process. Although the color coding system did not manage to improve upon the decline in test scores from the third test seen in both groups, the color coding system gave the test group an immediate advantage over the control group which continued throughout all six tests as well as a rate of improvement that was more than double that of the control group.

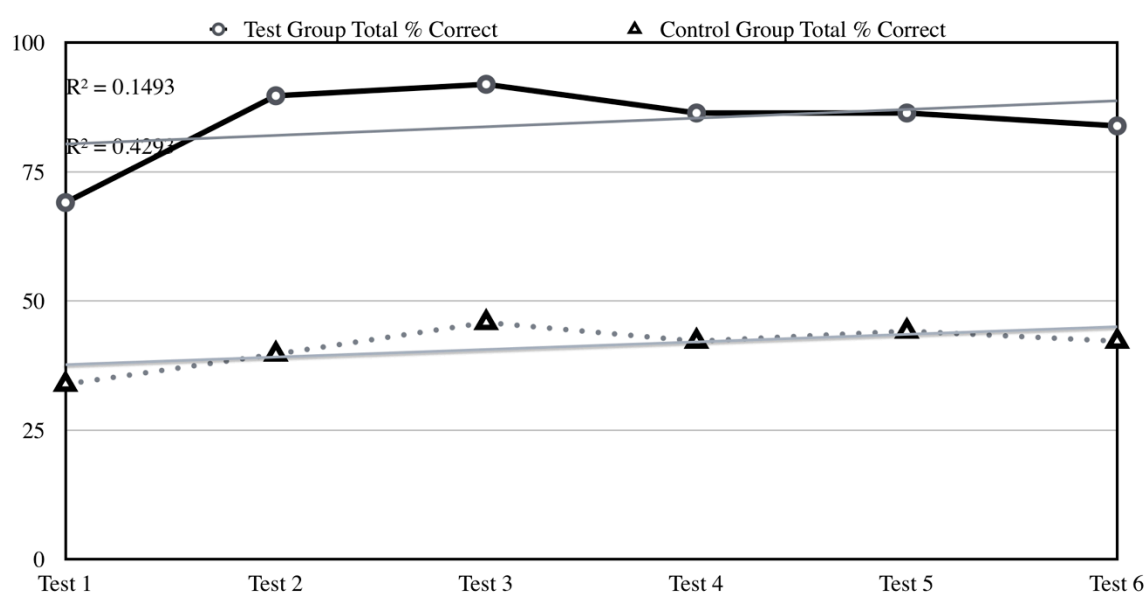


Figure 7: Averages of all six tests for both test and control groups

Another key difference in the test results is shown in Figures 8 and 9. In Figure 8, the average percentage correct scored in the test group (instruction with the color coding system) Kana comprehension and pronunciation tests are compared with the test group vocabulary retention tests. As is shown nicely in Figure 8, both curves match each other almost perfectly. This would seem to suggest that the color coding system links the comprehension of the Kana characters with the retention of the vocabulary in which they appear. These results are in contrast to the data presented in Figure 9, wherein the results of the control group (instruction without the color coding system) Kana comprehension and pronunciation tests are far more erratic and actually flip positions in tests two, four, and six. This would seem to suggest that the learners in the control group were not making as strong of a connection between the accurate reading of the Kana characters and the vocabulary in which they appear. Instead, the learner in the control group might have been focusing in on the English definitions of words rather than on the acquisition of the Kana syllabary. Moreover, the test group showed a far higher rate of improvement with a 26.4% average increase in accuracy

throughout all six tests, whereas the control group only showed a 14.8% average increase in accuracy.

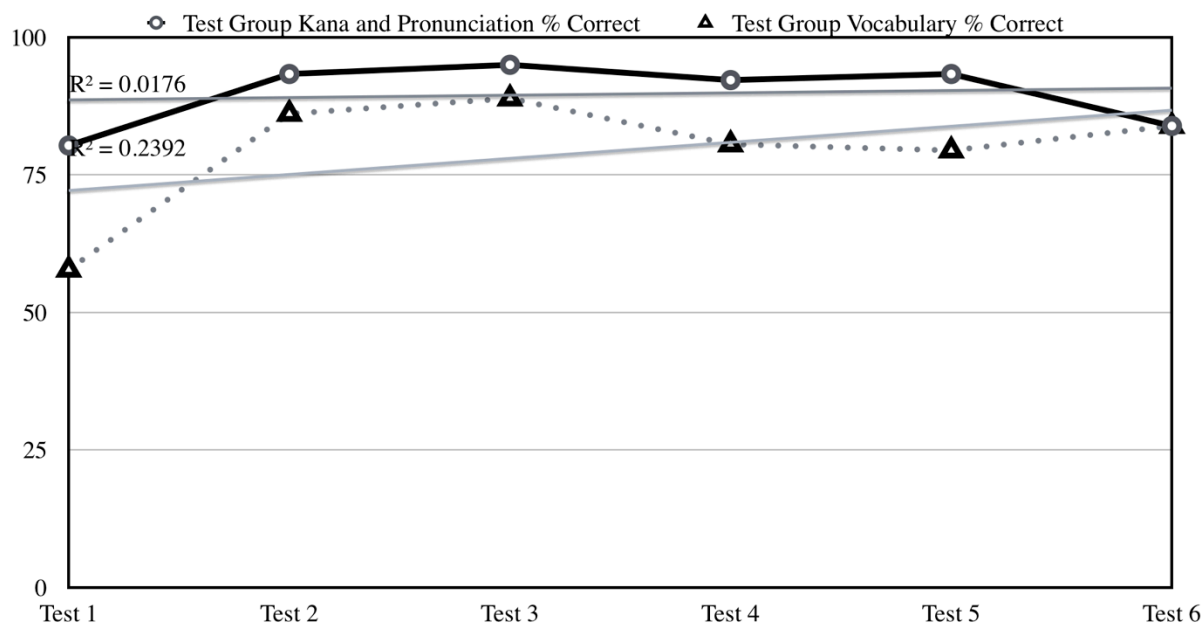


Figure 8: Test group romanization/pronunciation and vocabulary retention comparison

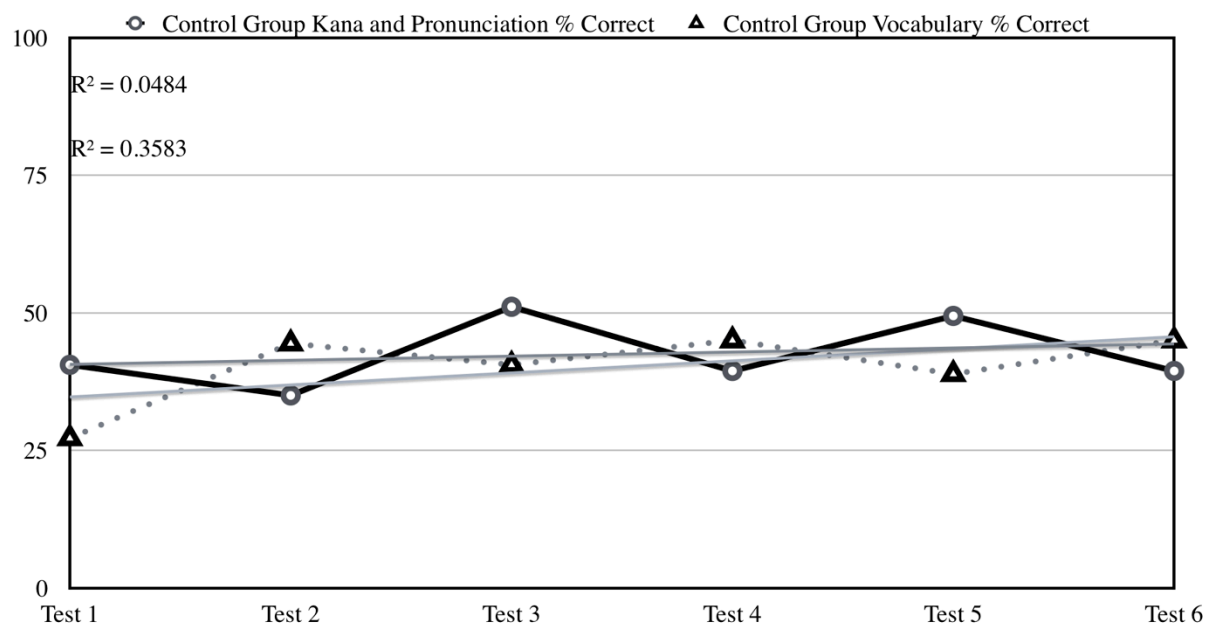


Figure 9: Control group romanization/pronunciation and vocabulary retention comparison

In both sets of data, the test group not only vastly outperformed the control group, but the test group also consistently showed higher rates of improvement in both Kana comprehension and vocabulary retention. Understanding why there is a difference in performance between the two testing groups should yield a deeper understanding of the potential pedagogical benefits that further intervention with the color coding

system presented within this research would have on native English speakers studying Japanese. As was touched on earlier, one potential reason for the higher rate of vocabulary acquisition seen in the test group could lie within how well the student recalls each of the Kana used in each vocabulary term. Due to the intentional structure of the vocabulary component of each test block to utilize those Kana covered in previous test blocks (e.g. the vocabulary in test block two only utilizes Kana from test blocks one and two, whereas vocabulary in test block three utilizes Kana from test blocks one through three), a more complete knowledge of the Kana used in previous test blocks should result in higher retention rates of vocabulary. This is exactly what we see happening in the test group. In the test group data, as scores rise with respect to Kana comprehension, so do vocabulary retention scores. Conversely, the scores with respect to Kana comprehension and vocabulary retention operate seemingly independent of one another in the control group.

The data presented in this section would seem to indicate that not only does the color coding system have the benefit of helping students acquire the Japanese syllabary at accelerated rates, but the utilization of just such a color coding system also has the potential of positively benefitting vocabulary retention. Although more research is necessary to firmly establish to what degree the implementation of the color coding system presented in this research would have on other areas of Japanese language acquisition, the potential surplus of benefits just such a system could have on other language processes such as reading skills, listening skills, and speaking skills is promising.

Even without considering the higher rates of Hiragana acquisition as well as vocabulary retention seen in the test group (instruction with the color coding system) over the control group (instruction without the color coding system), the point may still be made that all of the aforementioned phonetic descriptions depicted in the color coding system are accomplishable with simple romanizations of Japanese Kana. In this sense, it may be argued that complicating an already well-established writing system even though adequate romanization methods for acquisition are already set in place is unnecessarily complicating the instructional process regarding Japanese Kana. For example, the monograph ふ may be romanized as “fu” to denote the phonetic departure from the “H” consonant group. However, the benefits of utilizing this color coding system over simple romanization methods to instruct native English speakers stretches beyond the positive effect that the color coding system presented in this research has been shown to have on Hiragana acquisition and vocabulary retention.

The reason why this color coding system is superior to simple romanization is threefold: efficiency of memorization, accuracy of pronunciation, and the nature of color memorization. First, the color coding system, once learned, allows the learner to exclusively use Hiragana in the learning process. Without using the color code, native English learners’ focus is divided. Due to the fact that there are no alphabetic properties in Japanese Kana, the native English speaker using romanizations to acquire proficiency in Kana must constantly switch back and forth between writing systems until the Kana have been memorized. When mapped to the color coding system, however, each monograph is endowed with alphabetic properties, and the learning process is shifted to using Kana exclusively. While it may be argued that one must also memorize the color code in order to effectively interact with this pedagogical system, when compared to the 96 monographs for both Hiragana and

Katakana, the 19 colors required for color code proficiency is by a wide margin the more efficient route to memorization.

Second, using simple romanizations of Japanese Kana to aid in acquisition also has a concerning drawback: the accuracy of pronunciation may be negatively affected by romanization. While the utilization of romanization for Japanese Kana may have negligible effects on correct pronunciation for languages that use the Latin alphabet *and* have similar pronunciation of the base vowels (German, for instance), English vowel pronunciation is imbued with so much variety that a native English speaker using romanizations to aid in Kana acquisition runs the risk of having inaccurate pronunciation patterns taking root from the very onset of learning. Unlike the highly regular Japanese vowels あ (A), い (I), う (U), え (E), お (O) which always have the same pronunciation, the English vowels A, E, I, O, U, and (Y) host more than one pronunciation per letter. The potentially negative impact that this may have on accurate pronunciation of Japanese Kana for native English speakers when using romanization techniques is readily seen in the pronunciation of Japanese vocabulary adopted into the English language. The pronunciations of the following words are denoted using the International Phonetic Alphabet. The word カラオケ (ka·ra·o·ke) is pronounced “kara<sup>+</sup>oke” in Japanese, however the adopted word “karaoke” is pronounced “kæri'ooki” in English. Similarly, the car manufacturer 本田 (hon·da) is pronounced “honda” in Japanese, however in Standard American English it is pronounced “hɒndə.” In both of these Japanese born examples, it is easily observable that the loose rules in English for vowel pronunciation have resulted in the mispronunciation of every single romanized vowel except the “O” in “karaoke.” If we are to use the mispronunciation of these adopted Japanese vocabulary as a yardstick to gauge the efficiency of romanization techniques to effectively impart accurate pronunciation of Japanese vocabulary, then it is an easy assumption to make that strict reliance on romanization is not the most effective pedagogical method for native English speakers to acquire knowledge of accurate pronunciation in Japanese Kana. On the other hand, the use of the color coding system proves itself the more effective pedagogical tool for accurate pronunciation acquisition for one simple reason: colors do not have pre-assigned phonetic pronunciations, and can therefore be molded to fit any phonetic framework.

Third, outside the unique ability of color to denote any phonetic framework once a system of phonetic pronunciation has been established, color has one more unique property: the memory of color is linked with the linguistic terms ascribed to them (Lucy and Shweder, 1979). Writing systems must rely on shapes to convey their phonetic pronunciation. However, color has the ability to reinforce this process, because the memorization of color relies on the same linguistic processes when committed to memory. This is also perhaps why color can be so universally used for communication that does not require words: generally speaking, red can be used to mean “stop,” and green can be used to mean “go.” By using color to represent phonemes, the color reinforces the memorization of the shape of the character it represents and can therefore help the non-native Japanese Kana learner understand the structure of the Kana system.

The color coding system described in this research is an efficient pedagogical tool to help non-native speakers acquire not only proficiency in reading Japanese Kana, but also to train accurate pronunciation and retain acquired Japanese vocabulary. This

color coding system utilizes the unique properties of color to help visually depict irregularities within the Japanese Kana system, and it may provide the learner with insight into the structure of the Kana system before the user can read all Kana monographs. Finally, the use of color promises to have positive effects on the speed of memorization. Japanese is indeed a highly complex language, and there is no panacea to make the acquisition of Japanese as a second language vastly easier. However, by utilizing a pedagogical approach such as the phonetic color coding system presented in this research, we can give our students the extra push they may need to continue down the path to fluency in the Japanese language.

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## Appendices

Appendix 1: Monochromatic unvoiced Hiragana monographs mapped to the color code

Yellow (Yl)	Orange (Or)	Red (Rd)	Purple (Pr)	Blue (Bl)
Green (Gr)	Dark Green (DGr)	Cyan (Cy)	Magenta (Mg)	Pink (Pn)
Violet (Vt)	Rose (Rs)	Crimson (Cr)	White (Wh)	Gold (Gl)
Gray (Gy)	Brown (Bw)	Salmon (Sm)	Black (Blk)	Non-Coded (Black Text)

Vowels		°K (Cy)	°S (Mg)	°SH (Pn)	°T (Vt)	°CH (Rs)	°TS (Cr)	°N (Gr)	°H (Wh)	°F (DGr)	°P (Gl)	°M (Gy)	°R (Bw)	°Y (Sm)	°W (Blk)
A (Yl)	あ	か°	さ°		た°			な°	は°		は°	ま°	ら°	や°	わ°
I (Or)	い	き°	し°	し°	ち°	ち°		に°	ひ°		ひ°	み°	り°		
U (Rd)	う	く°	す°		つ°	つ°	つ°	ぬ°	ふ°	ふ°	ふ°	む°	る°	ゆ°	
E (Pr)	え	け°	せ°		て°			ね°	へ°		へ°	め°	れ°		
O (Bl)	お	こ°	そ°		と°			の°	ほ°		ほ°	も°	ろ°	よ°	を°
N (Gr)								ん							
Silent		く	す	し		ち	つ								

Appendix 2: Monochromatic voiced Hiragana monographs mapped to the color code

	"V (DGr)	"G (Cy)	"Z (Mg)	"J (Pn)	"D (Vt)	"J (Pn)	"Z (Mg)	°N	°H	°F	"B (Gl)	°M	°R	°Y	°W
A (Yl)	あ	か"	さ"		た"			な°	は°		は"	ま°	ら°	や°	わ°
I (Or)	い	き"	し"	し"	ち	ち"		に°	ひ°		ひ"	み°	り°		
U (Rd)	う"	く"	す"		つ	つ"	つ"	ぬ°	ふ	ふ°	ふ"	む°	る°	ゆ°	
E (Pr)	え	け"	せ"		て"			ね°	へ°		へ"	め°	れ°		
O (Bl)	お	こ"	そ"		と"			の°	ほ°		ほ"	も°	ろ°	よ°	を°

Appendix 3: Monochromatic Hiragana digraphs and geminate consonants mapped to the color code

Yellow (Yl)	Orange (Or)	Red (Rd)	Purple (Pr)	Blue (Bl)
Green (Gr)	Dark Green (DGr)	Cyan (Cy)	Magenta (Mg)	Pink (Pn)
Violet (Vt)	Rose (Rs)	Crimson (Cr)	White (Wh)	Gold (Gl)
Gray (Gy)	Brown (Bw)	Salmon (Sm)	Black (Blk)	Non-Coded (Black Text)

	"V (Dgr)	°K (Cy)	"G (Sm)	°SH (Pn)	"J (Sm)	°CH (Rs) (Sm)	°N (Gr) (Sm)	°H (Wh) (Sm)	°F (DGr)	°P (Gl)	"B (Sm)	°R (Bw) (Sm)	°M (Gy) (Sm)
A (Yl)	う"あ	き°や°	き"や°	し°や°	し"や°	ち°や°	に°や°	ひ°や°	ふ°あ	ひ°や°	ひ"や°	り°や°	み°や°
I (Or)	う"い								ふ°い				
U (Rd)		き°ゆ°	き"ゆ°	し°ゆ°	し"ゆ°	ち°ゆ°	に°ゆ°	ひ°ゆ°		ひ°ゆ°	ひ"ゆ°	り°ゆ°	み°ゆ°
E (Pr)	う"え			し°え	し"え	ち°え			ふ°え				
O (Bl)	う"お	き°よ°	き"よ°	し°よ°	し"よ°	ち°よ°	に°よ°	ひ°よ°	ふ°お	ひ°よ°	ひ"よ°	り°よ°	み°よ°
	っ	っ		っ		っ	っ	っ	っ	っ		っ	っ



***Teaching of Japanese Language to Filipino Learners through Blended Learning***

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**Abstract**

This study aimed to find out the effectiveness of blended learning as a mode of delivering Japanese language lessons to learners from selected degree programs in two Universities in the Philippines offering Japanese language course. After finishing the one-semester Japanese Language Course, under graduate learners from the experimental group and control group similarly demonstrated a very good skill in writing and speaking that their level of proficiency in the skill did not significantly differ. In the case of the learners from the graduate programs, those from the experimental group obtained a very good to excellent level of proficiency in writing while those from the control group posed a good to very good levels of proficiency in the same skill. However, statistical computation shows no significant difference as to writing skills between the groups. In speaking, it was found out that learners from the graduate program's experimental group showed a higher proficiency level in speaking compared to the control group as proven by statistical analysis. Learners from the experimental group further supported strongly the identified advantages of blended learning in teaching of Japanese language. Nevertheless, most of them suggested the integration of other techniques, like the utilization of songs and self-constructed conversation activities, in the teaching of foreign language whether or not blended learning is applied. It was concluded that a higher level of Japanese language proficiency in speaking can be attained through blended learning approach. Subsequently, the application of this mode as an alternative method in teaching foreign language is highly recommended.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Foreign Language, Proficiency Level

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## Introduction

Foreign language pertains to a nonnative language which is being learned in schools and is not spoken in the community where the teaching occurs. Studying another language allows the individual language learner to communicate effectively and creatively with other people who come from different cultures. The individual can participate to real-life situations through the language of the authentic culture itself. Learning another language provides access into a perspective other than one's own, increases the ability to see connections across content areas, and promotes an interdisciplinary perspective while gaining intercultural understandings (Moeller & Catalano, 2015). Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that recent scientific researches on the brain suggests that learning foreign languages makes students smarter overall. Among the many benefits, it increases students' mental focus, reading and writing abilities, and even improves mathematical skills (Kim, 2013). Strong evidence shows that time spent on foreign language study strongly reinforces the core subject areas of reading, language literacy, social studies and math. Foreign language learners consistently outperform control groups in core subject areas on standardized tests, often significantly (Saunders, 1998; Masciantonio, 1977; Rafferty, 1986; Andrade, 1989; as cited by NEA Research, 2007).

In today's increasingly global world, students need to be prepared with foreign language skills that will allow them to participate in international markets and conversations. In the Philippines, since the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) was established in 1994 through Republic Act No. 7722, foreign language is already of the curriculum for most Doctor's Degree Program Courses being offered various Colleges and Universities. In 2006, the Commission issued CMO No. 47, otherwise known as Policies and standards for Master's and Doctor's Degree Programs in Criminal Justice with Specialization in Criminology. Article IV-e of CMO No. 47 stipulates that the foreign language requirement of 6 units shall require completion of one foreign language which may be from Asian languages like Japanese, Korean, Chinese Mandarin, Bahasa Indonesia, and others.

As to the method of teaching foreign language, Article III-B of CMO No. 02 series 2017 specifies that Delivering Higher Education Institutions (DHEIS) may deliver foreign language program through three main modes such as, face-to-face or classroom based education, distance education, and blended learning or a combination of the face-to-face mode and distance education.

In the undergraduate level, at least during the conduct of this research, some of the degree courses that require the study of foreign languages are the Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM), Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM), and Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM). Unlike in the aforementioned graduate degrees, the method of teaching foreign language for the undergraduate degrees usually follows the face-to-face mode or classroom based instruction.

The application of blended learning in the teaching of foreign language particularly Niponggo is the focus of this research. Kiviniemi (2014) said that blended learning is an effective means of optimizing student learning and improving student performance in some disciplines particularly health science courses. It is nevertheless a big

question whether blended learning as a mode of teaching foreign language will work for learners in the undergraduate or graduate study courses. Undergraduate students are usually in their post teenager or young adult stage while those in the graduate level are expected to be adult learners. It is axiomatic that most adult learners have some difficulties when it comes to memorization which is an indispensable means of language acquisition. Unlike children whose super-flexible brains grow the connections necessary to learn an additional language, adults have sophisticated grown-up brains that they may not be able to pull off "implicit" learning (Baer, 2014). It may be necessary then for adult learners to be given more face-to-face learning opportunities in so far as foreign language is concern. As explained by Keen (2010), the tricks to maintain foreign language fluency is to practice the same regularly. Applying blended learning in teaching foreign language where regular classroom sessions are not necessary would be an interesting topic for a research.

Should blended learning be proven useful in teaching a foreign language, learning institutions may consider it as strategy in resolving issues on classroom congestions, teacher shortage, tardiness of students and the like. It was then the purpose of this research to find out the effectiveness of blended learning as a mode of delivering Japanese language lessons to learners from selected degree programs. Specifically, it was intended to determine the level of Japanese Language Proficiency of the learners after a one-semester language course; the difference of Japanese language proficiency level between the experimental groups and control groups; and advantages and disadvantages of blended learning. Further, it sought suggestions for improving further the delivery of foreign language lessons through blended learning.

The research was conducted in two Universities namely, the Benguet State University and the University of the Cordilleras which are both located in the Cordillera Administrative Region of the Philippines. The former has considered the teaching of foreign language to students under the Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (BSHRM) and the Doctor of Philosophy in Language course while the latter offers foreign languages for students under the Bachelor of Science in Tourism Management (BSTM), Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM), Doctor's degree course in Criminal Justice with specialization in Criminology (Ph.D. Crim.), and the Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Management (PhD. Educ.).

Japanese Language Proficiency, as applied in this research, refers only to the basic writing and speaking capabilities of Learners. Furthermore, basic writing skills pertain to the writing of Japanese sentences using the Roman alphabet and not the sets of Japanese characters such as katakana, hiragana, and kanji. The acquisition of a new language normally takes time that a one-semester foreign language course would be limited to the teaching of language rudimentary. It follows that the application of blended learning in this research was restricted to activities online, such as; verbal and written communications, language video file reviews, and written exercises. Classroom-based instruction and conversations were still utilized as part of the teaching-learning method albeit not done regularly. For the purpose of comparing the impact of blended learning against the usual method of teaching language, the former was implemented for classes assigned as experimental group while the latter was applied to the other classes considered as control group. The levels of language proficiency were determined through written and oral language assessments.

In order to describe the appropriate proficiency level of the learners, the established grading systems of the University of the Cordilleras and State Universities were adopted as follows:

Table 1. Grading system for undergraduate programs

Percentage Equivalent	Numerical Equivalent	Descriptive Equivalent
99-100	1.00	Excellent
96-98	1.25	Excellent
93-95	1.50	Very Good
90-92	1.75	Very Good
87-89	2.00	Good
84-86	2.25	Good
81-83	2.50	Fair
78-80	2.75	Fair
75-77	3.00	Passing

Table 2. Grading system for graduate programs

Percentage Equivalent	Numerical Equivalent	Descriptive Equivalent
97-100	1.00	Excellent
94-96	1.25	Very Good
91-93	1.50	Good
88-90	1.75	Satisfactory
85-87	2.00	Passed
75-84	3.00-2.25	Conditional

The perceptions of learners regarding the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning were obtained through questionnaires. The same questionnaires were also used to get suggestions from the learners on how blended learning be further improved.

## Conclusions

### Language Proficiency

After a one-semester basic Japanese language course, assessments showed that most learners whether belonging to the experimental group or to the control group of the undergraduate degree programs possessed a good proficiency level in Japanese language as to written skill. In the graduate programs, most learners from the experimental group had very good to excellent language proficiency levels while learners from the control group held a good to satisfactory level of proficiency in the same language skill.

Statistical analysis disclosed that there are no significant differences as to the level of Japanese language proficiency in writing between the experimental groups and the control groups. It can be inferred that integrating blended learning is a creative

strategy in teaching Japanese language. Nonetheless, it may not necessarily result in written outputs that are superior to learning outcomes where the usual method of language teaching is applied. As concluded by Oguri, Allen, and Kato (2016), while blended learning aims at letting the students increase their self-efficacy so that they will feel more positive toward carrying out self-regulated learning beyond classrooms, blending technology does not necessarily improve significantly the students' aptitude in learning. The non-significant differences of written outputs may however be partly attributed to the short duration of Blended Learning application during the conduct of the research. The length of time in using blended learning and the limitations of the program's interface are among those variables mentioned by Kobayashi (2011) that can negatively affect learners' perceptions of and satisfaction with blended learning.

In speaking, the majority of learners from both experimental group and the control group of the undergraduate programs obtained convincing skills. Statistical computations did not also show any significant difference of proficiency levels between the two groups. Apparently, blended learning is just as effective as other language teaching methods depending on teacher's way of utilizing it. It can be concluded that, just like other methods, blended learning may not at all times be very productive when affected by unfavorable circumstances. For instance, the students of Tosun (2015) did not achieve great learning outcomes by the end of 6-weeks blended instruction program. Some of the reasons cited were the short duration of the study, students preferred the traditional classroom based learning thus they lack motivation when blended learning was applied, and students did not have the self-discipline to make e-learning a powerful option which allows them to work independently at their own pace.

In the case of the learners from the graduate programs, many of those from the experimental group possessed a very good proficiency level in speaking while the greatest number of students from the control group had a good to very good proficiency level in the same skill. Interestingly, statistical computation revealed a significant difference of proficiency in speaking between the two groups of learners from the graduate programs. The way how blended learning was applied to the experimental group could have contributed to their higher level of proficiency in speaking as compared to the control group. Classroom-based learning sessions were scheduled only four times during weekends with in the one-semester course. The control group on the other hand followed the regular schedule of graduate classes which were done during weekdays after office hours. It can be assumed that the non-traditional way of scheduling Japanese Language classes for the experimental group made them more comfortable as adult language learners since they were more relaxed during weekdays and they have more time to practice at their own pace. The control group on the other hand had to attend to their regular schedule during week days after office hours. It is expected that most of them came from work and might have already been exhausted physically and mentally causing their lack of enough energy to study and practice the Language.

The significant difference of speaking proficiency between the said groups may corroborate the study of Hamad (2015) wherein significant differences of learning outcomes between two groups of students were noted. The group who were studying Basic foreign language course using the blended learning approach had a better

learning outcome compared to those who learnt the same language by traditional approach.

### **Advantages of Blended Learning**

The perceptions on the advantages and disadvantages of blended learning, and so with the suggestions to improve further the use of such approach, were acquired from the experimental group of learners of the graduate program. Since these were learners whom blended learning was fully implemented, it is expected that they were in a better position to give empirical ideas on how the teaching mode works. The following are the advantages of blended learning that were either expressed by the learners or adopted from other studies:

1. Increase cost effectiveness for employees who are permanently busy and hardly ever can afford to attend face-to-face full-time classes.
2. Saves time and effort of students from regularly traveling to and fro the University.
3. Online materials maybe read as is and not necessarily making hardcopies that will require additional expenses.
4. Learners can be more independent and autonomous.
5. Learners can combine classroom work and modern technologies in electronic distance learning environment.
6. Learners can explore supplemental knowledge and information related to the language being learned.
7. Learners have longer time to practice and master the language by themselves and at their own pace.
8. Increase student-student and student-teacher interactions.
9. Allows learners to give immediate and detailed feedback.
10. Encourages more involvement and participation.
11. Reduce or even eliminate communication anxiety.
12. Offers more opportunities for communication, in both classroom-based and on-line learning, using foreign language.

It came out that most learners strongly agreed with the aforementioned advantages. Items numbers 1 to 3 are apparently cost effective means of studying foreign language; numbers 4 to 7 demonstrate how learners can independently progress in their learning; numbers 8 to 12 reflect how learners became more engaged in learning the language. The strong agreement of the learners on the said advantages is somehow similar with the strong support for blended learning given by the respondents in the study of Kehrwald, Rawlins, and Simpson (2011). Said respondents confirmed that blended learning enriched their learning. Likewise, the research finding above substantiated the conclusion of Kaplanis' (2013) and Kudyshev (2013) that blended learning is beneficial because: the learner is more engaged using a variety of content types; learners with different learning styles can be taught through diversifying teaching methods; it greatly affects the way feedback is facilitated especially that it allows feedback to be prepared from home; it provides opportunity for students to learn in a group with a teacher and additionally at home at a convenient time; student himself sets the optimal speed and intensity of the learning process; and it helps student to discipline himself and learn to work independently.

## **Disadvantages of Blended Learning**

The disadvantages of blended learning proposed in this research included difficulties in accessing internet connection; not being challenged to speak foreign language due to absence of pressure; forgetting concepts learned due to the long gaps of classroom-based learning; very tiring “all day long” foreign language class; and slim chances to have “common time” for online discussion. Although the learners concurred with these disadvantages, their level of agreement is not as strong as their agreement with the advantages of blended learning. It can be presumed that the learners believed that there are more advantages than disadvantages of using blended learning in teaching foreign language.

The identified disadvantages of blended learning may impose some challenges both to the teachers and the learners albeit not in a very serious degree since these could always be given remedies. Technological challenges such as difficulties in accessing internet connection and slim chances to have “common time” for online discussion are indeed true especially to schools which do not have a good internet connection. This is precisely why Movchan, et. al (2018) claimed that full blended learning is possible if there is strong internet connectivity as this has a meaningful impact in terms of overall learning environment and experience. Undoubtedly, incorporating blended learning in language teaching-learning process may partly relies on technological feasibility.

“Learners not being challenged to speak foreign language due to absence of pressure” as among the disadvantages of blended learning can be attributed to the reduced number of actual classroom instructions. Presumably, when language learning is more on virtual, students have the tendency to become lax since no one in person will pressure them. Kintu, Zhu, and Kagambe (2017) even declared that the absence of learner interaction causes failure and eventual drop-out. These authors noted that the lack of learners’ connectedness was among the internal factors leading to drop-out in online courses. In some instances, learners may not continue in blended learning if they can hardly connect well with others through online, thereby, developing feelings of isolation.

## **Suggestions on the Use of Blended Learning**

Valuable suggestions to improve further the use of blended learning in the teaching of Japanese language were offered by a substantial number of learners from the graduate program. Their suggestions included the following: Integration of songs in the teaching of the language; more opportunities for conversation compositions and role plays; implementation of breaks during actual classroom instructions especially if the session is long; and classroom-based learning should not be done straight for one day.

The integration of songs was the most suggested means of complementing blended learning in the teaching of Japanese language. The respondents most likely agreed with the proven concept that familiarizing language by singing is easier and more relaxing compared with merely memorizing the language. Diakou (2013) stated that songs offer a great opportunity to help students change their classroom routine. The repetition and most importantly the fun involved in rhymes in songs could increase motivation levels by providing ample opportunities to work with interesting tasks and

activities. Moreover, rhymes in songs could help teachers convert their natural energy and enthusiasm into meaningful learning experiences. Gray (2013) even wrote that research from the University of Edinburgh found that adults who sang words or short phrases from a foreign language while learning were twice as good at speaking it later. It is thought that by listening to words that are sung, and by singing them back, the technique takes advantage of the strong links between music and memory. Although not clearly understood, music is known to help students when studying and can help to trigger memory recall.

The suggestion that “there should be more opportunities for conversation compositions and role plays” supports the idea that scripted conversations helps learners understand actual application of grammatical rules in speaking. With enough knowledge and useful vocabulary, learners may even learn the language faster when they themselves prepare, construct, and perform through dramatization. As stated by Peter (2015), speaking a new language requires a lot of time and practice focusing on conveying the meaning of words through conversations. Writing conversations is also useful in strengthening further the acquisition of language skills. Smith (2018) concluded that writing is the ultimate way to learn new vocabulary and practice verb construction. Writing is important in preparing an argument or point of view because learners can think and practice first the language before using in an oral conversation.

The other suggestions given by the learners such as the implementation of breaks for extended classroom based learning is in order. In fact there are studies proving the advantages of employing breaks in doing any tasks. In studies cited by Patel (2014), researchers studied four groups of people. Each of the groups worked on a brain-intensive task for 50 minutes. The group that took more breaks had the highest mental stamina at the end of the 50 minutes. Patel (2014) explained that by using another part of the brain, the students were able to give their analytical processing skills a break, and then solve the problem with renewed energy. Taking a break is essential to higher productivity, energy, concentration, efficiency, creativity, and just about every other good thing that one needs to survive.

Over all, a one semester Basic Japanese language course may produce a very good proficiency level in writing whether or not blended learning is introduced. For speaking however, a higher level of proficiency maybe acquired should blended learning be utilized.

There is no doubt that there are more advantages than disadvantages in using blended learning in the teaching of foreign language. Nevertheless, the approach will work better if it will be if it will be used along with other teaching approaches or techniques.

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***Understanding Demotivation Factors, Countermeasures, and Insights Gained  
From English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners***

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**Abstract**

Motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, are no doubt essential components to successful language learning. Addressing these factors, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in Japan exhaust their resources – thinking and employing a variety of strategies and materials - to encourage Japanese students and keep them motivated. However, in spite of these efforts, problems regarding decreased motivation are still seen to arise. Demotivation has become particularly noticeable among Japanese learners who show hesitation in speaking and participating in English class discussions. As noted by Uchioda (2013:9), ‘demotivation is obviously viewed as a significant phenomenon in English language education in Japan’. Hence, to identify the root cause of this problem, the current study focused on identifying the factors that demotivate and inhibit Japanese students’ participation in their English classes. In this research, a descriptive survey research design was utilized. The data used in the study was from the responses of 246 Reading classes’ students and 56 Communication Classes’ students from three universities in Tohoku. Respondents, who were initially identified using the purposive sampling technique, gave responses voluntarily. Data analysis revealed that Japanese EFL students patently lack interest in English as a class subject itself. Analysis of individual respondent profiles versus a variety of demotivating factors also unveiled significant differences. Further studies are recommended to address students’ lack of interest in English language learning and examine the sources of this problem.

Keywords: motivation, demotivation, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), language learning

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## Introduction

Educators believe that motivation is a pre-requisite and a necessary element for student engagement in learning (Russell, Ainlet & Frydenberg, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2009). It is also a driving force and fuels a learner's determination to learn independently despite the hardship of learning a second language. Teachers, in general, would agree with Kimura, Nakata, and Okumura (1999) that it is indeed a "key factor for success in language learning" and numerous studies have been conducted and various conclusions drawn about motivation and its underlying concepts (Lai, 2013, Kimura, Nakata & Okumura, 1999 & Ryan, 2008). In one such study, Kitjaroonchai (2012) reported seeing a difference between the academic achievement of students when their level of motivation was compared; hence, the more motivated the learners are, the higher the success rate that can be obtained. Gardner (1985), as cited by Kitjaroonchai (2012), explained that to identify the reasons behind student motivation, specifically, in language learning, it is necessary to deal with the understanding of students' main purpose in learning the language. Individual differences such as beliefs, attitudes, expectations, motivation levels, and affective states have significant effects on the foreign language learning process (Aydin & Zengin, 2008). Aside from this, teachers also consider themselves as a motivating factor in student learning and as a consequence they invest time in strategic planning and exploring what devices, materials, and techniques should be used to guarantee learning.

As demonstrated by the foregoing, studies about motivation that prove its positive influence on language learning has long been in existence. This recognition, however, has in no way whatsoever led to a situation where motivation is constantly close to a hundred percent rate; that everyone in the classroom is motivated and prepared to learn. Unfortunately, despite teachers' efforts to discover and apply different pedagogical strategies, issues relating to demotivation still arise. According to Dörnyei (2005), demotivation refers to "specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of behavioral intention or an ongoing action". He also commented that many classroom practitioners can easily think of a variety of events and situations that can have demotivating effects on the students. For example, public humiliation, devastating low test results, or conflict with peers (Dörnyei, 2001:14). English teachers in Japan share Dörnyei's concern, as these kinds of factors can be seen to impact of the demotivation that appears particularly widespread in Japanese English language classroom. Demotivating factors in Japan include the need to pass examinations, memorize English passages, activities such as translating English passages into Japanese, and a boring classroom environment Kikuchi (2015: pxii). Inevitably, no matter how hard teachers try to encourage their students, there will always be a certain number of demotivated learners. However, as acknowledged by Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011), it may be very helpful to also study factors that negatively affect learners' motivation in the broader sociocultural context. Critical examination of the learners' contexts is necessary to understand what may be affecting them outside of the classroom and increase motivation in a greater number of students.

Aligned with this, Dörnyei (2007:213), considering China, Japan, and the United States in addition to Japan, defines demotivation as 'the force that decreases students' energy to learn and/or the absence of the force that stimulates students to

learn'. However, one problem with these definitions is that it has not yet been empirically determined whether or not demotivating factors are completely external. Despite this conceptualization of demotivation as being caused by external factors, even Dörnyei (2011) lists two internal factors; reduced self-confidence and negative attitudes towards the foreign language, as sources of demotivation. Therefore, Kikuchi (2011) has added the notion of internal to Dörnyei's definition and defines demotivation as 'the internal and external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action (Kikuchi, 2015:3). Aydın (2012) noticed the same problem with regard to student demotivation in Turkey, leading him to discover the growing body of work that discusses student demotivation. Building on this base, he conducted a qualitative study that addressed demotivation focusing on the teaching process. His study lists the following areas as causative of demotivation: teaching position, curriculum, working conditions, students and parents, school administrators and physical conditions.

Like any other part of the world, as indicated by the studies mentioned above, demotivation among language learners in Japan is shifting and procuring higher rates (Falout, 2012). The EFL learners in this country who expressed negativity in EFL learning have been shown to be those who lost or experienced decreased motivation as they continued the process of EFL learning (Falout & Maruyama, 2004). Also, in this context, Kikuchi & Sakai (2009) find that use of Noncommunicative Methods (which focus on grammar learning or university entrance examination preparation without the communicative use of English), were perceived to be a demotivating factor by many Japanese learners of English. Some of the students characterized their response to demotivators as a feeling of tiredness and sleepiness from part-time jobs and a feeling that English is not necessary for their lives. Some even emphasized that they felt that English is of no advantage in their job hunting, a finding similar to that of Kikuchi (2015:107). In the case of one of the learners in Kikuchi's study, little change in motivation was observed and the urgency of learning English appeared to be completely out of the informant's consciousness right up to the moment of the interview. This student, who was so busy with other aspects of her life and she did not want to take the time to study English, can be seen as characteristic of such learners in contemporary Japan. The student's candid admission that she might study English harder if she needed it in the future, offered a glimmer of hope for educators who, like the authors, are concerned with the propagation of the English language in Japan.

It is true nowadays, and it appears to have been perennially the case that ESL/EFL teachers experience difficulty in encouraging Japanese students to speak out and participate in classroom discussions. Therefore, as concerned practitioners in the field of language education, the researchers, aiming to develop and maintain motivation in the cycle of EFL learning, seek to explore and unpack the concept of demotivation among EFL learners at selected universities in Japan. Towards this end, this study seeks to clearly identify the reasons behind student's demotivation in EFL learning which inhibit them to actively participate during language classes. Within this mode of inquiry, a comparison between two groups of EFL classes and the factor influencing such discouragement was also conducted.

## Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was utilized in this study. Three universities in Tohoku, Japan were chosen as the locale for this research. From these institutions, 302 students from two different classes – Communication (56) and Reading classes (246) - were included as respondents. They were selected through the use of the purposive sampling technique. The researchers have purposely chosen the universities they are affiliated with and picked the classes that are focusing on English as the students' foreign language.

The respondents were asked to answer voluntarily the *Demotivation Questionnaire*, adapted from Sakai & Kikuchi (2009), in the form of a checklist. This was composed of two parts. The first part included the personal profile of the respondents: age, sex, first language, and highest educational attainment. The second part was composed of statements grouped according to the following six different demotivating factors: Teachers, characteristics of classes/learning content, experiences of failure, class environment and facilities, class materials, and lack of interest. There were 35 items in this questionnaire, which utilized a scale of 1 to 5 (5 as the highest) as per the responses: 1 - Not true; 2 - Mostly not true; 3 - Neither true nor untrue; 4 - To some extent true; and, 5 - True. It was written in English together with a translation of the respondents' first language (L1) which is Nihongo (Standard Japanese). The data gathered were analyzed through the use of statistical tools such as weighted mean and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in determining whether there are significant differences among the variables. In terms of supplementary qualitative input, one of the researchers also engaged in informal friendly and homely talks with several respondents to reach towards a genuine understanding of why these students were less motivated to study English.

## Results and Discussion

The quantitative data analysis of the student-respondents' responses revealed the demotivating factors that inhibited Japanese learners' performance and participation during their English classes and Communication and Reading classes in particular. Significant differences were also discovered with the application of One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Table 1: Consolidated Responses on Demotivation Factors

Demotivating Factors	Mean	Std Dev	Verbal Interpretation
<b>Part A. (Teachers)</b>	<b>1.59</b>	<b>0.95</b>	<b>Not true</b>
1. Teachers' pronunciation of English was poor.	1.55	0.93	Not true
2. Teachers ridiculed students' mistakes.	1.38	0.86	Not true
3. Teachers made one-way explanations too often.	1.74	1.00	Not true
4. Teachers' explanations were not easy to understand.	1.81	1.07	Mostly not true
5. Teachers shouted or got angry.	1.41	0.88	Not true
6. The pace of lessons was not appropriate.	1.65	0.93	Not true
<b>Part B. (Characteristics of classes)</b>	<b>2.52</b>	<b>1.40</b>	<b>Mostly not true</b>

<b>/Learning contents)</b>			
7. I seldom had chances to communicate in English.	2.53	2.13	Mostly not true
8. Most of the lessons focused on translation	2.69	1.34	Neither true/not true
9. Most of the lessons focused on grammar.	2.63	1.26	Neither true/not true
10. Most of the lessons were entrance examination oriented.	2.38	1.27	Mostly not true
11. I was expected to use (or speak and write) grammatically correct English.	2.44	1.24	Mostly not true
12. I was forced to memorize the sentences in the textbooks too often	2.25	1.28	Mostly not true
13. The number of students in classes was large.	2.68	1.30	Neither true/not true
<b>Part C. (Experiences of failure)</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>1.30</b>	Mostly not true
14. I had difficulty memorizing words and phrases.	3.11	1.47	Neither true/not true
15. I got low scores on tests (such as mid-term and final examinations).	2.76	1.28	Neither true/not true
16. I got lost in how to self-study for English lessons.	1.98	1.09	Mostly not true
17. I could not do as well on tests as my friends.	2.77	1.42	Neither true/not true
18. I was often compared with my friends.	2.03	1.24	Mostly not true
<b>Part D. (Class environment and facilities)</b>	<b>2.38</b>	<b>1.19</b>	Mostly not true
19. Computer equipment was not used.	3.01	1.64	Neither true/not true
20. Visual materials (such as videos and DVDs) were not used.	2.69	1.58	Neither true/not true
21. The Internet was not used.	3.07	1.65	Neither true/not true
22. Language Learning equipment was not used.	2.78	1.56	Neither true/not true
23. Audio materials (such as CDs and tapes) were not used.	1.78	1.13	Not true
24. I did not like my classmates.	1.84	1.13	Not true
25. My friends did not like English.	2.71	1.42	Neither true/not true
<b>Part E. (Class materials)</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>1.26</b>	Mostly not true
26. Topics of the English passages used in lessons were not interesting.	2.42	1.27	Mostly not true
27. English passages in the textbooks were too long.	2.34	1.22	Mostly not true
28. English sentences dealt with in the lessons were difficult to interpret.	2.49	1.21	Mostly not true
29. A great number of textbooks and supplementary readers were assigned.	2.21	1.20	Mostly not true
30. Topics of the English passages used in	2.12	1.01	Mostly not true

lessons were old.			
31. English questions did not have clear answers.	2.03	1.05	
<b>Part F. (Lack of interest)</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>1.36</b>	Neither true/not true
<b>32. English was a compulsory subject.</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>1.66</b>	<b>To some extent true</b>
33. I lost my understanding of the purpose of studying English.	2.24	1.37	Mostly not true
34. I lost my interest in English.	2.18	1.31	Mostly not true
35. I lost my goal to be a speaker of English.	2.19	1.23	Mostly not true

Table 1 shows the items grouped according to the six demotivating factors. *Teachers*, comprising of statements about the teachers' abilities demonstrated inside the classroom, obtained a general weighted mean of 1.59 (*Not true*). The next factor is *Characteristics of classes /Learning Contents*, which included statements regarding the appropriateness of the content of the lessons taught to the learners. It obtained 2.52 (Mostly not true) as the weighted mean. The third factor is *Experiences of failure*, comprising statements about student shortcomings during classes, which garnered a weighted mean of 2.53 (Mostly not true). The fourth factor, *Class environment, and facilities*, dealing with the physical and social state of the students inside the classroom, garnered a general weighted mean of 2.38 (Mostly not true). Following this, the fifth area, *Class materials*, including items regarding the educational tools used in teaching, achieved a weighted mean of 2.45 Mostly not true. Sixthly, *Lack of interest*, dealing with students' view about the inclusion of the English subject in the curriculum, obtained a weight of 2.63 (Neither true/not true).

According to the majority of respondents, most of the statements provided regarding demotivation are not true for them. The verbal interpretations mostly lie under the categories *Not true* and *Mostly not true*. The same results were obtained by the consolidated responses when the statements, together with responses, were analyzed individually. However, despite the similarity of the findings, one statement revealed a significant discovery. Item no. 32, *English was a compulsory subject*, under the factor, *Lack of Interest*, obtained the highest weighted mean, which is 3.67, and was the only item that got a verbal interpretation of *to some extent true*. This implies that *Teachers*, *Characteristics of classes/Learning contents*, *Experiences of failure*, *Class environment and facilities*, and *Class materials* were not considered by the learners as demotivating factors in language learning, but rather, starkly, it was their own *lack of interest* that inhibited them to perform and participate during their English class discussions.

Table 2: One-way ANOVA Analysis

Factors (Demotivation)	Age	Sex	Class
Teachers	<b>0.64</b>	<b>0.034*</b>	<b>0.006*</b>
Characteristics of classes/ Learning contents	<b>0.32*</b>	0.409	<b>0.026*</b>
Experiences of failure	<b>0.222</b>	0.374	0.452
Class environment/Facilities	<b>0.038*</b>	0.924	0.055
Class materials	<b>0.534</b>	0.587	0.830
Lack of Interest	<b>0.340</b>	0.895	0.554

Table 2 presents the difference in the responses of the Japanese students about their demotivation in learning the English language. When grouped according to their age, it was found that there were significant differences in the perceived demotivating factors in learning the English language in the *Characteristics of classes/Learning contents*,  $p=0.032$  and in the fourth factor (Class Environment/Facilities),  $p=0.038$ .

When grouped according to their Sex, there was a significant difference found between the male and female respondents in their responses grouped under the Teacher factor,  $p=0.034$ . When grouped according to the class to which they belong, Communication and Reading classes, significant differences were found in the following factors: Teacher,  $p=0.006$ , and Characteristics of classes/Learning contents,  $p=0.026$ .

## Discussion

The analysis of the data collected revealed the demotivating factors inhibiting these students to participate in English classes: *Teachers; Characteristics of classes /Learning Contents; Experiences of failure; Class environment and facilities; Class materials; and, Lack of interest*. The responses for each factor were examined and yielded substantial findings leading to the achievement of the goals of this study.

Many studies consider *teachers* themselves as potential demotivators (Hasegawa, 2004 and Falout & Maruyama, 2004). Specifically, a teacher's personality, commitment, competence, and teaching method may elicit demotivation (Dörnyei & Otto, 1998). Researchers in Japan typically hear responses such as the following from interviewees: "teachers' explanations are not easy to understand," teachers have poor pronunciation," "teachers have a one-way teaching style," and "teachers have arrogant attitudes" (Kikuchi & Sakai, 2009 ). However, based on this study's results, teachers, in general, were not considered a factor that demotivates students' learning since EFL/ESL teachers in Japan, based on the responses, are considered good at pronunciation, make appropriate and clear instructions during classes and do not ridicule students' mistake during discussions. In contrast, Chambers (1999) obtained a diverse result wherein he concluded that students' demotivation was primarily caused by teachers. Considering the difference in the era when the studies were conducted, it can be inferred that teachers improve over time as regards their role in encouraging and being an instrument of language learning.

One of the limitations of demotivation studies has been that studies were often based on students' self-reports gathered with a questionnaire at one point in time. This limits the conclusions because of the concerns regarding the accuracy of self-report data. In order to deal with mono-method bias (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008), qualitative data gathering through interviews and class observations will allow for a more detailed investigation of the causes of demotivation in foreign language learners and could both confirm the results. As mentioned, in response to this concern, one of the researchers informally interviewed some of the respondents about why several students thought that they could not understand a teacher's explanation in English. Table 3 shows the conversation between the teacher and a student:

Table 3: Conversation between teacher and student

T: Why do you think that you don't understand teacher's explanation in English ? (なぜ学生たちは先生の説明は理解できないと思いますか?) ?
S: Because it is in English. (だって英語で説明していたから)
T: But it is an English class, right? (でもこれは英語のクラスだから)
S: Yes, but I don't know English. English is difficult. (やだやだやだ英語がわからない。英語はむずかしい!)
T: Would you like to use your imagination to understand what the teacher says? (先生の説明は理解するためにイマジネーションをすればどう?)
S: No. I don't know English. (やだやだ英語はわからないから)
T: Would you like to try to understand English with your best effort? あなたは最善を尽くして英語を理解しようとしていますか?
S: No. I don't know English. English is difficult. I don't need English. (やあだ! 英語はわからない。英語はむずかしいです。英語ははいらない。)
Teacher, study Japanese harder so you can explain the lesson in Japanese. 先生、日本語をもっと勉強して、レッスンを日本語で説明できるようにしてください。

This conversation revealed the students' self-concept and self-efficacy beliefs with regard to learning English. In this connection, Kikuchi, 2015 (cited from Zimmerman, 2000) is illustrative, saying that self-efficacy is the person's level of confidence (belief) that they can successfully carry out an action to achieve a specific goal in a particular setting under certain conditions. Importantly, the basic premise of self-efficacy theory is that people's beliefs in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their own actions are the most important determinants of the behaviors people choose to engage in and how much they persevere in their efforts in the face of obstacles and challenges (Maddux, 2013:335). Furthermore, instead of taking the responsibility to study English harder, some of the students were expecting foreign teachers to study Japanese to explain English lessons in Japanese for their own convenience. In this case, the researchers were challenged in their quest to further deepen their knowledge as to why EFL students, particularly in Japan, often consider teachers as one of their demotivators, despite the huge effort these educators were investing to encourage and relate to their students' psychological and cognitive-related needs.

*Characteristics of classes and Learning contents*, likewise, did not contribute to the decrease of motivation among the learners, since class sizes in Japan are often proportionate and conducive to EFL learning. In addition, they were also given chances to express themselves and communicate using the language. Students were also exposed to the study of different language skills such as grammar, translation, and oral communication.

The next mentioned factor, *Experiences of failure*, as concluded, did not constrain Japanese learners since they, according to their answers, did not experience difficulty in memorizing words and phrases in English. High test scores were also obtained by the respondents, particularly, during midterm and final examinations; moreover, they can be independent learners capable of self-studying. However, some of the students revealed in the informal interview, that too many words to remember made them

panic by merely seeing them. Because of this, one of the researchers of this study made all activities and examinations in class to be done in either pair or in groups. *Never alone* is the empowering phrase that fuels students' desire to at least change their mindset from *I can do it* (Maddux, 2011) towards *I will do it*.

Hence, *experiences of failure* did not inhibit these students in learning English. Sakai and Kikuchi (2009), discovered, contrary to this result, that *experiences of failure* was one of the main causes of the learners' decreased motivation in second language learning.

In terms of physical environment, Japanese students were provided ample tools and equipment such as the Internet and audio-visual materials to adequately facilitate the process of learning. Therefore, *Class environment and facilities* were not considered by these learners as a demotivating factor. In the same way, understanding the role of the use of class materials led to the interpretation that this was not involved in student demotivation since the teachers had been using authentic, appropriate and updated learning materials during class discussions. Positive responses regarding the utilization of learning materials such as texts, passages, textbooks, and supplementary readings were also exemplified and reflected on the results of the study. Contrary to the aforementioned findings, it was concluded that not all EFL learners, who enrolled and were attending their language classes, were willing to undergo such academic undertakings.

Despite the awareness and understanding of the purpose of learning the English language, some still hold to the notion that English is merely a compulsory subject and that adversely affected the Japanese learners' motivation to partake fully during EFL learning classes.

Significant differences in the responses of the student-respondents were found when they were grouped according to their profile. Differences were shown in *Characteristics of classes/Learning contents* and in *Class environment/facilities*, where older students have a lower rating, which means that more students of age 22 do not agree that the two mentioned factors were demotivating them. In addition, a difference in the students' responses was observed in the *Teacher* factor in terms of sex. More female students did not agree that their EFL teachers contributed to their demotivation.

In the comparison of the two English classes – Communication and Reading, it was shown that with regard to both the following factors, *Teacher* and *Characteristics of Classes/ Learning Contents*, Reading class students were absolute and agreed more that these two were never the reasons behind their demotivation as compared to those in Communication class.

It must be noted that though differences in the mean ratings were found, nevertheless, the overall results yielded that, except for *Lack of interest*, the student-respondents did not regard the remaining factors (*Teachers, Characteristics of classes/ Learning contents, Experiences of failure, Class environment/Facilities, and Class materials*) as inhibiting elements and contributors to demotivation amongst Japanese EFL learners.

## Conclusion and Future Directions

In line with the results presented, it is recommended that a parallel study comparing EFL and ESL learners be conducted. Furthermore, a qualitative analysis as regards the role played by culture as reflected in the varied outcomes may be usefully undertaken. In addition, a study continuing to dig deeper within the fundamental demotivation factor amongst Japanese learner, which was revealed to be lack of interest, may be considered as filling in the gaps in research to date and leading to a further, more nuanced research perspective. This could well involve probing internal factors such as lack of confidence, students' attitudes towards English and learners' vision of life and its relationship to their future-self as EFL learners.

In addition, the researchers are considering to probe the idea of self-imaging as an EFL learner and the effectiveness of the Family Environment Mode Approach (FEMA) in the EFL classroom (Ocampo, 2016), which is an approach that aims to establish a trusting relationship between teacher and students. This affective environment allows both teachers and students to talk openly about their academic-related issues and personal relationship, thus creating a stress-free classroom environment. Furthermore, English language teachers need to become more aware of a variety of affective factors such as demotivation, test anxiety, and foreign language anxiety (Rastegar, Akbarzadeh & Heidari (2012). Teachers can help students with necessary coping skills such as positive thinking to deal with demotivation factors. Practical ways to achieve this include giving students a chance for self-autonomy and allowing them to take control of their own learning process; involving capacities, abilities, attitudes, willingness, decision making; and assessment either as a language learner or as a communicator inside or outside the classroom during their lifetime (Chitashvili, 2007). Furthermore, learners with sufficient autonomy are allowed to develop and exercise this autonomy in order to solve and create an array of solutions to any number of problems related to learning within themselves and with their classmates.

Finally, it is also important to consider the fact that students' motivation to study English fluctuates (Koizumi & Kai, 1992; Miura, 2010). The level of students' motivation might decrease or increase at any time according to both external and internal factors around them. Because of this, when approaching the ingrained problem of demotivation, self-regulation, which is closely tied to autonomy and even motivation and illuminates "from within" with shared intentions and purposes (Ushioda, 2008:25), must be enhanced.

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***Family Environment Mode Approach (FEMA): Procedures for Nurturing Affective Learning***

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**Abstract**

This paper aims to provide detailed and replicable protocols for the Family Environment Mode Approach (FEMA) to language teaching, developed by the author. FEMA involves the conscious application of an emotional field by self-regenerating educational actors. This is done to promote key concepts that indirectly affect educational outcomes by reducing stress and increasing motivation. The approach supports the creation of a stress-free classroom environment and promotes a trusting family-like atmosphere. FEMA teachers aim to react in a non-judgmental manner to language errors, even embracing failure and mistakes. Having pioneered this approach, the author sets out to develop an even more a robust relationship-centered theory of language learning. The current paper develops these ideas based on concerns that arose during experimental research. Features of classroom plant, tools and equipment, communication of key concepts, relational and transactional factors are considered in detail. In particular, the study reveals teachers' continuous self-cultivation as being of great importance.

**Keywords:** Family Environment Mode Approach, Motivation, Learning Beliefs, Affect

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## Introduction

Teaching and learning any subject is an intricate process that involves many different interactions. The relationship between learners, interclass groups, teachers and the general social environment are also influenced by numerous other factors such as the time of day, weather, or even the class that took place beforehand. Everything learners bring to the classroom, including beliefs, personalities, sense of self, and relationships with the people around them, will influence their actions in class. Similarly, what teachers carry with them in these terms will impact on the way they behave and interact. In order to support learners and empower them to succeed in their language-learning endeavors, teachers need to understand how these multiple interacting factors affect learning (William et al., 2015). Within this complex range of dynamics, the importance of affective aspects such as stress and motivation has been widely recognized (Dörnyei, 1990, Dörnyei & Csizér, 2002; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; MacIntyre & Charos, 1996; MacIntyre & Clement, 1996, 1997).

Affect is an umbrella term that covers all the emotionally related aspects of language learning such as, emotions, feelings, and moods (William et al., 2015), and deals with the emotional rather than the intellectual side of language. Its study covers a wide range of aspects, including motivation, anxiety, competitiveness, cooperative learning, and self-esteem. William (2015) and Gross (2017) also emphasized that emotions mediate our learning, our use of language, and our behaviors and attitudes towards the language, the class, the materials, and even ourselves. For more than half a century, this area has long been considered one of the three main domains of learning (Krathwohl, 1964; Harrow, 1972). Much of the authors' work to date has focused on motivation and strategies for its enhancement. Motivation here refers to the combination of effort and desire to achieve the goal plus favorable attitudes toward learning the language. It can be considered as a driving force; a psychological one that reinforces an action toward a desired goal in the way thirst motivates an individual to drink.

In the classroom, motivation and affect in general are extremely important variables that can make the difference between failure and success. Inner conditions such as wishes, desires and goals, activate one to move in a particular behavioral direction. For example, when they receive praise or complements, students' excitement and enthusiasm to continue working on tasks increases. This provides motivation for them to study even harder. Motivation can be divided into two types: Intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that is driven by an interest or enjoyment in the task itself, and exists within the individual rather than relying on external pressures or a desire for reward. In contrast, extrinsic motivation comes from outside of the individual. Commonly, it encourages competition and takes the form of rewards such as prizes, money or grades.

While motivation is vital, anxiety, a general feeling of tension, apprehension and arousal of the nervous system also impact strongly on the learning process (Horwitz, 1986, MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C., 1991, 1994). With regard to language learning, a dual view of anxiety as being either transferred from other pre-existing concerns or as situation specific has been suggested (Horwitz & Young, 1991; Horwitz, 1986). In the author's own work to date, students fear of speaking in front of their peers, being laughed at, made fools of or using pronunciation unlike that of

native speakers have appeared as prominent sources of language learning anxiety. The idea that anxious teachers may be themselves an unwitting cause of flow-on stress is also an interesting concern that warrants further attention. In the author's view, the affective dimension and questions of stress and motivation in learning mentioned above are of great importance. These underlie the development of her Family Environment Mode Approach (FEMA), documented in recent experimental and exploratory research papers that mainly reported students' perceptions (Ocampo, 2015, 2016, 2017a, 2017b). This general approach is summarized in the following section.

### Procedures and General Outline of FEMA

The Family Environment Mode Approach (FEMA) to language teaching aims to reduce stress and increase motivation in language learning by calibrating attitudinal adjustments. The word family is intended to invoke a high degree of intimacy between participants. The role of the teacher (the author as Ma'am Mom in studies to date) in generating and sustaining the classroom atmosphere is vital. The key attitudinal changes (referred to as mindsets in the author's work) emphasized were embracing failure and letting go of fear of making mistakes and thinking of the class and its subgroups as family-like units. These ideas are illustrated in the figure 1 below (reproduced from the author's 2015 paper).

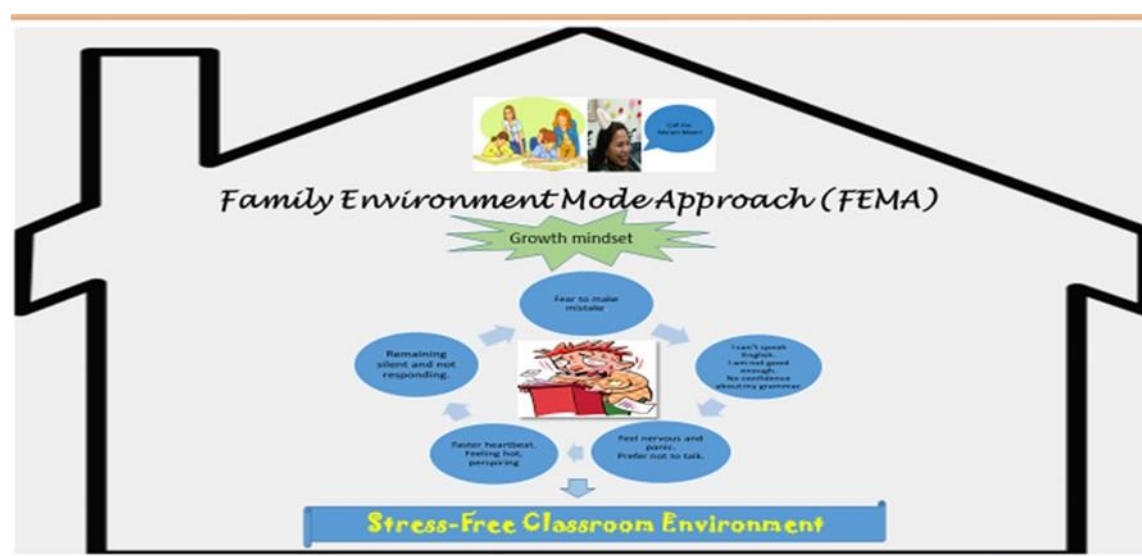


Figure 1: Family Environment Mode Approach (FEMA) Model

### Stress-free Environment in FEMA

Acceptance of these key attitudes and responses to the FEMA-style teaching in general were assessed from the standpoint of students' perceptions using questionnaires and a novel electronic mediating artifact '*Necomimi*' or cat's ears, which generally measured students' stress reactions in response to questions in English. *Necomimi* were very effective in helping to promote the fun, stress-free atmosphere that the author considers ideal in FEMA. Exploratory research (Ocampo, 2015, 2016), revealed that Japanese students enjoy question-and-answer conversation activities using *Necomimi*, presented as a 'wearable brainwaves of emotion detector'. The face-to-face seating arrangement used during the experiment meant that students'

emotions were visible to everyone and this encouraged their classmates to ask more questions. This positive environment allows students to naturally increase the endorphin, dopamine or serotonin levels in their brains, making the educational experience more pleasurable and intrinsically rewarding (Figure 2).



Figure 2: FEMA acceptability while wearing *Nekomimi* in a conversation activity

Despite the general positive reception of FEMA, feedback from some colleagues questioning whether FEMA amounted to no more than referring to the teacher as 'Ma'am Mom' and encouraging classroom bonding, prompted the researcher to probe her conception of FEMA-style teaching more deeply and establish more detailed and replicable protocols for the method. A teacher who carefully cultivates herself intellectually and emotionally and develops deep and caring relationships with her students may interact with them in real-time in any number of potentially effective ways. This observation makes the job of delimiting specific FEMA techniques very difficult. However, the current study will attempt to do so, based on the author's experiences and concerns that arose during experimental research.

### **Towards a Detailed Protocol for FEMA**

The adoption of social science research methods has come relatively late to academia in East Asia where the researcher is active. Hence human experiences of tremendous complexity, such as foreign language education, are sometimes examined from an Aristotelian perspective (Morrell, 2012) perhaps more appropriate to the hard sciences; the resulting graphs and measures presented with apparent grave seriousness in a self-conscious display of purported rigor. Although the author's previous work has tended in this direction, in working towards unpacking FEMA a direction towards a more Heideggerian perspective will be charted (Heidegger, 1971). At the same time, FEMA's overriding imperative of calibrating attitudinal change towards increased motivation and decreased stress will be born in mind. FEMA factors that influence this change and arose in previous work will be examined beginning with more corporeal and readily observable factors such as physical classroom plant and related tools and equipment. Next, key concepts and ideas and the way they are

communicated and emphasized is dealt with. After that, relational and transactional factors between FEMA participants are discussed. Finally, Teachers' self-cultivation, perhaps the most important, but paradoxically more problematic area from the point of view of academic research, will be discussed.

### Physical Classroom Plant and Related Tools and Equipment

A FEMA classroom plant is colorful, permits variation, reflects the participants' identities and provides spaces for active and creative tasks. Rather than one ideal physical classroom plant, the ability to vary the arrangement according to the activity appeared as important in previous work. In practical terms, this is often not possible in classrooms where the furniture is fixed in position, leaving little room for adjustment. An example of this appeared in the author's recent study of a CALL environment in which visual access was "restricted to a direct front-on or rear view of fixed blocks of computer desks that limits interaction between teacher and students" hindering the creation of a "safe and productive ESL learning environment" (Ocampo, 2017). Where possible, FEMA-friendly desk arrangement parameters are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Family Environment Mode Approach (FEMA) desk arrangement

Activity/Purpose	Student/Desk arrangement
Demonstration	Desks in single or double rows
Conversation	U-shaped desk arrangement Students facing each other or side by side
General	Any arrangement that accommodates an inclusive learning environment. Placing easily distracted students away from each other, doorways, windows, and areas of high traffic.

Practical and aesthetic dimensions of the visual and acoustic classroom environment are also important. For example, student work such as hand-made posters help to develop students' sense of belonging. Music influences mood in calming, comforting or stimulating ways and can even be used as a reward. Plants and animals can influence learning in the classroom but just like restrictions on desk placement variability, administrative constraints may not permit their incorporation in the classroom experience. Of the potential tools that would help a FEMA classroom flourish, *Necomimi* described earlier, is a characteristic example. This animatronic cat-ear headset is approachable, user friendly and fun promoting. Tools with these properties including videos and visual aids are very useful in FEMA. Ubiquitous technology, such as personally owned cell phones and computers have a place, with permission from the teacher. It is also conceivable that complex digital tools and gadgets might also be used, but their time-absorbing and exacting use is likely to tend away from the reduction of stress within the standard time limits of a language lesson. Uneven degrees of technological familiarity, particularly intergenerational, means that without prudent preparation the required use of computer-related gadgets as found in CALL environments can increase stress. For these reasons, they are not recommended as part of FEMA protocol, at least in the author's conception.

A FEMA approach does not view the classroom plant in isolation, but considers the relationship with and impact on the emotional environment as shown in Figure 3 below:

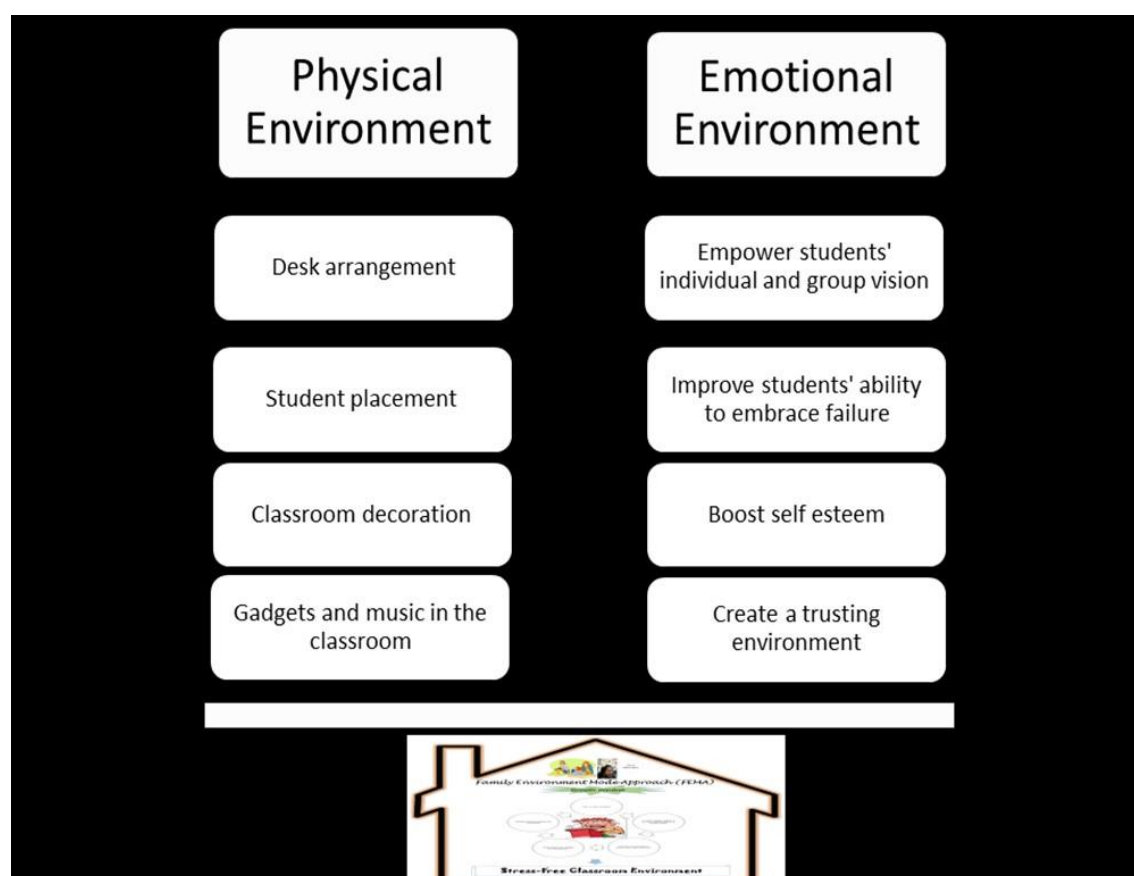


Figure 3: Balanced relationship of physical plant and emotional environment in FEMA

As shown in Figure 3, it is possible to think of an ‘emotional’ classroom environment, an idea drawn metaphorically from that of the physical plant but perhaps related more to the transactional and teacher self-cultivation elements that are examined later. Environments with good emotions affect memory and brain development and in the case of children, the effects of environment on brain development should not be underestimated. When a person feels satisfied, the brain releases endorphins that increase memory skill. The judicious modulation of music, physical movement, sense of safety etc. also has the potential to increase memory (Jensen, 2008; Rockell & Ocampo, 2017).

### Communication and Emphasis of Key Concepts

As already mentioned, FEMA aims to increase motivation and reduce stress. Depending on the students’ cultural background, the most appropriate key concepts that support such a result may vary. In Japan, where the author first developed FEMA, an over-emphasis on accuracy and perfectionistic attitude on the part of English language students pervades. For this reason, the first key concept “embracing failure and letting go of fear of making mistakes” was stressed. In this way, the belief that through mistakes one prospers helped many of the author’s students in Japan gain

considerable confidence to speak. It may be the case that when working in cultures other than Japan, different concepts will be more effective and relevant and this can be investigated in future research. The second key concept “think of the class and its subgroups as family-like units” is considered universal and of basic importance to FEMA by the author. A FEMA instructor should emphasize both these concepts iteratively. The ideas should be explained directly and in detail during the initial class orientation and again repeatedly prior to relevant class activity.

In addition to giving overt directives, the author also recommends covert demonstrations such as the teacher allowing herself to make her own mistakes in front of the class, expressing a kind of vulnerable solidarity. In the Japanese context, however, the author cautions that these occasions should be sparing as they may reduce the students’ trust in the teacher’s ability to teach. In general, a FEMA style of delivery is one that engages attention following an emotional trigger or hook, one of the important keys of brain-based education. Here, music, arts and classroom games assist by ‘knocking’ into the emotional areas to help the brain to remember and connect information. Humor, such as starting a lesson by telling a funny story or showing an amusing picture to help students feel comfortable is also very effective. Carefully chosen tools such as the *Necomimi* described earlier can also promote a relaxed mood and support engaging ways to communicate key concepts.

### **Relational and Transactional Factors in the Classroom**

In FEMA, the teacher, who is responsible for arranging the classroom plant and modulating the mood and emotional environment in a way that promotes the communication of key concepts, holds both great responsibility and authority. But this formal authority is softened by having students address her using a familial kinship term such as mom, dad, sister or brother (Ma’am Mom in the case of the author). Students are also encouraged to consider their classmates as siblings and all classroom activity is performed in either small groups or pairs, never alone (with the exception of the final exam). This cooperative effort tends toward being task-oriented, rather than ego-oriented, and students are rewarded for effort and improvement, rather than for static variables such as ‘ability’. FEMA encourages practices that improve students’ self-esteem, such as using affirmative language, providing positive statements and drawing on classroom peers as internal models of behavior.

Self-efficacy is an important determiner of positive motivation. Students feel more in control when they learn to attribute their classroom successes or failures to their own behaviors, such as appropriate effort, attitude, or academic/behavioral strategies. FEMA encourages them to participate in setting goals for themselves and assist in monitoring their progress toward meeting these goals and to participate in decisions regarding classroom rules and procedures. Whenever possible, FEMA instructors should experiment with a variety of techniques to elicit input from students, and implement their suggestions whenever possible. It is also very important that students’ accomplishments are acknowledged and rewarded with frequent positive feedback and praise and rewards, prizes or privileges. Despite the foregoing emphasis on empowering students’ sense of efficacy in the classroom, the final responsibility for setting transactional processes in motion and projection and generation of a fundamental emotional tone rests with the teacher. In FEMA this demands far more

than the replication of such and such a series of recommended educational protocols. It requires dedication to continual self-cultivation, as discussed below.

### **Teacher's Self-cultivation**

FEMA rejects the idea of a teacher as mere facilitator of classroom activity and likewise the expectation that the designation of the role of teacher should be sufficient alone to warrant students' attention and respect. In fact, the term 'teacher' may be inadequate to describe the multiple roles, such as manager, storyteller, singer or actress that this job so often entails. Teachers, in a sense, are the architects of society because they have the ability to shape the course of their students' futures (Hiver & Dörnyei, 2017). Entering into an emotional energy field as a constructive actor demands the constant development and maintenance of keen human awareness, knowledge as well as emotional strength and sensitivity. In this age of information explosion, the dynamic nature of human knowledge demands that teachers have not only a detailed understanding of the way the environment affects brain development and learning, and how to transmit knowledge, but that they continue to cultivate and maintain the life of their own learning brains (Raphael, 2017). As a result of professional realities, however, there is a danger that teachers can become detached from learning themselves, and insensitive to students' learning difficulties and individual differences in learning style. In contrast, if a teacher also remains an ardent learner, keenly interested in 'learning how to learn', she is more able to modulate her perceptual faculties in order to attune with the minds of students and sense their particular learning mode(s). Gaining the status of teacher is not a passport to exit learning. On the contrary, it is an entrance to both further learning and a license to experiment with the art of 'learning how to learn'.

Creating conditions for transformational change within a teacher is another principle that needs to be given attention (Dörnyei & Kubanyiova, 2014). An effective FEMA teacher therefore straddles the personalities of both teacher and student and these dual roles enrich each other. While teaching she teaches how to learn and while learning she learns how to teach. A teacher who ceases to learn risks becoming an untapped resource since, despite her knowledge, she will lose the ability to transmit it in a dynamic way to students. Therefore, a FEMA instructor should strive to maintain an ever vibrant, growth mindset and empathetic communication style. In addition, a charismatic aura surrounds the teacher who commits herself to lifelong learning and this strongly supports her ability to influence students.

The author's work on FEMA is applied to teaching English as a foreign language, and this necessarily implies an intercultural dynamic. Living in a foreign culture, language teachers can become trapped in a self-perpetuating cultural bubble and shut off from the language and life practices of the host culture. FEMA teachers must strive to avoid this situation and aim to constantly grow in intercultural understanding. It is important for language teachers to understand the host culture's values and approach these respectfully not only within the classroom environment but within the community, too. As a specific example, in the case of Japan, students are often hesitant to participate and give their answers right away when asked. Before doing so, they first look around as if asking for approval from the body of students. This indicates the value placed on consensus by Japanese people. Being aware of these kind culturally related factors that arise in a collectivist culture that emphasizes group

values and goals helps teachers develop a sensitive and empathetic approach. Such awareness is not easily gained, but a conscious effort to cultivate it is a hallmark of the FEMA approach, aspects of which are illustrated in Figure 4, below.

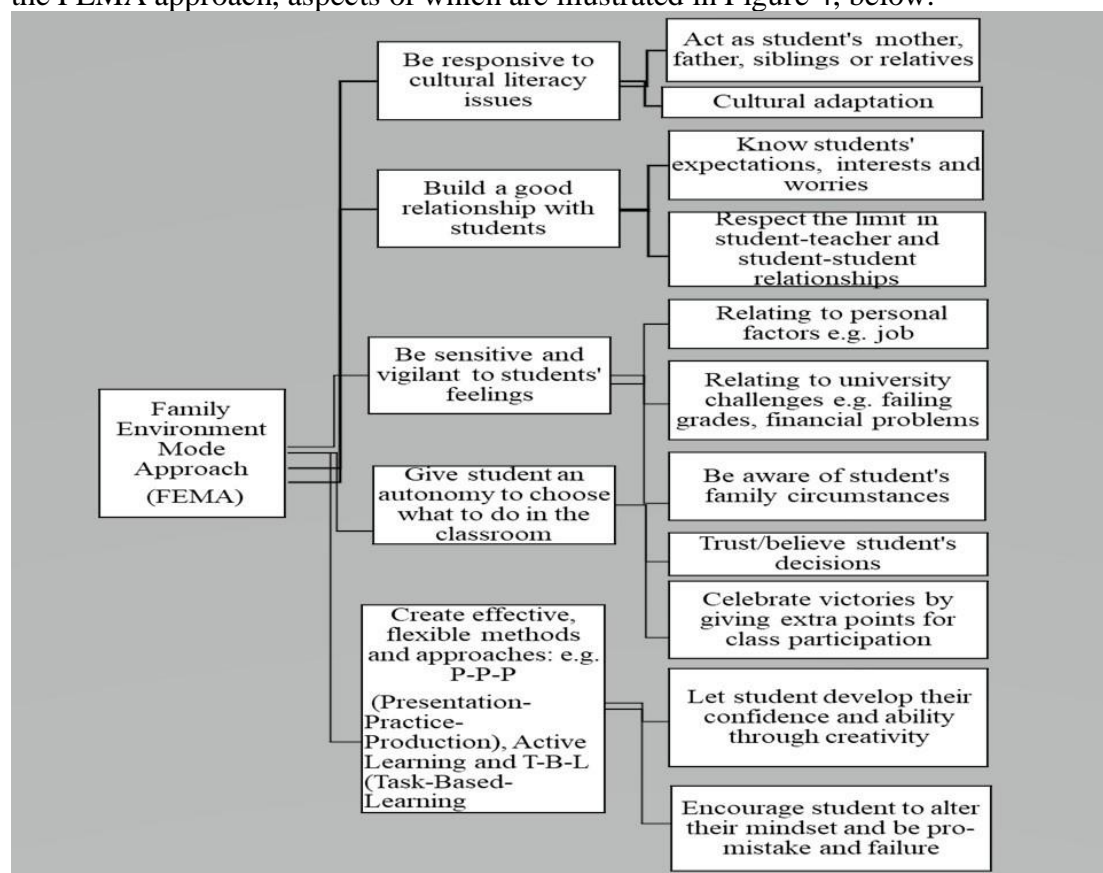


Figure 4. FEMA's intercultural and emotional awareness and sensitivity flowchart

Finally, in terms of self-cultivation, FEMA goes beyond normalizing teaching into a purely professional role. Being, and continually 'becoming' an example to others, a generative affective group actor who builds and maintains strong interpersonal relationships requires great personal emotional strength and sensitivity. To this end, obviously, FEMA instructors should strive to maintain physical health, seek out regular contact with a body of likeminded soul-searching individuals, read uplifting literature and avoid excessive alcohol consumption and other escapist behaviors. But more than this, when lived consciously and with commitment, FEMA itself can be an enriching pathway to the self-cultivation of emotional strength and sensitivity.

## Conclusion

This research has shown that the Family Environment Mode Approach (FEMA) involves the conscious application of an emotional field by self-re-generating educational actors in order to promote key concepts that indirectly affect educational outcomes by reducing stress and increasing motivation. This general approach was unpacked based on the author's experience in a Japanese context and detailed protocols for aspects of physical classroom plant, transmission of key concepts, classroom relationships and the need for continuous teacher-self cultivation were provided. In doing so, the attempt to delimit the approach led to the conclusion that the potentiality for situation specific, real time variation and change are most

significant and fundamental to FEMA on a deeper level. In particular, the vital role of the instructors in FEMA and the requirement that they develop and maintain intellectual, intercultural and emotional capabilities was revealed as being of tremendous importance. These results speak to the body of research on affect in education in general and in English language teaching and learning specifically. The protocol for the effective implementation of FEMA developed here, including a focus on its efficacy in promoting stress reduction and the role of gadgets such as *Necomimi* could be usefully developed into a FEMA textbook, both as a paper and online version. They could also be presented as a short educational DVD that demonstrates the FEMA approach for the benefit of instructors. To date, this research has looked only at FEMA's application to foreign language teaching and learning in a Japanese context. A continued, longitudinal study can offer further insights into stress and motivation as they pertain to Japanese learners and instructors active in a Japanese environment. However, by implementing the approach in various other locations with learners from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, helpful insights of benefit to intercultural education and current knowledge of affect in education more broadly can be gained. In particular, it would be of great interest to discover the way that the key concepts that promote the goals of FEMA vary from culture to culture. Such an investigation is part of the author's vision and plan for future work toward nurturing effective affective learning through FEMA.

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***Achieving Creativity Through Research Led Learning and Teaching***

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**Abstract**

In the past few years' creativity seemed to have been the buzzword driving contemporary programmes of education and having a substantial impact on curriculum design worldwide. However, many of those programmes simply include the word 'creative' and leave students to their own devices, without effective guidance or examples of what creativity actually means or can lead to. This also appears to be the case in China, where students are closely supervised throughout their primary and secondary education, and once they progress to university they are expected to study independently without such supervision. One of the ways to encourage autonomy and creativity in Higher Education learning is stimulating the interest and curiosity in that specific area, however not every module can be interesting and inspire curiosity and not every student will find interest in fields that perhaps are not so closely related to their major. This paper reflects on how interest, curiosity and creativity were enthused in year 2 University EAP students at an English Medium Instruction Collaborative University in China through research led learning and teaching.

**Keywords:** Research-led learning and teaching, autonomy, creativity, task-based learning

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## Introduction

In China the educational climate at schools is still quite traditional, where students are teacher dependent and potentially deprived of the ability to think creatively and critically. When these students reach university level, it becomes necessary for them to take the responsibility of their learning on themselves, and rote learning is not an option anymore. It falls upon the university teachers to dissuade them of their earlier learning habits and introduce them to a whole new style of autonomous and creative learning, which is the key to gaining a good degree and consequently employment. This research paper describes what happens when an unconventional style of collaborative multi-tasked and multi-skills generating assessment is applied at an EMI University in China within a year 2 English for Academic Purposes Built Environment module. In the first section of this paper, the theory behind this research has been discussed, which is followed by a brief literature review. The description of the research is followed by the analysis of the data and the paper concludes with a discussion of the implications for the future.

## Theory and Literature Review

In order to get access to Higher Education high school students in China are required to sit a national university entrance exam *Gaokao*. The examination is held annually and is seen as the biggest and the most important exam for Chinese students (Zhang, Zhao, & Lei, 2012). *Gaokao* was approved in 1952 by the People's Republic of China, but long before that its predecessor, *Keju* (meaning the Imperial Exam), was established in the Tang dynasty (AD 618-907) and was in place until 1905 (Zhang et al., 2012). The *Gaokao* is frequently compared with the *Keju* due to apparent similarities between the two (Ross & Wang, 2011). The top scorers in the long-existing *Keju* system were guaranteed employment, similarly students with top performance in *Gaokao* will be accepted to a prestigious university. Ross and Wang (2011) go even further to state that graduates of top Chinese universities are almost guaranteed well-paid employment after graduation, a point reinforced by Zhang, Zhao and Lei (2012).

In light of the above, Chinese high school students are under high pressure to perform academically, and are in the centre of incredible rivalry (Schiller 2007 as cited in Liu et al., 2013). Based on previous findings that evaluations, assessments, and rivalry pressures have harmful effects on youths' creativity (Runco 2003 as cited in Liu et al., 2013) *Gaokao* has been extensively recognized as the main culprit of killing innovation and creativity in Chinese classrooms (Zhang et al., 2012). More importantly though, using the *Gaokao* scores as the only indicator for the university admission cruelly narrows students' life-time education down to their performance in a number of tests conducted over a short period of time. Furthermore, Shiqin (2019) also points out that *Gaokao* fixes the content, and methods of school education and the learning process of students who do not have any autonomy within the education system, let alone personalised teaching and differentiation. Students who are academically underprivileged can neither benefit of their strengths, nor enter a university that is suitable for their academic development (Shiqin, 2019). Subsequently, the results of such limited educational choice led to an abundance of social problems. One example of this could be, as per the Chinese phrase, "*high scores and low ability*", which refers to students who are successful in formal examinations but are not equipped with problem solving skills and in general are poor achievers outside of a highly

controlled classroom environment (Liu et al., 2013). Even though Chinese educators understand the situation, in order to improve the school's standing and reputation, high schools have to prioritise *Gaokao* which consequently leads to exam-oriented education. As long as the current condition remains in place, the critical consequence of the entrance examination as a 'talent screening mechanism', the exam-oriented education will continue to be an unavoidable situation (Shiqin, 2019). However, the government recognises the need for change and within the Outline of China's National Plan for Medium- and Long-term Education Reform and Development (Ministry of Education 2010 as cited in Zhang, Zhao and Lei, 2012) recommends that university autonomy and a reform of university admission process are the two key aspects of educational changes that need to happen within the next decade. The Plan also recommends altering the "one-exam-decides-all" process to a robust holistic evaluation using several assessment methods over a prolonged period of time (Zhang et al., 2012).

In light of all of the above, preparation of students for real-life tasks and 'teaching' creativity in Chinese classrooms seems of utmost importance. However, one vital question when it comes to research on autonomy and creativity is what 'creative' actually means. Even though, creativity as such has been defined in a plethora of ways without reaching an agreement, it usually refers to the action, procedure or skill to produce something novel and suitable (Newton & Bevertson, 2012 as cited in Wang and Kokotsaki, 2018)). Creativity is usually associated with innovation, autonomy and imagination (Fleming, 2010). What is more, according to Piaget, nurturing creativity and developing creative people should be the main goal of education (Fisher, 2005 as cited in Wang and Kokotsaki, 2018). However, students do not just simply learn to be creative by 'direct instruction' the expectation in modern higher education is that students are not only creative but also autonomous. A point further reinforced by Bibbings, Bieluga, & Mills (2018) who claim that modern higher education tends to be project based and should emulate real-life tasks, especially within Built Environment education context, which results in expectation that students work independently and learn new skills during collaborative project work. Furthermore, Gunn (2010) asserts that students who learn through collaborative project work benefit from research led learning as they learn new skills through simulating real-life environment and obstacles associated with it. There is a body of literature to recognise the benefits of "Research-Led Learning" especially within Higher Education. The aim of Research-Led Learning is somewhat similar to Task-Based Learning where students are given tasks involving problems or issues and asked to resolve the scenarios as part of a project to stimulate learning rather than the traditional approach of classroom teaching and end of course examination. It is evident that using a design project as part of module delivery and assessment encourages autonomous learning, especially when students are expected to conduct their own research. This is especially true within Built Environment context, Maturana (2014) describes how the design studio is focused around problem-solving particularly within real life projects, where thoughts could be merged in a way that embraces the best capabilities of students within the technical and aesthetic forms of design. Zamorski (2002) further states that truly engaging with a subject or field of enquiry, should be including the ways in which that subject or field of enquiry is advanced, the ways in which students can add to its advancement, and the ways in which critical and creative contributions can be made. It is not just about learning about theories from the past but it is also about engaging with the subject,

which means that research plays an essential and central role within it. Maturana (2014, p.11) further asserts that that the ‘real world and the world of architectural practice’ are not lacking in problems and that ‘design problems offer the opportunity to respond in a creative and responsible manner that demonstrates (...) commitment to a public-spirited education, the wider society and the world’. Therefore, the assessment project within the Built Environment EAP module became the ideal opportunity to address these matters and could become an example to follow for years to come.

## Research

The end of semester module satisfaction survey revealed that year 2 EAP Built Environment students were keen on accessing more subject specific materials and also had valid suggestions regarding module design and assessments. In fact, it became apparent that the assessment concentrated on testing the language skills and did not directly take into consideration creativity, critical thinking and learning autonomy, skills which are key in built environment disciplines. Also, students commented that the assessment did not include subject specific high-quality challenges and did not require them to use a design studio for working and learning.

Comments from students included the following:

*I don't really find the assessment challenging nor interesting. We mostly use the coursebook and I can't really see how is that different from our high school English classes.*

*I would like EAP module to support what I do for my architecture major. At the moment I feel I learned a lot of vocabulary and grammar but I don't know how that will help me with my architecture assignments.*

*This module has just been a repetition of year 1 EAP and I think we could do more interesting stuff that will help us in real life conditions. Especially that in year 2 we have access to design studios.*

*I think EAP should be more related to Urban Planning modules and perhaps the lecturers could share resources and create a common bank. Also, perhaps it would be a good idea to deliver some of the classes within the studios.*

The bank of resources for the module included English for Academic Purposes books and followed the standard syllabus used for that level and year of study. The assessment included giving a presentation on a topic of built environment and also writing a compare and contrast essay. At the end of the semester students were asked to complete Module Feedback Questionnaire and the 137 respondents scored the semester 1 of academic year 2017/2018 4.24 with 5.00 being the maximum value, see Table 1.

Table1: Module Feedback Questionnaire results  
Source: Author

<b>EAP Built Environment Student Module Feedback Questionnaire (S1, AY2017-18)</b>	
<b>Question</b>	
The module objectives and learning outcomes were clearly stated	4.31
The module objectives and learning outcomes were achieved	4.17
The module readings (for example, textbooks, journals and articles) were helpful	4.25
Coursework and module assessments were explained clearly and with an appropriate level of guidance	4.34
The supporting activities and resources on ICE were useful	4.27
Overall, I found this module a valuable learning experience	4.13
Overall	4.24

Given the above result and students' suggestions new assessment was designed which would emulate real-life tasks and follow the principles of research-led learning. In order to succeed academically, students would be required to work in collaboration emulating real-life conditions and facing similar challenges as within employment. To fit in with the time-scale the whole assessment would have to be organised within a 12-week period, with a series of tutorials, studio work and site visits. The students were encouraged to use research-led approach and not only follow the task brief but also research the projects both independently and collaboratively.

The assessment designed included a number of scenarios that consisted of current and discipline specific circumstances.

#### Assessment Scenario 1

*Your firm has been tasked with outlining a potential design for building a new social housing community within the boundaries of Kowloon District in Hong Kong that fulfils all the criteria for health and safety and yet does not require much space. The project under consideration is of utmost importance as in recent years Hong Kong property prices have soared, leaving the elderly and other vulnerable groups without satisfactory housing options.*

#### Assessment Scenario 2

*As urban areas in China rapidly expand, people find themselves in suburban areas further and further away from the original city centres. Quite often new developments do not take important factors, such as flooding and the rising level of seas, into consideration. It is predicted that if action is not taken now some areas of Shanghai might be completely submersed in water by the year 2030. What is more, some projections claim that 17.5 million people currently living in Shanghai would need evacuation, due to rising waters, if global temperatures increase by 3C.*

#### Assessment Scenario 3

*Your firm has been tasked with outlining a potential design for building a bridge within the boundaries of old Suzhou that captures the history and culture of the region. The project under consideration has to be a so-called garden bridge that makes use of nature and greenery; however, the investor is open to a number of options. You should research recent garden bridge constructions both abroad and in*

*China, to see and analyse how they function and the rationale behind them.*

#### Assessment Scenario 4

*In recent years the design and construction of skyscrapers in Asia has become extremely popular and different cities compete with one another when it comes to design of such buildings. However, often enough the so-called radical designs are simply ridiculous, completely impractical and bring nothing back to culture or economy. Your firm has been tasked with outlining a potential design for building a skyscraper within the boundaries of Suzhou Industrial Park that captures not only the history and culture of the region but is also practical and serves a valid purpose.*

#### Assessment Scenario 5

*Concerned with current political situation in North Korea, the government of China would like to request proposals for refugee camps alongside the North Korean border. Some commentators claim that the Korean peninsula is on the brink of war and the regime is on the brink of collapse. China as a neighbouring country should make plans for such an eventuality and if needs be house refugees from North Korea.*

The research-led principles were taken into consideration and using Kolb's reflective cycle as a guide the assessment task was divided into two components; writing and speaking. Initially the process started with assessment briefs investigation, design reviews and site analysis. Students were also expected to complete a basic initial proposal of around 300 words describing their planned ideas which would at a later stage form the basis of the initial project presentation. After the initial presentations and proposals being completed, more time was allowed for research, proposals improvements and additional site visits if required. During that time the proposals were thoroughly evaluated and additional help from other departmental staff with more expertise was offered. Before finalising their proposals, students were required to critically analyse their designs and lastly describe the changes applied in the final reflection submission. The final critical review looked not only at speaking assessment descriptors but also finalised designs including details, application of feedback given and collaboration. The particulars of both integrated courseworks can be seen below in Table 2 and Table 3.

#### Writing Coursework

Table 2: Writing Coursework

Source: Author

<i>* Write a 300-500 word 'project proposal' (unassessed)</i>
<i>* Write a 'Critical Review and Reflection' based on your project and the competing group's project, consisting of three parts (assessed):</i>
<i>o Part 1: Reflection I - Initial Proposals (around 300 words)</i>
<i>o Part 2: Critical Analysis (around 600 words)</i>
<i>o Part 3: Reflection II – Proposal Improvements (around 300 words)</i>
<i>The proposal must be written in small groups. The 'Critical Review and Reflection' is to be written individually. The proposal is not separately assessed, but it is a core task requirement of the coursework. This task is also linked to the semester 2 speaking assessment.</i>

## Speaking Coursework

Table 3: Speaking Coursework

Source: Author

<i>Speaking coursework will be divided into two events:</i> <i>1. A group presentation and note-taking (unassessed)</i> <i>2. Critical Review (assessed 15%)</i>
<i>Both tasks will be carried out in the same groups allocated for the Writing Coursework.</i>
<i>Group Presentation and note-taking (unassessed)</i>
<i>* Groups will give a PPT presentation based on their project proposal explaining what it is and why it will be successful.</i>
<i>Critical Review (assessed)</i>
<i>* In the critical review, you will have two roles: defending your own project and questioning the project of the competing group.</i> <i>* Before the critical review, you and your group members should:</i> <i>o Prepare a group poster to be displayed in the classroom before the review.</i> <i>o Prepare a series of questions based on the competing group's initial proposal</i> <i>* During the critical review, you and your group members will need to:</i> <i>o Examine the competing group's poster and form any further questions.</i> <i>o Respond promptly to questions and convince the competing group that your project will be a success.</i>

## Outcomes

The assessment's complex nature meant additional staff hours being put into organising supplementary tutorials and liaising with other departments to make sure that students were receiving quality feedback on their work and ideas. Additionally, setting up the project scenarios meant added research hours into standard work patterns and visiting some of the locations for the purpose of feasibility checks.

At the end of semester Module Feedback Questionnaire revealed that overall students' satisfaction increased to 4.34 with Coursework and module assessment scoring 4.42, a visible improvement compared with semester 1 of the same academic year, see Table 4.

Respondents: 129

Table 4: Module Feedback Questionnaire results  
Source: Author

<b>EAP Built Environment Student Module Feedback Questionnaire (S2, AY2017-18)</b>	
<b>Question</b>	
The module objectives and learning outcomes were clearly stated	4.38
The module objectives and learning outcomes were achieved	4.26
The module readings (for example, textbooks, journals and articles) were helpful	4.33
Coursework and module assessments were explained clearly and with an appropriate level of guidance	4.42
The supporting activities and resources on ICE were useful	4.31
Overall, I found this module a valuable learning experience	4.32
Overall	4.34

More importantly though, some of the comments made by students acknowledged the changes in assessment procedure and overall the general feel about those was positive.

*Even though the assessment was challenging I feel the collaboration with my fellow group members enhanced my module experience.*

*I was happy with the research conducted as it helped me with other modules and allowed to understand the principles of groupwork better.*

*The project I did was interesting and I feel my interests were stimulated sufficiently. I learned a lot about Hong Kong housing crisis and I think the decision makers should urgently look into ways of solving it.*

*To be honest I found the groupwork aspect of the assessment really challenging and probably a little unfair but since a lot of Built Environment projects rely on collaboration, I understand that tensions and disagreements are unavoidable.*

*Even though I wasn't entirely happy with the project assigned I did a lot of independent reading on the topics of garden bridges and the integration of greenery within architecture and planning. It helped me a lot with other modules and hopefully I will be using that knowledge for my Final Year Project.*

*I enjoyed learning about new developments in architecture, especially about the concept of liveability and how to make our cities more liveable.*

*I really feel that this module helped me with not only general English but also Civil Engineering modules. The ability to work with students from other majors allowed me to learn a lot of new vocabulary and skills otherwise I would have never known about.*

Following positive feedback from staff and students the module and the assessment were recognised as an example of good practice and the author was asked to collaborate even further with other departments to create a bank of resources and assessments. Also, following a successful critical review one of the student's entered and consequently was awarded a second prize in the university's 'Research-led Learning and Teaching Student Competition 2018' for their proposed garden bridge

design within the ancient city of Suzhou. Another two students from the module entered the Evolo 2019 Skyscraper Competition and were awarded third prize for designing a Biosphere Skyscraper. External moderator's feedback was also encouraging stressing the importance of giving students opportunities to think and act both creatively and critically (see Table 5).

Table 5: External moderator's feedback

Source: Author

*I find that the range of scenarios for proposals is very well thought out and ideal for students from a Built Environment background. All five are excellent and the refugee camp idea, in particular, is an excellent example of how EAP teaching can be rooted in everyday issues, deeply embedded in the teaching of skills needed to unpack subject specific ideas and knowledge, and above all can motivate students to build knowledge beyond skills and language acquisition. This type of activity really gets students thinking creatively and critically, and dispels the notion that EAP is just English Language with an academic lexicon and without the fun parts of learning a language, as is a common misperception. Here, students are being presented with situations specific to their subjects that are then leading into opportunities for research and writing. The fact that the writing then involves both critical review and reflection means that students are being asked to provide output in different formats that each require a particular set of skills that go beyond simply the linguistic aspect. On the whole, there is a great sense of diversity in these tasks - the fact that group work leads to individual output, and everything is clearly interlinked, with reference also made to a broader linkage to the speaking assessment.*

## Conclusion and Recommendations for Future

Seeing the students' performance in Year 2 of their higher education and comparing it to the work of previous second years, the assessment has clearly enhanced both students' knowledge and desire to work autonomously. It became apparent that by being able to relate to real life the students acquire knowledge faster and with more interest.

The opportunity to collaborate with students from other courses within the Built Environment cluster, has shown that students are doing better with applying the skills and knowledge they have, taking on leadership roles and utilising knowledge from outside of their subjects. Also, even though setting up the assessments requires a significant amount of time and effort, it does produce tangible benefits in the form of professional and educational progress of students. Not only preparing them for real life challenges within employment but also giving them opportunity to research, write and speak in subject specific English providing them with a significant advantage on the international job market. Skills that normally would be acquired in later years, during a work placement or when already in employment. Instead, those skills are refined at university, cultivating the students' employability and greatly contributing to their overall development. For the reasons mentioned above the assessment development and creation of inter-disciplinary resources within the module will continue in the following years.

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## *A Non-Engineer's Discovery of Design Thinking*

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### **Abstract**

Design Thinking is a human-centred Engineering Design method that aims to find creative solutions to problems and encourages empathy, collaboration, and experimentation. This paper will introduce Design Thinking and relate the writer's discovery of it as a non-Engineer who taught an Engineering English course based mainly around the Scientific Method. I will demonstrate how, in response to students' apparent lack of enthusiasm for the lesson content, I adapted lessons to include Design Thinking alongside the Scientific Method. The paper will include examples of the activities used and the results of an informal questionnaire showing students' overwhelmingly positive reaction to the introduction of Design Thinking into the lessons. Finally, the paper will conclude with recommendations for incorporating Design Thinking into language lessons.

Keywords: Design Thinking, Engineering, English

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## Introduction

International College of Technology, Kanazawa is a five-year technical college. Students enter aged 15 and study high school level courses for three years, then university level courses for two years, before either going directly into employment aged 20 or going on to further education. In their fourth year, all students must study an English course taught by a non-Japanese teacher. The course is called Advanced English I, but it is divided into four streams, one of which is called Engineering & English, which I taught during the 2018-19 academic year, despite my lack of background in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM); my background is in Modern Foreign Languages and Education. The main focus of the course was making things in short experiments, usually done in pairs, then writing the experiments up using the Scientific Method of purpose, hypothesis, steps, data collection, and conclusion.

The first few weeks of the course covered how to write a lab paper by introducing each aspect of the Scientific Method one by one and practicing them by doing small experiments such as making a balloon car, a lemon battery, a catapult, and several others. Students seemed to enjoy the course initially but their enthusiasm began to tail off as the year progressed. This might have been due to a lack of enjoyment itself caused by writing the lab papers, or maybe because they wanted more choice over what experiments they did. Around this time, I read in *The Introspective Engineer* that “engineering is a significant part of what we are, and an indispensable part of what we seek to be. Engineering can also be great fun—to learn about as well as to do” (Florman, 1996, p6). This struck me as important and relevant to the situation: there had to be a way to make learning about Engineering (and English) more engaging.

Having recently been involved in facilitating Open Campus events and workshops for visiting students, I was present for several Introduction to Design Thinking workshops conducted by Engineering Design teacher colleagues for the benefit of the visitors. While reflecting on those workshops, Design Thinking stood out as a method of increasing students’ motivation, active learning, and English use. The following sections contain an explanation of Design Thinking, the activities used and the students’ reactions to them, the adjustments made based on that feedback, and the feedback that followed the adjusted lessons. The paper concludes with recommendations for incorporating Design Thinking into other learning and teaching contexts, and a call for more research into Design Thinking and language learning.

## Design Thinking

Design Thinking is a human-centred Engineering Design method that aims to find creative solutions to problems and encourages empathy, collaboration, and experimentation. The focus on real problems in the everyday lives of humans means that “innovation is powered by a thorough understanding, through direct observation, of what people want and need in their lives” (Brown, 2008, p.86). Collaboration is a key component of Design Thinking. Collaboration requires communication; they are interdependent. Similarly, the Advanced English I Engineering & English course takes as its basis the interdependence of Engineering and English, as indeed does the school’s entire curriculum. Design Thinking’s emphasis on collaboration and experimentation also promotes active learning and English use. To be active, learning

requires students to “read, write, discuss, or be engaged in solving problems” while also attempting “higher-order thinking tasks [such] as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation” (Bonwell & Eison, 1991, p.iii). The link between Design Thinking and active learning can be partly demonstrated by a series of activities designed for aiding discussion of social issues (Taylor, 2018).

## Activities

The following sections outline the activities used in classes to introduce Design Thinking to students. In order to prepare students for projects later in the course, most introductory activities were designed to practice Stages 2 (Interpretation) and 3 (Ideation), as these would be most relevant and useful later.

## Stage 2: Interpretation

Students completed three activities for Interpretation. The first activity was What? How? Why?, in which they look at a photo and must complete a worksheet that is divided into three columns (Figure 1). Students start with the “What?” column, and write who they see, what they are doing, and other details, without guessing. In the “How?” column, students write how the people are doing what they’re doing, their facial expression, body language, using as many adjectives as possible. The final column, “Why?”, requires the students to guess the motivations and emotions of the people in the picture, which is where the empathy aspect of Design Thinking comes in.

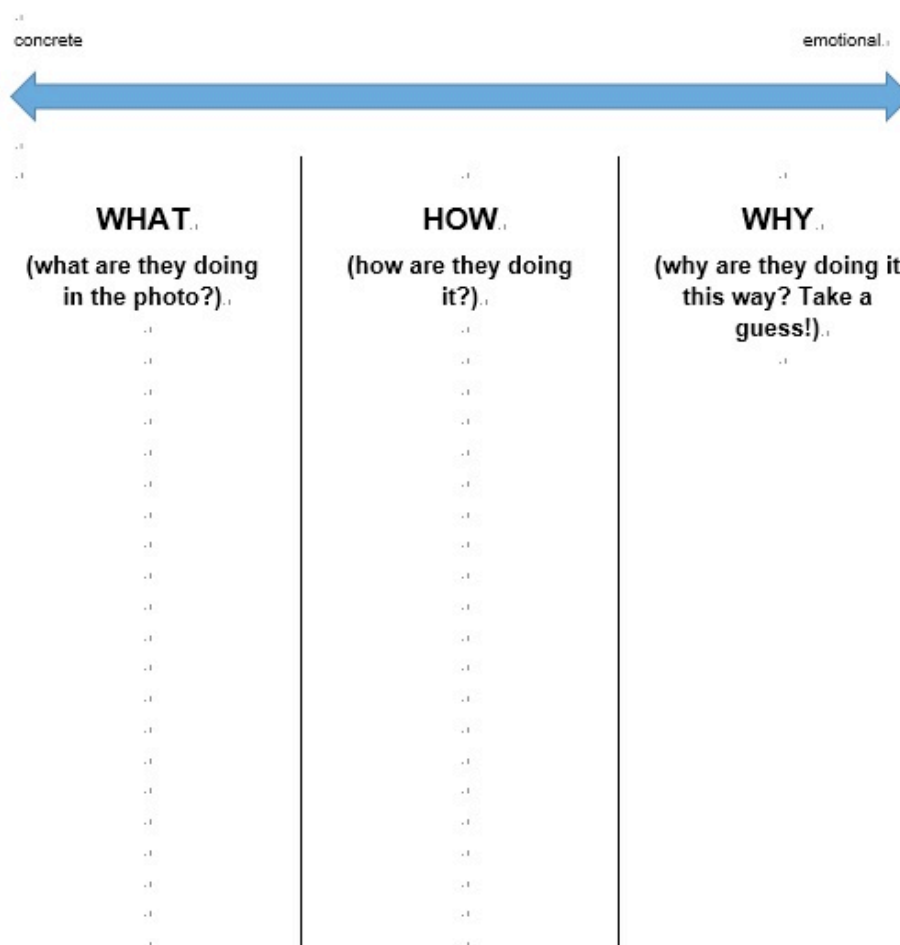


Figure 1: What? How? Why?

The second Interpretation activity was POEMS (People, Objects, Environment. Media/Messages, Services). For this activity, students received a worksheet with a column for each of those five categories (Figure 2), considered the classroom and wrote down what they could see in the room. When they had finished, they had to evaluate the experience of the classroom users (themselves) overall as positive or negative.

[illegible]

Figure 2: POEMS

The final Interpretation activity was Journey Mapping. This activity required students to consider their morning routine from waking up to arriving at school, and to plot their emotions on paper as the morning progresses (Figure 3). The rationale behind this activity is to consider aspects of their morning routine that cause negative emotions, which would then lead to an exploration of potential improvements to the routine.

The image shows a Journey Mapping template. It features a large grid. On the left side, there is a vertical axis with two colored sections: a light blue section at the top labeled 'Positive Experience' and a red section at the bottom labeled 'Negative Experience'. A horizontal dashed line separates these two sections. At the top of the grid, there are two labels: 'Research Subject's Name:' followed by a dotted line, and 'Subject's Journey:' followed by a dotted line. At the bottom of the grid, there are three labels: 'Student Name:', 'Class:', and 'Student Number:', each followed by a dotted line. A horizontal arrow labeled 'Time' points to the right, indicating the progression of the journey. A small green box with a line extending to the right is drawn in the 'Positive Experience' section. In the bottom right corner of the grid, there is a small logo that says 'ICT'.

Figure 3: Journey Mapping

### Stage 3: Ideation

After completing the Stage 2 activities, we moved on to practice Stage 3. This section, Ideation, focuses on techniques for brainstorming. Before beginning ideation, students were divided into groups. Each student received Post-It notes and a marker pen, and a piece of A3 paper was attached to the wall near the group, so students would have to be physically active in order to share their ideas. Students were also made aware of the rules for ideation: we wanted quantity over quality – we were not concerned with whether an idea was good or bad, as that stage comes later – and students were not required to use correct spelling, as long as they tried to use English. The class had a situation or problem, a time limit (usually 10 minutes), and students brainstormed possible solutions to the problem, following the rules of ideation. Students worked through five situations:

1. The layout of this classroom isn't very user-friendly. How can we improve it?
2. Monkeys keep entering my allotment and eating the vegetables. What can I do to stop them?
3. Venice is very popular for tourists but cruise ships are too big for Venice Port. What can be done?
4. There are many elderly people living alone in Kanazawa. It is difficult for them to go to the supermarket or to the doctor, etc. How can we assist them?
5. Every day, restaurants and shops throw away food they didn't sell. How can we reduce the food waste?

These scenarios were designed in order to require students to consider the everyday lives of other humans and empathise with others as they were considering how to solve the problem. To some extent, the scenarios also “expose[d] students to the situations that engineers encounter in their profession” (Crawley, et al., 2007, p.6).

When the time limit for ideation had expired, each group was given another A3 paper, this time with a 2x2 matrix with “Possible/Impossible” on one axis and “Desirable/Undesirable” on the other (Figure 4). By transferring their ideas from the first paper to the 2x2 matrix, students were able to evaluate their ideas and narrow their focus to those that were desirable and possible.

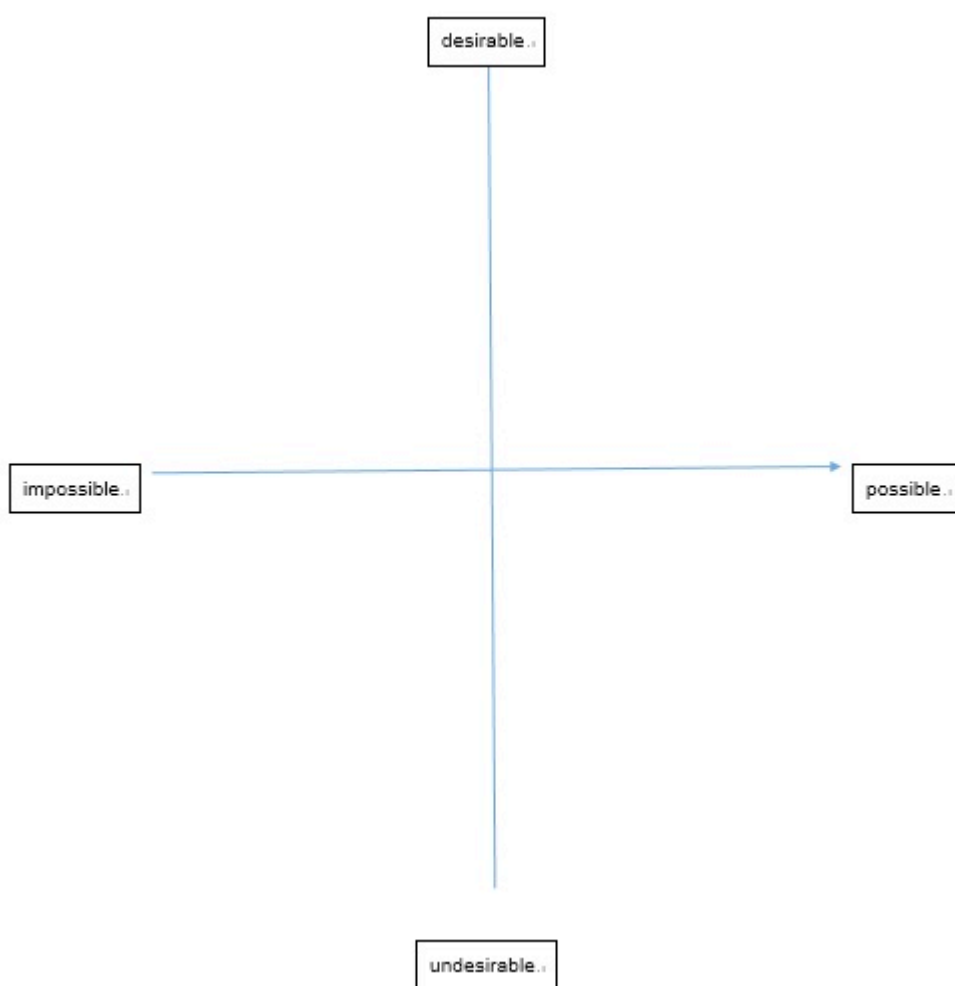


Figure 4: 2x2 Matrix

#### Stage 4: Experimentation

Students also had the opportunity to practice the Experimentation stage by choosing their most desirable and possible idea from one of the five ideation sessions and building a quick and simple prototype using materials available in the classroom.

The following section will explain the students' responses to these activities.

### **Students' Responses**

Following the lessons introducing Design Thinking, students completed a short, informal questionnaire consisting of five questions to gauge their reactions and preferences (see Appendix A). Ten students out of 14 responded positively to the early lessons using the Scientific Method, but the comments were revealing: some thought it was hard to understand and repetitive. Twelve out of 14 responded positively, with comments praising the usefulness of the method for other classes and for improving communication. Given a choice of Scientific Method only, Design Thinking only, or a mix of both, seven students opted for Design Thinking and 7 opted for a mix of both.

The next section outlines the adjustments made to the structure of lessons in the second half of the year.

### **Adjustments**

With the results of the informal questionnaire in mind, and despite being constrained to some extent by the fact that projects were already enshrined in the syllabus, adjustments were made to the lesson structure in the second half of the academic year. Instead of merely informing students of what they would build, I created scenarios that would give them freedom to ideate before beginning to build prototypes. Thus, when students were required to build a mechanical arm, the scenario was that they worked for The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency and they were part of a team that had to design a robot arm to fit on a Mars rover to collect rock samples. When the syllabus stated that students had to build a pump, the scenario was that the school's new campus needed a water feature. In each case, students spent time on the ideation process before prototyping, and they had to complete a lab paper during and after the projects.

The final few weeks of the year were individual projects, but students worked in pairs for the initial ideation stage, in which they had to choose a problem in their everyday life – at home, at school, in their neighbourhood, or daily routine – and think of potential solutions, then evaluate them using the 2x2 matrix. Students had to choose one desirable and possible idea, make and evolve a prototype, and finally reflect on whether they think they solved their problem. Students considered a variety of problems, and prototypes included a smartphone app linking the bus timetable to an alarm so the student would not miss the bus, a smartphone speaker, an alarm clock with a robot arm to hit the student when it was time to wake up, and a combined smartphone holder and charger, which the student successfully made with a laser cutter and LEDs (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Student-made smartphone holder and charger

### Students' Responses

At the end of the year, students completed another brief, informal questionnaire (see Appendix B). The responses were again mostly positive. Students enjoyed the opportunity to do more Design Thinking as they liked making things and trying to solve problems in that way. In terms of completing tasks, some students said that Design Thinking was not helpful due to time constraints, but again most students were in favour, with words like “useful” and “important” repeatedly appearing in responses.

### Conclusions & Recommendations

The fact that Design Thinking is collaborative, creative, and human-centred means that it encourages active learning and is suited to many learning contexts. There are some similarities with task-based language teaching, but Design Thinking – particularly the Interpretation and Ideation stages – could also be used to some extent in language courses that discuss social issues (Taylor, 2018) or do critical thinking, or into language lessons that focus on the four skills. Design Thinking has many benefits, it is versatile and simple to implement, even for non-experts and non-engineers, and it was popular with students, who appreciated the opportunities to improve communication and share ideas with others.

To date, little research has been conducted into Design Thinking and its potential connection to or effects on language learning, group dynamics, and creativity. More insight into such areas would be enlightening and valuable to language teachers.

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## **Appendix A**

1. What did you think of the lessons that used the Scientific Method?
2. Why?
3. What did you think of the lessons that used Design Thinking?
4. Why?
5. If you had to choose one type of lesson, which would you choose: Scientific Method, Design Thinking, or a mix of both?

## **Appendix B**

1. We did more Design Thinking and less Scientific Method in Autumn and Winter. What did you think about this?
2. Do you think Design Thinking helped you to complete tasks? Why or why not?

***Developing Interviewing and Presentation Skills: Using Action Research  
Methodology***

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The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2019  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The goal of the study was to develop interviewing and presentation skills of the course participants, who were being prepared to get into the main stream program as entrants of Secondary Teacher Education Program (STEP). The training program was sponsored by a reputable Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), Institute of Ismaili Studies, London . Besides attending the workshops on the development of interviewing skills, the participants were also given workshops on how to prepare power point presentations which reflected on their learning journey as part of the development of the presentation skills. Mock interviews based on their respective personal statement was designed by the facilitator. The data collection method was done by following the strategy of 'Individual Teacher Action Research', by adapting different models of action research which will be discussed in the sections of; Literature Review and Methodology . From the findings of the study, it has been revealed that the facilitator should have prepared a manual of course objectives and shared with the participants for future interventions. It has also been identified that the addition of the objectives on stress management and the dress code could be added to the manual of the objectives. Sometimes, it was difficult to reach the course participants; due to different time zones, poor internet connections and the availability of course participants. With the efforts of sponsors, course participants and the resource person, the above-mentioned problems were resolved.

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## INTRODUCTION

The different four phases of Individual Teacher Action Research are elicited below in Figure 1. A Reflective Practice of Action research was adapted, during the development of course objectives and classroom teaching.

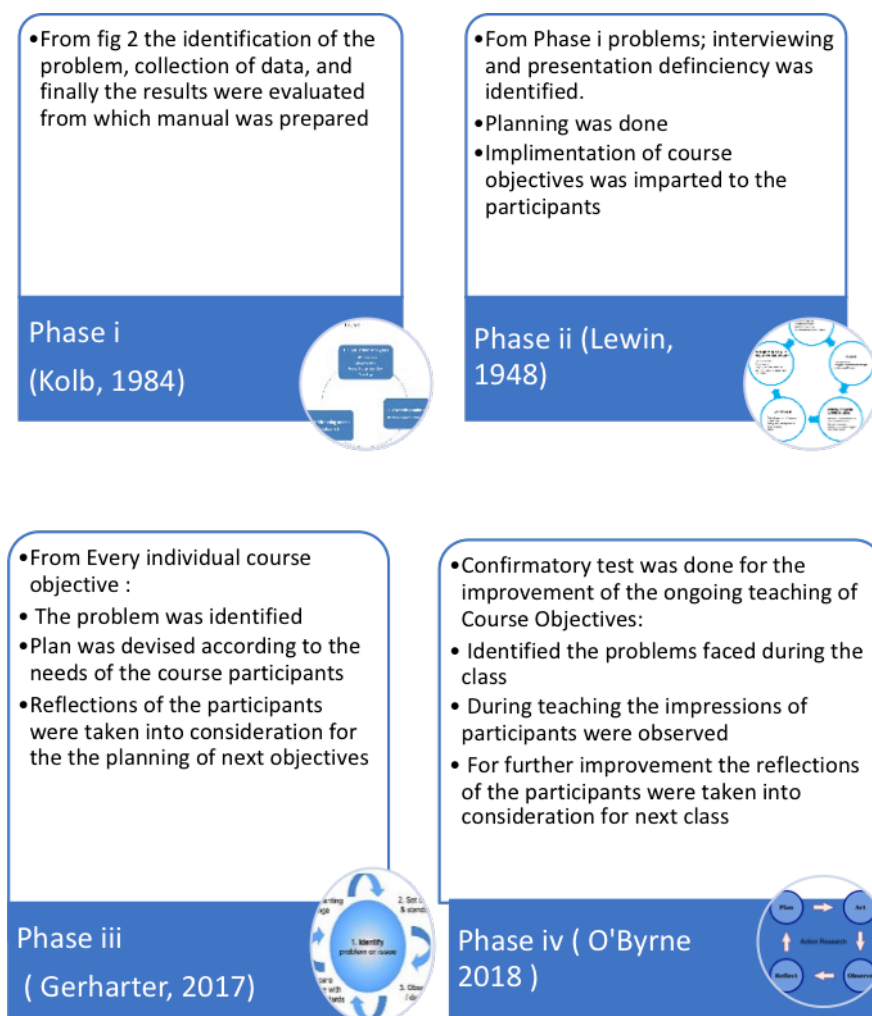


Figure-1 - Four Phases of Study

The focus of the study was to assess the skills and knowledge of the participants in the areas of their interviewing and presentation skills. The main objectives of the workshop were to develop confidence and enthusiasm among the course participants, while appearing for the formal and final interviews.

In addition, the other aspect explored during the study was the input given to the participants on how to be a good presenters while making oral presentations. The presentations were based on the teaching and learning experience termed as ‘ Learning Journey’, which was mostly shared through power point presentations. In addition, the course participants were prepared on how to answer the questions which were designed from their respective personal statements.

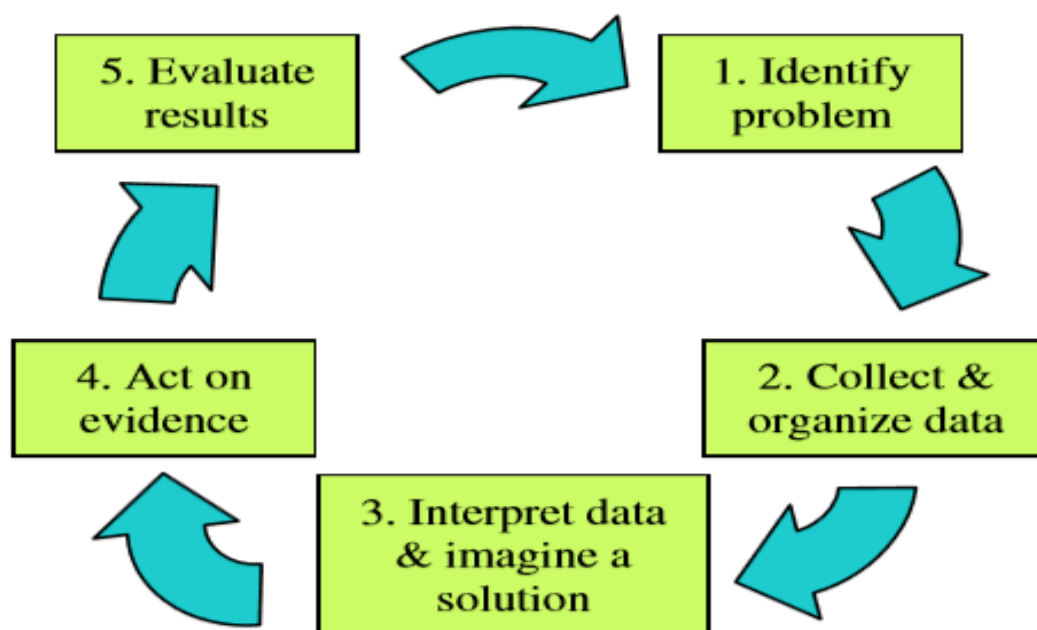
The individual teacher action research was most suitable for the researcher, because the researcher was working with participants who resided in different places, and had different historical background.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The basic steps in formulating action research during the study was initially conceptualized by adapting the Action Research model (Figure 2).

The model explains that firstly, the aspect which a researcher wants to investigate has to be identified, and then the data to be investigated is collected. The data is then organized and interpreted and a solution is identified. After identifying the solution, the researcher tries to implement it and monitors the outcomes by evaluating the results. ( Kolb, 1984 )

During Phase 1 , the model in Figure 2 was adapted in the following manner: The facilitator identified the problem, which was the lack of knowledge in the development of interviewing and presentation skills. Then the data was collected based on the existing knowledge of the course participants. The objectives were then prepared and a manual of course objectives was designed and finally the results were evaluated.



*Figure 2 Phase i*

Action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and situations in which the practices are carried out .

The discussion of action research in the study is self reflective because it is the Individual Teacher Action Research, which tends to generate research towards the enhancement of interviewing and presentation skills of the research participants.

A definition of research is, “the systemic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change”

The research objectives of the study were designed to bring about social changes among the study participants in the development of their interviewing and presentation skills which would in turn support the participants to bring about social changes in the society.

The origin of action research was established by Kurt Lewin, his approach of Action Research is a research in which the researcher intervenes in and during the research. This serves two purposes: firstly according to Kurt Lewin, it will bring about positive change and secondly knowledge and theory will be generated. (Veliet, 2013)

Keeping in view Lewins’ model of action research mentioned above, the researcher kept the various forms of social environment which were affecting the linguistic background of the course participants. Thus, the course objectives were designed and developed according to the language proficiency of the course participants.

Action research is an effective tool in improving the quality of an organization. It is done through collecting data, diagnosing problems, searching for solutions, taking action on developed solutions, monitoring how well the action worked.

Looking into Doyles’ statement of action research, the research under discussion followed the same diagnostic process as stated by Doyle. During the study, data was collected on the proficiency levels of the course participants. In this manner the problem language proficiency was identified, and the course objectives were prepared. After the implementation of every objective the evaluation was done, for further improvement.

It is also important to understand that effective presentation skills are not solely for the fortunate few who are naturally good communicators but that effective presentation skills can be developed in anyone and that we will have the ability to learn how to become highly effective presenters “Effective Presentation”, (2009, June 8)

Considering the review on Effective Presentation mentioned above, the course objectives of presentation skills were designed in the following manner: a) establish self esteem/integrity during the interview b) communicate clearly to the interviewer c) persuade or/ and influence the interviewer d) create a clear message during an interview e) deliver the message in an effective manner f) engage the interviewer g) have one key message throughout the interview, and h) start with a strong opening and ending

Candidates taken during job interviews that make them stand out; These actions can include proper interview behaviour, controlling nervousness or asking intelligent questions. If you have interviewing skills developed, and you ask intelligent questions, you will receive more job offers than those without them. (Interviewing Skills, 2018)

Interviewing skills are actions candidates take during job interviews that make them stand out.

Keeping in view the above mentioned objectives regarding the development of interviewing skills, the course objectives were prepared in such a manner that during the implementation of the course in class, the participants were made aware of how to control nervousness, what postures of sitting to use while being interviewed, and how to ask pertinent questions.

The skills were developed in such a manner that there was an exchange of ideas through a series of mock interviews based on the participants' learning journey and their personal statements.

## STUDY DESIGN

The principle outcomes of a research project; what the project suggested, revealed or indicated. This usually refers to the totality of outcomes, rather than the conclusions or recommendations from them. Findings (n.d.)

The design of the Action Research in the paper is based on the following:

- a) Purpose of the study will be to evaluate the Interviewing and Presentation skills of the participants
- b) The benefits of the individual teacher action research will assist the participants to develop their Interviewing and Presentation Skills

The procedure of the research is illustrated in Table I, which helped the researcher to plan the course objectives and lesson plans.

TABLE 1

Who?	Conducted the study on Course Participants
Where?	In the residents/workplace of the participants
How?	Qualitative method, which were adopted; power point presentations, handouts & discussion with the resource person
Why?	To make the participants proficient enough and to appear for their final interviews, and presentations on their respective learning journey

## METHODOLOGY

An application development methodology says what the phases are and what activities should be undertaken in each phase. (Turbit, 2018)

Three key objectives for the study were:

- a) To assess the knowledge and skills of the subjects, regarding the development of their Interviewing and Presentation Skills.
- b) To enhance the confidence and enthusiasm in the subjects.
- c) To provide hands on experience in the intended skills and knowledge

A program management methodology says a project should be broken down into phases and there should be a plan in place before each phase begins. (Turbit, 2018)

Based on a spiral of steps designed by Lewin (Figure 3) in Phase 2, the facilitator adapted the cycle and then identified the problem, which was a lack of interviewing and presentations skills and then a fact was discovered, that since they were from different historical backgrounds and had different living experiences, their interviewing and presentation skills needed further improvement. Therefore, the plan followed the following steps:

- a) Implementation of the plan
- b) Evaluation of outcomes
- c) Amendments of the teaching strategies
- d) Finally, the amended objectives were incorporated as a next step of teaching

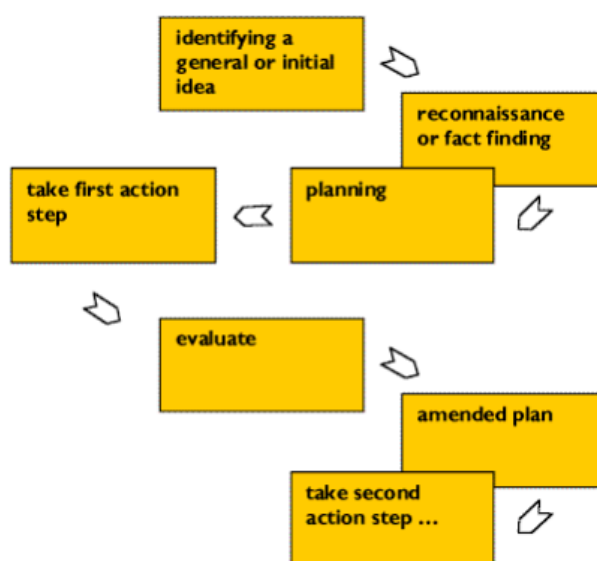


Figure 3 Phase ii

During Phase 3 for every course objective, the problem was identified, a plan was devised and action was taken to implement the plan. During the planning of the next lesson, the reflections were taken into consideration.

During the implementation of the plan the observations were recorded by collecting and analyzing the data and finally the reflections were taken into consideration for the next objective. For every teaching objective a vicious cycle was adapted from the model of action research elicited in Figure 4, which is Phase iii.



Figure 4 Phase iii

The approach listed above, was used to highlight and resolve the problems of the participants, by assessing and improving their interviewing and presentation skills. The overview of the study is the current evaluation of the study, which reports on 36 student-teacher contact hours, of classroom teaching. The workshops were designed to improve the interviewing and presentation skills of the research participants. The central objectives of these workshops were to enhance the confidence and enthusiasm of the subjects. In addition, the focus of the study was to investigate the knowledge of interviewing and presentation skills of the subjects. The objectives of the study were developed in such a manner that the subjects were encouraged to practice the skills of interviewing and presentation.

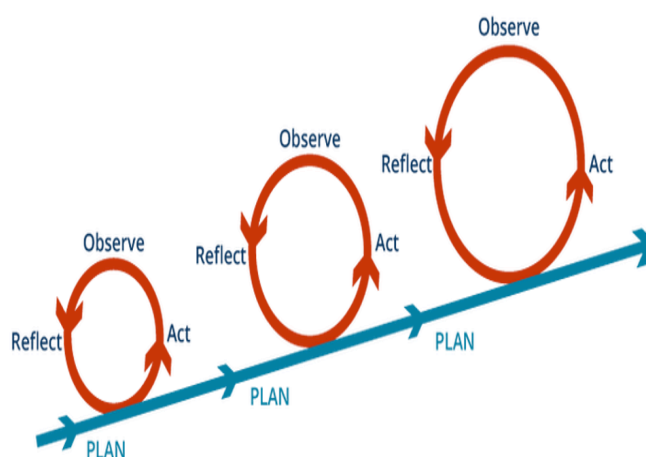


Figure 5 Phase iv

The Cycle of the study during the designing and implementation of course objectives is elicited in Phase iv (Figure 5), which was done in the following manner: The plan was developed, implemented, reflected upon and was finally observed. The overall effect of the course was based on the Model of Action Research: Four Steps to Conduct Action Research by W. Ian O' Byrne depicted in Figure 5. The model is based on the following: a) Identifying the problem b) Collecting the data c) Analyzing and interpreting the data d) Taking action e) Continuing the action research cycle.

The overall aspect of designing, implementing, and evaluating was adapted from the models of action research, elicited in Figures 2, 3, 4 & 5.

The subjects were given two hours per session. The sessions were an average of three classes per week. Therefore, the total number of hours given were approximately 36. In addition, the learners were also facilitated, in the form of mock interviews, to prepare them for the participation in the formal final interviews. The objectives of mock interviews were based on their personal statements. In addition, the slide show presentation on the learning journey was shared with the facilitator. Finally, the participants presented the slide show for the feedback from the facilitator, which was followed by the final presentation, as a graded assignment.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY**

Implementation Research is the study of these efforts with set of basic question: What are we doing? Is it working? For whom? Where? When? How? And Why? In other words, implementation research is an endeavour to understand if and how educational efforts are accomplishing their goals. (Century & Cassata, A., 2016)

The implementation of Individual Teacher Action Research is based on the development of interviewing and presentation skills of the course participants in order to gain admission in STEP. The implementation of the research followed the models are illustrated in figures: 2, 3, 4 & 5

The Cycle of implementation was defined in the following manner:

- A. Identified the objective to be studied: The sponsoring agency and the supervisors of the respective areas, focused on further development of the interviewing and presentation skills of the research participants.
- B. Collected data on the problem: The resource person interacted with the identified candidates. During the process of interaction, it was revealed that they needed workshops on the development of interviewing and presentation skills.
- C. Developed a plan to address the problem: The resource person developed the course objectives (Appendix A) and the details of the objectives in the form of lesson plans.
- D. Implemented the plan: The developed lesson plans were imparted to the learners two times a week with a duration of 3 hrs.
- E. Mock interviews: The facilitator assisted the learners on how to appear in formal interviews based on their respective personal statements.
- F. Slide show presentation: The facilitator guided the participants of the study for the presentation of slide show on their respective Learning Journey

## **FINDINGS**

During the study throughout it was an individual action research which was carried in a logical sequence to improve the interviewing and presentation skills of course participants.

Therefore the finding section is very important because the result is data generated which would help the organizers and facilitator for future planning.

The details of data collection methods is elicited in Figure 1, following the models of; Phase i Kolb, 1984, Phase ii Lewin, 1948, Phase iii Garharter 2017 and Phase iv O' Byrne 2018.

The following points were highlighted, while researching the findings of the study:

- 1) The problem regarding the scheduling of the classes was rectified with the cooperation of the sponsors of the course and high moral of the participants. In this manner the facilitator was able to schedule the classes according to the respective time zones and work schedules, successfully.
- 2) The Course Objectives (see Appendix A) were designed in such a manner that the content was based on the requirement of the formal interviews. After completing the cycle of action during the sessions, it was revealed that the language of some objectives could have been designed with simple language exponents, considering the language proficiency of the recipients. Therefore, it is recommended that in future, while planning a modified course on interviewing and presentation skills, the language should be according to the level of proficiency of the study participants.
- 3) To articulate the ideas regarding the course objectives well during a formal final interview, it was found that it is essential that a manual of overall objectives be shared among the interviewees. This would assist the participants to review the course objectives for the final interviews, confidently.
- 4) In the course objectives two components should have been added, a) Stress management, and b) Dress code. The added objectives would give enthusiasm and confidence among the interviewees during the formal interviews.
- 5) The resource person, instead of giving respective handouts for the commencement of each objective, could have prepared a manual containing the overall course objectives
- 6) When heading towards the conclusion of the course objectives, the facilitator should have at least two sessions with all the study participants as a group, regarding pros and cons of the course objectives. This strategy would not only elevate participants' moral and confidence, but it would also increase the knowledge level of the course participants. In addition, this strategy would also assist the facilitator to bring about required changes for future interventions of the workshops.
- 7) Positive Feedback from the course participants:
  - i) Gained confidence
  - ii) Had clear idea of open ended, close ended questions
  - iii) Understood the knowledge of hypothetical situation
  - iv) Mock interviews assisted the participants to identify their strengths and weaknesses
  - v) Flexibility in the start and end time of the sessions
  - vi) Development of self confidence vii) Skype sessions while discussing the respective objectives gave a clear image during the discussions
- 8) Suggestions for the improvements:
  - i) The objectives of the course could have been shared with the course participants in the form of a booklet
  - ii) Students voiced out that in course objectives, the questions should have been

- designed from simple to complex
- iii) The objectives regarding dress code for the final interviews could be added for future interventions. This would raise the moral of the interviewees
- iv) The objectives for stress management was highly recommended by the course participants

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. At times it was difficult for the resource person to get in contact with the participants due to different time zones and because they were in- service participants.
2. Absence of compiled manual of Course Objectives; Interviewing Skills, Power Point Presentations, and Personal Statements, slackened the pace of the workshops.
3. The compilation of manual containing Course Objectives and Teaching Material, could have been designed as a separate entity. This strategy of planning which presented the Course Objectives and Teaching Material, could have been planned in a formalized manner.
4. Since the given time of 36 hours was very little to cover the Course Objectives, it is recommended that the student – teacher contact hours should be increased for future interventions.
5. The sponsoring agency should have shared ESL and EFL scores with the resource person. This strategy would have made it easy for the facilitator to plan the objectives and teaching material accordingly.

### **CONCLUSION**

The conclusion of Individual Teacher Action research under discussion has reached to a point where a variety of perspectives of action research were used to generate results by using different models, of action research depicted in figures 2,3, 4 & 5.

Throughout the Individual Teacher Action Research, in the paper it is depicted; for every action of implementation, research was done before implementing the research models.

The objective of the study was to enhance the confidence and enthusiasm among the course participants who were opting to get admission into the STEP Program. In order to upgrade EFL/ESL therefore, the sponsoring agency of a reputable organization prepared the participants for further development of their language skills. Therefore, the study participants were prepared to appear for IELTS (Course of British Council).

After completing successfully, the above-mentioned components of English Language, the participants attended the workshops on interviewing and presentation skills of the course participants; therefore, she developed the Course Objectives based on the components of interviewing and presentation skills (see Appendix A). The course of 36 hours, was not sufficient. Therefore, the sponsoring agency should assigned more than 36 hours. In addition, the strategy of Mock Interviews based on the personal statement, were developed and implemented to raise the moral and confidence of the participants, when appearing for the formal interviews. Besides the

training for the formal interviews, the researcher prepared questions for the participants, based on their respective Personal Statement which assisted them to answer the questions, when appearing for the formal interviews (see Appendix B). Development of a slide show on the Learning Journey, was graded because here the examiners had to observe the confidence level of the course participants. The preparation of the slide show on learning journey, was also assisted by the facilitator. Therefore, the action regarding the total student- teacher- hours after researching in the form of participants feedback elicited that 36 hours were not enough for the workshops, due to several reasons; a) time zone b) language proficiency, and c) in service. Therefore, it is suggested that for future planning of the interviewing and presentation workshops hours should be increased.

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## Appendix A

### Course Outline & Course Objectives

Course Title: Development of Interviewing/Presentation Skills

Entry Level: Achieving IELTS level between 6.5 to 8

Credit Hours: 36

#### Details Of Course Objectives

SKILLS	SUB-SKILLS
Interpersonal Skills	Verbal-Non -verbal Communication, Listening, Questioning, Manners, Problem Solving Social Awareness, Self-Management, Responsibility, Accountability & Assertiveness
How to express yourself with confidence in an interview	Eye contact, Modulate the voice, Attire, Boldness, Pausing during the conversation
Three ways to depict Motivation/Enthusiasm	Relaxation of nerves, stay positive, Volunteer the enthusiasm
Types of Interviews	Competency based Interviews and Traditional Interviews
How to handle Questions	Close ended/open ended/ hypothetical Questions
Samples of Interview Questions	Resume Based/ Traditional Questions: Breaking the ice, Interest & Motivation, Education, Strength & Development Areas, Work Situation & Behavioural
Questions to be asked from the interviewees	What it takes to be successful in the program? How will the duties change once the training Program is completed? What are the opportunities for the advancement of the Program?

## Appendix B

The following are few questions which were taken from the Personal Statement / Resume based / Traditional Questions of the course participants:

### **Questions based on Personal Statement:**

Why do you think that this Program is a good fit for you?  
What major challenges are faced by the students in present day world and how would you assist them to overcome the problem?  
How would your goal to become a proficient teacher?  
Why do you think that teaching is a lasting contribution in a society?  
Do you think that you will enjoy studying in the Program which you have applied for?

### **Resume Based/ Traditional Questions:**

Can you introduce yourself?  
Do you think you would be able to enjoy studying in this Program?  
How did you become interested in this Program?  
What do you mean by pluralism and tolerance value?  
Which course have you enjoyed the most?  
What are your strengths and weaknesses?  
How will you achieve your goals to be a proficient teacher?

### **Questions based on Interest/ Motivation:**

What have you accomplished that you are proud of?  
What are your strengths and weaknesses ?  
What have you accomplished or you are proud of?  
What do you mean by critical thinking and how are you going to develop this in your study?



***Transcontextualizing Contemporary Filipino Gay-themed Movies: a Filmographic Education***

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The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2019  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

This study focused on transcontextualizing contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies as vehicle for filmographic education. Utilizing Content Analysis as a qualitative research method, this study deciphered the underlying message of each contemporary Filipino gay-themed movie and its social relevance to the LGBT community. As an approach and analytic strategy, content analysis enables a systematic examination of forms of communication to document patterns objectively (Marshall and Rossman 1995:85). Content analysis is a method for summarizing any form of content through classification, tabulation and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to ascertain its meaning. Results revealed that the different contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies have become instruments in creating new opportunities of respect and acceptance because of the reality they depict in a wide range of viewers. This denotes that with the increasing number of gay-themed movies in the Philippines, the barrier and discrimination will become less than the previous years. It is therefore recommended that transcontextualization should be utilized by students in literary analysis because it dilates ones' eyes to discern realities in the context of filmography.

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## Introduction

During the 1960s in the Philippines, the issue of homosexuality was rarely discussed (Foe, 2014). People have been afraid to talk about it because they are either ignored or mistreated. People who fall in love and commit into a relationship with others of the same gender are often seen or treated as ill, insane, or even dirty. This general apathy has forced gay people to live in the shadows, afraid to speak out (Zhang, 2014). Considered as a highly conservative country, Philippines has hardly ever opened the topic of homosexuality to public discussion or debate, a far cry from many western countries that can be said to have already experienced some kind of a revolution with respect to the equal treatment of gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender individuals.

Mass media pave the way for the LGBT acceptance in all different aspects in Philippine society. Motion pictures can create images of certain people affecting the audience's evaluation of a specific group or situation. And it has clearly created the possibilities of seeing homosexual roles in everyday television and film.

For example the movie *Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros* 2005, which was directed by Auraeus Solito, is a Filipino coming-of-age film about a gay teen who is torn between his love for a young cop and his loyalty to his family. This movie made the rounds of international film festivals, Best Film in Asian Festival of 1<sup>st</sup> films, Singapore and Golden Zenith Award for Best Picture in Montreal World Film Festival 2005.

Now that movies are distributed as DVDs and through the Internet, there are more avenues by which films with gay characters can be disseminated and seen by a wider audience. Following what happened in Hollywood, gay characters who used to be invisible now take on multi-dimensional roles—as heroes, villains, victims, or as neighbours next door. Observers say these turn around in portrayals seem to mirror society's more relaxed attitudes about gay characters in general (Zhang, 2014).

This study revolved around contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies and aimed to unravel its message to the LGBT community since they are slowly becoming more popular nowadays. This study aimed to fill a research gap in terms of explaining and elucidating the message of the gay-themed movies in the mass media in a nation known for its conservative stance on homosexuals. In the process, it hopes to shed light on Filipino media's depiction of this minority group that has long been marginalized in mainstream. This study focused on transcontextualizing contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies as vehicle for filmographic education.

Specifically, it sought to obtain the following objectives:

1. Differentiate contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies;
2. Identify the social relevance of the contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies;
3. Determine the themes of the transcontextualized movies based on cinematic elements through transcontextualization; and
4. Decipher its message to the LGBT community.

## **Conclusions and Implications**

The different contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies have become instruments in creating new opportunities of respect and acceptance because of the reality they depict in a wide range of viewers. This denotes that with the increasing number of gay-themed movies in the Philippines, the barrier and discrimination will be lesser than that of the previous years.

With this, the contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies set the need for an individual to identify himself because it roots to better understanding of him as a person and people surrounding him. Having a better view of oneself affects the way people see him as an individual.

Furthermore, the roles portrayed by the characters in the movies are parallel to that in real life. They represent the members of the LGBT community particularly the gays. They portray the reality of the world and it shows how gays are treated and judged differently by the society.

These movies bring an important message to the viewers especially the LGBT community. These movies encourage self-acceptance among the members of the LGBT community. These movies also suggest that gays should not easily give in to adversity. They should stand firm and fight against discrimination and not let others take advantage of them just because of their sexuality.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are derived from the findings and conclusion.

1. LGBT community should encourage themselves to watch these different contemporary Filipino gay-themed movies and it will make them enhance their confidence to face any challenges.
2. Media should continue in making movies that gives awareness about the LGBT community.
3. Viewers should be open in watching various gay-themed Filipino movies and in some instances, they will learn to understand the situation of the LGBT community and so the tendency is to lessen the gender discrimination especially to the LGBT community.
4. Future researchers should conduct more study and delve deeper on how to transcontextualize Filipino gay-themed movies concerning LGBT community.

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***A Framework of Five Level Learner Autonomy Method and Self-Assessment: A Case Study of Applying Self-Assessment in SAT Test Preparation Phase***

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**Abstract**

In the fields of pedagogy and language assessment, self-assessment has been regarded as an effective teaching and learning method. This method can promote learning in a positive way, and have positive washback on learning, particularly for students who are preparing for high-stake tests. However, in a Chinese context, neither teachers nor students attach much importance to self-assessment, either in classroom or after school. This paper addresses how to apply a new framework, united with Nunan's five level learner autonomy method and self-assessment, in an SAT preparation phase. It is found that the new framework is able to promote learning and learning strategies positively. Also, this paper suggests that, in the initial stage of the implementation of the new framework, some problems need to be taken seriously by teachers.

Key words: Self-assessment; five level learner autonomy method; framework; SAT; test preparation phase

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## Introduction

The score report of Scholastic Aptitude Test, often known as SAT, has been regarded as one of the application requirements by US university admissions (ETS, 2015). SAT is organized and developed by ETS (Educational Testing Service) and is under the supervision of US College Board (Lewin, 2014). The history of SAT dates to 1926. With a history duration of almost 93 years, there has been a few reforms in terms of this test. One of the most recent reforms is related to the test format, and the new updated SAT test was put in practice in 2016 (College Board, 2017).

According to previous studies, in terms of the requirements for university admissions, 67% of the top-ranked universities in US suggested “considered”, which means the scores are considered; 19% “recommended” or “recommended strongly”, which means the universities highly recommend that candidates should have the SAT score report to apply to the universities; 7% “alternative”, which means candidates may use other grades as substitution (Sawyer, 2018). It can be seen that the attitude of US universities to the SAT test scores has always been a reference, which is a reference for selecting and recruiting suitable applicants. As China's study abroad continues to heat up, as of November 2017, the Institute of International Education issued a report stating that between 2016 and 2017, China has been the country with the largest number of international students in the United States for eight consecutive years (OpenDoors, 2017).

The score report of SAT, a high-stake test, has been required by many U.S. universities (Sharpe, 2001). Hence, this test may influence the test-takers throughout the preparation and test-taking phase. In language testing field, there has been a number of studies researching on how a test may affect learners; but in regard with how a test may improve learner awareness and learner autonomy, there is a dearth in the relevant research. On the other hand, according to previous studies, a high-stake test enables learners to become more motivated than they normally do (Dong, 2015). In this case, how to use this force for learners in the test preparation phase remains a question for language testers, pedagogy researchers, and more importantly, the language teachers. In the pedagogical field, the Learner Autonomy method has been promoted as an effective method. For example, the Learner Autonomy method may motivate learners, and by doing so, learners may become more aware of the fact that they should be responsible for their own learning (Benson and Voller, 1997). Also, the Learners Autonomy method can enable learners to self-direct themselves, self-guide themselves, and have a clearer learning goal (Esch, 1997; Littlewood, 1997; Sheering, 1997).

In this light, by mixing the self-assessment theory and the five-level Learner Autonomy method (Nunan, 1997), the present study proposes a new framework, which is applied in an SAT preparation phase to promote the test-taker's preparation, aiming at the formation of the ultimate positive washback of teaching: to motivate the learner to improve the language learning. According domestic and overseas data, along with the perspectives of domestic administration, such as median and tutoring institution, it is acknowledged that Chinese learners obtain a comparatively higher average score at the SAT Mathematics subject; they achieve relatively lower average score at Evidenced-based reading and writing (Yuan, 2014; Gov.cn, 2018). Hence, my present study will implement the new framework to improve learners' awareness

regarding Evidenced-based reading and writing, with a particular focus on writing, by discussing the results found from a case study conducted in China. Future suggestions and directions will also be proved in the end.

## I. Self-assessment and Learner Autonomy method

### 1. Self-assessment

It has long been argued that the implementation of self-assessment in SAT test preparation is a key ingredient for learning, which may exert positive washback on learners and learning (Bailey, 1996). Moreover, self-assessment, on a large scale, is able to promote autonomous learning (Dickinson, 1987; Bailey, 1996). Hence, in terms of the relevant literature, self-assessment and learner autonomy, at least in test preparation, are inseparable; they may even be supplement to each other. In the Chinese educational context, according to previous research, self-assessment is beneficial to both teaching and learning (Leung, 2004; Leung, 2007). However, more often than not, due to various reasons and restraints, e.g. school policy, the learners are not learning in the autonomous way but rather following the rote learning and passive learning (Kember, 2000; Zhu, 2013). What is more, there is research finding suggesting that most learners not understand what self-assessment is, which is another way of saying their awareness has not been raised yet (Dong, 2015). For example, instead of fully understanding the mechanism of what to assess, how to assess, and when to assess, the learners only regard self-checking as self-assessment (Gardner, 2000; Guo, 2016). In this light, there is a need of an outside force to promote learning and to raise learners' awareness in regard to self-assessment. Because, as mentioned, the Learner Autonomy and self-assessment are inseparable, the force should and can be the Learner Autonomy method. There are a few famous Learner Autonomy theoretical frameworks or models, one of which is Nunan's five-level Learner Autonomy framework (Nunan, 1997).

### 2. Five-level Learner Autonomy framework

As shown in Table 1, Nunan's five-level framework is designed to promote learning autonomy. Throughout the learning process, the learners always take dominant role. On the first level, which is very important, the teacher should make learners aware of the learning goal and materials. The learners need to understand and raise their awareness regarding what their short-term and long-term goals are, how to set their goals, what kind of learning strategies they would like to use, and so on. On the second level, after the awareness being raised, though not completely, the learners are involved in the goal setting. On the third level, the learners can modify their goals and tasks, according to the formative learning outcome and feedback. On the fourth level, the learners create new goals and tasks. This level may overlap with the previous levels. On the fifth level, the learners may go out of the classroom, coming into contact with the society and learning from the society, which, gradually, enables the learners to transform to autonomous learners to autonomous people (Littlewood, 1997).

Table 1. Five-level Learner Autonomy framework

Level	Learner action	Content	Process
1	Awareness	Learners are made aware of the pedagogical goals and content of the materials they are using.	Learners identify strategy implications of pedagogical tasks and identify their own preferred learning styles.
2	Involvement	Learners are involved in setting their own goals from a range of alternatives.	Learners make choices among a range of options.
3	Intervention	Learners are involved in modifying and adapting the goals and content of the learning programme.	Learners modify or adapt tasks.
4	Creation	Learners create their own goals and objectives.	Learners create their own tasks.
5	Transcendence	Learners go beyond the classroom and make links between the content of classroom learning and the world beyond.	Learners become teachers and researchers.

### 3. New framework

Nevertheless, in the classroom application, it is somehow problematic with either self-assessment or Learner Autonomy, particularly, with the reliability of self-assessment being the focus of discussion (Gardner, 2000). Also, as for Learner Autonomy method, Nunan (1997) mentions that it is not possible that learners have determination that they should be completely responsible for their own learning throughout the learning process before they enter the classroom; furthermore, they may lack adequate cognitive knowledge regarding the language ability and skills they are going to learn (Nunan, 1997). In the Chinese context, especially in the test preparation, there are various high-stake test stakeholders, such as parents, test-takers, language institute teachers and so on. The stake may increase the difficulty to apply the self-assessment and Learner Autonomy at some point.

In terms of research findings, on the one hand, the implementation of self-assessment and Learner Autonomy can affect learners and learning positively. On the other hand, in specific context, the teacher needs to be prepared when applying the two methods, and learners also need to be prepared, particularly about the target language and skills. Besides, taking into account the above factors, the present research mixed the self-assessment theory and five-level framework and made a new framework (Table 2). First, the teacher and the learners discuss the SAT writing target language points: what SAT tests, what the learning goals are, and how many goals the learner needs to accomplish. Second, the learner designs a set of self-assessment question items. Third,

throughout the preparation phase, the teacher and the learners need to conduct formative feedback and what specific areas the learner needs to modify and develop. Fourth, based on the feedback, the learner will set new goals and continue to self-develop. Last, the learner will search for the authentic materials outside classroom and try to identify all the possible language points that are relevant to SAT target language, and discuss with the teacher continuously. This new framework is based on the five-level framework, taking account of the timing, content, and the principles of self-assessment.

Table 2. New Framework

Level	Learner action	Content	Process	Teacher role
1	Awareness	Learners understand and set learning goal.	Learner decides the materials and learner strategy	Feedback, Suggestion, Director, facilitator
		Teacher provides relevant materials, and constantly communicate with the learner.	Learner decides the learning duration.	
2	Involvement	Learners involve in the goal setting.	Learner design a set of self-assessment goals.	
		Learner decides what he or she needs to learn, particularly the room to develop part in order to self-assess.		
3	Intervention	Weekly feedback and goal adjusting.	Learner modifies the task.	
4	Creation	Learner creates new goal and continue to self-develop.	Learner creates new learning tasks.	
5	Transcend	Locate WL language items in life	Reading fiction, article, speech to locate WL items	

## II. Case study

The research method is, by conducting a case study in China, a mixed method including observation, formative feedback, and interview.

### 1. Candidate

The candidate, anonymously Zhang Hua, used to take SAT preparation course in Beijing, and was familiar with the test format. Also, she had been learning English

since junior high school, and her language level was equivalent to upper-intermediate. After receiving her first SAT score report, she was not very satisfied with her report, and decided to prepare for the test and take it again. Hence, on the recommendation by the language institute, I contacted Zhang Hua and conducted a pre-interview (semi-structured) with her. After the interview, I found that she had three major features: first, Zhang Hua was autonomous due to the impact of the SAT (Pintrich and Schunk, 1996); second, Zhang Hua was familiar with the target language of SAT writing (Nunan, 1997); third, however, Zhang Hua was unfamiliar with what SAT specifically tests and the specific requirements of the writing subject. As for the research regarding self-assessment development and Learner Autonomy, it is important to recruit a candidate who is autonomous on some level, understanding the target language but not completely. Hence, taking into account the above features, Zhuang Hua was a very suitable candidate.

## 2. Rationale behind the proposed research method

There are three features of the research. First, there is a need to include continuously formative monitoring. In this research, the candidate takes dominant role and gradually direct the assessment; the researcher (the teacher) communicates with the candidate on the basis of two or three days, along with providing feedback. Second, the timing is of importance. The research is conducted chronologically. The candidate suggested that she have almost six hours per day to prepare for the test. Third, this research is designed specifically for Zhang Hua, the candidate, with a particular focus on her self-assessment. Hence, considering the above features, the appropriate research method should be a case study (Duff, 2007; Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2011).

## 3. Case study

Table 3. Self-assessment mechanism

Level	Learner action	Content	Process	Teacher role
1	Aware of rubric	TL – understand and raise awareness	TL = construct + scoring	Supervisor, Facilitator
		Online resources search	Resources collection	
2	Goal setting and materials	Set the goal	Learner sets the goal and makes the syllabus	
		Design self-assessment syllabus		
3	Weekly self-assessment and room to develop	Daily practice, feedback on two-day basis, weekly feedback and summary	Modify goals and materials on weekly basis	
4	Development	Mock test on two-week basis	Learner, based on the specific condition, sets new goals.	
5	Transcend	Fiction excerpt, speech	Learner read and locate WL items	

As mentioned, Zhang Hua should and needs to take dominant role in the whole process, with the teacher (the researcher myself) as the monitor and supervisor. On the basis of the new framework, Zhang Hua and I together developed a self-assessment mechanism (Table 3). The whole process lasted for two months (from 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2-18 to 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2018). On the first level, starting from 3<sup>rd</sup> July, in order to make Zhang Hua more aware of the complete list of target language in SAT writing, I suggested that she should search on the Internet and try to find as much information as possible, and analyze the information. Within one week, I found that the teacher should be available, be involved, and help the learner, instead of being absent and leaving all the work to the learner. Otherwise, the learner might be demotivating at the beginning. Hence, on this level, we, together, searched for, collected, and collated the information, and then analyzed the information. In the first week of July, Zhang Hua gradually moved on to the next level. She started to analyze the information, and tried to make a list of questions which served as the self-assessment material. However, I found that the teacher, again, should not be totally absent. I conducted an interview with Zhang Hua and found that she needed a teacher as a consultant: if she met with problems, there should be a teacher available. Rather than being there all the time, I decided to motivate her and provide her with assistance via WeChat (an equivalent to Twitter). In a few days, I found Zhang Hua beginning to be familiar with the process and feel herself more than she did just a few days before. Successfully, at the end of this level, Zhang Hua and I finally made the list of 28 self-assessment questions (according to the six target language points of SAT writing: Development, Organization, Effective language use, Conventions of Usage, Sentence structure, Conventions of Punctuation), which gave her a sense of accomplishment. As we can see, the teacher should be available on some level or at least at some particular time of the level, with adequate direction, guidance, and motivation, particularly at the first two levels. Then, the next level went on well: Zhang Hua, in accordance with the time schedule she and I made, self-assessed herself on weekly basis. Because the self-assessment questions were made by her and me, she was very familiar with all the items, and the self-assessment went well too. Each week, Zhang Hua would work on four official tests provided by The Official SAT Study Guide (published by the College Board) and “Cracking the SAT with 5 Practice Tests” (published by Princeton Review). For each test, Zhang Hua should finish it strictly within 35 minutes, which was required by the authentic SAT testing situation (Messick, 1996). After finishing each test, she would self-assess by using the 28-question list. For example, she answered the questions via WeChat or computer. By scanning the QRcode, she was able to answer the questions (Appendix 1), similarly to answering survey questions, and also typing her analysis about the reason that she answered some questions incorrectly. By submitting the survey questions via WeChat or Internet, she would inform me. Then, I could see her answers by logging on the website (Zhou, 2016), and I would download her answers and analysis, summarized the information in an Excel form, and sent it back to her within the day. In this form, I would highlight the main and new problems. On receiving the form, Zhang Hua would move to the next level. She would check the form and start to summarize her problems and set new learning goals, which led to the goal and material modification. As we can see, on this level, Zhang Hua found her new problems, set her new goals, and developed herself. Moreover, the last level (Transcend) was actually embedded in the latter half of the process. I encouraged her to search for speech, literature excerpts and so on. Then she would try to locate and highlight the language use which

resonated with the SAT writing target language points. For example, after finishing the Official Guide tests, Zhang Hua found the Pearl Harbor Speech delivered by U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on December 8, 1941. She found that President Roosevelt used a number of comparison techniques in the speech to emphasize the importance of starting a war and to increase the power of the language. Then, Zhang Hua highlighted all the comparison techniques in the speech and sent it (Appendix 2) to me for a later discussion via WeChat.

#### 4. Findings

This self-assessment enables Zhang Hua to constantly understand her problems and new emerging problems, and to be aware of the areas where she needs further development, which, in turn, presents a positive washback on her learning. The most important washback effect is that Zhang Hua's awareness regarding learning, test, and the relationship between test and learning were largely raised. After her recent SAT test in Hong Kong, I conducted a follow-up interview with her, when she said that the self-assessment was helpful for her. Before, the classroom was dominated by the teacher, and she as the learner was not able to completely understand her own problems as such. So, she was not able to self-develop. In contrast, during self-assessment, Zhang Hua had the ownership in her own learning: from the first level to the last, she was leading the class, while I, the teacher, acted as the director and consultant (Esch, 1997), which suggested the shift of the roles of teacher and learner. More importantly, during the self-assessment, Zhang Hua understood SAT much deeper and her second time SAT score was enhanced, which suggests that this learning method positively affected her language learning and improved her language proficiency (Messick, 1996). We may not be able to interpret her score and the accountability of the score may need further research. But according to Zhang Hua, her awareness was raised, and she positively faced the future study too.

#### III. Discussion and suggestion

The design of the new framework is based on Nunan's five-level framework, with the embedding of the three strands of self-assessment: when, how, and what to assess. Throughout the whole self-assessment, the learner was able to understand the duration of self-assessment, the detailed content and strands of self-assessment, and the specific methods of self-assessment. Then, the learner began to be responsible for her learning. However, one limitation is the time in this research: only two months. According to previous research and official data, normally a three-month preparation phase is able to assist the test-takers to enhance their score (BALEAP, 2004). Hence, the time duration is one major limitation. Also, at the beginning of the research, particularly the first two levels did not go well, which suggested the importance of teacher's availability and motivation. Overall, the implementation of the new framework met up the research expectation, and had positive washback on learning and learner. In accordance with the follow-up interview, the candidate also said that this learning method was effective for her and she felt happier than she did before. Yet, whether the framework is able to affect learners and learning in the long term still remains question, and the findings from this research do not provide me with enough evidence to say more (Dong, 2018).

Based on the findings, there are two suggestions provided. First, not all the learners are suitable candidates. Under the supervision of the researcher (the teacher), necessary pre-interviews are of importance (Venuleo, Mossi, and Salvatore, 2016). Second, as for language institution, due to local school policy and other factors, there is possibility that it is of difficulty to apply the new framework. Hence, it is suggested that the framework should be applied little by little, starting as a case then gradually becoming a project or a class; it is highly not suggested that the institution implement the framework on a large scale. Third, there should be effective and constant communication among learners, parents, institutions, and other stakeholders. More often than not, the language institutions have already been commercialized (Hogan and Thompson, 2017). Under this circumstance, the institutions may focus on the profit a lot; the parents and learners may focus on the instant success more (Kang, 2014). Therefore, a constant communication is essential throughout the implementation of the framework in order to raise not only the learners' awareness but also other stakeholders'.

#### IV. Conclusion

By mixing Nunan's five-level Learner Autonomy framework and self-assessment, the present study proposed a new framework, and implemented this new framework in an SAT test preparation phase. According to the case study findings, for suitable candidates or test-takers, the implementation of the new framework is able to promote their motivation and autonomy, to appropriately raise their awareness regarding the specific target language of the construct of SAT, and indirectly to improve their score that on some level reflects their language proficiency improvement. However, the findings also suggest that a constant communication among stakeholders is important. Moreover, in certain contexts, the teacher should be available on some levels, particularly on the first two levels. Last, test-takers, teachers, institutions, and schools should implement the framework effectively and adjust to the local contexts.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1 SAT writing and language self-assessment questions

<b>Expression of ideas - the art of writing</b>									
Development									
1.	Proposition 主题：添加、修改或保留主题句等与篇章或段落主要思想相关的句子								
2.	Support 支持原文观点：添加、修改或保留能支持文章观点或主张的内容								
3.	Focus 是非理由题：添加、修改、保留或删除与文章目的有关的内容								
4.	Quantitative Information 图标信息：通过运用图标中的数据来加强文章的准确性								
Organization									
5.	Logical Sequence 逻辑顺序：确保文章的内容在逻辑上安排合理								
6.	Introductions, Conclusions and Transitions 引入、总结、过渡：改善开头段、结尾段以及段落之间的衔接方式								
Effective Language Use									
7.	Precision 精确：根据文章内容选择更准确合适的词汇								
8.	Concision 简洁：语言上表述清晰、无赘余内容。								
9.	Style and Tone 风格和语气：词汇选择上应该贴近文章的整体行文风格或者符合某种修辞目的								
10.	Syntax 句法：通过结合句子来改善文章的语言或者实现某种修辞目的								
<b>Standard English conventions: the craft of language</b>									
Conventions of Usage									
11.	Pronoun Clarity 代词明确：识别并改正指代不明的代词								
12.	Possessive Determiners 物主代词：区分物主代词、缩略形式和副词								
13.	Agreement 一致性：确保主谓之间、代词和先行词、名词之间在语法上的一致性								
14.	Frequently Confused Words 易混单词：有效区分容易混淆的词汇								
15.	Logical Comparison 逻辑比较：识别并改正不同类型事物之间的比较								
16.	Conventional Expression 习惯表达：识别并改正不符合习惯用法的表达方式								
Sentence Structure									
17.	Sentence Boundaries 句子完成：识别并改正语法上不完整的句子								
18.	Subordination and Coordination 逻辑关联词：识别并改正句子之间使用错误的逻辑关联词								
19.	Parallel Structure 平行结构：识别并改正平行结构错误								
20.	Modifier Placement 修饰语位置：识别并改正与修饰语有关的错误，包括悬垂修饰语和误置修饰语								
21.	Inappropriate shifts in Verb Tense, Mood and Voice 动词时态、语气、语态								
22.	Inappropriate shifts in Pronoun Person and Number 人称代词和数								
Conventions of Punctuation									
23.	Items in a Series 逗号、分号、并列：运用逗号；有时候也会用分号连接并列的句子								
24.	Nonrestrictive and Parenthetical Elements 逗号：非限制性成分和插入语								
25.	Possessive Nouns and Pronouns 撇号：名词所有格和代词								
26.	Unnecessary Punctuation 多余的标点：识别并删除不必要的标点								
27.	End-of-Sentence Punctuation 句末标点								
28.	Within-sentence Punctuation 句中标点								

## Appendix 2

### PEARL HARBOR SPEECH

Franklin Delano Roosevelt December 8, 1941

Mr. Vice President, Mr. Speaker, Members of the Senate, and of the House of Representatives:

Yesterday, Dec. 7, 1941 – a date which will live in infamy – the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.

The United States was at peace with that nation and, at the solicitation of Japan, was still in conversation with its government and its emperor looking toward the maintenance of peace in the Pacific.

Indeed, one hour after Japanese air squadrons had commenced bombing in Oahu, the Japanese ambassador to the United States and his colleagues delivered to the Secretary of State a formal reply to a recent American message. While this reply stated that it seemed useless to continue the existing diplomatic negotiations, it contained no threat or hint of war or armed attack.

It will be recorded that the distance of Hawaii from Japan makes it obvious that the attack was deliberately planned many days or even weeks ago. During the intervening time, the Japanese government has deliberately sought to deceive the United States by false statements and expressions of hope for continued peace.

The attack yesterday on the Hawaiian islands has caused severe damage to American naval and military forces. Very many American lives have been lost. In addition, American ships have been reported torpedoed on the high seas between San Francisco and Honolulu.

Yesterday, the Japanese government also launched an attack against Malaya.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked Guam.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.

Last night, the Japanese attacked Wake Island.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked Guam.

Last night, Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands.

Last night, the Japanese attacked Wake Island.

This morning, the Japanese attacked Midway Island.

Japan has, therefore, undertaken a surprise offensive extending throughout the Pacific area. The facts of yesterday and today speak for themselves. The people of the United States have already formed their opinions and well understand the implications to the very life and safety of our nation.

As commander in chief of the Army and Navy, I have directed that all measures be taken for our defense. But always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us.

No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory.

I believe I interpret the will of the Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost, but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again.

Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory and our interests are in grave danger.

With confidence in our armed forces, with the unbounding determination of our people, we will gain the inevitable triumph – so help us God.

I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, Dec. 7, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese empire.

## PEARL HARBOR SPEECH ↵

Franklin Delano Roosevelt December 8, 1941 ↵

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## ***A Study on Cochlear-implanted Children's Early First Language Development***

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the cochlear-implanted (CI) children's early language development status. It mainly focuses on two perspectives: 1, whether and how would daily parent-child interaction influence CI children's special belated first language (L1) acquisition; and 2, are there any similarity or differences between the L1 acquisition of CI children and children with normal hearing ability. The study recruited 16 young CI children (aged 3-8 years old), who were born with no hearing ability and received cochlear implantation in January to February 2018. In the beginning of the study, the participants' parents were informed and consented to take several home video clips containing daily parent-child interactions. After 8 months of cochlear implantation, the participants were invited to participate in a language comprehension test. The results of a Pearson correlation coefficient show that, there is a significant positive correlation between the parent-driven efficient communication and participants' test performance, while child-driven efficient communication does. This indicates that proper parenting methods have a significant positive influence on CI children's language development, at least at the early stages. Meanwhile, participants' language test performances showed higher correction rate in noun comprehension, moderate to low correction rate in adjective comprehension, and zero response to verbs. This implies an acquisition order of noun → adjective → verb, which is the same as standard L1 acquisition. However, the mean response time (RT) captured in their language tests is significantly longer than that of normal-hearing children within the same age range.

Keywords: cochlear-implantation, L1 acquisition

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## **1. Introduction**

The process of first language (L1) acquisition is always a mesmerizing field in linguistics. Countless researchers in this field have done in-depth work of L1 acquisition. However, less is known about how L1 is acquired by children with special needs, especially, children with severe hearing impairment by birth. Modern medical technology has developed multiple quite mature advanced methods to enable hearing-impaired patients to hear, among which is realized by manmade cochlea implantation (CI). With the support of society and government funding, infants with hearing impairment can have CI at a very young age. Interestingly, with their hearing ability reconstructed, L1 acquisition still seems to be a big struggle for most, if not all, of these patients. Therefore, this study aims to examine a particular side of this issue: CI children's parent-child interaction and its potential relation with CI children's early lexical development.

## **2. Background research and literature reviews**

### **2.1 Cochlea implantation and its influences on hearing-impaired children**

There are two types of patients with severe hearing-impairment: those who are born with hearing ability but have lost it by accidents and those who are born with impaired hearing system. Based on observation, those who could hear and speak before hearing impairment will return to normal lives right after CI surgery. They can speak and hear like they used to and acclaim that the manmade cochlea almost feel like their own. However, for those who were born without hearing ability, it seems that the situation is far more complicated.

Manmade cochlea is implanted into the human brain to replace the malfunctioning neurons in the impaired cochlea, hence help the brain to receive acoustic information. Therefore, the technology is widely used on newborn children who showed no neuron responses to sounds, hoping that they could hear like normal people do. Clinical hearing ability tests have proved that, after CI surgery, these children can achieve a close to normal level of hearing. The success of regaining hearing ability seems to be the first steps of acquiring their first language. However, these young children all have experienced difficulties in learning their first language.

### **2.2 Current challenges for hearing-rebuilt children**

These hearing-rebuilt children are reported to face multiple challenges in language learning. Firstly, since most of them are very young when receiving cochlea implantation, the physical discomforts that the machine brings are very likely to distract them. In almost all the cases that I have observed, and based on the parents' reports, these children have a tendency to remove the sound receiver attached to the back of their head when the adults were not paying attention.

There are other challenges as well. For these children, since they are not used to sound, they might easily be distracted by any source of acoustic input and could not concentrate on the informational parent-child communications. However, for young children, parent-child communications are the most efficient language developing points. The missing of such interactions will lead to the lack of meaningful language input.

The lack of social support is also a challenge for these children. Since there are few specialized schools or daycare center for these children, they could not enjoy enough amounts of proper social activities, which other children do in kindergartens. It is widely believed that for most children, one of the peaks of L1 development happens at the point when they attend school, where they can learn and practice their language skills. If this is the case, then for hearing-rebuilt children, they might not be able to enjoy such benefit and miss a perfectly productive environment.

### **2.3 Research Questions**

Although there might be many factors that put CI children through extra struggles in their L1 acquisition process, this study will only be focusing on one main issue: will joint-attention/informative parent-child interaction positively influence CI children's early L1 acquisition? To better examine this issue at hand, three related research questions are raised:

1. Is CI children's belated early lexical development order different from that of normal developing children's? If so, what is their acquisition order?
2. What types of parent-child interactions occur among CI children's families? Is there any uniqueness in their parent-child interactions comparing to others?
3. Will a specific type of parent-child interactions influence CI children's early lexical development? If so, what is this type and how does it influence?

## **3. Method**

### **3.1 Participants**

The target participants were 16 young children, between 3 and 8 years of age, who was diagnosed with severe hearing loss at birth and received cochlear implantation (CI) in early 2018. All participants come from the same region in Guangdong Province, China, and their caretakers (parents, grandparents, etc.) speak the same dialect as well as standard Mandarin Chinese. They have no exposure to sound of any kinds before CI surgery, nor received any forms of education in sign languages.

### **3.2 Pre-test preparation**

Before receiving CI surgeries, potential participants and their parents attended a briefing section of the research. Parents who signed the consent forms were informed to take several home videos, with the minimal length of 15 minutes each, containing daily parent-child activities. Videos were submitted once a month or a 8-month period. These videos are meant to capture the natural parent-child interaction patterns of each participant, therefore no specific instructions were given to the parents regarding to the content of these videos. In addition, since this research did not aim to test any particular parental methodology or theory of language acquisition, no instruction or advice on how to communicate with the participants after CI surgeries was provided to the parents. In other words, all videos collected from the participants' parents would contain only parent-child interactions occurred in a natural, non-intervened setting.

### 3.3 Materials

The participants will take a set of language development tests after 6 months of acquiring hearing ability. There already exist a number of various tests to monitor the development of the CI patients' hearing ability, but there are only few tests that are devoted to their language development.

In order to create such a set of language development tests, I have read some literatures on L1 acquisition, specifically of Chinese speaking children. Among the studies that I have read, I found Ho's (2007) work on early L1 acquisition and children's cognition development enlightening. In her work, she marked certain behaviors and abilities as milestones of language comprehension and production development and specified children's age of each milestone's occurrences. For example, a child would recognize the calling of his/her name by the age of 1 year and 6 months old, and should be able to recognize familiar household items by the age of 2. Since Ho's (2007) work only adapts to children with normal hearing ability, the "year of age" she used does not only refer to the child's birth age; it could also refer to the child's hearing age, in other words, the time span of exposure to child's L1. Considering this point, I created a set of language development tests for my participants based on Ho's (2007) framework.

There are 2 sections in my language comprehension tests. Section 1 only tests the participants' vocabulary size in familiar items. According to the interviews with the parents, the target participants did not have much social life due to their physical condition before the CI surgery. Most of them spent time with their caretaker (sometimes grandparents, or nannies) at home all day long. This information indicates that the participants should be very familiar with household items even without knowing their names. In Ho's (2007) study, children at age 2 should reach a status in which they have no difficulty in acknowledging familiar items by their names. Considering that the target participants are 3- to 6- year-olds with a hearing-age of only 8 months, on one hand, their cognitive development should allow them to recognize each item, on the other hand, their young hearing age might not be sufficient enough to map the nouns they have just acquired to the familiar items. Level I tests are designed in order to find out if this conflict actually exists.

Section 1: Comprehending familiar nouns	
<p>Task 1: Identifying familiar items</p> <p>Contents:</p> <p>Target words:</p> <p>杯子 碗 苹果 衣服 鞋子 小狗 小鸟 猫咪 太阳 月亮 cup bowl apple shirt shoe dog bird cat sun moon</p> <p>Question formats:</p> <p>1. 哪个是[target word]? Which is [target word]?</p> <p>2. [target word]在哪里?</p>	<p>Task 2: Identifying body parts</p> <p>Contents:</p> <p>Target words:</p> <p>手 脚 头 鼻子 嘴巴 眼睛 耳朵 头发 脖子 身体 hand foot head nose mouth eye ear hair neck body</p> <p>Question formats:</p> <p>1. 指一下他的[target word]. Point to his/hear [target word].</p>

Where is [target word]?	2. 他的[target word]在哪里? Where is his/her [target word]?
3. 指一下[target word]. Point to [target word].	3. 哪里是他的[target word]? Where is his/her [target word]?

Fig.1 Sample content of language development test (Section 1)

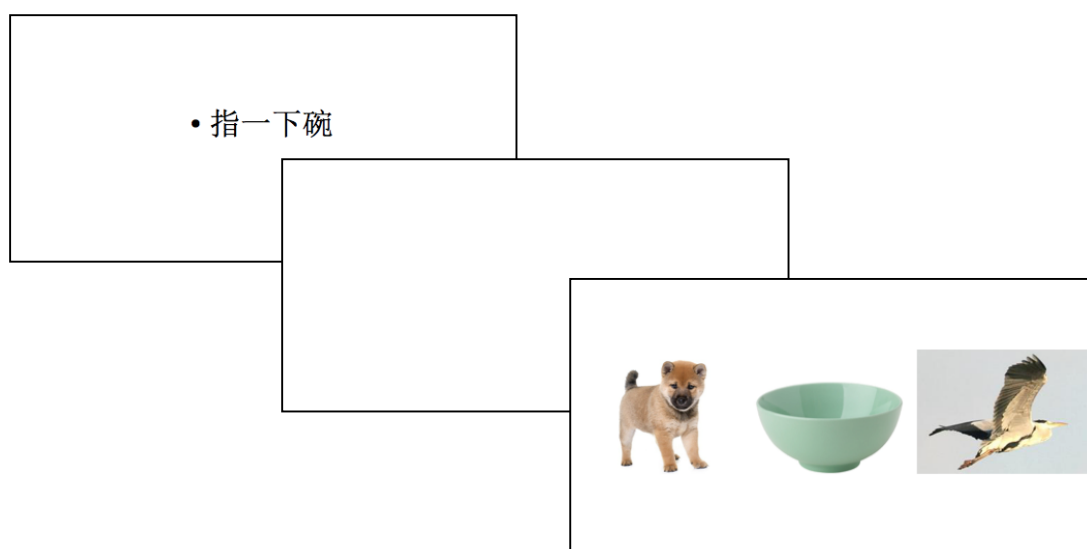
**Procedure:**

At the beginning of each test item, a question containing the target word will show up on the screen. The mother/caretaker will read out the question loud and clear. Then after 500 ms, the participant will be provided a picture containing several items (including the target item and some distractors). The participant is expected to point out the target items upon hearing the questions. If the participant showed no response, the mother/caretaker could repeat the question up to three times. The tests will be programed and run by E-prime, and the test results (the correctness and response time of each test item) will be collected. One sample item from the actual test is shown as below:

Step 1: sentence containing target word for the parent/caretaker to read out.

Step 2: blank screen lasts for 500 ms.

Step 3: three items containing the target item appear on the screen. The participant should point to the item according to what they have heard.



Section 2 test will be focusing on the recognition of basic physical concepts. According to Ho (2007), the acquisition of this specific ability starts at around 2 years of age and will reach adult-like level at around 4 years of age. More complicated and conceptual nouns and even adjectival phrases are included in understanding these physical concepts, therefore I put the test of these more complex lexical items in a more advanced difficulty level comparing to Section 1 test.

Section 2: Comprehending physical concepts
<p>Target concepts:</p> <p>Task 1: opposite physical concepts 大/小 ; 干净/脏 ; 高/矮 big/small; clean/dirty; tall/short</p> <p>Task 2: basic physical concepts Colors (红 red, 黄 yellow, 蓝 blue, 绿 green, 黑 black, 白 white) Quantity (多 many, 少 few)</p> <p>Question formats:</p> <p>1. 哪个是[target word]的? Which is [target word]?</p> <p>2. 哪个比较[target word]? Which is more [target word]? (Comparative formation)</p>

Fig.2 Sample content of language development test (Section 2)

The procedure of this section resembles that of the previous section.

### 3.4 Data collection

#### Video data coding scheme

The purpose of collecting pre-test videotapes is to obtain data of the parent-child interaction patterns. More specifically, as I have mentioned in the previous section, I will be targeting actions that behave like meaningful communication. In Tomasello and Todd's (1983) work on lexical development, they have developed a systematic coding scheme for parent-child joint attention from a behaviorism point of view. Although their work focused mainly on very young infants (15- to 21-month olds) with unimpaired hearing ability, their coding scheme did not contain much information from verbal language. Therefore, I adapted the main structure of their coding scheme and rewrote one as the coding method for this research:

1. Child initiated the interaction and parent actually followed and focused on the same object for a minimum of 3 seconds (child-driven communication);
2. Parent initiated the interaction and child actually followed and focused on the same object for a minimum of 3 seconds (parent-driven communication);
3. Child looked at parent for confirmation (child was aware of their mutual focus on the same object).

The first two criteria are complementary to each other, meaning that a meaningful communication occurrence will either fall in the first or the second pattern. However, the third one can happen to both child- and parent-driven interactions. As for the "3-second" standard mentioned in the first two criteria, in Tomasello and Todd's (1983) study, they have explained that any focus that is shorter than 3 seconds can be proved to be meaningless. Considering the third criterion can happen to both parent- and child-driven communications, there are actually 4 types of communication patterns that will be recorded in the coding of the videos:

Type A: Child-driven communication

Type A\*: Child driven communication w/ child confirmation

Type B: Parent-driven communication

Type B\*: Parent-driven communication w/ child confirmation

#### Video coding procedures

Each video was clipped to 15-min length containing only target content (parents' camera setting time etc. was removed). The 4 types of communication patterns were identified from the videos and the numbers of their occurrences in each video as recorded. After handling one participant's all videos throughout the 8-month period, the average numbers of occurrences of the 4 types of communication was noted as their communication pattern. Specifically, Type A and B communication patterns were recorded by times of their occurrences. Type A\* and B\* (communication /w child confirmation) was noted as ratios. For example, if, on average, a participant has 10 occurrences of Type A communication, which contains 3 occurrences of child confirmation, and 20 occurrences of Type B communication, which contains 10 occurrences of child confirmation, then this participant's communication pattern gathered from his (imagined) videos would be displayed in Fig. 3:

Participant No.	Type A Count	Type Ratio	A*	Type B Count	Type B Ratio
Imagined	10	0.30	20		0.50

Fig. 3 Language development test data collection

The language development test was compiled and run by E-prime, which would automatically capture participants' detailed responses, including item options and response times (RTs), to each test item. After participant had finished the test, results would be computed by DataAid and exported to the research computer.

## 4. Results and analysis

### 4.1 Parent-child communication patterns

Following the coding scheme adapted from Tomasello and Todd (1983), two main types of communication patterns (child-driven and parent-driven), each with two variations (with or without child confirmation), were picked out from multiple home activity videos collected from the participants. For convenience reasons, I have marked the two communication types and its variations as:

Type A: Child-driven communication

Type A\*: Child-driven communication with child confirmation

Type B: Parent-driven communication

Type B\*: Parent-driven communication with child confirmation

The average counts of these communication occurrences within a 15-min long parent-child interaction and its child confirmation ratio is listed in Fig. 4.

Participant No.	Type Counts	A Type Ratio	A* Type Counts	B Type Ratio	B*
1	22.30	0.373	9.00	0.222	
2	21.00	0.684	16.75	0.508	
3	13.33	0.425	16.00	0.133	
4	6.67	0.500	29.00	0.471	
5	10.00	0.500	26.00	0.654	
6	3.00	0.667	8.00	0.750	
7	15.00	0.533	19.00	0.158	
8	15.33	0.044	18.67	0.089	
9	6.00	0.667	8.00	0.125	
10	23.00	0.551	22.33	0.448	
11	10.70	0.500	23.00	0.232	
12	13.00	0.308	7.00	0.00	
13	3.67	0.545	17.67	0.623	
14	13.00	0.692	11.00	0.364	
15	6.50	0.385	9.50	0.263	
16	16.00	0.323	18.70	0.214	

Fig. 4 detailed joint-attention patterns

From the form we can see that, among the 16 participants, more preferred parent-driven communication compared to child-driven communication. A generalization of participants' communication type preference is presented in Fig.5.

	Child-driven	Parent-driven	No-preference
Participant Counts	3	6	7

Fig. 5

Fig. 4 also reflects the situation of child confirmation ratio happening in both child- and parent-driven communications. On average, 48.1% of child-driven communications contain the action of child confirmation, which occurs in 32.8% of parent-driven communication. The following chart depicts the individual differences of child-confirmation ratios in both types of communication.

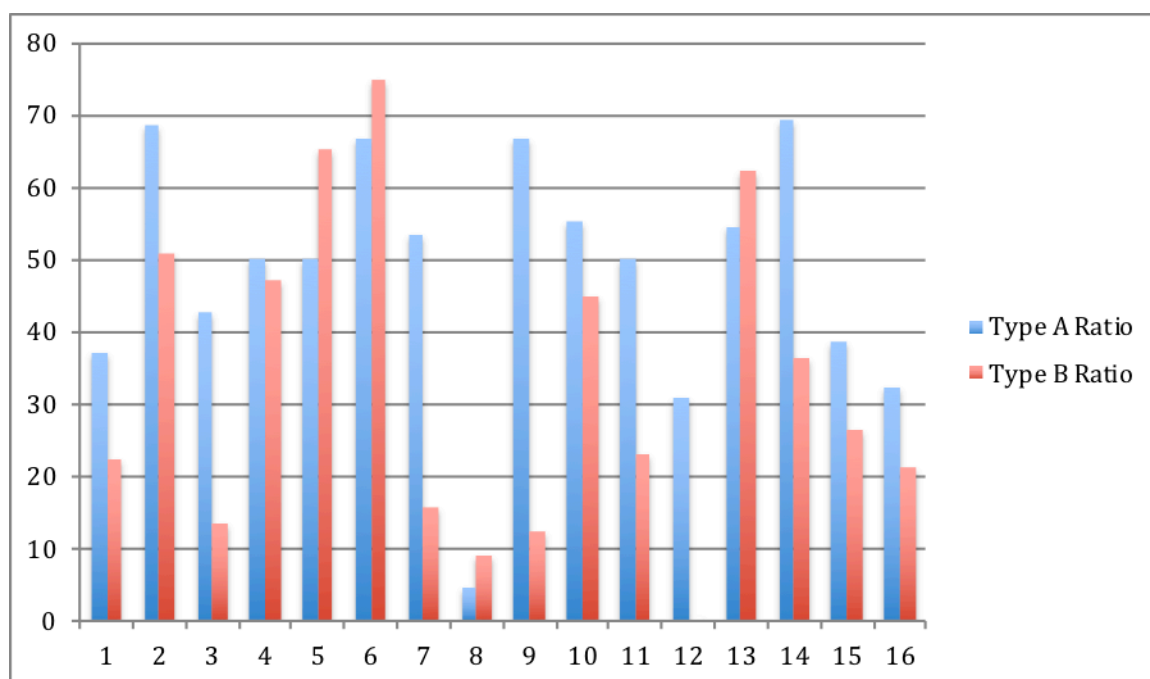


Fig. 6 Individual differences of child-confirmation ratios in joint-attention

More than half of the participants have an obviously higher tendency to confirm with their caretakers when they initiated the communication. Only a small portion of the participants confirm with their caretakers more when their caretaker initiated the communication.

## 4.2 Language development test performances

The language development test was conducted 6 months after all participants have their CI turned out and functioned properly. The test was divided into two major sections: noun acquisition (S1) test and adjective/adjectival phrase acquisition (S2). The detailed performances of each participant are listed below:

Participant No.	S1 Correction Rate	S1 Mean RT/ms	S2 Correction Rate	S2 Mean RT/ms
1	0.811	8866.46	0.610	7538.42
2	0.890	6028.68	0.790	6956.95
3	0.300	13094.8	0.230	15686.64
4	0.650	8476.15	0.570	7411.97
5	0.200	18589.70	0.730	7039.36
6	0.800	7509.40	0.790	10936.97
7	0.400	7121.05	0.430	8804.44
8	0.650	6053.15	0.375	7781.08
9	0.700	8713.45	0.367	13069.02
10	0.850	4785.70	0.552	6852.62
11	1.000	2919.00	0.584	4399.56
12	0.200	8880.50	N/A	N/A
13	0.850	14799.75	0.352	11467.33
14	0.700	8963.75	0.470	10252.81

15	0.200	31395.00	N/A	N/A
16	0.900	6073.2	0.403	10824.05

Fig. 7 Detailed test performances

All participants have completed the noun acquisition (S1) test, and expressed certain knowledge of nouns regarding to familiar household items. As for the adjective acquisition (S2) test, 2 of the 16 participants failed to complete the test.

The test results show that participants did not reach the same level of comprehension when hearing noun phrases and adjectival phrases. The average correction rate of S1 and S2 tests (see Fig. 8) reflects that participants have a slightly higher correction rate in S1 test than that in S2 test.

	<b>S1 Correction Rate</b>	<b>S1 mean RT/ms</b>	<b>S2 Correction Rate</b>	<b>S2 mean RT/ms</b>
<b>Participants' Average</b>	0.631	10141.86	0.518	9215.80

Fig. 8 Participants' general test performances

Interestingly, although participants expressed a better grasp of noun phrases than adjectival phrases, the data show that they spent less time responding to adjectival phrases than noun phrases. On average, participants needed around 9 seconds to respond to an adjectival phrase. But when hearing a noun/noun phrase, they needed one more second to respond.

#### 4.3 Possible correlations between parent-child communication pattern and their language development test performances

In order to find out whether there exist any possible correlations between participants' parent-child communication pattern and their early language development, the Pearson correlation test was used. The results are listed below.

		<b>w/ Correction Rate</b>			<b>w/ Mean RT/ms</b>		
		<b>R-value</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P-value</b>	<b>R-value</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P-value</b>
<b>Counts of Occurrences</b>		0.2079	0.0432	0.438	-0.3223	0.1039	0.224
<b>Ratio of Child-confirmations</b>		0.4079	0.1664	0.1168	0.0249	0.0006	0.927

\* indicates a significant correlation at  $p < .05$

\*\* indicates a strongly significant correlation at  $p < .05$

Fig. 9 Type A Communication and its Correlation w/ Participants' Performances

The results of a Pearson correlation test reflect that, there is no significant correlation found between Type A communication (child-driven) and participants' performances in language development test in general.

		<b>w/ Correction Rate</b>			<b>w/ Mean RT/ms</b>		
		<b>R-value</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P-value</b>	<b>R-value</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>P-value</b>
<b>Counts of Occurrences</b>		0.2349	0.0552	0.3812	0.3918	0.1535	0.1334

<b>Ratio of Child- confirmations</b>	0.5086*	0.2587*	0.0442*	0.1876	0.0352	0.4866
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\* indicates a significant correlation at  $p < .05$

\*\* indicates a strongly significant correlation at  $p < .05$

Fig. 10 Type B Communication and its Correlation w/ Participants' Performances

A Pearson correlation run for Type B communication (parent-driven) and test performance shows that, general Type B communication has a none-significant positive correlation with participants' test performance. However, Type B communication with child-confirmation shows a significant correlation with the correction rate of the language development test. The R-value for this pair is 0.5086, which is a strong positive correlation. This entails that, when there are more parent-driven communications with child-confirmation in participants' daily activities, the participants would reach a higher score in the early language development test.

In light of the significant correlation found between parent-driven communication with child confirmation and general language test performance, a second Pearson correlation test was run to find out exactly which section of the language test was the key influence. The results are listed below.

	w/ Correction Rate			w/ Mean RT/ms		
	R-value	R <sup>2</sup>	P-value	R-value	R <sup>2</sup>	P-value
<b>Noun (S1)</b>	0.26	0.0676	0.3308	0.125	0.0156	0.6446
<b>Adjective (S2)</b>	0.6638*	0.4406*	0.0096*	-0.1651	0.0273	0.5730

\* indicates a significant correlation at  $p < .05$

\*\* indicates a strongly significant correlation at  $p < .05$

Fig. 11 Type B Communication (w/ child-confirmation) and its Correlation w/ Participants' Performances in Noun and Adjective Acquisition

Surprisingly, an R-value of 0.26 reflects that there is almost no correlation found between Type B communication with child-confirmation and early noun acquisition. However, this specific type of communication has a significant correlation with adjective/adjectival phrase acquisition, with an R-value of 0.6638.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1 CI children's belated L1 development

The research process and results are a display of the participants' first 8 months of late L1 acquisition. The communication details collected from their home videos show their natural language learning process and their language test performances reflects the results of this early L1 acquisition stage. Some noticeable phenomena are found among the research data.

The first phenomenon spotted is that participants' L1 acquisition order, although a belated one, seem to synchronize with that of normal-hearing children's. Although there might not be a universal timetable for language learning across languages (Caselli et al., 1995), piles of evidence shown that young normal developing children start off their lexical development with nouns. Markman (1989) proposed the "whole object constraint" of infants' early lexical development: young children tend to

assume that a new word will refer to a whole object, but not the subparts or actions/states of that object. In light of this constraint, normal developing children will acquire nouns faster than any other lexical items. Macnamara (1986) also pointed out that nouns, especially names of concrete and accessible items, are acquired sooner than other lexical items. He proposed that before exposed to the nouns, the idea or concept of a familiar object has been created when the child has first set eye on it. Upon hearing the noun and established the mapping between the noun and the object, the child would acquire the noun and its meaning successfully. Other lexical items, such as verbs and adjectives, are reported acquired later due to several reasons. One possibility is that verbs and adjectives do not directly point to any object of interest. Therefore in early language acquisition, children tend to ignore that part of speech, rather focus on the nouns. This possibility accords with Markman's (1989) "whole object constraint". Another possibility is that, the grammatical complexity of these lexical items might have caused its late acquisition (Gentner, 1982). O'Grady (1987) provided some related arguments. He pointed out that verbs and adjectives are often used as predicates, while nouns are often used as arguments. Predicates are secondary to arguments, since they are descriptions of the key arguments' actions or states. In other words, if a child is able to use or understand a predicate, he/she must have a solid entity as the argument in his/her mind (O'Grady, 1987). If this were true, than logically speaking, verbs and adjectives would be acquired later than nouns.

The results of this study have shown similar order. Three sets of tests were originally prepared for the participants, noun, adjective and verbs. However, none of the participants could complete any item in the verb test, therefore the results contained only the noun and adjective tests. As seen from the last section, participants' average correction rates are 63.13% in noun test, and only 45.34% in adjective test. Participants' performances are obvious better in noun test than in adjective test, indicating that they have acquired more nouns than adjectives. The failure of the verb test indicates that, at this point, none of the participants have acquired any verbs yet. Unquestionably, participants have shown an acquisition order of noun-adjective-verb.

The second noticeable phenomenon spotted from the research is that, CI children's RTs are significantly longer than that of normal developing children. Before participants attend the language test, the adjective test was run as a pilot test in a kindergarten. 20 young (age 3- to 4-yo) normal developing children participated as volunteers (consented by their legal guardians). The result comparison is listed below:

	Mean Correction Rate	Mean Response Time (ms)
<b>Normal Children</b>	0.9043	3600.84
<b>CI Children</b>	0.4534	9215.80

Fig. 12 Comparison between Normal Children and CI Children regarding the Adjective Comprehension Test

As expected, the mean correction rate of normal developing children is above 90%. The results also show that for each test item, normal developing participants would only need slightly over 3 seconds to respond. However, CI participants would need over 9 seconds for each item, which is 3 times longer than that of normal hearing children. Although I have not found any criteria on regular RTs for comprehending an adjective/adjectival phrase, this huge difference between CI participants and normal developing volunteers put forward a crucial question: what could have caused it?

One hypothesis is that, CI children might need extra time in capturing and identifying the sounds of human language. In a regular case, a human fetus would have developed a complete hearing system at around 32 weeks of its mother's pregnancy. At 38 weeks of pregnancy, the fetus would be able to distinguish familiar and unfamiliar sound patterns, especially of human languages, preferably the mother's voice (DeCasper, 1986). This is because the damp environment of the uterus screened out most of the high pitch ( $>100\text{Hz}$ ) noises, and lower pitch sounds such as human language can be delivered successfully. Shortly after the baby is born, it could sort out the different patterns of sounds and pick out human language from a pile of other noises, thanks to the pre-birth "practices". This early development would not require any real language experience after birth, and is likely to be activated automatically at birth (Kuhl, 1993). CI children, on the other hand, were born deaf, therefore did not receive any of these sound stimuli as a fetus. As observed during the research process, when participants' manmade cochlea machine was turned on for the first time, all participants showed different degrees of fear and unsettlement. Their first encounter of sounds was in a more complex and noisy environment comparing to a mother's uterus, which means that they are on their own to figure out which sound clip is a sentence, and which sound clip is only a puppy's bark. By the time of participating the language test, CI participants have only experienced sounds for 8 months. It is highly possible that they have not yet developed an intuition when hearing human language. In other words, their long RTs in the test reflect an acoustic problem, not a language processing one. If they are given more time to expose to and experience natural human language, the RT difference mentioned above will fade away eventually.

Another possibility is more intuitive and straightforward: CI children's lack of familiarization with the lexical items push them to pause and think more before they respond. Undeniably the participants have only been exposed to language for 8 months when they took the test. Even if they subjectively start to "learn" their first language from day one, they still have way less time to master their language skills comparing to the volunteer group. Hesitating upon new knowledge would not poster any problem in competence.

To figure out which of the above possibilities is closer to the truth, further studies will need to be done.

## **5.2 Communication pattern's potential influence on CI children's L1**

Many studies have provided evidence of how early parent-child interactions could influence infants' early lexical development. Young children have a "mapping system" to learn about not only language, but also new things they encounter in life. When seeing a new item, they would associate this item to a concept created in their own mind. If an adult happen to provide a referential description, for example the item's name, during this mapping process, the child is likely to absorb that knowledge and acquire this noun naturally (Macnamara, 1986; Prasada, 2014; Trueswell et al., 2016, etc.). Trueswell et al. (2016) have found out that, a timely referent to the object would help boost child's early lexical development. If the adult provide linguistic information when the child was not paying attention to the same object at the same time, then the information provided by the adult is highly likely to be uninformative.

These studies on normal developing children's early lexical development have established the importance of meaningful parent-child interaction in L1 acquisition.

Such parent-child interactions occur among CI children and their parents as well. Based on participants' home videos, an average of 28.64 occurrences of such meaningful interaction are found in every 15-min of parent-child playtime. Roughly 43.33% of these interactions were initiated by the participants, the rest were initiated by their parents. The study has also found that, some participants tend to initiate more of such interactions, while others tend to wait for their parents initiate any communication. In order to find out whether such interaction tendencies would influence participants' lexical development, a Pearson correlation coefficient test was run. The results show that, a significant correlation exists between parent-initiated interactions with child confirmation and participants' adjective test performance. The R-value of 0.5086 indicates positive correlation. In other words, if the parent is more initiative and the child is more likely to check with his/her parents' reactions during their parent-child interactions, the child is more likely to achieve higher performance in the adjective test.

Although the research only recruited 16 participants, which indicates that the Pearson correlation coefficient test result is less reliable, it still entails the importance of a parent's role in CI children's lexical development. Joint attention has a special role in early lexical development, not only of normal developing children, but also of children with special needs. Many studies in autism children's early L1 acquisition have found out that joint attention has a strong positive correlation with their early language development (Loveland and Landry 1986; Mundy et al. 1994, etc.). However, in the specific case of autism children, Luyster et al.'s (2008) research has shown that the initiation of joint attention does not play a role in L1 acquisition. The important booster is the child's response to the joint attention (Luyster et al., 2008). Like autism children, CI children have special needs and demands extra care in L1 acquisition. However, unlike the results from the autism studies, our current study has revealed that for CI children, the initiation of joint attention is as important as response to joint attention. One way to interpret this finding is that, since our participants have less experience with sounds, a parent's informative verbal input together with visual instructions can help them focus on an utterance as well as map the object to that utterance. Also, as observed from the home videos, parents tend to repeat a sentence/phrase when their children look back to them during their interactions. If the child did not respond (making confirmation) to his/her parent during joint attention, he/she might not capture the acoustic signal in the first time. Interestingly, child-initiated interactions with child confirmation did not show any correlation with their test performance. After reexamined the home videos, I have found that child-initiated interactions involve less language input from the parent. When a child focuses on an object and tries to capture his/her parent's attention with it, often the parents tend not to call out the item's name or say anything about the object, but to utter something less relevant to the object such as "good job". But when the parent initiates an interaction, he/she tends to be in a "teaching" mode, and will always speak out something about the object as his/her child focuses on the object. In other words, coincidentally or not, child-initiated joint attentions spotted in this study involve less timely linguistic input, which makes them less informative than the parent-initiated ones. To conclude, a parent's effort in making child-parent

interactions informative and child's prompt response in joint-attention play a positive role in CI children's early lexical development.

## **6. General Conclusion and Limitations**

The findings of this study have answered the main research questions. Firstly, by assessing participants' language comprehension, we do find out that CI children's early L1 acquisition roughly goes through a similar chronological development pattern found among most normal developing children. At 8 months of hearing-age, they could comprehend most familiar objects' names (nouns) presented in the test. As for adjectives and adjectival phrases, participants also show certain degree of comprehension, which indicates they acquire these lexical items later than nouns. A trial test containing more linguistically complex structures, such as verb phrase, was also presented to the participants. However, the failure of responding to these test items was universal across all participants. The only logical explanation is that participants have not yet acquired the meanings and uses of verbs at all. This acquisition pattern anchors with Markman's (1989) "Whole Object Constraint", which refers to children's early lexical acquisition have a tendency of arguments over predicates.

Secondly, by studying the participants' home videos, we can see that parent-child interactions within CI children's families are typical among all families as well. Joint-attentions between parent and child are spotted frequently, and the ratio of informative interactions is not as low as expected. However, I do notice that in child-initiated joint attentions, informative verbal instructions from the adult are rare. This will cause the deduction of meaningful language input to the participants. On the other hand, informative joint-attention proves to influence participants' early lexical development, especially in predicate acquisition.

Although the proposed research questions are answered, there are still many limitations. A crucial one is that the data pool of this study is very small. Difficulty of recruiting qualified participants has caused the results of this study are not at all universal. All results will only serve as an indicator of these 16 participants' language development status, but not all CI children. Besides, many other problems regarding CI children's L1 acquisition are found, therefore further study in this field is needed.

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***An Empirical Study of a SPOC Embedded Flipped Classroom Model for College Intercultural Communication Course: Perceptions of Students***

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**Abstract**

Higher education in China has experienced a significant transformation from an elite educational system to a stage of massification since the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. A Small Private Online Course (SPOC) embedded flipped classroom is called for to accelerate the innovation of teaching and learning approaches particularly for English-major courses such as Intercultural Communication. Compared to the traditional knowledge-transmission teaching, flipped classroom approaches engage a variety of pre- and post-class work and in-class activities. This raises questions about the real status of the SPOC embedded flipped classroom model in Chinese higher education and whether it is perceived as important and effective. This study aims to explore the feedback of a four-month experiment using a flipped classroom approach which involved 153 undergraduate students at Wuhan University of Technology. Adopting an online-based questionnaire which consisted of 40 multiple-choice and open-ended questions, the present study investigated the attitudes of students toward the learning of English language and culture through the SPOC embedded flipped classroom model. Major findings show the positive attitudes of students toward the use of the proposed model in English-major courses; it contributes to the development of students' autonomous, active, and collaborative learning skills. However, some issues are addressed in relation to the time allocation of online learning and in-class activities and students' engagement in the online community. Several pedagogical suggestions are proposed such as the provision of an induction program.

**Keywords:** students' perspectives, flipped classroom, higher education

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## Introduction

Higher education in Mainland China has experienced a significant transformation away from an elite educational system to one in a stage of massification, since the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2007, China's Department of Higher Education launched the College English Curriculum Requirements, promoting "a computer-assisted and classroom-based teaching model" (p. 8). The National Foreign Languages Teaching Advisory Board also developed the *Guidelines on College English Teaching*, noting that computer and information technology should be widely applied to college English education as they not only facilitate the reform of teaching approaches and practices but also provide a large range of innovative learning resources to students (Ministry of Education, 2015).

While the emergence of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) has significantly influenced higher education in China on the merits of being accessible, affordable, sustainable, flexible, and collaborative, blended learning approaches provide potential solutions to the well-known problem of high dropout rates involved in MOOCs (Cheng, Liu, Sun, Liu, & Yang, 2017). One blended learning approach, the Small Private Open Course (SPOC), is one alternative to enhance and innovate on-campus curricular content through the platforms, technologies, and patterns used in MOOCs (Zhang, 2017). According to Fox (2013), the SPOC supplements the traditional classroom experience with free online learning materials delivered through MOOCs. In a sense, the SPOC combines the features of both face-to-face instruction and MOOCs, and extends the existing courses in higher education to online education.

However, an interesting issue raised is how to distribute and arrange face-to-face and online instruction for a SPOC-embedded English as a foreign language (EFL) course in higher education. It has been widely accepted that second learning (L2) cannot occur without some form of input. In foreign language (FL) settings such as those that prevail in Mainland China, most of L2 English learners have little opportunities to access the target language through natural exposure. Moreover, even in the face-to-face classroom, the majority of class time is used ineffectively by EFL teachers who focus on accounting for concepts through lecturing while students merely sit quietly and passively listen (Zappe, Leicht, Messner, Litzinger, & Lee, 2009; Littlewood, 1999). As a result, students may not be able to receive sufficient input and put those target items into practice due to the limited time of an EFL class.

A flipped classroom approach has the potential to address the aforementioned issue. Compared to traditional knowledge-transmission teaching, the flipped classroom approach removes face-to-face lectures from class time; instead, class presentations transform into home activities while homework and projects shift to in-class tasks (Abeysekera & Dawson, 2015; Sohrabi & Iraj, 2016). Since the learning process inverts in a flipped classroom, students have more access to using English inside and outside the classroom (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). Accordingly, students watch pre-recorded instructional videos via online platforms at home and engage in homework and activities collaboratively with their classmates during the class.

Despite the recent attention given to the flipped classroom approach (Akçayır & Akçayır, 2018; Bishop & Verleger, 2013; Butt, 2014; Jaster, 2013; Lee, Lim, & Kim, 2017; Lee & Wallace, 2018; Shih & Tsai, 2017; Zainuddin & Attaran, 2016), there is

limited empirical evidence regarding the status of the SPOC-embedded flipped classroom model in Chinese higher education and whether it is perceived by students as important and effective, particularly in EFL classrooms. The established studies focus on the design and principles of flipped classrooms in Mainland China (Jiang & Hu, 2018; Luo, 2017; Wang, 2017; Zhang, 2017; Zhang & Tao, 2017; Wang, Chen, & Zhang, 2016). Therefore, this study investigates undergraduate students' perspectives of the SPOC embedded flipped learning model in an EFL course at a Chinese public university.

## **Research Methods**

### **Participants**

This study involved a compulsory EFL course for undergraduate English majors, "*Society and Culture of Britain and America*," taught collaboratively by three lecturers affiliated with the same department in the fall semester of 2018 at a public university in Wuhan, Hubei. One hundred fifty students enrolled in this course with six classes, and each lecturer instructed two classes. There were 25 students in each class and 122 students voluntarily participated in this study by completing an online questionnaire at the end of the semester. The majority of the participants were freshmen (94.26%), while the remaining consisted of six sophomores (4.92%) and one junior (0.82%). Before attending this course, only 13.93% had experience in online learning, while more than one-fifth (21.31%) reported having no idea about this concept. The remaining participants (64.76%) demonstrated a limited understanding of online learning.

### **The SPOC Embedded Flipped Classroom**

The course lasted four months, from September to December 2018. Each class ran twice a week for 90 minutes. The three teachers had a regular meeting every Friday to determine the topics of discussion, collaborative tasks, and the face-to-face instruction process for the next session. All teaching materials were developed based on the course outline and curriculum requirements and subsequently produced into a SPOC on the Chinese Universities MOOC.

The teachers implemented the flipped classrooms by requiring students to complete self-paced online learning before class, including watching instructional videos, listening to recorded audios, reading passages, and making use of online learning resources via the SPOC platform. Additionally, students were required to complete an online quiz each week so the instructors could evaluate the students' work and progress. The students received the results of the quizzes immediately via the online platform.

During the face-to-face sessions, the instructors facilitated collaborative learning by leading students in a variety of in-class tasks and activities. Students were required to bring their own smart devices, such as smartphones, tablets, or laptops, to complete homework via the SPOC platform. Each homework assignment consisted of ten multiple-choice questions and aligned to individual lessons. The results of homework were released instantly through the online learning system. The instructors also provided feedback to address the unclear issues proposed by students. Students also

participated in group discussions that covered a range of pre-determined topics. The teachers provided a summary of the group discussion at the end of every session. Finally, students were told to share their questions and concerns concerning pre-class online learning, while other classmates were encouraged to provide corresponding solutions, followed by the teachers' comments.

### **Instrument and Procedures**

The researcher utilized an online survey to investigate students' attitudes toward the proposed approach and its perceived benefits. The questionnaire contained ten multiple-choice questions (see Tables 1-3) and one open-ended question. The former items assessed students' attitudes toward the SPOC and flipped classroom model, active and autonomous learning modes, and collaborative learning mode; the latter item collected information about students' opinions of benefits or shortcomings of the flipped classroom structure. Cronbach alpha for the five Likert-type scale items was .72, which is an acceptable value for reliability. All items were in Chinese to avoid potential misunderstanding.

At the end of the final session, all participants used their own smart devices to complete the online questionnaire anonymously within 20 minutes. The participants received a consent form and instructions for completing the online survey in advance. The researcher and the course instructors did not enter the class while consenting students completed their questionnaires and were not allowed to access any survey data until after final grades were submitted.

The quantitative data from multiple-choice questions were analyzed through SPSSAU v16.0 Software. To obtain a picture of the students' perspectives that was more comprehensive, the researcher checked through the participants' responses to the open-ended question and marked the keywords concerning their likes, dislikes, and suggestions to identify specific topics. The similar patterns within the topics were then generalized according to the overall features of SPOC-embedded flipped classrooms; examples of content patterns include subtitles of the instructional videos, teaching content, homework, discussions, and peer interactions.

### **Results**

Table 1 shows the results regarding the undergraduates' attitudes toward the SPOC and flipped classrooms through five survey items. First, 60.66% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they liked the online learning mode and enjoyed interacting with the instructor through a flipped classroom; 33.61% were not sure. Second, 33.61% agreed or strongly agreed that they did not adapt themselves to the SPOC embedded flipped classroom very well, and over half of the informants (51.64%) held a neutral attitude. Only 14.75% showed a positive attitude about their adaptation to the proposed teaching approach. Third, over one-fifth of the respondents (22.13%) agreed or strongly agreed that they did not feel free while engaging with the SPOC embedded flipped classroom, while more than one third (33.61%) indicated the opposite perspective; the rest of the participants (44.26%) were not sure. Fourth, over two-fifths of the respondents (43.45%) agreed or strongly agreed that they preferred the traditional knowledge-transmission classroom than the SPOC-embedded flipped classroom, while less than one fifth (19.67%) held the opposite attitude; the remaining

students (36.89%) held a neutral position. Fifth, 38.52% agreed or strongly agreed that the SPOC embedded flipped classroom approach was more beneficial than the traditional classroom instruction, while only 8.2% opposed that; over half of the respondents (53.28%) showed a vague attitude.

Table 1: Attitudes toward SPOC and flipped classrooms

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I like online learning and interacting with the teacher	4.1%	56.56%	33.61%	3.28%	2.46%
I don't adapt myself to the new model very well	2.46%	31.15%	51.64%	13.93%	0.82%
I don't feel free while engaging with the new model	4.1%	18.03%	44.26%	31.97%	1.64%
I prefer traditional classrooms than flipped classrooms	9.02%	34.43%	36.89%	18.03%	1.64%
I reckon that the new model is more beneficial	0.82%	37.7%	53.28%	6.56%	1.64%

Table 2 reveals the findings about the students' attitudes toward active and autonomous learning mode. First, over two-fifths of the participants (40.99%) agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to arrange their online learning and manage their learning progress well, and approximately half of the respondents (49.18%) indicated an unsure position. Second, more than half (51.64%) agreed or strongly agreed that they had more available time to consider the relevant questions while studying the SPOC, and nearly two fifths (39.34%) were unsure about that. Last but not the least, 45.9% affirmed that the SPOC embedded flipped classroom model advanced their autonomous learning skills and enabled them to learn more actively, while almost the same amount of the respondents (45.08%) had a neutral attitude.

Table 2: Attitudes toward active and autonomous learning mode

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I can arrange online learning and manage learning progress	4.1%	36.89%	49.18%	7.38%	2.46%
I have more time to think through the questions	8.2%	43.44%	39.34%	7.38%	1.64%
It advances my autonomous and active learning skills	2.46%	43.44%	45.08%	8.2%	0.82%

As Table 3 indicates, the results of the undergraduates' attitudes regarding the collaborative learning mode are tabulated according to two survey items. First, nearly half of the informants (45.9%) showed agreement or strong agreement that they could interact better with other classmates and learn more from each other, while 43.44% held an unclear position. Second, over a half (53.28%) agreed or strongly agreed that their team spirit and cooperative skills were advanced via the SPOC embedded flipped classroom approach, and 36.07% were uncertain.

Table 3: Attitudes toward collaborative learning mode

	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I can interact better with and learn more from classmates	0.82%	45.08%	43.44%	9.02%	1.64%
My teamwork spirit and cooperative skills are advanced	2.46%	50.82%	36.07%	9.84%	0.82%

The open-ended comments from the online survey varied considerably and it was difficult to identify consistencies. The categories and frequently mentioned keywords that appeared in the students' comments pertained to the "online" and "time" aspects of the course. The time allocation of online learning and face-to-face instruction appears to be the most conflicting issue for student respondents. Some students indicated that they favored online-based learning and recommended further implementation of SPOCs instead of traditional in-class lectures, as exemplified by two student's response, which stated "Online learning is very interesting, and I can manage my study time. I suggest this course should be developed as 100% online instruction mode" (Student A) and "I learned a lot from an online course. Hope the teacher can increase the online lessons and upload more supplementary materials to the SPOC" (Student B).

However, responses to weaknesses of the proposed model suggested that some students preferred more traditional in-class sessions over online learning, such as "The time allocation for online learning seems a bit too much, which sometimes makes me stressed" (Student C), and "More units should be delivered by in-class sessions" (Student D).

## Conclusion

This study reports on English-major undergraduates' perspectives on a SPOC embedded flipped classroom model at a public university in Mainland China. The results revealed that, on average, around half of students were positive about the use of the SPOC-embedded flipped classroom model in the current course, but the feedback from a few of survey items was somewhat mixed. First, concerning general attitudes toward SPOC and flipped classrooms, students consistently favored online learning and interacting with teachers; approximately two-fifths of the students believed the new teaching format was more beneficial than the previous approach. However, a majority of students did not clearly indicate that they fit the flipped classroom model and preferred it to traditional face-to-face instruction. Most of the students were open to this new attempt, but they were less satisfied with classroom structure than those in a traditional class were. This finding is relatively consistent with the result reported in Jaster (2013), who found that a majority of students enrolling in a first-year algebra course at an American college preferred a traditional lecture approach to a flipped classroom. A possible explanation for students' converse preference is that almost all the participants are first-year undergraduates and they may be underprepared for an immediate transition from a familiar instructional mode to an unfamiliar one. Those students graduated primarily from public high schools in Mainland China where traditional face-to-face lectures were employed exclusively. Thus, the lack of self-confidence might result in their conservative attitudes toward the SPOC and flipped classrooms.

In terms of active and autonomous learning mode, the students reported greater satisfaction with the flipped classroom structure. Approximately half of the students became positive toward their self-paced learning through the online platform and believed that the new model contributed to their autonomous and active learning skills and critical thinking. This result generally follows that of Zainuddin and Attaran (2016), who found that 78% of students favor the innovative learning mode of flipped approaches since it provides more time for them to perform the individual study and practice teaching contents outside the class. However, slightly more than half of the students did not believe or felt uncertain that they could manage their learning progress, which may result from the fact that most students still feel more comfortable about passively receiving knowledge from the instructor in a teacher-centered classroom; thus, they may not have not established strong motivation for self-driven learning. Moreover, a majority of the students had limited or no understanding of flipped learning, so they might not be familiar with how to conduct autonomous and online learning properly.

Regarding a collaborative learning mode, over half of the students were positive about their teamwork experiences and peer cooperation via the flipped classroom, while slightly less showed their confidence in peer learning and interaction. In another research study by Zainuddin and Attaran (2016), 67% of students claimed that flipped learning helped them develop a student-student rapport outside the class. The flipped classroom model is a student-centered pedagogical approach; thus, students have greater opportunities to communicate with their classmates using technology out of class and to participate actively in collaborative, hands-on tasks or activities during the sessions. However, the result also suggests that greater effort will be necessary to strengthen students' faiths and motivation in acquiring knowledge and skills through active helping and supporting their classmates.

The students' comments on the open-ended section draw our attention to a highlighted issue of flipped classrooms, namely, the time allocation of online learning and face-to-face sessions. Some students liked the ability to work at their own pace and time through the online platform, while others raised concerns that a higher workload from the online course caused them stress and seemed imbalanced when comparing online learning and face-to-face instruction. These concerns are similar to those previously discussed in the literature regarding criticisms of flipped learning (DeGrazia, Falconer, Nicodemus, & Medlin, 2012; Toto & Nguyen, 2009). The heterogeneity of students in class possibly causes that some students favor online learning while others dislike it. Their diverse levels of English proficiency and learning demands may determine their different preferences for instructional formats.

There are several suggestions that could potentially improve the effectiveness of the current flipped classroom model. First, an introductory program for SPOCs and flipped classrooms is necessary so that students can obtain additional guidance in developing their online, autonomous, and cooperative learning skills. Second, instructors need to check the discussion board of the SPOC platform more regularly and address individual questions posted by students more efficiently. Regular assistance from student tutors may be an addition to practicing teaching strategies. Third, a pre-course assessment may be helpful to have a better understanding of different levels of students' English proficiency. Finally, online learning materials

need to be divided into fundamental and advanced materials in line with students' learning readiness.

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***Exploring the Reflections of Non-Optionist Polytechnic English Language Lecturers (PELLs) in Identifying Their Professional Development Concerns***

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**Abstract**

The exploration into teachers' reflection in a language classroom context can be considered as an effective tool to investigate their teaching concerns. Hence, this study is carried out to explore three non-optionist polytechnic English Language lecturers' (PELLs) teaching concerns in order to understand the formation of their belief systems. The exhibition of PELLs' belief systems defines their teacher cognition. This element is useful to determine the concerns related to their professional development (PD) in language teaching practice. The qualitative research design was employed to gather the required data through reflective teaching procedures that involved journal writing, classroom observation and informal semi-structured interview. Two main findings have been derived based on the results of the constant comparative analyses: 1) Respondents' reflection reflects that they are reflective teaching practitioners and they shared four common teaching concerns, and 2) The PD concerns to address respondents' need-to-improve should acknowledge their personal pedagogical knowledge base. Finally, a contextual suggestion has been forwarded as a recommendation for this qualitative inquiry.

**Keywords:** non-optionist Polytechnic English language lecturers, teachers' belief system, teacher continuous professional development (CPD)

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## Introduction – Setting the Context

The initial concern of this study is non-optionists' professional development as polytechnic English language lecturers (PELLs). The non-optionist means that PELLs' first degrees were not Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) or any other language, linguistics or educational courses. Somehow, after graduation, they had opted for a short preparatory teaching course to get a diploma in education. This act entitled them to join teaching profession and has become qualified PELLs. Most of non-optionist PELLs are fluent in English language but their pedagogical knowledge in language teaching are considered limited due to not formally trained as TESL students. Their professional knowledge is normally derived from experiential knowledge (Wallace, 1991). The knowledge that they gained through their teaching experience.

Other than that, polytechnics are considered as technical and vocational education and training (TVET) higher learning institutions in Malaysia. The courses being offered include diploma and degree in technical and vocational courses. Its mission is to produce semi-professional workers as human capital in developing nation. Hence, its main focus is to equip polytechnic students with the skills and knowledge which have been demanded by the industries. Besides engineering courses, polytechnics do offer other courses such as hospitality, accountancy and, information and communication technology.

Hence, the common research sample focuses on students. Meanwhile, the frequent research interests would be students' employability concern. For instance, Ahmad Yasaruddin et al. (2010) touched on students' language proficiency. The learning gap between the acquired and required English skill attributes contributed to students' inability to communicate well at the workplace. In Mai (2012), the importance of soft skills competency among the graduates had been highlighted to excel in their workplace. In addition, Normala, Abdul Rahman and Yahya (2016) successfully identified seven skills as Employability Skills Based Work Performance Prediction (ESWPP). They placed communication skill as the main skill required. Other than that, ESWPP can be a guide for students to acknowledge other necessary elements needed to meet the future employers' demand.

On the other hand, a few studies on lecturers' professional development (henceforth PD) are found in Malaysian context (Wan Nooraini & Mohd Sani, 2010). Similar claim in PELL's professional development context is stated in Salmiza, Suhaily and Muhammad Zaki (2016). Meanwhile, Sarimah and Sanmugam (2015) also agreed that the studies on PELLs' PD is still considered as scarce. Ironically, in current situation, PELLs face many pedagogical challenges. It is due to several factors such as lacks of resources and supports, insufficient ESP pedagogical knowledge as well as industry revolution (Marwan, 2009; Poedjiastutie, 2017; Salmiza, Suhaily & Muhammad Zaki, 2016; Sarimah & Sanmugam, 2015; Shahiza, 2012; Siti Noridah, 2012). However, none of these studies directly touched on non-optionist PELLs' context. Hence, there is a need to explore the teaching concern in order to investigate their PD concerns.

## Focus of the study

Richard (2005) stated that reflective teaching refers to an activity or a process in which an experience is recalled, considered, and evaluated, usually in a relation to broader purpose. This involves a thinking process that requires critical self-examination and reflection (Richard, 2005; Wallace, 1991). Via reflective teaching, one can identify the problems pertinent to teaching and learning situations (Wallace, 1991). This covers the aspect related to teacher's belief which is known as an abstract dimension of teaching (Borg, 2012; Richards & Lockhart, 1996). Due to that, the explorations of teaching practices should adopt a qualitative case study method. It is expected that the collected information would be able to be compared, contrasted and triangulated to provide in-depth descriptions of the context and lead to rich interpretations to address non-optionists' professional development.

Furthermore, Richard and Lockhart (1996:29) claimed that the primary notion on 'what teachers do is a reflection of what they know and believe, and that teacher knowledge and "teacher thinking" provide the underlying framework or schema which guides the teacher's classroom actions'. The teachers' acts in the classroom could be identified as their teaching concerns. Some of the suggested concerns are focus on the learner, teacher decision making, role of the teacher, structure of the lesson, and nature of language learning activities. Richard and Lockhart (1996) believed that exploring these concerns resulted the understanding of teachers' belief system.

The language teachers' belief system is mapped based on its formation. The formation starts as early as teachers' childhood upbringing and gradually develops as they were student-teachers. Then, it keeps on evolving as they are in-service. As a result, the formative beliefs that held by novice teachers are particularly adaptive in nature (Lavigne, 2014). After some time, the adaptive formation would turn into a solid foundation that rests in teachers' personal pedagogical knowledge (Clandinin, 2013; Suhaily & Faizah, 2013a). The factors that can be considered as sources of English teachers' belief (Lorduy et al. 2009; Richards, Gallo & Renandya. 2001; Richards & Lockhart, 1996) and what types of formation on belief contribute to their belief system (Farrell & Bennis, 2013; Gutierrez, 2004; Lavigne, 2014; Suhaily & Faizah, 2013b) can be simplified as the following figure:

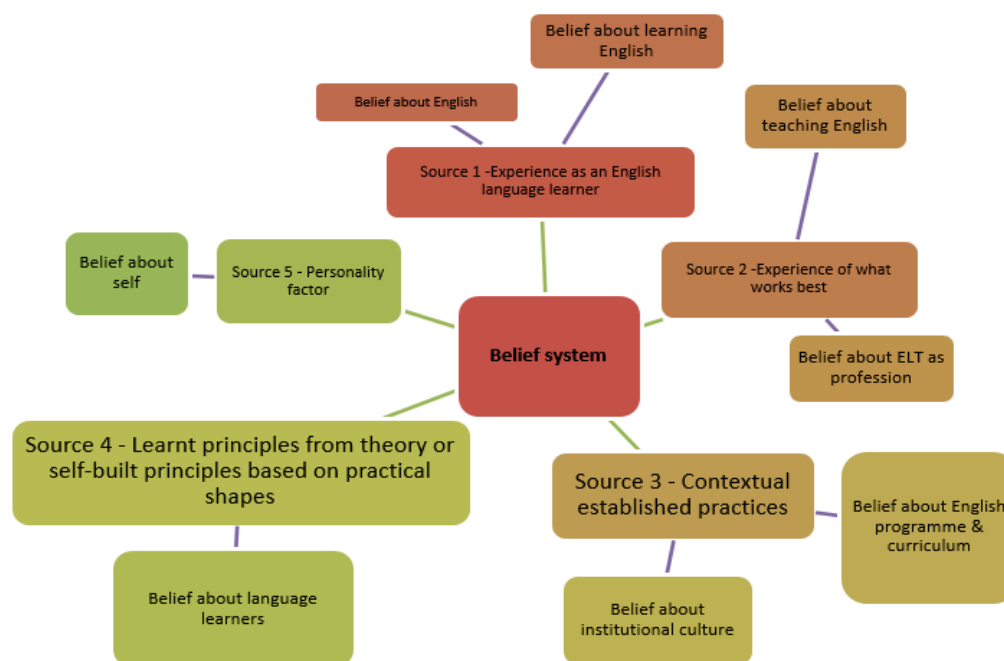


Figure 1: Link between types of teacher's belief, sources of teacher's belief & belief system

Based on Figure 1, it summarizes the link between types of teacher's belief, sources of teacher's belief and belief system. There are eight types of teacher's belief which are derived from five sources of teacher's belief. The first source is the experience as an English language learner. It influences belief about English and belief about learning English. The second source is the experience of what works best. This experience inspires belief about teaching English and belief about ELT as a profession. Next, the third one is the contextual established practice. It has formed teachers' belief about English programme and curriculum, and belief about institutional culture. The fourth source of teacher's belief is the learnt principles from theory or self-built principles based on practical. It shapes belief about language learners. Lastly, the fifth source is the personality factor. It awakens the belief about self.

In relation to the abovementioned explanation, it is suggested that teachers must be aware of what constitute their beliefs. The correlation between sources of teachers' beliefs and the types of teachers' beliefs (or espoused theories) are closely related to their teaching concerns (or theories-in-use) in shaping their professionalism (Farrell, 2012). In other words, revisiting teachers' belief system provides a systematic exploration into their practice. Their teaching concerns indirectly displays their teacher cognition (Borg, 2012; Richards & Lockhart, 1996). This may pave their growth as language teachers since teacher cognition reflects the professional knowledge of the teachers (Borg, 2003). This element is helpful to examine the on-going supports needed by the teachers to remain relevant in their teaching practice (Salmiza et. al, 2016).

Teacher professional knowledge has been studied in many forms. Shulman (1987) conceptualized teacher knowledge base into three categories. The first is general pedagogical knowledge (PK), followed by content knowledge (CK) and the third one

is pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). Among these three, Shulman (1987) suggested that PCK should be emphasized because it signifies the distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching. On the other hand, Wallace (1991) categorized two types of knowledge which are commonly acquired by educators, i.e. received knowledge and experiential knowledge. The former one is a formal education received by the teachers and the later refers to the knowledge gained through experience while they are in-service. Meanwhile, Clandinin (2013) revealed that the image in one's classroom act defines his or her personal practical knowledge which intimately connected with the personal and professional narratives of teachers' lives. Thus, it is considered as a combination of emotional and moral knowledge. Last but not least, Richards (2008) came out with two knowledge bases which specifically refer to second language teacher education. The explicit knowledge that teachers have about language and language teaching principles is known as 'knowledge about'. In addition, the second one is 'knowledge how' where by it represents the implicit knowledge of language which is influenced from their beliefs, theories, and knowledge (Richards, 2008).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to explore non-optionists' teaching concerns in order to acknowledge their professional development concerns. To achieve this purpose, reflective teaching procedures are employed to identify the common teaching concerns shared by the respondents. It is also meant to explore how non-optionists' teaching concerns are formed. Hence, the findings are expected to assist the researcher to determine the specific recommendation for the non-optionist PELLs' professional development.

### **Research Questions**

This study is carried out in order to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the common teaching concerns shared by the respondents in their reflections?
- 2) How respondents' reflections contribute to their professional development (PD) concerns?

### **Methodology**

The research methodology applied is based on the qualitative inquiry orientation. This case study involved three willing non-optionist PELLs in Politeknik Aman as a purposive sampling. The easy access granted to this polytechnic became the main factor why it was chosen as a research site. The modified versions of selected reflective teaching procedures such as critical friend, keeping written journal and peer observation were employed to elicit the required data. Hence, there were three different data resources, namely 1) the interview transcription from the informal semi-structured interview, 2) the entries from the teaching journal, and 3) the notes from the non-participatory classroom observation. These data resources were organized into a proper audit trail. After that, it was analyzed through constant comparative content analysis which was adapted from Creswell (2008) in Clark and Creswell (2010). The analysis steps are as follow (Figure 2):

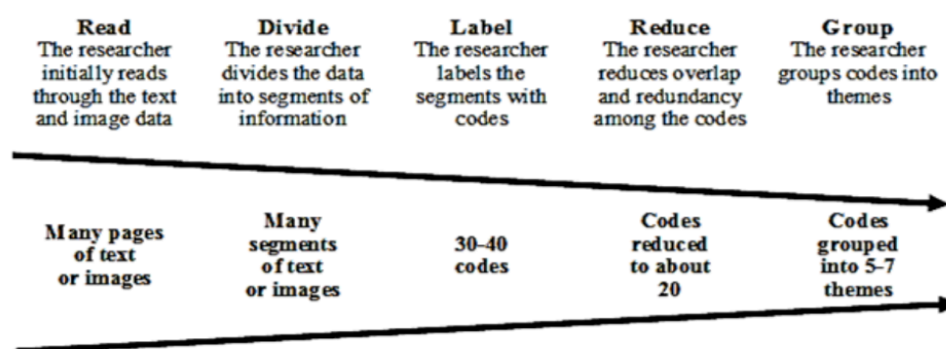


Figure 2: Content Analysis (Adapted from Creswell, 2010 in Clark & Creswell, 2010)

The specific codes were assigned for each theme to represent the common teaching concerns being shared by the research respondents. Other than that, the trustworthiness issue particularly in term of credibility and confirmability were addressed through several processes. The first two is through members' checking and prolong at the site. Then, the triangulation process was conducted through constant comparison of the results across the data resources. Lastly, the inter-rater reliability was carried out. The Cohen's kappa value between two raters yielded at 0.61- 0.80 which is equal to 'moderate' whereby the degree of agreement at  $> 0.81$  was interpreted as 'near complete agreement' (McHugh, 2012; Zamri & Noriah, 2003).

## Results and Discussion

This qualitative case study is meant to address the professional development concerns among non-optionist PELLs. The coded data were explored and analyzed so that the anticipated common teaching concerns can provide the link to determine the teachers' belief systems. The belief system can be defined as a reflection of respondents' teacher cognition. It signifies the current state of their professional knowledge base. Thus, any immediate requirements needed can be prepared to address their PD concerns. The results and discussions are made based on research questions are as follow:

### *Research Question 1*

The common teaching concerns shared by the respondents was determined by looking at the coded details (labelled as categories) across the data resources of the cross-sectional cases. Based on the summarized data recorded (refer Table 1), the coded details were grouped based on four different themes. Consequently, these themes reflect the respondents' shared common teaching concerns which featured as 1) concerns about learners, 2) concerns about pedagogical aspects, 3) concerns about self, and 4) concerns about institutional matters.

Table 1: *The common teaching concerns shared by respondents*

Themes	Category	R1		R2		R3		T	GT
		I	J	I	J	I	J		
Concerns about learners	a)Attitude	1	5	7	3	1	3	20	61
	b)Proficiency	3	2	3	2	2	1	13	
	c)Performance	-	11	-	5	-	6	22	
	d)Learning preferences	3	-	2	-	1	-	6	
Concerns about pedagogical aspects	a)Teaching approach	12	13	6	8	5	10	54	112
	b)Classroom management	-	10	-	7	-	9	26	
	c)Teachers' decision making	9	8	7	-	5	3	32	
Concerns about self	a)Seen aspects of self as teacher	7	5	6	4	8	5	35	94
	b)Personal values & belief about teaching	14	-	4	-	5	1	59	
Concerns about institutional matters	a)Supports	7	8	6	5	10	7	43	59
	b)Constraints in policy implementation	4	-	1	-	-	1	6	
	c)Constraints in teaching within community of practice	3	2	3	-	2	-	10	
Total	12 categories	61	64	45	34	39	46		
Grand Total		171		79		85			

To begin with, the most frequent concern being shared is related to the respondents' pedagogical aspect. One hundred and twelve (112) coded items were identified as the identical details which were categorized as teaching approach, classroom management and their decision making. As untrained language educators, this situation seems quite normal for the respondents to 'overly' concern about their roles as PELLs. Through the informal semi-structured interview and journal entries, the researcher found that respondents were cautious with what they planned and carried out. That is why their responses mostly illustrated the teaching approach, classroom management, and decision making.

This reflects the shared beliefs that being hold by the respondents. The beliefs that are influenced by lacking of pedagogical skills as English language educators and current institutional environment. Similar points were found in Lorduy et al, (2009) where by the former one was referred as '*the experience of training*' and the latter one was known '*the experience with the schooling*'. In this context, this belief system is derived from three main sources namely experience of what works best, contextual established practice and self-built principles based on practical shapes (Lorduy et al. 2009; Richards, Gallo & Renandya. 2001; Richards & Lockhart, 1996).

Next, the common item shared is concerns about self. The lack of formal training or received knowledge may lead to this scenario. The respondents were not trained as ESL teachers so it is logical for them to keep on questioning their credibility as PELLs. Thus, it could be the factor why their responses covered the seen aspects of self as teacher and the personal values. There were about ninety-four (94) details were successfully coded under this theme. As non-optimists, it is inevitable not to compare themselves to the colleagues who were formally trained as TESL student-teachers. This is because '*what teachers know and how they use their knowledge in classrooms are highly interpretative and contingent on knowledge of self*' (Johnson & Golombek, 2002: 2). In this context, personality factor can be considered as the main source of respondents' teacher's belief system.

Furthermore, respondents also shared their responses on concerns about learners (61 coded details) and concerns about institutional matters (59 coded items). In these case studies, respondents viewed students as their main clients. As a result, they kept on discussing about students' attitude, proficiency, performance and learning preferences. Some of them treated the students as opposed to how they were being treated as language learners in schools and universities. They were more emphatic towards their students. In addition, they also acknowledged the contextualized issues on supports, constraints in policy implementation and constraints in teaching within community of practice. The shared concerns are derived by respondents' teacher belief on their roles as the non-optionist PELLs at the research site, Politeknik Aman. Hence, in this context, the sources of their teachers' beliefs are derived from experience as an English language learner, contextual established practice and self-built principles based on practical shapes.

Last but not least, based on the overall data, R1 was considered the most responsive respondent who has shared related information to the required data. The total of 171 coded details was found in his interview transcriptions and journal entries. One of his reflections was classified as 'deeper reflection' where as he described about the changes made in order to alter his approach in subsequent class after experiencing a failure in his earlier class. This is considered as an evaluative decision to improve the teaching approach that matches the Zeichner and Liston's (1996) *research and re-theorizing and research* stage. Most of his other coded details are classified as 'surface' and 'moderate' reflection. The responses feature the characteristics of *review* mode and *reflection-in-action* level (Schon, 1987; Zeichner and Liston, 1996). Same goes to the other two respondents, R2 and R3. Their responses are considered as 'surface' and 'moderate' level. This has concluded that, even though the respondents were not formally trained as English language teachers, they have shown a characteristic of reflective practitioners.

### ***Research Question 2***

The formation of teaching concerns was derived from respondents' belief system. As discussed earlier, the sources that shape their belief system encompasses five different elements, namely 1)experience as an English language learner, 2)experience of what works best, 3)contextual established practice, 4)self-built principles based on practical shapes, and 5)personality factor. The identified common teaching concerns reflect respondents' teacher cognition which signifies the state of their current professional knowledge bases. This is because teacher cognition refers to that what teachers think, believe and do (Borg, 2003) and personalizes the actions, experience, thoughts and values which are mostly guided by their own reasoning (Wallace, 1991). Consequently, the identified professional knowledge base facilitates the process to determine participants' professional development concerns.

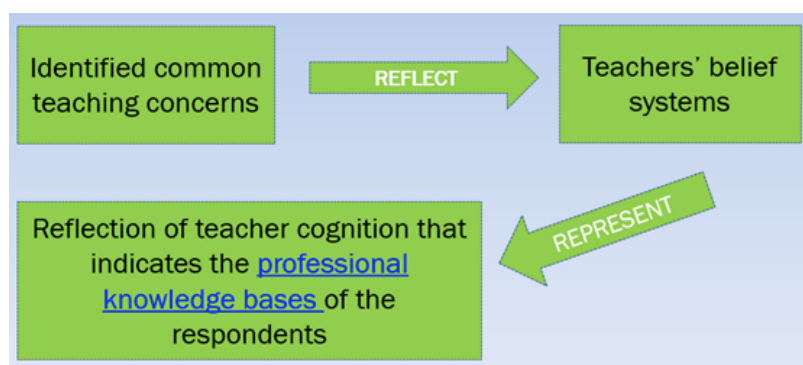


Figure 3: The path that link how exploring reflections related to identifying professional development concerns

Figure 3 depicts the link on is how exploring respondents' identified teaching concerns contribute to their professional development concerns. Based on these case studies, the identified professional knowledge bases are derived from subject/content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. The combination of the identified professional knowledge bases can be characterized as relevant to the requirements as the experienced language educators. It means that non-optionists' credibility as PELLs should not be interrogated even though they were not formally trained as language educators. The input from their short preparatory teaching training merged with their in-service teaching experience contributed to the development of their experiential knowledge.

Additionally, the respondents could be characterized as reflective practitioners. They hold positive attitudes towards their struggles to teach English language courses in English as a Specific Purpose (ESP) context. Their challenges are considered greater than their optionist colleagues. This is because the optionist PELLs also experienced similar difficulties to teach English language in ESP context. This is one of the main challenges in teaching English language at higher technical institutions (Marwan, 2009; Poedjiastutie, 2017; Salmiza et. al. 2016). The main reason is due to the fact that teaching ESP requires a special training that is based on need analysis in a specific scope or context.

Not forgetting, the non-optionist PELLs' knowledge base can be considered as a contextual formation. It reflects their current state of practice. It is expected because the conceptions of personal pedagogical knowledge (PPK). Respondents' PPK ought to address the complexity derived from the interactions between making sense of their particular teaching context and students at a particular time, the identity that fix their teaching, and the pedagogical choices they have decided (Clandinin, 2013; Salmiza et al, 2016; Shulman, 1987).

In relation to that, respondents' performance would not be as promising as what have been displayed in their present practice even though they are the self-driven individual. This is due to lack of specific supports received for their on-going professional development. It may exhaust them to continuously generate their self-efforts to work on what is best for them in less resources in terms of skills and knowledge as an ESP instructor. Hence, a drastic effort to support them should be made in assisting their PD concern before it affects their resilience to stay as PELLs. It may be applicable to the optionist PELLs' situation. This is because teachers'

retention embedded with emotion factor that is prone to be fluctuate depending on their immediate surroundings (Lavigne, 2015). Thus, bottom-up support to specifically address respondents' PD constraint particularly the improvement of their personal pedagogical knowledge as an ESP practitioner.

## **Conclusion**

All in all, it can be concluded that the respondents' teaching concerns have been shaped by the experience of what works best in their current situation as non-optionist PELLs in Politeknik Aman. Hence, their self-efforts to stay survived reflects the development of their professional knowledge base apart of not properly trained as ESL lecturers prior to join the teaching service. The experience of what works best is considered as a primary source of respondents' belief system. As a result, teaching concerns that most respondents shared in common are basically centred on '*what they do*' or their decision makings in teaching. It is actually anticipated by '*who they are*' as language educators. Furthermore, their experience as language learners and their personality factors trigger their professional learning regardless of their status as non-optionist PELLs. It can be seen that their experiential knowledge influences the engagement towards their professional practice. Being complacent or sticking to a routine are likely to be absent in their daily routines. Other than that, the findings prove that respondents are always in the state of conscious of their existence as they are considered as reflective practitioners.

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***Investigating the Idea of EAP Classroom Diglossia and Patterns of Code Switching.***

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**Abstract**

This study was conducted at a Sino-British University in mainland China with foundation level students learning academic reading and writing skills in English. Tutor observations across this type of context have noted generally high volumes of code-switching during class activities, particularly when working together. This study aims to discover why and when groups of Chinese students in an EAP classroom choose to use English and/or Mandarin Chinese during group work. It seeks to find patterns of language choice and whether this choice is made consciously, for instance as a result of the expectations of the context or their peers, or the code-switches are ‘slips’. It also investigates the role of interlocutors within the classroom, aiming to discover how great an influence they have on language choice. In order to do this, groups of students have been audio recorded during lesson time in classes led by the same tutor, covering the same materials. Participants were also given a short questionnaire prior to the recording aimed at revealing their perceptions of language use in order to compare with the recordings. It is anticipated that the data will show that code-switching is influenced by the task type and the interlocutor and that students view English as the preferred language yet perhaps are not confident or motivated enough to persevere when they cannot express themselves fully and switch back to Mandarin.

Keywords: diglossia, code-switching, classroom

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## 1. Introduction

An important aspect of being able to conduct successful interactions in conversation is having the ability to initiate and respond appropriately. As situations and contexts vary, so do the requirements of what language an interlocutor selects. This selection can be nuanced, for example linguistic choices made in terms of style or formality, or more obvious as in switching from one language or dialect to another. This linguistic alternation is known as ‘code-switching’ and there are numerous ways in which it can be divided. Code-switching can be separated into categories, two often referred to are situational and metaphorical (Holmes, 2001 p.35). Situational code-switching refers to more topic-based reasons for changing language code, whereas metaphorical has more social functions such as building relationships and solidarity. Additionally, Auer (1998 p. 6) uses the term language mixing to refer to turns in which different languages are alternated to the extent to which neither language is more prominent. This involves substituting words/phrases within a sentences or switching between languages within sentences.

Contexts in which language choices and switching between them exists are known as ‘diglossia’. The term is usually considered as referring to two versions of the same root language with a ‘high’ or more prestige form and a ‘low’ form, more typically found in informal situations (Ferguson, 2007 p. 34). This report will investigate code switching and diglossia in a classroom context. It will provide a background to the context and the study before reviewing current research and literature in relation to these aspects and to sociolinguistic and educational research more generally. The pedagogical approaches informing the methodology and details of how the research was conducted will also be discussed before the results are presented and analysed.

This small sociolinguistic study was conducted in a Sino-British University in China with pre-undergraduate students learning academic reading and writing skills in English before embarking on their undergraduate degrees. Although they were studying general English for Academic Purposes (EAP) at that time, all participants were to be enrolled on Engineering-related bachelors. At this point it is important to note that although the students are from a range of provinces, they do not speak dialect with each other and, perhaps given their age and social status, Mandarin is the dominant language given its wide promotion and the necessity of its use in education (Liang, 2015 p.21). Diglossia is typical in China with Mandarin and dialects both in use, with Mandarin for education and official business<sup>1</sup>.

In addition to this, English is widely used in Chinese education with English Medium Institutions (EMI) increasing in number, particularly in Higher Education (HE) (Wang and Liu, 2011 p.214) . Coulmas (2013, p. 152) describes code-switching as being contracted at times by ‘institutionalised restrictions’ and those enrolled in the university are expected to speak English in class. This institutionalisation can affect perceptions and beliefs of the students and their families, along with the methods and activities used by teachers (Li and Ruan, 2015, p.48). It is likely that many students, and the vast majority of parents, view the use of English highly and therefore believe it ought to be used in both instruction and communication in various campus contexts.

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<sup>1</sup> The students refer to Mandarin Chinese as ‘Chinese’, therefore for the purpose of this study the language shall be referred to as such.

This concept of a prestige and therefore ‘high’ form is a feature of diglossia and mirrors the EAP classroom situation to some extent and the language choice investigated may reveal this further.

This project aims to discover whether there exists a classroom diglossia in this context and why and when groups of Chinese students in an EAP classroom choose to use either English or Mandarin Chinese during group work. It investigates whether Chinese is chosen metaphorically as a means of forming bonds and displaying solidarity with their peers (Garrett, 2010 p.11; Fishman, 2007b p.56) or used more situationally depending on the topics and task types set. It also considers the context of the L2 classroom and whether participants choose their language more practically in this context, such as to clarify meaning or when they wish to express themselves (Üstünel, 2016 p.39). The research also gives some attention to the role of interlocutors such as in exchanges with the tutor and the table leader<sup>2</sup>, aiming to discover the influence these roles have on code-switching.

The research questions to be addressed are:

How far does the division of oral communication between English and Chinese used in class match the students’ perception of how much they use each language?

Can what causes students’ language choices and code-switching be categorised and at what is attributed to anything?

How much influence does an interlocutor have on group members’ language choice?

It is anticipated that the research will show that:

- Students perceive that they use more English than they actually do as they view it as the ‘high’ form in the classroom context. Trudgill (1972 p.188) reported in his seminal work in Norwich that participants tended to either under or over report their use of prestige language when compared with recordings, this is likely to be a factor here as the subjects are students of English so feel they ought to be using it.
- Causes of code-switching can be attributed to task types or attitudes to ability as certain tasks can be completed more easily in one of the languages.
- Interlocutors such as the tutor and the table leader have influence on language choice. During turn taking a speaker provides an addressee with a ‘role’ thus predicting a response type (Matthiessen and Slade, 2011 p.388) and elicits a language choice.

## 2. Literature Review

Ferguson (2007 p.34) describes diglossia as being able to develop in a variety of circumstances, yet is primarily involving variations of the same language. However, Fishman (2007a p.49) proports the existence of diglossia in any situation in which multiple roles and accesses can be determined through language. Thus, given shared socio-historical features such as a high and low form many types of circumstances can

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<sup>2</sup> The table leader is a particular method of engagement used for these classes in which one learner is chosen to lead their table for that lesson. Their role is to initiate discussions and to feedback to the teacher in open class or close monitoring at various stages throughout the session and the responsibility is given to different students each lesson to maintain parity. It is widely accepted within foreign language learning that students perform better with peer support and time to formulate responses as opposed to being called upon on the spot.

be considered diglossic (Meyerhoff, 2006 p.119) even, perhaps a classroom. In contrast, Gardener-Chloros' (2009 p.69) research into code switching argues that a diglossia cannot exist in the classroom context as learner's choose rather than are obliged to use a particular form.

Although there is little on the concept of a classroom diglossia, there is a considerable body of research into EMIs and linguistic beliefs associated with the Chinese context. Wei, Feng and Ma (2017 p. 46) conducted numerous student surveys regarding the necessity of English as a language of instruction in higher education, with over 80% of respondents deeming it necessary. Lin (1996 p. 53) cited the need to be proficient in English in order to succeed as the commonly held view in the study into code-switching in Hong Kong. This is echoed in research by Pan and Block (2011 p.395-6) in which both teachers and students viewed English as an important means to become more international and aid career progression, thus giving English prestige status in Chinese HE.

The participants in this study are referred to as 'Chinese learners', which Gu (2011 p.217) describes as among the most prominently researched collectives in higher education. Although much of this research is too homogenous to consider the complexities of multiple individuals on such a large scale, particularly considering issues with cultural labelling (Eisenhart, 2001 p. 217) and the maturing of students as they progress through university (Gu, 2011 p.218), some similarities between learners can be drawn. These can be seen in motivation, attitudes and input/experience of English.

One widely reported similarity of Chinese learners in EMIs, is that motivation is often behind students' approach to spoken English. Gu's (2011 p.219) study also found that the main motivation for studying at a British university was academic accreditation, with linguistic and cultural development a lesser focus. Peng and Woodrow (2011 p. 855) comment on the socio-cultural view of exam importance as a result of previous learning experience for this group. Similarly, Li and Ruan (2015 p. 48) and Pan and Block (2011 p.401) claim that prior assessment with a heavy focus on reading and writing is likely to lead to a focus on the acquisition of those skills to achieve assessment objectives, often at the expense of oral communication.

Student attitudes and beliefs, Aragão (2011 p.303) argues, can heavily influence emotions and this impacts on behaviour. While researchers often attribute behaviours to Chinese learners based on our own cultural norms (Stanley, 2011 p.112), many learners do conform to the Confucian heritage learner profile of experiencing anxiety and wishing to save face. More specifically to this context, research by Liu and Jackson (2011, p. 127) into Chinese students in an EMI context reported students felt particularly anxious when unprepared and addressing the class yet more confident in smaller groups. Therefore the language choice a table leader makes can impact widely on those of the whole group who may follow so-called 'addressee-based' code-switching (Meyerhoff, 2006 p. 121). Furthermore, Wei (2007 p.7) claims that bilingualism, and therefore code-switching, is as much about attitude as language, and the choice of one language over another may simply be the desire to opt for the unmarked variety (Coulmas, 2013 p. 137).

Previous research into bilingual contexts with Chinese learners have observed speakers often have little input in English outside the classroom. This results in feeling un-

natural conversing with classmates in English and a higher frequency of code-switching (Lin, 1996 p. 64). This can also result in ‘conflict control’ (Shay, 2015 p.468), where speakers reiterate points in their stronger language to either display understanding or avoid misunderstanding (Üstünel, 2016 p. 39).

Much research suggests that investigation into code switching and attitudes ‘appear to warrant more attention’ (Garrett, 2010 p. 78) and that it is ‘worthwhile’ to pursue studies that reveal social attitudinal changes (McKenzie and Carrie, 2018 p. 832). As the volume of EMIs in China grows, in order to maintain effective teaching and learning strategies, it is necessary to shed more light on the learners’ attitudes and beliefs (Li and Ruan, 2015, p. 45) to inform curriculum planning and development of learning environments. Gardener-Chloros (2009, p. 142) cites limited research into code-switching by learners of a second language, particularly into some of the variables in the Chinese/English speaker context (Wei, Milroy and Ching, 2007 p. 156). This group of participants addresses elements of this as there are fewer variables in terms of age, class and generation. Dixon and Zhao (2017, p.210) state that more research is needed into the relationship between the student perception of their abilities and how useful English is to them.

### 3. Methodology

As the research questions are based on use of language and inclusive of choice and identity, this study has taken an overall qualitative approach. Upon ethics approval, the data collection was conducted through a short online questionnaire (see appendix) consisting of 12 questions which had 43 respondents. Additionally, selected groups of 3-4 students were recorded and the data transcribed and analysed. The selection of three groups was based on researcher observations aiming to cover a variation including strong, confident speakers of English, a mixed ability group and a typically quiet, weaker group to form a triangular approach to the study. The groups recorded were in classes following the same lesson plan with the same tutor. Such mixed methodology is often viewed as beneficial in sociolinguistics to provide a more thorough investigation of the data (Angouri, 2010 p. 30; Dornyei, 2001 p.49). Ethical considerations were made when selecting participants, particularly as there is a perceived power relationship between tutor and student. All subjects were provided with bilingual participation information forms, anonymity and could withdraw at any time. The results will be available for any participants who wish to view them and will go on to inform curriculum development.

Rasinger (2010 p. 60) cites questionnaires as frequently employed to investigate language attitudes and choices, as a result a questionnaire was chosen for this research. It is argued that eliciting data relating to attitudes from conversational recordings is difficult, therefore focused questionnaires are recommended (Sunderland, 2010 p. 23). In this case, questions took the approach to studying language attitude using direct and indirect methods (Garrett, 2010 p.37). Participants were not only asked explicitly their reasons for code-switching but also asked questions which indirectly revealed attitudes to some extent, such as in ranking importance of skills, attributes and perceptions of their own use of language. It was decided that some questions should be open in order to avoid influencing participants’ choices and restricting them to multiple choice options. In accordance with accepted practice, there was a final question confirming the responses could be used in this research.

There are limitations in using this method to inform of language attitudes however, particularly as there is the issue of participants wishing to produce desirable answers for the researchers (Liang, 2015 p. 39; Garrett, 2010 p.42; Boberg 2013 p. 134). This is especially true in this case with the researchers' teacher-student relationship with the participants likely to influence their desire to project a positive attitude to speaking English. Also, as previously mentioned, there is also the risk of participants over reporting.

Dornyei (2001, p.49) notes the complementary nature of using qualitative methods to supplement sociolinguistics research, thus providing deeper understanding and analysis. Similarly, Navarro and Thornton (2011 p. 290) question the direct approach and suggest that more research focusing on behaviour and interaction is required. Meanwhile Gumperz's significant work in using a Conversation Analysis of transcripts in code-switching highlighted the importance of 'Interactional Sociolinguistics' (Gordon, 2011 p.67). In terms of this study, such views led to the inclusion of data collected from audio recordings which could then have the interaction analysed and compared with questionnaire data to show the differences in perception and reality, as outlined by Gee (2014 p.25-6) and Trudgill (1972 p. 188).

Hymes (1964 p.3) noted that communication and ethnography were needed in order to understand where language exists within another culture, rather than simply analysing the linguistics. This perspective meant that in order to fully examine language choice and code-switching, a variety of group types needed to be recorded. Constraints of time and number of ethics respondents meant that recording all groups was unfeasible, therefore three groups were selected based on the researcher's perceptions of language use prior to detailed investigation. The use of tutor observations and data collected from experience has been gaining wider acceptance in academia (Duff, 2008 p.201) and Creese (2010 p.140) gives multiple examples of these methods being used in classroom contexts, which suggested it would be effective for this study.

#### **4. Results**

The questionnaire had 43 respondents aged between 18-19 spread over four different classes, all of whom were Chinese and enrolled on foundation year programmes. All participants were studying EAP and would go on to study a field of Engineering. The participants had all been exposed to similar teaching style and classroom management within this environment and were familiar with group work and the table leader strategy employed by the researcher.

The first questions (Q1-2) addressed the students' perception of the quantity of spoken English they used in class and their desired quantity. As can be seen by the table around half of the participants believed they spoke mostly in English and just under 40% an even split between the two languages. Only one student believed they only used English in class, compared with almost a third desiring to use English only. The largest percentage again was the category of mostly English, some Chinese in terms of desired language use with only a single participant aiming for half and half. None of the respondents expressed perception or desire to use only Chinese language in this context.

Division of language	Participants' perceived use	Participants' desired use
English only	1	12
Mostly English, some Chinese	22	30
Half English, half Chinese	17	1
Mostly Chinese, some English	3	0
Chinese only	0	0

Figure 1: Perceived use of Language

The next set of questions (Q3-7) examined group work and interlocutors. When addressed in Chinese, nine students would respond in Chinese and four in English, whereas when addressed in English only six believed they would respond in English and seven in Chinese which seems to contradict the answers given in Q1. In contrast, Q5 reveals that no participants would say they began discussions in Chinese if they were table leader. Thirty out of forty opted for 'it depends' for both Q3 and 4 and three for Q5, therefore Q6 was left an open question form for expanding on this. A pattern of similar responses emerged and were organised as in the table below:

Dependent factors	No. of respondents
difficult task/topic	5
ability to express ideas	15
relation to task	2
language ability of group	3
emotion	1
no response	5

Figure 2: Dependent Factors for Language Choices

Q8 and 9 focused on the effect of task type on language choice and again used open questions. Despite being open, there were noticeable patterns in their responses. Most significantly, English exam preparation based discussion tasks and discussions based on a specific question were frequently cited as activities that elicited English, making up almost 50% of responses. Similarly, over a third of respondents cited difficult topics or concepts as a reason for opting for Chinese and discussions about gossip and new vocabulary were only mentioned in relation to using Chinese in class. One category that proved divisive was general discussion and teamwork as these concepts were mentioned almost equally when asked about both languages, with 12 respondents claiming to use English and 9 Chinese.

Finally, the participants were asked to rank skills (Q10) and desires (Q11), and the general role of English in China (Q12). It can be seen from the data that exam per-

formance and practicing oral English were deemed most important and building relationships with classmates more important than impressing the tutor. Not making mistakes did not appear to be of great concern in the questionnaire. Contrary to previously cited literature, the majority of the participants ranked oral communication skills as more important than reading and writing skills and grammar. The general response Q12 regarding the role of English in China was varied from positive and enjoyable to necessary if not always useful.

Groups were selected for the recordings from two of classes which completed the questionnaire and were chosen based on tutor perception of how much English they generally spoke in class. There groups consisted of a high-level group who complete most tasks in English as a variable and two mixed ability groups who tend to use both languages and represent the most frequently observed dynamics in this context based on researcher experience. In order to distinguish between participants' perceived and actual language use, each group was coded and the number of turns in each language added and compared in the charts below.

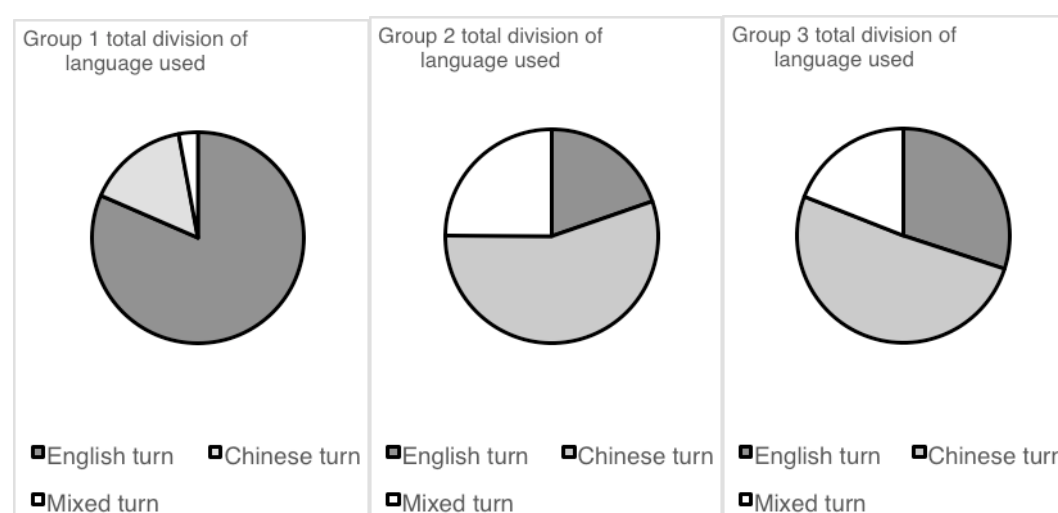


Figure 3: Division of Language used per group

The first group used mostly English whereas the mixed groups relied heavily on Chinese and also showed greater proportions of mixed turns.

The transcription was then analysed according to language functions. There were found to be three main functions of exchanges: clarification, discussion of tasks and gossip. It was found that Chinese was consistently selected by all groups for clarification of tasks and for gossip, with English not used for these functions. The discussions were of various tasks being undertaken throughout the lesson, these saw a mix of languages frequently employed. The tasks and the language choice can be divided as according to the table below:

Discussion of:	Group 1			Group 2			Group 3		
	Eng	Ch	Mix	Eng	Ch	Mix	Eng	Ch	Mix
Vocabulary and grammar	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	√
Sentences from books	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Paraphrasing	√	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√
Hypothesising	√	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√
Giving advice	√	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	√

Figure 4: Tasks and Language Choices

This data is more ambiguous in terms of function, Group 1 used limited Chinese and mixing, mostly keeping their interaction in English. Groups 2 and 3 employed much more Chinese and mixing to negotiate their discussions, although Group 3's use varied considerably more, which perhaps is a result of the higher volume of turns taken throughout the lesson.

Finally, the responses to interlocutors such as the tutor and table leader yielded some interesting results. In Group 1 the role of interlocutor was significant in either language. Even when a conversation had continued in English, there was an example of a response in Chinese to a question posed in Chinese a few lines earlier. The table leader (A) in this group started all discussions in English worked to maintain this, frequently posing questions and taking the responsibility of starting a move. This groups' interactions with the tutor were all conducted in English and continued in thus as the tutor left the conversation. The other two groups were similar to each other, yet markedly different from the first group. Both table leaders (H in group 2, J in group 3) began conversational moves in either language contradicting claims in Q5, there was also a tendency to start in English and switch mid-sentence to Chinese. In general, tutor interruptions as a direct interlocutor in a conversation triggered a code-switch to English as long as the tutor remained with the group. There are examples of the tutor posing a question then walking away or giving a prompt to the whole class without becoming an active interlocutor, in these cases both groups typically switched back to Chinese.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results confirm that there is a disparity for most students between their perception of language use and the reality of how much of each language they speak in the classroom. The variable Group 1 however, were more aligned with the questionnaire results, yet even if the single respondent who perceives they only speak English in class was in fact in this group, all participants had at least one turn in Chinese. The view of English as the prestige 'high' form could not be confirmed. Despite over reporting by most respondents, the mixed usage and the answers to the questionnaire, particularly

Q12, revealed that although there is a generally positive attitude to the role of English in China and students enrolled in EMIs would like to use English, it is not such a high priority and academic achievement either in a task or assessment results takes a precedent.

Code-switching did appear to be influenced by task, ability and interlocutor. Certain task types or language functions were operated almost entirely in Chinese such as clarification of instructions and gossiping. Although the questionnaire elicited different types of discussions as reasons for using English or switching, the transcriptions gave a clearer insight into which discussions were conducted in which language. It also demonstrated the difference in the higher Group 1 compared to the other groups with certain discussion types, suggesting that certain language functions may be assimilated first such as hypothesising, giving advice and discussing paraphrasing compared with negotiating correct grammar and vocabulary. The interlocutors appeared to conform more to the ideas of social code-switching and relationship building as speakers tended to accommodate to each other.

In conclusion, students in an EAP classroom generally use more code-switching and Chinese than they perceived. This appeared to be influenced by task and interlocutor to some extent, with some circumstances more clear-cut than others. Certain task types or language functions were operated almost entirely in Chinese such as clarification of instructions and gossiping. Although the questionnaire elicited different types of discussions as reasons for using English or switching, the transcriptions gave a clearer insight into which discussions were conducted in which language. It also demonstrated the difference in a more linguistically competent group with certain discussion types. The interlocutors appeared to conform more to the ideas of social code-switching and relationship building as speakers tended to accommodate to each other. Despite over reporting by most respondents, the mixed usage and questionnaire answers, particularly to Q12, revealed that although there is a generally positive attitude to the role of English in China and students enrolled in EMIs would like to use English, it is not such a high priority and academic achievement either in a task or assessment results takes a precedent.

There are limitations to the outcomes of this study with a small percentage of the student cohort recorded. It is likely that there are considerably more variables on a larger scale and wider in-depth investigation could reveal more of the complexity of language choice in the EAP classroom. Additionally, as the same lesson was used to maintain parity, it gives a narrow selection of activities and language functions. As the outcomes of sociolinguistic studies in contexts such as education can be well utilised to provide positive impact (Lawson and Sayers, 2016 p.19), this study will be used in course planning and curriculum design to facilitate communication in English in EAP classrooms in line with students' perceptions and desires. More locally, it will also be used to improve and develop the researcher as a tutor, particularly as an interlocutor.

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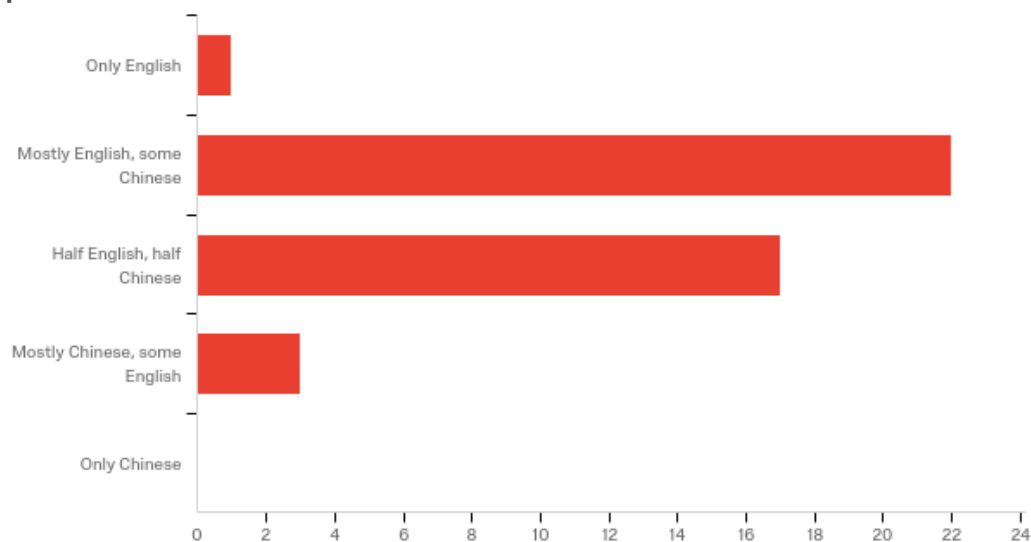
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**Contact email:** Lauren.Knowles@nottingham.edu.cn

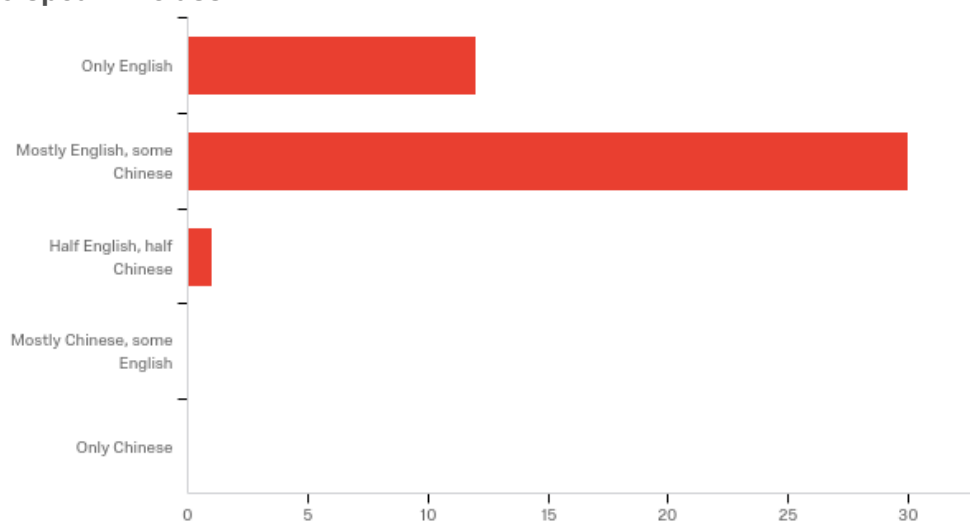
## Appendix

**Q1 - Which best represents the balance of English and Chinese you actually speak in class?**



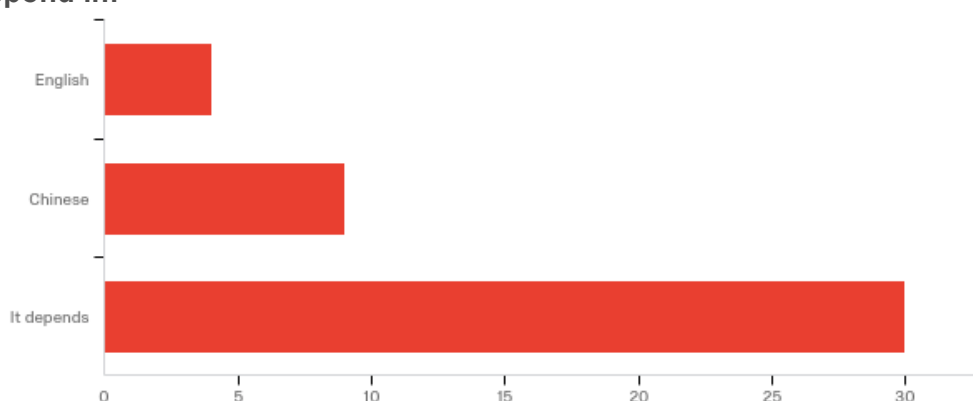
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Only English	2.33%	1
2	Mostly English, some Chinese	51.16%	22
3	Half English, half Chinese	39.53%	17
4	Mostly Chinese, some English	6.98%	3
5	Only Chinese	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	43

**Q2 - Which best represents the balance of English and Chinese you would like to speak in class?**



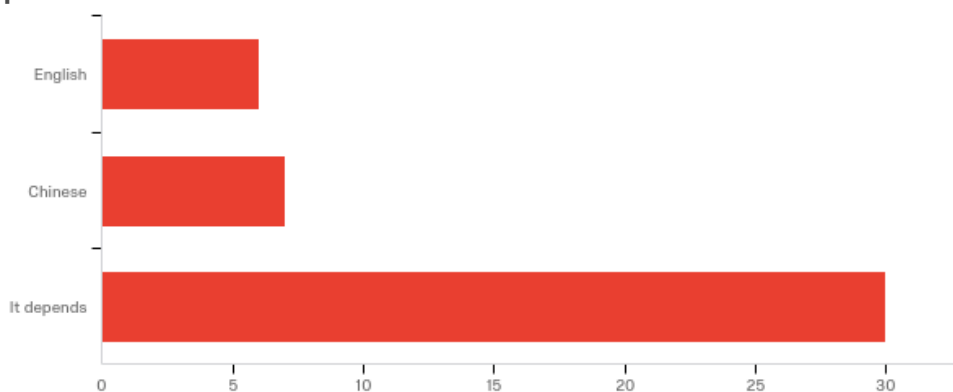
#	Answer	%	Count
1	Only English	27.91%	12
2	Mostly English, some Chinese	69.77%	30
3	Half English, half Chinese	2.33%	1
4	Mostly Chinese, some English	0.00%	0
5	Only Chinese	0.00%	0
	Total	100%	43

**Q3 - If your group is speaking in Chinese during a class activity, do you respond in:**



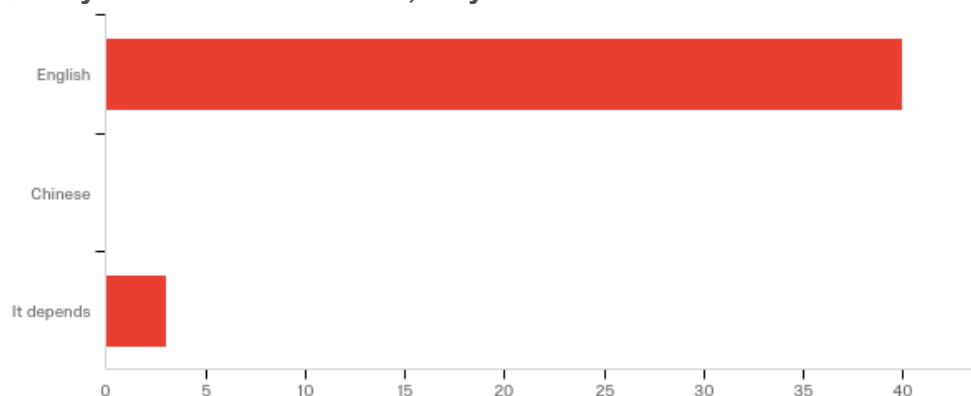
#	Answer	%	Count
1	English	9.30%	4
2	Chinese	20.93%	9
3	It depends	69.77%	30
	Total	100%	43

**Q4 - If your group is speaking in English during a class activity, do you respond in:**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	English	13.95%	6
2	Chinese	16.28%	7
3	It depends	69.77%	30
	Total	100%	43

#### Q5 - If you are the table leader, do you start discussions in:



#	Answer	%	Count
1	English	93.02%	40
2	Chinese	0.00%	0
3	It depends	6.98%	3
	Total	100%	43

#### Q6 - If you answered 'it depends', what does it depend on?

If you answered 'it depends', what does it depend on?

level of question

Can I Express my ideas

Do I know what the word is

My knowledge

the topic

if the topic is difficult foe me, i will speak Chinese

whether I know how to answer in English.

if the topic is tough enough

Whether the question is official

When it comes to problems that is irrelevant to the lesson, chinese, otherwise, English

Whether I can explain the issue well in English

The difficulty of the problem.

if I can respond clearly in English

whether I have the ability to express my idea in English. Depends on my vocabulary.

if I master the vocabulary.

whether I can express what I want to say clearly, and whether my classmates can understand and whether they want to talk in English or Chinese

Whether I know how to explain

Emmm

If my idea can be simply understood by others in English

emotion

...who knows. Maybe whether I can express it in English.

If I can express my feelings correctly in English, if so I will speak English, or I will use Chinese.

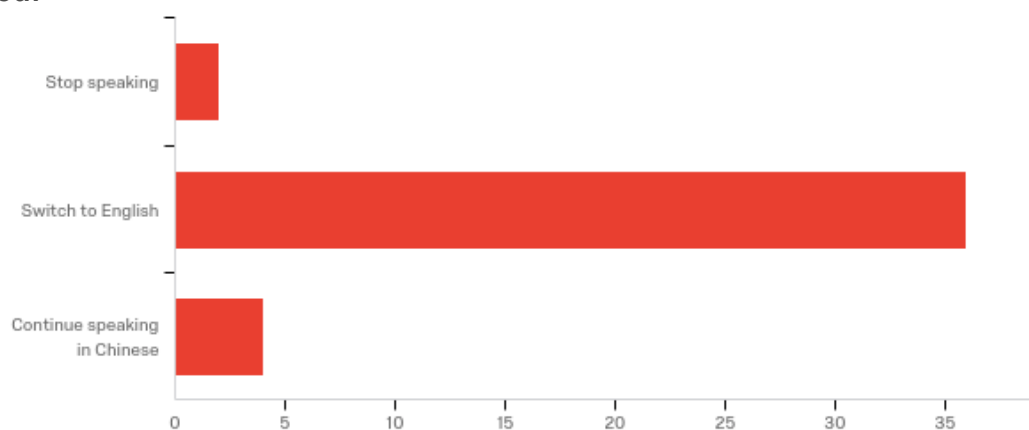
other mates

if we can express it clearly in English

If it is too hard for me to express in English, I'll use Chinese in a low voice to express.

how difficult the words are

**Q7 - If you are speaking Chinese with your group and your tutor comes over do you:**



#	Answer	%	Count
1	Stop speaking	4.76%	2
2	Switch to English	85.71%	36
3	Continue speaking in Chinese	9.52%	4
	Total	100%	42

### Q8 - What types of activities make you choose to work with your group in English?

What types of activities make you choose to work with your group in English?

answer questions

discuss

Discuss topic we have learned or pre-viewed

discusssion

Teamwork

discussion

Discuss an answer for a problem, maybe everyones opinion about something.

answer the question.

Discussion

discussion about a certain situation

Discuss the question asked by tutors

discussion

Discussion practice

discussion

group discussion

all things

may be discussion about article, lecture

When it is a good time to practice my spoken English

simple discuss. answer tutor's questions.

Preparing and practicing for discussion exam.

Discussion

Discussion

discussing questions or ideas

Something isn't hard for me to use English

group discussion

Just simple communication about study and knowledge.

Funny and not so difficult

discussion

Questions or answers are easy to understand and we can easily say that out.

answering questions, group discussion

answer specific questions

discuss

the discussion maybe

discussion

Practice some speaking task like group discussion

Those have new vocabulary especially

discussion

### **Q9 - What types of activities make you choose to work with your group in Chinese?**

What types of activities make you choose to work with your group in Chinese?

discussion

new words I dont know

Not familiar

hard to explain in english

gossip?

After-school planing

role play

When we need to describe a figure or explain something to our tutor.

discuss

Nothing

discussion about a certain situation

... free talk

QR qiuz

Activities need to raise a solution

explanation about some difficult problem

definition , answering tough questions

some special or difficult problems

may be discussion about article, lectureo

maybe when it is hard to explain or understand in English

---

complex topic discussion

---

Resolving the questions of the article.

---

Dicussion

---

Solve questions

---

Discussing questions or ideas

---

Something I can't use English to express myself clearly

---

something do not familiar with

---

Some need professional words and we can use English to express it.

---

difficult one and not easy to express

---

complicated discussion

---

Something that is hard to understand like words or phrases.

---

actually no

---

discussion difficult topic

---

the topic hard to say

---

the discussion of the pronlem from the booklet

---

difficult work

---

Some tasks that I cannot express in English

---

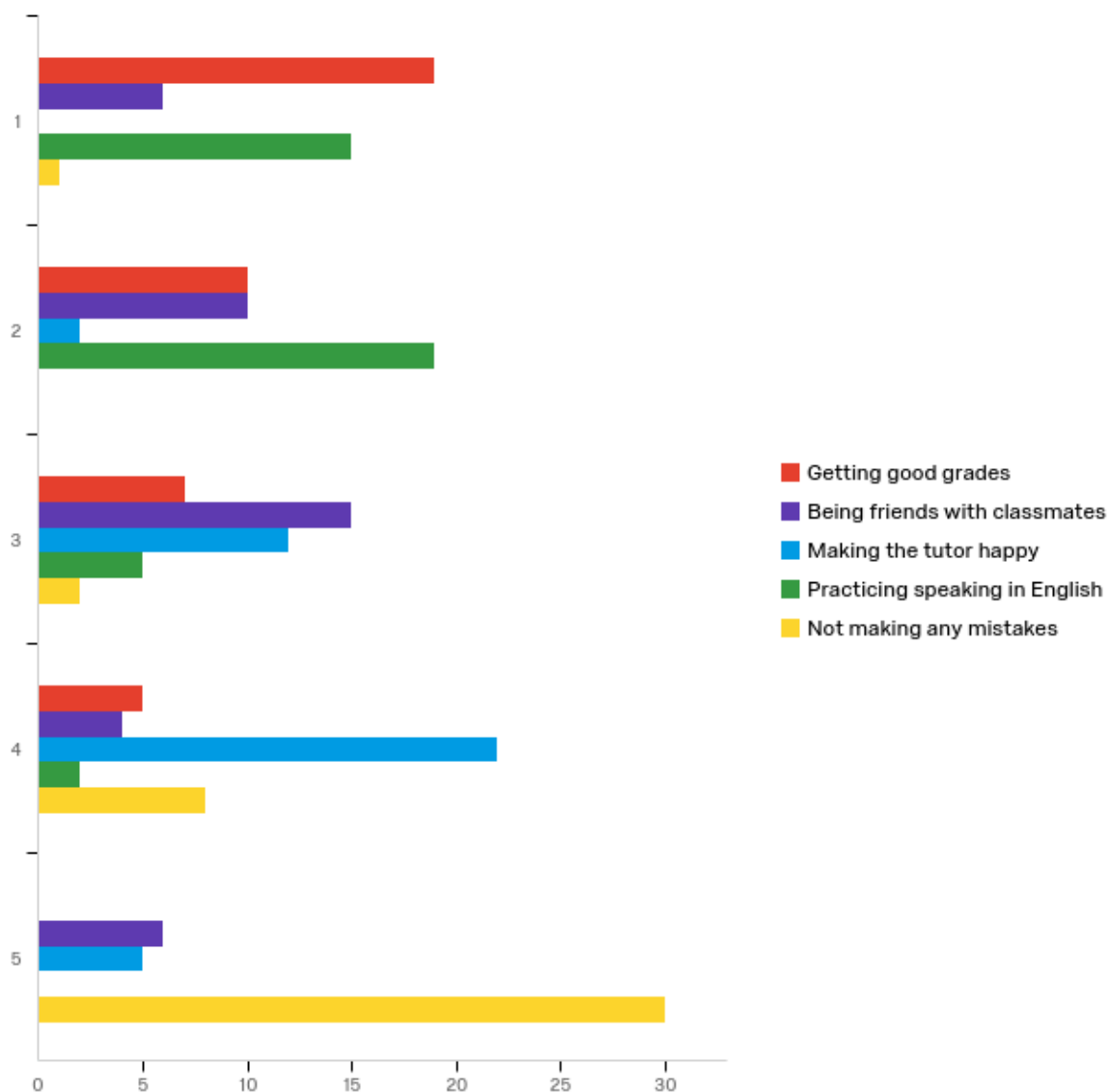
Just use in some dofficult part.

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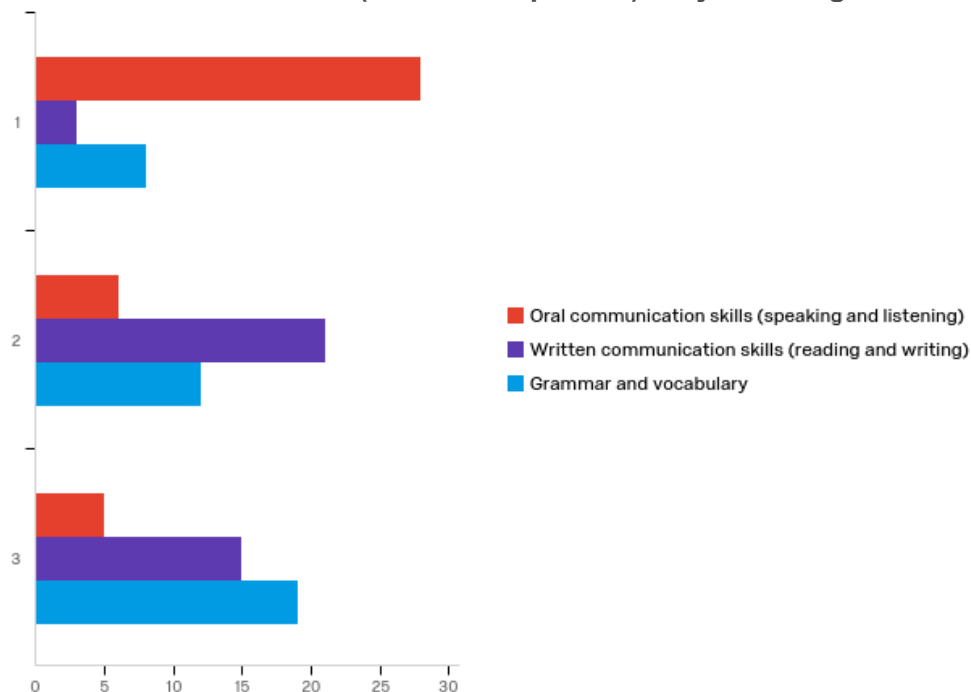
activities with specific words

---

**Q10 - Put these things in order (1 = most important) for you in your English classes.**



#	Question	1	2	3	4	5	Total
1	Getting good grades	46.34 % 19	24.39 % 10	17.07 % 7	12.20 % 5	0.00 % 0	41
2	Being friends with class-mates	14.63 % 6	24.39 % 10	36.59 % 15	9.76 % 4	14.63 % 6	41
3	Making the tutor happy	0.00 % 0	4.88 % 2	29.27 % 12	53.66 % 22	12.20 % 5	41
4	Practicing speaking in English	36.59 % 15	46.34 % 19	12.20 % 5	4.88 % 2	0.00 % 0	41
5	Not making any mistakes	2.44 % 1	0.00 % 0	4.88 % 2	19.51 % 8	73.17 % 30	41

**Q11 - Put the skills in order (1 = most important) for you in English.**

#	Question	1		2		3		Total
1	Oral communication skills (speaking and listening)	71.79%	28	15.38%	6	12.82%	5	39
2	Written communication skills (reading and writing)	7.69%	3	53.85%	21	38.46%	15	39
3	Grammar and vocabulary	20.51%	8	30.77%	12	48.72%	19	39

**Q12 - What do you think about the role of speaking English in China?**

What do you think about the role of speaking English in China?

not too bad

use for communicating with foreigners

If its for between chinese , its kinda silly , if betwwen two countries , sure why not

Vital

nice

Not bad

maybe not useful, because when people are facing sone difficulties,they can't help speaking Chinese

it doesn't influence most of people's life.The main role of English speaking is to show the ability of that person.

academic use

It gives you more working opportunities.

this important for people who are open mind

---

Communicate with friends from other countries.

---

good

---

More relevant on grades, I think

---

important

---

It's a necessary skill for the youngster.

---

Maybe not completed

---

It's a fundamental skill today.

---

It not a perfect surroundings in china because of education but it is good place in unnc

---

in compus, it is great and admirable, in my hometown, it is weird. but it is an important skill for Chinese.

---

It's a good thing maybe.

---

Interesting

---

It's simple and that must be an interesting guy that want to learn English well or very confident in English speaking

---

it's a good chance to prepare for studying abroad.

---

i do have no idea about this. sorry about this

---

If we just study for English, it is important. But if just for communication, it is not essential.

---

It's a bridge to other countries.

---

great and interesting but because of the lack of vocabulary, sometime I can not express myself in easy way

---

Has been treated too little.

---

not too bad

---

Happy

---

To enhance the global eyesight

---

useful in some area

---

Enable people to understand the outside world

---

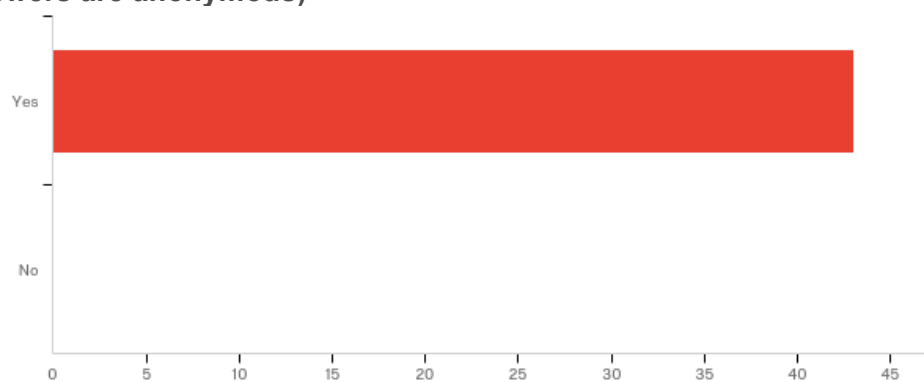
no ideas

---

practice and learning

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**Are you happy for your answers to be included in Lola's research? (the answers are anonymous)**



### ***Topical Structure Analysis of Filipino and Chinese Journal Abstracts***

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The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2019  
Official Conference Proceedings

#### **Abstract**

This study examined the topical structure of Filipino and Chinese journal abstracts on bilingual education. Specifically, it looked into the physical and topical characteristics of abstracts written by Filipino and Chinese researchers in the field of language. On the physical features, it examined the number of words, clauses, and sentences in a paragraph; number of words and number of clauses in a sentence; and number of words in a clause. In terms of topical features, it analyzed the difference in the internal coherence between Filipino and Chinese-written abstracts in English in terms of parallel progression, extended parallel progression, and sequential progression. The results of the study reveal differences between the two cultures in terms of journal abstracts writing. While Chinese and Filipino abstract writers seem to share similar writing styles, Filipino writers tend to use more wordy clauses and write longer sentences. There were also more progressions found in the Filipino abstracts as compared to the Chinese abstracts.

Keywords: Topical Structure, Contrastive Rhetoric, Filipino and Chinese Journal abstracts

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## Introduction

In Kaplan's (1966) study on the structure of formal essays, he stated that the thinking and writing styles of people are influenced and determined by their culture. He described speakers of different languages as having different thought patterns and that these affect the way they organize their thoughts and put them into writing. He further illustrated this in his model of Contrastive Rhetoric where he identified five models for organizing a paper and structuring an argument of speakers of different languages. Kaplan (1966) portrayed English native speakers to be direct and to the point in their argumentative writing as if it were a straight line. Meanwhile, his depiction of other cultures' writing approach was that of different shapes such as in the case of oriental writing which he illustrated as cyclic, indirect and non-assertive in nature.

Kaplan's (1966) model has been the subject of criticism because of its apparent leaning toward cultural misrepresentation and its failure to reflect diversity not only in language but also in culture. Kaplan (1966) pointed out, however, that these models are merely a generic typology of cultural writing patterns and not intended to advocate one cultural style over another nor promote that one is superior in comparison with other culture's academic writing style.

Despite the debates, Simpson (2000) in her comparison of English and Spanish academic writing, seemed to support Kaplan's theory that culture influences rhetorical patterns. She reported that English writers tend to have more repetition of keywords and phrases while Spanish writers link ideas together in a paragraph. A similar comparative study was conducted by Dumanig et. al (2009) focusing on the physical and topical structures of editorials written in English by American and Filipino writers. Aside from the structures, they likewise looked at the coherence and thematic progression patterns evident in the writing system of the two cultures. The results revealed that while there was minimal difference in the writings, Filipino writers tend to be verbose with their use of more words in clauses and longer sentences. In terms of topical progressions, however, both American and Filipino editorial writers in their study showed to have achieved internal coherence in writing (p.63).

## Topical Structure Analysis

In order to inspect the relationships between sentences and to describe its coherence, Lautamatti (1987) developed the theory of Topical Structure Analysis (TSA). According to Flores and Yin (2015), TSA offers a way to describe coherence of texts based on the sequencing of topics per sentence within a paragraph. They further stated that coherence is based on how topics are developed within a paragraph. In TSA, Lautamatti (1987) identified three features of a written text and these are: 1) Identification of sentence topics; 2) Determining sentence progression; and 3) Charting the progress of sentence topics. Lautamatti (1987) described progressions or sequence of topics per sentence as cohesive ties and may be classified into three types: parallel progression, sequential progression, and extended parallel progression. Each one is briefly described below:

1. Parallel Progression (The topics are semantically co-inferential)
2. Extended Parallel Progression (A parallel progression is temporarily interrupted by a sequential progression)
3. Sequential Progression (The topics are always different and derived from comment of the previous sentence)

The application of TSA has been the basis of many studies and researches in different areas of academic writing. Flores & Yin (2015) shared that studies with TSA application have gathered empirical evidence that validate the relationship between topical development and coherence. They averred that TSA has been helpful in identifying good and weak written texts. One significant study that attempted to do an analysis of the physical and topical structure of paragraphs gathered from manpower agency websites from three countries in Southeast Asia – the Philippines, Indonesia, and Jakarta was the one of Quinto (2015). The results revealed slight but statistically insignificant differences between and among the sets. Upon further analysis conducted through TSA, it was found out that there is a stronger demand for internal coherence in Philippine manpower discourse (MD) as compared with Indonesian and Malaysia manpower discourses. Quinto (2015) likewise shared that topical progressions in all paragraphs were evident in the Philippine manpower discourses, a characteristic that was not shared by its counterparts (p.91).

Other researches on contrastive rhetoric include investigations on L2 professional writing (Thatcher, 2000; Pariña, 2010), business and technical writing (Woolever, 2001), workplace discourse (Dautermann, 1993; Kleimann, 1993), research articles (Morales, 2001), among others (Quinto, 2015). As stated, the past decades have seen the spread of CR in different fields and while there is a wealth of information on these varied investigations, there remains limited literature on journal abstracts specifically focusing on topical structure analysis. Thus, this paper aims to fill that limited gap.

This study examines the topical structure of Philippine and Chinese journal abstracts which focus on the topic - bilingual education. Specifically, it looks at the physical and topical characteristics of abstracts written by Filipino and Chinese researchers in the field of language. On the physical features, it examines the number of words, clauses, and sentences in a paragraph; number of words and number of clauses in a sentence; and number of words in a clause. In terms of topical features, it analyzes the difference in the internal coherence between Filipino and Chinese-written abstracts in English in terms of parallel progression, extended parallel progression, and sequential progression. The results of the study will hopefully reveal differences in rhetorical characteristics between two cultures in terms of journal abstract writings, eventually substantiating earlier hypothesis on culture having an influence on writing.

### **Journal Abstracts**

A journal abstract is a part of a research or study that is published in conference proceedings. Aside from being the part that readers look at first before reading a journal article, it is also the first that readers see when they search through electronic databases. Journal abstracts help to identify an investigation's objectives, methodology, findings, and conclusions. It also enables the readers to identify the

basic contents of the report as well as its relevance (Moten, 2009) as cited in (Fartousi and Dumanig, 2012). Aside from conforming to a formal structure, most academic journals require that abstracts have limits on word count and they are usually from 200 to 250 words.

To validate the hypothesis that culture influences writing and rhetorical patterns differ among cultures, this study analyzed the differences between Chinese and Filipino journal abstracts in English. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How do Chinese journal abstracts differ from the Filipino journal abstracts in terms of: Number of words per paragraph? Number of sentences per paragraph? Number of words per sentence? Number of clauses? Number of clauses per sentence? Number of clauses per paragraph? Number of words per clause?
2. Is there a difference in the internal coherence between the Chinese and Filipino journal abstracts in English in terms of: Parallel progression? Extended parallel progression? Sequential progression?

## **Methodology**

### **Selection of Corpus**

This study used a total of twenty-six (26) randomly selected abstracts on bilingual education journal articles, 13 of which were written by Chinese and another 13 by Filipino writers and published in the online database, Jstor. The abstracts were analyzed in terms of their physical structure and their topical structure which include three progressions: Parallel progression, Extended Parallel progression, and Sequential progression.

### **Data Analysis Method**

**A. Physical Analysis** – Analyzing the physical structure of all data was done manually and partly checked electronically. The researcher manually counted the number of words, sentences, and clauses per sentence in all the abstracts that were used for the study. To validate the correctness of word count, the Microsoft Office program MS Word was used. The journal articles from which all the abstracts were collected were written by Chinese and Filipino writers on a specific topic - Bilingual education.

**B. Topical Structure Analysis** – In analyzing the topical structure of the abstracts, the researcher adapted the Topical Structure Analysis (TSA) of Lautamatti (1987). This analysis was used to determine the internal structure of the paragraph, focusing on identifying the topical subject and the three types of thematic progression for each of the sentences in the abstracts. Specifically, the following steps were conducted in identifying the topical structure of the abstracts:

1. Sentences were numbered.
2. Topic (word or phrase) in each sentence was highlighted.
3. A diagram of the topic sentences was constructed.
4. Coherence of ideas was checked.

For the purpose of this study, only the topical subjects of independent clauses were identified.

## Research Design

This study is both quantitative and qualitative in nature to demonstrate some of the differences between the Chinese and Filipino abstract writings in English. The quantitative part of the study deals with the general data of the corpus and frequency of occurrence of themes while the qualitative part addresses the explanation of the thematic progression pattern and the coherence of the texts.

## Research Instruments

As stated earlier, in order to arrive at a valid result, the study's corpus was randomly selected from an online database, JStor. A total of twenty six (26) journal articles on the topic: Bilingual Education from two cultures – Chinese and Filipino with 13 abstracts in each group. The researcher mainly identified the similarities and differences of the Filipino and Chinese abstracts using Lautamatti's (1987) topical structure analysis. In analyzing the data, two methods were used in the study: the physical analysis and the topical structure analysis. For textual analysis, the data was coded and tabulated.

## Results and Discussions

**A. The Physical Analysis** - The physical analysis of the paragraphs shows some predictable physical differences as revealed in Table 1.

**B.**

Table 1: General Data of Abstracts Written in English

	Chinese Abstracts	Filipino Abstracts
Total number of words	1,792	2,407
Average number of words per paragraph	137.85	185.15
Total number of sentences	55	91
Average number of sentences per paragraph	4.23	7
Average words per sentence	25.72	26.93

The general data gathered from the study's abstracts written in English can be seen in Table 1. The information shows a comparison between Chinese and Filipino abstracts in their physical structures specifically in terms of the total number of words, average number of words per paragraph, total number of sentences, average number of sentences per paragraph and average words per sentence.

As shown in the table, the Chinese abstracts are about 75% lesser than the Filipino abstracts in terms of total number of words. On the average, there are 25.72 words per sentence in the Chinese abstracts whereas for Filipino abstracts, the average number of words per sentence totals to 26.93. In terms of the total number of sentences, the Filipino abstracts were 36 sentences higher at 91 versus the Chinese's 55 sentences. The Filipino abstracts are almost 3 sentences more than its counterpart with an average of 7 sentences while it is 4.23 for the Chinese abstracts. The difference

between the abstract writings in English of Chinese and Filipinos as revealed in the results seems to indicate that Chinese write fewer sentences per paragraph as well as use slightly fewer words per sentence as compared to Filipino English writers. In all aspects, the Filipino abstracts used in the study reveal greater scores versus its Chinese counterparts.

Table 2: Clause Data from Abstracts Written in English

	Chinese Abstracts	Filipino Abstracts
Total number of clauses	111	142
Average number of clauses per paragraph	8.54	13.12
Average number of clauses per sentence	1.42	1.89
Average words per clause	13.45	13.12

Another area that the researcher looked at is the clause data of the English abstracts written by Chinese and Filipino writers. Presented in Table 2 are the clause data which include the total number of clauses, average clauses per paragraph, average clauses per sentence and the average words per clause. As can be seen, the Filipino abstracts outweighed the Chinese abstracts in terms of total number of clauses as well as in the average number of clauses per paragraph. However, there does not seem to be much difference in the average number of clauses per sentence for both Chinese and Filipino English abstracts as the latter is only higher by 0.47. In the case of average words per clause, the Chinese abstracts scored 0.33 higher than Filipino English abstracts. This difference may be an indication that Chinese English writers of abstracts use slightly more words or longer clauses than its counterpart.

### C. Topical Structure Analysis

Table 3: Summary of Topical Development of Filipino-Written Journal Abstracts

Abstract No.	Independent Clause Topic	New Topic	Parallel Sequential Progression	Extended Parallel Progression
1	10	4	3	2
2	9	5	1	3
3	6	6	0	0
4	15	7	5	1
5	11	5	4	1
6	13	5	6	1
7	16	4	4	3
8	17	4	10	2
9	19	12	5	0
10	11	3	8	0
11	14	4	6	3
12	13	6	5	0
13	8	3	4	2
Total	162	68	61	18

Table 3 presents the summary of topical development of the Filipino-written journal abstracts. The data included are the number of abstracts used, the number of independent clauses in every abstract and the number of new topics that occurred in every paragraph. It also presents the numbers of parallel progression, extended parallel progression and sequential parallel progression in every paragraph. The topical development in the Chinese abstracts contains 162 independent clauses, 68 new topics, 61 parallel progressions, 81 extended parallel progressions and 69 sequential progressions.

On the other hand, Table 4 shows the summary of topical development of Chinese-written abstracts. A total of 130 independent clauses were traced. New topics totaled 65 while the parallel, extended parallel and sequential progressions were 37, 13, and 60, respectively. Aside from providing a summary, the data gathered may be a basis for determining a significant difference between the English abstract writings of the Chinese and Filipino writers.

Table 4: Summary of Topical Development of Chinese-Written Journal Abstracts

No.	Abstract		Independent Topic	New Progression	Parallel Sequential		Parallel	Extended Progression	
	Clause								
	1	9	4		4		0		5
	2	9	4		3		1		3
3		13		9	2		1		8
	4	9	4		1		1		4
5		10		7	2		0		7
	6	9	5		0		3		5
	7	8	4		2		1		4
8		11	4		4		1		3
	9	6	4		1		1		3
	10	7	4		2		1		4
11		18	5		11		2		4
	12	5	5		0		0		5
13		16	6		5		1		5
Total		130	65		37		13		60

## Topical Structure Analysis

Table 5: Comparative Summary of Totals for Topical Structure Analysis

Chinese Abstracts	Percent %	Filipino Abstracts	Percent %
Clauses	130	162	
Topics	65	50.0	68
	41.98		
Parallel Progression	37	28.46	61
	37.65		
Extended Parallel Progression	13	10.0	18
	11.11		
Sequential Progression	60	46.15	69
	42.59		
Total Progression	110	84.62	149
	91.98		

Table 5 shows a comparative summary of totals for topical structure analysis. As gathered from the data, the clauses found in the Chinese abstracts total 130 or 32 less than the ones (162) found from the Filipino abstracts.

Based on the data indicated on Table 5, the clauses found in the Filipino abstracts were 32 more than the Chinese abstracts. While the topics introduced for the Filipino abstracts were slightly higher at 68, the Chinese abstracts scored higher in terms of percentage. As for the progressions, the Filipino abstracts were significantly higher in all the three types. In terms of the number of new topics in every abstract, it was 50% for the Chinese abstracts while it was 8.02% less for the Filipino abstracts. However, comparing the performance of both Chinese and Filipino writers in terms of repetition of keywords and phrases, the data show a huge difference. In the parallel progression of Chinese and Filipino abstracts, there is a difference of 24 with the latter scoring higher than the former. In this case, the occurrence of parallel progression is more frequent than the sequential and extended parallel progressions. This result would seem to indicate that much of the thematic development was done through repetition of key words and phrases in consecutive sentences. The rheme was also taken as the theme of the topic of the succeeding sentences. Again, while there was minimal difference in both types of abstracts in terms of extended parallel progression, the Filipino abstracts still scored higher by 1.1%. As for sequential progression, there is a difference of 9 with the Filipino abstracts still scoring higher over the Chinese abstracts. In terms of percentage, however, the Chinese abstracts scored 3.56% higher. As can be seen in the above results, there were more progressions found in the Filipino abstracts as compared to the Chinese abstracts.

Although both considered oriental, as far as Kaplan's (1966) classification in his models of contrastive rhetoric is concerned, the study's findings seem to indicate a difference in the rhetorical patterns and writing styles between Chinese and Filipino writers of English as far as journal abstracts are concerned. This phenomenon could be attributed to English being one of the Philippines' two official languages. A contributing factor may also be the variety of English used in the country which is

closely related to the American English (Dumanig, et. al., 2009), a characteristic not shared by Chinese writers of English (p.71).

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The result of the study explains how Chinese and Filipino writers construct journal abstracts. Based on the study's corpus, there are noted differences between the two cultures especially in terms of topical progressions. But while there were noted similarities in their writing styles possibly in compliance to a formal structure as expected of journal abstracts, the Filipino abstracts were evidently lengthier as it showed use of more words per paragraph, more clauses and sentences. Still, both Chinese and Filipino writers of English for journal abstracts, as seen in the results, tend to be verbose in their writing styles. Although both scored differently in all types of progressions, the study nevertheless proves that there is internal coherence in writing for both Chinese and Filipino writers.

As can be gleaned from the results, it is evident that sequential progression was the most preferred progression in the abstracts. This was closely followed by parallel progressions while extended parallel progression was the least used in the abstracts. The occurrence of high use of repetitive key terms and phrases in the Chinese and Filipino journal abstracts may be an indication that the writers from the two cultures choose to string their ideas together, a finding that seem to concur with Simpson's previous research comparing native English and Spanish professional writers and finding out that both utilized parallel progressions more in writing journal articles.

In summary, it may be worth-noting that writing patterns seem to be cultural-bound. The difference in the topical progressions patterns between Chinese and Filipino writers in writing English journal abstracts may be highly influenced by their cultural patterns of thought, as earlier suggested by Kaplan (1966). Nonetheless, being oriental writers, both Chinese and Filipinos tend to be indirect and cyclic in nature and this was evident in their verbose style of writing the journal abstracts. It must be noted though that the findings of this study are not conclusive as well as encompassing of the progression types, hence, may not be true for all Chinese and Filipino writers of English in journal abstracts.

For future researchers who would like to replicate this study to further prove its findings, it is suggested that more corpus is used in conducting a topical structure analysis of journal abstracts of Chinese and Filipino writers of English. Future studies on this may likewise be extended to other cultures in order to explore other relationships.

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***Promoting Junior High Students' English Grammar and Environmental Awareness in a Five-Day English Summer Camp in Taiwan***

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Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

Learning English grammar is considered an essential part in junior high level in Taiwan. However, learning grammar is tedious, and students may lose interest quickly. Nevertheless, learning will be more effective when students are learned with a meaningful purpose. Recently, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan has put great emphasis on promoting students' environmental awareness, which is also an important global issue. Learning about important environmental issues might enhance students' interest and give them a purpose to learn English grammar. Furthermore, research found that games can be effective in enhancing motivation in learning, grammar retention and environmental awareness (e.g. Arslan, Moseley & Cigdemoglu, 2011; Paris & Yussof, 2012; Phuong & Nguyen, 2017). Therefore, this study aimed to explore the effects of the combination of English grammar, environmental issues and a board game in a five-day English summer camp. The participants were 60 seventh and eighth graders. A board game was developed integrating English grammar and three environmental topics: global warming, pollution and sustainability. The students were giving grammar lessons using the topics and played the board game. They were given a pre-test and a post-test with questions on English grammar and knowledge about the three topics. A survey was also given at the end. The results showed a significant improvement in both English grammar and the knowledge of the three environmental topics. Although in the survey some students said some questions in the board game were difficult, most students expressed that the camp and the board game were helpful.

Keywords: Content and language integrated learning, English grammar, board game

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## Introduction

Taiwan has been promoting the integration of important issues with English language education. Environmental education is one of the four main issues included in the core English curriculum. It is also considered as the country's important policy. Nevertheless, high school education in Taiwan is exam-oriented. Students and parents concern about exam scores because they affect their entrance to their desired senior high schools and universities. As English exams mainly include multiple-choice and cloze questions about reading and usage, English grammar and drilling practices usually become the focus in English lessons, and which could be considered boring to students. Nonetheless, the core curriculum also emphasizes on fostering interest in English learning. Research found that games can be effective in enhancing motivation in learning, grammar retention and environmental awareness (e.g. Arslan, Moseley & Cigdemoglu, 2011; Paris & Yussof, 2012; Phuong & Nguyen, 2017). Therefore, this study aimed to explore the effects of the combination of English grammar, environmental issues and a board game in a five-day English summer camp.

### The context of the study

#### *The materials developed for the study*

*Eco-Activist* was a board game developed by 14 junior university students majoring in foreign language instruction for their graduation project in Taiwan, and it was supervised by the author. This undergraduate program aims to train students to be EFL teachers. The development of the materials took ten months started from February to December in 2018. The development of the board game was based on the concept of content and language integrated learning (CLIL). Bentley (2018) stated that "CLIL is an approach or method which integrates the teaching of content from the curriculum with the teaching of a non-native language" (p.5). It could enable students to improve their "production of language of curricular subjects" and "performance in both curricular subjects and the target language" (p.6) among others. *Eco-Activist* was designed for junior high students in Taiwan. The aims of the board game were to allow students to review grammar points in the junior high level and enhance their environmental awareness under three topics: global warming, pollution and sustainability.

#### *Descriptions of the board game Eco-Activist*

*Eco-Activist* can be played by two to six players. It is recommended to set the time limit to 60 minutes. The board game includes the concept of rescuing natural disasters on the earth. Players can collect various kinds of elements through answering the questions on the question cards. The questions included grammar questions in the context of the three environment topics and vocabulary and concept questions about the three environment topics. The types of questions included multiple choice, unscrambling sentences and combining sentences (see Figure 1). Players can rescue the disaster spots on the game board after collecting enough elements.

Examples of grammar points included:

- tenses (e.g. simple present, present perfect, past continuous, future)
- passive voice
- subordinating conjunctions
- modal verbs
- relative pronouns
- question tags

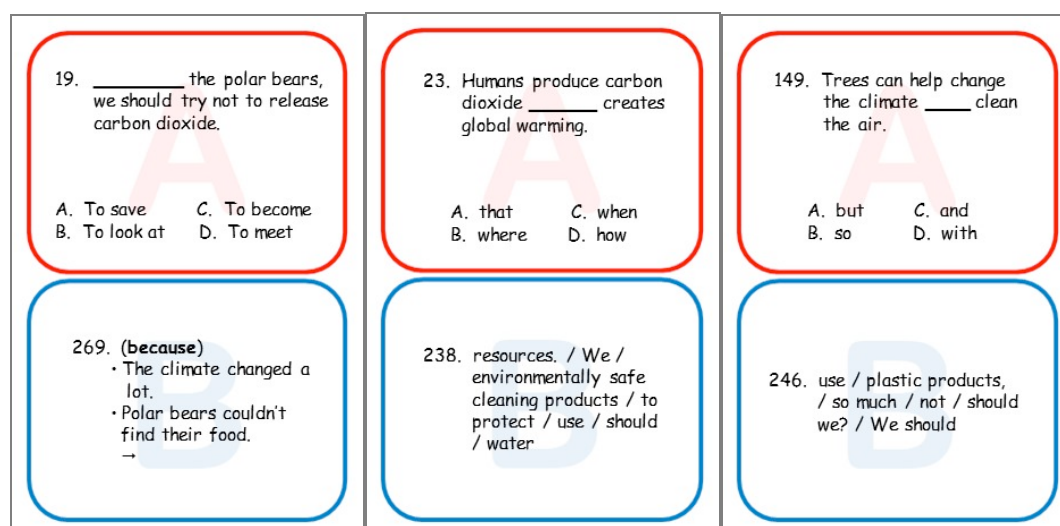


Figure 1. Examples of questions on the question cards of *Eco-Activist*.  
(The images are authorized to use in this paper.)

Game components (see Figure 2):

- One map (printed on a piece of fabric; 15 disaster spots)
  - Sixty pieces (six colors and ten pieces for each color; made of wood)
  - One dice (made of wood)
  - “A” (2 sides): Answer question A
  - “B” (2 sides): Answer question B
  - “A/B”: Choose questions A or B to answer
  - “AB”: Answer both A and B
  - One hundred and fifty question cards (each card contains two questions (A and B) on one side and different numbers of elements on the other side)
  - Twenty function cards (each card contains different numbers of elements on one side which looks the same as the other question cards and a particular function on the other side)
1. Remove: Remove one piece on the map.
  2. Rescue: Put one of your pieces on any non-rescued disaster spot.
  3. Switch: Exchange all your pieces with any player, but you need to choose a disaster card and roll the dice to answer the question. If you answer correctly, you can use this function card. After you answer the question, you have to put the disaster card back into the deck.
  4. Stop: Choose one player to pause one round, and each player cannot be stopped two times in a row.
  5. Element: Get the elements on this function card.
  6. Exchange: Exchange one of your cards with another player's.
  7. Pass: Pause on the next round, and each player cannot be stopped two times in a row.
  8. Defend: Defend against all the function cards, but you need to answer all the questions on this card.
- One answer keys
  - One instruction sheet

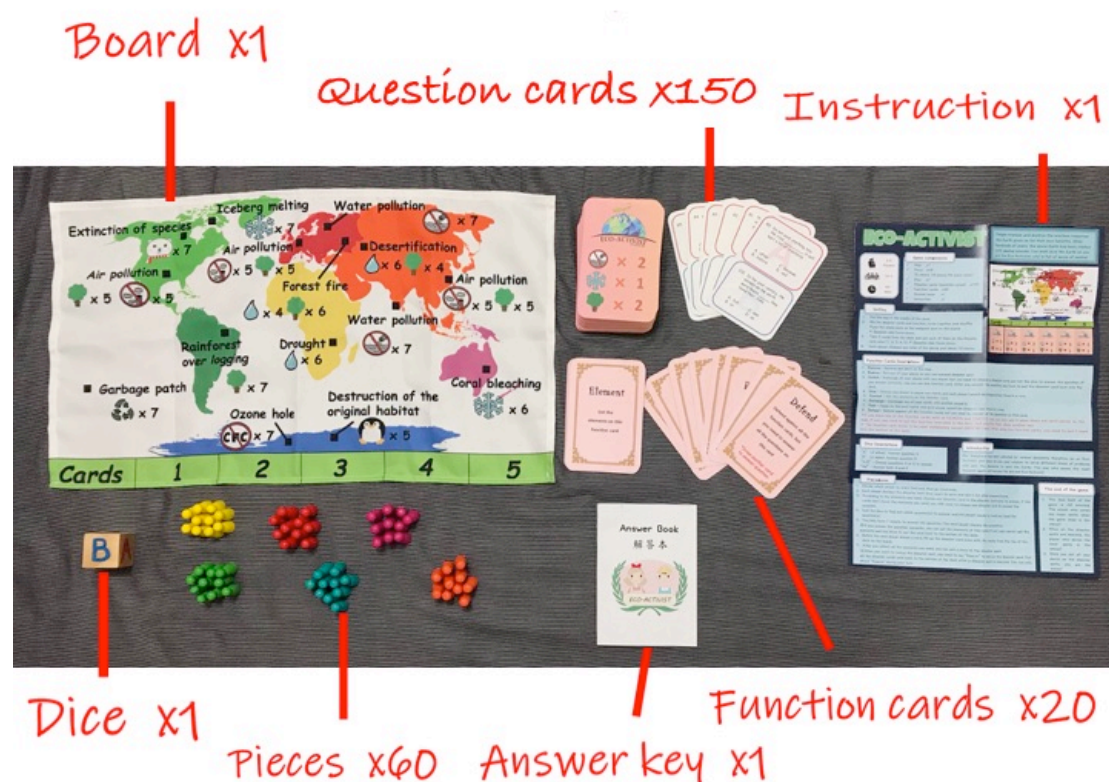


Figure 2. The components of Eco-Activist.  
(The image is authorized to use in this paper.)

Setting of the board game:

1. Put the map in the middle of the desk.
2. Mix the question cards and function cards together and shuffle. Place the whole deck (question side facedown) on the assigned spot on the board.
3. Take 5 cards from the deck and put each of them (question side facedown) on the question card zone (1, 2, 3, 4, 5).
4. Each player chooses one color of the pieces and takes 10 pieces.

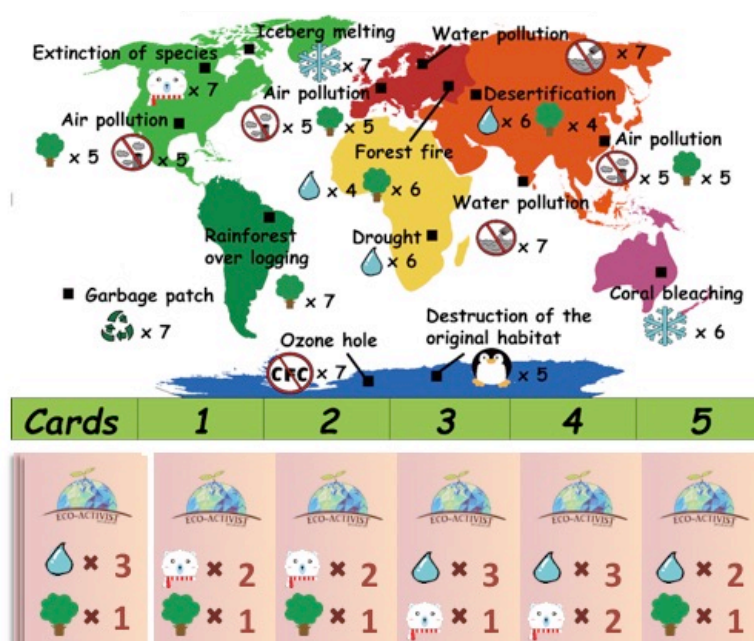


Figure 3. The setting of Eco-Activist before the game starts.  
(The image is authorized to use in this paper.)

How to play the game:

1. Decide which player to start first and then go clockwise.
2. Each player decides the disaster spot they want to save and do not let other players know.
3. According to the elements the player needs, choose one disaster card in the disaster card zone to answer. If the cards do not have the elements the player needs, the player still needs to choose one question card to answer the question.
4. Roll the dice to find out which question(s) to answer and the player needs to read out loud the question(s).
5. The player only has one minute to answer each question. The next player checks the answer(s).
6. If the player answers the question correctly, the player can get the elements on this card; if not, the player cannot get the elements and the player has to put the card back to the bottom of the deck.
7. Before the next player draws a card, fill up the question card zone with the cards from the top of the deck on the board.
8. After the player collects all the elements he/she need, the player can put a piece on the disaster spot.
9. When the player wants to rescue the disaster spot, the player needs to say "Rescue" to rescue the disaster spot. Put all the question cards used back to the bottom of the deck after a disaster spot is rescued. The player can only shout "Rescue" during his/her turn.

How to win the game:

1. The time limit of the game is 60 minutes. The player who saves the most spots when the game ends is the winner.
2. When all the disaster spots are rescued, the player who saves the most spots is the winner.
3. Once a player puts all his/her pieces on the disaster spots, he/she is the winner.

### Implementation of “Eco-Activist”

This study was conducted in the form of a summer camp in a junior high school in Taiwan; therefore, it did not interfere with the school’s regular curriculum. Nevertheless, it provides students extra learning opportunities in the summer.

In this study, the 14 junior university students who developed the board game *Eco-Activist* (referring as student teachers from now on) designed a five-day English summer camp combining English grammar and environmental awareness. Environment protection was the theme of the camp. The board game *Eco-Activist* was used in the camp to review the lessons. These 14 student teachers did this five-day English summer camp in July as part of their graduation project. They started preparing four months before the English camp took place under the guidance of their advisor. They were responsible for all the camp activities, English lessons, learning materials, teaching aids and teaching in the camp. Before the English summer camp took place, 53 seventh grade students and 25 eighth grade students from the school were recruited to join this summer camp.

Two 45-minute lessons were assigned to the topic of global warming on the first day. Three 45-minute lessons were assigned to the topic of pollution and another three 45-lessons were assigned to the topic sustainability on the second and third days respectively. There were 45-minute practice activities after lunch on the first three days. A period of 100 minutes was assigned to the board game *Eco-Activist* before the end of the day from day one to day four. There were also review activities in the morning at the beginning on the second, third and fourth days. There were also three 45-minute periods assigned to group activities on the fourth day. On day five, there were a Q&A competition and a closing ceremony. Figure 4 shows the time-table of the camp.

**Eco-Activist**

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thurs	Fri
8:00 ~8:20	環 保 小 尖 兵 報 到				
8:20 ~ 9:05	開幕典禮 暖身活動	環境保衛戰	環境保衛戰	環境保衛戰	腦力 對抗賽
9:05 ~ 9:15	下 課 時 間				
9:15 ~ 10:00	Say hi!	汗所不在 Gloomy Land	綠野仙蹤 The Green Wonderland	明天過後 The Day After Tomorrow	腦力 對抗賽
10:00 ~10:10	下課時間				
10:10 ~ 10:55	熱浪來襲 Heat Waves Coming	汗所不在 Gloomy Land	綠野仙蹤 The Green Wonderland	明天過後 The Day After Tomorrow	成果驗收
10:55 ~ 11:05	下課時間				
11:05 ~ 11:50	熱浪來襲 Heat Waves Coming	汗所不在 Gloomy Land	綠野仙蹤 The Green Wonderland	明天過後 The Day After Tomorrow	頒獎閉幕
11:50 ~ 13:10	午休&午餐時間				
13:10 ~ 13:15	下課時間				
13:15 ~ 14:00	拯救北極熊	髒土試煉	綠境重逢	桌伙來學習	
14:00 ~ 14:10	下課時間				
14:10 ~ 15:50	桌伙來學習	桌伙來學習	桌伙來學習	桌伙來學習	
15:50 ~ 16:00	開心放學				

Figure 4. Summer camp timetable.

## Research Method

The participants were 60 seventh and eighth graders in a junior high school in Taiwan participating in a 5-day English summer camp. At the beginning, more than 60 students participated in the summer camp, but only 60 of them have completed both the pre-test and post-tests. Therefore, only these 60 students were included as the participants of this study. Environmental protection was the theme of the camp. It included the three topics: global warming, pollution and sustainability. The students were giving lessons about the topics in the morning and played the board game *Eco-Activist*, which integrated English grammar and the three environmental topics, in the afternoon. The students were given a pre-test and a post-test with questions aiming at English grammar and environmental knowledge of the three topics at the beginning and at the end of the camp. There were total of 25 multiple choice questions in the pre-test and post-test. The total score of the tests was 100. Fifteen questions (60 points) and ten questions (40 points) were about English grammar and environmental knowledge of the three topics respectively. After the pre-test, the students were divided into two classes according to their scores. Thirty-two participants with higher scores were in Class A and 28 participants with lower scores were in Class B. At the end of the camp, a survey was also given to find out whether the students felt the board game help them learn. The scores of the pre-test and post-test of the participants in Class A and B were analyzed using dependent-sample t-tests on the on the Social Science Statistics website (<http://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/ttestdependent/Default2.aspx>). The survey was analyzed by the researcher.

## Results

In order to compare the English grammar and environmental knowledge scores between the pre-test and post-test, dependent-sample t-tests were conducted. The analysis of pre-test and post-test showed significant improvement in English grammar ( $P < 0.05$ ) in both Class A and Class B with mean differences at 4.13 and 7.00 respectively. The analysis of pre-test and post-test also showed significant improvement in environmental knowledge ( $P < 0.05$ ) in both Class A and Class B with mean differences at 4.38 and 8.72 respectively (see Table 1 and 2). In both the pre-test and post-test, Class A, which was the higher-level class, had higher scores in English grammar (30.00 and 34.13 respectively) and environmental knowledge (24.25 and 28.63 respectively) than Class B, which was the lower level class (16.43 and 23.43 in English grammar and 12.14 and 20.86 in environmental knowledge respectively).

Class / Items	Pre-test Scores		Post-test Scores	
	Means	SD	Means	SD
Class A (n=32)				
English Grammar	30.00	9.42	34.13	9.90
Environmental Knowledge	24.25	8.00	28.63	8.26
Class B (n=28)				
English Grammar	16.43	7.57	23.43	8.76
Environmental Knowledge	12.14	6.58	20.86	8.46

Table 1. The means and standard deviations of English grammar and environmental knowledge scores of the pre-test and post-test

Class – Items	Mean Difference	Sig. (2-tailed)
Class A – English Grammar		
Pre – Post	4.13	0.023
Class A – Environmental Knowledge		
Pre – Post	4.38	0.010
Class B –English Grammar		
Pre – Post	7.00	0.000
Class B –Environmental Knowledge		
Pre – Post	8.72	0.000

Table 2. Significance of English grammar and environmental knowledge scores between the pre-test and post-test

The analysis of the survey showed that more participants liked the board game part of the camp (55.26%) among group activities (28.95%) and English lessons (15.79%). In Class A, 54.29% liked the board game, 34.29% liked the group activities, and 11.42% liked the English lessons. In Class B, 56.10% like the board game, 24.39% liked the group activities, and 19.51% like the English lessons.

In Class A, 81.25% of the participants thought that the board game helped them learn, 18.75 thought that it helped them learn a little bit and no one thought that the board game did not help them learn. In Class B, 64.29% of the participants thought that the board game helped them learn, 35.71% thought that it helped them learn a little bit, and no one thought that it did not help them learn. Nevertheless, 31.25% of participants in Class A and 67.86% in Class B felt that the board game was difficult.

Through the camp, the participants expressed that they had learned vocabulary (20.39%) the most among environmental issues (14.80%), grammar (14.17%), listening (12.17%), speaking (12.17%), reading (11.51%), writing (10.19%), and cooperation (3.78%). In descending order, the participants in Class A thought that they had learned vocabulary (21.21%), grammar (17.85%), environmental issues (14.81%), reading (11.45%), listening (10.44%), speaking (10.44%), writing (8.42%) and cooperation (5.39%), and Class B thought that they had learned vocabulary (19.61%), environmental issues (14.79%), listening (13.82%), speaking (13.82%), writing (12.54%), grammar (11.58%), reading (11.58%) and cooperation (2.25%). Furthermore, 93.75% of participants in Class A and 88% in Class B expressed that they wanted to participate in this camp again. Table 3 listed the reasons the participants provided.

I would join this camp again.	I would not join this camp again.
Reasons	Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ I can learn a lot of English.</li> <li>■ I can improve my English ability.</li> <li>■ I can learn English through games; the board game is fun.</li> <li>■ I can learn a lot of knowledge.</li> <li>■ The camp has diverse activities.</li> <li>■ I can learn various vocabulary.</li> <li>■ The camp is fun and interesting.</li> <li>■ The lessons are fun and I can learn something.</li> <li>■ I want to play board games.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ I was forced to join this camp.</li> <li>■ I will have a family trip.</li> <li>■ I don't have time.</li> <li>■ I'm not interested in English</li> </ul>

Table 3

## Conclusions

The aims of the study were to explore the effects of the combination of English grammar, environmental issues and a board game in a five-day English summer camp. *Eco-Activist* was the board game used in this study. It was designed by 14 undergraduate juniors in Taiwan. Players had to answer English grammar and knowledge questions related to three environmental topics – global warming, pollution, and sustainability, to collect a number of elements on the question cards to save disaster spots on the earth on the map. Participants played the board game at the end of day one to day four to consolidate their learning of the lessons in the summer camp. The results of this study showed a significant improvement on both English grammar and environmental knowledge. Also, most participants expressed that the board game helped them learn. Nevertheless, more participants in the lower-level class expressed that the questions in the board game were difficult. The grammar questions in the board game covered many different grammar points in the junior level, some of which were not covered in the lessons in the camp and which they might not have learned, and the content was content-based, which involved vocabulary about environmental issues. With a lower level of English grammar and comprehension of English vocabulary related to environmental issues at the start, the questions in the board game could be beyond their ability to answer just after their lessons in the camp. Despite their lower level, their post-test scores still showed improvement. Nonetheless, the questions in the board game could be put into different levels for different levels of players.

This study combined three elements: English grammar, environmental issues and a board game. Integrating other subject areas like environmental issues in this study with English grammar in a board game could be an effective way to help students consolidate students' English grammar and promote knowledge of particular subject areas at the same time. Lee (2012) believed that board games were an effective tool for language learning. A carefully designed board game combining English grammar and subject knowledge could replace some of the tedious English grammar drilling practices in regular schools. Fung and Min (2016) maintained that "board games can add diversity in classroom activities" (p.269) and reduce stress. Students could be more motivated and could be less struggled when reviewing English grammar through board games. Being able to learn other subjects at the same time could be another advantage. Nevertheless, the results of this study were only limited to the particular

setting in this case. This study should be repeated in more different settings in order to confirm the results.

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***Development of Grammar Competence by Using Knowledgebase for Bachelor of Education (English) Students at Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Thailand***

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The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2019  
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**Abstract**

The research aims to develop grammar competence by using the <http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> knowledgebase for Bachelor of Education (English) students, to compare achievement score before and after using knowledgebase by taking English grammar pre-test and post-test and to assess satisfaction towards knowledgebase in aspect of content and technology. The subject comprised of 27 students who enrolled in Paragraph Writing course in the second semester of the academic year 2016 and were selected by using purposive random sampling technique. The research instruments were the <http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> knowledgebase, the grammar Pre-test, before using knowledgebase and grammar Post-test, after using knowledgebase, the task sheets which indicated the navigations linking to the foreign websites and the satisfaction assessment questionnaire in aspect of content and technology. After obtaining the data, mean of the scores was compared by the T-Test. For the questionnaire, SPSS windows were used to compute frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and some other descriptive statistic tasks. The results of this research were revealed as follows; Firstly, the learners' achievement scores in grammar after using the knowledgebase were higher than before using the knowledgebase at the level of  $p$ -value 0.0015 statistically significant. Secondly, the satisfaction towards the knowledgebase was at the most level in overall both in aspect of content and technology with the mean of 3.75 and 3.64 respectively. This insightful information should be used in future learning management.

Keywords: Grammar Competence, Knowledgebase, Paragraph Writing

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## Introduction

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the era of information technology, writing plays a vital role in the way of taking message and sending those texts to recipients. Accordingly, the skill of English writing is crucially important and considered as a tool of information dissemination, entirely occurred in academic field, business transactions, and personal activities domestically and internationally. By this importance of English writing, it results in the approach of learning and teaching for English writing skill in university level. In this stage, learning and teaching for English writing skill should emphasize how much educators improve writing ability for undergraduates so that they can use writing skill in their future careers and in study skills for further education. Although writing competency in English is much needed in profession, the level of English writing skill of Thai university students is under unsatisfactory evaluation. The majority of Thai students are unable to write sentences grammatically correct and in good writing principles. The problems they encounter are, for instance, syntax, limited knowledge of vocabulary, especially about their fields of study and writing style. Harmer (1983) added that learners will be effective in communication when they understand major grammatical concepts. The learners who can use grammar appropriately are required to understand grammar rules and elements. Van (2001) commented that as being language learners, it is impossible to neglect grammar when they learn a language. Ideologically, it is useful to learn grammar as long as they can use them correctly in different situations. Besides, the teaching of grammar can obtain the support of internet in pattern of knowledgebase. In order to reinforce grammar for the English major students who enrolled in Paragraph Writing course, I have a concept of developing their grammar competence by using the knowledgebase. This is to be the resource to find out more about the method that can develop grammar competence from using knowledgebase.

## Objectives of the Research

1. To develop grammar competence by using knowledgebase for Bachelor of Education (English) students
2. To compare achievement score before and after using knowledgebase by taking English grammar pre-test and post-test
3. To assess satisfaction towards knowledgebase in aspect of content and technology

## Research Questions

1. Do students who use the knowledgebase in Paragraph Writing course get more achievement score than before?
2. Do students who use the knowledgebase in Paragraph Writing course have high satisfaction towards the knowledgebase?

## Review of Literature

### Role of Grammar

According to Dickin and Woods (1988), grammar is the system of language structures that judge the order and forms of words that are complied into sentences. Grammar is important in expressing the meaning of language information because the meaning of communication is caused by the relationship between words in the sentence. Learning grammar is not a waste of time. Students should be advised of the structure of the language while they learn to use the

language. It does not mean that students do exercises without mistakes or fully understand grammar rules. However, they should know that they are speaking English correctly. They also know that they are wrong and can fix it when used in real situations (Stoti, 1990). According to Thornbury (2001), grammar is part of the study of which form or structure can be used in the language. The traditional grammar focuses on sentence level analysis. Grammar plays a role in language teaching, with many reasons supporting grammar teaching, including

1. Grammar is a description of the state of the language. Knowledge from grammar teaching makes students have the tools to create many sentences and allows students to have unlimited creative language tools.

2. Grammar causes a deeper sense of meaning than the word system can. Grammar can correct ambiguity of sentences.

3. Grammar helps prepare students for language learning. Grammar is the basis for learning and using language.

In addition, grammar is important to the study of language. When students know the grammar principles, it will help students to use the language correctly, communicate the issues they need, and have mutual understanding between the messenger and the receiver, Grammar knowledge helps learners to check whether the language or sentence used is correct or wrong and can correct it.

## **Knowledgebase**

According to Samruay (2002), the knowledgebase is collection of diverse knowledge that has been gathered from various sources together in a systematic way. Accordingly, the computer system can be researched for use in diagnosis or use as a reason to work or manage problems that arise. Knowledgebase is a presentation of knowledge in form of computer programs in the scope of knowledge area in a particular field by providing steps to be able to search for knowledge that is linked and interacting. Knowledgebase is an important tool that users can learn by themselves in order to get what they are interested in (Jaipanya, 1999).

According to Brahmawong (2005), educational knowledgebase should contain the knowledge and experience of the content in the curriculum. Most knowledgebase will separate content in each course that can be used both in the classroom and outside the classroom. The knowledgebase consists of three types of knowledge and information as follows

1. Hardcore - is knowledge that does not get changed, a fact or information.
2. Interactive – is part of knowledgebase and information that is used to interact with learners in using that knowledge and information.
3. Add – on - is an additional knowledge and information, comments and new research results from the opinion of teachers or learners or comments from other people.

In conclusion, knowledgebase teaching media is the collection of information and activities about a particular branch from various sources of knowledge and presented in electronic media. Knowledgebase is a web-based application that allows users to study, find knowledge for themselves, and use it in a connected and interactive way.

## Related Previous Studies

Parker (1997) studied design, implementation, and evaluation in web projects for use as a design to facilitate learning at home. This web project was to increase knowledge and positive attitude with learners. The web project was to study the relationship between learners and computer screens based on social intelligence theory to develop learners to interact directly with the computer. The sample groups used in the research were obtained from random sampling and divided into two groups: experimental group and control group. The experimental group studied using the web while the control group learned with the teacher. The questions used in the experiment were the test of understanding from the learners by interviewing them and their individual concepts. There was a tape recorded in the experimental group whilst using the web. The researcher brought the tape to analyze to study the views of the web in promoting learning. From the study, it was found that the web was as effective as the teacher in the teaching atmosphere as it was. Students who used the teaching web had more positive attitudes toward the lessons than those taught by the teacher. While the students in the group with the teacher commented that they couldn't learn as much as the group that used the computer. Most learners in the group with the computers had positive attitudes and found that using computers was a good educational tool.

Ktoridou (2002) conducted a research on how to integrate technology with teaching English as a foreign language. It was found that despite advances in computer for education, technology was still a simple tool. The computer was just a device that could not replace a teacher. Using computers in the classroom was important. In order that teachers can use technology in the classroom appropriately, there were several necessary factors as follows

1. Teacher training
2. Computer labs and schedule of computer usage appropriately
3. Availability of educational software
4. Video library
5. Time to prepare, design and create relevant media and lesson plans

The appropriateness of computer integration into English language teaching was as possible as the appropriateness of using computers in English classrooms. If the English language teacher and course designer recognized the individual differences and selected the right model, the technology would become a good and useful tool. Technology was also very effective in the use of language teaching. Technology will make learners become fun and easier and match the needs of each learner.

Surasawadee (2006) conducted research on the development of knowledgebase for English reading skills for foreign language learning strands. The objectives of research were to develop knowledgebase for English reading skills and study the satisfaction of teachers and students towards the knowledgebase. The sample group consisted of 20 English language teachers and 125 students. The research findings was the researcher developed the knowledgebase in the form of a CD-ROM and websites. The knowledgebase consisted of three parts: the instructor's section, the learner section and the extra reading section. It was found that teachers and students were satisfied with using the knowledgebase from the high level to the highest level in all aspects including content, technology and presentation style. Knowledgebase made teachers' attitudes towards the use of technology in teaching and learning better and made students' attitudes towards English reading better.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

Quasi-Experimental design in the form of Pre-test Post-test was used to compare the results before and after the use of knowledgebase. A research methodology was divided into the following steps:

Step 1 – In the first week of study, test the sample group before studying the course with the grammar pre-test.

Step 2 – Organize an orientation to introduce, explain and demonstrate the use of knowledgebase to sample students. The researcher explained how to proceed with the experiment, the purpose of the experiment and evaluation methods.

Step 3 – Distribute students with task sheets that specify details of links to foreign websites with 10 topics of grammatical content for 10 weeks of study. In task sheet, it described what links will be used in each week for self-study. The researcher often focused on students to use the knowledgebase in each topic of grammar regularly, especially after studying in the classroom for better understanding.

Step 4 – After 10 weeks of using the knowledgebase, students were asked to do the grammar post-test that was the same as grammar pre-test.

Step 5 – Ask the students in the sample group to complete the satisfaction questionnaire towards the knowledgebase in the aspects of content and technology.

Step 6 – Check and rate the test before and after using knowledgebase and use the scores obtained to analyze statistical data.

Step 7 – Check and tally the questionnaires to find the mean and find the conclusion.

Step 8 – Write discussion and conclusion of the research

### **Participants**

The participants of this study were 27 Bachelor of Education (English) students studying in the first year at Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Thailand. They were taken from a research population of 56 students (two groups of Education (English) students studying in the first year), enrolling in Paragraph Writing course at the second semester of the academic year 2016. The twenty-seven participants who were mixed-ability students in writing were selected by using purposive random sampling technique. The participants comprised of 22 female students and 5 male students. They studied Paragraph writing course as the first English writing course since admission into university.

## Research Instruments

Four research instruments were used in the present study.

### 1. Knowledgebase

The knowledgebase used in the research was <http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> that the researcher has already created, which was a research project that was part of the doctoral degree program. The knowledgebase had already been examined by experts in teaching English. Before allowing students to use the knowledgebase, teachers must learn to truly understand the knowledgebase. From the knowledgebase, the teacher selected foreign websites that had grammatical content that were as synthesized from Paragraph Writing textbook, with a total of 10 topics: Adjective, Be to describe and to define, The Simple Present, Subject – Verb Agreement, Imperatives, Modals of Advice, Necessity and Prohibition, The Simple Past, The Past Continuous, There is and There are, and Because of and Because. The selected websites had content that was compact, easy to understand, and useful. In the first week of teaching, the teacher must provide an orientation about using the knowledgebase for students by explaining and demonstrating the use of the knowledgebase. The teacher let students read grammar content and do exercises at the end of the chapter to get students become familiar with the practice of reading and doing exercises in case of self-study.



Figure 1: the homepage of the <http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> knowledgebase

### 2. Grammar Pre-test and Post-test

This research instrument was designed to test the participants' grammar ability to use grammar correctly according to 10 topics of grammar content synthesized from the Paragraph Writing textbook. This grammar test was used by participants both before using knowledgebase and after using knowledgebase. The researcher studied and selected the grammar test with language structure suitable for the first year undergraduate students. The test contained 100 questions with four multiple choices in 10 topics of grammar content. The grammar test was examined by experts in teaching English.

### 3. Task Sheet

The researcher created task sheet with the details of the navigation links to foreign websites for students in case of self-study. In the task sheet, it described the links to foreign websites in 10 topics of grammar content in 10-weeks period of time. It also described what kind of activities the teacher wanted the students to do, for instance, read grammar and do exercises at the end of the chapter, study sentence examples, and watch the video for more understanding.

### 4. Satisfaction Questionnaire for Knowledgebase

The questionnaire consisted of two main parts. The first part was designed to collect the data on the satisfaction towards the content of the knowledgebase. The second part was designed to survey satisfaction towards the technology of the knowledgebase. In both parts, a 4-point Likert scale was employed with the aim of investigating participants' satisfaction towards content and technology of the knowledgebase.

## Findings

The findings from the study were divided into three parts:

**Part I:** Learning resources contained in the knowledgebase (<http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th>)

The researcher studied the learning resources contained in the knowledgebase that promoted grammar learning according to 10 topics of grammar which was synthesized from Paragraph Writing textbook. The learning resources of each grammar are presented as follows:

Grammar 1: Adjective

<http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> ▶ RESOURCES ▶ Useful Web Links ▶ English Language Practice Links ▶ [www.eslgold.com](http://www.eslgold.com) ▶ Grammar ▶ Explanations, Examples & Exercises ▶ Adjectives

Grammar 2: *Be* to describe and to define

<http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> ▶ RESOURCES ▶ Useful Web Links ▶ English Language Practice Links ▶ [www.myenglishpages.com](http://www.myenglishpages.com) ▶ Grammar ▶ Simple present (“to be”)

Grammar 3: The Simple Present

<http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> ▶ RESOURCES ▶ Useful Web Links ▶ English Language Practice Links ▶ [www.myenglishpages.com](http://www.myenglishpages.com) ▶ Grammar ▶ Simple present (continued)

Grammar 4: Subject – Verb Agreement

<http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> ▶ RESOURCES ▶ Useful Web Links ▶ English Language Practice Links ▶ [www.eslgold.com](http://www.eslgold.com) ▶ Grammar ▶ Explanations, Examples & Exercises ▶ Subject – Verb Agreement

Grammar 5: Imperatives

<http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> ▶ RESOURCES ▶ Useful Web Links ▶ English Language Practice Links ▶ [www.myenglishpages.com](http://www.myenglishpages.com) ▶ Grammar ▶ The Imperatives

## Grammar 6: Modals of Advice, Necessity and Prohibition

<http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> ▶ RESOURCES ▶ Useful Web Links ▶ English Language Practice Links ▶ [www.learn-english-today.com](http://www.learn-english-today.com) ▶ Grammar ▶ modal verbs

## Grammar 7: The Simple past

<http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> ▶ RESOURCES ▶ Useful Web Links ▶ English Language Practice Links ▶ [www.myenglishpages.com](http://www.myenglishpages.com) ▶ Grammar ▶ Simple Past (continued)

## Grammar 8: The Past Continuous

<http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> ▶ RESOURCES ▶ Useful Web Links ▶ English Language Practice Links ▶ [www.myenglishpages.com](http://www.myenglishpages.com) ▶ Grammar ▶ Past continuous

## Grammar 9: There is and there are

<http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> ▶ RESOURCES ▶ Useful Web Links ▶ English Language Practice Links ▶ [www.english-at-home.com](http://www.english-at-home.com) ▶ English Grammar ▶ There is, there are

## Grammar 10: Because of and Because

<http://esp-pro.pnru.ac.th> ▶ RESOURCES ▶ Useful Web Links ▶ English Language Practice Links ▶ [www.myenglishpages.com](http://www.myenglishpages.com) ▶ Grammar ▶ Conjunctions

**Part II:** Comparison of mean scores before and after using the knowledgebase**Table 1.** Comparison of mean scores before and after using the knowledgebase

Test score (Total 100)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	$t$	$p$ -value
Before	65.43	15.965	-3.362	.0015
After	68.74	15.025		

The data from table 1 shows that the average scores of students prior to the use of the knowledgebase was 65.43 out of 100 with the standard deviation standing at 15.965 percent. However, after the use of the knowledgebase, students got a higher average score of 68.74, with the standard deviation standing at 15.025 percent. The T score equaled -3.362 while the Sig. value was .0015, which was less than the significance level (.005).

**Part III:** The results of the satisfaction survey towards the knowledgebase**Table 2.** Mean scores of students' satisfaction towards the content of the knowledgebase

		(n =27)				
No.	Description of evaluation (content)	Number/level of satisfaction				Mean
		Most	Much	Fair	Least	
1.	There is a clear reference to the source of the information.	22	5	-	-	3.81
2.	The knowledgebase contains clear objectives.	23	4	-	-	3.85
3.	The content is organized by categories and easy to use.	23	4	-	-	3.85
4.	The content of each topic is appropriate.	15	12	-	-	3.55
5.	The content has a balance between difficulty and easiness.	15	10	2	-	3.48
6.	The content of each topic is modern and current.	21	6	-	-	3.78
7.	The content encourages the study and research on the world wide web.	19	7	1	-	3.66
8.	The content is suitable for use in teaching and learning management.	22	5	-	-	3.81
9.	The content of each topic is accurate according to academic principles.	24	3	-	-	3.89
10.	The content corresponds to the course used.	23	4	-	-	3.85
		<b>Overview of satisfaction (content)</b>				<b>3.75</b>

The overall findings revealed that students' satisfaction towards the content of knowledgebase on the ten descriptions of evaluation was at a high level. The average of the mean scores was at 3.75. As shown, satisfaction on all of the descriptions of evaluation related to the content of the knowledgebase were described at a high level except for the satisfaction on the description of the content has a balance between difficulty and easiness with a mean score of 3.48, which was at a low level.

**Table 3.** Mean scores of students' satisfaction towards the technology of the knowledgebase

		(n =27)				
No.	Description of evaluation (technology)	Number/level of satisfaction				Mean
		Most	Much	Fair	Least	
1.	There is quick and easy access to the information you need.	18	9	-	-	3.67
2.	There is access to the information in many ways (e.g. main menu, sub-menu, etc.).	23	4	-	-	3.85
3.	The composition of the screen is proportional and beautiful.	20	7	-	-	3.73
4.	The design on the web page is interesting and attractive.	16	11	-	-	3.59
5.	The use of still images and moving images is appropriate, harmonious, and beautiful.	14	12	-	-	3.47
6.	Color design is appropriate.	16	9	2	-	3.52
7.	Font style is easy to read and clear.	16	10	1	-	3.55
8.	Language is meaningful and easy to understand.	17	8	2	-	3.56
9.	The link to each page within the website is correct.	21	5	1	-	3.74
10.	There is contact information of the developer of knowledgebase easily.	19	8	-	-	3.70
		Overview of satisfaction (technology)				3.64

The overall findings revealed that students' satisfaction towards the technology of knowledgebase on the ten descriptions of evaluation was at a high level. The average of the mean scores was at 3.64. As shown, satisfaction on all of the descriptions of evaluation related to the technology of the knowledgebase were described at a high level except for the satisfaction on description of the use of still images and moving images is appropriate, harmonious, and beautiful with a mean score of 3.47, which was at a low level.

## Discussion

This study investigated how the use of knowledgebase develops students' grammar competence and students' satisfaction towards content and technology of the knowledgebase. As the findings revealed, the achievement in learning English grammar was higher after being trained to read grammar content using the knowledgebase. The comparison of grammar

learning achievement before and after using knowledgebase showed that the learning achievement after using the knowledgebase was significantly higher than before using the knowledgebase at  $p$  - value 0.0015. Moreover, the students' satisfaction towards the content and the technology of knowledgebase were at high level.

The participants' increased level of grammar competence after using the knowledgebase could be the results of several factors. The first factor is learning grammar using a knowledgebase is a method that helps learners to see the structure of the language and understand grammar easier. Duan and Gloria (2004) also found that knowledgebase is information that contains information or structure of information that is changed for use in work or in various activities. The knowledgebase is designed to be effective for continuous improvement. Grammar learning using knowledgebase is an interesting learning method and can be used to organize grammar learning activities effectively. The knowledgebase is a source of knowledge that has been collected into categories, with structured forms and content that is systematically designed. The knowledgebase has a specific scope and depth in a particular subject for the convenience of research.

The second factor which causes the effectiveness of learning grammar by using the knowledgebase is a search tool. Learning grammar using a knowledgebase is a method that allows learners to have search tools to facilitate their own study. Chen et al. (2003) also found that information technology has changed human learning. Learning through electronic media allows humans to learn anywhere, anytime, and helps reduce costs in education. In addition, information technology also causes changes in knowledge storage. Jaipanya (1999) found that knowledgebase is an important tool that users can learn by themselves in order to get what they are interested in.

## **Conclusion**

This study was conducted to examine how the use of knowledgebase developed students' grammar competence and students' satisfaction towards content and technology of the knowledgebase. The 27 Bachelor of Education (English) students who enrolled in Paragraph Writing course participated in quasi-experimental research responded to the questionnaire. It was found that the learners' achievement scores in grammar after using the knowledgebase were higher than before using the knowledgebase. Moreover, the satisfaction towards the knowledgebase was at the most level in overall both in aspect of content and technology with the mean of 3.75 and 3.64 respectively. English writing teachers must emphasize grammatical accuracy to improve writing performance effectively. They must teach grammar and vocabulary information to the learners sufficiently to be a way of thinking and continue writing. Teachers should consider using the knowledgebase as a self-learning tool to enhance understanding of grammar learning along with the teaching of grammar in the classroom.

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***The Influence of Formative Assessment in “Reading Critically” Course on English Major Students’ Self-regulated Learning of Vocabularies in Linguistic Academic Articles<sup>1</sup>***

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**Abstract**

This study investigates the influence of formative assessment in “Reading Critically” course on English major students’ self-regulated learning of academic vocabularies in linguistics. “Reading Critically”, the new course for English majors developed by Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU), derives from many educators and policymakers’ recognition that mere language proficiency is insufficient for language majors to meet the needs of society. Therefore, it adopts a content-based instruction (CBI) approach. The first semester of this course uses linguistic academic articles as reading materials to simultaneously enhance language proficiency, introduce relevant knowledge, and nurture critical thinking ability. In this multiple-case study, data collected over one semester (where linguistics is the focus) were drawn from semi-structured interviews and stimulated recalls with 8 students at BFSU. Tseng et al.’s Self-Regulating Capacity in Vocabulary Learning (SRCvoc) was the analytical framework. The study highlighted the positive influence of formative assessment in helping students adjust learning goals, increase goal commitment, control concentration, curtail procrastination, and select conducive learning environment when learning vocabularies in linguistic academic articles. However, results also showed the students’ inability to control boredom, anxiety, and other disruptive emotions caused by the formative assessment when learning these vocabularies. This study seems the first to apply SRCvoc to CBI context in higher education. It is also the first to empirically investigate the influence of formative assessment in this curriculum, which may be adopted by other English departments in China in the near future. It provides a nuanced understanding that may help improve the curricular design.

Keywords: Self-regulation, CBI, vocabulary learning, formative assessment, SRCvoc

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## Introduction

### Self-regulation in the broad context of English major education reform in China

According to Sun and Li (2011), English education can be classified as in Figure 1.

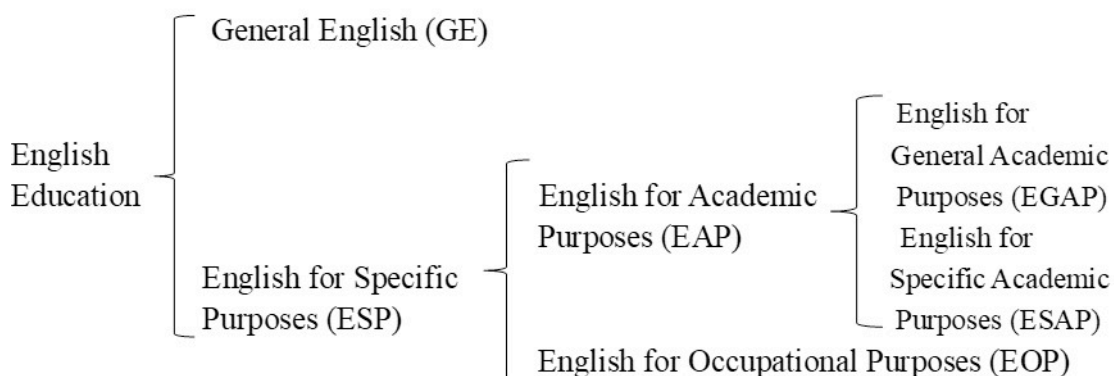


Figure 1: Taxonomy of English education (summarized from Sun & Li, 2011)

Traditionally, English major education spent 67% of time on nurturing language proficiency (primarily GE). ESP including courses on literature, linguistics, international relations, journalism, etc. only took 33% of time (Sun & Li, 2011). Moreover, the limited education concerning ESP was highly unsystematic, leading to students' fractured and scattered knowledge in many fields.

In recent years, this situation has been challenged. Following the progress in primary and secondary school English education, GE proficiency of students entering university as English majors has improved substantially, rendering it unnecessary to spend that much time on language proficiency (Sun, 2015). Besides, increasing academic, economic, and cultural communication around the globe demands not only the participants' language proficiency, but also their specialized knowledge in a relevant field (Sun, 2015). Furthermore, English major's critical thinking ability is also fundamental in being a world citizen and meeting the requirements of the labor markets (Sun, 2015).

Thus, the direction of English major education reform is to strike a balance among 3 aspects: language proficiency, specialized knowledge in humanities and social sciences, and critical thinking ability (Sun, 2015).

As for the way to reach it, the consensus among English educators in China is to promote ESP through Content-based Instruction (CBI), which enhances ESP proficiency (especially EAP) and teaches knowledge in humanities and social sciences simultaneously (e.g. Sun & Li, 2011; Sun, 2015; Cai, 2011; Zhang, 2011; Ma, 2011; Huang & Guo, 2011). Furthermore, students' self-regulated learning is highly advocated in this process because self-regulation is intrinsically related to critical thinking ability. "Critical thinking is the premise of self-regulated learning, enhances self-regulated learning, and can be nurtured through self-regulated learning." (Sun, 2015).

Therefore, the essence of English major education reform in China can be summarized as such: to nurture students' critical thinking ability through the

promotion of self-regulation in learning both language itself and the content, i.e. the specific knowledge in humanities and social sciences.

### **“Reading Critically”: the curriculum and the formative assessment**

Following this idea, School of English and International Studies (SEIS) of BFSU designed a new course called “Reading Critically”, using academic articles in linguistics, sociology, philosophy, and original literary texts (one for each semester) as reading materials to simultaneously improve students’ language proficiency, accumulate specialized knowledge and nurture critical thinking abilities.

The first semester, which focuses on linguistics, includes topics such as universal grammar, functions of language, language acquisition, language and thinking, language and gender, language and politics, language and media, etc. (each unit covers one topic). Each unit has 6 sections: passage A (article introducing fundamentals in the field), preparatory work (open questions guiding background survey), critical reading (open questions guiding critical thinking about text A), language enhancement (questions concerning new vocabularies, phrases, complex sentences and translation in text A), text B (another article providing complementary information for self-study), intercultural reflection (suggested essay topics related to the unit).

There are generally 2-3 formative assessments during one semester. Typically, the assessment consists of the following 6 sections: vocabulary (meaning and spelling), vocabulary (word formation), Chinese-to-English translation, text understanding, reading comprehension, and short essay questions. The first two sections both focus on vocabularies in academic articles learned.

Formative assessments are assessment for learning (AfL). They are part of the instruction that provides students and teachers with evidence and feedback based on which they can regulate their learning and teaching (e.g. Iowa Department of Education, 2019; Berry & Kennedy, 2008; Trauth-Nare & Buck, 2011). Ideal AfL provides feedback on not only *what*, but also *how* students learn (Bowen & Ellis, 2015).

However, as a new curriculum, there has been no empirical investigation on how students make use of the feedback provided by this assessment to self-regulate not only *what* they learn but also *how* they learn.

Vocabulary in these academic articles seems a proper focus in a study on the effectiveness of the formative assessment in guiding students’ self-regulated learning for 2 reasons. On the one hand, after the notion of self-regulation was first proposed by Dörnyei (2005), the first instrument measuring students’ self-regulation focuses on vocabulary learning (Self-regulated Capacity of Vocabulary Learning (SRCvoc), Tseng et al., 2006). Also, throughout the years, many empirical studies have used this instrument to study students’ self-regulation in vocabulary learning. Thus, a rather well-established framework of self-regulation is ready. On the other hand, self-regulated learning of vocabularies in academic articles stands at the intersection of all three focuses of the English major education reform in China: language proficiency, specific knowledge in humanities and social sciences, and critical

thinking. Vocabulary is of crucial importance to second language proficiency development (Tseng et al., 2006); the acquisition of vocabulary is also the acquisition of knowledge underlying the vocabulary (Snow & Matthews, 2016).

### **Self-regulation and SRCvoc: introduction and critique**

Self-regulation is the learner's own dynamic and active effort to manage their learning strategies as are mediated by different learning situations (Dörnyei, 2005). As a validated instrument to measure self-regulation, Tseng et al.'s SRCvoc (2006) contains the following constructs:

**“Commitment control**, which helps to preserve or increase the learners' original goal commitment (e.g. keeping in mind favourable expectations or positive incentives and rewards; focusing on what would happen if the original intention failed).

**Metacognitive control**, which involves the monitoring and controlling of concentration, and the curtailment of any unnecessary procrastination (e.g. identifying recurring distractions and developing defensive routines; focusing on the first steps to take when getting down to an activity).

**Satiation control**, which helps to eliminate boredom and to add extra attraction or interest to the task (e.g. adding a twist to the task; using one's fantasy to liven up the task).

**Emotion control**, which concerns the management of disruptive emotional states or moods, and the generation of emotions that will be conducive to implementing one's intentions (e.g. self-encouragement; using relaxation and meditation techniques).

**Environmental control**, which helps to eliminate negative environmental influences and to exploit positive environmental influences by making the environment an ally in the pursuit of a difficult goal (e.g. eliminating distractions; asking friends to help and not to allow one to do something)". (Tseng et al., 2006).

In this framework, in most cases, I refer to the 5 controls and their definitions as *goal-oriented* because they describe a psychological trait that the learner pursues; while in most cases I refer to the examples provided below each control as *way-oriented* because they describe a way to achieve certain goals. Moreover, I also propose that the mapping between *goal-* and *way-oriented strategies* should be contextualized, i.e. *way-oriented strategies* should not be assigned arbitrarily to *goal-oriented strategies* as mere examples as is in Tseng et al. (2006) (Xue, unpublished essay).

Since its establishment in 2006, SRCvoc has been applied to various empirical studies, most of which primarily adopt quantitative method (e.g. Luo & Weil, 2014; Rochecoust et al., 2012; Hitt & Veliz, 2015; Granfell & Harris, 2015; Gunning & Oxford, 2014; Ziegler, 2015; Ardasheva, 2016). Even when both qualitative and quantitative methods are used, results from the qualitative approach tend to be underexplained (e.g. Teng & Chang, 2016). Therefore, the field calls for more empirical study applying SRCvoc using qualitative approaches to gain a more detailed and nuanced understanding and a fuller landscape (Rose et al., 2018).

Among the limited qualitative study (e.g. Rose & Harbon, 2012; Veliz, 2012; Lam, 2015), Rose and Harbon (2012) developed interview questions based on the framework provided by SRCvoc. However, in their results and discussion section, they actually mixed students' psychological challenges, *goals*, and *ways* to achieve such goals together.

To prevent such mixture and the arbitrary assignment of *way-oriented strategies* to *goal-oriented strategies* as mere examples, and taking into account the English major education reform in China, the features of the new curriculum and the assessment, and the methodological status quo in self-regulation empirical research in second language acquisition, the main research question of the current study is: how does the formative assessment of "Reading Critically" course affect students' self-regulated learning of vocabularies in the linguistic academic articles studied? This question can be broken down into the following sub-questions:

1. Are student's psychological challenges and goals in learning these vocabularies with respect to the 5 facets in SRCvoc different before and after the formative assessment? If yes, how? (Here, challenges and goals are intrinsically related. If the student recognizes a challenge, then he or she must have already felt the necessity to overcome it, which is one of his or her goals.)
2. Are students' ways to cope with the challenges and thus achieve the goals different before and after the formative assessment? If yes, how?
3. Are the mappings between psychological *goals* and *ways* different before and after the assessment? If yes, how?

## Methodology

To ensure validity and comparability, the current study follows the methods of Rose and Harbon (2012), while preventing their drawbacks stated above.

## Participants

Participants were 8 first-year university students at BFSU (all native Chinese speakers). They were taking their first semester of "Reading Critically" course (focusing on linguistics) at the time of the study.

Following Rose and Harbon (2012), the first interview of this study was used to identify the participants' English proficiency and level of self-regulation, in order to take into account the variable of language proficiency in further discussion and to make sure that their levels of self-regulation could represent the majority of the cohort. The questions to identify level of self-regulation closely followed Rose and Harbon (2012). The only changes were to change Japanese kanji learning into the learning of English vocabularies (due to the word limit, question list is available on request). Beside, another question on the student's self-reported English proficiency was added to this list. Here, self-report of English proficiency as compared with their peers was used as the criterion because no available English test results seemed reliable. As first-year university students, many of them had not taken TOEFL or IELTS before.

Besides, Gaokao (university entrance examination in China) English test varies largely among different regions, rendering it an inappropriate criterion.

According to the interview, the students were divided into 3 English proficiency groups (see Table 1). The participants had no knowledge about it. All names are pseudonyms.

Table 1: Participants' English proficiency

English proficiency	Participants
High	Cindy, Emma
Medium	Sophia, Lydia, Jane, Ashley
Low	Erica, Nicole

### Data collection

Following Rose and Harbon (2012), participants were interviewed many times throughout a period to obtain more details and a fuller picture. In the current study, participants were interviewed individually on a weekly basis. Each interview lasted 15-30 minutes depending on how much time the participant had that week and how much they had to say.

To ensure validity and comparability, the interview questions were adapted from Rose and Harbon (2012). These questions were based upon the 5 facets in SRCvoc. The only changes was that Japanese kanji learning was changed into the learning of vocabularies in the linguistic academic articles studied in this course (due to the word limit, question list is available on request).

Besides in-depth interviews, once before and after the formative assessment, the interview was changed into stimulated recall session. In the stimulated recall session, participants were asked to bring a piece of written work that they produced when learning vocabularies in the linguistic academic articles on their own. Then, they were asked to recall any thoughts or feelings they had when producing this written piece. If they mentioned anything related to the 5 facets of SRCvoc, then more probing questions were asked for further elaboration.

Furthermore, more than Rose and Harbon (2012), the author emphasized that all challenges, goals, and ways to meet goals that they reported must be self-motivated, i.e. not instructed or required by the teacher (other-regulated).

### Data analysis

A qualitative content analysis was conducted in an abductive manner on the transcripts, which is a combination of inductive and deductive approaches in different steps of coding (Graneheim et al., 2017).

The codes and categories under the theme of *way-oriented strategies* in learning vocabularies in linguistic academic articles were established inductively before they were mapped deductively onto the 5 facets in SRCvoc based on the functions these strategies had according to the participants' remarks. While codes and categories concerning psychological challenges and goals when learning vocabularies in

linguistic academic articles were first formed in a grounded manner, they were later mapped deductively onto the 5 main categories indicated by SRCvoc. The final system of codes is presented in Figure 2.

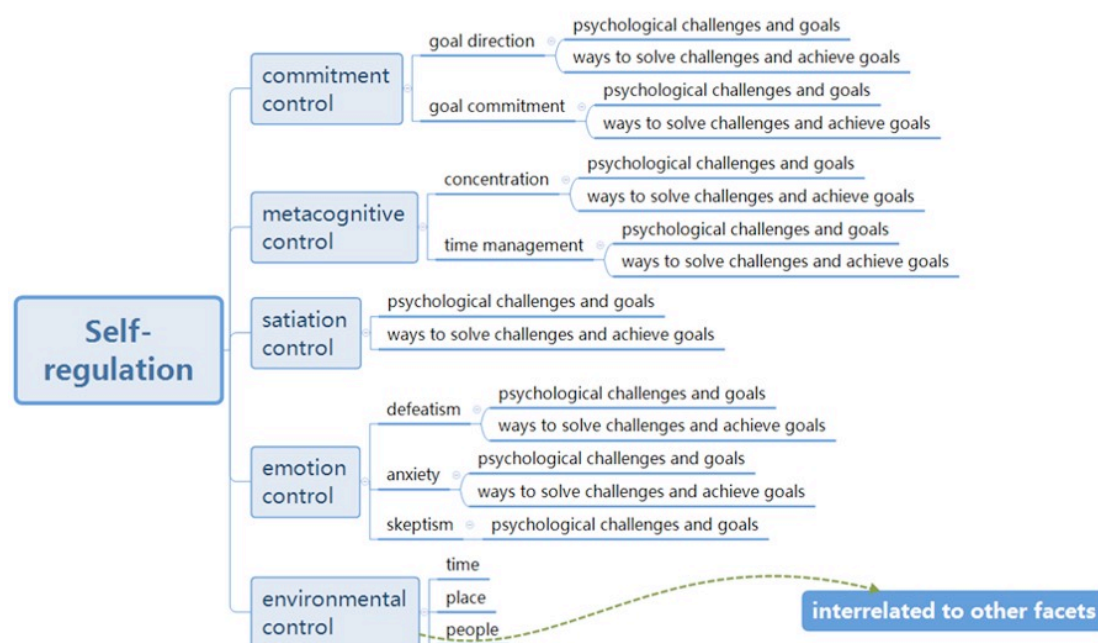


Figure 2: The coding network

## Results

### Commitment control

The formative assessment can guide the students in their goal direction setting and in turn facilitate their goal commitment.

*Goal direction.* For the high proficiency students, before the assessment, they did not know what to focus on and thus focused on everything. This led to overwhelming workload and inability to remember many things. For example, Cindy reported that this course contained academic articles of 2000-3000 English words. This was a giant leap from high school English. Due to such a giant leap, she was totally at a lost at first and thus tried to focus on everything including academic terms, phrases used in academic articles, structures of such articles, background of the topic covered in a unit, etc. Emma reported similar situation. She was fond of making word lists to memorize the vocabularies. At first she made word list for everything she encountered including academic terms, new vocabularies, word formations, and all meanings of a vocabulary in the dictionary, etc. Though she paid immense effort to memorize them all, this goal was hardly met. However, after the assessment, they self-managed to discover the correct focus based on the questions in the assessment. For instance, Cindy abandoned focusing too much on the academic terms because “the test questions seldom oriented around them”. Instead, this time she only included new vocabularies, useful phrases, different meanings of a vocabulary and word formation in her word lists because they were more test-centered. On the other hand, Emma developed some implicit

knowledge on the type of vocabulary that was more likely to be tested. According to Rebuschat and Williams (2011), implicit knowledge is the knowledge that can aid the participants in their performance but cannot be consciously verbalized or described by them. Likely, Emma reported that she “got a feeling that this vocabulary was very likely to appear in the test, so much more attention was paid to it without knowing why”. Moreover, she made word list for each type of words separately to facilitate her memory.

For the medium and low proficiency students, the major challenge before the assessment was that the learning goal was too blurred, also due to the giant leap between the current course and high school English course. Therefore, they did not do many things themselves aside from teachers’ instructions. For example, Jane, Ashley, and Nicole highlighted the new vocabularies and looked them up in the dictionary as was required by the teacher. However, they did not have a clear goal to work towards on themselves. Nevertheless, after the assessment, their behaviors tended to be similar to those high proficiency students. They all made word list of only the words that were more likely to be tested instead of focusing on nothing.

*Goal commitment.* The improve in goal commitment seemed closely related to goal direction setting. Before the assessment, the high proficiency students often felt overwhelmed due to the giant goal and their inability to realize it. This led to anxiety, self-skepticism, and sometimes even defeatism. Such negative emotions impeded their goal commitment. In face of this challenge, they sometimes resorted to some techniques to maintain their learning commitment in general, yet not specifically related to “Reading Critically” learning commitment. Cindy, for example, read stories of some student stars and learned information on postgraduate program application on Wechat public accounts to give herself motivation. After the assessment, since the adjusted goals were more reasonable and applicable, they became more committed to the goals and developed some techniques that enhanced learning commitment specifically related to this course. For instance, Emma developed a peer-competition scheme with her roommates, reporting that healthy competition facilitated her goal commitment to a large extent. Besides, she also read extensively on the topics covered in the units because “reading and thinking like a linguist” made her feel more advanced and thus more committed to the current work.

For the low and medium proficiency students, before the assessment they committed to this course very little. Erica and Jane, for example, reported that they worked for the sake of work itself. Nevertheless, after the assessment, they became more committed and developed some practical techniques to maintain their goal commitment. For example, Lydia and Nicole mentioned rewarding themselves if they successfully finished the task of the day. Sophia, on the other hand, reported that she would show off to her high school friends by telling them that she was learning an advanced science called linguistics to remain committed.

### **Metacognitive control**

*Concentration.* Similar to goal commitment, high proficiency students became more concentrated on the tasks after the assessment because their goals were more focused, more reasonable and more achievable. The observable behaviors used to maintain concentration were very similar to those used to maintain commitment. For example,

before the assessment, they read stories about student stars, learned information on postgraduate program application to stay concentrated on their study on the whole. Yet after the assessment, they used peer-competition and extensive reading on related topics to stay concentrated. Moreover, they also mentioned balancing self-study and group study.

Likewise, low and medium proficiency students became more concentrated because their goals became clearer after the assessment. They also employed some current-reward techniques to stay concentrated, e.g. Sophia and Ashley permitted herself to eat a candy when she finished the goal; Nicole liked to write down all the tasks on a list and loved the feeling of crossing off a task when finishing them. Also, Erica often reminded herself of the last exam to stay concentrated because she did not want the bad result to happen again.

*Time management.* Students at all proficiency levels demonstrated better time management after the assessment. Before the assessment, students had to stay up late to finish the giant goal. Ashley sometimes had to stay up until 2 o'clock. However, after the assessment, since their goals became more practical and focused, students at all proficiency level reported breaking their bigger goals into smaller ones and smaller steps so that they could be fit into time fragments of the day. Nicole reported that she could finish the smaller tasks when doing sports, before going to bed, and when eating meals.

### **Satiation control**

Students at all proficiency level experienced some difficulty in satiation control after the assessment. High and medium proficiency students reported that they read other academic articles on the related topics by themselves and wrote reading journals on their own before the assessment, partly because at that time they did not know what to focus on exactly. Such extensive reading gave them great pleasure and they became more interested in this course because it broadened their horizon. However, after the assessment, Emma reported that though she got a clearer goal, she felt she was put into a framework and had less space to self-explore and self-read, so this course was not as interesting as before. She felt like after the assessment she was studying mainly for the next assessment. Jane also reflected that only focusing on what would be tested resembled high school again. Among the high and medium proficiency students, only Cindy mentioned a technique, i.e. sentence-making in which the content can be designed according to her daily life and own interests.

While students with high or medium proficiency seemed to have difficulty in satiation control only after the assessment, their low proficiency peers seemed to have such challenges both before and after the assessment. Before the assessment, they reported being easily bored because they did not know what to focus on and had no idea about what the course should be aimed at. Erica described her situation as “studying in a fog”, which could be very boring. Nevertheless, after the assessment the situation did not change much. They were still easily bored because “the task requires too much repetition and memorization”, reported Nicole.

## **Emotion control**

Emotion control is another aspect that most students had difficulty in. Students at all proficiency level experienced defeatism, anxiety, and skepticism both before and after the assessment, but for different reasons. Before the assessment, for high and medium proficiency students, the defeatism mainly derived from their rather gigantic goal and the lack of focuses, while the source of defeatism for their low proficiency peers was mainly the giant leap from high school English course to this course. High and medium proficiency students were primarily anxious for not being as outstanding as their peers; whereas low proficiency students were anxious because they feared that they may not catch up with their peers. On the other hand, students reported skepticism over what they truly learned as English major students. Jane complained that nobody really told them what they should learn aside from mere vocabularies and phrases and that the current learning mode still resulted in rather shallow and unsystematic knowledge in linguistics.

After the assessment, students at all proficiency level experienced defeatism in face of the assessment result because most of them got only 70-85%. What's more, students at all proficiency level reported anxiety towards the next assessment. Nicole was afraid that the bad result would happen again. Moreover, the skepticism over what they truly learn as English majors became even more intense after the assessment. For the high and medium level students, they reported that they spent most of the time studying the vocabularies and phrases in the texts while neglecting self-reading on the related linguistic topics. As for low proficiency students, they began to doubt the meaning of studying vocabularies in this course and human nature. Erica argued that since human are not mere recorders, they should not spend that much time on memorization and repetition.

As for observable external behaviors to cope with such negative emotions, the students mainly tried learning vocabularies in more relaxing environments such as before going to bed, when doing sports and when eating meals. Low proficiency students also tried studying together with peers of similar proficiency level because they can communicate more about problems in common and ways to cope with it.

## **Environmental control**

Similar to what Rose and Harbon (2012) found, environmental control seems not an independent construct. The reasons why students chose a time or place to study, or some people to study with were to fulfill some other goals related to the other constructs. For example, some of the low proficiency students studied with peers of the similar proficiency level in order to reduce anxiety (emotion control); some students chose to study in more relaxing environments to reduce anxiety (emotion control); other students chose to balance self-study and group-study to best maintain their concentration (metacognitive control), etc. Therefore, the empirical evidence of the current study yields the similar doubt as Rose and Harbon (2012), i.e. perhaps environmental control is not an independent construct and that the taxonomy of SRCvoc may also suffer from “definitional fuzziness”.

## **Discussion**

### **Pedagogical suggestion**

Since the assessment had positive influence on students' commitment and metacognitive control, yet was not so effective in facilitating students' satiation and emotion control, I draw the following suggestions for the future pedagogy and promotion of this course to other English departments in China and worldwide:

1. Instructors should communicate the 3 focuses of English major education reform in China more often and in deeper depth to students. Many students' skepticism, too gigantic goal, or too blurred goal were derived from their lack of understanding of the reform. Communicating more about the essence of the reform to students may promote students to the participators or even the facilitators of the reform instead of only being the passive beneficiary or receiver of the reform;
2. The content and focus of the assessment should be improved. The first two sections of the assessment should give more focus on the academic terms studied in the articles to encourage self-reading of extra materials and reading journal writing. The current question type promotes high-school-style vocabulary learning;
3. Instructors should pay more attention to students whose English proficiency is less advanced when first entering the university by, for example, giving them more emotional support. Since there are many foreign language high schools in China, whose students already have a relatively high English proficiency level before entering university, the students from other common high schools should be given more emotional support to make sure nobody falls behind;
4. Instructors should give more suggestions to students on how to self-regulate their own learning (not instructed homework). Even though self-regulation is largely about learner's self, students are not born with this ability and this ability needs to be nurtured. Teacher-guided self-regulation ability nurturing is different from teacher-instruction (Thomas & Rose, 2018);
5. Given the large gap in English proficiency level between students graduating from foreign language high schools and normal high schools in China, it seems reasonable to divide students with different English proficiency into different classes and provide instruction with different focuses. A test before the start of the course seems necessary in achieving this goal.

### **Limitations and suggestions on future research**

As are many qualitative studies, though the results of this study may not be generalized, it provides a nuanced and detailed understanding of the students' psychological challenges and techniques to cope with them when learning this relatively new course. However, this study is not free of problems. First, the number of participants is very limited and all participants are female students. In future studies, more participants could be included and the number of female and male participants could be more balanced. Besides, the current study is only about the first semester of the course (which focuses on linguistics). Thus, future research on the effectiveness of

this course can be extended to other semesters (focusing on literature, sociology, and philosophy). A remaining question would be: whether the pattern of self-regulation found in the linguistic semester will also be found in the other semesters. In other words, whether the specific subject in humanities or social sciences is also a factor influencing students' self-regulation. Such studies would be needed to draw a full landscape of this course as a whole, which may help improve this curriculum and introduce it to other English departments in China and worldwide.

Moreover, the current research provides evidence of the interaction among the 5 constructs in SRCvoc as well as the interaction between *goal-* and *way-oriented strategies*. For example, environmental control may not be an independent construct and some *way-oriented strategies* can be used to fulfill goals related to more than one type of control in different contexts and for different individuals. Therefore, I would encourage future studies to probe into the contextualized and individualized interaction between the 5 types of controls in SRCvoc as well as between *goal-* and *way-oriented strategies*. These attempts may potentially improve the theoretical framework of SRCvoc.

## Conclusion

The current study finds that the effectiveness of formative assessment of “Reading Critically” course is rather paradoxical in different aspects.

Initially, the students had rather gigantic or blurred goals concerning this course, which in turn led to challenges in goal commitment, metacognitive control, satiation control, and many negative emotions. After the assessment, students' goal direction became more focused and clearer. This led to better goal commitment and metacognitive control. Therefore, students were indeed *learning self-regulated learning* through this process and were indeed making progress. Yet negative emotions concerning the course and the assessment as well as the challenge in satiation control were not solved. It seems that the assessment's focus on language proficiency impeded the students' free pursuit of specific knowledge in linguistics because they had to compensate the time of self-reading in this field for the repetitive memorization of vocabularies and phrases likely to be tested in the next assessment.

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***Holistic Flipped Classroom Model in ELT – Exploring learner engagement and autonomy in an English Enhancement Course for Early Childhood Education Pre-service Teachers***

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**Abstract**

Next generation of language learners need learner-centredness in higher education ELT courses. A Holistic Flipped Classroom model (HFC) has been proposed in this research for such ELT course design. The effectiveness of three key components of the model - an authentic or near-authentic language learning community, flipped teaching, project-based assessment – are examined in an interactive storytelling short course for Early Childhood Education pre-service teachers at a teacher's university in Hong Kong. A mixed research method of pre- and post-course surveys and interviews was used to measure students' preference for such a model and their perceived effectiveness of the model on their learning outcomes. Data collected from students' survey and interviews showed students' higher motivation in learning and overall improvement of confidence and story creation as well as moderate enhancement in learner autonomy. This paper shares the design of this holistic flipped classroom model and further recommendations on teacher training and language learning enhancement technology are made.

Keywords: Holistic flipped classroom, tertiary-level ESL/EFL teaching, learner autonomy, project-based assessment, technology-enhanced language learning, interactive storytelling

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## Introduction

Higher Education is undergoing change facing the new demands of increasingly technology-savvy cohorts of students (O’Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). Born into a technology rich age and now studying at tertiary institutions, these learners showed disengagement from learning if they passively listen to lectures or taking notes with little reflection in class. Some educators are concerned that due to the frequent use of ‘Rapid Communication Technology’ such as Facebook, instant messaging, these learners may require instant gratification or may even be shallow in thinking (Carnival, 2006). However, researchers found that these ‘digital natives’ did show strong motivation to learn although they learn in different ways compared to the generations before (Barnes, Marateo & Ferris, 2007). Prensky (2007) claimed that what has changed is not ‘students’ attention capabilities’ but rather ‘their tolerance and needs’ (p.2). Barnes, Marateo and Ferris (2007) argued that Net Geners could be more engaged if the learning environment encourages independence and autonomy.

Flipped classroom approach (FCA) is well-claimed to be conducive to the development of learner autonomy (Bakla, 2018; Bishop & Virleger, 2013; Fan, 2018; Hung, 2018; Lin & Hwang, 2018; Roehl, Reddy & Shannon, 2013). Also known as flipped learning or flipped teaching, this instructional model has been incrementally well-received in higher institutions worldwide to replace lecture-centred teaching in higher education. Originated in 2008 by Salman Khan, who recorded 4,400 instructional videos on K-12 topics such as math, science, history to cater for individually paced learning, this flipped classroom approach gained its momentum in primary schools in the United States since then. In 2012, when MOOC-based tertiary teaching platform Coursera was introduced to global learners, it also brought flipped classroom approach (FCA) to tertiary classroom worldwide (Limongelli, Lombardi & Marani, 2016). On the one hand, a typical flipped classroom design is similar to MOOC in that it involves ‘flipping’ traditional in-class lectures into pre-lecture videos and mastery checking quizzes that students can learn more comfortably at their own individual pace. On the other hand, the key advantage flipped teaching has over MOOC is that it also composes teacher/peer-face-to-face interaction and collaborative hands-on in-class activities, which could be crucial in maximizing active learning. Therefore, categorized by Staker and Horn (2012) as one rotation model of blended learning, flipped classroom provides a more active, engaged learning experience. In addition, recent researches also showed that FCA trained students higher order thinking (Hung, 2018; Angelini & Garcia-Carbonell, 2019), which are consistent with higher educational goal of whole person development. Beetham and Sharpe (2013) contended that instead of teacher-centred lecturing, higher education courses class time should be devoted to tasks that focus on knowledge application and work skill training, which entails the development of learners’ problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, social interaction skills, creative thinking skills and ethical decision making, global perspectives, oral and written communication skills (Barrie, 2007; Biggs, 2011; Zhang, 2018). O’Flaherty & Phillips (2015) believe that an effective flipped classroom approach fosters these 21<sup>st</sup> century work skills, enhances students’ ownership of learning, allows self-paced learning and frees up class time for robust discussion and associated problem solving).

The learner-centred nature of flipped classroom approach has made it popular in English language teaching (ELT). Turan and Akdag-Cimen (2019) in their systematic

review of 103 articles on flipped classroom in ELT suggested that FCA resulted not only in increased student engagement, but it also allows for diverse learning needs to be met. Since lecture contents are studied at home, class time is maximized for teachers' immediate individualized feedback on language and social/affective issues and peer interaction. Students are more engaged in communication through the target language in interactive activities. Some researchers even claim that students may have a higher chance of developing autonomy when they take the responsibility to learn the content of the course before coming to the classroom (Blin, 2004; Lee, 2017; Reynolds & Shih, 2019). Chen, Wang, Kinshuk and Chen (2014) proposed the concept of 'Holistic Flipped Classroom approach' (HFC). They argued that the F-L-I-P<sup>TM</sup> of 'Flexible Environments, Learning Culture, Intentional Content and Professional Educators' has its inadequacies. By adding 'Progressive Networking Activities, Engaging and Effective Learning Experiences, and Diversified and Seamless Learning Platforms', the authors have turned 'FLIP' into a more holistic 'FLIPPED' model. In their research, they have included online synchronous classroom, digital library, cloud and discussion forums and using physical classroom for summative test. Since their HFC model was for post-graduate level students in a computer science course, it is not readily reproducible in an English enhancement course. Therefore, this study attempts to identify the key elements of a holistic flipped classroom curriculum and to understand HFC's effect on learner engagement and its potential in developing learner autonomy.

Accordingly, three research questions will be explored in this study:

1. Which elements of holistic flipped classroom design enhance learner engagement?
2. Whether technology effectively supports students' learning in FCA environment?
3. Whether students are able to develop learner autonomy through flipped learning?

### ***Components of Holistic Flipped Classroom model and Technology***

A holistic flipped classroom model should include an authentic or near-authentic language learning community, flipped teaching, and project-based assessment. To make the model easily accessible to learners, technologies aligned with these four key elements should be incorporated.

First, an authentic or near-authentic language learning environment. English language learning has been form-focused and communication-based, which means the human elements, i.e. teacher and peers, are crucial elements in a learners' success in language learning (Dörnyei, 2009). As is evident in L1 learning, learners acquire listening and speaking skills through emersion in their mother tongue. So does the acquisition of L2. Even though classroom language environment may not be authentic as in real life, teachers who are native English speakers or near-native English teaching professionals can produce authentic conversation with their learners. To further enhance the language learning environment, teachers may also incorporate multimedia resources in authentic English or invite overseas partners into the course. Ideally, to make language learning more effective, language learning communities should be formed either physically or virtually using Moodle, Google Classroom or other educational conferencing systems. A consultation or feedback system should also be a part of this environment. Therefore, the first key element for a holistic flipped classroom would be authentic or near-authentic language community.

Second, flipped teaching. As flipped teaching involves having learners study lecture contents at home while having interactive activities for language enhancement in class, learner-centredness is at its core. Tudor (1996) contends that learner-centredness is crucial for language learning, as students all have their own ideas, opinions, experiences, and areas of expertise. Accordingly, the interactive in-class activities should provide such chances for learners to use language to express what they are knowledgeable or skillful of. In line with that, the design of interactive activities may as well be task-based group activities, in which a group of learners collectively take responsibility for and control of their learning. Technologies for flipped teaching involved video making tools, from the more professional green room to the convenient smartphone video camera, video editing tools, the most user-friendly one to record – iMovie. Or dependent on the nature of a specific language course, existing video resources such as YouTube education channel or TEDTalk can also be used to save time for instructors. For in-class tools, mainly gaming tools such as Kahoot!, reflection tools such as Mentimeter, or group brainstorming tools such as Padlet are recommended.

Third, project-based assessment. Project-based learning is frequently associated with learner-centred teaching for the reasons that the transfer of responsibility for the management of learning from teacher to learners, and therefore ‘autonomy becomes a fact of life’ (Tudor, 1996, p.219). In addition, the type of learning activities which are activated by project work, such as discussion, negotiation, suggestions, and argument of the project objective, reading of reference language materials and organization of material, or even the final presentation are built for all four language skills. Furthermore, strategic and linguistic opportunities are embedded in a collaborative project.

## Methods

A mixed method using pre- and post-course questionnaires and interview was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Holistic Flipped Classroom (HFC) model for ELT.

Research was conducted through a five-week English interactive storytelling course based on HFC. The course was designed for High Diploma Early Childhood Education pre-service teachers in their first year of study at a teacher’s university in Hong Kong. The Holistic Flipped Classroom (HFC) model in this study is composed of flipped teaching, a Moodle-based learning community, immediate in-class feedback with one group consultation session, and project-based interactive group storytelling assessment.

Story creation and storytelling were chosen as the theme due to its potential application in the future work of target students (Hwang, et al., 2016; Lee, 2012; Sauro & Sundmark, 2016). Theories related to the creation of a story, from setting, characters, Freytag’s pyramid for plot development, to the linguistic elements of pronunciation, intonation, vocal variety were made into pre-lecture videos of around 5 minutes each, with pre-lecture quizzes of less than 10 questions following the videos. The design of in-class activities mainly followed the sequence of further mastery checking and clarification of story creation or storytelling theories through examples, game-based activities, group story development and teacher/peer immediate feedback. In addition to in-class feedback, further teacher-student consultation sessions were

conducted towards the end of the course before the final assessment. A group interactive English storytelling project was employed as the final assessment. Students were formed into groups of 4-5 and were explicitly instructed that the stories created by each group should be original and would be posted on a website for general audience or particularly for K3 kindergarten students.

### ***Participants***

The participants were 24 Year 1 Early Childhood Education majors in a non-credit-bearing required English enhancement course during the Spring semester of 2019 with the author as their instructor. The participants were mostly female and between the ages of 19 and 20. Their English proficiency was considered to be mixed from lower intermediate to upper-intermediate level, even though they have studied English for a minimum of 12 years through secondary school. The upper-intermediate level students studied their English at English-medium instruction (EMI) schools and have obtained level 4 or above at the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE), suggesting that they could express a range of ideas fluently with occasional hesitation, speak English with pronunciation without causing comprehension problems for the listeners, and are able to initiate and maintain exchanges in a sustained manner, especially when with a sympathetic partner. The lower-intermediate to intermediate level students have obtained a level 3 at HKDSE or have obtained passing scores from English courses from their previous associate degrees or above that were considered the equivalent. According to the descriptors of level 3 in English language of HKDSE, these students are able to understand literal spoken English when delivered at moderate speed in familiar accents in familiar situations, identify speakers' attitudes and intentions when they are explicitly expressed, use a range of simple common expressions with fluency, pronounce familiar words accurately, and respond to others in a sustained manner.

### ***Procedure***

Before the start of teaching, students answered a pre-course questionnaire about their level of interest in storytelling and confidence in terms of English speaking, which collected the information necessary for identifying correlation between confidence-level and perceived learning outcome in HFC. A post-course questionnaire surveying students' preference on various HFC elements was distributed through Google Forms. Out of 24 participants, 16 responses were received. To further understand students' survey responses, 9 students with varied English proficiency levels were invited for an interview towards the end of the course.

### ***Findings***

Twenty-three responses were received in the pre-course survey, among which 61% prefers learning English storytelling. The result showed that approximately 50% were confident with English speaking, while the other half were not. In terms of technology use, only 5 out of 24 students do not use technology for language learning, while most used Rapid Communication Technology, online multimedia, online dictionary or language learning websites, and are familiar with mobile-learning.

Sixteen responses out of 24 were received from the post-course questionnaire on HFC.

The results of the questionnaire revealed that a majority of learners preferred HFC (83.3%). Regarding the pre-lecture components of HFC, 93.8% respondents believed that the design of the 5-minute pre-lecture videos and pre-lecture quizzes were conducive to their understanding of course contents and help them prepare for in-class activities. Interviews with selected students also showed that a majority had completed both pre-lecture components before class.

Regarding in-class activities, positive team dynamics were only reported by 68.8% of respondents, while 25% reported limited idea exchange during team discussion. 6.2% reported no interaction with the team, where story ideas were conjugated by individual team members without collaboration. Further interviews showed that groups with optimal team dynamics also reported higher contribution (50%) to story creation after class.

Learner autonomy was surveyed using questions regarding students' self-initiated activities outside class. All respondents claimed that they have made some efforts in improving their pronunciation, learning higher level vocabulary, reading reference books for story creation, and correcting their own grammatical errors (See Figure 1).

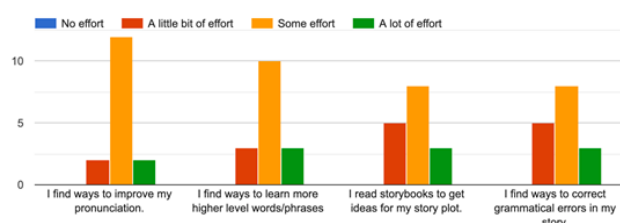


Figure 1. Students' Language Learning Effort outside class time

In terms of students' perceived learning outcomes, a majority agreed that their fluency, pronunciation, story creation skills, and confidence improved (See Figure 2). Only 1 student was dissatisfied with her progress in fluency and pronunciation.

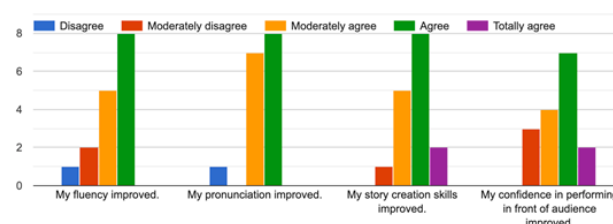


Figure 2. Students' perceived Learning Outcome

Open-ended questions were also used to collecting students' feedback. Most respondent expressed appreciation of HFC, claiming that 'flipped classroom approach really help [her] study', 'class activities are fun', 'group storytelling is good for [their] future career'. Some respondents recommended that more time or story examples be given to students 'to create and practise their telling stories skills'.

A comparison of pre- and post- course surveys shows that students with lower levels of English proficiency in speaking tend to have less satisfaction from HFC, especially if they form groups with learners of similar language confidence level.

Students who attended face-to-face interviews responded that:

1. A majority has completed the pre-lecture videos and quizzes before class. 2 out of 9 students didn't complete the pre-lecture videos and quizzes. However, they claimed that they learned the theories and lecture contents through discussion with their group mates during the group discussion session and through in-class mastery checking activities.
2. Regarding in-class activities, the interviewees all claimed that they appreciate the use of technology which effectively clarify concepts and theories for them. Additionally, they believed that game-based activities and group discussions are conducive to improve their motivation in learning.
3. All interviewees highlighted their preference in project-based team work. They expressed their appreciation of 'getting fresh ideas from team members', which positively impacted the story creation process.
4. Interviewees also expressed high levels of satisfaction with their final products, i.e. the stories they have created within the teams.

## **Discussion**

The most notable findings of the study were that (1) the students were mostly appreciative of the flipped teaching model more than the traditional one, in particular the project-based assessments and interactive in-class activities supported by a combination of technology, game-based learning and group-based discussion were perceived by learners as conducive to their learning, (2) group-based creativity in the form of story creation were highly appreciated by learners, (3) the development of learner autonomy through this research was not as evident as had expected.

### ***Learner-centredness and HFC***

From the findings, it is clear that learner-centredness should be at the core of Holistic Flipped Classroom Curriculum design, as learners appreciated components which allows for them to take their own responsibilities in learning, which is in line with Barnes and Ferris' (2007) observation that this next generation of learners need self-directed learning opportunities. In HFC, the flipped classroom approach in itself is first and foremost in promoting student-centred learning, as learners can study at a time and place that are most effective for their learning instead of being expected to learn with peers in class. Second, project-based assessments also set the learners at the centre of objectives setting, problem identification, solutions' brainstorming, resource collection, and project time management – the skills of which they can foresee required by their workplace in the future. Additionally, in-class activities that involve elements of entertainment, competitiveness and interaction also motivate students to be more sustained. Gamification, for instance, has learners work as individuals with reference to their 'competitors'/peers on a task (Lin, Hwang, Fu & Chen, 2018). A purposeful and playful learning game can act as valuable mediation to active learning (Prensky, 2007). The comprehension check games on Kahoot! in this course were observed to be effective in getting individuals set for their further discussion in class. Lastly, task-based group activities also allows opportunity for individuals to be independent and critical thinkers to contribute to team story creation (Priego & Liaw, 2017). This component is most appreciated by learners in this research, as they learned the different values, perspectives and knowledge from other individuals in

their team, which made their story more creative and thus leading to better sense of achievement.

Creativity is also a key elements in HFC, granting students opportunities to explore their competencies other than language proficiency. This was especially evident in students whose English speaking level were lower than average within a group. Even though teachers may help create positive synergies and promote empathy and mutual understanding in the group, individuals need to establish their confidence and raise their perceived 'status' within a group with their own merits (Shu & Gu, 2018). In group story creation, students with good creative thinking tended to contribute ideas, which sometimes help team members to look beyond their lower language proficiency (Argondizzo, 2012). It gave such students gratification and confidence more effectively than teachers' intervention.

### ***Technology and HFC***

Respondents of the study were particularly satisfied with the technology incorporated in this HFC model. First, the Immediate Gratification factor were taken into consideration in the design of pre-lecture videos. The 5-minute videos implied to the learners that minimal efforts were needed before class, even though after watching the 5-minute videos most students reported spending more time doing extra preparation through reading notes and researching for reference stories. It can be inferred that immediate achievements are much more motivational than delayed achievement to the Net Generation.

Second, mobile-learning in class proved to be conducive in mastery checking and group progress review. Despite the debate that mobile apps may not facilitate learning outside class, in class learners were found to use mobile devices for learning activities. Three e-learning platforms were used in this HFC design, i.e. Mentimeter, Padlet and Kahoot!. Mentimeter, for instance, offers a platform where learners can brainstorm concepts or theories they have learned from pre-lecture components. With the result projected on the screen in front of the whole class, learners were engaged in a process of self-evaluation and reflection. Padlet, on the other hand, is most effective for the purpose of group progress report. As all teams can project their products on Padlet at the same time, peer learning also occurs; learners can view one another's work, learn ideas and compare progress from the same platform – a process which is democratic by nature. Kahoot! as was discussed previously presented a gamification element, which a learning activity with entertainment and competitiveness.

However, it is also noted that the percentage of online platforms for teacher-learner communication were minimized in this HFC design. The main rationale was that language learning is more effective with authentic language environment. The communications that occurred in class where teacher and peers were present in person are considered more effective than any online communication platforms where talking heads of students and teacher were presented. It has been observed that being online talking from different locations where individuals are situated projects more a sense of individuality rather than that of collectiveness of a community (Huang, Wang, Tsai & Lin, 2017; Lage, Platt & Treglia, 2000; Liu, Wang & Tai, 2016). Therefore, in ELT, online communication platforms may be better replaced by real-life language learning communities.

### *Learner Autonomy Reviewed*

Learner autonomy was less evident in this research as had been expected, the explanation of which is probably that the length of the course (5 weeks) was rather insufficient for the development of autonomy and teacher/peer support from the community was accordingly inadequate. Time limitations did not allow for the in-depth exploration of learner autonomy issues that is necessary to fully establish independent learners in practice. Moreover, according to Little (1991), autonomy is both ‘independence and interdependence’ (as cited in Blin, 2004, p. 89), which implies that learners may not successfully develop autonomy without both their own deliberate effort, scaffolding from teachers and support from peers. While the forming of individual self-study habits may be dependent on a learners’ academic and social resilience, such autonomy cannot be formed if learners are not aware of their personal learning styles and the techniques that work best for them, which could be opened up with the guidance from teachers. As was observed by Thompson (2013), despite the assumption that digital natives are more independent and self-sufficient with technology, teacher’s scaffolding in metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies are still crucial in the success of their students’ learning process.

These next generation of learners expected multiple stimuli from interactive environments, multiple forms of feedback, and assignment choices that use different resources to create personally meaningful learning experiences (Sharpe, Beethan & De Freitas, 2010; Tindall-Ford, Chandler & Swell, 1997). Hence, a revised holistic flipped classroom model, as shown in Figure 3, is proposed for ELT.

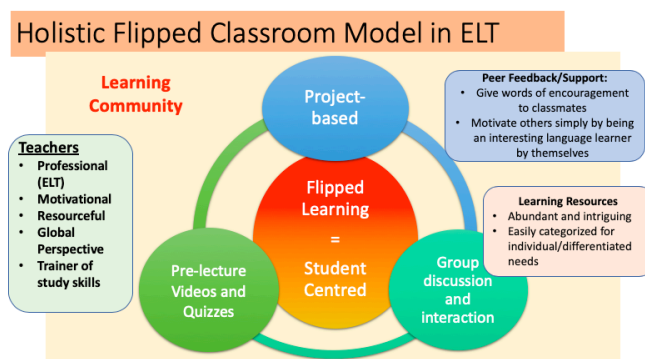


Figure 3. Revised Holistic Flipped Classroom Model in ELT

### **Conclusion**

This study aims to examine the components of a holistic flipped classroom model for English language teaching at tertiary level. The characteristics and properties of a HFC curriculum with respect to its potential for the development and exercise of learner autonomy and of language use. Three key components, that is an authentic or near-authentic language learning community, flipped teaching, project-based assessment, were explored through the HFC model in a tertiary level Early Childhood Education pre-service teachers’ English enhancement course themed on interactive storytelling. The research found that learners’ preference for HFC model is high as is consistent with the results from researches on learning patterns of next generation of learners and learner engagement was high under the HFC model.

The application of technology under this model appears to have achieved its purpose in promoting language learning through enhanced learning motivation. It is argued

that in language learning in particular not all components of the pedagogical design should be put online, as authentic human communication is crucial to the learning of major language skills such as listening and speaking.

The development of learner autonomy, though seems to be modestly enhanced through this model, was not high due to the constraints of insufficient time and community. As indicated by Cory (2004), learner autonomy is crucial as ‘in a fast changing world, the most valuable skill is the ability to adapt and retrain and pick up new skills and knowledge’ (p.2). Given a larger research base and time, it is highly likely that HFC’s effects in enhancing learner autonomy can be observed.

This study provides some insights into potential of HFC for the purpose of enhancing learner-centredness. However, for the model to be successful, teachers might need to overcome the fear of additional workload, as contact hours literally remained the same and preparation time may even be significantly reduced after the initial groundwork was completed (Lage et al., 2000).

Some teachers may also have doubts over whether all English course can be flipped holistically. My argument would be that since language learning is by nature learner-centred, as is evidenced in L1 learning, and language is for daily communication be it written or oral, authentic projects are not difficult to find. For academic writing course, for instance, student-initiated online research publications can be applied as a project-based assessment.

Lastly, recommendations are made for further research and technology development for holistic flipped classroom in ELT.

- In terms of teacher training, learner analytics and learner advising should be significant fields to look into. Once a teacher can have instant data analysis from students’ learning, it’s easier to give students just-in-time, individualized feedback and recommendation of personalized learning resources.
- Technology that supports the forming of authentic learning communities, should be developed. Even though Google classroom and Moodle are upgrading annually, these technology has not yet transcend over physical learning community in terms of effectiveness for language learning.
- Technology to enhance learner autonomy should be developed, through which easily accessible, voluminous learning resources can be allocated to the needs of different learners.
- Online learning resources should be made into modulized materials for Language learner in interactive formats.

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***Analysis of Errors in Writing English Composition Committed by  
Thai EFL Non-English Major Undergraduate Students***

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The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2019  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the English linguistic elements which cause errors in writing English made by the first-year undergraduates majoring in non-English academic disciplines under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Phranakhon Rajabhat University. This study was conducted with fifty Thai EFL undergraduate students. An instrument for this study included a worksheet on which students were required to write a 100-120 word composition, entitled My Personal Background. The findings revealed that the research participants committed different kinds of grammatical errors in writing the target language, from morphological to sentential levels. Most errors were mainly resulted from the dearth of L2 linguistic knowledge and the difficulty of the L2 grammatical system. The results from the written English errors have implications for English grammar teaching and learning.

**Keywords:** Analysis of errors, writing English composition, Thai EFL non-English major students

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## **Introduction**

Writing is an active skill that all language learners have to experience. It is a difficult process and more complicated performance in second language acquisition. Obviously, learners have to take much time, more concentration, and keep practicing it in order to achieve their ultimate goal in language learning. In writing a target language composition, particularly in a university level, it is one of the challenging tasks that language learners are absolutely assigned and have to accomplish. Writing involves a great deal of L2 linguistic competence, including L2 rules, writing mechanics, and writing styles. The writing process also plays an important role in a provision of opportunities to enhance learners' vocabulary and grammatical competence. Moreover, it develops their understanding of how logical ideas should be presented and how well their messages are understood through writing production.

Often, language learners fail to acquire the target language. This is because they usually find the L2 linguistic elements very complicated, i.e. the second language features are greater different from those of their first language. This results in making errors while attempting to communicate in L2. Lack of good linguistic competence in the new language system is another cause of L2 learning failure. The process of human language learning in both the mother tongue and the target language involves the making of errors. Naturally, children acquiring their first language also produce errors. Making errors is part of a process of language learning. Inevitably, learners of a second language probably commit a number of errors. Dulay and Burt (1974: 1) claim that "You can't learn without goofing." A goof or error the language learner makes is considered a natural product of the process of second language learning "for which no blame is implied." Ellis (1994: 47) maintains that "learners make errors in both comprehension and production." In sum, committing errors relies primarily on the process of human learning and language learning; without it, learners do not know how well they learn the new language.

## **Purpose of the study**

This study aimed at investigating the L2 linguistic elements which cause errors in writing made by the first-year undergraduates pursuing their bachelor degree at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Phranakhon Rajabhat University. They were majoring in non-English academic disciplines.

## **Research question**

The study attempted to answer the following question:

- 1) What are the L2 written grammatical errors made by Thai EFL students majoring in political science, public administration, community development, and business Chinese?

## **Significance of the study**

Given learning English as a foreign language at Phranakhon Rajabhat University, the English learning achievement yielded an unsuccessful achievement outcome. More specifically, in the English for Everyday Communication 1100201 class taught by the researcher, the achievement outcome was relatively low. Most Thai students at

Phranakhon Rajabhat University have encountered the difficulty in learning the English language, particularly in writing skills. One of the major challenges resulted in the unsuccessfulness of writing L2 is the structural differences between L1 and L2. The greater the differences between the two languages there are, the more difficulty in learning the target language students have. Thus, it is crucial to realize what grammatical areas they have faced cause the failure in L2 writing. The results of the study would uncover the problematic areas of acquiring the L2 linguistic system. Moreover, the findings may give guidance to teachers of English in planning their teaching activities which correspond to students' competence.

### **Significance of learner error**

Corder (1967) insists that errors are significant in three different ways. Firstly, they give the teacher with information about how much the learner have learned, i.e. how far towards the learner's goals he or she has progressed and what remains for the learner to pursue. Secondly, errors provide the researcher with evidence of how language is learned, what strategies or procedures the learner is using in the mastery of the language. This shows a new role which is of primary interest to researchers in the target language. Lastly, errors are considered devices by which the learner used to discover the L2 linguistic competence and test his or her hypotheses about the nature of the L2. It is believed that errors committed by language learners help reveal the L2 acquisition process which is the major concern of EA researchers in attempting to discover how language learners learn a new language in order to improve language pedagogy.

### **Sources of errors**

#### **Interlingual and intralingual errors**

Interlingual errors directly involve the mother tongue. Corder (1971) claims that interlingual errors are resulted from the interference of L1 habits, particularly patterns, rules, or systems when mastering the new linguistic systems. Interference is viewed as negative transfer, since it negatively influences the L2 performance. Leki (1992: 108) reports that students learning English as a second language commit a great number of errors in sentential level due to L1 interference.

Interlingual interference is caused by differences in categories, constructions, elements, rules, and meaning across languages. It can be further subcategorized into two types: preclusive and intrusive interference. The former is resulted from what does not exist in the mother tongue interferes with what is being learned in the target language. It seems to be clear that Thai learners are more likely to commit an error of the use of English articles and adding plural morphemes to plural nouns, for they do not exist in Thai language. The latter is caused by the different sentence pattern between L1 and L2 as in case of adjective-noun order. In English, an adjective comes before a noun, but the adjective comes after a noun in Thai. This is a major problem for Thai learners learning the English language. It is also resulted from overgeneralization from what is already known in the new language system.

Intralingual errors, according to Richards (1971), are linguistic items produced by L2 learners which do not reflect the structure of L1, but the generalizations based on

partial exposure to the new language. Language learners attempt to “derive the rules behind the data to which he/she has been exposed, and may develop hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language” (Richards & Sampson, 1974: 6). In other words, language learners produce deviant or ill-formed sentences by applying their knowledge of the L2 linguistic rules and system to the new contexts.

Another important cognitive factor involved committing errors in L2 writing is language transfer. The term “transfer”, according to Odlin (1989), is defined as the influence resulted from similarities and differences between the L1 and any other language that has been previously mastered. According to Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2003), L2 learners is more likely to depend primarily on their L1 grammar to some extent. An empirical evidence demonstrated the kinds of errors L2 learners commit, “which often involve the transfer of grammatical rules from their L1.” The mother tongue influence is also discovered in the acquisition of L2 syntax and morphology as in case that Thai speakers acquiring English often forget to put –ed particle at the end of a regular verb in order to form a past tense verb. This is because a past tense –ed particle does not exist in Thai. Another obvious situation that causes errors in writing L2 of Thai speakers is question and negation structures in L2. Most Thai speakers often form a question or negation without adding an auxiliary before a main verb. Moreover, there is no any inflectional morphological system in the Thai language. Words are not modified or conjugated for tense, person, possession, number (singular/plural), gender, or subject-verb agreement (Slayden, 2010). Determiners, articles, in particular, do not exist in Thai words. To form a larger unit, Thai words are assembled through compounding and adding more particles and other markers. Tense, politeness, verb-to-noun conversion, and other grammatical objectives were performed with the addition of modifying words to the basic subject-verb-object word order.

### **Classifications of errors**

Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982: 146-191) propose three descriptive classifications of errors: surface strategy taxonomy, comparative taxonomy, and communicative effect taxonomy. This study was conducted based on only surface strategy taxonomy.

### **Surface Strategy taxonomy**

Surface strategy taxonomy focuses on the ways surface structures are changed in specific and systematic way. For instance, language learners may omit some necessary linguistic items or add unnecessary ones; they may misform or misorder items. According to a surface strategy perspective, analyzing errors can identify cognitive processes that underlie the learner’s reconstruction of the new language (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982: 150). Surface strategy taxonomy is further classified into four major subcategories as shown in Figure 1.

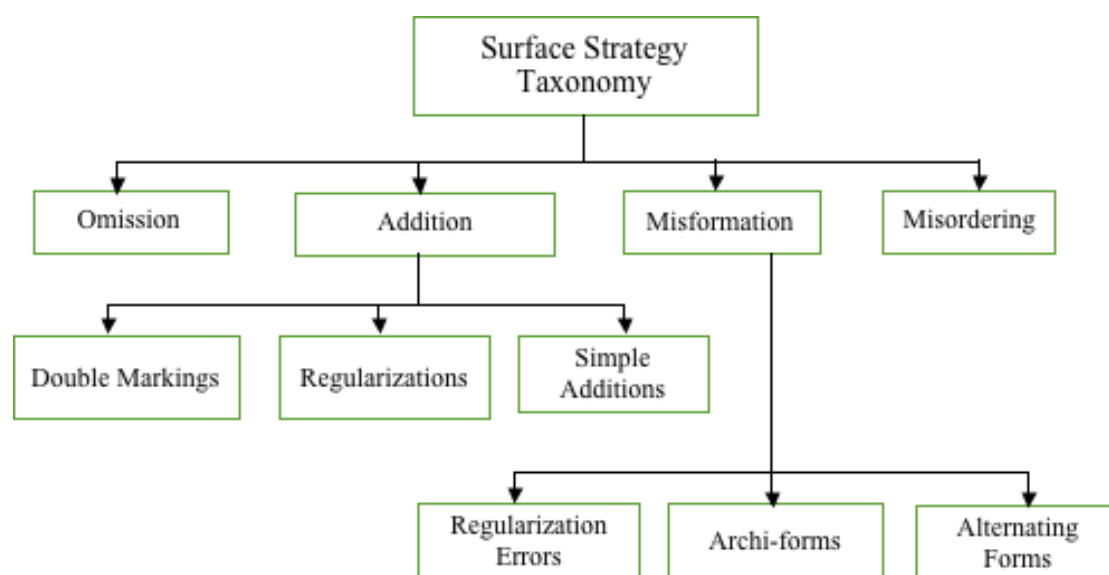


Figure 1: Classification of Errors Based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy

## 1. Omission

Omission errors refer to the absence of a linguistic element which is needed in a well-formed utterance. Morphemes (words) are categorized into two classes: content and function words. Content words are of most importance in syntactic structure. All well-formed sentences need content words, since they convey referential meaning of a sentence. Content words include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Unlike content words, the primary function of function words is to make sentences grammatically correct. They play a minor role in conveying the meaning of a sentence. Articles, prepositions, auxiliaries, noun, and verb inflections are examples of function words.

## 2. Additions

According to Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982: 156), addition errors refer to the presence of a linguistic element which is not required in a well-formed utterance. This takes place after language learners have acquired some L2 linguistic rules. Addition errors include three sub-categories:

2.1 Double marking: This error refers to the repeated use of a certain linguistic element which is not required in some linguistic construction.

e.g. \*Jim didn't *goed* to the movie yesterday.

2.2 Regularization: Errors 'in which a marker that is typically added to a linguistic item is erroneously added to exceptional items of the given class that do not take a marker' (Dulay, Burt, and Krashen, 1982: 156).

e.g. \*All *staffs* here are friendly.

2.3 Simple addition: An addition error which cannot be characterized as either a double marking or a particularization. It refers to the incorrect use of a linguistic element which is not required in a well-formed utterance.

e.g. \*This room includes a variety of modern *furnitures*.

## 3. Misformation

Misformation errors take place as a result of the use of the incorrect form of the morphemes or structure. They can be further classified into three sub-categories:

3.1 Regularization errors: This error occurs due to the wrong use of a regular marker in place of an irregular one.

e.g. *\*speaked* instead of spoken

3.2 Archi-forms: Errors are caused by the selection of a word in one class to represent the other in another class. They can be found in all stages of the L2 acquisition.

e.g. I saw him the day before yesterday. *\*Him* went to the movies.

3.3 Alternating forms: This error is resulted from the use of different words in the same linguistic structure.

e.g. *\*He seen* them the day before yesterday.

#### **4. Misordering**

Misordering errors are characterized by the inaccurate placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. They take place systematically for both L1 and L2 learners in the linguistic constructions which they have learned.

e.g. *\*I don't know where is he.*

### **Research methodology**

#### **Subjects**

The population of the study included the first-year students pursuing their bachelor degree at Phranakhon Rajabhat University. They were from fifteen academic disciplines under the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. After the selection process through simple sampling, there were only four academic majors in the study: political science, public administration, community development, and business Chinese. Then, students of the four academic disciplines were drawn from simple sampling again, i.e. every third number student in a class list was picked. Finally, there were fifty four non-English major freshmen.

#### **Research procedures**

The research participants were asked to write a 100-150 word paragraph entitle “My Personal Profile.” To facilitate their writing, they were provided a mind map, i.e. the topic areas which they should include in their composition. Participants were assigned to write a paragraph on his or her own background knowledge. This process lasted about 1.30–2.00 hours. After completing the task, all worksheets were collected for further steps.

All data gathered were analyzed using the following steps. Firstly, the data were collected from the worksheet which was an instrument and analyzed according to Corder's error analysis procedure. Secondly, the data were identified for errors. Lastly, the errors found in the worksheets were then classified based on the four subcategories of the surface strategy taxonomy and recorded in the error recording form accordingly. Error category was determined prior to the data collecting process.

## Findings

The Table 1 illustrates some examples of ill-formed sentences produced by the research participants.

Table 1: Distribution of Error Category

Linguistic category	Participant's error	Grammatically correct sentence
Syntax	<b>Preposition</b>	
	<b>a. Underuse of preposition</b> <i>I was born Pathumthanee.</i>	I was born in Pathumthanee Province.
	<b>b. Misuse of preposition</b> <i>Present I'm study in Pranakorn rajabhat University</i>	At present (Presently), I am studying at Phranakhon Rajabhat University.
	<b>Possessive adjective incorrect</b>	
	<b>a. Underuse of possessive adjective</b> <i>Nickname is Vin.</i> <i>I'm birthday is September 18 1997</i>	My nickname is Vin. My birthday is on September 18, 1997.
	<b>Sentence construction incorrect</b>	
	<b>a. Run-on sentence</b> <i>I like noodle and I dislike English and Match because It very hard.</i>	I like noodle. I dislike English and math, because they are very hard.
	<b>Fragment</b>	
	<b>a. Omission of main verb</b> <i>I reading cartoon.</i>	I like reading cartoon.
	<b>Article</b>	
	<b>a. Indefinite article incorrect</b> <i>I liked to watch a action and Comedy movie</i>	I like to watch action and comedy movies.
	<b>b. Overuse of indefinite article</b> <i>I like a cool weather.</i>	I like cool weather.
	<b>c. Underuse of indefinite article</b> <i>My father's job is police.</i>	My father's job is a police officer.
	<b>d. Underuse of definite article</b> <i>In Future maybe I will work in hospital</i>	In the future, I will work in hospital.

## Morphology

### Capitalization

#### a. Underuse of capitalization

*My name is kritsana.*

*My nickname is tae*

My name is Kritsana.

My nickname is Tae.

#### b. Overuse of capitalization

*My mom she is Accountant*

*I like sport Volleyball.*

*I like music is POP, Jazz*

My mom is an accountant.

I like volleyball.

I like pop and jazz music.

### Vocabulary incorrect

#### a. Misuse of vocabulary

*I studied at Pathumthanee*

*Nunthamunee Bumrung school.*

I graduated from

Pathumthanee Nunthamunee

Bumrung School.

*My favorite subjects are Thai and Social.*

My favorite subjects are Thai and social studies.

*I'm 20 yearago*

I am 20 years old.

*my brother job is study.*

My brother's job is a student.

### Punctuation

#### a. Underuse of punctuation

*My name is Artit Hanta*

*In my future I would like to be a soldier*

My name is Artit Hanta.

In my future, I would like to be a soldier.

### Spelling

#### a. Misspelling

*I likes movies are sci-fi and commadi.*

*my favorite movies is comedy and extion.*

*I am reading cratoon.*

I like sci-fi and comedy movies.

My favorite movies are comedy and action.

I am reading cartoon.

### Abbreviation

#### a. Misuse of abbreviation

*My address is 89/29 m.3,*

*Bangkuwat, Muang,*

*Pathumthanee 12000.*

My address is 89/29 Moo 3,

Bangkuwat Sub-district,

Muang District, Pathumthanee 12000.

### Word order

#### a. Misplace of proper name

*It's Hospital*

*Changraipachanukroh*

I was born in

Chiengraipachanukroh

Hospital.

#### b. Repetition of object

*I like reading comic books and ghost story books.*

*I like to watch romantic movies and ghost movies.*

I like reading comic and ghost story books.

I like to watch romantic and ghost movies.

#### c. Omission of main noun

*My special are listen music and*

My hobbies are listening to

*play badminton.  
favorite is English, match, social.*

music and playing badminton.  
My favorite subjects are  
English, math, and social  
studies.

### **Pronoun reference**

#### **a. Use of pronoun without any antecedent nouns to which it refers**

*It's Hospital  
Changraipachanukroh*

I was born in  
Chiengraipachanukroh  
Hospital. It is located in  
Chiengrai Province.

#### **b. Overuse of pronoun**

*My mom she is 41 yearago*

My mom is 41 years old.

### **Negative marker**

#### **a. Negative marker incorrect**

*I think I have not special abilities  
but I like to think and remember  
somethings Hard*

I think I have no any special  
abilities, but I like to think and  
remember something hard.

### **Possessive case incorrect**

#### **a. Omission of 's**

*My brother nickname is oil.*

My brother's nickname is Oil.

## **Tense**

### **Incorrect use of tense**

#### **a. Tense incorrect**

*I study at Phranakhon Rajabhat  
University.*

I am studying at Phranakhon  
Rajabhat University.

*I have been studied at  
Nawamintrachutit Suankularb  
Pathumthani.*

I studied high school at  
Nawamintrachutit Suankularb  
Pathumthani.

### **Incorrect passive construction**

#### **a. Passive construction incorrect**

*My home is build in years 1977*

My home was built in 1977.

### **Incorrect present continuous construction**

#### **a. Present continuous incorrect**

*Now I studying at Phranakorn  
Rajabhat University.*

I am now studying at  
Phranakhon Rajabhat  
University.

### **Incorrect present perfect construction**

#### **a. Overuse of past participle**

*I have been went to Singapore.*

I have been to Singapore.

### **To infinitive or gerund**

#### **a. Misuse of to infinitive or gerund**

*My hobbies are play soccer and watching TV.*

*In freetime I like to swimming play tennis*

### **Subject-verb agreement**

#### **a. Disagreement of subject and verb**

*I likes movies are sci-fi and commadi.*

*he like go to southAsians.*

*I favorite subject is English and Thai.*

### **Auxiliary**

#### **a. Overuse of be**

*I'm go to University by bus*

*I like color is Red, Blue, Black, White.*

*In year 2012 grandfather is die and years 1995 uncle is die.*

#### **b. Underuse of be in the present continuous**

*Currently studying at Phranakhon Rajabhat University.*

My hobbies are playing soccer and watching TV.

In my free time, I like to swim and play tennis.

I like sci-fi and comedy movies.

He likes to go to Southeast Asia.

My favorite subjects are English and Thai.

I go to university by bus.

I like red, blue, black, and white.

My uncle died in 1995 and my grandfather died in 2012.

Currently, I am studying at Phranakhon Rajabhat University.

## **L1 Interference**

### **a. L1 Negative transfer**

*I like colour green and I dislike colour black.*

*I like music pop-rock.*

*Family have members 4 people.*

I like green, but I dislike black.

I like pop rock.

My family has four members. There are four members in my family.

## **Others**

### **a. Ambiguous sentences**

*I have family three.*

*My hobbies sport is swimming.*

My family has three members.

1) My hobby is swimming.

2) My favorite sport is swimming.

## Discussion

The study aimed at identifying the errors in writing the English composition of Thai EFL undergraduates majoring in non-English discipline. The process of classifying L2 errors was based on the surface strategy taxonomy. The findings of the study correspond to the results of previous studies conducted in Thai contexts (Kittiprasert, 1998; Yipcharoenporn, 2000; Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007; Sattayatham & Rattanapinyowong, 2008; Jenwitheesuk, 2009; Watcharapunyawong & Usaha, 2013; Hinnon, 2014; Promsupa, Varasarin, & Brudhiprabha, 2017; Sermsook, Liamnimitr, & Pochakorn, 2017; and Suvarnamani, 2017). Most Thai EFL learners at all educational levels make a high frequency of grammatical errors in writing the English composition. They have encountered problematic areas of writing in L2 in every linguistic construction: in word, phrase, clause, sentence, and paragraph levels.

More importantly, the results of the study uncover the L1 influence in L2 acquisition, particularly in sentential and clause errors. The positive and negative interferences are found in the study, i.e. transfer of L1 rules and some L2 linguistic avoidance are applied in written English texts. The use of articles, punctuations, auxiliaries, and tenses are among the major problems of L2 learning failure.

With regard to the findings from the sources of errors, it can be concluded that interlingual errors were resulted from the dearth of participants' L2 linguistic rules. The participants in this study are more likely to produce English sentences by transferring their knowledge of L1 linguistic rules to L2 written texts.

## Implications for EFL teachers

The study of error in writing English texts help illustrate the areas of difficulty that L2 learners encounter in learning the new language system. Also, it can infer the nature of the learners' L2 competence at a given stage and indicate what language learners know and what they still have to acquire. In some English courses, particularly English grammatical structure courses, the results of the study help L2 language teachers to point out the different types of errors to the learners and to focus more on the errors that have a high frequency rate in order to achieve a satisfactory level of L2 competence in English writing. Errors identify the language teachers how effective the teaching methods is and show what parts of the syllabus have not been learned enough or taught and what parts of the syllabus are still needed further attention.

It would be better for language teachers to assign more written English assignments for which the learners would have to do much writing in the L2 as well as to do research more of the topic they want to write about by reading a lot of English materials and thinking in English. Moreover, if different group work activities are applied to language classes, learners will have more opportunity to practice the L2 with their partners to improve both L2 competence and performance of writing skill. Also, proficient learners of L2 would help correct errors that less proficient learners commit. Interestingly, group work assignments would reduce learning burdens, for instance, stress and work load.

Some L2 linguistic items that are viewed as major causes of errors must be taught or identified at earlier stage of the target language learning. It will be good if teachers of

L2 work together to solve learners' problems related to making L2 errors. Learners of the target language should also be encouraged to write L2 composition in class and at home. Some writing mechanics and paragraph patterns should be taught in order for learners to produce well-form essays. Furthermore, some samples of bad L2 written production should be used as one in-class activity, for learners can correct and analyze L2 errors. Learning from errors makes learners realize well the types of errors and prevents them to commit such errors again.

### **Implications for English language teaching pedagogy**

It is obvious in this study that most Thai EFL learners acquiring L2 rely primarily on interlingual transfer, particularly in the learning environment where language learners are less likely to expose to formal English classes. A few hours a week of L2 instruction is not enough for effective learning the new language. Considering use of L1 in L2 classes would be helpful for better understanding of difficult areas of L2 grammatical elements as in case that the introduction of contrastive comparisons of the L1 and the L2 linguistic systems would give the L2 learners a clear picture of the similarities and differences between the two language systems.

### **Recommendations for further research**

The study made an attempt to investigate certain characteristics of errors committed by Thai EFL undergraduates and to examine the sources of errors. The primary focus of the study was on the detection of errors at lexical and sentential levels. Since this study is limited only to the textual level, a study beyond the textual level like discourse level would be possible to other researchers. Another limitation is that this study was conducted through quantitative method in discovering only types of errors, using a qualitative method coupled with quantitative one would yield profound details of causes of errors.

According to the findings of the study, Thai EFL learners committed a large number of L2 grammatical errors. This shows that the language teachers of writing classes should pay more attention to the writing product together with the writing process. If possible, remedial writing classes should be offered to less proficient language learners or to all first-year students before the start of the first semester. Also, teachers of English should be aware of L2 linguistic rules. Errors, regardless of the teaching methods used in the classroom, still exist and stay as long as L2 teaching is practiced. Teachers, therefore, should not be concerned, rather they should draw the students' attention to the different linguistic systems of the mother tongue and the target language. This will help L2 learners acquire the new language with ease.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to uncover the grammatical errors committed by Thai EFL students from their writing of English composition. A number of different L2 errors were discovered in written English texts. The errors were found from both morphological and sentential levels. The major cause of error was due to the fact that language learners were equipped with inadequate grammatical competence of the English language. Carelessness was also the cause of error.

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*Enhancing English Language Teaching and Learning through Ipadagogy*

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**Abstract**

English Language Teaching and Learning has evolved in contemporary times, and shifts in society have partly influenced this evolution. This descriptive study examined the instructional and learning practices in English Language classes of a school which has adopted and implemented since 2016 the 1:1 Learning with iPad initiative in all learning areas. To assess the extent of the technology integration in the English Language classes, the researcher used the SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition) conceptual model of technology integration. Moreover, classroom experiences from English Language Teachers and Learners were classified into relevant themes which objectively reflect the realities of technology-aided classrooms. Data were gathered through surveys, classroom observations, and in-depth interviews with ELLs and ELTs. The results indicate that the ELLs and ELTs utilize the iPad for many educational purposes, and they find it useful despite constantly facing personal and instructional challenges. Furthermore, the iPads were frequently used as augmentation tools, but the teachers have found ways to modify the classroom tasks to maximize technology integration. Finally, the teachers and the learners in this study claim that their experiences are generally positive because they have a digital tool which has extended learning beyond the classroom. On another important note, the researcher suggests that the school clarify fundamental principles and concepts of the teaching approach which could be used in the context of integrating iPad's technology in a 1:1 Teaching and Learning Initiative. This study has added new knowledge into the regularly updating fields of English Language Teaching and Learning and Educational Technology.

Keywords: language learning, educational technology, iPads, trends, technology

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## Introduction

English Language Teaching and Learning has evolved in contemporary times, and shifts in society have influenced classroom practices. As a result of these societal shifts, “schools are attempting to utilize technology to help provide the best learning experience for children” (Henderson & Yeow, 2012, p.78). One particular educational-technological trend which has gained significant ground in classroom instruction is the use of iPads for language teaching and learning (Auquilla & Urgiles, 2017).

With several software developers’ creation of verified computer applications, researchers have realized that the iPad can be used as a teaching-learning tool (Choto-Alvarado, Ortega-Palma, & Sibrian-Ramirez, 2014). Research on the use of iPads in English language teaching and learning (e.g., Beauchamp & Hillier, 2014; Beschorner & Hutchison, 2013; Dhir, Gawaji, & Nyman, 2013) have emerged as attempts into understanding the complex processes of teaching and learning a language with the aid of technology.

The researcher’s decision to examine this phenomenon is primarily compelled by the emerging trends of enhancing language classroom activities through technology integration, specifically those influenced by iPadagogy. Claimed to be first coined by Cochrane, Narayan, and Oldfield (2011), iPadagogy is the pedagogical employment of iPad devices which aims to enhance classroom practices through appropriate combinations of “content, pedagogy, and technical knowledge” (Reichert, 2016) in teaching. Despite the emergence of the term ‘iPadagogy,’ there remains inadequate knowledge on its pedagogical implications aside from the insights offered from ‘The Padagogy Wheel’ framework presented by Carrington (2016).

In some instances, iPadagogy has been adopted in 1:1 Learning with the iPad initiative, a teaching approach of having each student immersed in one computing device while a teacher closely supervises (Males, 2015; Bebell & Kay, 2009). The fact that many schools still resist the adoption of mobile devices in teaching and learning (Tay, 2016) gives more reason for researchers to give empirical proof on the scant literature of iPad integration in education, especially in English Language Teaching and Learning. Technology integration hitherto remains “a divisive issue” (Motamedi, 2010) in the classroom, and that may not change unless the majority of educational stakeholders all over the world acknowledges this issue. Seen in the light of contributing more insights to the growing literature of the evolution of English Language Teaching and Learning, hand-in-hand with the growth of the English Language (Shyamlee, 2012), this research closely examined instructional and learning practices in connection with emerging educational trends, theories, and framework.

Specifically, this study explored the English Language Learners’ and Teachers’ perspectives on the uses, challenges, and usefulness of the iPad in the English Language classes. Moreover, the researcher examined in which level of technology integration English Language Teachers apply iPadagogy in Language Teaching. All these explorations were then merged into emerging themes which reflect the experiences of ELLs and ELTs in the use of iPadagogy in English Language Teaching and Learning.

## Literature Review

### *TPACK Model and SAMR Model*

Despite the apparent confusions of integrating technology in English Language Teaching (Dearden, 2005), practitioners may take advantage of teaching-learning models which integrate the effective use of technology in pedagogical processes. The researcher highlights two teaching-learning models which have achieved notable recognition in the educational landscape: the TPACK Model (Mishra & Koehler, 2006) and the SAMR Model (Puentedura, 2013). Both of these models have helped establish a theoretical framework for the study.

In a Venn Diagram of three connected circles, Mishra and Koehler (2006), who drew inspiration from Shulman (1987)), presents the three bodies of knowledge which teachers must utilize to “produce effective teaching with technology” (Mishra & Koehler, 2006, p.6). These bodies of knowledge are referred to as *Technological Knowledge*, *Pedagogical Knowledge*, and *Content Knowledge*. This framework compels teachers to be more equipped not only with one area of content but in all forms of knowledge. What the TPACK Framework suggests to educators is to note and to use the essential components of teaching with technology: content, pedagogy, and technology. Often, the absence or inadequacy of a particular body of knowledge in the TPACK framework may lead to teacher inefficiency because these bodies of knowledge are necessities.

Researchers and educators may use Puentedura’s (2013) SAMR (Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, Redefinition) Model as a framework for assessing the outcomes after what teaching through technology integration has accomplished. Puentedura (2013) patterns the hierarchy of the model after Anderson’s and Krathwohl’s (2001) Revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy. The SAMR Model concretizes possible outcomes of a technology-aided pedagogy. Through the SAMR Model, teachers could purposefully design and manipulate technology-aided learning tasks that are assessed through an increasing complexity of learning objectives and the corresponding extent of technology integration (Hockly, 2013).

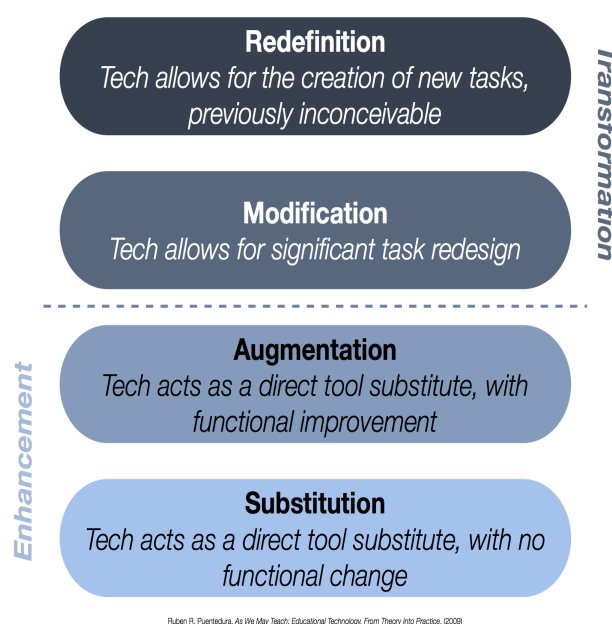


Figure 1: The SAMR Model. by IUSD, 2014. Retrieved from [www.iusd.org](http://www.iusd.org). Copyright 2014 by IUSD.

Understanding the principles behind the SAMR Model is critical, for the extent of technology integration in classroom instruction would play its effects on the enhancement of classroom experiences and on how students perceive the usefulness of technology in learning as demonstrated in the longitudinal studies of Karsenti and Fievez (2013) and Tay (2016). The researcher asserts the view that the SAMR Model was “not designed to be viewed as hierarchical” (Kirkland, 2014) or “a ladder to be climbed” (Floris & Renandya, 2017) like how it has often been presented in other literature. The problem with having such thinking may, as Floris and Renandya (2017) point out, create an illusion that the ultimate goal of technology integration is Redefinition but may not have to require doing such act necessarily. There would be instances that technology integration would merely require the Substitution mode, but it shall not immediately mean that the learner has not performed any proof of learning, nor has the teacher attempted to initiate learning. What makes the SAMR appear hierarchical is because of its attachment to the lesson objectives, which are based on Bloom’s Taxonomy of Learning. Hence, it should be made clear that it is still the lesson objectives which determine the complexity and level of learning and not the SAMR’s mode of technology integration (Humes, 2017).

### ***iPadagogy and 1:1 Learning Initiatives***

Of great interest in this review of literature is the emergence of the term, iPadagogy. As previously discussed, iPadagogy resulted from the blending of the words, ‘iPad’ and ‘pedagogy,’ to indicate and to refer to the use of the iPad by the teachers and learners inside the classroom (Cochrane, Narayan, & Oldfield, 2011). Aside from the definition of Reichert (2016), no other literature seems to offer an explicit definition of iPadagogy. Despite the apparent pedagogical potential of the use of iPad, “there still exists little information on how such potential is utilized” (Valstad, 2010).

Language Teachers who are aided by iPads have often been led to refer to other pedagogical models and framework like Mishra and Koehler's (2006) TPACK framework and Puentedura's (2013) SAMR model to emulate. Carrington (2016) has created the iPadagogy wheel to show which mobile applications could be used for particular tasks. The wheel illustrates instructional tasks which teachers can use for learning activities with the aid of educational and mobile applications to enhance instruction. With the planning of the lessons, a teacher can purposefully and systematically integrate iPad's technology into the language lessons through various mobile educational applications (Kent, 2015).

Despite the concept's obscurity, the researcher believes that English Language Teachers can still find ways to effectively integrate iPadagogy in English Language Teaching so that they could achieve desired results to the English Language Learners (Auquila & Uguilles, 2017). Another critical point of emphasis to be clarified is that the iPad alone may not be sufficient to assure that teaching and learning could occur. The iPad's hardware features allow people to accomplish basic and functional tasks, but iPadagogy cannot fully be utilized without the use of appropriate apps (Neaves, 2015; Kent, 2015). With the tested frameworks such as TPACK, SAMR, and Bloom's Taxonomy plus the available mobile applications, researchers may hopefully arrive at a concrete definition of iPadagogy. Nonetheless, it would be helpful to borrow a statement from Chou, Block, and Jesness (2015), to give insights on iPad technology integration, when they stated: "iPad integration refers to the design, development, and implementation of sound instructional planning to maximize the use of iPad for learning" (p.86).

Other researchers have also provided valuable insights into understanding how English Language Teaching and Learning can be enhanced through the integration of iPad's technology in the classroom. Many research appeared to have studied the pedagogical use of iPads in smaller scopes by focusing on Language Learners' perceptions on the use of iPads for language learning (e.g., Diemer, Fernandez, and Streepey, 2012; Mango, 2015) or by conducting case studies on ELLs across all ages (e.g. Gabarre et.al., 2015; Prince, 2017; Sandvik, Smordal & Osterud, 2012). These studies and those which show similar framework on the integration of iPad in English Education all seem to signify characteristics of Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) in '1:1 Teaching-Learning with iPad Initiative.'

Bebell and Kay (2009) noted that one of the reasons why schools chose to adopt the 1:1 Computing as an instructional method is for "improved teaching and learning, greater efficiency, and the development of important skills in students" (p.11). Classes are tailored to meet students need and at the same time to incorporate the use of the available computer technology (Males, 2015). However, Schrader (2016) believes that for schools' 1:1 Learning with the iPad Initiatives to succeed, a school must have articulated "a complete vision" which must also be reflected in the lessons of the teachers. Furthermore, a 1:1 Teaching-Learning Initiative's implementation can be improved through giving focus on the following:" a) professional development, b) school culture and environment, c) technology support, and d) time" (Christensen, 2015). As educators endeavor to implement the initiative, they have to meet 'pedagogical adaptations' as these may help determine not only teacher effectiveness but, most importantly, student achievement. Studies on the integration of iPad's technology seem to have compelled researchers to focus on the results, but, as

Andrade (2014) stressed, it is equally important to examine the teaching-learning process while integrating both the hardware and software features that the iPad's technology offers (Auquilla & Urgilles, 2017). Researchers remark the importance of explaining the phenomena of how technology shapes teaching and learning because these have become standards in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education (Jansen & van der Merwe, 2015).

## **Methods**

This descriptive study sought to primarily examine the teaching-learning practices and experiences of English Language Teachers and Learners who utilize iPad's technology in teaching and learning English in a 1:1 Learning Initiative context. Data were collected through surveys, classroom observations, and in-depth interviews.

### **Survey**

The researcher surveyed 966 English Language Learners and eight (8) English Language Teachers. Patterned after, Karsenti and Fievez's (2013) evaluation study on the use of iPads in classrooms, the researcher designed specific sets of questionnaires for the English Language Learners and the English Language Teachers (ELLs).

### **Classroom Observations**

The researcher conducted Open Observation during the selected classes of the English Language Teachers (ELTs). During these classroom observations, the researcher identified and noted the ELTs' instructional activities which specifically have purposefully allowed them and the English Language Learners (ELLs) to use iPad's technology to accomplish language tasks as designed in the lesson plan. However, the researcher had anticipated that, as in many language classes, there would be other instances which may require the teachers to adjust their strategies during classes. Thus, these types of strategies were also considered for inclusion as they contribute to the teaching-learning process. These instructional strategies which were executed by the teacher added to the identification and classification of classroom activities which integrated technology based on the SAMR Model.

All classroom activities, most notably those activities which demonstrated technology integration, were recorded in the researcher's narrative field notes. The data that were collected from the ELLs included the learning strategies which fulfill the following criteria: a) use of iPad's technology and b) iPad's use for a language classroom activity. During the classroom observation, the researcher observed the ELLs and the ELTs whenever the indicated direction for the technology integration was demonstrated either by the teacher or the learner, as shown in the lesson plan. The researcher also acknowledged that there would be instances when the ELLs would most likely deviate from the presented teaching-learning activity (McCoy, 2016) because of the presence of digital and mobile devices in the form of the iPad.

### **Interview**

Interviews were conducted with selected English Language Learners and with English Language Teachers who had been subjected to the recorded classroom observations.

The researcher prepared a Semi-Structured interview to further investigate the perceptions and experiences of the participants. For the teacher-participants, the questions primarily revolved around the English Language Teacher's instructional practices and experiences on the implementation of this teaching approach. For the student-participants, the researcher focused on their learning experiences in English Language classes which integrate iPad's technology. The researcher elicited responses from the student-participants on their uses of the iPad in their English Language classes, their challenges in using the iPad in the teaching-learning process, and their strategies in adapting to emerging challenges of integrating mobile technology in formal classroom instruction.

### **Data Analyses**

To objectively analyze the data, the researcher triangulated the data to verify and to corroborate data "by incorporating several viewpoints and methods" (Rahman & Yeasmin, 2012, p.156). As answers to the research questions, the data needed to be verified with the findings from other sources of data collection to establish more reliability and validity. Thus, the researcher draws inspiration from the works of Vaismoradi et al. (2016) and Falk and Blumenreich (2005). These authors suggest a framework for analyzing and organizing qualitative data into relevant and emergent themes (Creswell, 2007). Furthermore, the researcher utilized the following key strategies: finding and identifying similar responses, constructs, and concepts from the participants' answers, assigning appropriate codes, and merging responses into emerging themes.

### **Results and Discussions**

The use of technology in English Language classes paves the way for many classroom activities which can be used for teaching and learning the English language. In this investigation, the researcher had identified similar uses of iPads in the classroom, as shown in Karsenti and Fievez's (2013) research. Undocumented uses of iPads for language classroom activities hitherto have emerged upon the researcher's data collection. The results of the data collection procedures have yielded results which resemble results in previous studies which have also investigated the use of iPads in formal classroom instruction. Few 'official' and specific guidelines on how to successfully integrate iPads exist because this is still considered an emerging trend in educational technology (Huber, 2012).

#### ***Teaching and Learning as Augmented by Technology***

The results of the data collection yielded inter-related themes of the integration of iPadagogy in English Language Teaching and Learning processes. Research participants have remarked the different uses and usefulness of iPads and the challenges in using these devices. Apparent in the results of the survey, interviews, and observation is the practice of how English Language Learners and Teachers use the iPad for several reasons, as displayed in *Table 1*.

**Table 1.**  
**Main Uses of iPad in English Language Classes**

Uses of iPad	<i>f</i>
<b>Writing Uses</b>	
Writing Text for Written Requirements	847
Creating Essays/e-Books/Research Works	748
Writing Notes for Lessons	741
Answering of Quizzes	581
<b>Internet Uses</b>	
Researching Sources from the Internet	813
Browsing the Web	800
Accessing Language Subjects' Materials and Files through Learning Management System	781
Utilize the Learning Management System's features	762
Checking of Grammar	722
<b>Multimedia Uses</b>	
Presenting Multimedia (Keynote, PowerPoint, Video) Presentations	768
Watching and Recording Video Materials for Class	659
Creating a digital portfolio	423

The English Language Teachers and Learners have given positive feedback on the integration of the iPad in the English Language classes. The respondents say that having iPad devices as educational tools has ‘enhanced’ and ‘improved’ in terms of how they learn and on how they get engaged in different classroom tasks. The learners seem to benefit the most out of this initiative in teaching and learning. They now have a digital tool which is mobile and accessible, gives them the capacity to gather relevant information, allows them to augment necessary skills and convert these to more sophisticated skills, and lastly, empowers them to create new knowledge and new products which were formerly unthinkable.

It is also equally critical to highlight that the idea of using technology does not guarantee usefulness for the people using the technology, especially in a complex environment like the classroom. The findings of the study, fortunately, generally present a strong agreement among the participants on the usefulness of iPads in the classroom. In terms of usefulness, themes on the usefulness of iPad pedagogy emerged in forms like “*Helpful in utilizing the iPad’s technology to apply the English Language into meaningful tasks,*” “*Useful in utilizing iPad’s technology to learn the English Language,*” and “*Purposeful opportunities for students’ use of iPad by teachers lets students learn the English Language.*”

Despite the many potential advantages on the use of iPads for teaching and learning as presented by literature, both ELLs and ELTs have expressed challenges in the use of iPads in their classes as presented in *Table 2*. The most frequently mentioned challenge in the course of the study is the participants’ dependence on the internet for their iPad. The researcher has noted in the classroom observations that there seems to be an instinctive need to have the iPad connected to the internet as soon as the device is switched on. The main reason can be credited to the fact that living in the digital age means that “work, education, entertainment, and social connectivity are all experienced on the web (BrckaLorenz et al., 2013).

Another challenge in the use of the iPad, which deserves to be highlighted is the participants' claims that the use of the device has become a source of distraction. The English Language Learners in this study acknowledge that despite purchasing the device for educational purposes, they can easily get distracted from the primary intention of having the iPads in the classrooms. This study's results echo the report of Karsenti and Fievez (2013) in which the most frequently mentioned challenge is that the iPad is a source of distraction in their classes.

**Table 2.**

**English Language Learners' Challenges in the Use of iPads in English Language Classes**

<b>Challenges of iPad Use</b>	<b><i>f</i></b>
<b>Technical Difficulties on iPad Use</b>	
Limitation of iPads and its apps' Functions	457
Appropriateness of iPad Use to Language Tasks	421
<b>User's Personal Challenges</b>	
Dependence on the internet	602
Source of Distraction	598
Got Used to Pen and Paper Methods	398
Difficulty in Organizing Lesson Materials and Files	337
Disregard of language textbooks	255
Unfamiliarity with iPad	254

The researcher has identified some of the common technology integration practices which the English Language Teachers (ELTs) use which, as it has been revealed, highly prompt what the learners do inside the classroom. Based on the SAMR conceptual model of technology integration (Puentedura, 2013), the English Language Teachers mostly agree and demonstrated that they use and let the students use the iPad as 'augmentation' tools. Thus, the extent of iPad technology integration could be classified as 'Augmentation,' which means the iPad device act as a direct tool substitute but with functional improvements. This claim is further solidified upon the observation of ELLs who have manifested such "augmentation" instances during the classroom observations, and their statements in the interviews also seem to suggest augmentation activities.

To cite an example of Augmentation, Teacher E, the researcher noted, in her class asked the students to compose business letters. At an initial analysis, this task could be classified in the 'Substitution' mode for instead of writing on paper; the students encoded on a digital device using the Pages application. Based on the SAMR Model, however, using the Pages app seems to equate to 'Augmentation' of the task because aside from mere writing, the learners also used other features like auto-correct keyboard, the 'define' option, and even the annotation features without necessarily having to 'redefining' the entire task. As soon as the English Language Learners were busy in writing their application letters, Teacher E asked the students to work in pairs and have their partners peer-review their work. This instance has presented some of the various strategies which ELTs use to integrate technology while getting the chance to let students use other language macro-skills.

There remain contentious points on Puentedura's conceptual model, but it is worthy of emulation for technology integration practices. Guided or not guided by the SAMR

Model, teacher-participants in this study have also shared that there were many instances too when they have used the SAMR modes of ‘Modification’ and ‘Redefinition.’ The main reason why teachers opted to use or not to be in a specific mode of the SAMR Model highly anchors on the teaching-learning principles of appropriacy and objectivity as suggested by Floris and Renandya (2017).

### ***Teaching and Learning in the Hands of the Learner, at the Command of the Teacher***

The abundant uses of the English Language Teachers and Learners indicate that they find the iPad useful for educational purposes. In the context of the 1:1 Learning with the iPad in formal classroom instruction, each student is empowered to use the iPad for the accomplishment of tasks under the supervision of the teacher (Males, 2015). Upon closer examination of the obtained information from the participants, the 1:1 computing initiative has different contexts and objectives, but this concept may have been hastily accepted as the only approach for delivering classroom instruction for a school which has just started operations. Other teacher-participants, for instance, seem to feel that they have inadequate preparations for this classroom setup as mandated by their higher authorities.

The 1:1 computing learning setup seems to work best in classrooms with fewer students, as reviewed in the study of Neaves (2015). Each student had the iPad device at their disposal, but there are 30-45 of them in each class, a contextual disparity of the learning environment displayed from those who advocate the 1:1 computing for technology-aided classes. Consequentially, this adoption of this model, as seen in the classroom observations, did not turn out to be the ideal setup. The students had the iPad in their possession, but the students, most of the time still had to wait for the teacher’s directions on what to do with the iPad.

What appeared to be actualizing the 1:1 computing model turned out to be a hybrid and concoction of different teaching and learning approaches as seen in this study. As a result of this uncertainty in the teaching approach, the English Language Teachers most often resorted to teacher-directed instruction whereby they use the device themselves and let the students use the iPad as an augmenting-modifying tool. The responses of the informants corroborated the finding in the interview that the iPad is a digital tool which aids them in the teaching and learning processes respectively. Furthermore, the researcher’s observation of the ELTs’ Present-Practice-Perform/Produce lesson structure manifests a divergence from the supposedly desired teaching and learning initiative. That deviation, however, did not necessarily equate to inferior educational practices. What this might instead suggest are the ELTs abilities to adapt to meet the needs of the learners and to achieve the learning outcomes. With this concept of using the iPad device as an integral tool in language learning came the inevitable challenges of teachers having inadequate technological, content, and pedagogical knowledge and of the learners facing constant digital distraction, dealing with the iPad’s hardware and software limitations, and translating the use of the device into meaningful tasks.

Most literature and the findings of this study suggest the need to adjust classroom instruction for students as they are the primary beneficiaries of these changes. However, the central figure in technology integration in language teaching is still the

English Language Teacher. If teachers deliberately choose not to use information and communications technology, then indeed, no integration of technology would ever happen (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2016). In this study's classroom context, the researcher has witnessed the crucial concept of empowering students to learn the language through the aid of technology. This will only happen if the teacher allows the enabling power of technology to be used in the classroom. Accurate enough to the previous statement, the researcher has witnessed the positive results of having the iPad's technology be integrated into the teaching-learning process upon the teacher's intention and decision.

## Conclusion

This study was primarily conducted to examine instructional and learning practices in English Language classes wherein iPads are integrated into the English teaching and learning process. Supported by literature which tackled relevant and emerging issues on English Language Learning and Educational Technology, the researcher primarily drew inspiration from the contemporary works of Karsenti and Fievez (2013), Itayem (2014), Andrade (2014) and Reichert (2016) to develop the framework of this research paper. In sum, this study has contributed invaluable insights into the ever-evolving fields of English Language Teaching and Educational Technology. More importantly, the findings of this study add more understanding to the scant literature of empirical studies which examine authentic teaching and learning practices of technology integration in English Language Teaching. Additionally, iPad pedagogy seemed to have emerged among interested scholars as a term which signifies the use of iPads' technology in pedagogy. However, using iPad's technology or even the device itself does not guarantee technology integration or signify TPACK skills. Given that this teaching 'approach' is relatively emerging, it is notable how English Language Teachers have critically assessed their teaching practices and the learning behaviors of the English Language Learners.

Of remarkable concerns in this study could be summed up into the challenges of instruction and implementation. Having a digital tool for the students' education does not guarantee that the teaching-learning process will be free of problems (Karsenti & Fievez, 2013). Many valid and noteworthy challenges have emerged out of the research findings. English Language Learners deal with challenges on unfamiliarity, digital distractions, and even financial capacity in owning an iPad. As the primary figures in technology integration, the English Language Teachers face personal, pedagogical, and administrative functions which they have to manage to deliver quality instruction. The researcher considers the experiences of the ELTs as invaluable information, for these have also opened more polemic and reasonable justification to continue exploring the many dimensions of English Language Teaching and Learning when aided by technology. As the field of English Language Teaching and Educational Technology brings regular updates, so must the people involved in this field be more updated with these educational trends.

One of the criticisms often hurled at schools which integrate technology is on how schools could measure the academic achievements and progress of the learners (Shittu et al., 2014). Moreover, there are cases when schools may have emphasized so much on the use of technology over more essential school matters (Davie, 2015) and this may have negative impacts to all the educational stakeholders as reported by OECD.

It is, perhaps, from these not initially addressed issues that other challenges have also surfaced. Hence, this is also where the researcher would like to illuminate more insights for the improvement of the education being offered by schools which thrust the use of technology in learning and teaching.

The most challenging task lies in clarifying the teaching and learning model of the 1:1 Learning with iPad. As stated earlier, the 1:1 Learning with iPad was designed for many objectives, primarily that of providing a computing device to each learner which can help transform the traditional methods of learning. In the context of 1:1 computing, the teacher closely supervises the learner who works on the device, the iPad for example (Neaves, 2015). What happened, however, in this school's program, the classes transformed into a hybrid of several teaching approaches and methods which to some extent have scapegoated the goals 1:1 Learning with iPad. These teaching activities have been results of teachers experimenting with whatever procedures there are available, with their teaching style, and with the needs of the learners.

Clarifying and presenting a clear-cut teaching approach and methodology may remove the confusions on how teachers could approach the teaching and learning process which integrate iPad's technology. There are many teaching models which the school leaders could use to guide the teachers in their classroom instruction. These emerging teaching models include Flipped Classroom, Blended Learning, Gamification, or combination of these to form a distinct teaching model which is ready to adapt to the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century classroom.

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***Direct and Indirect Feedback: How do They Impact on Secondary School Learners' Writing Anxiety and How do Learners Perceive Them?***

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**Abstract**

Previous research has focused mainly on the effectiveness of written corrective feedback (WCF) in second language acquisition (SLA), but individual differences, such as anxiety, have not received adequate attention. This study seeks to explore the effects of written corrective feedback (WCF), indirect feedback (IF) and direct feedback (DF) respectively on learners' anxiety, and to investigate the beliefs towards WCF in English writing tasks among secondary school English learners in Mainland China. Both qualitative and quantitative methodology were employed in the study. The participants were 80 secondary students selected from the same grade. They were administered a questionnaire based on the Chinese version of the English Writing Anxiety Scale (Tsai, 2008) and were interviewed before and after carrying out four English writing tasks, one task per week. The participants were divided into two groups, one instructed with direct WCF and the other with indirect WCF. The results indicate that 1) DF has a positive effect on alleviating anxiety of making mistakes 2) IF can be helpful in building up confidence in writing in the long run 3) IF can reduce the fear of negative evaluation and 4) most learners claim that IF can improve their language accuracy in the long term but they preferred DF.

Keywords: written corrective feedback, second language acquisition, direct-indirect feedback, language anxiety, secondary school students

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## Introduction

For most second language learners, writing continues to be the most challenging task to deal with. Written corrective feedback (WCF) is widely used by teachers during a writing task review in attempting to improve learners' language accuracy. It can be grouped into direct written corrective feedback and indirect written corrective feedback. Direct WCF refers to a correction that not only calls attention to the error but also provides a specific solution to the problem (Bitchener and Ferris, 2012). Indirect WCF is defined as indicating an error through circling, underlining, highlighting, or otherwise marking it at its location in a text, with or without a verbal rule reminder or an error code (Ferris, 2012).

Despite its being widely researched in SLA, the bulk of research on WCF has mostly dealt with either the effectiveness or the ineffectiveness of different types of WCF. Each learner possesses different personal characteristics. Dornyei (2005) considers "enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree" as individual differences. Anxiety is one of the factors responsible for individual differences. Most foreign language learners and second language learners experience language anxiety. Anxiety can hamper learners' confidence, self-evaluation, and furthermore, language performance. WCF is considered to facilitate learners' writing but still it causes anxiety to some extent. How do indirect and direct WCF impact on English learners writing anxiety in secondary schools? WCF is usually given by language instructors from the perspective that learners can be aware of their incorrect usage of the target language and reduce their mistakes. In this study, learners' perceptions pertaining to indirect and direct WCF will be explored.

## Literature Review

Written corrective feedback (WCF) is regarded as an instructional pedagogical strategy to facilitate L2 writing effectiveness. WCF varies in terms of its focus, types and other features. With respect to types of WCF, Ellis (2009) provided a comprehensive typology, including direct and indirect WCF. Direct WCF indicates that teachers will directly point out where the errors are, cross out the unnecessary utterances, insert the missing words, phrases and morphemes, write down the right form below or near it, or more thoroughly, rewrite the whole sentences; whereas indirect WCF refers to the way that teachers only underline or highlight the wrong form without commenting on why it is not right or how it can be corrected.

Some researchers have sought to compare the efficacy of these two types of WCF and the combination of these two types and others. Lalande (1982) found that students who were given indirect WCF outperformed students receiving direct WCF. Ample studies have shown that both direct and indirect WCF work effectively in improving target language accuracy over time (Frantzen, 1995; Rob, Ross & Shortreed, 1986). Recent studies by Asadi and Rahimi (2014) revealed that indirect groups wrote more accurately in their essays over time. Findings from Salimi and Ahmadpour (2015) suggested that direct and indirect WCF had equal short-term effect in developing learners' accuracy while direct WCF showed a more significant long-term effect compared to indirect WCF. Due to the variety of methods used, the results are still inconclusive.

Anxiety is an important aspect of affective factors and affects learners' second language acquisition. Foreign language anxiety has been defined 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 (Howitz, Howitz & Cope, 1986). With respect to types of foreign language anxiety, Howitz et al. (1986) identified communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. They developed the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale to measure learners' anxiety. Writing anxiety was first explored by Daly and Miller (1975), who developed a Writing Apprehension Test to discern first language writing apprehension and scale the writing anxiety. Potential writing anxiety contributors can be linguistic ability, cognitive factors, socio-psychological issues, the clash between FL writers' first language and target language culture, and learners' or instructor's beliefs about writing and writing environments.

In recent studies, Jen (2003) found that secondary students experienced anxiety triggered by personality factors, fear of negative evaluation, low English proficiency, lack of preparation, pressure from language instructors and test and parental pressure. Rahmi and Dasjerdi (2012) investigated the efficacy of immediate and delayed CF in improvement of learners' complexity, fluency and accuracy in oral production and revealed that delayed CF outperformed immediate CF and learners treated with delayed CF had a lower level of anxiety. In another study by Shabami and Safari (2016), learners from both groups - immediate CF group and delayed CF group - experienced some levels of anxiety when receiving corrective feedback from the teachers. The significant relationship between language anxiety and error correction is ascertained. Assessment of learners' viewpoints across CF types on their level of anxiety needs to be further confirmed.

## **Methodology**

### **Research questions**

Both a qualitative and a quantitative approach were employed in this study to form some understanding of the relationship between indirect and direct WCF and writing anxiety. The following research questions were explored:

1. How do direct and indirect WCF impact on secondary school English learners' writing anxiety?
2. How do learners perceive direct and indirect WCF?

### **Participants**

The participants were 80 students selected from the same grade in a secondary school in Mainland China. They were divided into two groups, Group 1 and Group 2. Both of the two groups were treated with different WCF, G1 with indirect WCF, and G2 with direct WCF over a period of 4 weeks.

### **Instrument**

The questionnaire employed in this study was the 28 English Writing Anxiety Scale adopted by Tsai (2008). The participants involved in Tsai's study were university students. Concerning the discrepancy of the participants' writing ability level and

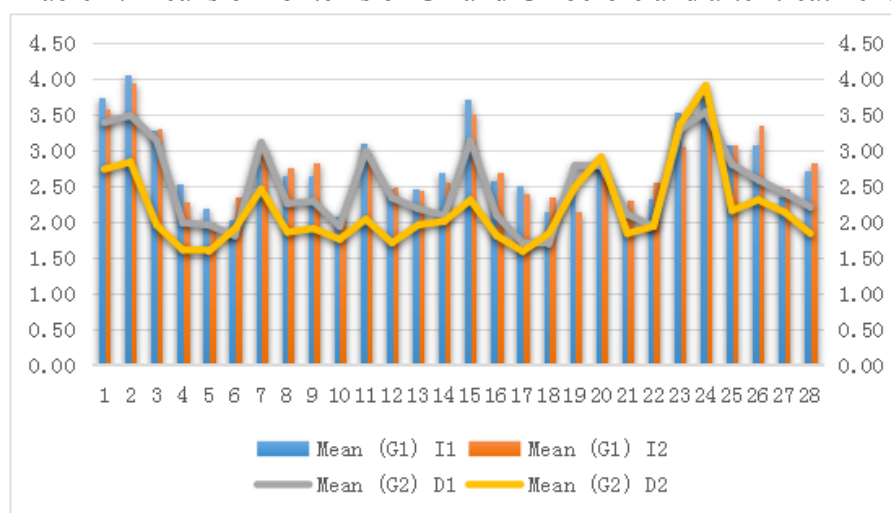
learning environment, the questionnaire was adjusted to fit the target participants in this study. At the beginning is the demographic information that needs to be filled in, including gender, age and which class he/she is from. The questionnaire consists of 28 items. The participants were asked to rate the extent to which the proposed statements echoed their own thoughts by using a 5-point scale from 5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree. A high score suggests a high degree of agreement with the statements. (See Appendix B).

### Data Collection Procedure

Two groups of the participants were first given a questionnaire in order to measure their writing anxiety. Within the four weeks the two groups were treated with different WCF, G1 with indirect WCF and G2 with direct WCF. Four weeks later their writing anxiety was tested again to compare with the former results. Interviews were conducted twice, one after the first questionnaire and the other after the second. The questions they needed to answer for the two interviews were different (see Appendix A).

### Findings

Table 1: Means of 28 items of G1 and G2 before and after treatment



After the administration of the questionnaire, the data were collected and analysed. The questionnaire has 28 items to be answered based on a five point Likert scale. Bars stand for the means of 28 items of G1, before the group was treated with indirect WCF and after. Lines represent 28-item means of G2, treated with direct WCF before and after. As Table 1 indicates, the high scores of G1 and G2 overlap on Items 1, 2, 15 and 24, which reveals whether using words, expressions and grammar correctly is a main factor leading to participants' writing anxiety. They positively believe they will be able to write well as long as the writing topic is not beyond their knowledge. The low scores appear to be allocated to Item 5, 6, 17 and 18, which show slight traces of English writing anxiety from the present participants, starting to feel panic when writing an English composition, worrying that teachers cannot understand the expressions in their writing, being tense about the writing test, etc.

Participants' writing anxiety can be calculated by adding his/her ratings. As presented in Table 2, before the treatment, the mean is 77.95 and after the treatment it is 77.23. Independent samples T-test was used to test the significance of difference, which further confirms there is no significant effectiveness of indirect WCF to relieve writing anxiety of participants. Compared to G1, the mean scores of before and after treatment show that direct WCF poses significant positive impact on reducing participants' writing anxiety. The data also reveals that the two groups of participants share a big anxiety gap; some are extremely anxious about their writing but some are totally on the contrary.

Table 2: Group 1-indirect group

<b>Writing Anxiety (G1: indirect group)</b>				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Before	77.95	13.87	52	104
After	77.23	15.19	52	105
p=0.83				

Table 3: Group 2-direct group

<b>Writing Anxiety (G2: direct group)</b>				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Min	Max
Before	69.73	17.20	46	108
After	60.475	19.66	36	104
p=0.03				

The impact of the two kinds of treatments is diverse. The changes between before and after the treatments are quite subtle but with significance and implications. G1 received indirect WCF but there was no prominent positive impact on the participants according to the data. Actually, the mean scores of some items rise after the treatment, especially Item 6 from 2.03 to 2.35, Item 22 from 2.33 to 2.55 and Item 26 from 3.08 to 3.35. The increase of the scores indicates that indirect WCF might need more sophisticated implementation procedures and learners' sentiment is better evaluated and considered before and during the treatment. Otherwise, there will be a negative impact on learners' English writing performance. A sharp increase in the mean score of G2 is detected in Item 24 from 3.53 to 3.90, which indicates that direct WCF can be helpful in supporting learners' confidence in writing to some extent.

Table 4: Item 1-18 and means of Item 1-18

Statement	Mean (G1)		Mean (G2)	
	I1	I2	D1	D2
1. When writing an English composition, I worry about whether the words and expressions used are correct.	3.73	3.58	3.38	2.73
2. I feel anxious about whether the grammar used is correct when I am writing an English composition.	4.05	3.95	3.48	2.83
3. I get upset when I find my English composition filled with red marks from the teacher.	3.28	3.30	3.13	1.95
4. I feel nervous when reading instructions for the topic in English writing.	2.53	2.28	1.98	1.60
5. I feel panicky when I start writing an English composition.	2.18	1.98	1.95	1.58
6. I worry about whether the teacher understands what I write in English.	2.03	2.35	1.80	1.90
7. I think other students are better at English writing than I am.	2.80	3.00	3.10	2.45
8. Before taking a writing test, I feel jittery about what is going to happen.	2.65	2.75	2.25	1.85
9. I find it stressful to write my ideas down in English.	2.65	2.83	2.28	1.90
10. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in writing an English composition.	2.08	2.10	1.93	1.75
11. I am afraid that what I write in English cannot meet my teacher's expectations.	3.10	2.95	2.98	2.03
12. The thought of revising my composition give me a lot of pressure.	2.45	2.48	2.33	1.70
13. I usually worry about how to revise my written work in English.	2.45	2.43	2.18	1.95
14. I feel anxious if my English writing needs to be graded.	2.68	2.55	2.08	2.00
15. An unfamiliar writing topic makes me anxious.	3.70	3.50	3.13	2.30
16. Whenever I think my teacher is ready to correct the mistakes in my English composition, I get worried.	2.58	2.68	2.08	1.80
17. Taking English composition exams makes me feel nervous.	2.50	2.40	1.70	1.58
18. I am often distressed after a writing test.	2.15	2.35	1.68	1.83

Table 5: Item 19-28 and means of 19-28

19. I do not worry about making mistakes in sentence structure when writing in English.	2.48	2.15	2.78	2.48
20. A writing class is enjoyable to me when writing errors are not emphasized so much.	2.88	2.63	2.78	2.90
21. I get nervous when the time for a writing task is running out.	2.20	2.30	2.10	1.83
22. The thought of my writing being judged by my English teacher makes me tense.	2.33	2.55	1.93	1.93
23. I am happy to write sufficient details to support my ideas.	3.53	3.05	3.28	3.35
24. I think I can write good English compositions.	3.80	3.43	3.53	3.90
25. I feel nervous in a writing class when the teacher's expectations are too high.	3.08	3.08	2.80	2.15
26. I worry about the consequence of failing my English writing test.	3.08	3.35	2.58	2.30
27. I am afraid that my classmates will find fault with my English compositions if I discuss it with them.	2.35	2.45	2.40	2.13
28. Even if I am well prepared for an English writing test, I still feel tense about it.	2.70	2.83	2.20	1.83

During interview participants responded to the questions in terms of the cause of anxiety. The results echo the data collected from the questionnaire. Words, expressions and grammar are the three main factors that trigger writing anxiety. Lack of writing skills, poor organization ability, low proficiency in English and stress from instrumental factors, like scores, scolding and even punishment, all promote their writing anxiety.

Before receiving the treatment, the suggestions from the learners indicate their inclination towards direct WCF and the problems they encountered when they decipher the WCF symbols. Regarding the WCF they received, the difficulties G1 and G2 face are quite similar: not understanding teachers' feedback, being afraid to ask for teachers' help, no clues about the mistakes, etc. When it comes to the benefits of WCF, they claim that with the help of WCF, especially IF, they can better understand the topic, organize the writing structure, correct the grammar and remember the words than before. Their writing accuracy has been improved as well as their writing performance and ultimately their scores. General inclination cannot include individual cases. DF can provide more direct writing support for learners than IF. After receiving DF, learners' behaviours are quite different. Some act positively, correcting errors autonomously, thinking about the reasons leading to the failure, asking for help from teachers or classmates, while some act negatively, just following the feedback without any reflection upon the errors they made. Most learners recommend both direct and indirect WCF: indirect WCF promotes further reflection upon the errors and correction, which facilitates the further memorization of the relevant words, expressions and grammar; direct WCF, on the one hand, can be pretty instantly helpful and effective, but on the other hand it may account for heavy reliance on teachers' help in the English writing task. More learners preferred indirect WCF because they believe in the long term effect it brings. Learners with low confidence in themselves would rather receive indirect WCF because it can reduce their fear of negative evaluation.

### **Implication**

Upon data gathering, data analysis and findings, several implications can be inferred from the current study related to teachers and students. Teachers should be trained how to render WCF effectively and elaborate on the correction symbols before students get back the feedback. They need to encourage students, not only to strengthen their confidence, but also to use WCF in a more effective way. Whether to choose IF or DF or combine them depends on the students learning preferences and performance. The answer cannot be easily determined. From the perspective of a learner, dealing with WCF needs patience and confidence. Language proficiency is the Achilles' heel for some learners. If matters come up concerning language proficiency, asking for help from your peers and teachers is always a wise option.

### **Conclusion**

This small-scale study examined the impact of direct and indirect written corrective feedback on secondary school English learners' writing anxiety and shed light on the perceptions of secondary school English learners towards these two kinds of written corrective feedback. Direct WCF exerts a positive impact on target learners' writing anxiety. Indirect WCF can be helpful to build up their confidence and improve their writing accuracy in the long run and reduce their fear of negative evaluation, but direct WCF is much more preferred.

To improve the validity and reliability, enlarging the capacity of the sample would be a good choice. The sample can be randomly picked from several secondary schools. Each school can be allocated a specific quota. In this study, the instrument adopted was designed for technology university students not secondary English learners. A

customized instrument will definitely improve the validity and enable a deeper insight into writing anxiety and WCF. This variable is trivial but indeed is of significance.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Questions**

#### **First Interview Questions:**

1. Could you tell us what might cause your writing anxiety?
2. Do you have any suggestions or advice for your teachers' written feedback?

#### **Second Interview Questions:**

1. What are the problems you face when you receive correction based on the error symbols or when your errors are corrected directly?
2. How does corrective feedback help you in writing?
3. When you get back your revised composition from the teacher, what do you do usually?
4. Will you recommend this feedback to be practiced by teachers? Why? Why not?

## Appendix B

This is a questionnaire about writing anxiety. Please fill in the following information.

1. Class:

2. Age:

### 3. Gender:

Please rate from 1-5 that fits your thought and fill in the number in the brackets.

Thank you. (5= strongly agree ;4= agree ;3=neutral ;2=disagree ;1=strongly disagree)

1. When writing an English composition, I worry about whether the words and expressions used are correct.
2. I feel anxious about whether the grammar used is correct when I am writing an English composition.
3. I get upset when I find my English composition filled with red marks from the teacher.
4. I feel nervous when reading instructions for the topic in English writing.
5. I feel panicky when I start writing an English composition.
6. I worry about whether the teacher understands what I write in English.
7. I think other students are better at English writing than I am.
8. Before taking a writing test, I feel jittery about what is going to happen.
9. I find it stressful to write my ideas down in English.
10. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in writing an English composition.
11. I am afraid that what I write in English cannot meet my teacher's expectations.
12. The thought of revising my composition give me a lot of pressure.
13. I usually worry about how to revise my written work in English.
14. I feel anxious if my English writing needs to be graded.
15. An unfamiliar writing topic makes me anxious.
16. Whenever I think my teacher is ready to correct the mistakes in my English composition, I get worried.
17. Taking English composition exams makes me feel nervous.
18. I am often distressed after a writing test.
19. I do not worry about making mistakes in sentence structure when writing in English.
20. A writing class is enjoyable to me when writing errors are not emphasized so much.
21. I get nervous when the time for a writing task is running out.
22. The thought of my writing being judged by my English teacher makes me tense.
23. I am happy to write sufficient details to support my ideas.
24. I think I can write good English compositions.
25. I feel nervous in a writing class when the teacher's expectations are too high.
26. I worry about the consequence of failing my English writing test.
27. I am afraid that my classmates will find fault with my English compositions if I discuss it with them.
28. Even if I am well prepared for an English writing test, I still feel tense about it.

***Educational Culture in an Online Class: The Case of Filipino-Chinese Interface***

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**Abstract**

One key target of the global education system is the equipping of graduates exhibiting sets of core 21<sup>st</sup> century competencies. Looking into global competencies vis-a-vis language learning, inclination to English fluency is an edge for pursuing global careers. The imperativeness of accommodating English education in China is first manifested in its Open Door Policy in 1976. However, even after four centuries, the competence of Chinese has little progression with merely a percentage of its population classified as conversational. Resolution now includes enrolling to online English school. This paper is an attempt to identify the themed emerging issues in the educational culture based on the experiences of five Filipino educators. Five problematic educational cultures were identified: 1) culture of hiring practice and training development: overemphasizing online English teaching as a merit of English communication skill and less cultivation of pedagogical skills; 2) culture of teaching: “delight” of the learners as the end goal; 3) culture on training learners: learners are not trained to be autodidact language learners; 4) culture on developing learning goal: putting grammar proficiency and wide vocabulary as the ultimate general goal for learners; 5) culture of developing curriculum content: emphasizing on form over rich context. Examining the regional education system of an online English class allows understanding the interface between the language learner and the educator. Findings show that this interface in an online language class requisites diagnosis to help identify errors for recommendation of case-specific actions, and to serve as an opportunity for the educators’ cultural self-reflection.

Keywords: educational culture, online English class, ESL teaching

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## Introduction

To explore the contemporary problems vis-à-vis the educational culture of an online English school for Chinese nationals as perceived by five Filipino ESL educators, an online interview was conducted. Interview respondents were selected through snowball method. Probing was facilitated to answer these two critical questions: “What were the issues of the current educational culture in the online class?”, and “What are the possible modifications or interventions that must be done to address issues?”. Thematic analysis was employed to make sense of and organize the data collected

Understanding the educational culture in an online English school is imperative as Scarino and Liddicoat (2009) noted that it has direct linkage with language learning. Following this proposition, it is important to cultivate continuously a positive educational culture to improve the learning experience of the learners. In this particular study, the educational culture within the system of interaction between the Filipino educators and the Chinese learners was explored. As this study subscribed to the interpretivism research philosophy, worldviews of the respondents were the highlighted narratives on the language learning phenomenon and discourse. Since the respondents did not provide much depth onto the cultural differences and even nuances in learning and teaching between the two interacting cohorts with different nationalities, no intricate micro-analysis was undertaken in this study. Nevertheless, the results were still indicative of the potentially actionable issues at hand as well as a provide starting point for future researchable areas.

In perspective, the agenda to improve English communication is regarded to be attributable to empirical macro studies concluding that countries with English proficient skills are revealed to have strong and flourishing economies since the rise in English proficiency of a nation has a direct relationship to its per capita income (EF EPI Report, 2013 as cited by McCormick, 2013), bilateral trade flows (Ku & Zussman, 2010), and net exports (Ufier, 2015); as well as micro studies showing English language skills positively impacting earnings (Lang and Sinvier, 2006), eligibility to higher paying job opportunities (Angrist and Lavy, 1997), and foreign direct investment inflows (Lein et al., 2011 as cited by Ufier, 2015).

Correspondingly, it is anticipated that learning English is considerably credited by the governments, economists, and education planners as contributory to the expanding commerce since English is the *lingua franca* of global business. These arguments would conventionally lend credence of the language as a critical tool in doing business, but highly likely miss out the equally essential impacts of learning English language on the aspects of the individual’s biological being, cognitive capacities, and cultural interpretative abilities, to name a few. It was found out that compared to monolingual speakers, bilingual speakers have: 1) denser grey matter in the brain which is involved in decision-making, self-control, and speech (Mechelli, Crinion, Noppeney, Ashburner, Franckowiak, & Price.); 2) better linguistic awareness, problem-solving skill, mathematical creativity and visual-spatial memory than their counterparts (Dermont, 2001; Kessler, 1980; Leikan, 2013; Diaz & Klingler, 1991); 3) positive attitudes towards target language and/or the speakers of the acquired foreign language (Bamford & Mizokawa, 1989).

China institutionalized its English education in 1976 with its Open Door Policy. Even after more than four decades, the country registered little progression with merely 1% of its population classified as conversational (Smith, 2017). Currently, there are almost 300 million Chinese students enrolled on online English schools. Filipinos are among the top service providers since English is their second language (ESL). Among the most pronounced advantage of ESL online education is its ascribed utility in terms of providing “well-balanced mix of self-regulated and self-scheduled learning material” (English Club TV, 2018) to the students compared if the same learning goal is undertaken in a conventional school.

Like any action to shift to innovative option, the advent of new ways to learn a language brings about problems as much as it resolves previously identified problems. Hence, improvements of online teaching are sought continuously to ensure that its bad outcomes do not negate its benefits. This study used the cybernetic approach to explore the structures, constraints, and possibilities in an online classroom system. This study likewise regarded educational culture as embedded on each element and so contexts were discussed to identify interactions between and among the elements of the learning system.

## Conclusion

1) *Culture of hiring practice and training development:* Overemphasizing online English teaching as a merit of English communication skill and le cultivation of pedagogical skills

Interviewed educators shared their perception of being appreciated, equipped, and competent in their work as online English teachers to be associated with their higher level of English speaking skills than the learners. Further, they felt that their qualities such as outstanding enunciation, wide vocabulary, and even engaging personality can be their leverage for securing better chance of being booked regularly by students. Their perception then implied the connection they ascribed to their fluency with the merit of their worth in the online teaching vocation.

It is logical that English communicative competence can be the most obvious reason for the educators to be hired and pursue ESL teaching profession. However, to attribute the educators' qualifications to mere optics can be limiting in developing their full potential as effective ESL educators. For one, it can be attributed to the lack of coherent framework for their development once they entered the online teaching industry. In particular, they shared that they lacked knowledge on the science of teaching, with emphasis on being acquainted with the formal approaches to effective classroom management. The lack of being knowledgeable on pedagogical approaches, skills, and content especially for the first-time teachers can lead to losing the opportunity to maximizing multi-modal approaches and innovative science-based activities available for usage by the teachers to enhance the language learning experience of the learners. Some stated that the new techniques they used in their class were mostly from the suggestions provided by their team head or training coach. As such, they perceived these resolutions as product of “common sense”, “similar experience”, or “inherent wisdom” of their team heads.

Their perceptions are valid concerns to be examined since having the communication skills does not necessarily translate to having competent teaching skills. Teacher competencies requisite more than the knowledge and skills on the subject matter, in this case the English language, as it includes as well the capability to “mobilizing psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context” (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2005). If these competencies are met, long-term visions such as pursuing high quality management of online schools can be attained as the actual practice of teaching exhibits multi-method approach deliberate placements, combinations, and integration of pedagogical approaches.

Participants shared that during training, terminologies such as “inquiry-based”, and “collaborative” are shortly mentioned. However, these staple principles on effective teaching could only serve its purpose if clearly understood by the teachers for them to wisely appropriate in their classes based on the needs of their students. To clarify to them to “know why they do what they do” on the basis of learning theories, pedagogical frameworks, and based on empirical evidences are imperative for their professional growth as educators.

**Modifications/ interventions:** The lack of training development framework particularly on pedagogical approaches is an issue associated with the lack of formal academic educational background of the teachers. It is suggested that training program for the ESL educators should also provide emphasis on discussing the science behind teaching including the pedagogical approaches appropriate for a particular need of the students. There should likewise be an emphasis on discussing the need on personalizing teaching content and pluralizing teaching methods. Their increased awareness on pedagogy could improve the teaching styles of the educators and contents of the curriculum and will eventually develop a culture of a science-based method of and approach in teaching.

## 2) *Culture of teaching:* “Delight” of the learners as the end goal

One pronounced way to pursue the *delight* of the learners is through the deliberate matching of their teaching styles with the students’ learning preferences. The preferences of learners can be determined using various standard tools. It is said that this concept and practice of connecting teaching style with learning preferences “can help students respond more positively to instructional methods, and inform faculty about effective teaching practices” (Fenton and Watkins, 2012).

The degree of connection between learning and teaching styles is ideally on the prerogative of the ESL educator. Such is a spectrum of extremely submitting to learners’ preferences on one end to neglecting it altogether on the opposite end. For the participants’ cases, they perceived that most often, the culture and expectations from their learners and even the school management pushed them to yield totally to the students’ learning styles even on occasions when they thought that it is best to follow their own judgment of the learning-teaching situation. As exemplified by the respondent, though there are young learners found to possess kinesthetic learning style, demonstrating how “saying thank you” can be functional in their everyday schooling does not necessarily need them to do particular movements. In this case, he

thought that the context of the learning to “say thank you” should be given more emphasis than demonstrating the movement while saying it.

This is similar to the existing challenge towards the validity of learning preference. The scant scientific evidence and merit on the usefulness of the learning style model made education scientists to debunk it and tagged it as “neuromythology”. A teacher’s guided funded by the U.S. Department of Education even furthered that “teaching students in their preferred styles... is an effective learning practice” (as cited by Toppo, 2019) since it is paradoxical wherein implementing learning styles is a unimodal approach consequent to having fixed mindset instead of growth mindset.

Another challenge the educators are confronted with is the lack of accurate assessment of the learners’ preference. Though the learners undergo assessment prior to enrolling to online classes, the results are not fully disclosed to the educators. As such, there are instances when educators improvise ways to assess their learners. The respondents noted that this can be counterproductive since they needed to evaluate the students first which was time-consuming and thus, reduced their actual time spent for the teaching lessons. They said that if only they were given the profiles of their students in advance, they can use the whole session time implementing the custom-fit teaching approaches for the learners.

Meanwhile, the influence of the management to the schema of the educators of what constitute the delight of the students is evident whenever a learner provides feedback regarding their experience with the educator’s class. They shared that they expected a call out from the management only when they received negative feedback. If it involved their teaching style, the resolution of the management was usually to yield to the preferences of the learners. Although this can be unfortunate for the educators who have their own cognitive faculties to appropriate strategies to meet the learning needs of the students, it cannot be separated from the fact that the online English school can only sustainably operate using the profits generated from the enrolled students. Thus, even at instances when learners throw unnecessary theatrics and antics in the classroom, they needed to accommodate their concept of delight. Following this logic, for the school to operate sustainably, the education system has to serve the learners on a manner worthy of their expectations.

**Modifications/ interventions:** It is important to evaluate and consult the learners of their learning preferences but essentially, in the end, it is the intelligible judgment of the educators that must be executed inside the classroom. Rather than focusing on the delight of the learners, delight on studying the language must be the focus. The learners can be too young or inexperienced to dictate the best strategy that could work for them. So the optimal option is to have the educators lead the lesson delivery. Multi-modal approach or the usage of different learning styles and not strengthening only one style for growth mindset is then appropriate for online classroom to enable enhanced learning and strengthened interconnectivity of their senses for language learning.

3) *Culture on training learners:* Learners are not trained to be autodidact language learners

Training students to be autodidactic language learners is perceived to be the least focus of the learning goals. Educators perceived that the curriculum has limited objectives which mainly cater to the base level of learning outcomes- knowledge, comprehension, and application levels. Further, most of these outcomes merely measure the increased knowledge of the learners to the context of the lesson topics. Although these can be good as short-term goals, in the end, it would be an innovative achievement if the curriculum trains the learners to study and explore language learning on their own.

The nobility of developing autodidact learners can potentially develop the sustainable zeal of the learners to improve their fluency in English language as they improvise their own learning tactics and timeline. As such, the learners will be able to personally invest on ways that can help them be better as English communicators even outside their formal and online schooling.

One major conflict in limiting the learning objectives to the content of the lesson is to inhibit as well their creative expression. For instance, the topics on expressions and vocabulary would provide an impression that these are the best words to say something and untrained learners would program their minds within the specific phrases in expressing their thoughts. This is associated as a problem when language is view as mere collections of words, grammars, and vocabularies which can be taught through rote memorization instead of the communicative exploration of experiencing the foreign language.

The educators perceived that it is ideal for the learners to speak 70% of the time in the class. As educators, they see their role as facilitators. This means that they perceived their role is primarily to guide learning through the provided course material. They also thought as well that they have the discretion to modify sections of the lessons which they thought are unnecessary particularly for advanced learners as well as provide additional references which the learners can study outside the class. In this way, they thought that the learners will be able to form their own thoughts about the additional materials they gathered and indirectly be able to explore their identity as a learner and foreign language speaker.

**Modifications/ interventions:** To respond to the shift of teaching method of educators to being facilitators of language learning, the curriculum content must have more activities for the learners to innovate expressions and it is the responsibility of the educators to transition the shift from teacher-centered learning to student-centered. This shift facilitates the dependency to the educators be minimized since the learners are trained to be more creative and self-reliant in building their own sets of vocabularies. Additionally, for learners to be autodidacts, educators must be able to identify reputable and appropriate materials which learners can engage with especially outside class. However, recommendations of films, songs, and other creative forms must be done with caution to avoid the learners from adding colloquial expressions to their vocabulary which might be dangerous to use if they lack understanding of its usage, context and cultural implications.

4) *Culture on developing learning goal:* Putting grammar proficiency and wide vocabulary as the ultimate general goal for learners

Since the educators had different types of learners each work shift, they had a wide range of learners' profile that they need to accommodate. One issue that they recognized in the curriculum is its high regards for attaining grammar proficiency. Although it is not completely wrong to aim for attaining mastery on the correct structure of expressing ideas, it may be counterproductive for those who merely aim for functional English. As such, the stance of the educator is in accordance to the Communicative Language Theory (CLT) which indicates that the first goal of language learning is to be understood.

An example cited by a respondent is her farmer student. According to his learner, he wanted to learn how to speak in English so he can negotiate with his small-time clients in selling their harvest. For him, he just needed to be familiar with basic terms needed to talk with their clients and not be fooled easily. To introduce him with economics-related jargons as how their module is structured would be an overkill of learning English, as he said. Some learners even told the educators that to be intelligibly sound might shy away their clients who are mostly non-native/proficient speakers. Further, the educators stated that this technical concept should only be introduced if the learner chose to do so. At the same time, forcing them to master grammar rules and memorize tons of words would give them the unnecessary burden since this can be beyond their personal goal of learning English.

**Modifications/ interventions:** Proficiency can be a goal, but should not be positioned ultimate as there are students who aim to acquire functional English to sustain their everyday living. Simulators on real topics that they have can also be added as an activity. The key to having a matched personal goal of the learners and the learning goals lies is having an effective learners' profile evaluation.

5) *Culture of developing curriculum* content: Emphasizing on form over rich context

Respondents claimed that the curriculum and the manner the activities are structured are implying that learning about grammar and vocabulary is an effective teaching method for and to experience foreign language learning. As previously argued, this can have negative implications as to how learners view the utility of learning the language. Worst, they might perceive their learning goals to be beyond what they can achieve. Two of the respondents testified experiencing having learners who did not finish their course since they thought that they could no longer meet the pre-determined learning goals. In this sense, the learners might have lost the importance of language learning outside the highly structured engagement with the language.

Educators argued that they considered rote learning as the most static way of teaching English. It should be taken into consideration that in teaching English online, the Filipino teacher is interacting with his or her Chinese learners. As such, there is the intercultural dimension happening within the learning system. This occurs when educators learn another cultural perspective of English learning in relation to another culture, and vice versa. To teach vocabulary is just partial understanding of the language. The full experience is embedded in its culture, meaning-making, and interpretations.

The cultural nuances embedded in the lesson context is essential in keeping the credibility of the online school as it can reflect the extensive research it entails the curriculum developer to produce the lesson materials. A remarkable example provided by one educator was his teaching experience about the lesson on “Birthday Celebrations”. At the end of the class, he observed indifference on his learner’s face. He thought that the student’s indifference is attributable to the lesson being a commonplace. However, when he asked his learner, the student disclosed that birthday celebration was not part of their culture as they view their birth day as not a special day. The learner thought that the context of birthday celebration depicted in the lesson is an extravagance in their culture. Hence, the educator implied disconnection between the dialogues presented in the course material with the reality of his learner. This kind of lapses in the context in the curriculum content can be discouraging or “offending” to learners which may cause psychological noise during their class.

**Modifications/ interventions:** Highlighting learning language as a social enterprise of meaning-making and interpretations is a paradigm shift from the passive and highly structured approach of teaching language via the route of mastering grammar and expanding vocabulary. To introduce the new paradigm of teaching language, activities involving interactive methods probing, laddering, and debate can be implemented. These activities can cultivate the meaningful “experience” of using words and arranging them based on the capacity of the learner. Mentoring and correcting errors during this language game should be facilitated by the educator.

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***Exploring Communicative Activities in EFL Classrooms: Can Development of CLIL Lesson Plans Work as a Communicative Task for University Students?***

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**Abstract**

This study aimed to explore how and to what extent the development of CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) lesson plans could serve as a communicative task for Japanese university students. Despite the abundant research on the application of CLIL, there had not been studies investigating if making CLIL lesson plans for younger students could function as an effective communicative task for EFL university students in CLIL English courses. As part of the unit on education for children, 77 students from 4 classes developed a lesson plan in groups for teaching mathematics or science to Japanese elementary school students in English. The topics included multiplication and division, fraction, the water cycle, solid, liquid, and gas, photosynthesis, magnet, and gravity. Twenty-four lesson plans were produced, and the data were analyzed qualitatively mainly from three perspectives: types and contents of the activities, linguistic expressions and instructions, and other features including the preparation process that potentially contributed to the university students' own learning. The students successfully developed a variety of fun and creative activities intended to facilitate classroom interaction including examples (explanation types and experience-based types), experiments (larger-scale experiments and experiments in small groups), and games. They carefully selected English expressions appropriate for the target audience of their choice. Their reactions to this task were positive, and this study suggested that the task could be a highly effective CLIL task for university students.

Keywords: English education, CLIL, communicative task, EFL, Japan

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## Introduction

According to Mehisto, Marsh, and Frigols (2008), students in language classes can learn more effectively “if they are not simply learning language for language’s sake, but using language to accomplish concrete tasks and learn new content” (p. 11). As the researchers observed, the importance and effectiveness of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been emphasized in English language teaching, especially in Europe. Mehisto et al. (2008) defined CLIL as “a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language” (p. 9). In other words, CLIL accentuates the integration of learning the language and learning about the content (Morton & Llinares, 2017, p. 2). CLIL has four cores, content, cognition, communication, and culture, summarized as the 4Cs (Coyle, Holmes, & King, 2009, p. 12). The fourth element, culture, is sometimes referred to as community instead (e.g., Marsh, Mehisto, Wolff, & Frigols Martín, 2012, p. 34).

There has been an extensive amount of research and practice with regard to CLIL, especially in Europe, from various perspectives. Coyle (2007) provided a conceptual framework and research paradigm of CLIL, focusing on the 4Cs framework. She put emphasis on the importance of culture and claimed that “intercultural learning and understanding potentially permeate CLIL learning and teaching” (p. 550). She also maintained that communication is not only about learning the language but about “using and developing language *of* learning, *for* learning and *through* learning” (p. 550). Mehisto et al. (2008) also emphasized the four principles, using the concept “community” in place of “culture.” In their theory, cognition was regarded as the driving force of effective CLIL practice (p. 30). They also outlined 30 core features of CLIL, under the categories of multiple focus, safe and enriching learning environment, authenticity, active learning, scaffolding, and co-operation (pp. 29-30).

Coyle et al. (2009) then proposed guidelines of CLIL, and Marsh et al. (2012) wrote the European Framework for CLIL Teacher Education, both outlining the contexts and key concepts of CLIL. In response to the popularity of CLIL in Europe, research has been conducted at various stages of education. For example, Egger and Lechner (2012) explored research and classroom practice of CLIL in Europe and illustrated positive effects of CLIL on primary school students’ cognitive development. Serra (2007) also conducted research at primary school, demonstrating the process of development of L2 in CLIL mathematics classes in Switzerland. Whittaker, Llinares, and McCabe (2011) focused on secondary school in Spain and showed how CLIL history classes helped to improve learners’ English writing skills. They observed that CLIL assisted the development of academic registers (p. 357). Denman, Tanner, and De Graaff (2013) investigated the effectiveness of CLIL at junior vocational school in Netherlands and found a positive impact of CLIL on developing a successful curriculum for bilingual education at vocational schools.

Research has also been conducted extensively at the tertiary level in Europe. Fortanet-Gómez (2013) investigated a multilingual program of Spanish, Valencian, and English at a Spanish university as a case study and illustrated how CLIL had been utilized in the program in the context of multilingual higher education. Hellekjær (2010) analyzed CLIL courses at Norwegian universities and compared students’ understanding of the contents in English and in Norwegian. He identified areas where

students had more difficulty in English including vocabulary and note-taking and pointed out the necessity of addressing language difficulties. As these studies have shown, CLIL has been proved to be an effective way of teaching a second or foreign language in Europe at various levels of education when it is implemented carefully based on the context.

Students' perceptions of CLIL courses have also been shown to be generally positive. For instance, Pladevall-Ballester (2015) demonstrated that primary school students held positive attitudes toward CLIL because they could learn new concepts and work on their English at the same time (pp. 55-56) based on their study in Spain. Lasagabaster and Doiz (2016) added, as a result of their study in Basque, that secondary school students felt that their English skills improved in CLIL courses more than in other English courses except for grammar (p. 122). At the tertiary level, for example, Aguilar and Rodríguez (2012) found that participants in their study at a Spanish university perceived that their vocabulary, listening, and speaking skills in particular improved in CLIL courses. These studies indicate that CLIL has been accepted positively at different levels of education in Europe.

In correspondence to the popularity of CLIL, in-class activities for CLIL classes as well as instruments for assessment have also been devised and proposed. Dale and Tanner (2012), for example, listed subjects that the authors observed would be particularly suitable for CLIL such as economics, mathematics, geography, and art. They also suggested activities that could be applied to teaching various subjects from activities for activating to activities for assessment, review, and feedback. Mehisto et al. (2008) also outlined activities teachers could adopt during the first week of teaching at primary, secondary, and vocational schools extensively. They then provided further guidelines for implementing CLIL courses with concrete activities as well as rubrics for assessment. Nikula (2015) focused on chemistry and physics and found that pre-tasks and post-tasks were more instrumental in teaching content specific concepts and terminology compared with hands-on tasks. She observed that "it seems that the potential exists for adding more explicit language focus in CLIL," but at the same time notified that "[a]wareness-raising of the interconnectedness between language and content matters" was necessary (p. 25). Massler, Stotz, and Queisser (2014) proposed an assessment model for primary school students in CLIL courses, consisting of three dimensions of subject-specific themes, subject-specific skills and competences, and communicative competences in the foreign language (p. 142).

Research in Europe has thus demonstrated that CLIL is widespread and that it has been proved to be popular and effective. However, in Japan, where the current study took place, CLIL is still at its initial stage. English is learned as a foreign language (EFL) in Japan, and opportunities for communicating in English are limited outside of the classroom (Seargeant, 2009, p. 60). The importance of communicative language teaching (CLT) has been emphasized in English classrooms (Abe, 2013) as well as the importance of task-based language teaching (TBLT) (e.g., Bygate, 2016). However, as Brown (2015) observed, CLIL is "relatively new in Japan but growing in popularity, particularly in English language-learning contexts" (Brown, 2015, p. 1). A growing number of publications on CLIL underscores this trend. Based on a keyword search on CiNii (<https://ci.nii.ac.jp/>), an index of publications in Japan, there were only eight papers published with CLIL in the title in 2012. There was a steady growth

in the number of publications between 2013 (27 papers) and 2016 (63 papers), and the number has been around the same since then. There is only a limited number of books available on CLIL in Japanese. For instance, Watabe, Ikeda, and Izumi (2011) provided an overview of CLIL approach at their university, followed by sequels with more concrete suggestions and materials (Izumi, Ikeda, & Watabe, 2012; 2016). As the overall scarcity of literature implies, CLIL still has a lot of room to be investigated in Japanese contexts, and activities and tasks in classrooms have not been fully illustrated or analyzed.

The present paper focuses on a possible communicative task in a university CLIL course. The present study took place in CLIL English courses at a university in Japan. According to Ikeda, CLIL can be classified into two types “strong/hard CLIL” and “weak/soft CLIL.” The former is content-oriented, which is the typical type of CLIL in Europe (p. 32). On the other hand, the latter is language-oriented, “[t]aught by trained CLIL language teachers to help learners develop their target language competency as a primary aim and their subject/theme/topic knowledge as a secondary aim” (p. 32). The context of the present study fell under the second category as the courses were taught by a non-content language instructor. The courses could be called as content-based language teaching (CBT) as well, but the label CLIL is used reflecting the position that they can be “considered as two labels for the same reality” (Cenoz, 2015, p. 12). There were assigned textbooks *Contemporary Topics* consisting of four textbooks (in the order of the difficulty level: Clement & Lennox, 2009; Solórzano & Frazier, 2009; Kisslinger, 2009; Beglar & Murray, 2016). Various topics of today’s society are covered in these textbooks including topics from psychology, sociology, communication, business, technology, biology, media, and agriculture. One of the unit topics was on education, more specifically on education for children. After finishing the assigned unit mainly consisting of listening, vocabulary, and discussion, it was decided to include a task or activity that would further help students learn and think about the topic in English.

Since the unit was on education for children, the task which was adopted was to have university students develop CLIL mathematics or science lesson plans for elementary school students. This was because the task would enable the university students to apply the concepts they had learned in the unit to a real-life example. In addition, they had been elementary school students until several years before so that they would be able to recall elementary school English classes well. Some students also had experience teaching elementary school students at cram schools as their part-time job. The term “elementary school” rather than “primary school” is used from here to reflect the Japanese context. As a task is defined as “a workplan that requires learners to process language pragmatically in order to achieve an outcome that can be evaluated in terms of whether the correct or appropriate propositional content has been conveyed” (Ellis, 2003, p. 16), the term “task” rather than “activity” is adopted here.

In other words, the research question of the present study was as follows: does making mathematics or science CLIL lesson plans for elementary school students function as an effective communicative task for university students who are themselves taking CLIL based English courses? This study adopted the position of Mehisto et al. (2008) and defined the 4Cs of CLIL as content, communication, cognition, and community.

## Methodology

### Participants

In total, 77 first-year humanities Japanese university students took part in this study. The students were from four English communication classes which were based on CBI/ CLIL syllabi as mentioned above. Three classes were upper intermediate level (57 students), and one class was intermediate level (20 students). The main unit participants were working on was Unit 5 “How we each learn best” from *Contemporary Topics 2* (Kisslinger, 2009, pp. 42-51), which dealt with multiple intelligences theory and how people, especially young children could benefit from different ways of learning and assessment. Participants generally spent two class periods (180 minutes) on this unit. It should be noted that some classes had started a different unit due to the requirement of the assigned syllabus, so the timing of the implementation of the task slightly differed among the classes. The medium of instruction was English although the instructor did not prohibit participants from switching to Japanese when they tried to discuss complicated concepts in groups. Participants gave approval for the researcher to use their data anonymously for research purposes.

### Materials

The name of the task was “teaching kids in a fun and creative way.” Two types of materials were prepared for this study: an example and a worksheet. The example was for having participants obtain a general idea of what the instructor expected them to do. It was also for having them overview a typical structure of a lesson plan because it was the first time for most of them to develop a lesson plan all by themselves. As the example, an episode from a YouTube edutainment series *Wonder Quest* (Maker Studio, 2015) was chosen. The series was created by a popular YouTuber stampylonghead (more than 9 million subscribers as of May, 2019) in collaboration with Disney’s Maker Studio. The first season consisted of 12 episodes, and an episode was uploaded on YouTube once a week from April 25, 2015 to July 11, 2015. It covered topics such as division, fraction, photosynthesis, water cycle, and planets. A part of Episode 2, which was on the solar system, was selected as the example material. This topic was chosen because it was different from the topics participants had to work on so that it would not interfere with their ideas. The video was used solely for academic purposes.

Along with the video, a short lesson plan based on the episode was also prepared. It briefly outlined a lesson plan of teaching the names and order of the planets of the solar system to third year students by having them use small balls as models of the planets. In addition, a blank worksheet was prepared which only had an instruction and headings. The instruction said “suppose you need to teach math or science to Japanese elementary school students in English,” and the headings were “your topic,” “aim,” “materials,” and “lesson plan (for X students, Y year).”

### Procedure

First of all, participants watched the edutainment video mentioned above as an example. They then went over the example lesson plan with the instructor. The

instructor told them that examples, experiments, and pair or group work could be effective ways of teaching without giving them any further examples so as not to influence their ideas. In addition, participants learned that imperatives as in “introduce today’s topic” could be used on their lesson plan. The worksheet was then distributed to participants who had been divided into groups of three or four. A topic was randomly assigned to each group so that there would not be overlap of topics within the same class. The topics were multiplication and division, fraction, the water cycle, magnet, solid, liquid, and gas, photosynthesis, and gravity, chosen partly in reference to the *Wonder Quest* series. Participants then had about 45 minutes to prepare a lesson plan in their group. Finally, they did a short demonstration of their lesson plan to the class at the end of the class or at the beginning of the next class. The instructor could only give each group several minutes for the demonstration due to the restriction of the syllabi, but participants were encouraged to “teach” their classmates as if they were elementary school students.

## Results and Analysis

The data was analyzed from three perspectives: contents, linguistic features, and others. For this study, a qualitative approach was mainly adopted in order to analyze the features of each lesson plan in detail.

### Contents

In total, 24 lesson plans were developed. Four groups from different classes worked on the same topic except for the topics of gravity and fraction. Since the instructor emphasized “creative” and “fun” before participants began the task, none of the groups adopted a straightforward lecture. Instead, they were able to develop various types of creative activities in English. The activities they came up with could be categorized into three types: examples, experiments, and games. Some groups combined more than two activities of different categories, but the classification was based on the main activity in their lesson plan. Ten groups (41.7%) used examples as their main activity, 11 groups (45.8%) used experiments, and 3 groups (12.5%) used games.

The first category, examples, could further be divided into two categories: explanation types and experience-based types. Five lesson plans had explanation type examples (two on the water cycle, one on gravity, two on photosynthesis.) For instance, one group decided to explain photosynthesis by using popular anime series *Pokémon*. Specifically, they chose some grass type characters that elementary school students were likely to be familiar with such as bulbasaur, chikorita, and treecko. They then made a story of photosynthesis by using those characters. The idea the other photosynthesis group suggested was similar but did not involve anime characters. Two groups which worked on the water cycle also made a story of the water cycle starting from rain. One group followed the story by a song on the water cycle. Finally, one group decided to explain gravity through real-life examples such as dropping the eraser on the ground. They decided to make the target sixth year students, and they included technical terminology such as centrifugal force as well.

Five groups adopted experience-based type examples in their lesson plan, that is, asking elementary school students to try out the examples in groups either by using

actual materials or by drawing the objects. One fraction group adopted this type of activity, and all the four groups on multiplication and division developed an activity of this category. For example, three groups decided to use buying apples at a grocery store as an example to teach multiplication and division for second year students. One of them wrote that they would set up mock grocery stores and ask students to go shopping for apples for their family members. The fourth multiplication and division group decided to use cats and boxes instead, probably reflecting their instructor's obsession with her cat. Doing a party with pizza and cake was the idea of the group which wrote a lesson plan on fraction.

The second category was experiments. Five lesson plans included a larger-scale experiment in front of the class, and six lesson plans included an experiment elementary school students could carry out in groups or individually. Two photosynthesis groups, two water cycle groups, and one gravity group adopted a larger-scale experiment. For teaching the water cycle, both groups suggested they build a model of the water cycle consisting of a small mountain and a river in a glass box. There should be an experiment kit like this, but explaining the whole process in English turned out to be challenging for the participants. To teach gravity, one group wrote that they would bring in different types of weights and feathers to demonstrate the mechanism and concepts of gravity to sixth year students. For teaching photosynthesis, one group used a classical experiment of using a leaf, sunlight, and iodine solution. On the other hand, the other photosynthesis group decided to create a short magic show where a "magical box" converted things into energy.

Six groups adopted a smaller experiment students could try in groups or independently. Three experiments were on magnet, and the other three were on solid, liquid, and gas. The magnet groups all decided to provide second year students with a magnet and to have them find out what stuck to it in groups at school. They came up with a list of unexpected things that would stick to magnet, for example, some colors of crayon. For the topic of solid, liquid, and gas, two groups wrote they would first prepare ice and let students melt them into water on their palm safely. They would then prepare kettles, portable stoves, and a piece of black paper (kept in a safe distance) so that students could observe water transforming into steam in groups. One of the groups added dry ice to the materials list in order to demonstrate that solid could transform directly into gas. The third group wrote that they would bring students outside to the school ground instead and let them observe what would happen to ice under the sunlight.

The third category was games (one on magnet, one on fraction, one on solid, liquid, and gas). To teach how magnets work to second year students, one group suggested a game in which students would be divided into "S" and "N" and would be asked to find someone who they could "stick" to by walking around the classroom. Jigsaw puzzles were utilized as a game to teach fraction to fourth year students in detail along with words such as "denominator" and "numerator" by a different group. The third group developed a game on solid, liquid, and gas. In this game for third-year students, students would respond to their teacher's command by moving around the classroom. Students needed to stay as close together as possible and shout "ice" when the teacher said "solid." They needed to form a circle by holding hands together and shout "water" when the teacher said "liquid." They then had to spread out as much as possible and shout "steam" when the teacher said "gas."

As the examples have illustrated, first year university students were able to devise fun and creative activities suitable for the topic and the target audience in English. They were also able to describe the activity in an explicit, clear way.

### **Linguistic Features**

This section describes linguistic features of the lesson plans in order to analyze what linguistic aspects the university students could practice through this task of developing CLIL lesson plans for elementary school students. As described above, the use of imperatives was mentioned when the instructor went over an example lesson plan as a class, but that was the only linguistic instruction given specifically for this task. It should be noted, however, that the university students also had exposure to related expressions and vocabulary through the textbook unit before the task. Expressions they produced were of two types: expressions used to describe the activity and expressions used as instructions to elementary school students.

For the first category, not only imperative sentences but also sentences with causative verbs (e.g., “Make them draw the picture of water cycle.”) were often observed in the lesson plans. Imperative sentences were primarily used either as instructions (e.g., “Explain the relationship.” “Ask a question.” “Show experiment.” “Ask the result.”) or description of the processes (“Set the mountain in a clear box.” “Boil the water in the kettle in front of the black paper.” “Drop iodine solution”). In addition, a variety of mathematics and science related vocabulary was observed including evaporation, nutrition, oxygen, formation, numerator, denominator, air resistance, starch, and soil.

For the second category, the university students often included questions in their lesson plans to engage elementary school students as in “Do you know where rain goes to?” “How many cats are there?” “Why can you stand on the ground?” “Have you ever collected iron sands?” “Do you often put ice into juice?” They also used “you” and “we” as subjects rather than “I” as in “You can see white gas,” “You buy three boxes,” “We’re going to stick things using magnet.” As the examples have shown, questions and instructions tended to be in simple, terse expressions. In addition, the university students used technical terminology mainly for fifth and sixth year students. For example, “Photosynthesis is essential to support life,” “This green is chloroplast,” and “On the earth, gravitation is stronger than centrifugal force.” They chose different words to explain the same concepts depending on their target audience. For example, one group chose first-year students as the target audience of their lesson plan on the water cycle, and the group only used words such as “sea,” “cloud,” and “rain.” On the other hand, another water cycle group chose fifth-year students as their target audience included more technical words such as “evaporation” and “water vapor.” This may indicate that they were able to adjust the complexity of the instructions based on their target audience in English.

One setback was that small grammatical mistakes were observed in the lesson plans. For example, there were mistakes with prepositions (e.g., They want two apples of each. Experiment water and soil. What do you know gravity?), mistakes with articles (e.g., You have easy method. Put leaf under the sun. There is common point.), and mistakes with verb forms (e.g., The air become clean. If the color change, nutrition exist there. We have to sharing with people. What do you think magnets is made of?). These were not mistakes the university students participated in this study regularly

made. This is because the same students wrote sentences of the same structure correctly elsewhere in the lesson plan. The instructor was also aware that the students were able to answer grammatical questions of these types correctly when they tried grammar questions in the textbook before the task. This indicates that the instructor probably should have given them more time to proofread the lesson plans.

## **Others**

In addition to thinking about the contents creatively and describing the ideas appropriately in English, there were some other points that may have contributed to the university students' own learning through the task. First of all, they were allowed to use dictionaries and English websites as reference when they needed to look up words and concepts they were not familiar with. As such, they could train and practice their online research skills in English. Second, they had to discuss the contents of the lesson plan with their group members both in English and (when necessary) in Japanese, so they could train their discussion skills. Third, they had to demonstrate their lesson plans to their classmates in English by using their English speaking and presentation skills. Due to the time constraint, the demonstration had to be around five to six minutes, so they did not have time to do everything on their lesson plan. However, they did a good job presenting their ideas by asking their classmates to pretend to be elementary school students. Finally, they received feedback from their classmates and the instructor in English.

## **Discussion**

This task, despite being a short one, covered the 4Cs of CLIL as much as possible within the given time frame. Content: Although the university students could not actually try out the lesson plans to elementary school students, the topic and task were authentic and appropriate enough for the topic of education for children. Communication: The university students had to produce English expressions suitable for the topic and the target audience. They also had to talk about the topic with their classmates and demonstrate their lesson plans to their classmates. Cognition: They thought about the topic creatively, tested out different ideas, and discussed with group members. Community: They worked cooperatively with classmates in groups. They also thought about people outside of the classroom.

Looking at the task from another perspective, it fulfilled core features of the CLIL methodology according to Mehisto et al. (2008, pp.29-30): multiple focus, safe and enriching learning environment, authenticity, active learning, scaffolding, and co-operation. To be more specific, the task let the university students focus on contents as well as language and also integrate their knowledge of different fields including mathematics, science, and education. The learning environment was relaxed and friendly so that the university students could confidently try out different English expressions and contents, and there was stable access to online materials as well. Even without the actual implementation of the lesson plan, the situation of the task was realistic. The university students could recall their English and other classes in elementary school, and some of them could rely on their teaching experience at a cram school. They could demonstrate the lesson plan in the class by having other classmates pretending to be the target audience. Furthermore, this task let the university students take the lead of the contents as well as language and let them work

closely with their peers. It built onto the knowledge they already had, and encouraged them to think about the contents creatively. Finally, they had to think about communities outside of the university classroom. Feedback from the university students was overall positive, indicating that it was a fun and meaningful task for them.

Accordingly, this task of developing CLIL lesson plans for elementary school students seem to be an effective task for this topic of education for children. This is because it promotes active learning through cooperation, elicits the choice of expressions appropriate for the audience, supports the use of vocabulary and expressions specific to the topic, and encourages creative thinking. However, as irregular grammatical mistakes show, university students tend to focus more on contents compared to linguistic aspects. This could be prevented by providing a set amount of time for proofreading toward the end of the task.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, preparing CLIL lesson plans for younger audience helps university students in CLIL courses think about the topic in a cooperative and creative manner. It also helps them use vocabulary and expressions different from other topics and try to produce expressions suitable for the target audience. In other words, it lets EFL university students effectively integrate contents and language in a friendly environment.

To make it more effective especially in terms of linguistic aspects, instructors can integrate linguistically challenging mathematics or science related activity as a pre-task so that university students will have more linguistic knowledge to express their ideas. It would be ideal to make group discussion fully English so that students will have even more exposure to English during the task. Finally, the task will become more realistic if university students can actually carry out the lesson plan for elementary school students. This will likely to require more preparation and practice time, but if it is realized, the task will become even more meaningful and authentic. As the role of CLIL is likely to become more significant in the near future, further research on CLIL tasks for different subjects and topics will be necessary.

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***L1 and L2 Attitudes and Willingness to Communicate in Taiwanese Middle School Bilingual Program***

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**Abstract**

Early pedagogical experiences can greatly influence students' future motivations for language learning. However, while the majority of Taiwanese language learners are school aged children, most academic research still target university students. Noting such knowledge gap, this study is conducted in an EFL Taiwanese bilingual school environment to (a) assess correlations between attitudes and Willingness to Communicate (WTC) for both Chinese (L1) and English (L2); and (b) examine how students' WTC with peers and adults compare in L1 and L2. For this purpose, a 36 question 4 point-Likert survey was distributed to 58 seventh grade students at a private Elementary and Middle School in Northern Taiwan. Results indicate that attitude has a moderate positive correlation to WTC in L2 but not in L1. Mean values further reveal students are more WTC in task-based activities in L2, which is consistent with findings on how students are more WTC with teachers in L2 but more WTC with peers in L1. Informed with the above, this paper will provide insights to ways educators can better strengthen young learners' WTC in the classroom.

**Keywords:** Willingness to Communicate, Taiwanese bilingual program, L1 WTC, L2 WTC, Language attitude

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## Introduction

The Taiwanese Ministry of Education (MOE) altered their policy in 2005 to mandate English education from grade three (Chang 2008). Acknowledging this change, public schools started increasing their English classes while many private schools began developing bilingual programs. These bilingual programs are interesting because they are relatively new and are just graduating their third and at most, fourth wave of eighth graders that can attest to their effectiveness. Early researchers have already found students to be at grade level for both languages. For instance, a recent study comparing the Mandarin proficiency of 7<sup>th</sup> grade bilingual students with those from monolingual schools suggest similar language abilities which proves current programs to be successful (Hu 2014). However, the studies were focused on passive skills measured by written tests and did not account for communicative competence in either languages which, is critical for practical language use.

Therefore, this study examines students' willingness to communicate (WTC) as it positively correlates to communicative competence. The study participants are seventh grade bilingual students; these young learners are particularly worth examining because they are ripe for WTC strengthening and WTC positively correlates to target language communicative competence (MacIntyre and Charos, 1996; Hashimoto, 2002; Yashima 2002). Empirical support include a survey by MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, and Dovovan (2003) on 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade learners of French that found WTC can increase dramatically between 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> grade but plateaus after 8<sup>th</sup> grade due to growing anxiety. The finding supports studies that have determined anxiety to be one of the most influential factor for L2 WTC in EFL contexts (Peng and Woodrow, 2010; Yashima, 2002; Yashima et al. 2004, Yashima, 2012). Another research of interest investigated the English learning motivation of 2,783 Korean students grades three to twelve in 14 different schools. Researchers found language learning motivation consistently decreased until Grade 9 but increased from Grades 10 to 12 (Kim 2006). Considering motivation is closely related to WTC (MacIntyre et al. 2003), pinpointing changes in student's motivation for WTC in L1 and L2 in various classroom context (with teachers or peers) can also help educators better target student needs to maximize teaching effectiveness.

As teachers can greatly influence the development of learner WTC (Dörnyei, 2009) and quality of learning experience influences young learners' motivation for learning L2 more than university students (You and Dörnyei 2016), by identifying where students have the highest WTC, Taiwanese middle school bilingual programs can identify areas for improvement. Whether in teaching style or curriculum, the goal is to optimize Taiwanese English education to give students a solid foundation to enter high schools and universities anywhere in the world.

## Literature Review

### Immersion/Bilingual Education

Immersion and bilingual education involves instructing students across content areas using two languages; including core subject areas such as math, science, social studies etc. The benefits of these programs are proven as research on early English immersion programs have found that immersion students scored higher than students in more

traditional language programs on oral English proficiency and indices of literacy (Finnemore, 2006; Knell, 2010). Coupled with the fact immersion students excel in L2 compared to their non-immersion peers with no long term or detrimental effects on their L1 ability (Genesee, 1987; Knell, 2010; Swain & Lapkin, 1982), the programs have shown that humans are able to learn multiple languages effectively and without significant language attrition. In addition to language ability alone, immersion students also show lower levels of language anxiety than non-immersion students (Knell and Chi, 2012) which is a huge inhibitor of WTC.

### **Willingness to Communicate in L1**

The concept of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) originates from Gerald M. Phillips' research on reticence (1965). According to Phillips (1984), "People avoid communication because they believe they will lose more by talking than by remaining silent" (Keaten and Kelly, 2000 p. 134). Building upon this idea, McCroskey and Richmond (1980) identified communication apprehension as an important subset of reticence. They defined it as "an individual's level of fear or anxiety with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (p. 78). To measure communication apprehension, McCroskey developed the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension Scale which later evolved to the Willingness To Communicate Scale. In congruently, first models of WTC in L1 were mostly constructed through a hierarchy of antecedents moving from personality traits to communication-related variables (MacIntyre et al, 1996).

### **Willingness to Communicate in L2**

In the past decade, researchers shifted their attention towards L2 WTC after discovering its pedagogical value as a strong predictor for learners' communicative competence (MacIntyre et al. 2003; Yashima, 2002). MacIntyre et al.'s (1998) heuristic pyramid-shaped model is one the first L2 WTC models that constructed factors influencing WTC as a combination of "transient and enduring influences" (p. 546). The six layer triangular shaped model sets up with a foundation of traits factors such as personality and builds up to situational factors such as behavioral intentions. As WTC becomes more prevalent in second language research, more and more studies have explored the topic both quantitatively and qualitatively from both trait and state perspectives (Hashimoto, 2002; Richmond and McCroskey, 1998; Yashima, 2002). Directly relating to pedagogy, however, recent research include studies on internal factors influencing WTC such as student self-efficacy within the classroom (Matsuoka, 2005), different types of learning such as co-operative learning (Fushimo, 2010) and classroom constructs (Peng and Woodrow, 2010). These all lend a deeper understanding of the factors influencing communication.

### **Language learning and motivation**

Gardner and Lambert (1959) were among the first to publish substantial research on learner's motivation. In their theory, integrative motivation was said to be the most powerful factor for learning L2. However, as English became a lingua franca over the past four decades, critics started questioning its practicality regarding EFL learners who have little opportunity to interact with the L2 community (Meierkord, 2012).

This paved way for the current popularized model of language learning motivation called “L2 Motivational Self System” (Dörnyei 2005, 2009). Dörnyei’s outlines three main components: *ideal L2 self*, *ought to self*, and *L2 learning experience*. The ideal L2 self relates to the learners’ own desired self-image using L2; ought to self refers to externally constructed expectations learners feel they should possess to avoid negative outcome (a student would respond to a teacher’s question because they don’t want to lose participation points); finally learning experience relates to the curriculum, methodology, instructor and peer group etc. (Dörnyei 2009). The system explains that motivation stems from the learners’ desire to close the gap between the *ideal self* and *ought to self*. Since its creation, Dörnyei’s model has received much empirical support (Csizér and Lukács 2010; Lamb, 2009; Taguchi, Magid and Papi, 2009). To illustrate, Taguchi et al. (2009) found a positive correlation between the ideal L2 self and integrative motivation in three Asian contexts through a comparative study on the L2 Motivational Self System among Japanese, Chinese, and Iranian learners of English; Csizér and Lukács’ (2010) research on motivational and attitudinal dispositions of German and English bilingual students in Germany also found that student’s *Ideal L2 self* to be a strong predictor for motivated language learning behavior.

## Methodology

### Participants

The participants in this study include 58 bilingual English and Chinese learners from a private Elementary and Middle School in Northern Taiwan. The participants are in seventh grade, age 12- 13 who have been in the bilingual program for more than 5 years. As such, the participants’ oral language proficiency range from intermediate to advance level. However, since most students grew up in monolingual Taiwanese families, their primary language at home is still Chinese. Which, act as an appropriate representation of the middle school bilingual school status quo in Taiwan. Of the 58 students 32 were male, and 26 were female.

### Procedure

Prior collecting data, the researcher contacted the school and obtained permission from the English department to conduct the survey. Two classes were then administered the questionnaires within a week on two different days afterschool at the end of the semester in the 2016- 2017 academic year. Participants filled in the online survey in the classrooms.

Before giving students the survey link, ([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe9ltGJ8B21TXSfhMh03DYoGZJPto-g4ewN68uZ6-kL428-TQ/viewform?usp=sf link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe9ltGJ8B21TXSfhMh03DYoGZJPto-g4ewN68uZ6-kL428-TQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)), students were informed of the objective of the study and were given 20 minutes to fill out the questions. They were told that the survey is anonymous and will not affect their academic assessment. The data collected was then synthesized from Google Forms into SPSS for analysis.

## Instrumentation

The survey was created by synthesizing several measurement tools from previous studies. Students rated how strongly they felt about each item on a four point scale, which differed from the standard five point scale surveys to encourage students to have an opinion. The survey is divided into five parts that will be discussed in the following sections.

*Section 1: Demographics and Self-Rated Communicative Language Competence.* Students were asked their age, years in the bilingual program, and to rate their English and Chinese proficiency levels as well as how often they speak the two languages at school.

*Section 2 & 3: Willingness to Communicate in the Classroom (English Cronbach alpha = 0.8 and Mandarin Cronbach alpha = 0.6 ).<sup>1</sup>* L1 and L2 WTC was measured with a short modified version of Peng and Woodrow's (2010) survey used to study WTC inside and outside of the classroom adapted from MacIntyre et al. (2001). While the original scale measured L2 WTC in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the modified survey focused on speaking and cherry picked items that assessed how often students choose to communicate with their teacher and peers in the indicated language. The items are on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Almost never willing" to "Almost always willing." Higher scores equates to higher WTC in the indicated language.

*Section 4 & 5: Attitude Towards English (English Cronbach alpha = 0.78 and Mandarin Cronbach alpha = .86).* This section was adapted from Yashima's (2002) survey investigating Japanese learner's WTC in an EFL context. 3 items were chosen from his *Motivational Intensity* survey section and 3 items from his *Desire to Learn English* sections in which he adopted from Gardner and Lambert (1972). Two additional questions were added to assess students' attitude towards communicating in the languages.

In terms of differentiating teachers and peers, 3 items were selected from Yashima's (2002) survey to reflect students' WTC with teachers (English *Cronbach alpha* = .63 and Chinese *Cronbach alpha* = .68) and 2 question were selected to reflect students' WTC with peers (English *Cronbach alpha* = .73 and Chinese *Cronbach alpha* = .89)

## Results

The objectives of this study were to (a) assess the correlations between attitude and WTC for both L1 and L2 in an EFL bilingual school environment; and (b) examine how students' WTC with peers and adults compare in L1 and L2; Each of these objectives will be discussed in turn.

## Relationship between attitude and WTC for English and Chinese

Table 1: Results of t-test and Descriptive Statistics for attitudes towards English and Chinese

	Chinese						95% CI for Mean Difference	t	df
	Attitude towards language								
	English			Chinese					
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n			
Attitude	3.12	.411	59	3.32	.57	59	-.385, -.021	2.23*	58
WTC	3.47	.65	59	2.70	.68	59	-.972, -.568	7.62*	58

\*  $p < .05$

T-tests were obtained on summed scores of students' attitude towards Chinese (ACH) and English (AEN) as well as Willingness To Communicate (WTC) with Chinese (WCH) and English (WEN). The findings indicate that both students' attitude towards (p = .030) and WTC (p = 0) with Chinese and English are significantly significant, thus very different and worth exploring.

Comparing mean values, ACH (M = 3.32) and WCH (M = 3.47) are greater than AEN (M = 3.12) and WEN (M=2.7). This suggests students not only feel more positively towards Chinese, but are more willing to communicate in Chinese as well. Nonetheless, Spearman rho correlation tests revealed that while students may have more affinity towards Chinese, their attitude towards Chinese has no statistical significance nor correlation to their WTC in the language.

AEN and WEN ( $r = .58$ ;  $P = .0$ ) on the other hand, revealed a statistically significant moderate correlation relationship. While all 7 survey items relating to AEN showed a significant relationship with students' WEN, there is a stronger, moderate correlation between AEN and WTC for academic related or teacher directed activities such as Q1 "Speaking in a group about your summer vacation in English inside the classroom" ( $r = .55$ ;  $P = 0$ ), followed by Q7 "How willing would you be to act in a play in English inside the classroom" ( $r = .47$ ;  $P = 0$ ); and a weaker correlation between AEN and WEN with non-academic related activities such as Q3 "A stranger enters the room you are in, how willing would you be to have a conversation if he talks to you first in English" ( $r = .273$ ;  $p = .36$ ), followed by Q5 "Talking to a friend in English while waiting in line inside the classroom" ( $r = .289$ ;  $p = .26$ ), and Q6 "playing a game in English, for example Monopoly inside the classroom" ( $r = .35$ ;  $P = 0$ ).

## Adult vs. Peer WTC correlations in English and Chinese

Table 2: Results of Descriptive Statistics for Willingness to Communicate survey questions

	Willingness to Communicate Survey Summary					
	English			Chinese		
	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
1. Speaking in a group about your summer vacation	2.71	.95	59	3.65	.69	59
2. Speaking to your teacher about your homework assignment	2.89	.90	59	3.53	.84	59
3. A stranger enters the room you are in, how willing would you be to have a conversation if he talks to you first	2.58	.97	59	3.46	.84	59
4. You are confused about a task you must complete, how willing are you to ask for instructions or clarification	2.97	.83	59	3.46	.88	59
5. Talking to a friend while waiting in line	2.41	1.0	59	3.64	.74	59
6. Playing a game, for example Monopoly	2.80	1.0	59	3.52	.84	59
7. How willing would you be to act in a play	2.56	.99	59	3.05	1.1	59

T-tests indicated the P value to be  $< .05$  for all combinations of WTC: WTC with Teachers in English (WTCTE), WTC with Teachers in Chinese (WTCTC), WTC with Peers in English (WTCPE), and WTC with Peers in Chinese (WTCPC). Thus, student WTC with peers and adults is significantly different for both languages and within the languages as well. Comparing mean values, students indicated the highest WTC in Chinese but within Chinese, more so with peers ( $M = 3.64$ ) than teachers ( $M = 3.51$ ). This is opposite from English WTC where the mean values indicate that students are more WTC with teachers (3.08) than peers 2.6). Furthermore, AEN also has a higher statistical significant correlation ( $P=0$ ) with teachers ( $r=0.61$ ) over peers ( $r = .49$ ). With ACH, there is only statistically significant ( $p=0$ ) weak correlation between ACH and WTCTC ( $r = .38$ ).

An examination of independent survey items provide further insight on how students are more willing to speak to their teachers than peers in English and more willing to speak to their peers than teachers in Chinese. This is evident in how the two highest mean values for English WTC are for Q4 “You are confused about a task you must complete, how willing are you to ask for instructions or clarification in English inside the classroom” ( $M = 2.97$ ) followed by Q2 “Speaking to your teacher about your homework assignment” ( $M=2.89$ ). The lowest mean value is for the question “Talking to a friend in English while waiting in line inside the classroom” (2.41) indicating students are less motivated to use English as their social language even

though they are in a bilingual program. Though, further research needs to be conducted to support and confirm this claim. In terms of Chinese, mean values of survey questions indicate that students are more willing to talk to peers than teachers. In regards to Chinese, the mean value for “Talking in a group about your summer vacation” ( $M=3.65$ ) and “Talking to a friend in Chinese while waiting in line inside the classroom” ( $M= 3.64$ ) were the highest whereas “How willing would you be to act in a play in Chinese inside the classroom” ( $M= 3.065$ ) was the lowest. Notice here, also that the lowest mean value for WTCCH is still higher than the highest mean value for WTCEN.

Finally, there is no statistically significant correlation between students’ self perceived WTC in Chinese evaluated by the question, “what level is your Chinese” and WTCCH and WTC PeersCh. Yet, there is a statistically significant ( $P=0$ ) weak correlation between students’ self-perceived WTC in English evaluated by the question, “what level is your English” and WTCEN ( $r = .39$ ) and WTC PeersEn ( $r = .28$ ).

## Discussion

The purpose of this study is to explore student attitudes towards L1 versus L2 and how it relates to their WTC with teachers and peers in the Taiwanese middle school bilingual program context. The results indicate that while ACH and WCH do not correlate, student attitudes towards L2 do correlate with their WTC in L2. Correlation results also reveal that attitude positively relates to students WTC with teachers and peers in English.

### Relationship between attitude and WTC for English and Chinese

In this study, students were asked a series of questions to gauge their attitude towards Chinese and English. For Chinese (the students’ native language), attitude holds no correlation to their WTC in Chinese. Which, is consistent with past studies claiming native language WTC is grounded in trait or personality related volitional choices (McCroskey and Baer, 1985; McCroskey and Richmond 1990). Which, explains why attitude towards L1 doesn’t hold significance for WTC because attitudes cannot change predispositions. For English, data suggested a moderate statistically significant correlation. This reinforces the idea that for L2, both trait and state variables affect L2 WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1999). State level influences of WTC in regards to L2 most likely account for the moderate correlation as students experience more uncertainty in L2 communication, allowing attitude towards a language to have increased influence on WTC (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

Additionally, the analysis found a higher correlation between AEN and WTC for task-oriented activities such as Q4 “You are confused about a task you must complete, how willing are you to ask for instructions or clarification.” It is plausible that this can be attributed to Taiwanese students’ culture and motivations. Wen and Clément (2003) found that most Chinese students’ are motivated by fitting in and “accomplishing tasks so as to gain approval of the immediate public and, thus, feel emotionally secure” (p.31). In regards to accomplishing tasks, Warden and Lin (2000)’s study also brought to light a new factor of “required motivation”. From surveying 567 Taiwanese language learners, they found that students’ motivation for accomplishing

tasks stem from the fact that it is required more than from integrative purposes or interest. One possible explanation is that Taiwanese students “[orient] towards an appreciation – or at least has imparted some type of conditioning , - that predisposition them to being sensitive to requirements” (Warden and Lin, 2000 p 544). Therefore, in English classrooms, students’ would be more motivated to speak in activity based circumstances where participation is required for their grades and less often, with each other for social purposes. The requirement theory may also explain why in English, students have a higher WTC mean value in regards to responding to a stranger’s question than speaking with peers in line. While this finding may directly contradict McCroskey & Richmond (1990)’s finding that conversational objects and the degree of familiarity impacts students’ WTC; it seems that in Asian contexts, the fact that students are required to respond to a stranger motivates them to do so, more than in situation where they have the choice to engage in conversation with a familiar classmate. Lastly, from the “L2 Motivational Self System” perspective, the higher WTC during task-based activities can be attributed to students possibly not developing a strong *Ideal L2 self* as their motivation is determined by the *Ought to self* to satisfy requirements such as perform during exams (Csizér and Dörnyei, 2005). Finally, to address the fact that the lowest mean value for WCH is still higher than the highest mean value for WEN, this may also be attributed to the fact that Taiwanese learners treat learning English as a required academic subject rather than a tool for social survival or cultural integration (Warden and Lin, 2000).

### **Adult vs. Peer WTC correlations in English and Chinese**

In regards to adult vs. peers WTC, data indicate that Taiwanese bilingual students are more WTC with teachers than peers in English but more WTC with peers than teachers in Chinese. This may be attributed to several reasons. Firstly, each bilingual classroom in the school has three teachers, one of them is American who doesn’t speak Chinese. To communicate with teachers, students have to use English, which coincides with research that found Taiwanese students respond to required motivation. Furthermore, the American teachers may also be more student centric and activity based in their teaching methods thus students are required to speak up. It has been shown that Chinese students are less willing to communicate in public because of their philosophy and culture (Wen and Clement 2003). In the Chinese classroom, Chinese teachers tend to take on an authoritative role, where, “the whole process of learning and education was oriented to the mechanical memorization of ideals of antiquity, principally the Four Books and Five Great Classics” (Pratt, 1992 p. 302). This teaching method is not adopted in the English classroom. As the English teachers treat students more like equals, students’ tendency to communicate with them also increases. For Chinese, it is the opposite, this is evident in the data as well. Since social hierarchy is a lot stronger in Chinese classrooms, students naturally are also more willing to speak to peers than teachers.

Lastly, empirical support on Taiwanese students lacking integrative motivation in L2 learning also informs this study (Warden and Lin, 2000). As students have low L2 WTC with peers, one can deduct they are not trying to assimilate into the L2 language community and thus do not see the value in using the language with peers to practice socializing. Circling back to Dörnyei’s (2005) “L2 Motivational Self System” construct, it is also possible that WTC is not part of students’ *ideal L2 self*. As educators, it is then our duty to facilitate the growth of this form of *ideal L2 self*. One

theorist suggest doing so through stringing the *ought to L2 self* with the *ideal L2 self*, which leverages the learners' sense of obligation that is strong in Chinese communities. Once learners have a "more-internalized instrumentality [that] is closely associated with the ideal L2 self...he or she can imagine a prosperous ideal English self and thus create promotion-based instrumentality (such as being offered a decent job, gaining promotion)" (Kim, 2009, p. 49). In this way, when a learner's L2 learning goals intersects with their life goals, the *ought to L2 self* becomes internalized and transforms to the *ideal L2 self*. In other words, Kim argues for developing students' emotional attachment to their *ought to L2 self*. Emotional attachment is important because just though the *out to L2 self* or out of requirement motivation, learners may cognitively understand why schools require them to develop L2 WTC but lack the emotional drive to want to succeed in it.

## Conclusion

McCroskey and Richmond (1990) modeled WTC to be a construct of both state (situational) and trait (predisposition) variables. In Taiwan where students are greatly influenced by traditional values grounded in Confucianism and submission to authority, this can explain why students in general have higher WTC in Chinese among peers rather than with adults. Naturally, as Csikszentmihalyi and McCormack (1986) have claimed, time spent with teachers can be a very critical opportunity for students to develop positive attitudes toward learning. This is most likely why English classroom teachers are able to alter students' tendencies to speak more to teachers than they do to peers in the classroom. However it seems as though in English, students still find little motivation and tendencies to speak to each other. Nonetheless, though students are taught using different methods in English and Mandarin, students do not seem to reject the more traditional, teacher centric way of learning because they still scored high in both their attitude and language proficiency in Mandarin. Yet, this may also be due to the fact that Chinese is their native language since students' attitude towards Chinese doesn't really affect their WTC nor attitude.

Nonetheless, evidence that Taiwanese learners have low L2 integrative motivation is worth noting - as seen in how they have low L2 WTC with peers - because most EFL teaching materials are created based on Western studies that place integrative motivation in primary importance. Many current English lessons are based upon supposed real life situations such as conversing with friends, going to the zoo, or navigating an airport that lends less significance to Taiwanese language learners. In future curriculum planning, teachers may have to rethink their motivational stimulants to incorporate L2 WTC into students' *ideal L2 self*. One method may be to use materials that portray students as effective L2 users in action and not native speakers (which they will realistically never become) or as tourists. Doing so should help strengthen learners' *ideal L2 self*. Knowing Taiwanese students respond to "required" and instrumental motivation, educators can also leverage activities that put student in circumstances where they required to practice speaking such as facilitating discussions or assigning points to participation. Educators can also motivate students more effectively by emphasizing the relationship between WTC and future requirements such as attending international conferences or networking in English if they are to work with international counterparts. Some activities include setting up face time meetings with sister schools abroad, having students design English tours of

their city, or even assigning interview projects where they have to find a foreign professional to interview.

Finally, to further investigate students' attitudes and motivations for WTC, more qualitative research needs to be conducted on young learners' *ideal L2 self*. It would also be interesting to evaluate the differences between Chinese and English language teachers in the classroom as well as exactly how and why students have the responses they indicated on the survey. Finally, researchers can also explore methods teachers are currently using to employ meaningful learning in the Taiwanese context as well as how students feel about the various methods across content areas/language.

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## Appendix A: Survey

### Willingness to Communicate in Bilingual (Inside Classroom)

#### Background information

This section of the survey serves to give us knowledge on your demographics background, please select the appropriate answer.

1. **1. What is your gender**  
*Mark only one oval.*
  - ☐ Male
  - ☐ Female
2. **2. What level is your Chinese?**  
*Mark only one oval.*
  - ☐ Beginner
  - ☐ Option 2
3. **2. What level is your Chinese?**  
*Mark only one oval.*
  - ☐ Beginner
  - ☐ Option 2
4. **When did you enter the bilingual program?**  
*Mark only one oval.*
  - ☐ First grade
  - ☐ Second grade
  - ☐ Third grade
  - ☐ Fourth grade
  - ☐ Fifth grade
5. **How often do you speak English at school**  
*Mark only one oval.*
  - ☐ Never
  - ☐ Rarely
  - ☐ Sometimes
  - ☐ Often
  - ☐ Always
6. **How often do you speak Chinese at school**  
*Mark only one oval.*
  - ☐ Never
  - ☐ Rarely
  - ☐ Sometimes
  - ☐ Often
  - ☐ Always

### Speaking English inside the classroom

This survey is made up of statements about your feelings towards communicating with other people in English. Please choose how often you choose to speak in English in each of the classroom scenarios.

7. **1. Speaking in a group about your summer vacation in English**  
*Mark only one oval.*
  - ☐ Almost never willing
  - ☐ Sometimes willing
  - ☐ Willing half of the time
  - ☐ Usually willing
  - ☐ Almost always willing
8. **2. Speaking to your teacher about your homework assignment in English**  
*Mark only one oval.*
  - ☐ Almost never willing
  - ☐ Sometimes willing
  - ☐ Willing half of the time
  - ☐ Usually willing
  - ☐ Almost always willing
9. **3. A stranger enters the room you are in, how willing would you be to have a conversation if he talks to you first in English**  
*Mark only one oval.*
  - ☐ Almost never willing
  - ☐ Sometimes willing
  - ☐ Willing half of the time
  - ☐ Usually willing
  - ☐ Almost always willing
10. **4. You are confused about a task you must complete, how willing are you to ask for instructions or clarification in English**  
*Mark only one oval.*
  - ☐ Almost never willing
  - ☐ Sometimes willing
  - ☐ Willing half of the time
  - ☐ Usually willing
  - ☐ Almost always willing
11. **5. Talking to a friend while waiting in line in English**  
*Mark only one oval.*
  - ☐ Almost never willing
  - ☐ Sometimes willing
  - ☐ Willing half of the time
  - ☐ Usually willing
  - ☐ Almost always willing

**Speaking Mandarin inside the classroom**

This survey is made up of statements about your feelings towards communicating with other people in Chinese. Please choose how often you choose to speak in Chinese in each of the classroom scenarios.

14. **1. Speaking in a group about your summer vacation in Chinese**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Almost never willing  
☐ Sometimes willing  
☐ Willing half of the time  
☐ Usually willing  
☐ Almost always willing

15. **2. Speaking to your teacher about your homework assignment in Chinese**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Almost never willing  
☐ Sometimes willing  
☐ Willing half of the time  
☐ Usually willing  
☐ Almost always willing

16. **3. A stranger enters the room you are in, how willing would you be to have a conversation if he talks to you first in Chinese**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Almost never willing  
☐ Sometimes willing  
☐ Willing half of the time  
☐ Usually willing  
☐ Almost always willing

17. **4. You are confused about a task you must complete, how willing are you to ask for instructions or clarification in Chinese**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Almost never willing  
☐ Sometimes willing  
☐ Willing half of the time  
☐ Usually willing  
☐ Almost always willing

18. **5. Talking to a friend while waiting in line in Chinese**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Almost never willing  
☐ Sometimes willing  
☐ Willing half of the time  
☐ Usually willing  
☐ Almost always willing

19. **6. Play a game in Chinese, for example Monopoly**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Almost never willing  
☐ Sometimes willing  
☐ Willing half of the time  
☐ Usually willing  
☐ Almost always willing

20. **7. How willing would you be to be an actor in a play in Chinese**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Almost never willing  
☐ Sometimes willing  
☐ Willing half of the time  
☐ Usually willing  
☐ Almost always willing

**English language motivations**

This survey is composed of statements about how you feel towards learning English and English as a language itself. Please read the questions carefully and select the option that best reflects how you feel

21. **1. I enjoy speaking English with my classmates**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

22. **2. I often think about the words and ideas which I learn about in my classes in English**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

23. **3. After I graduate from college, I will continue to study English and try to improve**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

24. **4. If someone needs help with English, I am excited to help them**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

25. **5. During classes in English, I am absorbed in what is taught and concentrate on my studies**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

26. **6. I find my classes in English more interesting than other subjects**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

27. **7. When the teacher asks me a question in English, I try to respond**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

28. **8. I would like the number of classes in English at school increased (adapted)**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

### Chinese language motivations

This survey is composed of statements about how you feel towards learning Chinese and Chinese as a language itself. Please read the questions carefully and select the option that best reflects how you feel

29. **1. I enjoy speaking Chinese with my classmates**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

30. **2. I often think about the words and ideas which I learn about in my classes in Chinese**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

31. **3. After I graduate from college, I will continue to study Chinese and try to improve**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

32. **4. If someone needs help with Chinese, I am excited to help them**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

33. **5. During classes in Chinese, I am absorbed in what is taught and concentrate on my studies**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

34. **6. I find my classes in Chinese more interesting than other subjects**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

35. **7. When the teacher asks me a question in Chinese, I try to respond**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree

36. **8. I would like the number of classes in Chinese at school increased**

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Neither agree or disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree



***Pre-service Teacher Reflections: Embracing Growth and Professional Development***

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The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2019  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The production of reflections has been identified as an efficient means of guiding perspective language teachers to construct meaning about their experiences and professional growth. This virtual talk will present the results of a two-year qualitative interpretive study, which examined pre-service English teachers' reflections as part of their assessment for the completion of their training. The study focuses on two English Language Didactics courses of the program, and involves 46 pre-service secondary school English teachers who had enrolled to a Cypriot pre-service teacher training program in order to be appointed to the public school system at the end of the course. The teachers who participated in the study were provided with guided questions, and were trained in order to develop their reflective skills, and provide evidence of their capabilities and professional growth. The participants were encouraged to use various methods of delivery that could be tied to future instructional goals, such as the use of video, websites, portfolios, journals, posters, and handbooks. The chapter will highlight the contribution of these reflective tools to the teachers' professional development and their preparation to teach. Furthermore, there will be a display of the results of the study, which suggest that the use of a reflective framework can help pre-service English language teachers actively think about their teaching, consider how they can improve, how to attend to their learners' needs, connect theory to practice, and come to the realization of the vital role reflections play in language teaching.

**Keywords:** Pre-service teacher training, reflective framework, English Language teachers, reflective tools

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## Introduction

The increasing interest in professional development in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) (Gerlach, 2018), indicates the need for highly qualified language teachers and pre-service programs that can support practitioners in the process. This certainly can prove to be an enormous challenge depending on the teacher education programs, the contexts and the (future) teachers' professional and personal experiences. The production of reflections has been identified as an efficient means of guiding perspective language teachers, of all contexts, to construct meaning about their experiences and professional growth. Reflective practice can give future language teachers the opportunity to explore the nature of teaching, create opportunities for self-inquiry, and trigger a deeper understanding of their own practice and approaches (Richards & Lockhart, 2009).

This chapter focuses on teachers-in-preparation who participated in a qualitative interpretive study. More specifically, the study focuses on two English Language Didactics courses of the a pre-service teacher training program for potential English language secondary school teacher. The teachers who participated were encouraged to adopt a reflective framework during the program. This process was part of the trainees assessment for the completion of the courses. Trainees were provided with guided questions, and trained in order to develop their reflective skills, and provide evidence of their capabilities and professional growth. The participants were encouraged to use various methods of delivery that could be tied to future instructional goals, such as the use of video, websites, portfolios, journals, posters, and handbooks. This study was conducted on the assumption will be actively involved in what is happening in their practice and how they are evolving as English language teachers through the course. This chapter will concentrate on the following questions:

1. How can a reflective framework be implemented in a teacher education course as a means of trainees' assessment?
2. How can reflective practice be implemented in a pre-service teacher training program effectively and sustainably?
3. What effect can the freedom of choice of delivery have on the quality of reflections?

## Background Review

Teachers' reflections have been put under the magnifying glass, investigating the benefits of a reflective model in foreign language teaching. However, the need for research in this area of teaching is not new. Dewey (1993) has described reflective practice as a 'state of doubt' rather than thinking of a classroom situation. Dewey sees it as an active process, which derives from a problematic issue that needs to be actively tackled. According to Dewey (1993:6) 'reflection is an active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge'. Hatton and Smith (1994) have found that a break from traditional education is needed in order to implement a reflective framework and efficiently focus on good models of teaching. A process Wallace (1998) is in agreement with as he argues that reflective teaching is the chance for teachers to explore their own practice and enrich their professional development.

Considering the benefits of reflective practice and the freedom it gives the teachers, as they remove themselves from impulse and routine behavior when looking closely into their teaching (Farrell, 2003), educators also develop skills of considering the teaching process analytically and objectively (Richards, 2002). Nonetheless, the development of reflective skills has been observed to take place in pre-service training programs, according to the literature. It has been argued that through reflections, trainees become more aware of themselves as future teachers and of the pedagogical context (Lee, 2007). A number of studies have concentrated on how reflections were implemented in pre-service course and the effect of the form of delivery. Kelchtermans (1996) has looked into the use of autobiographical reflections and storytelling. The study showed that these forms of delivery helped contribute to successful coping with vulnerability, meaningful ideas, and presents opportunities to view their experiences from a different perspective. Groom and Maunonen-Eskelinen (2006) underline the importance of portfolios as a tool for teachers to develop the technique to critique their own teaching and learning experience. Maclean and White (2007) made use of video reflections where teachers constructed professional teacher identities focusing on representation, categorization, evaluation, individualization and inclusion. Lee (2007) concentrated on journal writing, where teachers reflect on their own experiences, values and beliefs in order to evaluate what they have learned. Odhiambo (2010) used action research in order to engage pre-service teachers in reflective thinking. Through this process it was found that the majority of the participants favorably perceived action research as a useful way to improve their reflective skills. Studies such as these indicate the importance of systematically reflecting for professional growth and self-development, starting from pre-service teacher training programs (Farrell, 2004). Darling-Hammond (2006) has stated that teachers need to be well equipped with knowledge and skills in order to effectively tackle issues that may occur in the classroom, but to also be proactive in their own learning and enhance their professional growth. Research has shown that because reflective practice has benefits and can help improve teachers' problem-solving skills, there is a need for teacher training programs to develop the skill of reflective thinking in pre-service (Hrevnack, 2011). Karatepe and Yilmaz (2018) argue that teacher education programs have not integrated reflectivity successfully, especially in contexts where reflection is not within the cultural tradition. During practicum, trainees are given the opportunity to sculpt themselves as teachers, and this can be effectively achieved through reflection, and as Van Mannen (1991) suggests, with an order of hierarchically. In this way, teachers-in-preparation become increasingly analytical. Zhu (2011) labeled the levels of reflective hierarchy, suggesting that the first level of reflective thinking was to be considering what teachers actually do in practice, a 'technical rationality'. The second level was reflecting on experience and explaining actions, a 'practical action'. The third level included using personal and others' experiences, a 'critical reflection', and finally, the teacher-in-preparation would 'reflection on reflection' where the teacher would reflect on the way reflections are being displayed and put together.

## **The Context**

The present chapter sheds light on an interesting, yet under-researched context; the pre-service secondary English language teachers based in the Republic of Cyprus. Prospective secondary English language teachers are required to enroll in a pre-service teaching program and obtain a certificate of completion before being

appointed in state schools in the country. The programs are run by the Department of Education of the University of Cyprus and last for a total of one academic year. During this training, teachers-in-preparation are presented with pedagogical issues at the premises of the university in the first semester, and in the second trainees are given the opportunity to teach in real time and receive feedback from their mentors and staff from the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute (The World Bank, 2014). Teachers have been placed on waiting lists and those on the top of the list are invited every year. In 2017, a new system of teacher recruitment was introduced, where prospective teachers would sit exams and would be appointed depending on the score. The Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus intended to adopt this system from then onwards so that the waiting list would eventually phase out. Currently, there is a transitional period between the waiting list system and the new exam-oriented system. For the needs of this chapter, there will be a focus on two modules prospective English language teachers take in order to complete their pre-service teacher training Didactics 1 and Didactics 2. The two modules interconnect and focus on teaching methodologies in English as a Foreign Language (EFL), from a practical scope. More specifically, the two modules provide trainees with a foundation in EFL learning and teaching by encouraging interactive and student-centred approaches. Communicative methodologies, with an emphasis on learner-centred practices, are presented throughout and are the basis for the guided practicum. In order to complete the module Didactics 1, trainees were expected to put together their own reflections of themselves as trainees and teachers.

## **Research Methodology**

In this qualitative study, there was a use of comparative and interpretive analysis in order to examine teacher students' reflection assignments. This present study was based on the theoretical underpinnings of reflective thinking and the delivery of a reflective framework.

In order to conduct the data analysis, qualitative data reduction strategies were applied. This helped identify themes through individual categorization and interpretation (Creswell, 2003). Open codes were also used in order to develop themes deriving from participants' frequently used words and responses. Additionally, the data analysis involved a comparison between trainees of 2017 and trainees of 2018, since the two groups of participants had different delivery requests for the needs of their assignment. As a pre-service teacher educator conducting the study, bias may have occurred in the data collection and analysis. Nonetheless, all pre-service teachers responded to the same questions at different times throughout a two-year period. This assisted the researcher to identify patterns in the meaning of the trainees' reflections and to strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings (Garza & Smith, 2018).

## **The Assignment**

Before presenting the findings of the study, it is essential that the nature of the assignment is presented.

The assignment was presented to the trainees in the 5th week of the first semester (13 weeks per semester). This was done so that trainees had ample time to begin their

reflections and concentrate more on the course and their progress throughout. In the first year the study was conducted, the trainees were not encouraged to deliver their reflections in any specific way, nonetheless, the trainees were provided with five guided questions:

1. What are the most positive aspects to teaching EFL? How have these positive aspects reinforced your decision to go into teaching?
2. If you are currently teaching, what are you doing differently now to when you first started the course? Why is this and how is it working better for you?
3. What would you say are the fundamental principles underpinning your planning at this stage of your life?

In the second year, the reflections assignment changed. Student teachers were encouraged to follow a more creative path of delivery and were given the freedom to choose the way they would display their work. This was done in order to motivate and improve the trainees' reflections. Some ideas were:

1. In the form of a blog or website (wordpress or wixsite)
2. In the form of a handbook (hard copy)
3. In the form of a Poster (digital or hard copy)
4. In the form of a video clip
5. In the form of a portfolio

The requirement for the completion of the assignment were as follows:

Student teachers were to put together their Reflections of themselves trainees and as teachers. The following questions guided them and needed to be answered:

1. What new experiences have helped me develop as a language teacher?
2. Have I developed new professional relationships that I can seek support from?
3. Have I learned about new techniques that I can apply in my classroom. If so, what are they?
4. Have I developed as a teacher?
5. Do I feel confident walking into the classroom and having a successful lesson?
6. Do I know of new techniques to motivate my students?
7. Do I have new techniques of how to assess my students?
8. Do I have new techniques to teach my students Reading, Listening, Writing, and Speaking?
9. Do I feel more confident to be creative in the classroom? If so, how?
10. If I were to label myself as a teacher after training, what would it be?

The trainees were also provided with a Grading Rubric, which was to guide them in their reflections and give them a better understanding of what was expected of them.

## **Findings and Discussion**

In this sections, there will be a presentation of findings from the first and second year of the study separately.

### **1. Year one of Reflections Assignment**

As the data of Year 1 was analysed, three themes emerged: 1) critical reflection, 2) prescriptive reflection and, 3) self-assessment.

Critical reflection was defined by the nature of the question and the content of the trainees' responses. The trainees were invited to focus on their decision-making and their individual stance of language teachers. In order to answer the questions: 'what are the most aspects of teaching EFL? How have these positive aspects reinforced your decision to go into teaching', teachers need to reflect on their initial needs and wants to enter the field of language education. This process would prompt teachers to ask themselves additional questions and compare their past decisions to their current situation and experience. They would also need to estimate and present their knowledge of the progress of their field and their context. This question (and silent subquestion) were answered by all the Year 1 participants of the study, in a similar manner, as seen in the sample extract below:

Trainee 4: 'Nowadays, the most positive aspects of teaching EFL rely mostly on globalization. More specifically, when we talk about globalization, we mean all the areas that include people sharing i.e. investments, multinational companies, commerce, industry, people traveling worldwide for business, pleasure or moving to another country. In Cyprus, all the above are very important aspects when it comes to learning any foreign language. Our public and private schools, here in Cyprus, have become very multicultural as there are students from other countries as well. Moreover, creativity and knowledge sharing increase in communicative media, because there is also the need to reinforce the efforts of learning one or more foreign languages. Thinking about the past, I can recall that the English language was always a 'must'. I do remember that some of the positive aspects that I have mentioned above existed also, even when I grew up and had to decide what I wanted to do with my future. Those aspects enhanced my decision to extend my studies and become a teacher of the English language. I never regretted making this decision, because now I have the ability from the position of the teacher to inspire my students to also want to extend their knowledge in English, but also to make them acknowledge the positive aspects of today and make them want to study English further'.

Trainee 4's response is representative of the participants' reflections to the question posed. The teachers made an effort to display their knowledge of their field, they failed to reflect upon the aspects of teaching EFL and present their own thoughts of why they have become teachers to begin with, and what motivates them to go on. Although critical in-depth reflection was expected, the responses were superficial, as trainees focused on answering the question rather than reflecting upon it.

Data showed that questions concentrating on prescriptive reflection and self-assessment were closer to a reflective framework, although did not go into depth as seen in the sample abstracts below:

Trainee 7: 'I see my work at school from a different point of view. I attended teacher-centred classes as a student, so I followed this same method in my teaching. My lessons were teacher-centred and course-book centred. I thought I was the master in the classroom. In these last weeks, I have changed my lessons into student-centred one, more interactive. I believe that I started being what they call a facilitator or a motivator. I can't say that I always manage to teach as I know now is the best, more

creative way to teach but at least I do my best. I believe I am in the introductory phase of becoming a good educator’.

Trainee 12: ‘My practicum has made me feel more confident as a teacher, and I feel more confident to use what I have learned. Through the program, I manage to learn various aspects of successful teaching and how to apply various methods and activities, how to assess students’ progress and in general the whole experience helped me a lot’.

The trainees were more comfortable reflecting on the connection of their training and teaching, and how they saw themselves develop. They recognized their shortcomings and the fact that they learned new teaching approaches that they were not familiar with before their teacher training. Nonetheless, they still do not go into depth and leave room for more reflection and questioning, i.e. ‘in general the whole experience helped me a lot’, ‘In these last weeks, I have changed my lessons into student-centred ones, more interactive’.

## 2. Year two of Reflections Assignment

In the second year, as mentioned in the Research Methodology section, the assignment changed in that the trainees were encouraged to present their reflections in a variety of ways and were offered ideas on delivery. Also, trainees were provided with 10 guided questions instead of three. This was done to give the trainees the opportunity to reflect on more aspects of their learning and teaching, and to prompt them to reflect in depth. The themes that emerged were the same as in the analysis from the Year 1 data (critical reflection, prescriptive reflection and, self-assessment). Critical reflection in Year 2 of the Reflections assignment was documented to be more in-depth and specific in comparison to Year 1. This could be because the trainees had all chosen more creative outlets to express themselves, and ended up giving into the process. The following sample extract supports this argument:

Trainee 19 (booklet): ‘I have always wanted to evolve as a teacher and I would never want my students to call me boring. Though I remember in earlier years of teaching, I would use the same order of doing things in the classroom. Spelling, homework, new vocabulary, reading, grammar, activities. I would follow the book like it was the Holy Bible! The End! And after a while I could hear my students giving out my instructions before I had even opened my mouth! Scary! I had become predictable’.

The trainee was able to look back and see that changes needed to be made. These comments underline important qualities of a teacher, showing that they are able to take a good look at their teaching and improve it. The teacher had realized that changes were needed before they took the Didactics module, and the reflection is valuable as it could lead the teacher to effective teaching.

Regarding the trainees’ prescriptive reflection, it was largely expanded in their assignment and dominant throughout. The trainees focused mostly on connecting their pre-service training with their past teaching experience.

Trainee 22 (Journal): ‘If predictability may lead to boredom, then something else is needed. The answer came early during the semester: *Creativity*. So obvious, isn’t it? Actually, it is. It’s one of those little forgotten things that once remembered and

applied can turn everything upside down. I had the chance to rethink of the importance of creativity and motivation. The final grade is a motivating factor as well, but it cannot work in an uninterested class. I learned how important it is to for students to be able to express themselves freely, to actively participate, to make and correct mistakes and actually enjoy learning. I realized the importance of modelling motivation and creativity myself before demanding it of my students. Several ideas came up from our pre-service training sessions. What I realized was that motivation and creativity don't just happen because the teacher is motivated and creative. There are also a series of considerations to be taken into account [...]'.

The trainee demonstrates essential elements of language teaching, and the fact that action needs to be taken in order to be effective and meet the students' needs. The trainee shows that they are now able to connect their teaching and techniques to be applied in the classroom as a result of their training. The trainee later elaborates on different strategies that could make a difference in the lesson:

Trainee 22: 'Factors as simple as the seating arrangement, can play a major role to whether your wonderful ideas will actually work or create chaos. Something else that could be taken under consideration is that what seems extremely interesting to you may not be appealing to your students. I have learned that it is important to offer them choices'.

The trainee touches vital issues of language education, however, she does not go into depth as far as strategies are concerned. This could be a matter of self-expression, or the trainee may not be fully aware of the strategies required at this stage.

In their self-assessment reflections, the trainees focused on the transitional period pre- and post training. These reflections displayed a developing self-awareness and all revolved around the same issues, changing from teacher-centred to student-centred teaching approaches. More specifically:

Trainee 30 (video): 'For me, the most crucial experience resulted from transitioning from teacher-centred teaching, to student-centred teaching. Previously, I did not realize the importance of engaging my students in learner-centred and communicative lessons. This is probably explained by the fact that I initially had the idea that when education is teacher-centred, the classroom remains orderly. Students are quiet, and you retain full control of the classroom and its activities. Fortunately, I have significantly developed my understanding of the benefits of learner-centred communicative lessons. Having experienced the learner-centred approach during this course, I now know that students learn important communicative and collaborative skills through group work'.

This segment of the trainee's reflection focuses on the self as the teacher and discusses the factors of growth that has influenced the teaching context. This is a powerful reflection as it conveys self-awareness and the elements of progress. One could assume that the specific individual has realized that critical teaching skills include planning meaningful lessons and activities, varied modes of instructional delivery, and assessment, nonetheless, the trainee has failed to display this in his reflections.

## Conclusion

Pre-service teachers of the present study were influenced by their past experience, background, values and beliefs when conveying their reflections for the needs of their assignment. The Reflections assignment has served to challenge and prompt professional growth in English language teaching in the Cypriot context. The effect of the assignment helped English secondary school trainees redefine their understanding of reflecting and re-evaluate their teaching approaches, and were motivated to do so when they were given the freedom to put their creativity to the test. The means of delivery inspired aspiring state school teachers in their own instruction as well. This process showed reaction, elaboration and contemplation; nonetheless, the majority of the submissions failed to go into depth. However, trainees were able to connect their past experience to the present and became aware of their professional development, which is very positive and beneficial in their practice, and their students.

In conclusion, the present study showed that the course of reflections was a revelation for the aspiring teachers, nonetheless, teachers are in need of motivation and challenge in order to make the attempt to take a good look in the mirror and reflect on their own teaching and professional growth. Furthermore, in a context where teachers are not accustomed to a reflective framework, it is important for them to endure training in this domain and specific guidance in order for reflections to be beneficial.

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***Improving EFL Students Thesaurus-Using Skills: an Action Research at a University***

***This article has been retracted***

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The Asian Conference on Language Learning 2019  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

It stands undisputed that thesauri are a crucial resource for learning English. Apart from high-quality thesauri, efficient thesaurus use requires adequate thesaurus skills from the English learner's part. While research has shown that most learners of English need guidance on how to make full use of thesauri, there has been scant evidence for gallant endeavours to train these thesaurus users because such formal instructions would demand, among other aspects, a thorough understanding of the learner and their unique context in the first place. This paper briefly reports partial findings of an action research project which crystallizes a specific case of EFL students' thesaurus use. The paper thus specifically aims to (i) explore students' perceptions of thesaurus use and (ii) investigate their thesaurus practices in an EFL writing class. As part of a qualitative study, the paper highlights major findings from questionnaires, interviews and thesaurus-using tests with fifty-one university students. It is anticipated that these insights will raise teachers' awareness of the complexity of thesaurus use among EFL students and can point the way to more designing and implementing programs with a view to sharpening their students' thesaurus skills. Further investigation is indubitably warranted.

**Retraction: "Improving EFL Students' Thesaurus-using Skills: An Action Research at a University"**

**December 2, 2019**

It has come to the attention of The International Academic Forum Publications Committee that this article is a duplicate of a previously published article, and that the authorship of the two articles differs.

In view of the duplication of a previously published article, this article has been retracted at the request of author.

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This article has been retracted

## 1. Introduction

Vocabulary plays an important role in learning English. To produce an academic text, learners of English need to master a vocabulary size of some 10,000 word families. Unsurprisingly, EFL students who want to excel in English usually desire to have a fluent command of English lexical items. However, gaining mastery of English vocabulary is amongst greatest difficulties that English language learners normally encounter. When coming across a new English word in an academic text, learners can use several strategies, such as looking up the word in a dictionary, turning to the teacher or peers, divining the meaning of the word from its context (Gu, 2003). Among these strategies, dictionary use and guessing strategies are popularly used.

Like reading, while writing a text in English, EFL learners need to consult a dictionary in order to pick out the words they want. Also, EFL learners refer to a dictionary to replace the words they have used previously in their text. In other words, EFL learners look for English synonyms in a dictionary and/or thesaurus so as to polish their written text. In course of consultation, obviously, EFL learners may face several difficulties (Huang & Eslami, 2013). Therefore, the present study aimed at providing insight into EFL students' thesaurus-using skills by investigating (i) their perceptions of thesaurus use and (ii) their practices of thesaurus use in English writing.

We posed two primary research questions in this study:

- (1) What are students' practices of using a thesaurus when producing an English text?
- (2) What are students' perceptions of thesaurus use in their English writing?

## 2. Review of related literature

### 2.1. English synonyms

Synonymy can be viewed as a very basic concept in English lexicology. The concept formulated from a Greek word '*sunonumon*' is used to refer to a relationship of two or more words or expressions having the same meaning (Phoocharoensil, 2010). In the space of recent years, the study of synonyms has received increasing attention. Then it has come to linguists' attention that there are two major types of synonyms: *strict synonyms* and *loose synonyms*.

The history of research into synonymy divides synonyms into two main types: *strict (absolute) synonyms* and *loose synonyms*. Specifically, two items are considered strict synonyms when they can be used interchangeably in all of their possible contexts of use. Moreover, the substitution of one lexical item for the other must not result in a change in meaning, connotation and formality of what is being said or written. However, the point is strict synonyms are very rare and not actually existent. In regard to *loose synonymy*, it occurs more frequently in a language. When linguists mention synonyms, they refer to varying degrees of loose synonymy, "where we identify not only a significant overlap in meaning between two words, but also some contexts at least where they cannot substitute for each other" (Jackson & Amvela, 2007, p. 94).

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## **2.2. Thesaurus-skills**

### **2.2.1. Definition of thesauri**

Thesauri occupy an irreplaceable position in English teaching and learning. A thesaurus which is a useful resource that “words with similar meanings are grouped together” (Kilgarriff & Yallop, 1999, p. 1). Thesauri can come in many forms such as paper-based and electronic-based (a mobile application or an Internet site). Thesauri can be used to search for appropriate words needed in a writing task in order to avoid repetition and make a text more appealing.

Teachers and learners of English can enjoy the benefits of thesauri in many ways. Thesauri lend students a hand when the teacher is not available. Like dictionaries, thesauri can be “a friend in need” of English language learners. In fact, it has come to our knowledge that human memory is associative and that we retrieve information better by connecting similar concepts. In a theoretical perspective, the learner’s vocabulary size can increase when known synonyms are learnt together. The vocabulary acquisition process would occur more easily for learners with wider vocabularies than for those with limited vocabularies as extended vocabulary knowledge would help accelerate the process (Webb, 2007). Moreover, access to a thesaurus helps learners develop autonomy and take more responsibility for their learning (Huang & Eslami, 2013). In an age of rapid technological advance, lexicography has made big strides the thesaurus-making profession, thereby improving the quality and new kinds of thesauri.

### **2.2.2. Thesaurus-skills**

Nevertheless, unabridged thesauri are not enough. EFL learners need to have the necessary skills to make full use of their thesauri. When looking up synonyms in a thesaurus, learners are confused because some of them can often be substituted effectively one another in some contexts but not always (Webb, 2007). Therefore, the skills EFL learners need to develop involves the ability to distinguish loose synonyms. In Huang & Eslami’s (2013) words, learners “often have difficulty developing an appropriate context for an unfamiliar word” based on a thesaurus (p. 3). According to Phoocharoensil (2010), thesaurus skills are the skills that EFL learners need to possess, or is expected to acquire in handling a thesaurus and tell apart the words it provides. More specifically, in the final stage of the dictionary consultation process, which is understanding lexicographical issues, EFL learners should distinguish English synonyms basing on four criteria (Nesi, 1999).

Connotations are the first criteria. As Finegan (2007) explained, synonyms carry the same referential meaning in referring to a specific concept, their emotive or expressive meanings may differ from each other. Thus, EFL learners need to have the ability to differentiate slight differences in the emotive or expressive meanings of synonyms.

Grammatical patterns are the second factor EFL learners should consider when choosing from a list of synonyms. It is obvious that words that convey a similar meaning do not share the same grammatical patterns (Davies, 2007). Thesaurus user are expected to tell the difference in grammatical patterns of synonyms in order to use them accurately.

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Collocations are the next element for EFL learners to take into account before picking out the right words. As English language is arbitrary, it is hard for EFL learners to decide which words are good or strong collocates that tend to go with the headword (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2003). To improve EFL learners' thesaurus-using skills, they need to observe and take notice of collocational patterns as possible while reading or writing.

Style of formality of context is the last thing to contemplate. Undoubtedly, among synonyms, some have a tendency to occur in a more formal context than the rest. It is awkward to use an informal word to replace for another one in a very formal situation and vice versa. Thornbury (2002) emphasized that regarding register language learners should develop the essential skills to use synonyms accurately in a given context.

### **2.2.3. Benefits of thesaurus-using skills**

In the context of teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), thesaurus skills cannot be underestimated because the learner typically sit international English examinations such as IELTS or TOEFL, which the learner may have to use a wide range of vocabulary and expressions effectively to get high scores. In the long run, EFL learners are likely to experience benefits from thesauri as they work or research in English. Indeed, thesaurus-using skills are an important part of professional reference skills and life-long learning skills.

## **3. Statement of the problem**

Unfortunately, studies have shown that language learners lack these skills and are, thus, struggling with or simply giving up on their thesaurus use. It is true that the thesaurus consultation process is far more complicated, and "no matter how simple and clear it may seem to us, there are people who do not know even the very simplest dictionary conventions" (Tono, 2011, p. 109).

Given the benefits of thesauri and the widespread lack of thesaurus-using skills among language learners, researchers have appealed for integrating thesaurus training into the language learning curriculum. Actual efforts to improve language learners' thesaurus-using skills, nonetheless, have been scant, partly because such formal interventions would require a brave endeavor from language teachers to investigate their content and to design, implement and evaluate their interventions.

From my personal observation over years of teaching at my university, EFL students lack the skills to use thesauri effectively. That is what motivated me to start an action research to improve students' thesaurus-using skills. As part of the project, I investigated my students' perceptions and practices of thesaurus use. The findings of this enquiry have refined my understanding of my situation and informed the subsequent interventions, which, I believe, other teachers would relate to in their efforts to sharpen students' thesaurus-using skills.

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## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Research questions**

This study can be conceptualized as a qualitative case study, in which I explored my EFL students' thesaurus use in terms of their perceptions and practices. To achieve the stated goals, I formulated two research questions as follows:

(1) What are students' practices of using a thesaurus when producing an English text?

(2) What are students' perceptions of thesaurus use in their English writing?

Particularly, the first question dealt with students' thesaurus ownership and using habits, prior instruction and current level of thesaurus-using skills. The second question focused on students' perceptions of the roles of thesaurus use in their learning, difficulties in using thesauri, and the thesaurus-using skills that they needed to develop.

### **4.2. Subjects**

The subjects of this study were 42 students of an EFL writing class that I taught in the second semester of the school year 2018-2019 at my university. They ranged from 20 to 22 years of age and were either in their second or third year, all majoring in economics-related discipline such as general accounting, construction economics, and business administration. To be eligible to enroll in this writing course, the students were required to pass level B1 in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Hence, their general English were some pre-intermediate at the time I carried out this project.

### **4.3. Data collection**

Three data collection instruments were employed: thesaurus-using test, questionnaire and interview. In the first week of the course, I gave the students a test in paragraph writing. The writing topic was a short film review. This topic was adapted from a level B1 test practice book. Students were required to write from 120 to 150 words. In the second week, I asked the students to underline the repeated in their paper, and to try to replace them using their thesauri. These two steps were chosen because they involved and benefit most from thesaurus use. While doing the test, the students were allowed to use any kinds of thesauri they liked but they had to make notes of the similar words or phrases they found by explaining why they chose them in their revised paper. They were also required to jot down the sources of these replaced words. There were no time limits on the test in order that the students would do it at their own pace.

Data on students' perceptions and habits of thesaurus use were collected via a questionnaire delivered to the students after they completed the writing test. In the first section, I asked students about their thesaurus-using habits and ownership. Part 2 discovered whether or not students had ever been taught how to use a thesaurus before. In the last part, students expressed their opinions on the roles of thesauri in their English learning as well as the difficulties they had when consulting thesauri. The students answered the questionnaire in Vietnamese at home and handed it in on the following session of the course. I explained to the students how to answer the questionnaire in a slide in class and answered all the questions arose.

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The interview question was based on the analysis of the test and questionnaire data so that I could concentrate on the areas that were not satisfactorily investigated in these two instruments. The interviewees were selected by purposeful sampling. I chose two students performing best and two doing worst on the thesaurus-using test to delve into the difference between good and poor thesaurus users. The last interviewee was a student whose answers in the questionnaire were particularly informative. All the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese and were audio-recorded with the permission of the subjects.

#### **4.4. Data analysis**

Students' notes on the thesaurus-using test were stored in a Microsoft Office Excel file where I counted, classified the look-up items and examined the results. As for the questionnaire data, I deployed SPSS to process Likert-scale answers. Answers from open-ended questions were first entered into an Excel file, and then I printed the sheets out to analyze the data using my pencils and color markers. All the interviews were transcribed in a Microsoft Office Word table and later printed out so that I could analyze the data based on the research questions. Excerpts from the questionnaires and interviews that illustrated the themes were then translated into English.

### **5. Major findings**

#### **5.1. Students' practices of using thesauri**

Analysis of the questionnaire data pointed out that more than half of the students used more than one thesaurus (56.5%). Online thesauri were the most popular, being used by 77.3% of the subjects. Mobile thesaurus applications and paper ranked second and third at 36.8% and 16.2% respectively.

The most popular names were "Thesaurus.com", "Synonymy.com" and "Thesaurus" (a smartphone application). In the interviews, most students said that they were aware of the limitation of a mobile application like Thesaurus, but still used it because it was "free", "quick", "easy" to use and, as it was in their apps store, "quite handy". As for paper thesauri, some students said that they were "more informative and reliable", but did not use them very often because they were "thick", "time-consuming", "heavy", and "difficult to use".

Concerning frequency of use, online thesauri scored highest, with 78.5% of the subjects reported that they used "every time they needed", closely followed by mobile thesaurus applications, with 61.7% at the same frequency. Despite being owned by nearly half of the students, paper thesauri were actually used much less often, with a modest 21.6% being touched.

Most students reported that they had known about thesauri for 1 to 2 years thanks to their previous teachers. However, more than half of the subjects (58.6%) had never heard about how to use a thesaurus. The others (41.4%) stated that they had been taught about using thesauri. Answers to the open-ended questions, which asked them to describe what they had learned, revealed that they had a very limited understanding of thesaurus-using skills. Some even wrote that "learning vocabulary" and "conjugating tenses" were the 'skills' they had been taught, which were not only too general but also irrelevant.

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Means analysis of the students' self-assessment of their thesaurus-using skills showed that they thought they could use a thesaurus quite well ( $M=5.93$  on a 10-point scale). However, data from the thesaurus-using test painted a less positive picture. Many students appeared to have picked up the wrong words more often. More specifically, there were 189 pairs of synonyms that were identified by the students, but only 76 of them (40.2%) were correct. For examples, it was very strange when one student wrote "He flushed the letter down the lavatory." to avoid repeating the word "toilet". One more interesting example is the case of the phrase "be able", one student used "be capable" in order to mean "having the ability to do something". He wrote "\*Ross is capable to fly Concorde". Obviously, these two words differ in grammatical patterns. Students had problems in distinguishing synonyms, especially when the segments they wanted to look up were an idiomatic phrase or had multiple parts of speech. Other problems included choosing the wrong collocations, failing to find more about connotations and apply meanings into context. In addition to the above issues, students also failed to replace personal pronouns, which was typically necessary and demanded more advanced skills in using thesauri.

## 5.2. Students' perceptions of thesaurus use

Most students viewed thesaurus use a vital strategy, with 78.8% wanting to use a thesaurus when they needed to avoid repetition and make their paper more attractive. Understandably, they reported highly positive opinions about the role of thesauri in learning English. On a five-point Likert scale, Items 3.2. (i.e. "Thesauri are useful in learning English") and 3.4 (i.e. "I want to learn how to use thesauri effectively"), for examples, scored a mean of 4.45 and 4.27 respectively (with 5.00 being "Absolutely true").

However, in the questionnaires, they shared a number of difficulties in using thesauri, particularly when they had to choose the word with the correct emotive meaning (Item 3.9,  $M = 3.55$ ). On his experience in using thesauri in general and when doing the thesaurus-using test in particular, one interview later confirmed that:

*"The hardest thing is choosing a suitable word with the same emotive meaning [that I wanted to convey]. I have to make further consultation [in another dictionary] and read through all the meanings and examples to decide. And that's tiring."* (S19)

He added that if he could find a good result, he would sometimes feel "mad", "exhausted" and want to "give it up for good".

Another student talked about her difficulty in identifying collocations of similar words. She found the consultation process "challenging and exhausting".

*"I found that synonyms co-occur with different words, especially in an idiom. For instance, it is very good to write "many happy returns of the day". But I cannot use the word "glad" in this case, even though "happy" and "glad" are synonyms. [It seems to me that] I need to develop advanced skills to deal with this problem."* (S33)

## 6. Discussion

Findings of students' thesaurus-using practices show that technology-based thesauri such as Internet site and mobile applications have taken an increasingly significant share of the dictionary market previously dominated by their paper counterparts. This is an understandable development, given the fact that technological advances have made thesauri cheaper, faster, and more accessible than ever. This shift clearly has

This article has been retracted

impacts on the specification of thesaurus-using skills students need to master, with some new skills added to the repertoire while others now becoming obsolete (Lew, 2013). Nonetheless, many of the new skills are either too trivial or too advanced for the lay user, which means the core thesauri skills are likely to remain the same. Thus, formal instructions on thesaurus-using skills should keep the concentration on the fundamental skills, particularly criteria 2 and 4 in Nesi's (1999) classification, while introducing new skills to students.

In another angle, the study found that the majority of EFL learners had never had any training on how to use thesauri accurately and effectively, which may explain the mistakes they made in the thesaurus-using test and the difficulties they shared in the questionnaires and interviews. In fact, the urgent need for formal instructions on thesaurus-using skills is evident, as it has been widely recommended in the growing body of literature.

Knowledge of students' perceptions and practices of thesaurus use is part of the broader understanding of the "thesaurus culture" of an educational context (Hartmann & James, 1998). This concept is powerful on both theoretical and practical implications because it pieces together the findings of thesaurus use research, including those of this study, to offer a multifaceted understanding of the immediate context, which enables tailored interventions to hone thesaurus-using skills. As the concept embraces a variety of issues, it follows that efforts to teach EFL learners thesaurus-using skills should be accompanied and reinforced by improvements in other aspects of the thesaurus culture, particularly teachers' and students' awareness of the roles of thesauri in English teaching and learning. In this way, these interventions will benefit from and, simultaneously, foster a thesaurus-friendly learning environment.

## 7. Conclusion

Thesauri have always been and will even still be an important learning resource. This study has extended a case-specific, richly descriptive understanding of how these reference works were being employed and perceived by a group of EFL learners in a higher education setting. Among the main themes of the findings were the prevalence of mobile and online thesauri over their traditional print counterparts, the true need for formal, evidence-based interventions to boost students' thesaurus-using skills, and, from a broader dimension, the prospects of nurturing a thesaurus-friendly learning environment.

The insights and discussions presented so far are undoubtedly limited to the peculiarities of my research context. Hence, more comprehensive studies should look at other settings to gain a more general knowledge of EFL learners' thesaurus-using skills. In a different vein, teachers might find the ideas in this paper useful for their efforts to understand students' thesaurus use in their educational contexts, and accordingly, to boost their students' thesaurus-using skills.

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## ***Design Thinking and Creative Group Engagement in the EFL Classroom***

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### **Abstract**

Research has questioned the ability of our educational systems to prepare students for the increasingly uncertain and complex nature of the modern world. The need to rapidly predict trends, and find solutions to complex problems has increased the importance of empathy, creativity, cognitive flexibility and critical thinking in the workplace. In order to prepare students for the challenges they will face, fostering these 21st century skills should be essential goals for educators. In this presentation, the two authors looked at how these skills can be developed in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom through group-projects based on Design Thinking (DT). DT is an approach that focuses on designing solutions based on an empathetic understanding of end-users. In theory at least, DT courses provide dynamic activities that engage creative and critical thinking skills, and help students develop empathy and cognitive flexibility to help them succeed in the modern working environment. In order to critically analyse the potential for DT as a framework for structuring language lessons we described a DT-based EFL course in a Japanese university. The course consists of two types of lessons: 1) group activities and projects based on DT that stimulate student creativity; and, 2) an academic writing component using the creativity input as a basis for reflection and analysis. Attendees at the presentation left with theoretical insights into the impact of DT on student engagement and practical suggestions for implementing DT in language lessons.

**Keywords:** Design Thinking, creativity, English as a Foreign Language, Japanese universities

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## Introduction

The authors, Tim (T) and Neil (N) shared teaching an eight-week university EFL class called ‘Academic Topics and Tasks’ from April to June 2018. Tim taught the class of 42 students in a two-hour lesson on Tuesday and Neil on a Friday. The goal of Tim’s lessons was for the students to work in small teams to create a ‘creativity test’. In order to make this test Tim taught them to go through the various stages of ‘Design Thinking’ (DT). Neil, on the other hand, taught academic writing to the students and used their experiences in the creativity lessons as a focus for the topics of two short academic reports (each were about 800 words in length). In order to work effectively together, Tim and Neil decided to make this joint course a research project and collected various kinds of data before, during and after the course was taught. Below are representative extracts from the kinds of conversations that they had during the making of the course and afterwards when they were analysing the data and working on the research project.

### Creativity is a continuum

N: We have to share this course on academic topics and tasks. Do you have any particular focus?

T: I’ve been making materials based on DT and creativity for a while. Perhaps we could try them out?

N: Brilliant. Maybe you could do the DT and creativity materials on Tuesday and I could do the academic reflection bit on Friday? I know creativity is important in the workplace. There is a World Economic Forum report (2016) where senior business executives rank creativity in the top three qualities that workers need for knowledge-based economies. And I know it’s important in education movements such as ‘21st Century Skills’ (Kaufman, 2013) and ‘Deep learning’ (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014) where the so-called ‘4Cs’ all include creativity as a key component. But I have been wondering why *you* are so keen on creativity.

T: Yes, all that is true but as well as the knowledge economy, the creative economy is growing rapidly as well. The global market for creative goods and services has increased substantially between 2002 and 2015, from \$208 billion to \$509 billion annually. Furthermore, the development of the creative economy has also been a driver for knowledge transfer and cultural inclusivity (UNCTAD, 2018).

N: OK I see. I guess it’s not just creativity, but also other qualities such as empathy, cognitive flexibility and critical thinking that have become essential in the workplace (OECD, 2017; World Bank, 2019; World Economic Forum, 2016). So, as teachers we have to learn how to develop training programs that foster these qualities and help our students get on in life.

T: I think teaching about creativity can be an approach to teach all of these skills. Creative ideas can be practical like new manufacturing or building techniques; expressive, like poems or songs; or analytical, like scientific or literary theories. However, to be creative these contributions must be “new, surprising and valuable” (Boden, 2004) in some way. New and surprising emphasizes the originality of

construction and valuable highlights that the construction must be fit for purpose and valued by a relevant community.

N: But, communities will have different notions of valuable (Baer, 2018), right? For physicians and biologists, a new theory must not only be accurate but also generate replicable results. Whereas in cultural and artistic domains, a dynamic expression of an idea or emotion that is so individualistic it cannot be replicated may be considered creative.

T: Exactly! Although creativity conjures up images of gifted artists or groundbreaking scientific discoveries, it is better conceived as a continuum from everyday insights that solve local problems to those deeper insights that transform the way we all think and live (Amabile, 2018). That's why I like the 4Cs model of creativity that introduces the idea that learning insights and creativity are related (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2017).

N: That's based on a social constructivist model of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning is a dynamic process of knowledge construction and new insights become creative acts in the mind of the learner.

T: Yes, that's 'mini-c' creativity. Mini-c highlights "novel and personally meaningful interpretation of experiences, actions and events" (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2017, p. 72) within the learning process. Mini-c is primarily important as a form of individual growth; however, if these insights are explored and developed, they can lead to 'little-c' creativity. Little-c creativity describes innovations in everyday life that solve localized problems and are considered new and valuable by a local community.

N: So, in an educational context, mini-c and little-c are useful ways to look at how students are learning and how that affects others in the classroom.

T: Yeah, I agree. 'Pro-c' creativity represents a developmental progression beyond little-c that requires professional-level knowledge. Pro-c contributions are valued by a community of experts and so have some wider impact.

N: So, if the research we do on linguistic development and creativity is read and influences the way other teachers and researchers work, then it would be an example of pro-c creativity.

T: I'm glad you're optimistic. But, even if we did reach pro-c creativity, we're still unlikely to reach the heights of 'Big-C' creativity which is when a body of work creates a new field of expertise, or transforms an existing one. Big-C is for the Einsteins, Picassos and Mozarts of this world.

N: But it's interesting that our project on creativity actually spans three different types of creativity from the mini-c of individual learning, to the little-c of group problem solving to, potentially, the pro-c impact of the research itself.

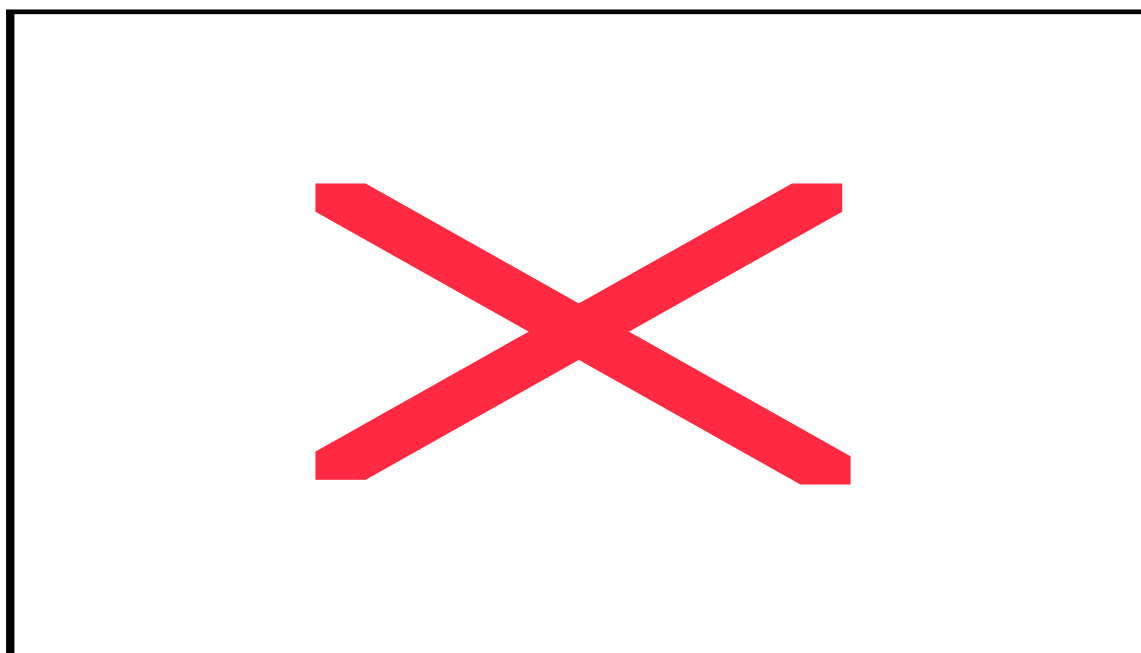


Figure 1. Types of creativity

T: I think one of the questions people might ask is, “What’s creativity got to do with teaching language?” What do you think about this?

N: I believe creativity is a fundamental part of communication. We need social-emotional imagination (Gotlieb, Jahner, Immordino-Yang & Kaufman, 2016) to make sense of each other when we speak and bridge communication gaps (Chappell, 2016). We also use linguistic creativity to entertain each other and make information memorable (Tagg, 2013). For example, when we make puns and jokes, or we use original rhymes or abbreviations as mnemonic tools. So, creativity is a natural component of dialogue. However, creativity in EFL has generally been used artistically such as through drama activities (Dervishaj & Xhillari, 2009), language play (Cook, 2000), and students creating multilingual (Choi, 2016) and multimodal texts (Hafner, 2014).

T: Yeah, I think creativity is also about problem solving too, so project based learning (Beckett & Miller, 2006) involves a lot of creativity too. In our approach students use DT to create something new. So, they have to use language to engage and communicate, use some artistic skill to create something and apply critical thinking to make sure it’s fit for purpose.

### **What is Design Thinking (DT)?**

N: Can you tell me a little bit more about what DT is and how you introduce convergent and divergent approaches?

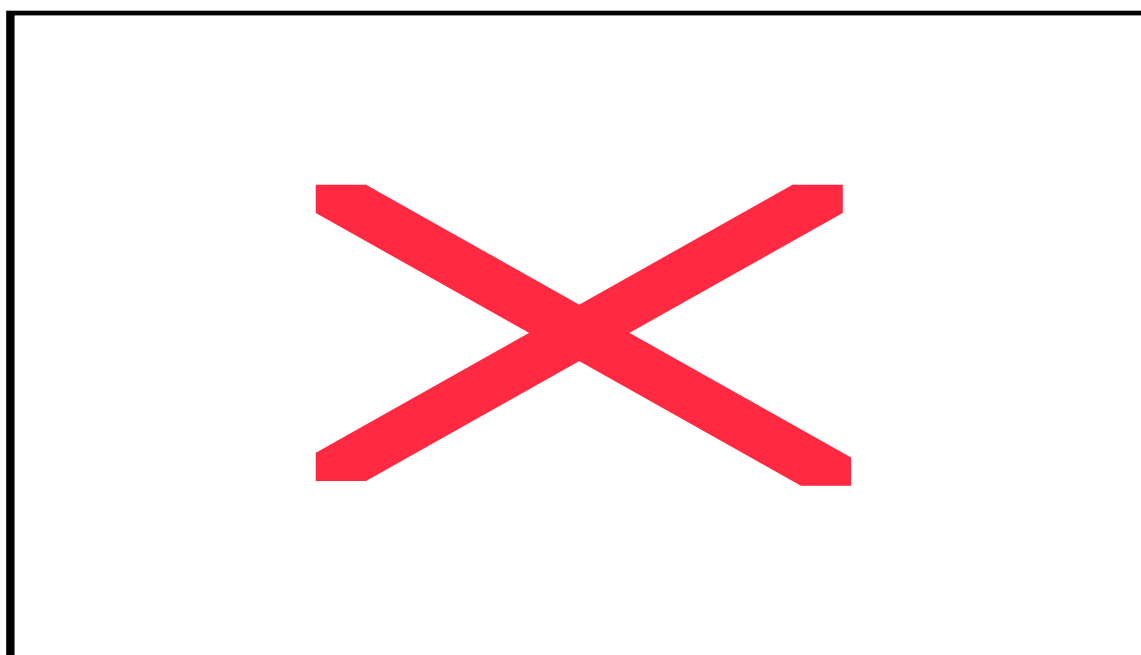


Figure 2. Design Thinking process

T: The key principle of DT is that if designers use empathy and deep listening to understand their clients before designing, they will make products the users will value and think are fit for purpose. So, designers define the problem with the users. Then they create lots of possible solution in the 'Ideation' phase. They then use logic and critical thinking to choose the most promising components in the 'Implementation' phase. After this they create blueprints and prototype solutions. They test those solutions, get feedback and start the whole process again if necessary. You can see that it is teaching how to make things that are new, surprising and valuable, as we mentioned before.

During the ideation phase, divergent thinking, or free-thinking imagination, is required to create lots of possible solutions to a problem. As we are aiming to create choice and explore new possibilities, it's important to encourage others, even if the ideas seem a little crazy at first. When we have a critical mass of ideas, we enter the 'Implementation' stage and it's time to evaluate the ideas and make something that's fit for purpose. Here we need to employ logic and discuss and clarify the potential benefits and risks that each solution creates. Divergent and convergent thinking require a different form of dialogic engagement, so they provide good opportunities to use different language skills.

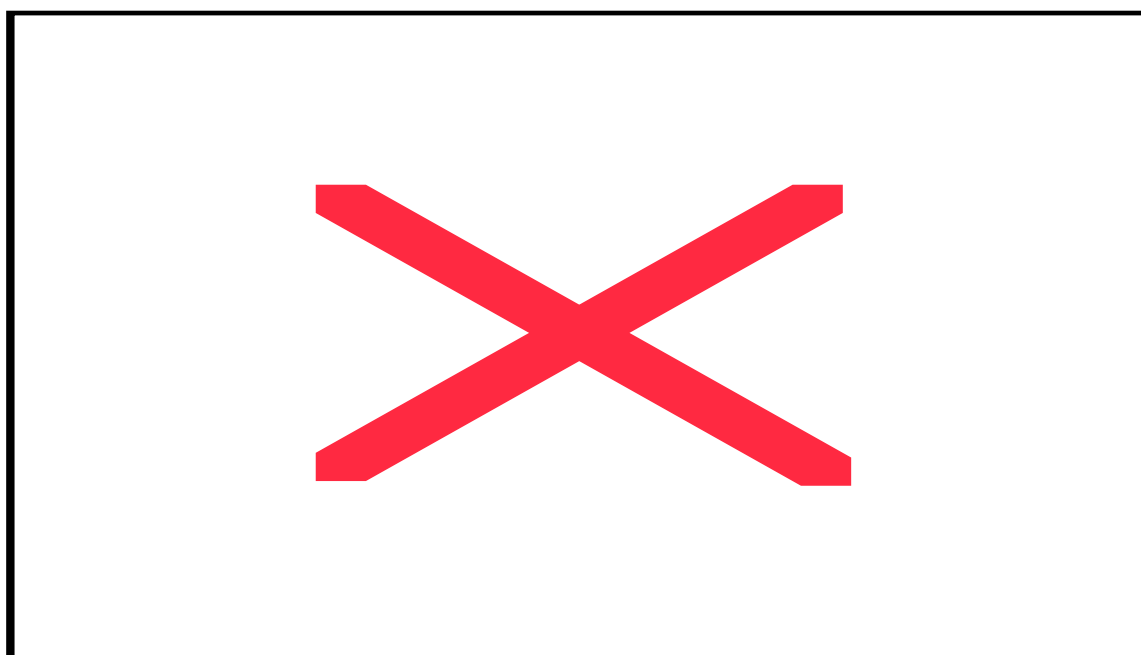


Figure 3. Modes of communication during Design Thinking

### Our lessons

N: We can split our classes into two types: you teach the group activities, skills and communication techniques of DT; and I will use that as subject matter for reflective writing classes.

T: Sure. I try to create fun and engaging lessons that focus on developing awareness of diversity and understanding creativity and DT. I start by exploring personal learning and communication styles, and examining personal space. These activities soon show the natural diversity in the class. Then I start teaching about divergent and convergent thinking and the DT process.

N: I remember you telling me you had an activity about the Mona Lisa that helps develop divergent thinking skills. Can you explain it a little?

T: It's a drawing activity that the students seem to enjoy. I start by showing a photo of the Mona Lisa and say that we take it for granted. The image has become so ubiquitous, we recognise it instantly and think of it more like a fact than an artistic masterpiece. I tell the students we have forgotten to look closely but we need to do that and try to reimagine what the Mona Lisa could be. I show photos of Mona Lisa memes that make the students laugh, like a bodybuilding Mona Lisa, or Mona Lisa taking a selfie. Then I give the students a sheet of paper with pictures of the Mona Lisa on and ask them to reimagine and redraw the pictures. I make the Mona Lisa more and more minimal which allows students to be more and more creative with what they draw. And they come up with some entertaining and original designs.

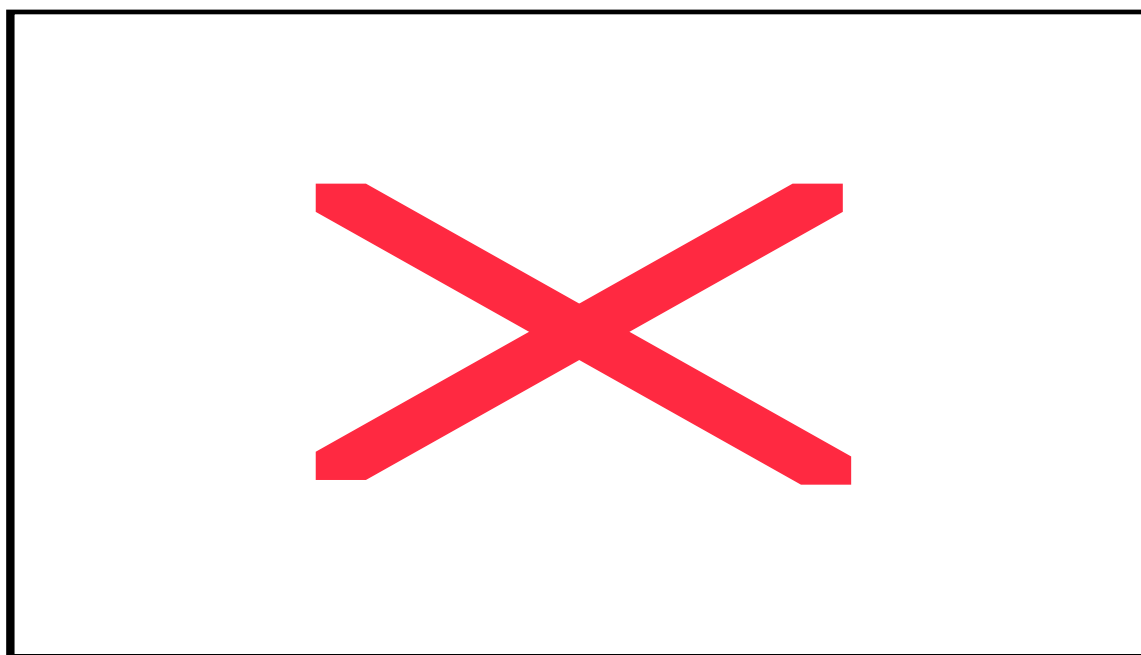


Figure 4. Students' Mona Lisa designs

N: I think these activities allow students to explore their imagination, to use a different media in the EFL classroom and make connections through humour. I think there's lots of mini-c creativity going on here, where students are learning new things about themselves and others in the classroom. I think that helps to build teams later on in the course.

T: Yes, I agree. I also get the students to take lots of little creativity tests designed by famous researchers like Guilford (1957; 1959) and Torrance (1981). This helps them to learn about how others have tried to measure creative thinking skills. After we've analysed these tests, the students work in teams to build games that could be used to facilitate and measure creativity. They start off by listening to each other's ideas, then define the problem and follow the DT process. By the end, the students come up with some fascinating tests.

### **Three sources of data: Creativity tests; student reports; and, student surveys**

#### ***1. Creativity Tests***

N: I went to Tim's lesson on creativity tests and took the tests myself. From a personal perspective, they were really interesting and fun tests to take. But from an analytical perspective the quality and suitability of some of the tests was very high. As they were novel and fit for purpose, I think you could say they were new, surprising and valuable and hence genuinely creative. They were good examples of little-c creativity in the classroom.

T: The tests were incredibly varied. Some required visual and linguistic imagination as well as divergent and convergent thinking. For example, there was one test where participants combined visual prompts to imagine a scenario that seemed realistic. The

scoring contained divergent thinking concepts such as fluency and originality, but there was convergent thinking as the picture got more points for making sense.

N: Yes, and there was a lot of English language use going on. Not just in the discussion whilst making the tests, but also creative uses of grammar in the text that required a playful, reading between-the-lines approach (Jones, 2016). And, of course, the tests were created as English products with English instructions, so students got experience of the full design process.

T: Each team also got feedback from the other teams letting them know what they enjoyed about the test and how they could be improved. As a result, it was a good way to learn about creativity and the DT process.

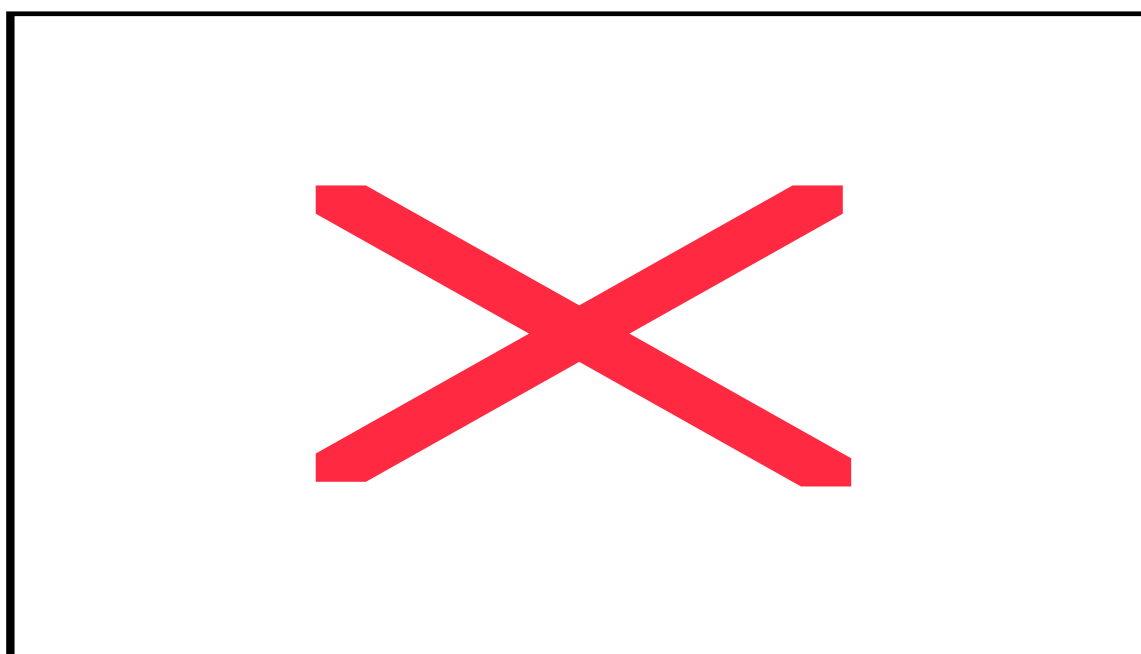


Figure 5. Student creativity test example

## **2. Student reports**

N: The students wrote two reports. In the first report the students focused on personal identity, and in the second report, they explained what creativity is and analysed their creativity test.

T: I think your writing classes were also really important, as it provided an opportunity for students to get together and reflect on those activities. I remember you saying how you were surprised by the quality of the observations the students made and the length of their reports. Do you think they were being creative in their report writing, too?

N: I think we can say that the reports were full of new discoveries and original ideas on a personal level. We could say that the reports showed many examples of mini-c creativity. For example, when discussing creative people:

*Rie said her calligraphy club mates have many divergent ideas and create new models in a collaborative process.*

*Shunsuke said, that for the YouTuber 'Tokai on air', being creative was a necessity and 'close to crazy'.*

*Whereas, Kiyo said her drama club peer is open to many other ideas, can take action and use his imagination.*

You can see the depth of thinking and expression was high for an intermediate class. And these formulations come from looking at aspects of their lives and reevaluating them. So, for me, they are examples of mini-c creativity. Rhodes (1961) suggests a '4Ps' model of creativity, that is, creativity can be divided up into four aspects of Place, Person, Process and Product. It was interesting to see that the students also expressed their ideas in similar terms. By far the easiest for students to talk about was creative people, including people that were close to them such as family members or club mates.

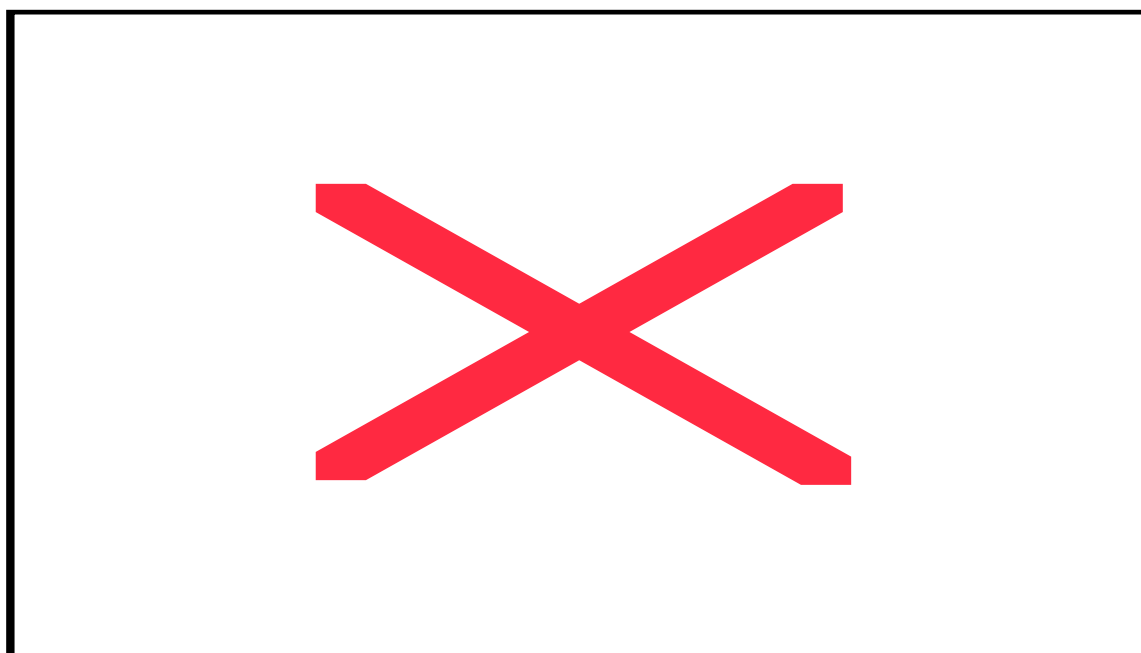
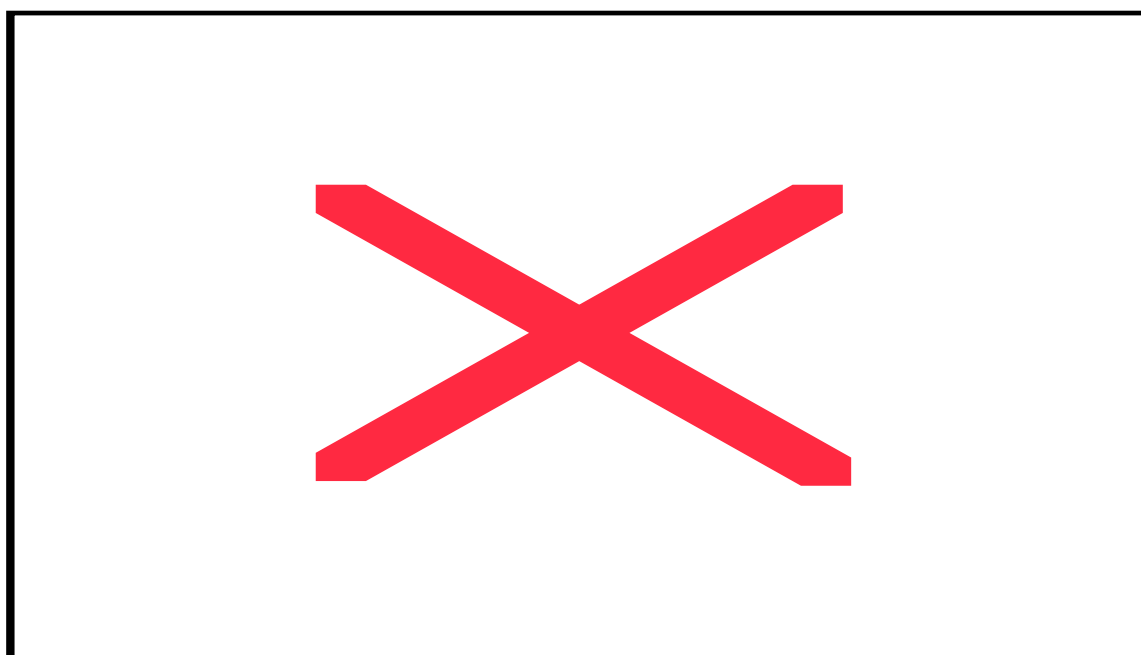


Figure 6. Student reports: People and process

### 3. Surveys

N: Tell me about the surveys and how the students reacted to the course?

T: First and foremost, the students gave very positive responses to the DT approach. Students were asked about engagement, affective states and perceived skill development on a 5-point Likert scale. Over 90% of students enjoyed working in teams, making something in the class, and felt they could engage with a new challenge. Around 85% said they could communicate and listen better in a team, and that the activities made them think deeply and more flexibly about problems.



(n=26)

Figure 7. Affective responses to the Design Thinking approach

N: And did you find some interesting correlations?

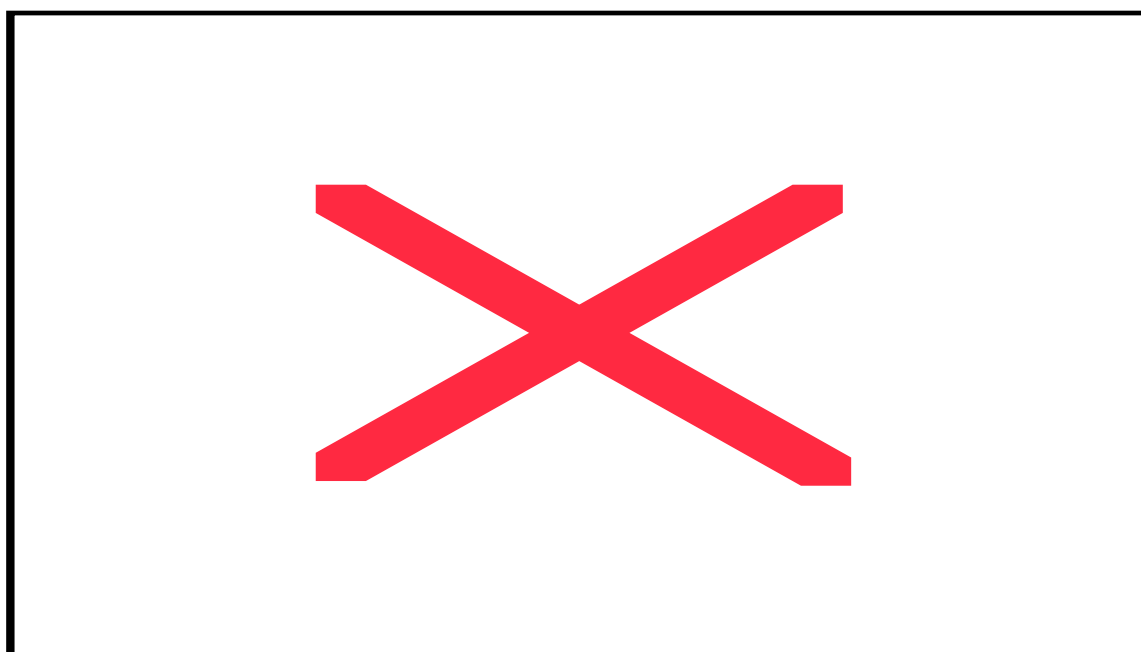


Figure 8. Correlations: Design Thinking and communication skills

T: There were a large number of correlations between DT activities and perceived improvements in communication skills. For example, as can be seen in the slide above, feeling an improvement in team communication skills was strongly correlated with making something ( $r=0.762$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and moderately correlated with enjoying team

projects ( $r=0.629$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and a sense of challenge ( $r=0.602$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Furthermore, there was a strong correlation between improvement in listening and a sense of challenge ( $r=0.846$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). This could suggest that a sense of challenge makes people more attentive to others as they evaluate suggestions in order to think up solutions. So, it is possible the sense of purpose and challenge in DT creates an environment in which communication within a team becomes meaningful.

N: However, this communication wasn't just in L2. Japanese was also used when discussions became complex.

T: Yes, that's right. Advanced groups can handle the linguistic challenges but intermediate groups need a bit more training and support.

### **What does it all mean?**

N: In general, I think the quality of the tests showed students could apply their understanding of creativity to a practical problem in innovative ways, and that they could be creative with English. The correlations also suggest purposeful, open-ended activities that require collaboration facilitated that kind of creative engagement and meaningful communication. And the activities provided motivation for reflection and in-depth report writing.

T: I also think the writing classes provided opportunities for the students to organize their thoughts and hence be more focused in their problem solving.

N: Yes, I agree. But also, I think we need to reduce the report writing a little and devote more time to on-task communication skills.

T: Yes, we need to do that to reduce the amount of L1 used during discussions. I also think we need to develop more conversation tools to help students in the more complex dialogues. I think we found that students responded well to concrete examples of creative people and objects. This really helped them develop their thought. And they also expressed a preference for more multimodal and hands-on learning. So, it would be good to integrate more engineering-type problems and interpersonal tasks that require empathy and can facilitate social-emotional imagination.

### **Conclusion**

T: If we make these changes, DT can be an effective way to improve student interaction, communicative competence and linguistic imagination in the EFL classroom.

N: Yes, and DT is a viable model for enabling students to experience the creative process in teams and gain experience of creating a real product in the classroom.

T: Yes, if we think about the skills necessary for the creative economy and modern workplace, DT can enable a lot of important skills development. Through interaction, students can develop deep listening, social-emotional imagination and become aware of diversity. They can challenge themselves in new ways to solve problems and these challenges can enable them to engage in meaningful communication and explore new

ways of thinking. They can gain some of the skills and confidence necessary to operate in a global and digital marketplace where creative skills are becoming a necessity.

### **Future Research**

N: I think that over and above developing the on-task communication tools, it would be great to focus on assessment as well.

T: Yes, I think the Consensual Assessment Tool (CAT) (Hennessey, Amabile & Mueller, 2011) would be good for analysing the creative aspects of the course. And DT would also be a good match for positive psychology approaches that focus on autonomy.

N: So, Seligman's (2011) PERMA model might be another interesting avenue of research in the future. Perhaps then we might make some more Pro-c insights... and finally hit Big-C...

T: We can dream.

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***Slang Words from Loanwords Reflecting Thais' Language Use on the Facebook Fan Page "Tai Tiang Dara"***

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**Abstract**

This article aims to present results of an analysis of slang words from loanwords reflecting Thais' language use on the Facebook fan page "*Tai Tiang Dara*" collected between September and November 2017 from a total of 344 posts to reflect Thai culture in language use during this period. It was found that there were 23 slang words classified into two categories: words from other languages and words from Thai dialects. Of 21 words from other languages, 18 are from English, 2 Korean, and 1 Chinese while only two slang words are borrowed from a Thai dialect. The 18 words borrowed from English are mum, babe, he, she, guru, pay, happy, know, drama, boy, bed, fin, mouth, way, sis, friend, and focus; two from Korean are *oppa* (오빠), and *annyeong* (안녕) and one from Teochew Chinese *seiy* (财主), and two words from a Northeastern Thai dialect are "sap" and "nua". The results of the analysis reflect Thai culture in language use, particularly preference in using loanwords from other languages over Thai dialects because foreign languages have influence on Thais in various aspects from mass communication to education which makes them easier to access than Thai dialects which are usually accessed through studying or mingling with the speech community.

Keywords: slang, loanwords, culture

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## Introduction

Slang words are words derived from various factors. Some are derived from a situation at the time. For example, the word “Tueanchai” is derived from a murder case about which newspapers used a phrase “Khati tuenchai” so often that the last part of it became a slang word. Others are derived from entertainment of various forms such as an exclamation “Hai tai thoe Robin! (Damn it Robin!)” that comes from a film; and a phrase from a song “Ao khuam thuk pai thing thale (Throw the troubles into the sea.)” (Khanitthanan, 1993, p. 36; Kanchanathat, 1999, pp. 29-30).

Presently, slang words are more popularly used in Thai society as a result of the fact that language users use them for various reasons. For example, in order to reduce stress or strict language usage, they say “Pai sawan (Go to heaven)” instead of “Tai (die)”; to express a strong emotion or satirity, they use “apple” instead of the Thai word “Appri (unpropitious)” (Khanitthanan, 1993, p. 37-38; Kanchanathat, 1999, pp. 29-30).

Slang words can be made by borrowing foreign words using transliteration techniques such as the word “Heng suai” in Thai comes from the Chinese word (兴衰) meaning without principles and not reliable but when used as a Thai slang word, it means “very bad”. Some slang words comes from a dialect not the standard Thai language such as the word “Li” which is a northeastern Thai word originally means beautiful but when used as a slang word, it means “flirting” (Khanitthanan, 1993, p. 30-33; Thewaphalin, 1988, pp. 54-57).

Slang words made from loanwords from another language or dialect are popular because language is transferred and exchanged between cultures or races all the time. Moreover, sometimes using loanwords makes it easier to understand than using a standard word in the speaker’s own language. Presently, many slang words that are loanwords are found in online communication. Facebook is one of the most popular networking websites with an increase number of users that went over 10 percent in the past year (Kemp, 2019).

Facebook is an online social networking website that allows users to create various forms of communication that can be used for various purposes. Some members use it for communicating with other members while some use it for commercial purposes. They can also create a group which is a public feature of Facebook called a fan page which offers a space for members to recount or transfer their interest so that other members with the same interest can interact and freely express their opinions. One of the most popular fan page where members share their interest about famous actors and actresses in Thailand and other countries is the page “*Tai Tiang Dara*” meaning under the stars’ beds. On this Facebook fan page, many informal and slang words made from loanwords from other languages or Thai dialects are used to convey emotions and feelings. As a result, there are more than 2.5 million followers of the page (Tai Tiang Dara, 2019).

The importance of slang words used on the fan page and of the fan page “*Tai Tiang Dara*” itself prompted the researcher to investigate slang words from loanwords that reflect the Thai language use culture on the Facebook online social networking web

page “*Tai Tiang Dara*” which is a language use phenomenon that reflects a social dimension of Thai society.

## Objective

To investigate slang words from loanwords that reflect Thais’ language use culture on the Facebook fan page “*Tai Tiang Dara*”.

## Hypothesis

Slang words from loanwords that reflect Thais’ language use on the Facebook fan page “*Tai Tiang Dara*” from other languages are found to be more in number than those from Thai dialects.

## Concepts, theories and conceptual frameworks

Slang words are words borrowed from other languages and local dialects for use with specific persons or items instead of words in the standard Thai language. For example, the word “Chai hot”, the last part of which comes from the English language. This slang word is used to mean “hot-tempered”. Another example is the word “Sap”, a slang word meaning “spicy hot and delicious” which comes from a northeastern Thai dialect (Thewaphalin, 1988, pp.54-57; Khanitthanan, 1983, pp. 30-33).

## Methods

1. Investigate concepts on slang words that are borrowed from other languages and local dialects.
2. Collect posts from the Facebook fan page “*Tai Tiang Dara*”, particularly posts that were posted by the admin of the fan page excluding posts relating to advertisements during the period September to November 2017 totaling 344 posts.
3. Analyze the slang words from loanwords reflecting Thai culture from the Facebook fan page “*Tai Tiang Dara*” from September to November 2017 based on Khanitthanan’s concept on slang words derived from loanwords (Khanitthanan, 1993, pp. 30-33; Thewaphalin, 1988, pp. 54-57).
4. Present the study results using descriptive analysis with examples and tables presenting the results in numbers and percentages.

## Results

The study found 23 slang words from loanwords that reflected Thai culture especially on language use on the Facebook fan page “*Tai Tiang Dara*” which could be classified into two categories as follows.

1. Slang words from words borrowed from foreign languages—a total of 21 word were found, of which 18 were loanwords from the English language: mum, bebe, he, she, guru, pay, happy, know, drama, boy, bed, fin, mouth, way, sis, friend, runway,

and focus; two from the Korean language: *oppa* (오빠), and *annyeong* (안녕), and one from Teochew Chinese *seiy* (财主).

2. Slang words from words borrowed from a Thai dialect—a total of 2 words were found: “Sap” and “Nua”.

They could be explained in detail as follows.

### 1. Slang words from words borrowed from foreign languages

A total of 21 slang words was found in this category; 18 were from the English language, mum, bebe, he, she, guru, pay, happy, know, drama, boy, bed, fin, mouth, way, sis, friend, runway, and focus; two from the Korean language: *oppa* (오빠), and *annyeong* (안녕), and one from Teochew Chinese *seiy* (财主). They were detailed as followed.

1.1 English: 18 words were found: mum, bebe, he, she, guru, pay, happy, know, drama, boy, bed, fin, mouth, way, sis, friend, runway, and focus as in the following Post 1 and Post 2.

#### Example 1

“Well, Sis, at the moment netizens seem to be rather obsessed with something about major wives; Thinking of the scene the day before yesterday when She, Mae Khem Ru, came on Ploeng Bun; only her walking into the scene was intimidating enough. Even that cool Ee Roeng gave in!”

(Tai Tiang Dara, September 22, 2017)

The word, “Sis” in Example 1 is a slang word borrowed from the English word “sister”. It is used with the same meaning as it is in English. However, when it is used as a slang word in the above example, it is used by an actress speaking to her escort to show intimacy meaning that they are as close as sisters. It is used among close friends to show their close relationship. Therefore, the example indicates a context of a close relationship.

The word “She” in Post 1 above is a slang word borrowed from English and is used instead of the word “woman”. In this context, “she” is modified by the word “Mae” to praise Khem Ru, with a respectful tone as she is well-respected. Thus, the phrase “She, Khem Ru” is to express admiration for Khem Ruchira, a famous TV actress.

#### Example 2

“I feel really sorry for Mum Phloi. If you followed Phloi Choe’s IG, you would have seen her always visiting and taking care of her grandma at home and the hospital. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of last September, her grandma passed away because of old age. My deepest condolences to Khun Mum. Be strong and of good courage. /holding hands

#Under Khun Mum’s sorrow, #Under Dear Grandma

(Tai Tiang Dara, September 7, 2017)

“Mum” in Post 2 above is borrowed from the English word “mom” or “mother” but when used as a slang word in this context it refers to a woman who is highly respected for her expertise in her career. The use of the word “Mum” in the above example is used to refer to Phloi Choe, a famous actress who has long been in her entertainment career. This indicates the admin of the page’s respect for her well-rounded characteristics.

1.2 Korean: Two Korean words were found: *oppa* (오빠), and *annyeong* (안녕) as shown in the following example.

#### Example 3

This is the origin of “Klong loves Kan; Kan loves Klong.” Ha ha ha. From a young northeastern Thai man in that program the other day to being “Lua (hubby)” today with an international *oppa* style. The four of us don’t have to come at the same time. Only one can come alone is enough.

#Under Kan of Luk Ket Team, #Under oppa, # Under Klong loves Kan, #Under being lua

(Tai Tiang Dara, September 28, 2017)

The word: *oppa* (오빠) is borrowed from Korean meaning an older brother (used by a woman only). However, in the above example, when used as a slang word, it is a word used by Thai women to refer to Korean actors for whom they have admiration. In the above example, “...with an international *oppa* style”, the word *oppa* (오빠) is used to refer to a Thai actor who looks like a Korean actor.

#### Example 4

*She, Am* the same person with an additional talent, dancing, can dance beautifully twisting her hip, shaking her head, dancing however crazily is so lively, lovely, irresistibly and *annyeong* in whatever she does. Cut and focus on me too, please. Ha ha ha. Ma says Dtac is so smooth that she would not trade it with anything at all.

#Under Am Pat dancing style, #Under loveliness #Under attractive whatever she does, # Under would not trade it with anything

(Tai Tiang Dara, September 10, 2017)

The word *annyeong* (안녕) in Example 4 above is borrowed from Korean. It is used for greeting and saying goodbye, Hello, Hi, Good bye, Bye, but when used as a slang word in the above context, it means very good or excellent. The word *annyeong* in the statement, “...so lively, lovely, irresistibly and *annyeong* in whatever she does” conveys a meaning that Am Patcharapha, a famous actress is so beautiful, lively, lovely and attractive.

1.3 Chinese: One word was found. The word *seiy* (财主) in Teochew Chinese was the only word found in the present study as in the following Example 5.

**Example 5**

This is really *sap*. It makes me wanna be *Seiy* Chiang's daughter-in-law right now. Well, here is Grace of Sticky Rice and Grilled Pork, who is now grown up and so smart. She has filed a request to dress as a man on her graduation day and to take part in the commencement ceremony. "Let us be what we are on the day we are most proud of."

#Under Grace, *Seiy* Chiang's daughter, #Under Sticky Rice and Grilled Pork, #Under graduation day, #Under Let us be what we are on the day we are most proud of.

(Tai Tiang Dara, September 28, 2017)

The word *seiy* (财主) in Example 5 above is borrowed from Teochew Chinese meaning donation or a rich man but when used as a slang word it has a broader meaning which is "an elder rich man of Chinese descent who usually has a young woman as a mistress". Therefore, the statement "It makes me wanna be *Seiy* Chiang's daughter-in-law right now." indicates that Chiang is an elderly rich man of Chinese descent, and only the word *Seiy* is needed to convey this long meaning.

## 2. Slang words from words borrowed from a Thai dialect

A total of two slang words was found in this category. They were "Sap" and "Nua" which are from a northeastern Thai dialect. No words from other Thai dialects were found. The two words were found in the context shown by the following Example 6 and Example 7.

**Example 6**

Pi Mai's grandpa was here to explain so many issues. He said "It is normal for a couple to quarrel. What is the matter that they will get a divorce? I don't know but I don't want to interfere my children. If they cannot solve the problem, then I'll help clear it up."

"If a man does not love his children and his wife, which dog will he love?"

"Wow! This is so *sap* and so direct, Grandpa. Ha ha ha."

#Under Grandpa's words, #Under Grass leaves Bonanza, #Under A man does not love his children and his wife, which dog will he love, #Under Songkran and Af's bed leg

(Tai Tiang Dara, September 23, 2017)

The word "*Sap*" in Example 6 above is borrowed from a northeastern Thai dialect meaning delicious. However, when it is used in the above context, it means like, very good, excellent, and perfect. The word is easy to pronounce and conveys an exact meaning of feeling and emotion that is more than the meaning "delicious" for food. In the statement "Wow! This is so *sap* and so direct, Grandpa. Ha ha ha." communicates the speaker's behavior, feeling, and emotion. It also conveys the speaker's close relationship with the listeners.

Example 7

Wow! This is so *“sap”* and *“nua”*. I thought that the story about Khan-ngeon Tita was complaint by Nung Ni through Line has already ended on the day he explained through his IG but no it has not. There will be Episode 2 of the story (after Nong Ni appeared to give a reply to the media). He said “I never dated anyone after I ended my relationship with Rita. Go away from me. Spend your full 15 minutes of fame. Don’t use my kindness as my weak point bla..bla..bla.” I choked with his words for you Pi Ta. Go escape first.

#Under Reply, #Under Can stand it no more, #Under She Fe’s pain, #Under Abandoned by a man on IG

(Tai Tiang Dara, September 14, 2017)

The word “*Nua*” in Example 7 above is borrowed from a northeastern Thai dialect meaning mellow and delicious. However, when it is used in the above context, it means being satisfied, meeting the emotional needs or serving the purpose. The statement “Wow! This is so *“sap”* and *“nua.”* Conveys a meaning that this statement by Khan-ngeon is direct and satisfied reporters.

The results of the study on slang words from loanwords on the Facebook fan page “*Tai Tiang Dara*” collected between September and November 2017 reflected Thai culture and revealed two categories of loanwords as follows.

1. Slang words borrowed from other languages that are not the standard language for Thailand. The slang words came into existence as a result of various influence factors. For example, some slang words are a result of trading with many countries from the past until the present. Others are a result of the media, entertainment, education, and economy. In this study, 21 slang words from loanwords were found. 18 words are borrowed from English which are mum, babe, he, she, guru, pay, happy, know, drama, boy, bed, fin, mouth, way, sis, friend, and focus. Two are borrowed from Korean are *oppa* (오빠), and *annyeong* (안녕) and one from Teochew Chinese *seiy* (财主). Table 1 shows the numbers of meanings: literal meanings and contextual meanings.

Table 1:

Loanwords from foreign languages and numbers of literal meanings and contextual meanings

No.	Loanwords from foreign languages	Literal meaning	Contextual meaning
1	Mum	-	/
2	Bebe	/	-
3	He	/	-
4	She	/	-
5	Guru	/	-
6	Pay	/	-
7	Happy	/	-
8	Know	/	-
9	Drama	/	-
10	Boy	/	-
11	Bed	/	-
12	Fin	-	/
13	Mouth	/	-
14	Way	/	-
15	Sis	-	/
16	Friend	/	-
17	Runway	/	-
18	Focus	/	-
19	<i>annyeong</i> (안녕)	-	/
20	<i>oppa</i> (오빠)	/	-
21	<i>seiy</i> (財主)	/	-
Total		17	4

The meanings of slang words from loanwords revealed that there were 17 words with literal meanings: babe, he, she, guru, pay, happy, know, drama, boy, bed, mouth, way, friend, and focus. There were only four words that had contextual meanings when used as slang words by Thais: mum, sis, fin and *annyeong* (안녕).

The words mum and sis when used as slang words have contextual meanings. The meanings of the words change from their literal meanings. They are used to refer to a woman who is not a family member of the speaker but the words are used to honor the woman who is respected by the speaker. The word mum and sis are chosen by the speaker to address or to refer to a woman taking into consideration the woman's age and status. Another slang word which is a word borrowed from English is fin. This is shortened from the word finale in English. However, when used by Thai people, it means being satisfied or feeling great. The word *annyeong* (안녕) which literally means hello or good bye has a different meaning when used as a slang word; it means beautiful, good looking, lively, lovely or attractive. Therefore, these four words have contextual meanings when used by Thais as slang words.

2. Slang words from loanwords of a northern Thai dialect are not words from the standard Thai language. Thailand is divided into four major parts: northern, southern, central, and northeastern parts, and the language spoken by people in the central part or central Thai is the standard language and is taken as the official language.

However, in each part, there are dialects spoken by locals of different areas. People from all parts of the country work in the central part and therefore some words comes from a dialect and in this study, two words were found to be from a northeastern Thai dialect: *sap* and *nua*.

Table 2:

Loanwords from a Thai dialect and numbers of literal meanings and contextual meanings

No.	Loanwords from a Thai dialect	Literal meaning	Contextual meaning
1	Sap	-	/
2	Nua	-	/
		0	2

The meanings of the two words borrowed from a northeastern Thai dialect: *sap* and *nua* were found to have only contextual meanings; the literally meanings were not found to be used. Both *sap* and *nua* literally means delicious but when used as slang words, *sap* means spicy hot, excellent, and perfect which communicates with more feeling and emotion while *nua* means “directly to the point”, “meeting the objective” and “serving the purpose”. Thus, *sap* and *nua* have contextual meanings when used as slang words.

## Conclusions

The study found 23 slang words that were loanwords reflecting the use of the Thai language on the Facebook fan page, “*Tai Tiang Dara*” as shown in the table below.

Table 3:

Numbers of slang words from loanwords reflecting the use of Thai on the Facebook fan page, “*Tai Tiang Dara*”

No	Loanwords	Number of words found	Percent
1	Slang words which are loanwords from other languages	21	91.3
2	Slang words which are loanwords from a northeastern Thai dialect	2	8.7
	Total	23	100

Of all the 23 slang words that were loanwords reflecting the use of the Thai language on the Facebook fan page, “*Tai Tiang Dara*”, 21 words were from foreign languages; 18 of them were from English: mum, bebe, he, she, guru, pay, happy, know, drama, boy, bed, fin, mouth, way, sis, friend, runway, and focus; two from the Korean language: *oppa* (오빠), and *annyeong* (안녕), and one from Teochew Chinese *seiy* (財主). These loanwords accounted for 91.3 percent while only two words were found to be loanwords from a Thai dialect accounting for only 8.7 percent.

Table 4:  
Meanings and numbers of slang words from loanwords from other languages and from a Thai dialect

No.	Meanings	Number of words	Percent
1	Literal meanings	17	73.9
2	Contextual meanings	6	26.1
Total		23	100

Regarding the meanings of the loanwords from other languages and from a Thai dialect, it was found that 17 words had literal meanings: *bebe*, *he*, *she*, *guru*, *pay*, *happy*, *know*, *drama*, *boy*, *bed*, *mouth*, *way*, *friend*, *runway*, *focus*, *oppa*, and *seiy* accounting for 73.9 percent. For words with contextual meanings, 6 words: *mum*, *sis*, *fin*, *annyeong*, *sap* and *nua* were found and they accounted for 26.1 percent.

## Discussion

The study found 23 slang words that are loanwords reflecting the use of the Thai language on the Facebook fan page, “*Tai Tiang Dara*” which can be grouped into two categories. 1) Slang words from loanwords from foreign languages; a total of 21 words were found consisting of 18 English words, 2 Korean words and 1 Chinese word. 2) Slang words from loanwords from a northern Thai dialect; only two words were found. It is noticeable that more loanwords from other languages were found than from Thai dialects which confirmed the hypothesis. This reflects that Thai people enjoy using foreign language words more than they do Thai dialect words. Foreign languages have influence on Thai people in many aspects; one of them is mass communication and media as evidenced by this post.

*“This is the source of “Klong loves Kan; Kan loves Klong.” Ha ha ha. From a young northeastern Thai man in that program that day to being “Lua (hubby)” today who has an international oppa style. The four of us don’t have to come at the same time, Only one can come alone...” #Under Kan of Luk Ket Team, #Under oppa, # Under Klong loves Kan, #Under being lua (Tai Tiang Dara, September 28, 2017).*

Other reasons why foreign languages have influence on Thais are that they are easily accessible and that they can be learned and found in daily life, especially on various forms of mass media. Therefore, slang words borrowed from foreign languages are more popular and influential than slang words from a Thai dialect. In order to learn a Thai dialect, people have to mingle with locals or a group of people who speak it. As a result, more slang words from loanwords from other languages were found than those from a Thai dialect.

### **Recommendations for further studies**

This article presents only slang words that are derived from loanwords. There are slang words derived from other factors that can be studied further. The scope of this present study is limited to slang words used on the Facebook fan page, “*Tai Tiang Dara*” during a specific period. Thus, there are more aspects of the topic that can still be examined.

The results of this study can be utilized as a guideline for further study on related topics, such as to find out more reasons why foreign languages have more influence on the Thais’ use of slang words. Moreover, characteristics and values of borrowing words from other languages or from Thai dialects for use as slang words can also be investigated.

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***Language Techniques in the Anthology of Short Stories “Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)” by Ummisalam Umar***

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**Abstract**

The objective of this article is to analyze language techniques in the anthology of short stories, “Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)” by Ummisalam Umar consisting of 10 short stories: Phu Tong Songsai (Eyes of a Child), Foon (Dust), Nithan Khong Pho (Daddy’s tales), Klang Phung Phae (Amidst a heard of goats), Phi Chai (Older Brother), Kai Lud Khok (Let Loose Chicken), Ya (Grandma), Luang (Cheating), Khuamtai Nai Duean Ramadan (Death in the Ramadan Month, and Phae Lang Hak (Broken-back Goats). Data were collected from documents and results were presented through descriptive analysis. “Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)” is an anthology of short stories by a Muslim female writer nominated for the 2017 S.E.A Write Award (Southeast Asian Writers Award). Its outstanding language features are created by blending emotional aspects resulting from characters’ fate that make them realistic. Three major language techniques found are: 1) Word usage consisting of words with direct meanings and words with implications; 2) Use of figurative language consisting of simile, metaphor, and symbol; and 3) Usage of sentences consisting of affirmative, negative, interrogative, and imperative sentences. It can be said that the value of language techniques used in this anthology is how the writer presents literary value to reflect social value creatively and cleverly with unity.

**Keywords:** Language techniques, anthology of short stories

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## Introduction

“Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)” is an anthology of short stories by a Muslim writer nominated for the 2017 S.E.A Write Award (Southeast Asian Writers Award). She refers to relationships of life and the stories that she used as raw materials for creation of the content of her short stories in Matichon online newspaper stating that “The society where we spend our lives is full of stories that are not tales or legends or whatever but they are stories that go round and round in that society which sometimes things, words, and people have hidden meanings and stories about them. The styles people use when they speak, the ways people are, and the ways people do things all have stories behind them. When we perceive them or listen to them, sometimes we could feel them and think they play a role in our lives more than they could actually do. Ummisalam Umar believes that every life is socialized with stories and her life is not different; her stories also socialize her life (Dokfon, 2017).

In the anthology of short stories, “Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)” by Ummisalam Umar, language techniques clearly reflect concepts through characters’ behaviors corresponding with admirations given to the beauty of language techniques she uses. Bunyathat states “The writer’s attitude as a missionary indicates viewpoints of understanding aiming to describe the outcome unfolding the clues for causes of problems that are so valuable when carefully examined. The scenes hide clues using signs to convey meanings that are memorable and impressive to readers. Linguistically, the writer incorporates various angles of stories that make her short stories valuable with creativities that are new and different but complete with mental beauty and liveliness” (Ummisalam Umar, 2014: 5-9).

Therefore, the researcher was interested in examining the anthology of short stories, “Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)” by Ummisalam Umar, and thus analyzed language techniques used by characters in the stories that reflect concepts or reveal attitudes toward how humans spend their lives; language techniques that are results of transferring emotions and thoughts through language use in words, figurative language and sentences linking concepts that indicate value of experiences of human lives in the Thai society.

## Objective

To examine language techniques reflecting concepts in the anthology of short stories, “Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)” by Ummisalam Umar.

## Methodology

Analysis of language techniques reflecting concepts of 10 short stories in the anthology, “Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)” by Ummisalam Umar consisting of Phu Tong Songsai (Eyes of a Child), Foon (Dust), Nithan Khong Pho (Daddy’s tales), Klang Phung Phae (Amidst a heard of goats), Phi Chai (Older Brother), Kai Lud Khok (Let Loose Chicken), Ya (Grandma), Luang (Cheating), Khuamtai Nai Duean Ramadan (Death in the Ramadan Month,

and Phae Lang Hak (Broken-back Goats). Data were analyzed and processed, and results were presented through descriptive analysis with examples.

## Results

The anthology, “Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)” by Ummisalam Umar reveals three literary devices: 1) word choice especially use of words with denotative and connotative meanings; 2) figures of speech consisting of simile, metaphor, and symbol; and 3) use of sentences consisting of declarative, negative, interrogative, and imperative sentences as follows.

### 1) Word choice

A word is a sound or writing of letters hand written or typed to show a thought which usually is considered the smallest unit with a meaning in itself (Royal Institute of Thailand, 2003: 248). For this present study, the researcher applied the concepts of Laksanasiri and Intharaporn (2015: 28-29) in the analysis of word use comprising denotative and connotative meanings as follows.

1.1 Denotative meaning refers to the meaning as the word is written or literal meaning about which a dictionary usually gives as the first meaning. It is also called direct meaning. For example:

In the short story “Klang Phung Phae” (Amid a heard of goats), there are words with direct meanings used when the speaker is furious. A character, an old homeless woman who is called by an insulting name *Nomphuean*, is always bristly and hot-tempered. Thus, she usually uses words with denotative meanings. One example is,

*“You go ahead and say that you want me thrown into a jail cell. Son of a bitch, you get yourself thrown into it first.”*

(Ummisalam Umar, 2014: 65)

The word “cell” used by the character means a small room used to lock up a person convicted of a crime. The word conveys a direct meaning and shows that the character is ready to fight and never surrenders to anyone or gives in to anything. The word choice reflects implication of self-defense; expressing oneself directly without fear; self-defense of a small and powerless person against the majority in society. It can be said that an important language dimension is that people can use it as a tool for negotiation or demand for justice in society. Thus, the fact that the author chooses to use words with direct meanings is associated with the character’s status as a common person to make it realistic and to display emotions and feelings of commoners talking to each other giving the reader vivid imaginations.

1.2 Connotative meaning refers to the sub-meaning hidden in the main meaning (direct meaning) and conveys meanings that show attitude, emotion, or feeling of the speaker. An example from a short story in the anthology is as follows.

In the short story “Phu Tong Songsai (Eyes of a Child)”, one word with a connotative meaning is used about a homeless man whose insulting name is Poh-ne.

He is accused of being a terrorist and it is a groundless accusation. A boy who has been instilled by his teacher with a negative attitude towards Poh-ne is afraid of Poh-ne. The boy, because of his being inexperienced about life, believes in his teacher's suggestive words, and so he criticizes Poh-ne with a connotative word in the following sentence.

*“Don’t you go near Poh-ne; he’s not just a man. What we see is only his **outer skin**.”*

(Ummisalam Umar, 2014: 19)

It can be seen that in the conversation between the characters, the words “outer skin” refer to the appearance of a person not his/her real self. The appearance of Poh-ne is that of a homeless man but he is looked at as a terrorist which reflects a language dimension that links to a framework of thought formed by the person's experience. Thus, the words “outer skin” have a connotative meaning which is to avoid speaking directly about one's attitude or thought towards another whom one considers dangerous or harmful to oneself or others or to avoid speaking about sensitive matters about which one cannot express opinions directly. This reflects a thought that has been instilled or framed with a readymade thought that makes people believe or have the same understanding that makes it easy for social organization. Therefore, the use of connotative words can be considered a language technique in a dimension that communicates with implications which can hook the reader's attention.

## 2) Figures of speech

Figures of speech refer to a use of words to empower communication that the writer intends to make it different from the meaning structure or the regular order of words in order to create power in expressing and creating readers' imagination (Chitchamnong, 1984: 161-162). This article applies analytical principles stated in Chitchamnong, (1984: 161-162) consisting of simile, metaphor, and symbol as follows.

2.1 Simile refers to a comparison of one thing with another that is different in its kind but they have the same features and they use a word with the same or similar meaning to emphasize how they are similar. An example is the following.

In “Nithan Khong Pho (Daddy's tales)”, there is a comparison in describing thoughts of a character who is a daughter asking a question about her father's unusual behavior. The father loves the sea and his boat very much because he is a fisherman who is so attached to the area and things around there; this behavior is nothing unusual. However, the daughter notices that her father often tells the tale about a beautiful woman in the sea and as he is telling it, he seems to be absent-minded. Therefore, she contemplates his inattentive behavior, and a simile is used to describe it in the following sentences.

*“Ariya often thinks about **the tale** told by her father and wonders why her father enjoys telling it repeatedly **as if it was real** and so impressive. So, today she could tell what her father wants; that boat is not everything to him but the sea is his **everything**.”*

(Ummisalam Umar, 2014: 53)

The writer uses the phrase *“as if”* to compare the meanings conveyed by the words ***tale*** and ***real*** to communicate her thought that the tale may not be only a tale or an age-old story but it has power linking thoughts and beliefs. It can be said that the writer uses a simile to reflect cultural communication in a form of local cultural beliefs distribution to readers through characters’ thoughts.

**2.1 Metaphor** refers to an implied comparison using a statement saying one thing to mean another. It compares important features without using words showing comparison. Here is an example.

In “Phae Lang Hak (the Broken-backed Goat)”, there are metaphors in the sentences used by an abbot to warn a girl who is riding a goat which may injure the goat. The abbot says:

*“That’s a goat not a horse, little girl. You’re like a water jar; why are you sitting on its back. Don’t you pity it? If it can’t walk like this, how can it go to find grass to eat?”*

(Ummisalam Umar, 2014: 168)

The writer uses a metaphor twice. The first time to compare a goat and a horse to say that they are different, and the second time to compare the size and shape of the girl with a water jar. The use of metaphors shows that the writer uses rhetoric in communicating the meanings to make it easier for readers to imagine and understand the content.

**2.3 Symbol** refers to a comparison of things using other words to represent them. These words are derived from comparisons and interpretations that have long been used and are generally understood. It can be a single word or a phrase used throughout a story or only a part of it. An example is as follows.

In the story “Khuamtai Nai Duean Ramadan (Death in the Ramadan Month)”, a symbol word is used to comfort another gangster who has been found guilty and received a life sentence for detonating a bomb to ambush and kill other people. The writer chooses to use a sentence containing a symbol to empower a character that is faced with a problem to feel better under a stressful circumstance.

*“Don’t worry. We all will go to **heaven** for sure. That man is the spy not you; you are not guilty.”*

(Ummisalam Umar, 2014: 152)

In this sentence, the writer uses the word “heaven” to represent a positive meaning. Heaven is a place, according to a religious belief, where people who do good deeds go after death. The word communicates the speaker’s ideology and belief in what s/he has done to be right. The writer chooses to use the word “heaven” as a symbol to transfer a thought, emotion and feeling of the character in this context. Thus, it has communication power as a figure representing hope. The use of the word in this

context makes it *concise* and *easy* to interpret; it is a language technique that avoids use of a long description which keeps readers reading the story.

### 3) Use of sentences

A sentence refers to a group of words put together systematically according to grammatical principles of each language and sentences are classified into types based on language structures (Laksanasiri & Intharaporn, 2015: 43). Sentences in this anthology are analyzed based on sentence analysis principles by Changkhuanyuen (1993: 30-31) where types of sentences are declarative, negative, interrogative, and imperative sentences.

**3.1 Declarative sentences** are used to show an intention to tell or inform knowledge, fact, opinion, emotion and feeling. An example is as follows.

In the story “Luang (Cheating)”, declarative sentences are used by the writer to transfer thoughts through a conversation between a decisive daughter and her seriously ill mother. Their neighbors believe that the mother’s illness is a result of negligence in paying respect to sacred things and thus they pray to Allah asking for blessings for her to recover from the illness. However, the daughter sees the cause of her mother’s illness differently as she is a new generation living in the capital city; her mindset does not agree with the local belief. Therefore, she wants to take her mother to a hospital for modern medical treatment.

Daughter: “I am taking you to the hospital myself. It’s not far at all. There’re a lot of buses and taxis but they don’t take you to the hospital.”

(Ummisalam Umar, 2014: 141)

The writer chooses to use the declarative sentences to reflect a mindset of a new generation that is different from that of locals in the community. The character, the daughter, represents people of a new generation who have confidence in modern medical treatment which is different from the mindset of older locals in the community who believe that the mother is punished by sacred things in the community as a result of her not paying respect to the sacred. As can be seen, the writer transfers a thought and attitude through simple declarative sentences and fully justifies the thoughts and behaviors of the characters who have different beliefs.

**3.2 Negative sentences** are used to show that something is not acceptable and often include the words: *no*, *not*, *cannot*.

In the story “Kai Lud Khok (Let Loose Chicken)”, a conversation between Salma and her aunt-in-law about Salma’s decision to move back to her parents’ house because her husband has always blamed her for so many things and it is getting more severe making her disappointed. Her husband looks down on her and does not respect her. Thus, she has tried to solve the problem by deciding to move back to her parents’ house taking her children with her. Part of the conversation is as follows.

Aunt-in-law: Consider talking it over with him. Don’t move back. Discuss it with him first.

Salma: *No, Machi. I would rather go back home than living here and let others look down on me.*

(Ummisalam Umar, 2014: 113)

The writer uses the above negative sentences to reflect alternatives a woman who is a wife and a mother has and to reflect local culture relating to marriage; after marriage, the woman must move into the man's family. Consequently, when the couple has a problem that cannot be solved, the woman usually choose to go back to her parents. This shows spatial authority, that is to say, when the woman refuses to live in the man's space, it infers that she is not happy living in that space. She decides to go back to a safe place for her and her children; that is her parents' place, her birth place. The fact that the writer opts for using negative sentences in this situation communicates more than just a general negation but power negotiation by a woman who is a wife and a mother.

**3.3 Interrogative sentences** are used to show an intention of getting a reply.

In the story "Foon ( Dust)", the writer transfers this type of sentence through the main character who is the first wife. The writer chooses to use language with hidden touching feeling expressed with furiousness as a result of the fact that her husband takes another woman as his wife without her permission. Her anguish is released by asking for justice as in these sentences.

*"Is it fair to me? Tell me that it is fair."*

(Ummisalam Umar, 2014: 36)

The interrogative sentence "*Is it fair to me*" indicates that the writer chooses to use an ironic speech act that conveys more than just a question because it expresses the character's repressed emotion resulting from her husband's unjustifiable behavior. Her question also conveys her hidden desire for sympathy. Thus, it is not only a simple question but also an expression of frustration and heartbreak. This emphasizes that in society where there is religious permission for a man to have more than one wife at a time, it is not always true that a woman would agree to it and she suffers when it happens to her.

**3.4 Imperative sentences** are used to show requests or commands for the message recipient to do as instructed and this type of sentence usually begins with a verb.

In the story. "Ya (Grandma)", the writer transfers her message through a conversation between the main character who is an angry father talking to his children. The stressful situation in the family has been caused by the religiously untraditional funeral of the grandmother. The father who is religiously strict does not agree with what his relatives did for the funeral. Thus, he orders people in his family not to have anything to do with their relatives any longer.

*"No. Don't say anything at all, whatsoever. When I say no and don't; I mean no and don't, period. When I die, don't hire anyone to pay respect to my body; don't hire anyone to give my body a bath. I have several children. If none of them can pay*

*respect to my body, don't call me Pa. I don't care if there are only two people giving me a bath. But don't hire anyone to do it; I would feel ashamed.*

(Ummisalam Umar, 2014: 131)

When considering the sentences expressing the character's thought, it can be seen that the writer chooses to use imperative sentences to reflect a mindset with strict religious principles that are crucial factors for their life plan. When the situation does not go according to plan, the character demonstrates his disagreement with another mindset. Nevertheless, these imperative sentences communicate a message from a person whose status is head of the family. The use of imperative sentences in this situation is to stimulate the reader's feeling and to present the character's strategy for controlling thoughts and behaviors of the other characters whose status is family members under the head of the family.

### **Discussion and conclusions**

The analysis of language techniques reflecting concepts and thoughts in the anthology of short stories, "Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)" by Ummisalam Umar consisting of 10 short stories: Phu Tong Songsai (Eyes of a Child), Foon (Dust), Nithan Khong Pho (Daddy's tales), Klang Phung Phae (Amidst a heard of goats), Phi Chai (Older Brother), Kai Lud Khok (Let Loose Chicken), Ya (Grandma), Luang (Cheating), Khuamtai Nai Duean Ramadan (Death in the Ramadan Month, and Phae Lang Hak (Broken-back Goats) reveals three main language techniques: word choice or use of words, figures of speech, and use of sentences. 1) Use of words consists of words with denotative and connotative meanings. Words with denotative meanings are for example, in the story Klang Phung Phae (Amidst a heard of goats), because the characters are villagers, they use words with direct meanings. However, sometimes they use words with connotative or latent meanings as seen in the story Phu Tong Songsai (Eyes of a Child), because the topic of the conversation is sensitive and takes place in public, the characters use words with indirect meanings in order to avoid talking about it elaborately. 2) Figures of speech consist of simile, metaphor, and symbol. In the story Nithan Khong Pho (Daddy's tales), a simile is used to communicate a thought of a character who is doubtful about a behavior of another character who tells a tale as if it was real and compares it with a belief among fishermen about the tale. Metaphors are used in Phae Lang Hak (the Broken-backed Goat) to make it easy to convey the message and easy to understand for readers. Furthermore, symbol words are used in the story Khuamtai Nai Duean Ramadan (Death in the Ramadan Month to communicate with power about an important belief. 3) Use of sentences consists of declarative, negative, interrogative, and imperative sentences. Declarative sentences are used in the story Luang (Cheating) to communicate and give an account a new mindset that is different from a traditional mindset while negative sentences are used in the story Kai Lud Khok (Let Loose Chicken) but they are actually expressions showing women's power in terms of spatial dimension. Another type of sentence used in this anthology is interrogative sentences. In the story Foon (Dust), an interrogative sentence is used by the main character to show women's negotiating power for justice. Lastly, the other type of sentence is imperative sentences that are used in the story Ya (Grandma) to control thoughts and behaviors of family members with clear orders.

When considering all the three language techniques used in the anthology of short stories, *Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)* by Ummisalam Umar which consists of 10 short stories, it can be seen that the writer reflects concepts of how humans maintain their existence and that their communication can affect their own as well as others' thoughts and emotions. The language used for communication is usually associated with the speaker's or the character's environments. For instance, characters who are local villagers usually use words with direct meanings which sometimes seem to be somewhat violent but they communicate with clear meanings while a character who is a student uses words with indirect meanings and is careful with the use of words as they can cause adverse reactions if used in public. This emphasizes that a person's status can affect the use of language; people with different statuses use language differently as a result of how they have been socialized and acquired their mindsets. It can be said that the language techniques used in the anthology of short stories, *Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)* by Ummisalam Umar gives the readers vivid imaginations that enhances their leisure reading.

### **Recommendations**

The analysis of language techniques used to reflect concepts in the anthology of short stories, "*Klang Phung Phae Lang Hak (Amidst a Herd of Broken-backed Goats)*" by Ummisalam Umar is only one example of language use the characters employ to present thoughts relating to human life experience. Thus, further studies can be conducted on other aspects such as speech acts of apology in fictions as it is one way of learning about culture reflected in language use in daily life in Thai society.

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***From Solitary to Shared Experience: Lessons from Running a  
University-wide Reading Programme***

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**Abstract**

Reading in the second or foreign language is not an easy task for students, but it is undoubtedly an effective way to enhance students' reading proficiency. Voluntary reading programmes are commonly used to foster ESL/EFL learners' leisure reading habit to enhance their language proficiency, but the challenge lies in encouraging students to participate in such programmes. The READ@PolyU common reading programme is the only one of its kind in the public higher education sector in Hong Kong. A partnership between the university's English Language Centre and the Library, this campus-wide reading programme rallies the student population to read a common English language book each year, and hosts a series of events to engage student readers. While it takes its cues from similar reading programmes in the west (namely US and Canada), it has, over the past seven years, evolved into a unique offering in the city of Hong Kong. This session aims to offer insights on the challenges and logistics of running a common book reading programme from both a language and a library perspective. Learn from the language teacher's experience on book selection and reading group development, and from the librarian's experience with administering publicity, outreach, and logistics of the reading programme. Programme evaluation and outcomes on students' reading and university experience will also be presented to show how reading can both be transformed from an independent activity to an interdependent learning experience in such a programme.

**Keywords:** recreational reading, reading habit, reading programme

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## Introduction

The campus-wide reading program of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, READ@PolyU, is poised to enter its ninth consecutive year of programming in September 2019. Piloted in 2011, it remains the only program of its kind among the universities in Hong Kong. Since its inception, READ@PolyU has selected eight common books in English, run over 70 events, and engaged over 15,000 students in the effort to cultivate a student reading habit and bring a love of reading to campus. The authors wish to share the lessons learned from running a community reading program in the Asian and L2 context.

The READ@PolyU program was modelled after the generic One City One Book programs that have evolved over the last twenty years. Various known as community-wide reads, city-wide book clubs, or state-wide reading campaigns, these projects engage everyone to read the same book and to join other readers in talking about it. The original One City One Book program was initiated in 1998 by librarian Nancy Pearl of the Seattle Public Library and Washington Center of the Book. The program sought to scale the interest generated by book discussion groups and author events to the city level (Library Journal, April 2002; American Libraries, May 2005). The program has since been introduced across the U.S.A. and around the world.

Like the One City One Book programs, READ@PolyU rallies the student population to read a common English language book, and brings readers together in a series of engagement events. It shares with other reading programmes the common book, reading groups, book giveaway, seminars, film screenings, and author talks. In addition to these components, READ@PolyU also features a Library Exhibition, writing contest, and integration in the university curriculum via a freshman seminar.

## Our Context

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) is one of eight government-funded universities in Hong Kong and the third largest by enrolment. Of its 30,000 students, the majority (57%) are enrolled in undergraduate programmes, with the rest in postgraduate master's and doctorate programs. An overwhelming majority of students (79%) are local students, 15% from Mainland China, Taiwan, and Macau, and the remaining from overseas countries.

Although the majority of students are Chinese, they do not share the same proficiency in English. English is widely considered a second language for Hong Kong and Macau students whose L1 is Cantonese, and a foreign language for Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese students whose L1 is Mandarin or other Chinese dialects. For some students, arrival at university, where English is the medium of instruction, can be a culture shock.

Students are not confident readers in general. In 2017, the majority of freshmen (84%) reported being the first generation university-goers. There is clear evidence, however, that they face multiple barriers to adapting to the new linguistic, educational, and cultural environment and in mixing with students from different backgrounds. Of incoming students, only 31.6% rated themselves as being strong, or very strong, in English.

Students overwhelmingly view themselves as non-readers, and usually feel guilty or apologetic about not reading on a regular basis in either their L1 or L2. Students tend to hold common misconceptions about reading, such as the need to finish one book before starting another, that reading only applies to classical literature, and that reading non-literary genres such as comics and magazines, or that any form of online reading, do not constitute “real” reading. In other words, reading in L2 is a challenge for most students who face barriers in picking up an English book for recreational reading.

### **Program Goals**

Articulating program goals is an important exercise. Program goals allow you to communicate your vision to your supporters, sponsors, partners, colleagues, and your reading public. Librarians have differed in their view of what could be achieved in a community read program. Nancy Pearl, the librarian who started One City One Book, expressed the potential for such a program to achieve civic goals, with her “hope...that it’s a unifying experience in a city that’s very, very diverse...a way of bringing people together” (Seattle Times, November 5, 1998). The civic role of a community reading program was echoed by the Commissioner of Chicago Public Library, Mary Dempsey, who said of One Book, One Chicago in 2002: “If you can get a city excited about a book or even disagreeing about a book, then you’ve made a significant contribution to the cultural life of that city” (Library Journal, 2002).

At its eight-year inflection point, READ@PolyU decided to step back and revisit its original goal of “bringing a reading culture to campus”. The timing was informed by the formation of a new team of librarians and language instructors taking on lead roles in program coordination. After consultations with students and faculty, the program rearticulated a new set of goals. The mission to “promote a reading culture via a campus-wide reading program” remained unchanged, but the a new and ambitious vision was articulated: “To build an empathetic, imaginative, and courageous community of learners and global citizens for whom reading is a source of knowledge and creativity.”

The program goals attempt to situate READ@PolyU within the university context. By aligning with the university’s new strategic plan, READ@PolyU has signaled its intention to work with campus stakeholders to meet shared goals to enhance the student learning experience and provide an international and inclusive campus ambience. The new goals have re-energized the administrative team, and it is expected that in the process of disseminating them more widely the reading community will also be inspired.

### **Program Impact**

In addition to documenting the measurable data of a reading program, coordinators can reflect upon ways to capture thick data through student descriptions and reflections and images of student engagement.

The Reading Groups, or Book Chat Groups as they were named, were an area of the program that the READ@PolyU team felt were significant if undersubscribed. An average of 250 students joined a Reading Group each year, a modest number when

compared with target numbers such as the 2,700 incoming PolyU freshmen or the 2,000 or so books distributed. Thick data gathered from participants helped deliver to program administrators additional evidence and depth of meaning, supplying a picture of what was happening inside the closed groups and how students were actually experiencing READ@PolyU.

Beginning in 2017, two new questions were built into the post-programme survey asking students to identify, and describe the impact of, their “peak moments” in the reading groups. The questions were “What was the most memorable moment during the Book Chat Groups?” and “How did that moment impact your university or campus experience?” Using two years’ worth of data, the team analysed the responses, coded them, and drew out four broad themes characterizing the impacts of READ@PolyU. Consistently across the two years, students described how READ@PolyU afforded them: (1) a positive introduction to university life, (2) the acquisition of new soft skills, such as (3) the formation of new friendships, and (4) a motivation to read more.

(1) A positive introduction to university life

- “It surprisingly changed my entire image of university life, especially discussion methods. The event opened the first door for me to truly understand the university teaching system.” (2017/18)
- “Gave me the university feeling like I was starting a new life, very different from secondary school.” (2018/19)

(2) The acquisition of new soft skills

- “It helped me to try to understand other people more fully, to walk in their shoes and understand why they were different from me.” (2017/18)
- “The discussions were thought-provoking and helped me think more deeply about different issues during the first semester.” (2018/19)

(3) The formation of new friendships

- “I am able to meet some new friends from other faculties and years.” (2017/18)
- “The chance to communicate and build relationships with students who are different from me was really valuable.” (2018/19)

(4) A motivation to read more

- “Inspired me to pay more attention to reading both academically and non-academically.” (2017/18)
- “Joining these discussions made me see the power of reading. I want to read more.” (2018/19)

We shared these outcomes widely, in a brief report (with more visuals and fewer words) and a full report (with more thick data). We believe the community, especially Library and the English Language Centre colleagues, as well as members of the READ@PolyU Programme Committee and volunteer faculty facilitators, were informed and encouraged by these outcomes.

In addition to enhancing the post-program survey and reporting the results widely, we made an effort to capture images of students in their groups. We took care to schedule

a photographer to take snapshots of each of the 30 reading groups, and spent time selecting, sharing, and posting the photos to Flickr, the Library's photo sharing platform.

## **Book Selection**

Selecting the right book is the key to achieving the desired reach and appeal. The selection process begins with a campus-wide call for nomination, followed by shortlisting by the teaching staff of English Language Centre and the Programme committee. The shortlisted titles are then previewed by PolyU students in a mini-survey, in order to understand their responses and glean any insights to be considered in making the final selection. The Programme Committee identified a detailed list of selection criteria for selecting the common book.

### **Common Book Selection Criteria**

- The book will be in English, preferably less than 300 pages
- It should be engaging for the PolyU community
- It should be accessible, not difficult to read
- It should appeal to students' imagination, and should include some elements of exploration of and reflection on multi-cultural issues
- It should preferably have been adapted for film
- It should preferably have won international and critical acclaim
- Ideally, the author would be available to visit PolyU

Advice on book selection abounds, and the Programme Committee has kept to advice relating to making bold choices. Young adult fiction titles were popular, and in the coming year, a graphic novel has been selected.

## **The Reading Groups**

The English Language Centre (ELC) has been promoting reading for pleasure in English to enhance students' proficiency and confidence in the form of an interest club called the ELC Reading Club. Students voluntarily join small reading groups (4 to 6 students), each paired with a teaching staff from the Centre to read a book of their choice. Groups meet regularly over the semester to discuss the book. Students are offered book coupons as incentives for regular attendance and the writing of a reflection or book review. The ELC Reading Club has been popular among students, and when the university decided to launch the READ@polyU campus-wide reading programme in 2011, it was used as a model for the programme's Book Chat Groups.

Leading the discussion group is no easy task. Language teachers would be familiar with the role of a facilitator in such book discussion groups. However, if one needs to involve non-language teachers or those who are less familiar with the facilitation role, extra help should be offered to equip future facilitators to ensure the smooth running of discussions. One easy and important intervention is to provide a facilitator resource package that would include a basic plot synopsis, guiding questions, suggested activities to be used in the book discussion groups. Materials or suggested activities can be easily found online, with help from the language teaching staff.

Another important aid is to offer skills training and guidance for faculty members who volunteer as discussion group facilitators. Ways to start a discussion, elicit responses from students, use existing resources, manage group dynamics, and respond to common challenges are essential for successfully leading the discussion groups. Predicting potential issues or cultural differences that may arise from a specific book would also be useful.

## **Conclusion**

The READ@PolyU program has not always been an intuitive fit for the former polytechnic. The program has, however, been surprisingly welcomed by university students for the opportunities it has afforded to experience the social, cultural, and linguistic novelties of university life, and university learning. In spite of the difficulties, students show that they can, and do, embrace the risk of picking up an English book, reading it, and talking about it with peers and facilitators in the Reading Groups. The program is not without its challenges but has proven a worthwhile endeavor in the Asian L2 higher education context.

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## ***Combining Grammar Translation and Task-Based Language Teaching***

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### **Abstract**

In this study, we create a ‘Translation-based TBLT Activity’ where L2 learners can acquire target grammar in a communicative manner by combining the grammar translation method and the communicative approach. In this activity, learners translate the sentences whose content is relevant to their daily-life communication, which can encourage them to express their culture and identity in the L2 in terms of sociolinguistics. Therefore, the aims of this activity are not only providing the translation practice with the learners but also showing them how differently their culture and identity are expressed in the language, in other words, their individual style of the L2 use. By comparing their translations to that of native speakers, they can see the differences and learn an authentic style of L2, which leads them to explore the culture and identity of the speaker. In a model Japanese class, we introduced the activity to test this idea. In the Japanese language (TL), there are different verb forms describing different levels of formality, and people choose different forms as they take the interlocutor’s social status and relationship with them into consideration. Thus, the form selection is expected to represent the learners’ culture and identity in politeness and social relationship. The subjects are international students in a Japanese college, and they were asked to select the verb forms in the translation task according to different interlocutors. The result shows that their form selections are all different, that is, their culture and identity are reflected in their Japanese language (L2).

Keywords: Grammar Translation Method, TBLT, Sociolinguistics

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## 1. Introduction

This study will focus on language teaching methods in relation to sociolinguistics. The purpose of this study is to propose a new class activity design for L2 learning, which I call 'Translation-based TBLT Activity,' (where TBLT stands for 'translation-based language teaching') that combines the traditional grammar translation method and the communicative approach. When it comes to the development of L2 learners' accuracy, the grammar translation method is one of the most effective ways to promote it. The main idea of the method is that the learners repeatedly translate given sentences from L1 to L2 or vice versa using the target grammar until the grammar is incorporated into their L2 language system, i.e. interlanguage (Selinker, 1972). On the other hand, the method restricts the learners' autonomy by expecting them to objectively reproduce the sentences in the other language.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, people express their own culture and identity when using language, which is a true figure of communication. Concerning this, Niemeier (2014) points out that language is not only a communication tool but also reflects the context, such as the speaker's own culture and identity. However, the grammar translation method does not allow L2 learners to express their own culture and identity, which is indispensable in real communication. This is because that grammar translation method is regarded as an impractical language teaching method. On the other hand, the communicative approach, that is, the counterpart of the grammar translation method allows L2 learners to express their culture and identity by being placed in a daily-life communicative situation, so it is very practical and effective in acquiring communication skills. When it comes to grammar teaching, however, the communicative approach is ineffective since L2 learners do not have many opportunities to get feedback from the teacher, unlike the grammar translation method. As stated above, each methodology has its own advantages and disadvantages, and the advantage for one may be a disadvantage of the other. The 'Translation-based TBLT Activity' has the potential to elicit the advantages of both methods, while covering both disadvantages and it can make it possible for L2 learners to acquire the target grammar in a communicative manner and show their autonomy; in other words, express their own culture and identity in L2 use.

## 2. Activity Design

The core design structure of the activity is a translation, which aims at L2 learners' acquisition of the target grammar, while the content is based on real-life communication where L2 learners can freely express their own culture and identity in L2. In order to motivate the learners to express these, the activity settings should be familiar for them since people become expressive and communicative in their own way when they make communication with close interlocutors, such as their family and friends in the everyday environment. In regard to this, Sharma (2018) reports that bidialectal people are likely to speak their own dialect with close members in their community. That is to say, those people express their culture and identity in daily-life communication, which is also true in the case of L2 learners. Thus, a real-life-setting-based communicative approach can illustrate how L2 learners' culture and identity emerge in their L2 use, which is reflected in their style of language use, and how different the style is from that of a native speaker.

In light of this, a combination of the grammar translation method and TBLT, called the ‘Translation-based TBLT Activity’, is proposed. TBLT is one of the most frequently used communicative approaches to encourage L2 learners to use authentic L2 in a real-life conversational situation in which a given objective is set up and the learners are required to achieve it through communication such as shopping at a store and reserving a hotel room. Although TBLT usually indicates oral communication, the proposed activity is designed for L2 learners to participate in written communication with the target grammar/expressions.

### ***Aims of the activity***

(1) Development of the target grammar in a communicative manner:  
As Cook (2010) argues that the translation task and activity should be implemented communicatively, the content and goal of the translation task are set based on daily-life conversational situations so that the learners can work in a communicative manner. Further, the learners compare and analyze their translation with the group members before receiving the teacher’s feedback, which helps them to have a proactive attitude for grammar study and to consider how and why they translated the sentences.

(2) Learning the native speaker’s style of L2 use:  
By comparing the learners’ to the native speaker’s translations, the learners can understand an authentic style of L2 use (specifically, target grammar). Through learning it, they can also explore the L2 speaker’s culture and identity, which plays a role in cross-cultural learning.

### ***Flow of the activity***

- (1) The teacher sets the communicative setting and prepares the sentences for translation (into L2) based on the context. The point is that the context should be familiar in order for the learners to regard the situation as real-life communication.
- (2) The teacher needs to arrange the parts where the learners are expected to use the target grammar.
- (3) The learners work on the translation activity individually.
- (4) The learners compare and analyze their own translation to the native speaker’s translation with the teacher and classmates (group discussion).
- (5) The teacher checks and corrects the students’ translation (feedback).

### ***Model of the activity***

I introduced the activity as a model case in my Japanese class in February 2019. In this activity, the students select verb forms with different levels of formality according to the interlocutor’s social status and relationship with them, and it is expected that the form selections reflect their own culture and identity (in this case, mostly in politeness and social relationship); that is, their style of Japanese use, which can be different from that of a Japanese native speaker.

Regarding these forms of the Japanese language, there are basically four types with different grammatical structures: honorific forms, humble forms, polite forms, and

casual forms. In this study, these forms are categorized into three groups in terms of the levels of formality as below.

**Respectful language group:** honorific/humble forms

- These forms are used to show respect to the interlocutor. The honorific form is used for the actions performed by the interlocutor, while the humble form is used for the actions performed by the learners. These forms are the most formal.

**Formal language group:** polite forms

- These forms are also used to show respect to the interlocutor, but the level of formality of this form is lower than that of the honorific/humble forms.

**Informal language group:** casual forms

- These forms are used to show friendliness to the interlocutor, so the level of formality is the lowest among these forms.

***Subjects' profile***

- Participants: 12 international college students in Japan
- Nationality: Chinese, Taiwanese, Vietnamese, Mongolian, Bangladeshi, Nepali, American, German, French
- Japanese level: Intermediate ~ Advanced
- Target grammar: honorific/humble forms, polite forms, and casual forms

The following shows the details of the activity.

(1) **Class content:** Use of verb forms in different levels of formality

**Target grammar:** Honorific/humble, polite and casual forms

(2) **Setting:**

The students send an email to three different people at the college: *the college president, a close staff member, and a friend*. The students translate the same email sentences to each person, with the level of formality varying depending on the relationship distance with the recipient. The purpose of the email is to invite them to a school event as an organizer. The sentences to be translated are as follows.

-----  
Hello. I'm (your name).

We will have a school event next week and would like to invite you.  
In this event, we will introduce foreign cultures and serve international food

Further, our special guest, the Vice President will sing a song for us!  
Also, we will have a karaoke competition and select the best singer.

The event will start at 1 PM in the gym on February 4<sup>th</sup>.  
I hope you can join our event and have fun with us.

-----

(3) **Form selection:**

The students need to select the forms in the translation according to each recipient's different social status and the relationship with them.

(4) **Group discussion:**

The students compare the differences of their translation with their classmates' and also with the native speaker's translation, which leads them to learn an authentic style of language use, including the target grammar.

### 3. Case Study

To show how differently the students express their cultural and social context through the form selections, I will analyze the differences between two subjects (a Chinese and a French student). The outcome is described below.

Figure 1: Usage Percentage of Each Form in the E-mail



Note: Usage Percentage of the Form = (Number of the Form)/ (Number of All Forms)

The index number indicates the usage percentage of each form which is calculated by dividing the number of all forms in the email by that of the particular form in the email. In the case of the Chinese student's form selection for *the college president*, for example, the usage percentage of honorific/humble forms is around 60 percent while that of the polite form is about 40 percent (that of the casual form is 0 percent).

#### **Data Analysis**

Looking firstly at the case of the president, both students chose honorific/humble and polite forms and combined these forms to make the sentences. Hence, their form selections are similar to each other even though the usage percentage of each form is different. Considering the president's social status in a college, it is natural for the

students to choose honorific/humble forms, so their form selections, in this case, seem to follow the Japanese cultural and social context.

On the other hand, there is a big difference in the form selections for the cases of the close staff members and friends. In both cases, the Chinese student chose the polite form 100 percent of the time, while the French student chose the casual form across the board. Looking at the difference from another perspective, the Chinese student prioritized the official relationship with the event organizer over the personal one, which is a similar perspective as that of the Japanese. On the other hand, the French student prioritized the personal relationship with the friend over the official one. This describes the differences in the style of Japanese language use between these two students, that is, their culture and identity in politeness and social relationships.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In language pedagogy, it is very important for L2 learners to improve both accuracy and fluency. Although the ‘classic’ grammar translation method can lead the learners to improve their accuracy precisely and smoothly, the method still lacks practicality in real-life communication. However, the Translation-based TBLT Activity, which introduces the elements of one of the communicative approaches, i.e. TBLT, can encourage the learners to improve both accuracy and fluency at the same time. Further, the method can also provide the opportunity to explore the L2/other language speaker’s culture and identity, and to reconfirm their own culture and identity through comparing their translations and understanding authentic styles of Japanese language use. In fact, another communicative aspect of the activity is to promote the learners’ discussion (communication) on how and why the context of the speaker’s culture and identity appears in the form selections, which may differ from their classmates and teacher.

Apart from this study, the research will be continued by collecting more data. Although the data of the Chinese and the French students was qualitatively compared and analyzed in the case study, it can be possible to quantitatively do so after enough data is collected. Further, I will classify the subjects by their L1, age, gender, proficiency of Japanese, etc. in order to compare and analyze how differently the subjects make grammar errors and select the form(s) from multiple perspectives. This will lead to clarification and allow for categorization of the error patterns and the contexts of the speaker’s culture and identity, that is, the style of Japanese language use. Based on this analysis, it is expected that the teacher can provide an individual learning methodology with an individual student in consideration of his/her error patterns and the style of Japanese language use. I believe that the methodology based on the data will be very effective for Japanese language learners to improve their proficiency dramatically. This research will also provide an activity model so that other language teachers can also introduce the activity, collect data, and improve their teaching methodology for their students.

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***The Practice and Effects of Integrating Literature Circles and Mobile  
Instant-messaging Technology in ELT***

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**Abstract**

Research has found significant advantages of using classroom literature circles, where small groups of students read the same text and then take different role responsibilities in their fully face-to-face discussion around the text; however, more and more studies have shown that in today's technological world, virtual literature circles integrated with the Internet and various forms of communication technology are growing rapidly in popularity. LINE, the fastest growing mobile instant-messaging app, seems to have great potential to facilitate the role-based, peer-led discussions of virtual literature circles, but there is still little empirical research regarding the use of this mobile application as a communication tool to complete learning-related tasks. The present study describes a blended literature circle project implemented in my teaching of a *Freshman English* course, in which three face-to-face literature circles were conducted in the classroom to help the students get familiar with this new learning format, especially the discussion roles, before they had out-of-class, synchronous literature circle discussions via LINE. A questionnaire survey and semi-structured interviews were conducted to investigate the students' learning experiences of and responses to this project. It was found that the majority of the participants thought very positively of the integration of literature circles and LINE and agreed that such integration had increased their motivation to read the literary text and get engaged in the structured role-based discussion about it.

Keywords: literature circles, LINE, ELT

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## Introduction

The literature circle (LC), originating from the L1 classroom and used as a powerful and effective way to get L1 learners actively engaged in the process of interacting around literary books and ideas with their peers, has drawn a lot of attention in the ELT community and has been adapted, modified and implemented in different ESL/EFL contexts since its initial success in the field of L1 literacy education (Samway & Whang, 1996). According to Daniels, literature circles are “small, temporary discussion groups” who choose to read the same short story or novel and discuss it regularly, with “discussion roles” rotating each session and guiding the reading and discussion process (1994: 13). Traditionally, members of a literature circle meet face to face to have role-based structured discussion on the reading material; however, with the rapid development and application of technology in educational settings, a number of changes have been made to this traditional LC approach over the years. For example, the reading materials are not limited to paper-based ones only and it is now possible to have the discussion held synchronously or asynchronously by means of online communication tools or mobile-based applications (Cavanaugh, 2006; Whittingham, 2013; Sun *et al.*, 2018).

To motivate my students of non-English major to read and discuss in English, I have been using literature circles with these EFL learners for over ten years, first in the traditional classroom and then on the Internet. Although I enjoyed watching, listening to, and even participating in my students’ face-to-face LC discussions in class, I soon realized that it would take up too much of the class time and couldn’t help but ask the students to have the discussion face to face outside the classroom. However, a lot of complaints about how difficult it could be to gather group members majoring in different subjects and having very difficult schedules made me start to consider the possibility of allowing the students to have the discussion in an online environment, such as chat rooms, discussion forums and Skype.

Not feeling satisfied with the online communication tools mentioned above and noticing the popularity of using LINE, among Taiwanese university students, I decided to had this mobile instant-messaging application integrated into a blended literature circle project designed to help my students get familiar with the LC roles and tasks in their face-to-face discussion in class, so that they would have more confidence in performing their assigned role tasks in their out-of-class LC discussion via LINE. This paper describes how LINE was used in this blended LC project implemented in my teaching of an intermediate-level *Freshman English* course and reports how my Taiwanese students of non-English majors responded to the integration of literature circles and LINE.

## Integrating LINE into the Blended LC Project

Based on my experience of using literature circles with my students, I found it problematic to have them discuss the reading material only in class or only out of class. When allowing all the LC discussions to be conducted face to face in class, I often ended up with not having enough class time for my teaching of the textbook or other language learning materials. However, having the students discuss what they had read out of class only, either face to face or online, sometimes made them feel confused or disoriented as they tried to perform their role tasks or interact with one

another in the discussion process. Thus, a blended literature circle project was designed and implemented to enable my students without any LC experience to get familiar with their group members and the discussion roles in the five face-to-face meetings in class, with the teacher's presence and guidance, before they started to have five out-of-class synchronous virtual LC discussions by sending instant text-based messages or making voice calls via LINE, which has been the most popular mobile instant-messaging application among my students in recent years but is seldom used for learning-related purposes. It was also expected that this blended approach would maximize the benefits of both face-to-face and online interactions in small groups.

Before this ten-week blended LC project was put into practice, a lot of preparation work had to be completed. First of all, thirty authentic English short stories had been carefully pre-selected and posted on a LC blog. Next, groups of five or six were formed, and the role-based LC discussion format, as well as the discussion roles, including Discussion Director, Summarizer, Investigator, Connector, Word Wizard and Passage Master, was introduced to the class. Then, each group would choose one of the stories to read and discuss each week, face to face in class in the first five weeks and then via LINE in the following five weeks, with the discussion roles rotated regularly among members of the group. After each discussion was finished, the students had to fill in an evaluation form to reflect on the LC reading and discussion experience and think about how to improve it the next time. In addition, the discussion record, either in the form of a video file recorded during face-to-face discussion or an MS Word document with all the text-based messages exchanged or an audio file recorded during the synchronous discussion via LINE, had to be submitted.

### **Researching into Students' Responses to the Integration of LINE and LCs**

The participants were forty Taiwanese university students of non-English major taking my intermediate-level *Freshman English* course, and to explore and investigate the benefits and problems of integrating LCs and LINE from these students' perspectives, a questionnaire survey and semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted after the project was completed.

The questionnaire data showed that the majority of the participants thought positively of their experience of using LINE for their LC discussion, and agreed that the use of LINE had increased their motivation to participate in the out-of-class group discussions. The interview data further revealed the major benefits of such integration, including: having more time to think and respond to the others' words, having less trouble finding the right time for all the members to discuss the reading outside the classroom, feeling more confident and less embarrassed to share one's own thoughts of and responses to a literary text, making it easier to use English only during the discussion, understanding the others' words easily and fully, and making it possible to sharing images, files, and online information with group members quickly and easily.

On the other hand, the problems of integrating LINE and LCs were often mentioned by the interviewees. Most of the problems were time-related issues. For example, it was considered more time-consuming to have the LC discussion via LINE than face to face because some members typed slowly, failed to show up on time, were busy

dealing with something else at the same time, or suddenly disappeared for some reason. In addition, some interviewees complained that technical problems caused by someone's mobile phone or the Internet connection could interrupt the discussion process. It is worth noting that a few students mentioned that they would prefer to "talk" to their group members via LINE but it was easier to get discussion records ready for submission if they exchanged text-based instant messages rather than making voice calls, which had to be transcribed by the recorder.

## **Conclusion**

It is hoped that the findings of the study will identify the major benefits and problems of using LINE for LC discussions from the participants' perspectives and thus provide empirical data to help instructors decide whether to use LINE for LC or the other kind of small-group discussion outside the classroom and how to do it effectively. However, there are limitations of the study, such as a small number of participants, one genre of literature used, and only ten-week implementation of the project, which make it hard to generalize a conclusion from the findings. It is suggested that further research might compare the effectiveness of sending text-based messages and making voice calls via LINE during LC discussions or compare the practice and outcomes of using LINE and the other mobile-based instant-messaging app for LC discussions.

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