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On behalf of the organizing committee, I would like to welcome all of you to the Fourth International Conference on Foreign Language Learning and Teaching (FLLT2016). Since its inception in 2009, it has been a tradition for this conference to encourage and inspire collaboration between TESOL and SLA researchers. In addition, as our Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, or LEARN Journal has recently been indexed in TCI (Thailand Citation Index) and ACI (ASEAN Citation Index), we’d like to take this opportunity to celebrate its success. Like our LEARN Journal, FLLT 2016 provides a forum for language learning academics specializing in both education-based and knowledge-based research, to contribute their findings and ideas. Thus, for this distinguished event, the selection of topics for paper presentations was performed with the goal of ensuring them to be wide-ranging and diverse. We hope that this diversity will lead to further research in language teaching, learning, and ultimately, a greater understanding of the development of an L1/L2.

Coinciding with the achievements of our LEARN journal, the Language Institute is in the midst of celebrating its 30 year anniversary. This means that this years’ FLLT conference provides us with a great opportunity to honor our accomplishments. The exhibits you can find in the hallway display our faculty’s extensive interests and publications. If you’d like to know more about any research done on behalf of the Language Institute, you are most welcome to contact the authors.
Regarding the oral presentations that will take place today and tomorrow, I’d like to state how pleased we are at the overwhelming response we have received from both the local and international research community. We have no doubt that all of you will discover interesting and informative talks from the nearly 80 topics that have been selected. Learner Autonomy, On-line Technology, Corpus-based Analysis, Lexical and Grammatical Acquisition, Reading & Reflections, and Language Assessment are just some of the topics that are sure to interest you. The selected abstracts represent studies that are of high quality, both theoretically and methodologically. Moreover, our plenary and featured speakers have graciously contributed to the program.

Of course, FLLT 2016 would not have been possible without the involvement of several parties. First of all, I would like to thank all Vice Directors of the Language Institute, especially Dr. Supakorn Phoocharoensil, the Program Chair, and the organizing committee members for their valuable time and tremendous effort. In addition, I am extremely grateful to the abstract review committee for their careful assessments and constructive comments. I would also like to thank in advance the conference proceedings committee, who will work with the editors following the conference to complete an on-line version. There will be more assistance from the Language Institute’s faculty, staff, and graduate students working on-site throughout these two days. I would like to thank them all in advance as well. I also gratefully acknowledge sponsorships from Macmillan Publishers (Thailand), DK Today, the Institute of International Education, SE-EDucation PLC, Book Access Co. Ltd., Pearson Indochina Co. Ltd., McGraw-Hill Education, Grolier International Inc., Scholastic, Oxford University Press, and Cambridge University Press. Finally, I would like to thank all of the FLLT participants for your interest, your support and your contribution. I wish you a pleasant and productive time, a memorable experience, and continued success in your academic endeavors.

With best wishes,

Associate Professor Pornsiri Singhapreecha (Ph.D.)
Director of the Language Institute of Thammasat University
FLLT2016 Chairperson
Crosslinguistic Influence: What can Indonesian Students Benefit from Their Mother Tongue in Learning English?

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Abstract
It is widely accepted that many second language learners possess complete knowledge of their first language before they begin learning the additional one. Therefore, previous language knowledge is an important source of influence on second language acquisition as it may impede or facilitate second language learning. In Indonesia, where English is learnt as a foreign language, somehow learners get frustrated in learning the target language because a number of aspects in English are spectacularly different from the way their mother tongue works. Indonesian students must struggle to deal with problems in language aspects such as grammar, spelling and pronunciation which may result in errors. While many recent studies in Indonesia mostly address how crosslinguistic influence among Indonesian students can impede their English learning, it is also necessary to examine how this crosslinguistic influence can facilitate learning. Against this background, this paper is aimed at discussing how Indonesian students can benefit from their mother tongue in learning English. Supported with relevant evidence, we present our further arguments about what aspects in Bahasa Indonesia can be used to facilitate English language learning.

Keywords: Second language acquisition, Crosslinguistic influence, Positive transfer

1. Introduction

As global communication expands, the need for learning English also increases significantly today. For Indonesian students in particular, English is learnt as a foreign language which is highly needed in many important aspects of life. The widespread use of English obligates Indonesian students to learn this language in order to survive and grow in this tough competitive world. Being proficient in English can be a passport for their advanced knowledge, better careers, and much better life in the global context.

In the study of second language acquisition (SLA), it is widely accepted that second language learners possess knowledge of their first language before they begin learning an additional one. For that reason, previous language knowledge is an important source of influence on SLA as it may impede or facilitate second language learning. With regard to this issue, learning English can be so challenging for Indonesian students because a number of the target language are spectacularly
different from the way their mother tongue works. As the learners have already possessed knowledge of their mother tongue (L1), which in the Indonesian context is referred to Bahasa Indonesia, their pre-existing knowledge can influence interlanguage development by accelerating or delaying their progress in learning English (L2).

In order to understand the L1 influence on L2 learning, one needs to deal with language transfer which commonly caused by perceived L1-L2 similarities as well as by L1-L2 differences. It is strongly believed that structural similarities may lead to facilitation while differences may cause interferences. For example, Indonesian students may mistakenly say ‘a car red’ instead of ‘a red car’ because there are different rules in constructing a noun phrase between Bahasa Indonesia and English. In this case, their L1 negative transfer occurs and interferes in their L2 learning.

While many recent studies in Indonesia mostly address how crosslinguistic influence among Indonesian students can impede their English learning, it is also necessary to examine how this influence can facilitate English learning. Against this background, this paper is aimed at discussing what Indonesian students can benefit from their mother tongue in learning English. Further arguments about what aspects in Bahasa Indonesia can be used to facilitate English language learning are presented with relevant evidence.

2. Literature Review
   a. Crosslinguistic Influence
   As mentioned by Ortega (2013, p. 31), the term ‘crosslinguistic influence’ has displaced the older term ‘interference’ in contemporary SLA discourse. This is intended to prevent unwanted implication that knowledge of the first language hinders L2 development because in fact, crosslinguistic influence can have positive as well as negative consequences for L2 learning. In addition, knowledge of the L1 may impact on L2 acquisition subtly and selectively, sometimes resulting in different negative and positive consequences for different learner L1 backgrounds, at different phases of development or proficiency, and for different areas of the L2. One example of crosslinguistic influence is that, for a native speaker of Spanish who is learning English, crosslinguistic influence may lead to Spanish-sounding pronunciation when speaking English, e.g. pronouncing ‘zoo’ like ‘soo’ or somehow can lead to comprehension of Spanish words which look or sound similar to English words, e.g. ‘turista’ = ‘tourist.’

   b. Contrastive Analysis
   Contrastive Analysis (CA) is well defined by Brown (2000, p. 207) as the study of contrasts between the native language and the target language. It is believed that systematic L1-L2 comparisons can allow researchers and language teachers to predict when negative transfer will occur and what errors will be produced by a particular L1 background groups of L2 learners (Ortega, 201331). Furthermore, as pointed out by Lado (1957, p. 2), in the comparison between native and foreign languages lies the key to ease or difficulties in foreign language learning. Those elements which are
similar to the learners’ native language will be simple for them and those elements which are different will be difficult.

Based on structuralist linguistics, CA focuses on the surface forms of both L1 and L2 systems and describes then compares the languages on the same level (Saville-Troike, 2005, p. 34). A bottom-up priority is generally used to contrast, starting from the phonology, morphology, syntax then to the discourse of the L1 and L2. According to Fries (1945: 3), the bottom-up priority is a very clear method to learn a language because the first thing to do in language learning is the mastery of the sound system followed by the mastery of the features of arrangement that form the structure of the language. By implication, learners should also learn the sound system and features of their L1 and L2 to master the target language.

On the other hand, in behaviourist psychology, CA deals with the way learners respond to the language. According to Saville-Troike (2005), learners try to respond towards the linguistic input as the stimulus and reinforce the response. Imitating and then repeating the language are common ways that the learners respond to the language. The reinforcement of the response is then termed as the learning process. So, the more learners practice the language in their daily life, the more proficient they become.

#### c. L1 Transfer

As stated by Ortega (2013, p. 33), in order to understand L1 transfer, one needs to go beyond L1-L2 correspondences. Transfer can be caused by perceived L1-L2 similarities as well as by L1-L2 differences which facilitates the L1. For transfer to occur, according to Odlin (2003, p. 454), learners have to make an interlingual identification as the judgment that something in the native language and something in the target language are similar.

There are two cases of transfer in crosslinguistic influence namely positive transfer and negative transfer. Positive transfer occurs when the same structure of the L1 and L2 is appropriated in both languages (Saville-Troike, 2005: 35). It means that the transfer of elements acquired in the L1 can facilitate the L2 learning. If some parts of the grammatical aspect in the L1 are similar to those in the L2 for example, positive transfer may occur when learners are producing grammatically correct sentences in English and, therefore, it can give them an extra advantage in their L2 learning.

Negative transfer, on the other hand, occurs when learners use L1 structures inappropriately in the L2 (Saville-Troike, 2005, p. 35). It can be manifested in errors which occur at all levels of language, from information structures, to pragmatics, to thinking-for-speaking. If some parts of the phonological aspect in the L1 are very much different from those in the L2, for example, negative transfer may occur when learners are pronouncing some words or phrases in English and, therefore, it can hinder their L2 learning.

Both positive and negative consequences of L1 transfer have been documented across diverse areas of L2 learning. A good example is a study conducted by Jarvis (2002) in
which he investigated the use of the English article system among Finnish-dominant and Swedish-dominant students who learn English at schools. In fact, Swedish, like English, has articles, whereas Finnish does not. It was revealed that L1 influences from Swedish provided the Finland Swedes with an overall advantage in accuracy of using the and zero article over the Finnish-speaking learners. Swedes with only two years of English instruction showed 86% accuracy in their use of the English indefinite article and 98% in their use of the English definite article. This can be in part explained by the similarities that English and Swedish exhibit in their article systems.

Another example is a carefully designed study by Eckman (2004). This study investigated the case of voiced and voiceless stops in English and German. Both English and German have the same set of voiced and voiceless consonants. However, in English, both types of consonants can appear in the word-final position, whereas in German, voiced stops do not occur in this position and all voiced consonants in the final position are pronounced as voiceless. Therefore, for example, the voiced consonant ‘g’ in ‘tag’ (‘day’) is actually pronounced as a ‘k’ in German. In the early stages of L2 development, L1 German learners of English commonly have some difficulties with English words like ‘wave’ and ‘tab’ that end in voiced consonants. They will often pronounce these two words as ‘wafe’ and ‘taph’ in what is a direct transfer of the devoicing rule from their L1.

3. Methodology

This qualitative study was aimed at exploring what Indonesian students can benefit from their mother tongue in learning English. It was conducted in a general English class consisting of 20 college students in Yogyakarta. The data were collected through observations, interviews, and document analyses. Therefore, observation sheets, interview guidelines, and some documents were used as the instruments to collect the data. To address the main issue of crosslinguistic influence, the data collection was focused on positive transfer of several linguistic aspects in Bahasa Indonesia which can be used to facilitate English language learning. The collected data were then analyzed qualitatively using descriptive analysis.

4. Findings and Discussion

There are four linguistic aspects found in the study about crosslinguistic influence among Indonesian college students including morphology, syntax, phonology, and sociolinguistics. Each of the aspects is discussed as follows.

**Morphology**

The first aspect to discuss is morphology which deals with the process of word formation and structure such as affixation, derivation, inflection, and other similar things. In fact, some parts of the morphological process in Indonesian language are similar to those in English. Firstly, both Bahasa Indonesia and English have rules in affixation by adding a letter or group of letters to the beginning (prefixes) or end of a word (suffixes) to make a new word. Although the rules of affixation in English are
different to some extent from those in Bahasa Indonesia, the idea of this affixation can be an advantage for Indonesian students. They should realize that there is something to do with word formation in English and that they need to be careful about learning what and how to add affixes, for example, to form a noun from an adjective, a verb from a noun and so forth.

Secondly, both Bahasa Indonesia and English have the idea of plural to express nouns of more than one. English expresses plural implicitly by adding inflection -s or -es and also other rules for particular words, while the Indonesian language expresses plural explicitly by reduplicating the word. The students should be aware of this difference and make use of it in order to prevent negative transfer from their L1 to L2.

Some examples of the morphological process between Bahasa Indonesia and English are given in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morphological Aspects</th>
<th>Mother tongue (Bahasa Indonesia)</th>
<th>Target language (English)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affixations (prefixes and suffixes in adjectives, nouns and verbs)</td>
<td>sakit (adj) penyakit (n) kecantikan (n) mempercantik (v) mewawancara (v) pewawancara (n) memotivasi (v) motivasi (n) Sekolah-sekolah Buku-buku</td>
<td>sick (adj) sickness (n) beauty (n) beautify (v) interview (v) interviewer (n) motivate (v) motivation (n) Schools Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plural at nouns</td>
<td>*Note: Exceptions for particular nouns, e.g. mouse → mice man → men child → children</td>
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Syntax
The next aspect is related to syntax. Regarding the syntactic level, there are some similarities between Bahasa Indonesia and English on how sentences are structured. In fact, the basic order for both Bahasa Indonesia and English consists of Noun Phrase and Verb Phrase (S = NP.VP). However, in many cases, the order of sentence structures in Bahasa Indonesia can be more flexibly put together.

Some examples of syntactic similarities between Bahasa Indonesia and English are given in the table below:
**Mother tongue**
(Bahasa Indonesia)  
| Saya biasanya pergi ke kampus jam 7 pagi.  
| Dapatkah saya berbicara dengan Isabel?  
| Mengapa kamu sedih?  
| Paman saya pergi ke London minggu kemarin.  
| Andy diundang ke pernikahan temannya sabtu kemarin. |

| **Target language**
(English)       |
| I usually go to campus at 7 o’clock in the morning.  
| Can I speak to Isabel?  
| Why are you sad?  
| My uncle went to London last week.  
| Andy was invited to his friend’s wedding last Saturday. |

It can be seen from the table that basically, some sentence constructions in Bahasa Indonesia and English are quite similar. This similarity can help the students learn grammatical rules in English more easily, but still there are some exceptions for sentences with more complex components. Of course, the construction for complex sentences can be very much different between these two languages, and the students should be aware of this difference.

**Phonology**
In the phonological aspect, the students can take advantage of pronunciation similarities between Bahasa Indonesia and English. There are many words in Bahasa Indonesia and English which are similarly pronounced. Furthermore, today there have been many more English terms adopted and widely spoken by Indonesian people as a result of assimilation. Such similarities in the phonological aspect can help students comprehend a wide range of English vocabulary more easily with intelligible pronunciation.

The following table provides some examples of phonological similarities between Bahasa Indonesia and English.
The last aspect to discuss is related to the phenomenon of code-mixing or hybridization which belongs to the study of sociolinguistics. This phenomenon is now becoming increasingly popular among communities in Indonesia including college students. In this globalized world, code-mixing is unavoidably used by the students both in their daily conversations and academic situations. The students deliberately mix English words or phrases together with their mother tongue (Bahasa Indonesia). Some examples of code-mixing commonly used by the students are given in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Aspects</th>
<th>Mother tongue (Bahasa Indonesia)</th>
<th>Target language (English)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code Mixing (Hybridization)</td>
<td>Thank you banget. Da-daah, have fun yah! Ayo kita come on! Follow Instagram aku yah. Don’t forget, nanti chat me. Sorry, please maafin aku.</td>
<td>Thank you so much. Ta-ta/Goodbye, have fun! Come on, let’s go, guys! Please follow my Instagram. Don’t forget to chat me later. I’m sorry, forgive me, please.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While the use of code-mixing has rapidly become the trend among college students today, it has also become a matter for debate because of its benefits and drawbacks. The more the students use code-mixing in their daily conversations, the more familiar they become with English words or phrases. It can also lead to successful learning as the students quickly recognize the words or phrases they hear or read and then grasp the meanings easily. However, it can be a problem if the students use code-mixing too often while they are expected to use Standard English. Some criticisms are provided to this phenomenon because it is considered as a threat to Indonesian national identity. The use of code-mixing between Bahasa Indonesia and English may destroy the Indonesian language standard. Above all, code-mixing should be viewed as a positive phenomenon in which learners are appreciating and learning English. It
can be a part of the learning process that they have to experience before mastering English completely.

5. Conclusion

It is important to keep in mind that L1 knowledge can give positive as well as negative consequences for L2 learning. The negative effects of L1 knowledge are much more noticeable and have been more often investigated. In fact, knowledge of the L1 can also have a positive impact on the rate of L2 learning. Systematic L1-L2 comparisons are therefore necessary to examine what aspects in the L1 can be used to facilitate L2 learning. By comparing the differences and similarities that lie between Bahasa Indonesia and English, we can have a clear picture about which aspects may hinder L2 learning and which can facilitate L2 learning.

In this paper, some linguistic areas of Bahasa Indonesia as the mother tongue in Indonesia have been explored in response to the positive effects of crosslinguistic influence. We have also discussed four linguistic aspects including morphology, syntax, phonology, and sociolinguistics together with examples contextually occurring among Indonesian college students. It is important to note that, to some extent, Bahasa Indonesia and English have similar linguistic aspects in common. Even though some different rules of linguistic use exist between Bahasa Indonesia and English, as English teachers we can still make use of them to help our students realize about the positive influences of their mother tongue as an extra advantage in learning English more effectively.

The fact that the influence of the mother tongue cannot explain all phenomena in interlanguage development is definitely true. However, it cannot be ignored that the knowledge of ones mother tongue can help us to identify tendencies and probabilities in L1 transfer which can then be used by Indonesian students in L2 learning. Conducting further investigations into how Indonesian students can make further use of their mother tongue in learning English from different aspects such as sociocultural and psychological areas is therefore highly recommended.
References


Abstract
This research examined language acquisition in terms of formal structures and language use in context. It primarily addressed the question: what are the forms and functions of children’s responses to questions addressed to them? This study also analyzed the social factors affecting the children’s language use and how the children adapted their speech style to the context. The children’s responses exhibited four forms—the completion or fill-in, elliptical, mixed, and the complete forms. Initially, the children’s responses were fill-in or elliptical. Later on, the children responded with utterances that were more elaborate in form and in substance. In addition, the forms also served pragmatic functions as they indicated the moods, attitudes, and intentions of the children. In general, the children’s responses expressed the representational, expressive, social, and tutorial functions of language. A big percentage of the children’s responses were found to be representational—that is to say, the use of language to talk about things in the environment. As the children became more mature conversational partners, they moved from one functional mode to another depending on their intents, moods, the behavior of their interlocutors and some other contextual factors. Finally, this study found discovered that the children were able to adopt conversational strategies that helped them stay focused in conversations and repair any impending breakdown in communication. These conversational strategies included various kinds of repetition, contingent queries, and gestural support.

Keywords: Language acquisition, Pragmatics, Child Language Research

1. Introduction
Over the last fifty years, language acquisition has emerged as one of the most interesting and complicated areas of language study. The interest in children’s language usage has resulted in studies providing linguists and psychologists new bases for understanding language processes and atypical language development. Most of the studies done prior to the 70s focused on certain aspects of phonology, morphology, and syntax. They focused on linguistic rules that children use to understand and produce language. In the early 70s, pragmatics reemerged as a research area due largely to the pioneering works on speech acts by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) and the work on conversational implicatures by Grice (1975). In 1974, Hymes proposed an ethnographic framework that accounts for the various factors relevant to understanding how a particular communicative event achieves its goals. This work paved the way for studies that link language development to the broader functional and social dimensions of language use. Researchers shifted their focus from the formal aspect of children’s language to the interaction between a child’s
language and the social context. Motivated by the attention to and new interest in the integration of the social dimension in the study of child language, this paper examined language acquisition in terms of formal structures and language use in context. It addressed the question: *What are the forms and functions of children’s responses to questions?*

The nature and types of questions addressed to children were investigated as well as the forms in which they were expressed. This study determined the major functions expressed in children’s responses and the forms and other textual devices they used to make the intent of their message clear. It also analyzed the social factors affecting their use of language and how they adapted their speech style to the social context. The functions of language, the linguistic forms and the textual devices that the children used to make their intentions clear, and the social context were the major factors that define the pragmatic and sociolinguistic concern of this study.

### 2. Review of Literature

The 1970s brought forth studies that foregrounded the speaker’s use of language to achieve a purpose. Bloom (1970) was one of the first child language researchers who argued that semantics (meaning) cannot be ignored in the effort to understand children’s acquisition of syntax. In her seminal work, Bloom applied transformational generative grammar to children’s early word combinations and found that utterances recorded in natural setting had the same forms but different meanings. She argued that by considering the physical and social context within which utterances occurred, it was possible to infer that the same linguistic structure was used to convey different meanings. Bates (1976), using the Speech Act Theory, identified two classes of acts performed by children during the pre-linguistic stage—the proto-imperative sequence and the proto-declarative sequence. Greenfield and Smith (1976) also used the notions articulated by the Speech Act theorists to describe the pragmatics of the early words of children. Bruner et al (1982) studied requests as illocutionary acts and found that the real first requests of children appear between 0 and 8 years of age. As children mature linguistically, gestures become optional accompaniment for their verbal messages.

Dore (1974; 1977) made two studies of children’s speech acts. In the first study, he suggested a list of speech acts which characterize the utterances of children who are just beginning to talk. He called these primitive speech acts which included labeling, repeating, answering, requesting, calling, greeting, protesting, and practicing. In 1977, he came up with another taxonomy to describe the illocutionary acts expressed by older children. He used this taxonomy to determine the communicative intentions of children as expressed in their responses to questions. These illocutionary acts were request, conversation devices, response, description, statement, performative, and acknowledgment. In this study, Dore was also able to categorize children’s responses into canonical (simplest, expected response), non-canonical (not standard or expected response), and no answer.

Using a sociolinguistic-functional framework, Halliday (1975) studied the language development of his son, Nigel, and developed a set of categories that described the
functions of children’s utterances. He identified seven functional categories—
instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative, and
informative. For decades, the data on children’s language were derived from
controlled laboratory experiments. Halliday’s study revived the interest in
observational studies of children in the natural environment and in the last thirty
years, the appreciation of a pragmatic analysis of children’s language has been
enhanced by studies using other frameworks or approaches to language acquisition
and development.

3. Methodology
Three children (JJ, LRA, LRN) were observed in a natural setting—at home which
the children considered as the most familiar and comfortable setting. Their
conversations with their parents/mothers were recorded and notes were taken to
provide additional data on the context of utterance. Complementary methods like
observations and interviews were also done to help put the data in perspective. The
data collected were then transcribed following a transcription pattern adapted from
McTear (1985).

4. Findings and discussion

4.1 The Nature of the Mothers’ Questions
An analysis of the mothers’ questions from the data showed that more than 30% of
the mothers’ utterances were questions addressed to the children. The result of this
study is consistent with earlier findings in Child Language Research that 15-33% of
mothers’ utterances addressed to their children are questions.

Most of the questions that the mothers addressed to the children were report questions
(54%) meant to test the children’s linguistic and cognitive skills. The preponderance
of report questions may be explained by the fact that motherese has been observed to
be basically didactic. Parents ask questions mainly to test children’s comprehension
and to ensure that they stay focused and engaged in the conversation. The conscious
effort on the part of the parents to monitor the feedback they received during
interaction helped them determine the children’s maturation (linguistic and to some
extent cognitive) and current level of their linguistic skills. Although minimal
research has been done to determine the specific correlation between cognition and
communicative competence, studies suggest that some aspects of communicative
competence depend on cognition (Foster 1990, pp. 179-180). Aside from pedagogical
purposes, the mothers’ questions must be viewed as a genuine effort to communicate
with children. The real questions (38%) allowed a less adult-controlled conversation.
For some children, this kind of interaction might be more challenging because it calls
for greater production/performance on their part. In mother-child interactions, the
mothers relied heavily on solicitation to get the children to take their turn. In most
cases, the verbal repetitions or verbal reflection questions (6%) were meant to serve as
contingent queries--requests for restatement, clarification or additional information on
some unclear utterances of the children.
The data also indicated that the mothers asked more wh-questions (77%) than yes-no questions (23%). Among the wh-questions, the what questions occurred most frequently. The preponderance of the wh-questions was easily accounted for by the basic goal of motherese—that is, to activate the children’s predisposition to learn language by presenting them with particular challenges provided by the various types of wh-questions. Unlike the yes-no questions, the wh-questions look for different kinds of information; thus, they are more demanding in terms of cognition and verbal production.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Wh-questions</th>
<th>Frequency (total 1,207)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.08%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The high frequency of what relative to the other questions is also consistent with the general observation that questions asked by the parents predominantly serve didactic purposes. The incidence of who questions as the second most frequent is consistent with the findings of studies on children’s acquisition and comprehension of wh-questions. Wootten, Merkin, Hood and Bloom (1979) found that what, where and who are the first questions asked by children presumably because these are the first questions asked of them by their parents. Studies of children’s comprehension likewise disclosed that the children find the said questions easier to respond to correctly because they do not require lengthy responses (Ervin-Tripp, 1970). Children are able to answer questions that require parts of sentences they can easily use or express. Young children’s sentences reflect agents, objects and locations. We therefore find children able to answer what, who and where more readily than the other wh-questions (de Villiers and de Villiers, 1979). Furthermore, the focus of the questions is less semantically and cognitively complex compared to how, when and why. The concepts of manner, process, time, purpose and causality involve more coding time and more complex structures. It was noted that in many instances where the children were asked how, when or why, they produced inappropriate answers. It is assumed that at this stage, the children might have yet to incorporate the questions in their speech and might not be ready in terms of their cognitive ability.

### 4.2 Children’s Responses: Canonical vs Non-Canonical Responses

Using John Dore’s pragmatic framework (1977), this study categorized the children’s responses into canonical, non-canonical, and no answer. The data showed that children gave more canonical (56%) than non-canonical responses to wh-questions. In general, children are more successful in giving appropriate and accurate responses when the questions refer to objects, persons, and events in the immediate environment (Owens, 1996, p.325). In the data gathered, the mothers’ questions simply required naming or labeling objects and identifying people. The children also gave canonical
answers to questions that refer to locative information. Many of these canonical responses were the result of the different interactive strategies both mothers and children used.

Example

M: yah
   you remember the characters in Sesame Street in the viewmaster?
JJ: yah
M: they have their individual letters like who’s that holding the umbrella?
   Bert or Ernie?
JJ: that’s letter W

In the example the mother and the child were talking about the letters of the alphabet. Apparently, the child had some difficulty recalling certain letters so the mother resorted to giving additional information (shown by the highlighted parts of the exchange) that would help the child recall or orient him to the focus of the mother’s question (the letter W).

Despite various interactive strategies that the mothers used, the children still gave non-canonical responses. The non-canonical responses included giving different answers, performing an action, or asking a question. The category different answers referred to responses that were unrelated to the topic or did not correspond to the information being asked. Some questions were interpreted as requests for action, so the children complied by performing some actions. There were also questions to which the children responded by asking counter-questions or by repeating previous utterances of the mother. It is possible that the children’s questions and repetitions functioned either as contingent queries or as reaffirmation of the mothers’ previous utterances.

Of the wh-questions, WHY elicited the highest number of unrelated or different answers (86%). This finding supports the observation that being one of the last wh-questions to be acquired by children, WHY remains one of the most difficult questions to respond to. This is due to the fact that children are required to examine causal relationships and to reason when responding to WHY. Unlike WHAT, WHO, WHERE, which are question words for basic sentence roles and which can be answered by one or two words, WHY often requires more explanation and more elaborate sentence structure.
4.3 Forms of Children’s Responses
In terms of form, the responses may be classified as:

1. Completion form or fill-in
2. Elliptical/reduced form
3. Mixed form
4. Complete form

During the early part of recording, the mothers used sentence completion to elicit responses from children. They simply stated the beginning of the sentences and left unfinished for the children to complete. Through the rising intonation that is associated with the question form, the mothers signaled to the children that they requested information. The effect of this type of elicitation is similar to that of the wh-questions because the blank to be filled correspond mainly to the what/who questions. Owens (1996) calls this type of response fill-ins.

Example

Mother: Now what’s this (point to a picture)
JJ: boy
Mother: a boy and a _______?
JJ: girl

There are two kinds of reduced structures found in children’s utterances. The first kind resembles telegraphic speech. In telegraphic speech, the children leave out closed-class words so that their utterances are similar to a telegram as shown in the example.

Example

Mother: what did you say?
Cinderella
LRN: Cindelelasussus
Mother: give me my shoes

The other type—grammatical ellipsis—reflected the children’s linguistic sophistication. In this kind of structure, the children were assumed to be aware of the listener’s presupposition. They took into account linguistic preference and omits the elements that were redundant. Unlike in the telegraphic speech, the deleted structures in grammatical ellipsis have either been acquired by the child or in the process of being learned (Bloom, 1991).

The children’s first language was, and still is, English and their exposure to media and other people speaking Filipino resulted in occasional switches to Filipino. The children would switch to Filipino when they wanted to get the attention of their interlocutor or when they wanted to express strong emotions. When they heard a Filipino word that was new to them, they tried to repeat it and use it in a sentence.
Such behavior was validated by Weinrich (1953) and Gumperz (1970) who noted that bilinguals occasionally make use of separate codes for the sake of enriching their language and for some other purposes. The switchings found in the data were of three kinds—extrasentential, intrasentential, and intersentential.

The extrasentential switching consisted of grammatical fillers *ha, nga, naman, eh* inserted in otherwise English utterances. Since these forms were subject to minimal syntactic constraints, they were easily inserted at various places in the sentence.

Example

Mother: you did not say meow meow like that?
LRN: *eh* because I might get cry baby

Intrasentential switching occurred when elements of language x were mixed with those of language y within a sentence or clause.

Example

Mother: coz you’re always touching this one
JJ: where is it na?
   Mama Cora threw it *na* (already) in the *basura* (garbage)

Intersentential switching referred to changes that took place between utterances.

Example

Mother: you broke it *ano* (didn’t you)?
JJ: I did not ah
   Ganyantalaga (It’s really like that)

As expected, the children’s complete sentences occurred when the recording was about to end. By this time, the children had started preschool. The complete forms manifested their developing concept of language formal rules, growing vocabulary and awareness of new objects and experiences. Their growing knowledge of relationships had to be accommodated by their expanding syntax.

Example

Mother: aha, what’s this? (points to a picture book).
   JJ: an old woman
   Mother: yeah
   JJ: Jack eating a lot of fruit
      Jack *eating the hand*
   Mother: *with* the hands
### 4.4 Functions of Children’s Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Representational</td>
<td>1,059</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency of the representational function may be explained by the tasks mothers and children engaged in. The mothers tended to employ an informational style of questioning that centered on naming objects and assessing the children’s cognitive development. As the mothers became more curious of the linguistic and cognitive developments of their children, they became more inclined to ask WHAT questions associated with the information function. This information centered on exchanges, encouraged the children to overcome their conversational limitations, and perform as expected or even more by giving additional information. From this type of interaction, the children learned more nouns to name objects and more adjectives to describe themselves, other people, the events and other processes they observed around them. Consequently, the increased vocabulary and grammatical knowledge enabled them to express more successfully and appropriately a wider range of intention.

The data revealed that the children improved their ability to sustain a conversation by asking questions about their interlocutors’ comments. The children often responded to their mothers’ queries by asking another question—whether to clarify or to introduce new ideas to the conversation. This development seemed to have anticipated the more demanding and challenging question-answer structure that parents and children engaged in later. The conversational exchanges no longer consisted of questions from the adults and responses from the children. The children took on the more mature role of the interlocutors. If they felt that the adults lacked knowledge, or if the conversation was on the verge of breaking down, they turned into competent communicators by adapting their language to the needs of their partners. They provided more elaborations that included expanded sentences, new lexical items, and other forms of qualifiers and counter-questions.

The interactions between mothers and children also highlighted the creativity of the children in inventing their own word and own version of traditional stories. In addition, they used the phonological resources of language to reinforce the setting and characters of their stories. When asked to narrate a story, the children were actually challenged to use their existing communication skills and to acquire new skills to help them meet the task of narrating effectively. These new skills included cultivating their own narrative style, expressions, and gestures. In addition, they used the phonological resources of language to reinforce the setting and the characters of their stories as exhibited by the next example.
Example

Mother: This is the story of Ate Laura

LRA: One day Laraine was in the house and found a big
And she found a big big snowman
After then, she found first a bear and she found
   A big big snowman. And then wanna give him a gift.
   He has no jacket and the dog gave him a jacket
   Named Timba
   And one day the bad a bad
   Three pockets there then bad dog said also
   I like a bad baby
   Also a bad baby like you and this is the ne
This is the letters of the bad little girl
They left the teddy bear upstairs
And the clock was striking BONG
It was 12:00 and then that’s the end of the story

The child’s creativity and imagination were reflected by the fact that her story was actually a combination of many children’s stories such as Lion King, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and Cinderella. The child borrowed the characters (Timba, bears, little girl) and the setting (12:00 midnight) of the various stories as she created her own. Moreover, she used onomatopoeia (BONG) and alliteration (bad boy) to emphasize important features of her story while at the same time acted out some roles.

The tutorial function took the form of drills that repeated newly introduced words to articulate the sounds of particular words. This function helped the children recall names, events, things, and numbers as illustrated in the example below.

Example

Mother: say dog
LRA: dog
Mother: say cat
LRA: cat

The preceding discussions have shown that the children responded to questions with a variety of forms and functions. Using linguistic resources, albeit initially limited, children informed, objected, criticized, asserted, questioned, clarified or even challenged their interlocutors’ previous utterances. They moved from one functional mode to another in their effort to maintain contact with their interlocutors.
5. Conclusion

The children in this study were very intelligent interlocutors. They exhibited various communication strategies that enabled them to convey meanings to their interlocutors. These strategies included the use of repetition, different registers, prosodic features, and deixis. The children used repetition as contingent queries or request for clarification. Many of the requests made by children were in the form of contingent queries where the requested act grounded on and recognized by the listener on the basis of some prosodic features. The result of this investigation reaffirmed earlier studies which established the ability of children to adopt or fine-tune their speech depending on the context and their intentions. They were able to make systematic modifications in their speech if faced with a different conversational situation. In this study, the rising intonation was primarily used by the children to convey doubt, request new information, express surprise, confirmation, confusion. The children also used deictic elements and gestural support to direct the attention of the mothers. Initially, they easily got confused by shifting references, but the mothers were quick to detect and correct errors.

Research reaffirms that language acquisition cannot be divorced from the social context of meaning and intention. The essence of communication cannot be derived solely from linguistic structures but also from the interplay of forms and factors in the environment. It also reinforced the finding that negotiated interaction does have an effect on the communicative development of children. Through interactions, children develop pragmatic skills such as knowing how to answer questions, being able to participate in conversations by observing turns as well as changes in perspectives, noticing and responding to non-verbal features, being able to initiate, maintain, and close conversations.
References


The Effects of Using Structured Controversial Dialogues to Enhance Students’ Critical Thinking and English Speaking Abilities

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Abstract
Although the structured controversial dialogues (SCD) technique, an adaptation of the constructive controversy, is not a new teaching method used to foster critical thinking, it has not been studied in Thailand. In Asian countries, only a few studies have been conducted in language classes, but none with low English proficiency students. Accordingly, this study compares students’ critical thinking and English speaking abilities before and after the application of SCD to the experimental group with that of the control group, and to investigate the students’ opinions of this technique. The participants were 76 low proficiency Thai students from the Faculty of Agriculture at Chiang Mai University taking a fundamental English class over a 15-week semester. The mixed method approach was employed in the analysis of the data. In the quantitative analysis, the data were collected using a pre-test and post-test on students’ critical thinking and English speaking abilities. Through the qualitative approach, students’ attitudes towards the SCD technique were studied using questions from an open-ended questionnaire. The results revealed that SCD provided positive effects on low proficiency agriculture students’ critical thinking and speaking abilities, and they had positive attitudes towards this technique. The findings from the study will be useful for English teachers or course designers in developing a pedagogical model of a SCD instructional method, especially for low proficiency students in developing their critical thinking and speaking skills.

Keywords: Structured controversial dialogues, Critical thinking, Speaking ability, Low English proficiency students

1. Introduction
At present, advancement in science and technology strongly affects changes in society. Additionally, the development of 21st century skills has become more crucial for students in order to succeed in the information age. Thus, Thai education is attempting to put more emphasis on fostering students to solve problems and think more critically, so that they can be equipped with the knowledge and skills for critical thinking, which has been regarded as a main feature of educational reform to strengthen intellectual health in Thai students (Ministry of Education, 2004).

Nevertheless, in the past, the critical thinking ability of Thai people graduating from Thai universities has been far from satisfactory (Buranapatana, 2006). Recent studies have revealed that rather than actively involving their students in learning how to think critically and creatively, most Thai instructors give them lectures. Learners lack opportunities to think, to express or to share any ideas, even among friends. They just
listen and become passive learners (Office of the National Education Commission, 2000; Tripatara, 2000; Wiratchai, 2002).

In addition, English has become increasingly important for Thai learners as it is a leading means of communication worldwide. Nowadays, a good command of English is needed in many fields, including education, economics, business, and social science. To meet these requirements, the Thai government has steadily attempted to promote Thai learners’ English proficiency throughout the history of English language teaching in Thailand (Kanoksilapatham, 2007).

However, most Thai students are not able to communicate in English fluently for many reasons. Yusica (n.d.) stated that speaking is the weakest aspect of learning English for Thais, resulting from large-class sizes, instruction in Thai, and lack of an English environment for interaction in daily life. In the classroom, Thai students are afraid to talk, ask questions, or even use English to communicate (Nguyen, n.d.). Furthermore, Kakar (n.d.) indicates that the attitudes of students play a crucial role in the process of language learning. Thai learners are likely to adopt negative characteristics resulting in negative attitudes towards English, including anxiety, shyness, and lack of motivation. Similarly, Juhana (2012) explained that these are considered as the crucial factors that hinder students from speaking.

Many research projects have applied a variety of suitable teaching methods to promote students’ critical thinking and speaking abilities. Only a few studies on the use of SCD were conducted in language classes, and with only high or moderate proficiency students rather than limited proficiency (e.g., Heriani, 2012; Hosseini, 2012). To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, no studies reported the effects of using SCD on Thai students, especially low English proficiency, and none revealed how this technique affects their critical thinking or speaking abilities. In light of the shortage of this line of research, this study aims to explore critical thinking and English speaking abilities of low English proficiency Thai students by using SCD and to study their opinions towards this teaching method.

2. Literature Review

This section provides a description of critical thinking in language teaching, speaking problems in Thai classroom, and SCD. Subsequently, previous studies on the SCD technique are presented.

2.1 Critical thinking in language teaching

Critical thinking has been described in a number of ways (Noris & Ennis, 1989; Lipman, 1991). Nevertheless, there is not much difference among these definitions. As Maiorana (1992) states, critical thinking skills emphasize achieving, understanding and evaluating different perspectives and solving problems. Furthermore, critical thinking has been defined as the process of analyzing and assessing thinking with the actual improving of thought (Elder, L., & Paul, R., 2010).
As critical thinking has become more recognized in the educational arena, educators have given precedence to it as an essential teaching approach in language classrooms and as a desirable educational outcome. Many studies have been conducted to confirm the role of critical thinking in enhancing EFL reading comprehension (Hassani, Rahmany, & Babaei, 2013); language proficiency (Liaw, 2007); and speaking proficiency (Sanavi & Tarighat, 2014). Rafi (n.d.) stated several reasons for promoting critical thinking in language classrooms. First, if language learners can take charge of their own thinking, they can monitor and evaluate their own ways of learning more successfully. Moreover, critical thinking can make the language more meaningful for learners to expand their experience of learning, and lead to improved achievement. He also added that learners can become proficient if they have motivation and are taught in ways of fostering critical thinking skills in foreign language usage, which indicates that learners can be creative in their production of ideas and use logic reasoning and evidence to develop and support those ideas.

Scholars have a strong focus on the importance of enhancing higher-order thinking skills in foreign language classrooms (Chamot, 1995; Tarvin & Al-Arish, 1991), and the effectiveness of teaching critical thinking skills in foreign language is confirmed by empirical evidence (Chapple & Curtis, 2000; Davidson, 1995). As a matter of fact, language learners who are capable of using higher-order thinking skills are able to handle activities of which other students may not be capable. According to Mahyuddin et al. (2004), language learners with critical thinking ability are capable of making decisions, solving problems, using their thinking skills, understanding language or its contents, and treating thinking skills as lifelong learning, and are intellectually, physically, emotionally and spiritually well-balanced.

Nevertheless, language learning and thinking skills are often practiced as independent processes in typical school settings (Miraman & Tishman, 1988). Kabilan (2000) argued that even communicative language teaching, which emphasizes interaction using language as a communication tool, is not able to really assist learners to become proficient in the target language because they could not think creatively and critically when using the language. This supports the ideas of Mirman and Tishman (1988) that creative and critical thinking skills should be embedded in the curriculum. Similarly, Brown (2004) suggested that to enhance critical thinking skills, the objectives of the curriculum should go beyond linguistic factors.

Additionally, teachers play an influential role in improving critical thinking skills. Lipman (2003) stated that teachers are responsible for developing critical thinking in their learners, not just helping them move from one educational level to the next. Language teachers should facilitate students’ involvement in enhancing their own critical thinking skills while learning the language. Furthermore, Fisher (2003) highlights the need to develop thinking skills as they are essential to prepare students for overcoming problems that they encounter in education or in daily life. Therefore, as Mahyuddin et al. (2004) maintain, there is plenty of room for improvement in including critical thinking skills into language teaching curriculum.
2.2 English speaking problems in Thai classroom

According to Chaikul (2006), English speaking ability is considered the most desirable language skill. The capability to communicate orally with others includes communicative competence, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. Even though Wongsuwana (2006) concluded that speaking skills can be trained and do not depend on talent, it is still a problem for many Thai learners. They are not confident to speak English with their teachers or classmates possibly due to mother tongue interference (Biyaem, 1997). Ratanapinyowong, Poopon, & Honsa (2007) stated that Thais’ oral communication problems include students’ tension, excitement, and lack of confidence during speaking with time constraints. Yusica (n.d.), moreover, shows that large-class sizes, instruction in Thai, and lack of an English environment for interaction in daily life are also fundamental problems that should be fixed. He also suggests that students need to be overtrained so as to get fluency in speaking. Additionally, many studies on English language requirements in the workplace revealed that the English curriculum in Thai universities should emphasize listening and speaking the most (Wiriyachitra, 2003). Therefore, to enhance students’ speaking ability, teaching speaking demands the use of proper practices and strategies that can help learners improve their communication skills. The SCD technique is one of the most dynamic and involving teaching strategies for promoting speaking, yet never-used in Thailand. In this respect, Heriani (2012) asserted that SCD can enable students to communicate and, thus, improve their speaking abilities.

2.3 Structured controversial dialogues

The SCD technique, or structured academic controversy, was developed by cooperative learning researchers, David and Roger Johnson (1988), of the University of Minnesota as a way to provide structure and focus to classroom discussions. Working in pairs and then coming together in four-person teams, students explore a question by reading about it and then presenting contrasting positions. Afterwards, they engage in discussion to reach a consensus.

2.3.1 Use of structured controversial dialogues in classroom

This technique requires students to debate their peers on controversial topics. To use SCD, the teacher identifies a number of controversial topics that are related to the course being taught. Students are assigned to complete the following steps:

Step 1: Preparation. In groups of four, each pair reads the given materials and prepares evidence by making a list of reasons supporting its position and plan how to present the best case to the other pair.

Step 2: Position. Each pair presents its position using supporting evidence, while the other pair takes notes and clarifies anything they do not understand.

Step 3: Reverse Perspectives. Each pair reverses perspectives and presents the best case for the opposing position. The opposing pair does the same.

Step 4: Consensus Building. Students synthesize and integrate the best advice and reasoning from both sides into a joint position that all members can agree upon, finalize the group report and present their conclusions to the class.
2.3.2 Advantages of using structured controversial dialogues
SCD can enhance the development of several essential academic learning skills which include searching for information and new experiences to resolve a dilemma or an uncertainty; organizing information; preparing and rationalizing an advocacy position; seeing issues from a different perspective and learning to debate the merits of each position; and synthesizing issues and conceptualizing a new position or reaching a consensus based on careful analysis and evaluation of all positions of the issue.

The application of SCD can promote classroom interactions between students with diverse views, engaging them in enhancing their understanding and curiosity for searching for solutions to a problem. It can also encourage students to use complex reasoning and critical thinking skills to improve the quality of their problem solving and find new conclusions to complex problems (Zainuddin & Moore, 2003).

2.4 Previous studies on structured controversial dialogues
Only a few studies have been conducted on using SCD in language classrooms. Heriani (2012) studied the improvement of Indonesian students’ speaking achievement through the SCD technique. Her study indicated that SCD can encourage students to be more active and enthusiastic in their speaking and that this practice also improved the students’ achievement in speaking.

Similarly, Susilo & Mufanti (n.d.) confirm in their article entitled “Structured Academic Controversy to Trigger Students’ Active Participation and Critical Thinking” that the application of SCD can trigger students’ critical thinking and promote active participation. They also suggest that in order to challenge and motivate students to practice their English collaboratively and gain the optimum result on their achievement, teachers should use and develop this teaching method in the classroom.

As mentioned earlier, there is very little research focusing on the use of SCD in English classes, especially to explore its effects on both students’ critical thinking and speaking abilities. This reason suggests a need for more study in this research area.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants
The participants were 76 low proficiency Thai second-year students from the Faculty of Agriculture at Chiang Mai University taking a fundamental English IV class (EFL setting) over a 15-week semester. The participants were considered to be low proficiency students due to the scores on the “CMU E-pro test”, which is provided by Chiang Mai University to check the academic skill of entering students. Simple random sampling was used as a method of selecting participants. Half of the participants received explicit instruction in the SCD technique, whereas the other participants received normal class activities.
3.2 Instruments
The instruments for collecting data were the critical thinking test, the topics and rubrics for English speaking ability assessment, and five Likert scale open-ended questionnaire.

3.2.1 The Cornell Critical Thinking Test, Level Z
The Cornell Critical Thinking Test, Level Z, based on Ennis (1985)’s critical thinking theory, which was developed by Assistant Professor Dr. Panita Wannapirun, an instructor at King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, was used to assess students’ critical thinking. To avoid any impact of an existing language barrier and cultural differences, the critical thinking test was translated to Thai by translation specialists at Chalermprakiet Center of Translation and Interpretation, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. The reliability level of the test is 0.75. The test consists of 52 multiple-choice items which are to be completed online within 50 minutes. Consequently, in order to measure students’ critical thinking skills before and after the implementation of SCD, the pre-test and post-test scores were compared and analyzed.

3.2.2 Topics and Rubrics for English speaking ability assessment
In order to assess students’ speaking skills, they were asked to discuss the chosen controversial issue with their partner. They had two minutes for preparation in which Thai language was allowed to be used and four minutes for speaking only English. Initially, ten different controversial topics chosen from the survey conducted to find out the most interesting controversial topics among students were used in drawing lots for the pretest and posttest. Two sets of five topics were interchanged and provided for each test. The rubrics for assessing students’ speaking abilities are adapted from the Spontaneous Conversation Rubric of the NYSED (New York State Education Department) Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Languages LOTE (Languages Other Than English) (2014) to suit classroom implementation and the students’ speaking abilities. The results of the pretest and posttest on speaking ability were assessed by the researcher and two experienced raters, and they established the reliability of the assessment by discussing each of the elements of the rubric and setting up criteria for adopting the rubric for evaluating students’ speaking abilities. Cronbach's alpha was used for inter-rater reliability of the assessment, and both speaking tests were recorded for more validity and reliability.

3.2.3 Open-ended questionnaire
To gauge students’ opinions toward the SCD technique, a researcher-designed post-study questionnaire was administered, including 20 five-point Likert-style items and four open-ended questions focusing on student perspectives, class activities, and learning outcomes.

3.3 Design and Procedure
The study involved two groups of students, with one group taught by using normal class activities as the control group, and the experimental group receiving explicit instruction in the SCD technique. Throughout the semester, both classes were taught by the researcher, and students participated in discussions on controversial issues.
related to agriculture. The mixed method approach was used to collect data. Quantitative data were collected using a pre-test and post-test on students’ critical thinking and English speaking abilities. Qualitative data were collected using questions from open-ended questionnaires. The obtained data were analyzed for percentage, mean, and standard deviation and were discussed using content analysis.

4. Findings and Discussion
In this paper, the data obtained from the different instruments were analyzed and the research findings are shown below.

Table 1
Results of pretest and posttest on speaking ability of the two groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Speaking ability assessment</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>P-value (Sig)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>1.561</td>
<td>1.554</td>
<td>0.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>1.641</td>
<td>1.597</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>1.763</td>
<td>1.308</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>2.904</td>
<td>1.341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 1, the posttest speaking scores of the students in the control class (1.641) were not significantly different from the pretest (1.561), while the experimental class’s posttest speaking scores (2.904) were significantly higher than the pretest (1.763).

Table 2
Posttest speaking score difference between the experimental and control groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>P-value (Sig)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>1.561</td>
<td>1.554</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group</td>
<td>2.904</td>
<td>1.341</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 2, it can be seen that the experimental class’s posttest speaking scores (2.904) were significantly higher than the control class’ (1.561). These results confirm a significant different between the two groups and also support the effectiveness of SCD in enhancing students’ English speaking ability, suggesting this teaching method can be integrated into regular course activities. This responds to the suggestions by Heriani’s (2012) research findings that the SCD technique can improve students’ achievement in speaking. She also reported that the students who were taught with this method were more active and enthusiastic in speaking English. With SCD, students argue back and forth, providing different points and learning the ability to support their answers. The back and forth nature of this type of dialogue does not allow students to remain passive, but they feel more active to hear what is next or want to get involved themselves. Moreover, as Daniels and Cajander (2010) explained, SCD is considered as a cooperative learning technique. Working in a team
atmosphere can also help them feel more comfortable and be able to discuss controversial topics more easily. This conforms to the idea of Hess (2004) that this strategy fosters a “safe environment” which facilitates students’ speaking performance while discussing and engaging in the issue with their peers. Thus, this technique is a motivating factor for apathetic students to have the opportunity to learn through discussion.

Table 3
Results of pretest and posttest on the critical thinking of the two groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Critical thinking assessment</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>P-value (Sig)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>26.158</td>
<td>4.739</td>
<td>0.234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>27.514</td>
<td>8.649</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>24.526</td>
<td>4.842</td>
<td>0.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>26.743</td>
<td>6.599</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 indicates that the posttest critical thinking scores of the students in the control class (27.514) were not significantly different from the pretest (26.158), while the experimental class had a significantly higher posttest mean score on critical thinking (26.743) than the pretest (24.526). This implies that after the implementation of SCD, students had increased critical thinking abilities. The findings are in agreement with the results of the study carried out by Steiner, Brzuzy, Gerdes and Hurdle (2003) who concluded that participation in SCD process sharpened students’ critical thinking skills. As students interact and discuss ideas, opinions and perspectives, they can learn and generate their own ideas and conclusions challenged by advocates of an opposing position. SCD can help students gain more accuracy with the quality of reconceptualization, synthesis, and integration. Through the steps of SCD technique, students had the opportunity to practice their perspective taking, their incorporation of others’ information and reasoning into their own position, their change in attitude and position, and other transitions to higher stages of recognitive reasoning (Johnson et al.,1997). Additionally, Zainuddin and Moore (2003) asserted that the dialogue provides a natural scaffolding for students to understand and interpret complex content and reasoning. Therefore, it can be justified that the application of SCD can trigger students’ critical thinking skills.

Table 4
Posttest critical thinking score difference between the experimental and control groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>P-value (Sig)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>27.514</td>
<td>8.649</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>*0.950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group</td>
<td>26.743</td>
<td>6.599</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Although, from Table 4, the posttest critical thinking scores (26.743) of the experimental class were higher than the pretest (24.526), there is a small difference between the posttest scores of the experimental group (26.743) and the control group (27.514), which is not statistically significant. This can be supported by Ennis’s (1993) reason that significant results may not be expected in a short period of time. In other words, learning to think critically takes a long time. Additionally, this research was conducted among low proficiency students, so it could require much more time. Dunn, Halonen, and Smith (2008) reassured that teaching critical thinking can be more time-consuming than other teaching techniques. Based on the researcher’s experience, one class period was not adequate for students to discuss the issues, synthesize the evidence and then present the conclusions orally to the class. Despite the fact that initially, the plan was modified and time was allotted properly after doing try-out teaching to suit the capability of the students, they needed more time to comprehend evidence for and against claims and to critically evaluate those claims.

Student feedback from Likert-style questionnaire items and open-ended questions was organized into categories through content analysis. Examples of student feedback are briefly presented below. For the feedback from Likert-style questionnaire items, overall, the participants agreed with learning by using the SCD technique (Mean = 4.22). The students in the experimental class overwhelmingly agreed (Mean = 4.71 / agree = 11, overwhelmingly agree = 27) with the statements “I have more chance to work with others,” and “I listen to and accept others’ ideas” (Mean = 4.61 / agree = 15, overwhelmingly agree = 23). From the open-ended questions, stated reasons for other opinions fell into the following categories: (1) the most impressive activities, (2) the activities that promote critical thinking skills, (3) the difficulties in learning, (4) the activities that can be applied in daily life. Sample responses include: “My most impressive activities are having discussions, expressing thoughts and sharing my ideas in English.” “Reaching consensus is the activity that can help develop my critical thinking skills.” “The difficulty to learn through this technique is lack of vocabulary knowledge and English speaking skills.” “The things that I have learned and can be applied in my daily life are using reasoning to argue with others and finding the best conclusion.” “This technique is a good and useful method that should be used in the language classroom.”

According to the findings, it can be concluded that students had positive attitudes toward the SCD technique. Likewise, D’Eton, Proctor, and Reeder (2007) indicated that the students’ implementation of SCD resulted in a long-term change in their opinions towards SCD. The results of this study also reflected that students absorbed and adopted many of the SCD strategies taught during class, eventhough they had difficulties in using vocabulary and English communication skills. If they do, indeed, transfer or adapt these skills to other classes, then the researcher believes that the goal of simultaneously fostering critical thinking and enhancing English speaking ability has been achieved.

5. Conclusion
In conclusion, the findings from the present study reveal that the SCD technique is a useful and effective teaching method to promote students’ critical thinking and
English speaking abilities. It can also be found that even students with low English proficiency can increase their higher-order thinking and oral communication skills if they are allowed to practice these skills using a technique that encourages them to actively interact by sharing opinions and generating new ideas together with learning how to argue with others using reasoning, synthesizing information, and making the best decisions possible in a given situation. Even though time management to provide sufficient time for discussion should be considered since the implementation of SCD among low English proficiency students requires more time, this teaching method can be a means to encourage students to think that they will be able to improve their oral interaction. With this teaching method, students are engaged in a cooperative learning situation, are provided negotiation of meaning and peer assistance, and sharpen their critical thinking skills. It also creates a safe environment and attracts student participation. According to the results of this study, teachers or course designers are suggested to develop and apply SCD to motivate and challenge students of various English proficiencies to practice their English collaboratively and obtain the ultimate results from their learning.

References


Abstract
Standard Arabic is actually the language of writing in Damascus. The speeches made in the media and in some TV series are, in most cases, a literal restatement of visual coding of the language (text written in standard Arabic) in auditory coding (reading aloud the written text). Similarly, everyday Arabic does not have the same coding as Arabic that exists in the media, in books and in Arabic language courses. This gives the impression that the current teaching content is not suitable for a usage outside of the language classroom.

This paper deals with the problem of building the lexical content of textbooks of teaching Arabic as a foreign language of The Higher Language Institute of Damascus (Syria). A content that does not withdraw from standard norms (focus on the adaptation of a classic or modern standard Arabic), but seeks to be as close as possible to the daily practice of language that is very rich in dialect. We study the spoken language in Syria represented in 30 Syrian TV videos. The study proves that about 60% of its lexical components belongs to standard Arabic. This analysis focuses on finding the crossing points in standard and spoken Arabic to build a route map that allows the learner an easy passage from what he or she learns in the Arabic language classroom to an Arabic that is really practiced in everyday communications. It provides some solutions to reduce the gap between these two usages of Arabic.

Keywords: Arabic, CEFR, Corpus analysis, Literary Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, Standard Arabic, Syrian dialect, Textbook analysis
1. Introduction

The language provided and used in the class of Arabic language is notably different from that practiced by people outside the classroom. The language spoken in these two environments is not the same. In the classroom, we normally find Standard Arabic (classical or modern) while there are, outside of this environment, more than ten "constituent glosses" of this language system (Dichy 1994, pp. 28-30). The simultaneous presence of several varieties of Arabic reduces, for the learner, the opportunity to stay in touch with the formal literary lexicon and consequently poses a risk to lose it.

Different Arabic speakers rarely use Standard Arabic to communicate between themselves. They prefer to use their dialects in which common lexical elements are included with modern Standard Arabic (Dichy, 2007, 2010). This type of Arabic is sometimes distinctly different from one country to another. A Syrian speaker and a Lebanese or a Jordanian speaker can understand each other if both speak in their own dialect because they are from neighbouring language cultures. However, a Syrian and a Moroccan can’t communicate easily through their dialects. Here, Standard Arabic is indispensable.

The choice between the Standard and any of the other Arabic "glosses" will mainly depend on why the learner wants to learn the language. If the reason is to settle in a particular country or to communicate with people of a certain culture, learning colloquial Arabic may be more appropriate because it facilitates everyday communication. However, if we can offer to the learner a Standard Arabic lexicon which is closer to every day Arabic, this will give him more flexibility to integrate with various communicative situations.
2. The Corpus of Marāyā 2013

The revision and the development of the lexical content of Arabic textbooks of The Higher Language Institute of Damascus requires researching rich natural or near to natural resources of Arabic lexicon. The linguistic analysis of them is required to determine the effectiveness of the proposed lexicon. The textbooks are usually based on textual documents, but the enrichment of their content requires also the analysis of spoken performances that are difficult to select for the case of teaching Arabic language. It was necessary then to develop a uniform oral corpus to observe, describe and interpret linguistic and discursive configurations, close to the daily language. For this reason, the last season of the TV series Marāyā 2013, which has been until today a very popular television series in Syria and in many countries of the Arab world since 1982, was selected to represent the language.

The corpus of Marāyā 2013 is made up of thirty video files representing all of the episodes of the series defused in 2013 on the Algerian channel Aš-šurūq TV. The language of the episodes is mainly the dialect of Damascus. However, some dialects of other regions can appear according to the characters. The words of the characters were transcribed into text format and annotated using the tool ELAN (EUDICO Linguistic Annotator).

The analysis of the corpus was implemented in two steps:

- statistical and descriptive analysis: the objective of this analysis was to determine the different types of speech in the Syrian dialect found in the episodes of Marāyā;
- linguistic analysis: aimed to distribute into groups the existing lexical items. A semantic and morphological study was then applied to each of these groups individually.

2.1. Lexical Categories of The Corpus of Marāyā 2013

The dialect of Damascus, represented by most of the episodes of Marāyā 2013 is a regional dialect according to the classification proposed by Dichy (1994). It is composed mainly of lexical items that come directly from the dictionary of Standard Arabic, classical or modern, or that are derived from these. Several varieties of Arabic can be distinguished in the episodes. This phenomenon is recognized in most Arabic publicized speeches. The transition from one variety to another in the words of the same speaker during the same discourse depends on the lexical and socio-pragmatic pressures that influence the communication skill of the speaker (Dichy, 2010). In a phrase like «أهلين وكول هَوا، شو جايب مَعَك؟», a simple look at each component of this construction is enough to recall their origins belonging to Standard Arabic.

---

1 Marāyā 2013 (episode 1, 00:53).
To go further in this observation, we chose the first 2100 most repeated elements in the corpus of Marāyā 2013. These items were distributed, according to their membership or distance from standard Arabic, in four lexical categories: “literary lexicon”, “quasi-literary lexicon”, “close to literary lexicon” and “dialectal lexicon”. Sorting the different elements of both the "quasi-literary lexicon" and "close literary lexicon,” is based mainly on the degree of morphological changes to the original form belonging to the standard Arabic. This change is measured at two levels:

- Changes in short vowels:
  - replace a vowel by another: « أَنْتَ : 'anta : you » ⇔ « إِنْتَ : 'inta : you » ;
  - extend a vowel: « إِحْكِي : talk ! » ⇔ « إِحْكِ : iḥkī : talk ! », (conjugated in both cases to the imperative of the second person, masculine, singular);
  - delete a vowel: « يَصِيرَ : ṭiṣīr : became » ⇔ « يَصِيرُ : yṣīr : became » ;

- Changes in letters and long vowels:
  - replace a letter with another: « أَعْرِفَ : aʿrif : I know» ⇔ « بَعْرِفُ : baʿrif : I know » ;
  - add a letter: « نَكْتُ بَ : naktub : we write » ⇔ « مْنَكْتُ بَ : mnuktub : we write », (here, there is also a change of a short vowel after the added letter : na ⇔ nu) ;
  - add a long vowel: « اِطْلَعَ : iṭlāʾ : come up ! » ⇔ « اِطْلَعَ : iṭlaʾ : come up ! », (conjugated in both cases to the imperative of the second person, masculine, singular) ;
  - change the order of letters: « زَوْجِي : zawjī : my husband » ⇔ « جَوْزِي : juwzī : my husband » ;
  - change the pronunciation of a letter: « قَرِيبُ : qarīb : close to » ⇔ « أَرِيبٌ : ‘arīb : close to ».

About that last comment (change the pronunciation), we found seven letters of Standard Arabic that can be pronounced differently in the regional dialect of Damascus. The following table shows, with examples, how to pronounce these letters in different contexts.
Abbreviations:
SA: Standard Arabic
L: letter in Arabic script
RdD: Regional dialect of Damascus
T: Transliteration of the Arabic letter
Tra: Translation of the example in English

Table 1
Arabic letters pronounced differently in RdD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SA letter</th>
<th>Pronunciation in RdD</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Original word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>٣</td>
<td>ث</td>
<td>مثال : Muṭallaṣ</td>
<td>ث : مثال : Muṭallaṣ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٣</td>
<td>ث</td>
<td>مثال : Muṭallaṣ</td>
<td>ث : مثال : Muṭallaṣ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٣</td>
<td>س</td>
<td>مثال : Muṭallaṣ</td>
<td>ث : مثال : Muṭallaṣ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٣</td>
<td>د</td>
<td>د : diʿb : wolf</td>
<td>د : diʿb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٣</td>
<td>ز</td>
<td>أَيْنِ : 'iden</td>
<td>أَيْنِ : 'iden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٣</td>
<td>س</td>
<td>صَدِقْنِي : ṣaddiqnī</td>
<td>صَدِقْنِي : ṣaddiqnī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٣</td>
<td>ض</td>
<td>مَرِيض : marīḍ : ill</td>
<td>مَرِيض : marīḍ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٣</td>
<td>ز</td>
<td>مَزِبَّط : mazbūṭ : absolutely</td>
<td>مَزِبَّط : mazbūṭ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٣</td>
<td>ض</td>
<td>مَذِئِب : ṣḍēb : like</td>
<td>مَذِئِب : ṣḍēb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٣</td>
<td>ق</td>
<td>حَدِيقَة : ḥadīqah : garden / park</td>
<td>حَدِيقَة : ḥadīqah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>٣</td>
<td>٣</td>
<td>أَب و قَاسِم : 'abū gāsim : the father of Gāsim</td>
<td>أَب و قَاسِم : 'abū gāsim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We divided also the lexical content of each of the four lexical categories created earlier into five groups: 1) names, 2) verbs, 3) adjectives, 4) tools, and 5) another lexicon.

Data analysis was conducted in two directions: the first was for showing the volume of lexical groups (nouns, verbs, adjectives, tools and another lexicon) composing each of the categories studied. The second reading was to show how much lexical components belonged or not to different lexical categories.
2.2. Horizontal Reading of Data

A cross-sectional look at the results of the classification of lexical items in these four categories shows that:

- for the first three classification groups (nouns, verbs and adjectives), we notice a similar ranking for each of the four lexical categories: the group of nouns is always the biggest one, followed by the group of verbs and then, the group of adjectives;

- the ratio of adjectival group remains low in all categories;

- for the first three lexical categories, far away from literary Arabic, the proportion of nominal components significantly reduced in favour of the verbal components. This shows that names related to literary Arabic become fewer unlike verbs that become more numerous;

- tools take up constantly an important place in all three categories and become the majority in the dialectal lexicon;

- the elements belonging to the group "others" are an average of 10% of the components of the last three categories, and are virtually non-existent in the literary lexicon.

Table 2

Proportions of the components of the four lexical categories according to groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Horizontal reading</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>another</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literary lexicon</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quasi-literary lexicon</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close to literary lexicon</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialectal lexicon</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3. Vertical Reading of Data

The results of the categorization of lexical elements of the five groups studied show:

- for the four first groups: « nouns », « verbs », « adjectives » and « tools », the lexicon belongs to the category « literary lexicon » occupy the biggest place, compared to the lexicon of the others categories. The ratio of this lexicon is bigger in the groups « nouns » and « adjectives », (74%) for both of them. It becomes smaller and smaller in the groups « verbs »: (62%), and « tools »: (55%). This lexicon is the weakest one in the group « another lexicon » where it appears with a ratio of (10%);
the «quasi-literary lexicon» comes in second position in the groups: «nouns», «verbs», «adjectives» and «another lexicon», and in third position in the group «tools»;

the «close to literary lexicon» occupies the second place in the group «adjectives», with a ratio equivalent to that of the category «quasi-literary lexicon» in this same group, with a proportion of (10%) for both of them. It occupies the third position in the groups: «nouns», «verbs», «divers» and «tools», and the last position in the group «tools»;

finally, the «dialectal lexicon» comes in the last position in the groups: «nouns», «verbs» and «adjectives». It occupies the second place in the group «tools», and becomes in first position in the group «another lexicon».

Table 3
Proportions of lexical components of the five groups according to categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vertical reading</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>another</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literary lexicon</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quasi-literary lexicon</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close to literary lexicon</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialectal lexicon</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results assume the hypothesis that learning «nouns», «verbs», «adjectives» and «tools», that belong at the same time to literary Arabic and to Syrian dialect (of Damascus), may help to comprehend the majority of dialectal communication of Damascus. Moreover, for these four groups, knowing how to link the “quasi-literary lexicon” and the “close to literary lexicon” to their literary origins may also increase this capacity to understanding at a higher level.

2.4. Global Reading of Data

This reading is also achieved, as detailed reading data in two directions: vertical (for the entire analysed lexicon, classified according to categories), and horizontal (for all of this lexicon, but classified this time according to the groups).

The vertical global reading of data led to the following results:

- the «literary lexicon» composes (62%) of the analysed corpus;
- the «quasi-literary lexicon» is present with a low percentage of (17%);
- the «close to literary lexicon» is also lower and composes only 6% of the total;
and finally, the « dialectal lexicon » appears close by its quantity to « quasi-literary lexicon », and composes 15% of the total analysed lexicon.

However, the horizontal global reading of the data shows more clearly the nature of the most common lexical elements in Marāyā 2013 and their distribution in the corpus. This reading shows that:

- the « tools » are the lexical elements which are the most widespread throughout the lexicon studied. They are present at a rate of 40%;
- the nominal lexicon occupies the second place with a rate of (38%);
- verbal lexicon comes third with a rate of 13% only;
- the "adjectives" are even fewer than the "verbs" and represent 5% of the corpus;
- and finally, the lexicon belonging to the group "another lexicon" is present with a rate of 4% and occupies; therefore, the last place.

3. Morphological and Semantic Analysis of Lexical Elements of The Corpus of Marāyā 2013

By this analysis, we proceed to examine the degrees of morphological and semantic slippage of literary lexical units that are present in every day Arabic in Syria, represented by Marāyā 2013. Morphological analysis is devoted to possible changes of a lexical element in its simple and / or composed format, out of context. Conversely, semantic analysis considers the context in which the lexical item is used.
Thus, we distinguish:

1- lexical items which have the same meaning and the same form in dialect and in literary Arabic (أخي: ’ḥī: my brother);

2- lexical items that have undergone slight changes between the literary and dialectal Arabic (letters and / or vowels), but maintain the same meaning ( كثير / كثير: kafīr/ kīr: a lot);

3- lexical items which have the same shape in literary Arabic and in dialect but whose meaning is different between the two registers (بَكْرَة: bukrāh: time just before sunrise « in literary Arabic » / tomorrow « in Syrian dialect »).

We also distinguish between collocations and idioms:

1- constructions that have the same components in literary Arabic and in dialect, and that give the same meaning (إن شاء الله: ’in šā’a’ā Allāh: if God wants);

2- constructions of lexical items belonging to literary Arabic but are working only in a colloquial usage (أمر عي ونَك: ’amr ’yūnak: at your service);

3- dialectal constructs containing lexical items related to literary Arabic, maintaining the same meaning as the original literary construction (تَعَدَّ للمِي ئة أَبِل: تَعَدُّ لِلمِئَة قَبْلَ أنْ...: count to one hundred before « doing something »), the equivalent literal expression is (تَعَدَّ للمِئَة قَبْلَ أنْ...);

4- constructs containing lexical items related to literary Arabic but that exist and have a meaning only in dialect (تَسْتوُانِي حَيْيْتِي: tistawṭī ḥiyītī).

This comparative approach allows the identification of the morphological, transformational, categorical and interpretive criteria of the Arabic lexicon. It also promotes the acquisition of formal and structural knowledge and combinatorial expertise dating back to the level of lexical and communication skills of the learner.

Activities of morphological recognition can then be developed to train learners to make the link between these two types of lexicon.

If we take, for example, the following sentence which is an extract from a phone conversation in Marāyā 2013 (episode 1, 14:03):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1) أعطني جوزي، بذي أحيک</th>
<th>Pass me my husband, I want to talk to him!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) ‘اَفینی جوِی، بِدِیة َاِکی مَاِیَ.</td>
<td>مغفر.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In literary Arabic, several scenarios can give the same meaning. Among which, the following two may be mentioned:
Between the sentence 1 and sentences 2 and 3 there is a similar lexicon:

أعطيني: 'أعطُني
جوؤي: جوؤي
معو: معو

These three words in the dialect of Damascus have the same meaning as the three corresponding words in literary Arabic. The first (أعطى 'أعطى), composed of the verb (أعطى 'أعطى) and the object (ني 'ني), is a form of the word slipped morphologically (أعطِني 'أعطني) by the extension of the vowel (ى) on the third letter of the word, or keeping, in dialect, the letter (ی) the root of the verb while it should be deleted in the case of literary Arabic.

The second word (جوؤي 'جوؤي), consisting of the name (جوز: جوز: husband) and the pronoun (ي: ي: equivalent to the possessive adjective "my"), is a reformulation of (جوؤي 'جوؤي) by reversing the first three letters of the word (which is a very rare phenomenon in Syrian dialect). The vowel (ا) of the first letter in the literary word is replaced by the vowel (ع) in the word in dialect.

The third word (ما 'مو: ما 'مو) composed of the preposition (مع: مع: ma') and the pronoun (و: و: from the third person, masculine, singular) is a reformulation of the word (مع: مع: ma'ahu) by replacing the pronoun (ه: ه: hu) of literary Arabic, after slipping its short vowel (و) on the last letter of the word:

الدراسة من هذه الـ3 عبادات تظهر أن الطالب يمكنه فهم النصف الأول من الجملة 1 إذا تعلم واحدة من الجملتين 2 و 3. لجني الوجهية من النصف الثاني، يتعين أن يكون في لغة العربية الحديثة لوجود السمة الخاصة (بدي: بدي) في لغة العربية الحديثة. يكون مركب هذا الإشارة في العربية الحديثة (أحك: أحك) يوجد بالفعل في العربية الحديثة. إنه مركب من الفعل (أحك: أحك) بالمعنى من "談話"، بينما في العربية الحديثة يتعني عادة "tell recount".

كما أن اللفظ (بدي: بدي: I want), يخرج من البداية (بودي: بودي) مكون من الفعل (ب: ب) المرتبط بالنوع (ود: ود: widd: desire) إلى
pronoun (ي : ī). The first letter of the noun is always deleted in Syrian dialect. In other Arabic dialects, (in Saudi Arabia for example) the people say (ودي : widdī : I want) by removing the preposition and keeping the first letter of the name.

The word (بَدِي : biddī) in dialect gives, so, a verbal meaning « I want » while it has, in literary Arabic, a nominal meaning « my desire ». The verb equivalent to the dialectal meaning exists in literary Arabic (أَوْدُ : 'awaddu : I want / I desire). Understanding the sentence 1 of Syrian dialect through literary Arabic is possible if we provide in the textbooks phrases such as:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4) 'اَتْنِي ذَوْجِي، 'وَدُدُ انْ 'عَلْكِيْهِ/ 'اَحْكَيْ مَا'اْهُ</td>
<td>4) أعْطِني زَوْجِي، أُوْدُ انْ أَحَاكِيْهِ/ أحكي معهْ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) 'اَتْنِي ذَوْجِي، بِوِدِي انْ 'عَلْكِيْهِ/ 'اَحْكَيْ مَا'اْهُ</td>
<td>5) أعْطِني زَوْجِي، بِوِدِي أَنْ أَحَاكِيْهِ/ أحكي معهْ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By this practice, acquired vocabulary can best help the learner to communicate with native speakers and understand them outside the classroom. It is also necessary to highlight some grammatical differences between literary Arabic and the targeted dialect like deleting in dialect the grammatical tool (ن : an : that) which separates, in literary Arabic, two verbs: the first is often a verb of desire or obligation (يَجِب أنْ: yajibu 'an : it is necessary that, أَرِيد أنْ : urīdu 'an : I want).

4. Conclusion

Language teaching is now developing theories and very powerful educational tools to facilitate the learning task and motivate learners to improve their language skills. Language habits change continuously and the learners’ needs change too. This is why it is always necessary to review and update the theoretical methods and practices in an educational program to refine the pedagogy and the content of the textbooks. Because learning is largely based on vocabulary knowledge, four key points must always be taken into consideration during the preparation of this vocabulary before being supplied to the learners:

- the lexical content must be based on the needs of learners, and the vocabulary skills must be actively taught, learned and, if possible, adapted to their needs;
- each lexicon presentation must occur in multiple contexts. A combination of spoken and written activities is also necessary;
- it is important to master the language functions of the learned lexicon to be able to use it effectively;
- and finally, it is essential to combine, in textbooks, editorial and communicative lexicon, especially when they are distant as in the case of Arabic.
The comparative approach that we propose is not only intended to connect literary Arabic and the regional dialects of Damascus. Lexicon obtained by this method may also be useful in situations of communication between other Arabic dialects. These dialects contain lots of elements that are common with or linked to literary Arabic words.

In some institutions in the Arab world, the regional dialect is taught at the request of learners. This is also the case in The Higher Language Institute of Damascus. However, learning a dialect will not have much use when the learner goes to another Arab country where regional dialects are different.

We propose this approach firstly to encourage better use of vocabulary learned in class in different situations of Syrian language practice. Secondly, it is to help the learner to use this lexicon to, at least, understand the language used in other regions or in other Arab countries.

The application of this approach does not mean to exclude the classic and modern literary Arabic in teaching programs. The teaching of these two language varieties is still justified for the comprehension and the production of written Arabic.

This approach is a proposed method of a possible solution to the problem of polyglossia in Arabic languages. However, there is still much work to do especially in terms of the syntagmatic and paradigmatic analysis of the language of everyday communication, the level of development of educational tools for training, and the evaluation of acquired skills.
References


Why do Private University Students Decide to Learn English?

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Abstract

Zoltan Dornyei (2009) has proposed a new L2 motivation construct, the L2 Motivational Self System, which goes beyond the classic traditions set by Canadian psychologist Robert Gardner and his associates. Thus, this study utilized the new construct to explore the nature of L2 learners’ motivation toward English language learning. A total of 50 third-year undergraduate students majoring in Business English Communication at a private university completed a small-scale survey adapted from Dornyei’s (2009) new L2 motivation construct in order to investigate the type and level of motivation; instrumental motives with a promotion focus or a prevention focus and integrative motives were selected in this study. The main findings show that the students decide to study English because they think it will be useful in getting a good job. If they do not have knowledge of English, they will be considered a weak student. The results could be guidelines for enhancing relevant language programs and learning activities as well as increasing the learners’ motivation in English language learning.

Keywords: Motivation, L2 motivational self-system, Private university students, English language learning

1. Introduction

English language is a universal language which is used as a medium of communication. Thus, it is important for students to learn the language and even better if they master it in order to have more job opportunities. Nowadays, employers are looking for potential candidates who are able to communicate in English. For this reason, many universities in Thailand have opened Business English Communication courses to serve employers’ needs.
Siam University is a private university where Business English Communication courses were created for students who are interested in English for communication in business contexts. Moreover, Business English Communication students or BEC students have more opportunities to practice English communication skills since every course is conducted in English. Even though English used as a medium of instruction is tough for them, they continue studying it. For this reason, the researcher decided to discover the reasons why those students wanted to learn English by applying the L2 motivational framework to identify their motivational orientations.

**Literature Review**

Motivation has been widely accepted as an important factor that affects L2 learners’ achievement (Gardner, 1985; Dornyei, 2001). Learners who have high levels of motivation are likely to perform better than those who have low levels (Gardner, 2006, p. 241). Dornyei (1988) explains that in the beginning motivation gives an impetus to initiate L2 learning and later works as a driving force to make learners keep learning for a long time without giving up (p. 117). If they lack sufficient motivation, they are unlikely to continue learning long enough to reach any expected language proficiency (Cheng and Dornyei, 2007, p. 153).

According to Gardner (1985, p. 10), motivation is a combination of tireless effort and desire to reach the goal of learning the target language; it also includes positive attitudes toward learning the language. Gardner (ibid), therefore, believes that an L2 learner with sufficient motivation is one who is eager to learn, willing to spend effort on the learning activities and willing to continuing doing them. Gardner and Lambert (1972) have distinguished L2 learning motivation into two types: instrumental and integrative motivation. Learners who are instrumentally motivated want to learn a language for practical reasons such as career promotion, business opportunities, getting a salary bonus or just passing a test or exam (Gardner, 1983; Saville-Troike, 2006). Unlike instrumental motivation, those who are integratively motivated wish to better understand and get closer to the people who speak the target language (Gardner, 1983).

However, Dornyei (2009) argued that the concept of ‘integrative’ proposed by Gardner is not quite clear in terms of what the target of the integration is. Dornyei et al. (2006) further points out that English is now the global language. In some countries like Singapore and India, people use English as a second language; they are also native speakers of English. Furthermore, many countries use English as a main medium of communication. For this reason, it is not at all clear who EFL (English as a
foreign language) learners believe the ‘owner’ of their L2 is. Consequently, Gardner’s concept of integrativeness has been undermined.

In 2005, Dornyei proposed a new framework, L2 Motivational Self System. The framework discusses several attitudinal/ motivational dimensions, such as instrumentality, direct contact with L2 speakers, cultural interest, vitality of L2 community, milieu, and linguistic self-confidence. Although this framework talks about various dimensions, only instrumentality was selected in the present study.

According to Dornyei’s (2005) L2 Motivational Self System, based on Higgins’s (1998) distinction are two types of instrumentality: promotional and preventional. Instrumentality-promise involves learners’ goals and hopes to become professionally successful in the L2. For example, students think that studying English can be important to them because someday it will be useful in getting a good job and/or making money. The second type, instrumentality-prevention, is concerned with responsibilities and obligations that learners have toward others. For example, students think that studying English is important to them because, if they don’t have knowledge of English, they’ll be considered weak students.

In addition, instrumentality-promotion and prevention seems to play an important role in Asian learning environments, saying that family influence is a factor that either promotes or prevents learners in learning the language (Lockwood et al., 2005). Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the type of instrumental motivation third-year Business English Communication students at Siam University have towards English language learning in terms of the following two constructs: promotion and prevention (Higgins, 1998). It also examined the participants’ decision to choose English as their major. To reach this objective, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What kind of instrumental motivation do third-year Business English Communication students have towards English language learning?

2. What are their main reasons to study English as their major?
2. Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants in this study were 50 third-year BEC students of the Faculty of Liberal Arts at Siam University. The majority of participants were female (N= 33, 66%) as opposed to males (N= 17, 34%). Ages ranged from 20 to 25 years old.

3.2 Research instrument

A small-scale motivational questionnaire was divided into 2 main sections based on Higgins (1998): instrumentality-promotion and –prevention. Following Taguchi et al. (2009), in order to identify students’ motivation, the questionnaire comprised 20 questions based on Dornyei’s (2006) attitude/motivation questionnaire. The subjects were asked to rank 20 statements on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ (1) to ‘strongly agree’ (5). The statements represented two motivational constructs: instrumentality-promotion (items 1-12) and instrumentality-prevention (items 13-20).

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 What kind of instrumental motivation do third-year Business English Communication students have towards English language learning?

The first question included in the questionnaire attempted to find out whether third-year Business English Communication students were either more instrumentally promoted or prevented. The results are shown in the following two tables (Table 1 and Table 2). Overall, the data seem to indicate that respondents are more instrumentally promoted. Furthermore, Table 1 reveals that participants seem to possess a high level of instrumentality-promotion since all items related to this type of motivation registered mean scores above 4 points on a 5-point scale. The average mean score of instrumentality-promotion is also very high (x̄ = 4.49), which clearly demonstrates the relevance of this type of motivation among participants.
Table 1

**Instrumentality (Promotion)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrumentality (promotion)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Rating of Motivation Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Studying English can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Studying English is important to me because with English I can work globally.</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Studying English is important because with a high level of English proficiency I will be able to make a lot of money.</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Studying English is important to me because English proficiency is necessary for promotion in the future.</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Studying English is important to me because it offers a new challenge in my life.</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The things I want to do in the future require me to use English.</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Studying English is important to me in order to achieve a special goal (e.g. to get a degree or scholarship).</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I study English in order to keep updated and informed of recent news of the world.</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Studying English is important to me because I would like to spend a longer period living abroad (e.g. studying and working).</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Studying English is important to me because I am planning to study abroad.</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Studying English is important to me in</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
order to attain a higher social respect.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Studying English can be important to me because I think I’ll need it for further studies.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from Table 1, the three aspects registering the highest scores were item 1 (‘Studying English can be important to me because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.’, \(\bar{x} = 4.90\)), item 7 (‘Studying English is important to me because with English I can work globally.’, \(\bar{x} = 4.70\)) and item 2 (‘Studying English is important because with a high level of English proficiency I will be able to make a lot of money.’, \(\bar{x} = 4.60\)). All three items seem to make reference to the more vocational aspects of language learning including the possibility of getting a good job and working globally. Additionally, item 2 also points to the ability of making a lot of money if a level of English proficiency is high.

These findings seem to give support to Taguchi et al.’s (2009) study on motivation towards English language learning among Iranian learners. Studying English is a requirement of a university education. In order to find a good job, one should do well on the English course or chances of finding a secure job with a stable income will decrease. In Thailand, graduating from prestigious universities also increases chances of having a decent job. Consequently, Thai students these days learn English in order to enter prestigious universities. To achieve that goal, students usually resort to cram schools and personal tutors since English language teachers in the formal education system are not capable of equipping them with the necessary English skills to pass the university entrance examinations. In Thai society, the students who fail the entrance exam usually go to private universities. It is a sad truth that those students are likely to be perceived as low-level in terms of academia as well as in English language just because they did not pass the entrance exam.

As for the lowest-scoring items, participants cited the following: ‘Studying English is important to me because I would like to spend a longer period living abroad (e.g. studying and working).’ (item 4, \(\bar{x} = 4.30\)), ‘Studying English is important to me because I am planning to study abroad.’ (item 5, \(\bar{x} = 4.30\)), ‘Studying English is important to me in order to attain a higher social respect.’ (item 11, \(\bar{x} = 4.24\)) and finally, ‘Studying English can be important to me because I think I’ll need it for further studies.’ (item 6, \(\bar{x} = 4.20\)). All four items appear to relate to further studies. Although these aspects had the least impact on participants’ motivation, the mean scores are still high.
Table 2

*Instrumentality (Prevention)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrumentality (promotion)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Rating of Motivation Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. Studying English is important to me because, if I don’t have knowledge of English, I’ll be considered a weak student.</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I have to learn English because I don’t want to fail the English course.</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I have to learn English because without passing the English course I cannot get my degree.</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I have to study English because I don’t want to get bad marks in it.</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Studying English is necessary for me because I don’t want to get a poor score or a fail mark in English proficiency tests (TOEFL, IELTS,. . .).</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I have to study English; otherwise, I think I cannot be successful in my future career.</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Studying English is important to me because I don’t like to be considered a poorly educated person.</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Studying English is important to me, because I would feel ashamed if I got bad grades in English.</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrumentality-prevention can be seen from the data shown in Table 2, the three highest-scoring items associated to this type of motivation were the following: ‘Studying English is important to me because, if I don’t have knowledge of English,
I’ll be considered a weak student.’ (item 18, $x^- = 4.50$), ‘I have to learn English because I don’t want to fail the English course.’ (item 14, $x^- = 4.48$), ‘I have to learn English because without passing the English course I cannot get my degree.’ (item 13, $x^- = 4.46$). The highest-scoring item seems to be related to students’ future self-image as a good L2 user, saying that if they have knowledge of English, they will be considered a strong student. This seems to give support to Dornyei’s ‘L2 motivational self-system’ theory (2009), which suggests that a future image of oneself as a proficient L2 user can increase his or her motivation. According to Islam et al. (2013), the positive future self-image may also boost their learning efforts.

The second and third highest-scoring items seem to be related to the desire to pass the English course in order to get a degree, which reflects the reality of the Thai education system where Thais tend to value academic degrees more than performance. It is almost impossible for university students to find a good job because employers prefer to hire graduate students with academic degrees, at least bachelor’s degree. Therefore, this is the reason why students have to learn English. Without passing the English course, they cannot get a degree to apply for a job.

**4.2 What are their main reasons to study English as their major?**

**Table 3**

*The comparison between instrumentality-promotion and –prevention*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentality (promotion)</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumentality (prevention)</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 presents the comparison between instrumentality-promotion and –prevention. It reveals that the mean score of promotion (4.49) is higher than the mean score of prevention (4.25). However, the overall mean scores of both types of motivation of 4.37 is considered as a high degree of motivation. These figures clearly indicate that the participants were instrumentally promoted to learn the English language. Although instrumentality-promotion is their main reasons to study English as their major, instrumentality-prevention is still high.
5 Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that instrumentality-promotion was clearly the primary source of the motivation of third-year BEC students towards the learning of the English language. Likewise, the data also indicates that the strongest promoting factors in the decision to choose English as their major’ seem to be related to getting a good job and making a lot of money out of it. On the contrary, the most preventing factors reported by participants appear to be strongly related to the importance of studying English to prevent themselves from being considered weak students and the need to pass the English course in order to get a degree. Although the data sources from this study may not represent all other student groups, it provides useful knowledge and information for the institute at Siam University to improve English courses by considering the reasons why students choose English language courses. The researcher is still confident that the results will be of a great value to authorities or researchers concerned.

References


Developing an In-House Speaking Assessment: Rasch Analysis for Action Research

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Abstract
Volunteer students \((n = 20)\) and teacher-raters \((n = 5)\) were recruited in order to pilot a new speaking test scoring system meant to replace an intuition-based assessment approach. The research questions for this study are: 1) How are the performances of the examinees, raters and and rubric categories related when they are put on the same logit scale? 2) To what degree are different raters scoring in the same ways? 3) How difficult or easy are the rubric categories relative to each other? Results were analyzed using multifaceted Rasch analysis (Bond & Fox, 2011; Linacre, 2001). The results showed a range of student abilities from high to low with most students’ scores falling within plus/minus one standard deviation from the mean. Student raters’ self-ratings were too varied and erratic; some high performers gave themselves low scores and low performers gave themselves high scores. Teachers’ ratings were more stable, centered around the mean, but with some teachers slightly more lenient. The easiest category to get good marks in was Content Relevance and the hardest category was Fluency.

Keywords: Action research, Speaking assessment, Rubric, Multi-faceted Rasch measurement

3. Introduction

Language teachers are sometimes put into the position of judging a second language learner’s speaking ability in a short amount of time. The purpose of such an assessment may be to screen candidates from entering a program, or it can serve a placement test to match the learner with the best course. Often, a short conversation or interview may be the only chance to perform this level check, and the results depend on that teacher’s overall impression or intuition. However, due to individual differences among raters, would the results be the same with a different rater?

After experiencing an uneasy time using an intuition-based method to rate students on an English-language speaking test at a private university in Japan, the author requested and received permission to conduct participatory action research at the institution, with the aim of improving the scoring process.
4. Literature Review

4.1 Action Research
The idea of action research has evolved and developed since it was first coined by German psychologist, Kurt Lewin in his 1946 paper “Action Research and Minority Problems” (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Hinchey, 2008; Lewin, 1946; McKernan, 1988). Action research, as explained by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, p. 2) is a reflective and cyclical process that people in social situations, not in laboratory experiments, undertake to improve the “rationality and justice of their own social or educational practice, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out.”

Action research fits well with the critical paradigm (Hatch, 2002) in that the starting point is to identify a problem, most likely posing a challenge the status quo, but coming from a desire to constructively criticize, and its ending point is to find a solution. As such, a benefit of action research is that it produces a set of practices, not just words on a page (Gustavsen, Hannson, & Qvale, 2008).

The action research cycle that I adopt is the one in its most recent form, succinctly reported by Ivankova (2015). This cycle contains the six stages of Diagnosing, Reconnaissance, Planning, Acting, Evaluation, and Monitoring. The scope of the present study is on the first to the third stage of this framework: identifying a problem, doing reconnaissance about the problem, and planning for the intervention.

4.2 Evidence-Centered Design
The evidence-centered design (ECD) methodology originates from ETS, especially Mislevy, Almond, and Lukas (2003). It attempts to produce an instrument based on evidence that is linked to relevant constructs (e.g. fluency, appropriate register, naturalness of speech). It can be thought of as the opposite to intuition-based assessment methods. Two examples that represent the end product of ECD are the ACTFL OPI (ACTFL, 2012) and the IELTS Speaking Test (IELTS.org, 2014). While not a speaking assessment in and of itself, the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) is another example of a scale describing language ability.

The common features of these scoring systems are the numbered levels, or bands, from lower ability to higher ability and the fact that each level is defined with a set of carefully written definitions of ability. In other words, they describe the constructs to be assessed and provide criteria for raters to search for matching evidence. Ideally, if the scoring system is well linked with the learning outcome or curriculum goal, it provides content validity for the assessment in question. Additionally, if rater training is successful, different raters would assign roughly the same ratings for the same speaking performance, lending support to the reliability issue. Fulcher and Davison (2007) support ECD as one way to get test developers to consider if test items created actually do encourage test-takers to supply evidence that can be scored, and if this score is related to end goal of what the test’s purpose is about.
4.3 Rasch Analysis

Rasch analysis, specifically multifaceted Rasch analysis, is a sophisticated way to statistically analyze rubric score data. One technique to analyze a person’s ability and also a rater's level of leniency/severity is Linacre's (2006) Facets software. It can perform multifaceted Rasch measurement, and it is possible to not only analyze rater severity, but also candidate performance, as well as the rating scale's (the test instrument) performance. Analyzing this data may lead to a quality control decision to adjust one or more of the facets of the test administration: for example, the candidate's score, plus or minus the rater's severity, or recalibration of the scoring system and descriptions of the levels in the scale. A unique feature of this approach is that it can track bias among raters, and even provide an adjustment value to make the final scores fairer than just the observed, raw totals.

5. Action Research Context

The motivation for this study came from an uneasy experience I had as a volunteer judge for the annual speaking test at a private Japanese university. It was a screening test for students who wanted to enter their special certificate course for advanced English studies. Interviewers were told by the director to “ask anything” and to rate the candidates on a 5-point scale in the categories of English Skills and Motivation. After doing this intuition-based rating for two years in a row, I felt it was not very systematic or fair. This was stage 1 of my action research, finding a gap, not in theory, but in the practice of administering a loose speaking assessment.

In stage 2, I requested and received permission to conduct participatory action research, in order to propose a new system. My reconnaissance activities included: conducting observations of the speaking test (during my third year as a volunteer judge) and interviewing the other judges, both veterans and first-timers. After reviewing my field notes and transcripts, I naturally looked at the literature on speaking assessments and validity in testing (Brown, 2012; Fulcher & Davidson, 2013; Lazaraton, 2002; Luoma, 2004; Taylor, 2011) for guidance.

As a result, I was able to arrive at stage 3, planning the intervention. In this stage I proposed a new procedure. The new scoring system includes: a bank of interview questions (two sets: easier and harder) to ask the examinees, a scoring rubric of four levels with four categories: Content Relevance (CR), Content Support (CS), Fluency (FLU), and Accuracy (ACC), and the recommendation to use the statistical procedure called multifaceted Rasch measurement (MFRM).

As the assessment developer, my intention was that by having 1) a list of questions to use, rather than the “ask anything” approach, 2) a shared set of criteria (the rubric), 3) raters who have prepared ahead of time by studying the rubrics, and 4) trackable (and adjustable) results via MFRM, this new speaking assessment would be fairer and more transparent to all parties concerned, than the way it had been previously administered.
6. Purpose and Research Questions

Before using the rubric under live testing conditions, a trial speaking test was conducted. The purpose was to confirm the soundness of the assessment scale. This study seeks to discover evidence that the four categories, CR, CS, FLU, and ACC (with their four levels) worked consistently well, in terms of rater severity, agreement and misfit.

The research questions for this study are:

1. How are the performances of the examinees, raters and rubric categories related when they are put on the same logit scale?
2. To what degree are different raters scoring in the same ways?
3. How difficult or easy are the rubric categories relative to each other?

7. Methodology: The Trial Speaking Test

A trial speaking test was conducted using the new scoring system. All participants were given the rubric and lists of questions. I was the sole interviewer and conducted one-on-one sessions with each interviewee. The sessions were audio recorded using an IC recorder. A total of 20 performances from 20 volunteer students were recorded. An effort was made to recruit students of a variety of proficiencies to “test” the raters’ rating ability and to check the rubric’s ability to yield a range of scores. A total of five volunteer raters participated in this study: two L1 Japanese non-native English teachers/translators and three native English-speaking teachers, including myself. In addition to requesting teachers’ ratings of these recorded speaking performances, I also requested students to rate their own speaking. The purpose of this was to see if the 20 students rated differently from the five “professional” raters, which is a pertinent issue when considering Research Question 2.

Table 1 shows the rating design, with details about which rater checked which students’ recording. Due to the robustness of Rasch analysis it was not necessary to have all raters rate all candidates (Bond & Fox, 2011; Linacre, 2001). Certain test-takers, students 5, 9, 13, and 17 had overlapping raters. In doing so the data are “anchored” such that the dataset can be calculated even with some missing values. Data were entered into Facets (Linacre, 2001), a multi-faceted Rasch analysis software to calculate measures of student ability, rater severity, and rubric scale difficulty.
Table 1

*Structure of Rating Design*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Taker ID</th>
<th>Self raters</th>
<th>Rater 21 (me)</th>
<th>Rater 22 (NS1)</th>
<th>Rater 23 (NS2)</th>
<th>Rater 24 (NNS1)</th>
<th>Rater 25 (NNS2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Findings and Discussion
Overall results are discussed before taking a look at the data relevant to each research question. Table 2 shows the candidates’ raw scores. The series of four numbers in each cell represent each person’s scores in the four categories in this order: Content Relevance, Content Support, Fluency, and Accuracy. The maximum score possible from one judge is 16 points. Depending on the number of raters the grand total for possible points per examinee will differ: 32 points for 2 raters, 48 points for three raters, 64 points for four raters.

Even without a deeper analysis we can see some anomalous cases. Student 12 gave herself a total score of 10, while I awarded a top score of 16 and Rater 24 awarded a score of 15 points. This student was too harsh on herself. For one more example, student 17 self-rated at the maximum score of 16 points, while I award 12 points and Rater 25 awarded 10 points. This student was much too lenient in the self-rating.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Students’ self rating</th>
<th>Rater 21</th>
<th>Rater 22</th>
<th>Rater 23</th>
<th>Rater 24</th>
<th>Rater 25</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3212</td>
<td>4123</td>
<td>4333</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3333</td>
<td>4322</td>
<td>4322</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4433</td>
<td>2112</td>
<td>3221</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4433</td>
<td>4323</td>
<td>3323</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4332</td>
<td>4432</td>
<td>4433</td>
<td>4322</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>2222</td>
<td>3322</td>
<td></td>
<td>4322</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>2222</td>
<td>4322</td>
<td></td>
<td>3322</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3423</td>
<td>4322</td>
<td></td>
<td>4433</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3233</td>
<td>4212</td>
<td>4434</td>
<td>3222</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>3232</td>
<td>4333</td>
<td></td>
<td>4233</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1111</td>
<td>2211</td>
<td></td>
<td>2211</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 8.1 Multifaceted Rasch Analysis fit Statistics

A look at the Rasch fit statistics can help determine how well the data fit the Rasch (probability) model. Table 3 gives misfit results for the trial speaking assessment using all raters’ data. There seems to be a few misfitting data if mean squares are used, (as listed in the table). When using standardized $z$-scores of greater than 2 as a guide (not shown), however, there are no cases of misfit.

The fifth column of Table 3 labeled Reliability refers to separation reliability of the different facets of this speaking assessment. The 0.94 for examinees is a good sign. It shows that they are separate and unique. This is important because students with different abilities were intentionally recruited for this trial speaking test. The data show that the new scoring system could properly separate students of different ability. The 0.89 for the raters is high, which does not meet expectations. It shows that raters are too unique and separate; they are not rating in similar ways, which is what judges should ideally do if they are all following the same scoring procedure. The 0.97 for the categories means that CR, CS, FLU, and ACC are statistically significant and separate constructs. In this, we can see validation for the rubric’s categories because the constructs do not overlap.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facet</th>
<th># misfit</th>
<th>RMSE</th>
<th>Separation</th>
<th>Reliability</th>
<th>Chi-Square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>examinees</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>$p. &lt; .001$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
raters   14   1.1   2.88   0.89   \( p. < .001 \)
categories  0   0.27   5.46   0.97   \( p. < .001 \)

*Note: RMSE = root mean square standard error*

Figure 1 is the vertical ruler, and it has a summary of the Rasch analysis taken from the *Facets* software. It shows student ability levels, rater severity levels, and difficulty levels of the categories. All values have been converted to the logit scale, an interval scale, with the distance from each unit being equal throughout the scale. A zero logit refers to the mean score, a positive logit value indicates how many standard deviation units are above the mean, and a negative logit value indicates how many standard deviation units are below the mean.

### 8.2 Examinee Performances

One part of Research Question 1 is concerned with student ability measures. It was hoped that raters using the criteria in the rubric would be able to fairly and accurately rank students in order of their ability. This seems to be the case. The results in the student ability column show a range of ratings, converted to logits, from high to low with most students’ scores falling within plus/minus one standard deviation from the mean. For example, two low ability students are 11 and 3, an average ability student is student 17, and the highest ability student is 12. The shape of this distribution approximates a bell curved turned on its side, which is what one would hope for.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logits</th>
<th>Student Ability</th>
<th>Rater Severity</th>
<th>Category Difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>(high ability)</td>
<td>11 (strict)</td>
<td>(Difficult)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facet</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>13 6 7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content support</td>
<td>16 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content relevance</td>
<td>18 19 22 23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(low ability)</td>
<td>17 3 (lenient)</td>
<td>(Easy)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1* Rasch analysis Facets summary (vertical ruler) of the pilot study
8.3 Rater Severity
Another part of Research Question 1 and the main focus of Research Question 2 is about rater severity. As can be seen from the rater severity column in Figure 1, students’ self-ratings (raters 1 to 20) were too varied and erratic. The entire 14-logit-span range is used. A high performer (Student 12) gave herself a strict (low) score, while an average and low performers (Students 17 and 3) gave themselves nearly the highest scores possible. One has to question whether or not students in these extreme cases actually used the rubric as instructed. It is quite possible that they used their own feelings to guide their judgement, rather than the criteria given in the rubric.

Teachers’ ratings, on the other hand, were more stable than the students’ self-ratings. Their positions on the logit scale range from zero (average severity level) to –2.5 logits. This is vastly different from the 14-logit-span range that we saw students using. It is interesting to note that the native speakers were more lenient than the non-native speaker raters. In fact, Rater 24 was right on the mean, indicating that she was the “fairest one of all”, followed closely by Rater 25, another non-native English speaker.

8.4 Rubric categories and levels
As shown in the category difficulty column of Figure 1, the easiest category to get good marks in was Content Relevance (-2.26), followed by Content Support (-0.37). The secondmost difficult category was Accuracy (0.92) and the most difficult category was Fluency (1.71). This ranking makes sense since it is easier to get points in Content if a student stays on topic and gives support details. It is no surprise that learners would have the most trouble with Fluency and Accuracy. Therefore, no unexpected results appeared in these analyses.

Regarding the four levels of the scale, it seems that having four levels for each category work well, statistically. All ratings (1 to 4) were used, not requiring any levels to be merged (collapsed) together due to disuse.

9. Conclusion
The scope of this study was to report on the planned intervention for stage 3 of the action research cycle, in the context of a speaking assessment for university students. Specifically, the study was carried out to confirm if the newly proposed scoring system’s rubric could function well as a replacement for the intuition-based scoring method currently used for speaking tests. Using an evidence-centered design and Rasch analysis for assessing the assessment, it was found that the new scoring system appears to be a viable option. The underlying constructs present in the four categories of the rubric were found to be unique and separate. The scoring system could measure and rank the different levels of student abilities. It could also track which raters were not performing as expected and which raters seemed to follow the scoring method well. It was much more scientific and transparent than just the “that’s what I think” intuition-based approach, by providing trackable empirical data, which
could be checked and adjusted for bias. Additional steps to take for improving this scoring system include a review of the questions used to generate the speech data and the development of rater training procedures and materials.

References


Helping L2 Writers Find Their Voice in Academic Writing

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Abstract

This paper grew out of a corpus research project on written academic English. My students and I became interested in a small area of academic vocabulary commonly referred to as reporting verbs. These verbs are used to cite sources in academic writing. They have the dual purpose of reviewing the literature in an academic field but also in revealing to the reader the epistemic and attitudinal stance of the writer of the review. Reporting verbs provide a locus in literature reviews where writers can obliquely insert their own view on the cited author’s opinion and the degree to which they agree with that opinion. I give a brief historical account of how these reporting verbs came to be the stock in trade of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers, as witnessed by numerous academic websites which offer help and advice to students of EAP. I describe part of a case study in which I attempted to raise an advanced apprentice writer’s awareness of these powerful words. Illustrative data is provided and analysed showing the outcome. A discussion follows on how to minimize teacher induced error when encouraging students in autonomous learning. The use of corpora and concordancing is proposed as a way of providing students of EAP with a means to study vocabulary in context so that they can engage more with the target words and derive a clearer picture of a word’s collocations and colligations than can be obtained from dictionaries or thesauri.

Keywords: Interpersonal metafunction, Reporting verbs, Vocabulary acquisition

1. Introduction

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) alerted us to what they called the interpersonal metafunction in language production. Often language plays multiple roles in the situations in which it is used. Typical of this is the pragmatic force invested by speakers / writers in their utterances so that they have an information-bearing, ideational or denotational function but also build and maintain the writer/speakers’ relation with their reader(s) or listeners. An example of this is hedging: where the writer does not state his or her conclusions baldly or dogmatically but instead writes tentatively allowing readers to make up their own mind. At a more general level, interpersonal meanings have been described as evaluation, appraisal, stance and the term, metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005) is a useful portmanteau term for these phenomena. EFL and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students have to learn to achieve an appropriate degree of tentativeness and certainty in order for them to function well in their chosen academic discourse community.
In this paper I would like to report on an episode which occurred during a corpus-based EAP course which sought to raise tertiary students’ awareness of certain features of academic writing. This research grew out of an earlier corpus project in which the master’s dissertations submitted by students since 2004 at the British University in Dubai (BUiD) were collected. The L1 of almost all of the writers in the corpus is Arabic. This so-called BUiD corpus contains seven million running words of written academic English. A control corpus (of L1 academic writing) for comparative purposes was extracted from the BAWE corpus.

Johns (1994) in his influential work on data driven learning described his students as ‘language detectives’ as they manipulated and investigated the language data they were provided with or gathered themselves with text retrieval software and concordancers, discovering the grammar and discourse rules for themselves. I think this metaphor suits the EAP learner and the EAP practitioner or teacher of academic literacy who is facilitating the learner in exploring the corpora. It is a good metaphor to learn and teach by.

The potential relevance of corpus analysis for EAP teaching is well acknowledged these days (Dudley-Evans & St. Johns 1998) and there are many potential applications of corpus work to ESP available to teachers. Gavioli and Aston (2001) describe this potential in most enthusiastic terms: ‘ESP and specialized corpora: A happy marriage’.

For the FLLT conference, I revisited the so-called reporting verbs (e.g., affirmed, declared, stated, maintained, claimed, alleged, suggested and so forth). There has been much interest in these verbs in both theoretical and pedagogical works in the last two decades and a whole chapter of the COBUILD grammar was devoted to them. EAP students can use these verbs for a dual purpose in their literature review; firstly, to report what the authors of their source texts have written and, secondly, to show the degree to which they agree with their sources or how much credence they give to the various reported texts. Very subtly, the student can insert his or her own voice at this stage.

In the final part of my paper I will discuss a small case study and ask whether data driven learning or a more guided approach facilitates EAP students’ acquisition of the writing skills needed to handle the interpersonal function and, in particular, the accurate and appropriate deployment of reporting verbs.

2. Literature Review

Reporting verbs are portrayed and exemplified on many university websites providing online resources for university students. The following is an excerpt from one of the most consulted sites held at the University of Adelaide <URL: https://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/>. One interesting point is the way in which these websites borrow and cite from each other, so that a creative commons has been built up in the field of EAP.
Academic writing requires you to use citations to refer to the original source when you have used someone else’s ideas or concepts in your writing.

One of the most common ways to incorporate these citations into your writing is to use reporting verbs to help you to present the information.

The use of reporting verbs in your written academic work can help to reflect your attitudes to the ‘sourced information’ or help you to voice your opinions/arguments better in your assignment work.

There is a wide variety of reporting verbs in the English language, some of which are detailed below:

**Part 1: Advanced ways to show your attitude**

Reporting verbs are a way for you, the writer, to show your attitude towards the source of information you are citing. These attitudes are either ‘positive’, ‘negative’ or ‘neutral’.

---

Do you agree with what the author has said? If so, use reporting verbs with a positive meaning to them. Here are some reporting verbs that tend to be positive:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>acknowledges</th>
<th>affirms</th>
<th>analyses</th>
<th>Applauds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

---

Do you disagree with what the author has said? In this case, you can use a negative reporting verb to indicate this. Here are some reporting verbs used when there is a belief that the literature is incorrect:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>accuses</th>
<th>alleges</th>
<th>apologizes</th>
<th>Asserts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

---

Perhaps you feel neutral about the source you are citing. In this situation, you should use a neutral reporting verb. Here are some reporting verbs that tend to be neutral:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>accepts</th>
<th>acknowledges</th>
<th>adds</th>
<th>Agrees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

---

Adapted from: [The Independent Learning Centre](http://example.com) [opens external site], *Chinese University, Hong Kong, n.d. Reporting verbs*, viewed 26 May, 2016.
Part 2: Your "writer's" voice

Academic writing at university normally requires you to use multiple information sources, and to evaluate the quality of these ideas. One important tool for doing this is reporting verbs.

Reporting verbs tell us that someone said something. However, careful selection of reporting verbs can help show your assessment of the quality of what they have said. This is a vital academic skill. It not only helps turn ordinary Pass-level work into much better work, but it also develops your critical thinking skills.

Reporting verbs can show your opinion of others’ ideas:

- a belief that the literature is correct (stronger position)
- a neutral attitude towards the veracity of the literature (i.e. neither correct nor incorrect – neutral position)
- a belief that the literature is incorrect (weaker position)

The grammar of reporting verbs

Reporting verbs have simple basic grammar. However, it can be confusing because there are two basic patterns. Some reporting verbs belong to one pattern, some to the other, and some to both.

Pattern 1: Verb + Noun (noun phrase)

The authors show the devastating results of this policy (Smith & Jones, 2008, p. 12).

For example:

Pattern 2: Verb + That + clause (i.e. sentence)

Examples: The authors show that this policy had 'devastating economic results' (Smith & Jones, 2008, p. 12).

Tense

Reporting verbs are normally present simple – especially for recent articles and books. For example:

Turner (2010) states that the modern nation wields more power in new ways.

However, use the past tense if presenting the results of past research – even in recent literature. For example:

The groups observed during the research showed a range of leadership styles (Kang, 2006).

(Retrieved from: https://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/)

I quote extensively from this source, because the subject of my case study read the advice given on this website closely. She also paid close attention to the advice on reporting verbs in the Cobuild Grammar of English; for this reason a sizeable quote is given from this text.

Before I move on to examine further the advice given to student writers about the use of reporting verbs, I would like to second the advice from the University of Adelaide about the central role of the present tense in reporting the literature. According to the supervisor of my PhD thesis, Professor Katie Wales, the present tense should almost always be used for reporting verbs. This advice makes life easy and is to be trusted as
Katie Wales is none other than the Editor of the Longman Dictionary of Stylistics. The simple present tense avoids convolutions of chronology requiring the Past Perfect and Past Progressive when the reporting verbs are in the Simple Past and can even report ideas of ancient scholars like Aristotle and Confucius. The following excerpt from the Cobuild Grammar of English shows the seriousness with which reporting verbs began to be taken. This is the only reference to reporting verbs to be found in a grammar of the English language.

**Reporting**

An important aspect of academic speaking and writing involves reporting (or *citing*) the work of other academics.

Citations can be used to explain the basis of your work, to support and illustrate your arguments, or to contrast your ideas with other writers’ theories.

Citations sometimes take the form of direct quotes; however, the reported information is usually summarized in your own words.

The following reporting verbs are commonly used in academic English to introduce cited material.

Theses verbs indicate the type of activity reported:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the activity is:</th>
<th>research-related</th>
<th>mental</th>
<th>verbal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>use</td>
<td>measure</td>
<td>think</td>
<td>state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>calculate</td>
<td>believe</td>
<td>write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>estimate</td>
<td>consider</td>
<td>define</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>find</td>
<td>focus on</td>
<td>challenge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>obtain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Nuttall and Gipps (1982)* estimate that the direct cost of the APU was £800,000 per year.

*Collins and Ellis (2001)* also challenge the traditional concept of the individual.

Note that the verbs that you use will depend on your academic discipline. Research-related verbs are more common in technical and scientific writing; mental and verbal activity verbs are more common in the humanities and social sciences.
Expressing degrees of certainty

When you are formulating your message, you need to consider how strongly you want to make your claim. Different structures express different degrees of certainty, and allow you to establish a position that you can defend if you are criticized.

For example, it is possible to defend the following statement:

Certain researchers have attempted to show that some underprivileged children cannot engage in play.

The following would be less easy to defend:

Researchers have shown that underprivileged children cannot engage in play.

Cautious language

You can use more cautious language when you think that other people may disagree with your statement, or when you want to express uncertainty about whether or not a proposition is true. This may be because you really are uncertain, or because you want to create opportunities for readers to decide for themselves.

We can see therefore that there has been an increasing amount of focus on reporting verbs, from the perspective of grammar as seen in the Cobuild English Grammar quotation above and on numerous websites held at universities throughout the world, where students are given support and advice about academic writing style.

In the seminal work on reporting verbs by Thomson and Yiyun (1991), an in-depth study was made of the phenomenon. These two authors came up with a list of more than 400 reporting verbs and they also reached the conclusion that “this number is not in fact surprising—nor is the list complete or, indeed, completable” (Thomson & Yiyun, 1991, p. 367). These authors carried out an analysis of the reporting verbs under two main headings: denotational and evaluative potential. The dissertation writer reports what the cited author did or said. That is, the denotational function of reporting verbs. This function is then subdivided into three groups of processes: textual, mental, research.

Textual: verbs referring to processes in which verbal expression is an obligatory component; for example, state, write, term, challenge, underline, point out, name, deny

Mental: verbs referring to mental processes expressed in the cited author’s text; for example, believe, think, focus on, consider, prefer.

Research: verbs referring primarily to the mental or physical processes that are part of research work (or the cited author’s description of these processes; for example, measure, calculate, quantify, obtain, find.

In analysing the evaluative potential of reporting verbs, Thomson and Yiyun (1991) distinguished between three separate factors: author’s stance, writer’s stance and
writer’s interpretation. Writer here refers to the dissertation or assignment writer who is citing an author as a source. It is interesting to note that this taxonomy has subsequently been adopted by authors working with mainly pedagogic aims, as for example in the Cobuild English Grammar. Thomson and Yeyun also illustrate why the list of reporting verbs is not completable. They give the example of a citation:

Hunkins (1969) had sixth graders study social study material (Royer et al., 1984, p. 76).

The reporting verb in this example (‘had’) is one that would probably not be predicted as falling into that category and yet it is essentially similar to:


As we can see various lists are available of varying length and with varying degrees of usefulness. The apprentice writer of EAP can find a range of lists at various recommended university websites. The problem with such lists of reporting verbs, as indeed with all vocabulary lists, is that they lie inert on the page or on the screen and the students of EAP have to be brought into some kind of interaction with them (Schmitt, 2008).

I have great admiration for the work of Thomson and Yeyun, but I think that it is a cumbersome model; useful for scholars, but of little use to student writers. I believe that corpora can be used to hunt down and identify reporting verbs. Once identified, the inertness of wordlists can be overcome by helping students explore the identified verbs in their context using concordancing software. The students see the words they are learning to use in the company they usually keep. Instead of a word in a list, the student sees the word in various contexts as each line of a concordance of the word reveals more and more nuances of its ecology.

3. Methodology
The methodology used here was a ‘manual’ (i.e., non-corpus) examination and discussion of occurrences of reporting verbs in students’ writings.

4. Findings and Discussion
Data from a case study of an advanced EAP writers grappling with RVs

The following sentences were extracted from an extended piece of work produced by an advanced student of EAP. The reporting verbs in bold and underlined in the text are those produced by the student. The student was attempting to use a greater variety of reporting verbs and was also consciously trying to use reporting verbs more effectively. It was quite a surprise to me when so many problems arose. After consultation, the student and I agreed that the verbs in parentheses preceding each problematic verb fitted their context better in terms of denotation, stance and complementation.
1. Green (2013) (explains) elucidates that based on these group activities “meaning resides both in the mind of the writer and in the social tools, products and practices present in the writer's world.”

2. Observation in language learning. The researchers (confirm) assure that when learners observe the actions of a proficient model, participate in guided practice and get instrumental feedback, their competence in the task, content and context will develop as well as their abilities to self-regulate learning.

3. The results of analyzing students’ essays and the responses to a questionnaire (indicated) pointed out that English foreign language novice writers could, if engaged in an appropriate learning context, achieve progress in writing effective argumentative essays.

4. As the findings of examining students’ written products at different stages through several drafts, (revealed) asserted that when students learned that writing could be a process to discover and develop their ideas then their writing might show improvement.

5. In addition, the findings of transcribing the interviews and categorizing them thematically (showed) maintained that there was a strong positive correlation between students' use of English writing strategies and their written performance.

6. The results (indicated) supported that limited differences between boys and girls performance were seen as far as the linguistic characteristics of the written works and text types were concerned.

7. The results (demonstrated) depicted that transfer from the first language decreased with the development of the learners' English proficiency and that both Arabic and English speakers used different organizational patterns and learning styles.

I found that my attempts at consciousness raising were singularly unsuccessful. The writer of the sentences above was an advanced student. I suggested she try to vary the verbs she used when she cited authors in her academic writing. I suggested using the thesaurus in Microsoft Word, typing an appropriate reporting verb into her Word document, then calling up a list of synonyms from the thesaurus, and then choosing which verb was best. I referred her to the website at Adelaide University discussed above and to the section on reporting verbs in the Cobuild English Grammar. This was rough and ready autonomous learning but the result, as we can see from the partial list above, was highly unsatisfactory. My student would have produced fewer miscollocations if left to her own devices. We could consider the list of solecisms above as teacher-induced errors.

5. Conclusion

It is clear that these powerful verbs, which have a Janus-like functioning, experiential and simultaneously interpersonal, have to become part of the EAP student’s repertoire. As this is a conference focused on SLA the question arises as to how the
EAP teacher should help the student acquire this useful language. Is it best for students to commit these reporting verbs to their long term memory or mental lexicon or should the students access them from lists or thesauri? One leading scholar of vocabulary teaching and learning, Schmitt (2008), states that the principal task of the vocabulary teacher and materials writer is to promote the engagement of the learner with the lexis to be learned. The more a learner engages with a new word, the more likely he or she is to learn it. Also increased manipulation of the item and its properties and an increased amount of time spent engaging with the item will be conducive to the successful learning of the item. This view of vocabulary learning, which is widely held in the world of TESOL and applied linguistics, would seem to discourage the use of word and phrase lists without the students being to engage more with the new language in order to make it part of their active vocabulary.

In order that students experience this engagement with the verbs, the study of keywords in context concordances might provide this greater engagement, provided that the students are taught how to read concordances. Students would see many examples of the verb in context and could study for themselves the grammatical environment the verb typically is found in.

Tognini-Bellini (2001) claims that the concordance provides syntagmatic information to its reader when it is read horizontally and paradigmatic information when it is read vertically. Such linguistic knowledge, however, can only be obtained from a concordance when the student has been trained in its use. Language students need to learn this new way of viewing language. The adjustment needed is so great that Sinclair (2003) devoted an entire book to training this skill. The concordance, in order to provide useful knowledge, must have been prepared from a carefully chosen corpus, edited to remove noise, irrelevancies, and duplication and then sorted on the most telling collocates to the left or right of the node word. Such an approach and related practices might point the way to helping EAP students incorporate reporting verbs more effectively and confidently in their writing.
References

BAWE The British Academic Written English (BAWE) corpus developed at the Universities of Warwick, Reading and Oxford Brookes under the directorship of Hilary Nesi and Sheena Gardner, Paul Thompson, and Paul Wickens.

Glasgow: Harper Collins


Undergraduates’ Perceptions of Anonymous and Open Digital Peer Feedback in Academic Writing

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Abstract

This study aimed at revealing undergraduates’ perceptions of receiving and providing peer-feedback either ‘openly’ or ‘anonymously’ in a digital online environment in EFL academic writing. The data were collected during an Advanced Reading and Writing Skills course at the English Language Teaching department of Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University in Turkey in the spring semester of the 2014-2015 academic year. Two experimental groups similar to each other in terms of academic writing proficiency were set up. Students submitted their writing assignments through the text-matching software Turnitin and peer-reviewed three papers either anonymously or openly. The participants were categorized into three sub-groups with reference to their writing assignment scores in the fall term. Each student received feedback from a good, a moderate, and a poor peer. Following this, students revised their assignments and resubmitted. Finally, students submitted a reflection paper in which they explained how they benefited from digital peer-feedback. In addition to discussing the effectiveness of open and anonymous peer review, the results also revealed how students reacted to the different types of feedback that they had received. The results highlight the importance of anonymity, specifically in the case of providing peer feedback, through which they change roles and become readers rather than authors. Since the relevant literature provides very limited information regarding the administration of the anonymous peer review process in a digital environment provided from multiple sources, the results are important in terms of maximizing the gains of the anonymous multi-mediated writing model.

Keywords: Academic writing, Anonymous multi-mediated writing model, Anonymous peer feedback, Digital online feedback
10. Introduction
Peers may help each other identify problems that they have overlooked. Therefore, the relevant literature considers peer-review beneficial as a common practice of scaffolding in accordance with Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Peer-review contributes to the acquisition of better writing skills both by the author and reviewer. Yet, managing peer-review can be a complicated task for lecturers. With the help of recent technological developments, digital platforms facilitate the management of exchanging peer-feedback by enabling facilities such as anonymous peer review, matching multiple reviewers for a single paper, and submission of several drafts. In this respect, benefiting from such features of digital platforms is expected to contribute to learners’ writing performances. For instance, the relevant literature indicates that anonymity results in more critical feedback and university students prefer anonymity in peer-feedback exchange. Relevant to these discussions, this study aims to investigate language learners’ perceptions on receiving and providing peer-feedback either ‘openly’ or ‘anonymously’ in a digital online environment in EFL academic writing.

11. Feedback
Peer feedback is considered part of the formative developmental process by Hyland (2000). In the process of exchanging feedback, student authors become readers, which is regarded as “[a]n opportunity to change roles” (Berggren, 2015, p. 67). Several theories provide support for peer review in writing classes. For example, to some extent, peer review benefits from communicative interaction to enable a socially mediated process (Kayi-Aydar, 2013). However, Vygotsky’s (1978) ZPD through which learners scaffold each other (Weissberg, 2006), seems to be its most essential contributor. Peer review can be regarded as a vital component of the process approach (Wette, 2015), which encourages student creativity by thinking (e.g., brainstorming, planning, drafting and revising). Peer review also refers to the social / genre approach (Tribble, 2015), since it requires the cooperation of student authors at different proficiencies, which depends on scaffolding.

As peer feedback reveals writing problems that have been overlooked (Ruecker, 2010), it is considered beneficial (e.g., Hu, 2005; Hu & Lam, 2010; Zhao, 2010, 2014) both for authors and reviewers (Aghaee & Hansson, 2013). There appears to be a greater benefit for reviewers than authors (Lu & Law, 2012; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). By means of peer review tasks, learners become more autonomous (Hyland, 2000; Villamil & Guerrero, 1996) and they develop higher order thinking skills (Mangelsdorf, 1992). However, since the reliability of peer review is questionable (Aghaee & Hansson, 2013), peer review might be problematic for two reasons, both concerning reliability. Firstly, students misleading each other due to their own deficiencies should be considered as this results in a lack of trust in peer feedback (Berggren, 2015; Nelson & Murphy, 1993; Paulus, 1999; Rinehart & Chen, 2012; Rollinson, 2005; Ruecker, 2010; Saito & Fujita, 2004; Yang, Badger, & Yu, 2006; Zhao, 2014). Secondly, students are reluctant to criticize friends (Liou & Peng, 2009). The anonymous multi-mediated writing model developed by Razi (2015) aims to provide a solution to these
problems. In the model, learners submit their draft, have their papers matched with three peers. Then they complete the task anonymously. Since this requires matching learners with different writing proficiency levels, asymmetrical and symmetrical feedback is distributed in a balanced way (Hanjani & Li, 2014).

12. Methodology
This study mainly aimed at revealing undergraduates’ perceptions of receiving and providing peer-feedback either ‘openly’ or ‘anonymously’ in a digital online environment in EFL academic writing. The research questions were:

- **RQ1:** Do EAP learners prefer receiving peer feedback openly or anonymously?
- **RQ2:** Do EAP learners prefer providing peer feedback openly or anonymously?
- **RQ3:** In what ways do EAP learners think that peer review is beneficial or problematic?
- **RQ4:** How do EAP learners consider the quality of peer feedback they have received in a digital environment?
- **RQ5:** Do EAP learners think that exchanging peer feedback contributed to better writing?

12.1 Setting and participants
The study was conducted in the English Language Teaching Department at the Faculty of Education, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Turkey in the 2014-2015 academic year, spring term. The participants were first year students enrolled on an Advanced Reading and Writing Skills course taught by the author. Two experimental groups of participants from three intact classes were constituted in accordance with the participants’ academic writing proficiency. There were a total number of 60 participants in the experimental group (42 females, 18 males) and 30 participants in the control group (21 females, 9 males).

12.2 Instrument
Text-matching software, Turnitin, was used as the digital environment through which the participants peer-reviewed assignments. To learn about their perceptions, the participants answered open-ended questions in the form of a questionnaire.

12.3 Procedure
To divide the participants into two experimental groups, their scores in the Advanced Reading and Writing Skills course (2014-15 fall semester) were considered by categorizing them as ‘good’, ‘moderate’, or ‘weak’. The participants were aware of this categorization but did not know into which category they were placed. They received feedback from three peers, and also provided feedback to three peers, either openly or anonymously. This justification was
rather important for retrieving reliable results, as instructors should consider different student groups carefully and give precise instructions about the peer review task (Rollinson, 2005). The syllabus suggested by Razı (2011) was adapted in accordance with the aims of the Advanced Reading and Writing Skills course. The participants submitted an ELT-related review paper on a topic chosen by themselves at a length of approximately 1,500-words (excluding abstract and references) as an assignment. Then they provided and received either open or anonymous peer feedback within a digital environment.

13. Findings and Discussion

13.1 Do EAP learners prefer receiving peer feedback openly or anonymously?

The participants’ responses as illustrated in Figure 1 indicated that a great number (75%) of them, regardless of whether they received feedback anonymously or not, preferred receiving feedback anonymously. Yet, the participants who received anonymous peer feedback supported anonymity more than the others.

![Figure 1. Preferred way of receiving peer feedback.](image)

13.2 Do EAP learners prefer providing peer feedback openly or anonymously?

The participants’ responses as illustrated in Figure 2 revealed that a vast majority (86.67%), regardless of whether they provided feedback anonymously or not, preferred providing peer feedback anonymously. A careful investigation of their responses to the first two research questions highlights the importance of anonymity, specifically in the case of providing peer feedback, through which they change roles (Berggren, 2015) and become readers rather than authors. The relevant literature reports better writing performance and more critical feedback in when anonymity is present (Lu & Bol, 2007), and anonymous peer review also provides heightened awareness in academic writing (Robinson, 2002). A previous survey study also revealed a preference for anonymity among university students (Hosack, 2003).
13.3 In what ways do EAP learners think that peer review is beneficial or problematic?

To answer RQ3, the participants in the anonymous and open group were asked to report in which ways they benefited, if any, from the peer review process. Their responses were grouped, as illustrated in Table 1. Please note that the numbers in parentheses represent the frequency of the item. In accordance with the results, it can be inferred that the participants in both groups benefit mostly from peer review with regards to the mechanics of their paper, such as the grammar, punctuation and spelling. However, they report a limited contribution regarding the content, such as flow of ideas, use of linking devices, and vocabulary selection. The participants indicated that peer feedback was problematic from several aspects, as listed in Table 1. They mainly complained about receiving either weak or wrong feedback from peers.

Table 1

**Benefits and Problematic Aspects of Peer Review**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>f (anonymous group)</th>
<th>f (open group)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grammar (21)</td>
<td></td>
<td>grammar (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punctuation (12)</td>
<td></td>
<td>punctuation (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spelling (11)</td>
<td></td>
<td>spelling (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flow of ideas (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td>flow of ideas (4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13.4 How do EAP learners consider the quality of peer feedback they have received in a digital environment?

To answer RQ5, the participants were asked to answer a 5-scale Likert question (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = acceptable, 4 = good, 5 = excellent) regarding how they perceived the quality of peer feedback received in terms of writing a better paper. The overall mean score highlighted their appreciation for the contribution of peer feedback ($M_{overall} = 3.58$, $SD = 0.79$). In addition, an independent samples $t$-test revealed significant differences between the perceptions of the anonymous group ($M_{anonymous} = 3.83$, $SD = 0.59$) and the open group ($M_{open} = 3.33$, $SD = 0.84$) with a medium effect size ($d = 0.66$) [$t(50.66) = 2.57$, $p = .01$]. This finding indicates that the participants regarded peer feedback as being more beneficial when carried out anonymously.

13.5 Do EAP learners think that exchanging peer feedback contributed to better writing?

All participants in the study regardless of receiving anonymous or open peer feedback indicated the positive contribution of receiving peer feedback on the writing of their papers; only three participants ($n_{anonymous} = 2$, $n_{open} = 1$) highlighted a slight contribution. Similarly, a vast majority (93.33%) indicated that providing peer feedback contributed to them writing
better papers. Only two participants from the two groups did not consider that there was any contribution, whereas two other participants indicated a slight contribution. It is interesting to note that one of the participants, who indicated that receiving feedback from peers did not contribute to writing a better paper, paradoxically, appreciated the contribution of providing feedback to other peers in terms of writing a better paper.

Metacognitive experiences occur when careful, conscious monitoring of one’s cognitive efforts is required (Abbott, 2006). Receiving feedback from several peers and revising accordingly requires deep analysis by the employment of metacognitive revising strategies (Nishino & Atkinson, 2015). Such a development of metacognitive skills is expected to contribute to becoming autonomous language learners, as written corrective peer feedback triggers form-focused cognitive progress.

In addition to the findings from the quantitative data, it is important to analyse the participants’ comments regarding peer feedback. Firstly, the following expert highlights the importance of matching student papers with multiple reviewers in the anonymous multi-mediated writing model:

♯1: “I received weak feedback from several of my friends. They just skipped my mistakes since they did not care about the assignment. Receiving feedback from three peers minimized this problem as at least one of them called my attention to the problems in my paper. In addition, the detailed rubric that we used to provide feedback was very beneficial. In this way, as reviewers, we knew what to focus on while providing peer feedback.”

Secondly, the following expert participants indicate the contribution of exchanging peer feedback within a digital environment via the anonymous multi-mediated writing model.

♯2: “Since the complete writing process was on a digital platform, I felt a bit stressed but anyway, this helped me motivate myself to finish the task in time.”

♯3: “I enjoyed writing in such a way where cutting edge technology was available. This increased my motivation for writing.”

♯4: “I benefited from submitting drafts in terms of avoiding plagiarism.”

♯5: “It enabled us to work anywhere and anytime we wanted. This was so practical!”

♯6: “Digital peer review was so practical in comparison to the traditional type of peer review. I could benefit from using different colours, for example, while providing feedback on different types of mistakes.”
♯7: “I didn’t have to run after my friends begging them to provide feedback on my paper. It also helped us save our planet by working paper-free.”

Thirdly, the following experts underline why the participants support exchanging peer feedback anonymously via the anonymous multi-mediated writing model:

♯8: “It is more objective, as we do not know who is giving the feedback.”
♯9: “In anonymous peer review, I think we hide our emotions along with our identities.”
♯10: “One of my friends lost a friend simply because of open peer review as the reviewer criticized her.”
♯11: “When reviewers know our identity, they might review our papers based on their thoughts of our personality.”
♯12: “In the case of open peer review, I could not criticize effectively to avoid hurting my friend’s feelings.”
♯13: “No one criticizes his/her best friend’s paper truthfully.”
♯14: “Knowing the author put me under the impact of my prejudices against them.”
♯15: “Not everybody can control his/her emotions. Some friends behave very badly after being criticized by a peer.”

Fourthly, it is also important to consider why other participants disregarded anonymity in peer feedback. In this respect, the following experts provide justification for their thoughts:

♯16: “I prefer open peer review as it encourages the reviewer to be more careful in providing feedback.”
♯17: “I want to know about the reviewer as I need this information to decide whether to trust his/her suggestions or not.”
♯18: “I want to receive open peer feedback as I later have the opportunity of talking to my reviewer about the details of my paper and his/her suggestions.”

Finally, the following expert participants reveal how they benefited from exchanging peer feedback:

♯19: “I spent too much time on the same page while writing my paper and this prevented me from recognizing my mistakes. Peer reviews helped me to identify such mistakes.”
♯20: “I learned from my friends’ mistakes.”

♯21: “I realized my own mistakes by reviewing my friends’ papers.”

♯22: “I can find a mistake in my friend’s paper but I have difficulty in identifying a similar mistake in my own paper.”

♯23: “I benefited from my previous mistakes while providing feedback.”

♯24: “Providing feedback to my peers helped me to learn and to remember academic writing rules better.”

14. Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from the findings of the present study. Firstly, it is clear that EAP learners prefer both receiving and providing peer feedback anonymously, and anonymity seems more important while providing peer feedback in order to keep the reviewer’s identity hidden. Secondly, peer review, either openly or anonymously, is considered beneficial, especially with regards to the mechanics of writing such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling. However, the contribution of peer review to the other components of papers such as flow of ideas, vocabulary selection and academic writing rules is limited. Thirdly, EAP learners can be considered as providing ‘good’ quality feedback, yet students should be aware of the existence of weak or wrong peer feedback that probably comes from lower proficiency learners. This situation provides evidence for the necessity of receiving feedback from multiple peers in accordance with the reviewers’ writing proficiency. Fourthly, anonymity in peer review enabled better quality feedback. Finally, EAP learners believe that both receiving and providing feedback helped them write better.

With regards to these conclusions, the anonymous multi-mediated writing model is suggested in writing classes to increase the benefits of students from exchanging higher quality feedback. In the implementation of the model, students should be grouped carefully and provided with precise instructions about the peer review task (Rollinson, 2005). It is also important to familiarize them with peer feedback on a digital platform, which eliminates the social constraint of face-to-face feedback (Ho & Savignon, 2007). Instructors are expected to model how to use the rubric in order to provide more effective peer feedback. It is important to note that asking students to do peer review means extra work for them, which might be demotivating. Therefore, their efforts in the process of peer review should also be appreciated in their final grades (see Razi, 2015 for a suggested formula).
References


An Exploratory Research on Class-based Culture Teaching Practices in EFL Context in Junior High Schools, North East Thailand

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Abstract
English is used as the predominant language in the present globalized context for intercultural/multicultural communication. Teaching and learning English should therefore be done with a multicultural dimension in mind in order to promote intercultural communicative competence which is one of the main goals in EFL/ESL teaching and learning. However, in some countries such as Thailand where English is taught in an EFL context, there has been poor proficiency test results from the students who study English at different levels including junior high school level. The reasons for these poor results may be diverse. Previous research has shown that teaching language and culture simultaneously improves language learning and acquisition. The issue about teaching language and culture in the EFL classroom has been under-investigated in Thailand. The present study explores culture-teaching practices of some English language teachers in North East Thailand at junior high school level. Tools for the main study include an in-depth interview with 10 foreign teachers with diverse origins, a focus group interview, lesson plans, observation and a questionnaire. This session presents the preliminary findings of the pilot study conducted with five participants who teach English in junior schools in North East Thailand, a qualitative interpretation of the results showed that most of the teachers themselves do not possess adequate intercultural competence and awareness for them to efficiently teach culture in the classroom. It is hoped that a more in-depth study could provide clues about how to improve teaching and learning of English at junior high school level in North East Thailand.

Keywords: Culture, Teaching approach, Teaching method, Teaching technique

1. Introduction
With the rapid globalization that is presently taking place, countries such as Thailand are becoming more diverse, multilingual and multicultural. The world is becoming “smaller” in size and different people need to communicate and function across national borders more effectively. Effective communication aims not only at understanding each other but also it is aimed at success in business initiatives and ventures within and without the confines of national borders. Hence improving the teaching and learning of English as an international language in Thai schools cannot be overemphasized.
As a matter of fact, English is now widely recognized as an international language both within and outside of the field of TESOL (Matsuda, 2012). If we consider the classification of the use of English, moving from the inner circle countries (native speakers) via the outer circle countries (countries with English as one of the main languages) to the expanding circle countries (where English is used for advertisements, store and brand names, and pop culture), it is clear that the context and function of the use of English for the expanding circle countries is constantly changing.

Although the Ministry of Education in Thailand has long recognized the need for English to be taught in schools, and has also recommended that schools adopt policies to promote the teaching and learning of English, the intercultural competence level in English of Thai students is unsatisfactory when compared to other nationalities within the ASEAN community, such as Singapore, Malaysia, and The Phillipines (EF-EPI, 2015; Bolton, 2008). This calls for a review of teaching and learning practices of English in Thai classrooms.

Jantawej (2011) states that sometimes teaching and learning English in the classroom may be problematic because of cultural barriers that exist between the teachers and their Thai students. Miscommunication, misconceptions, and misunderstandings often arise as a result of cultural differences embedded in language.

Presently, there are essentially two approaches to teaching culture; the “activity” school and the “anthropological process” school (Arries, 1994). The activity school is about engaging students both physically and mentally in and out of the classroom in cultural activities unlike the anthropological school which focuses on real cultural experience. The anthropological process school, on the other hand, regards an exclusive focus on activities and materials used to teach culture as ineffective. The activity school is considered to be both practical and suitable for classroom practices.

In Thailand, the teaching of communicative skills’ has been regarded to a large extent as ineffective (Teng & Sinwongsuwat, 2015). KongKerd (2013) is of the opinion that the current pedagogical approaches in teaching English language in Thailand are not sufficient to help the students develop the required intercultural/multicultural communicative competence needed. Hancock (2003) states that cultural considerations are not taught in South East Asian General English classrooms and that there exist a lack of an appreciation of the relationship between the learning of language and culture. Thailand cannot be excluded from this assertion.

The National Education Act and the 2002 Education Curriculum drifted policy towards a more learner-centered communicative approach in Thai EFL classrooms. However, having adopted CLT, the communicative competence of Thai students has not improved, with English proficiency levels still remaining low. The English First English Proficiency Index (EF-EPI) report for 2015 actually states that the proficiency of English language in Thailand is on the decline.
A number of reasons have been proposed as to why students’ proficiency level in English remains low; some of these reasons can be enumerated thus:

a. Lack of sustained professional development and teacher fluency
b. Insufficient classroom time
c. Preference for accuracy over fluency
d. Large class sizes
e. Students being uncooperative and uncomfortable with CLT
f. Misconceptions about CLT applications (Teng & Sinwongsuwat, 2015).

The present study is carried out on the basis of what and how teachers have to teach about culture. The reasons for conducting the present study are two-fold. Firstly, researchers agree that language and culture are intricately linked together (Kramsch, 1993; Lazar, 1993; Scheu, 1996). In an EFL setting such as Thailand, implicit and explicit instruction of culture is very important in English language classrooms. This follows because the language classroom is almost the sole venue where Thai learners are able to use the language to communicate. Scheu (1996) thinks that given the complexities of intercultural communication, the classroom is the best place where students can develop and acquire cultural understanding and intercultural skills. This assertion is not a certainty. The present study is necessary to determine not only which aspects of culture are being included in EFL classrooms, but how they are being implemented in teaching and learning practice in North East Thailand. Secondly, this study is necessary in order to know which culture(s) is/are taught and what aspects of this/these culture(s) should be focused on. It is also important to know how much focus should be given to the different aspects of culture taught. In an increasingly multicultural world, not only the target language culture should be addressed in the classroom. While L1 culture should be a point of major focus, other cultures (i.e., the cultures of other users of the English language), if possible, should be used aside from L1 and L2 cultures. Mao (2009) asserts that a cultural awareness should be created in order that learners understand how their L1 culture relates to the L2 culture thereby gaining intercultural communicative competence.

To meet the aims of the present study, the following research questions were proposed:

1) What are the aspects of culture taught during culture instruction in EFL classrooms at junior high school level (grade 7 to 12) in North East Thailand?
2) What are the dominant approaches, methods, and techniques used by teachers to teach culture in the EFL classrooms at junior high school level in North East Thailand?
3) What are the major problems that arise in culture instruction in EFL classrooms at junior high school level in North East Thailand?
2. Literature Review

Noom-ura (2013) states that Thai students spend 12 years studying English at primary and secondary (junior high) levels in schools but the results obtained concerning the students’ performance are questionable. Presenting data based on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and the Office of National Educational Test (O-NET) in Thailand, Noom-ura backs up the statement on the low performance of Thai secondary school students. Considering the proficiency level within Thailand, O-NET revealed that average scores in English language for secondary school students between 2009 and 2011 (more than 900,000 students) were 32.42, 26.05, and 16.19 out of 100 respectively. There may be many reasons for such results; one of which is likely to be the teaching and learning practices in the school classrooms.

Wiriyachitra (2002) compiled several factors that could be the possible causes of difficulties in teaching and learning of English in the Thai secondary classrooms. Among these were insufficient language skills and cultural knowledge of the English language instructors. Thailand has seen a policy change from the teacher-centered method of teaching language to the learner-centered method. This has also affected the teaching practices of English language teachers at secondary school level in Thailand. Maskhao, (2002) states that not long ago, most Thai English language teachers used only methods that they were very familiar with, namely: the text-book-based method, the grammar translation method, focusing on vocabulary, grammar structures and reading. Not much attention was paid on developing intercultural communicative competence, with language teaching generally aimed at preparing students for university entrance examinations.

However, the reform in teaching and learning of English language in Thailand has followed contemporary trends. Attention has shifted from teaching language forms to the teaching of language use (Savignon, 1997). Kongkerd (2013) advises that teachers who teach English in Thailand should move away from focusing on native speaker competency when using the English language and pay more attention to intercultural communicative competence because Thais are increasingly coming in contact and speaking with other speakers of English who have different cultural backgrounds. The National Education Act (1999) required the implementation of the learner-centered approach but this has not been completely feasible because of contextual factors resulting from a global situation which may be different from the Thai situation. After looking into the new learner-centered approach in the teaching policy of Thailand, some researchers (e.g., Nonkukhetong, Baldauf & Moni, 2006) concluded that policies cannot be successfully implemented if the teachers who are the key actors in policy implementation are not listened to. Changes that the National Education Act (1999) brought about aimed to decentralize syllabus design in schools, encouraging thinking skills focusing on individual needs, adding a local cultural component (highly necessary for language teaching and learning) and focusing on communicative language teaching approaches (Darasawang, 2007).

Kongkerd (2013) states that being proficient in English is not a sufficient condition for successful intercultural communication, therefore teachers who teach English in Thai schools are obliged to raise the intercultural awareness of their students. Baker
(2012) reasserts the fact that many Thais will increasingly have to interact and communicate with people of diverse multilingual and cultural backgrounds with English as the contact medium. Baker thinks that teaching only the English skills is insufficient for successful intercultural communication. English linguistic knowledge, pragmatic and intercultural competence must be developed simultaneously for successful intercultural competence to be developed.

Although it is well known that intercultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence play a very significant role in language teaching and learning, not much attention has been paid to this issue in Thailand. By applying the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in Thai EFL classrooms, teaching practices have relegated intercultural learning to the background (Damnet, 2008). CLT emphasizes only native speaker norms in language learning and teaching and this may be is one of the reasons why teaching and learning English has, to this extent, remained unsuccessful in Thailand. Emphasizing native speaker norms may only lead to highlighting the “otherness” of the native speakers’ culture which in many cases will lead to the reluctance of learners to give up their own culture.

Apparently at present, the exact situation of the issue of culture instruction to create intercultural awareness and boost intercultural communicative competence in Thai junior high schools is not known, a gap which the present study attempts to address. So far the predominant approaches in teaching English in Thai schools has been the grammar translation method, the audio lingual method, and the traditional method preceding the 1999 Education Act which advocated the communicative language teaching method in classrooms. The previous approaches taught only the target language culture (Ho, 2009). The communicative language teaching method is in itself deficient because more focus is placed on the native L2 culture which seems not to be sufficient for the Thai learners who have to communicate more with people from cultures other than the inner circle of native speakers of English. Developing intercultural/multicultural communicative competence certainly requires more than only knowing the native L2 culture.

Various approaches, methods and techniques for culture instruction in the language classroom are outlined below. The approaches are of two main types; the monocultural approach during which the target language culture is the main focus during instruction and the comparative approach which places emphasis on a comparison between the target language culture and the learners’ own culture. Some researchers (e.g., Buttjes & Byram, 1991) think that the mono-cultural approach is obsolete because it provides learners with only a one way flow of cultural information, unlike the recommended comparative approach which provides learners with the chance to reflect on their own culture and the foreign culture of the target language. Learners can discover similarities and difference between their own culture and the target culture and this leads to increased knowledge, understanding, and acceptance of the target language culture.
Risager (1998) has described four approaches to teaching culture, two of which include a large degree of comparison; the inter-culture and the multicultural approaches. The inter-cultural approach is based on the premise that a better way of learning culture in language teaching and learning is through comparison of the learners’ own culture and the cultures of countries where the target language is spoken. With the inter-cultural approach, learners are taught to develop inter-cultural communicative competence and can be able to act as mediators between their own culture and the target language culture. However, because of the multicultural character of most countries, the intercultural approach is deficient as a sole culture teaching approach in language classrooms.

On the other hand, the multicultural approach focuses on ethnic and linguistic diversity as one of its tenets. This approach considers that several cultures exist within a given culture and this should be taken into consideration during culture instruction in the language classroom. Two other approaches include the transcultural approach and the foreign cultural approach. The transcultural approach views a foreign language as an international language commonly used as a lingua franca for international communication. The transcultural approach sees no need to link a foreign language to any particular culture. Lastly, the almost obsolete mono-cultural approach which was dominant in the 1980s, also known as the foreign cultural approach, targets only the foreign language culture and leaves behind the learners’ own culture. It aims mostly to develop native speaker communicative and cultural competence. Whatever the approach may be, suitable methods and techniques have to be used in the language classroom to teach learners for effective learning and acquisition of the target language culture. However, below are a list of techniques which are currently relevant to teaching culture in an EFL setting: Creating an authentic environment (Stern, 1992), the slice of life technique (Chastain, 1988; Stern, 1992), the culture aside technique (Henrichsen, 1998), the micrologue (Chastain, 1988), the audio monitor unit (Henrichsen, 1998; Stern, 1992), dramatization (Byram & Fleming, 1998), the self-awareness technique (Chastain, 1988) and the WebQuest technique (Tran-Hoang-Thu, 2010).

The list of approaches, methods and techniques is not exhaustive. Harmer (2001) claims that if teachers constantly monitor their classes and adjust to what they do, they will almost certainly apply the best methods and techniques that suit their learners. Dagmar (1996) affirms that culture is much more integrated in the second language classroom particularly if the course is following the guidelines for a more communicative approach as is the case for Thai secondary schools.

3. Theoretical Framework
The theoretical framework for this study is based on Weaver’s (1984) cultural iceberg. Some cultural aspects taught in classrooms are clear-cut while some are comparatively less clear-cut. The clear-cut aspects include what we can see, hear, and touch; these aspects are known as external aspects. Some of the less clear-cut aspects include beliefs, values, thought patterns and myths; these are known as internal aspects. The external aspects are explicitly learned in a conscious way and can be easily changed (objective knowledge) over time in any given cultural context. The
internal aspects are implicitly learned in an unconscious manner and are very difficult
to change (subjective knowledge).

4. Research Methodology
The conceptual framework for this study separates culture into external and internal
aspects (Weaver, 1984) and the research design is based on Crotty’s (1998)
framework which looks at knowledge claims, strategies of inquiry, and methods of
data collection.

The present study is qualitative. Creswell (2003) recommends a qualitative study for
an exploratory research study such as the present study. The categories chosen to be
explored in the present study are based on Cortazzi and Jin (1999) and these include
the target culture, the source culture, and international culture. A simplistic concept
for classifying internal and external aspects of culture was adapted from Lee (2009).
The classification is simplistic but it facilitates the approach used in this study which

4.1 Research sites
The research sites for this study are made up of two junior high schools: Pakthongchai
Prachaniramit School and Pakchong School, both based in Nakhon Ratchasima
province in North East Thailand.

4.2 Participants
The ten participants of the study were selected on a voluntary basis. They teach
English at the research sites and each have a minimum of two years teaching
experience at junior high school level in Thailand. They comprise three Americans,
two Cameroonian, four Filipinos and one Briton.

4.3 Data collection
Data were collected using five research instruments, namely: an in-depth interview, a
questionnaire, lesson plans, classroom observation and a focus group interview. The
in-depth interview was done on a one-to-one basis.

The questionnaire was completed by the individual participants at their convenience.
The content of the research instruments all aimed to illicit responses and answers for
the three research questions. The items on the in-depth interview and the
questionnaire were validated by two competent teachers of English at another
university. Classroom observation time per participant was four teaching periods of
50 minutes each. Four lesson plans were randomly selected per participant for the
study. The focus group interview was conducted with the participants on a voluntary
basis over a time period of one and a half hours. Data collection took place in the
months of February and March 2016 at the two research sites.
4.4 Data analysis
The data were analyzed by matching responses from the different research instruments with the observed classroom practices using a check list. Analysis followed coding, assigning low inferential descriptive tags to units of information obtained (Mohamed, 2006). The codes were analyzed horizontally for all participants and vertically for individual participants. Analysis was largely inferential because this is a qualitative study.

5. Results of the pilot study
From the in-depth interview answers and observation phase, which aimed at knowing which cultural-teaching practice is dominant in classrooms, it could be noted that the teachers themselves could not clearly distinguish between cross-cultural awareness and intercultural awareness. Four of the participants had never heard anything about multilingualism/multiculturalism.

The answers also provided by the teachers indicated that what they teach about culture was what is prescribed in the school curriculum, leaving no room for innovation or eclectic practices. All the teachers, when asked why they seldom include culture in their lessons, indicated that classroom time was too short to do so and the proficiency level of their students leaves little chance for them to teach culture. The classroom time per period of study is 50 to 60 minutes long.

When asked about other culture aside from L1 culture, three of the participants answered that they taught mainly native speaker culture. Unfortunately, these teachers have only a very faint understanding of the concept of English as an international language. Given that four out of five of the participants in the pilot phase rarely taught external aspects of culture, the researcher decided to outline the results of the pilot study thematically mainly through culture, as follows:

5.1 Appropriate choices of conversation topics
All of the respondents teach some aspects of culture in the classroom sometimes and the respondents think that the topics for conversation do not differ from the conversation topics in L1. However, only one respondent actually teaches almost all the aspects of culture found on the check list used for this study. There is one of the respondents to the questionnaire who teaches just two aspects of external culture and two aspects of internal culture. Actually this one respondent is of the opinion culture instruction in the EFL classroom is not important and that the effects are not long lasting. To quote her (Toni - not her real name), “the language classroom is not the right venue to teach culture”. This respondent also assumes that the students she teaches have much intercultural awareness in the language classroom.

5.2 Rituals of greetings and leave taking
All the participants answered that teaching about greetings is not a priority except in the case where it arises in the course book and it is usually taught by role play. Nevertheless, the participants answered that they explain politeness in greetings with respect to age and gender. All the participants also acknowledged that they presented
different patterns of greetings in formal and informal settings such as “hi” and “good morning”. They also explained to students that expressions for leave taking and greetings are not interchangeable such as “goodbye” for leave taking and “hello” for greetings. Generally all participants agreed that rituals of greeting and leave taking are quite similar across cultures. Role play, they insist, is the main technique used to teach rituals of greetings and leave taking.

5.3 Non-verbal expressions of gratitude
All participants agreed that it is quite difficult to teach non-verbal expressions of gratitude because of the age and proficiency of their students. They also indicated that the chance rarely arises when they need to explain non-verbal expressions of gratitude.

5.4 Appropriate ways of complaining or criticizing
Four out of five participants agreed that they teach about ways of complaining and criticizing as the chance may arise in the course book. Once again the technique used is role play; for example, complaining about poor service at a food shop or restaurant. Five participants also accepted that they teach the students to be polite when complaining or criticizing because politeness is a value that is present in all cultures.

5.5 Dangers of negative stereotyping
Once again four of the five participants agreed that they teach about the dangers of negative stereotyping particularly when it comes to racial issues. For example, Mimi from Africa needs to explain that “Africa is not a country and so there is no homogeneity of cultural aspects that pertain to Africa”. The four participants agree that teaching about negative stereotyping creates the chance for them to teach more about differences in culture in the world. However, they think it is quite a sensitive issue given the learners’ age and cultural experience.

5.6 Variation of personal space from one culture to another
All the participants had never given any thought about teaching anything that concerns variation of personal space in the target and first language cultures.

5.7 Culture shock
All of the five participants agreed that they teach some aspects of culture shock because the culture of English language and Thai culture are markedly different. For example, Mimi said “she explains to Thai students that kissing is a form of greeting that exists in some English-speaking cultures, unlike in Thai culture where kissing may seem a weird way of greeting”.

No fixed methods approaches or techniques were used by the participants except for the dramatization techniques which sometimes provided the opportunity for role play.
The present research is on-going and is expected to be completed during the first term of the academic year 2016. The preliminary findings do not contradict other researchers like Hancock (2003) who found out that teaching of culture has been downplayed in the EFL classrooms in South East Asia.

References


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Reframing the Goals of Academic Speaking:
Targeting Discussion Sub-Skills in Curriculum Design

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Abstract

This paper presents an innovative approach to academic speaking curriculum design and introduces an integrated skills EAP course in an intensive English program in Thailand that focuses on preparing students to participate successfully in academic classroom discussion. We begin by making the case for the instruction of academic discussion skills (Hsu, Van Dyke, & Chen, 2015; Kim, 2006) since instructional objectives for academic speaking typically emphasize oral presentations in formal assessment. Academic discussion skills include interactive skills to develop discourse topics organically (e.g., responding, clarifying, supporting, progressing, questioning, redirecting) and the ability to integrate relevant support from academic references using citations. The paper then maps the progression of a unit that integrates academic listening, reading, and writing skills and culminates in an informed academic discussion on a topic relevant to university students across majors. Following this structured approach to developing discussion skills, students are largely successful in engaging in lively academic discussion. The paper concludes with practical suggestions for implementing this approach and tips for overcoming challenges, such as divergent cultural expectations of classroom participation (Jones, 1999). While this approach to teaching and assessing academic speaking skills has been designed and implemented in an intensive EAP program, it could be applied in a variety of academic contexts and should be of interest to a wide cross-section of educators who are interested in enhancing their students’ ability to participate effectively in university classrooms.

Keywords: Academic discussion, Interactional competence, Integrated skills
1. Introduction

As Thailand competes to prepare students with the requisite language skills to participate in a global economy, English language educators face the challenge of developing new approaches to foster communicative competence in English curricula design. The recent attention in Thailand to adopt aspects of the Common European Framework Reference (CEFR) to assess foreign language ability as a means to compare with international standards presents new challenges in shaping curricula to better prepare students to develop competencies in communicative ability (Council of Europe, 2013). Meanwhile, despite the advancement of communicative language teaching approaches, students’ speaking skills often lag behind their reading, writing, and listening skills in many English programs in Thailand, and in foreign language contexts in general. Learning objectives for the development of academic speaking skills are typically limited to general accuracy and fluency goals with formal assessment that emphasizes oral presentation skills (Folse, 2006). While fluency and accuracy are important aspects of teaching and assessing speaking, an exclusive focus on these goals neglects other critical areas in the development of speaking skills, most notably interactional competence.

This paper presents the results of an action research project that has culminated in an innovative approach to addressing these two issues in speaking instruction: relatively underdeveloped speaking skills and a lack of interactional competence. We first highlight the limitations posed by traditional language curriculum design in terms of teaching foreign language speaking skills for academic purposes, then outline the steps taken towards addressing these challenges since 2012 in an EAP program at the Preparation Center for Language and Mathematics at Mahidol University International College in Thailand. Finally, we report on the success of targeting academic discussion skills to address the need for developing interactive competence in English.

The approach to teaching academic speaking outlined in this paper has been developed to prepare prospective freshmen for Mahidol University’s English-medium liberal arts program. Previously, the assessment of speaking skills was limited to performance on oral presentations. Although oral presentation skills remain essential in academic speaking, we realized that an exclusive focus on this mode of speaking production fails to accurately represent the extent to which students will need to speak in the target language context—university classrooms. Students in the liberal arts program are assessed on oral presentations; however, we argue that much of the learning that takes place in an English medium university classroom occurs via student engagement in pair, group, and full-class discussion, particularly in classrooms with relatively smaller class sizes that emphasize student engagement. The need to participate effectively in classroom discussion is particularly important for students aiming to study abroad (Kim, 2006). The challenges that Asian students face in participating actively in student-centered classrooms in foreign contexts due to
divergent cultural expectations for classroom behavior has been well documented (e.g., Jones, 1999; Yeldham, 2014). The ability to confidently engage in classroom discussion is one of the most challenging aspects for students in study abroad contexts and also limits opportunities to exploit learning opportunities available to them in English-medium programs domestically.

The approach described below is our response to this perceived need to develop students’ interactive competence through academic discussion skills. After reviewing relevant literature on interactional competence and the teaching of academic discussion skills, our approach to teaching and assessing these skills is presented in detail. Finally, we evaluate our approach in terms of the existing literature.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Interactional competence as a prominent L2 curricular goal

As communicative approaches to L2 pedagogy mature, the last decade has witnessed growing interest in the adoption of interactive speaking tasks in the field of second language assessment. This shift from an exclusive focus on monologic speaking assessment tasks has resulted in a growing body of studies investigating interactive competence both in paired tasks (e.g., Csépes, 2009; Dimitrova-Galaczi, 2013; May, 2011) and group tasks (e.g., Gan, 2010; Nakatsuhara, 2011). This line of research has aimed to clarify the construct of interactional competence and better understand how it can be operationalized in designing instructional objectives and assessment.

Meanwhile, in an effort to fall in line with internationally recognized foreign language standards, the Thai Ministry of Education is in the process of adopting the CEFR for assessment purposes. The CEFR, developed by the Council of Europe (2013) over two decades ago, has gained in popularity as it focuses on user’s abilities to communicate proficiently. A key criterion in the CEFR speaking benchmarks refers explicitly to interactive ability; Band C2, the highest proficiency, states that speakers can “interact with ease and skill, picking up and using nonverbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly [and]…can interweave his/her contributions into the joint discourse with fully natural turn-taking, referencing, allusion making, etc.”

Similar features of discourse competence are referenced throughout the literature from both macro and micro levels (Wang, 2015; Young, 2011). From a macro level, collaborative patterns of discourse that promote engagement and production of shared ideas (Dimitrova-Galaczi, 2013) and that are characterized by parallel contribution and effective use of back-channeling, among other features, have been associated with
favorable perceptions of overall quality of interaction (May, 2011). Interaction-based research has also focused on micro-level measures of interactional competence. In this approach Ducase and Brown (2009) analyzed and coded conversations to arrive at three categories of interaction features: non-verbal interpersonal communication (e.g., gaze and gesturing), interactive listening (signaling comprehension and supportive listening, such as filling silence through back-channeling, asking or requesting clarification or agreeing / disagreeing), and interactional management. Interactional management includes three subcategories: topic management (initiation, development, connection, closure), turn management (e.g., initiating and maintaining discourse, intervening appropriately, length and number of turns), and use of questions (e.g., for information, agreement, confirmation, floor-offering). Topic development and connection (e.g., integrating sub-themes, expanding and supporting main points in a conversation with relevant supporting details and examples) are subskills that have been found to have positive impact on interactional quality (Ducase & Brown, 2009). While several of these features of interaction have been identified and associated with successful task completion and/or favorable perceptions of interactive ability, the challenge of teaching and measuring these communicative resources remains largely unaddressed in EAP programs.

2.2 Research on teaching academic discussion skills

In the context of academic discourse, spoken interaction occurs largely through classroom discussion, whether pair, group, or as a full class led by an instructor. Surprisingly however, the instruction (or measurement) of discussion skills or the design of discussion programs in L2 curricula is rarely reported in applied linguistics literature. One exception is a journal article by Green, Christopher, and Lam (1997) which introduced a university-level discussion program that scaffolded the development of discussion skills through pre- (preparation), during (observation and feedback), and post-discussion (reflection) activities. Their approach is learner-centered in which groups of students choose, brainstorm, and research topics to discuss in front of partner groups who have frequent opportunities to observe, describe, evaluate, and provide feedback on “content, intra-group dynamics and linguistic appropriateness” (p. 137). Teachers also provide feedback and evaluate discussion performances using behavior tally sheets.

Since Green et al. (1997), few accounts in L2 literature have reported on teaching discussion skills in a process-approach (see Reese & Wells, 2007 for a report on a card game activity and Bardovi-Harlig, Mossman, & Vellenga, 2015, who found effectiveness in teaching pragmatic routines in academic discussion). Research on the instruction of discussion skills is more prevalent outside of the L2 literature (e.g., Chin & Osborne, 2010; Webb, 2009), often focusing on adolescent education levels with encouraging results that point to the effectiveness of such activities. From a second language acquisition perspective, scant research exists that investigates the effectiveness of teaching or learning discussion skills (Lam, 2009 is an exception).
Meanwhile, the specific needs of learning discussion skills have been well documented, particularly for East Asian students studying in EFL or international programs (Aubrey, 2011; Jones, 1999; Kim, 2006). In general, interactive competence has been rarely embedded into an L2 curriculum in a systematic process-oriented approach with measurable objectives. The approach we have developed and revised over several years aims to fill this gap using a newly developed set of guidelines and measurement criteria to meet the goals of an international EAP program in Thailand.

3. Methodology

The curriculum changes implemented to support students’ interational competence involve the development of an integrated skills course that teaches and assesses discussion skills through scaffolding of subskills such as note-taking, questioning, agreeing and disagreeing, and topic development. The content-based curriculum includes topics of general interest to students preparing for diverse areas of study. Students read texts, watch videos, and listen to lectures that highlight multiple perspectives on local and global cultural and business-related issues. Students then construct an argumentative essay in which they reference sources from class as well as their own outside research. Parting from common integrated skills approaches (Shin & Ewert, 2015), the writing component is then followed by an academic group discussion. Our assessment targets skills that comprise interactive competence, as highlighted in the CEFR. We present a rubric that has been designed to integrate key findings in pair and group interaction research investigating the features of communication that contribute to successful interaction (Dimitrova-Galaczi, 2013; May, 2011; Wang, 2015) and report on the success of its implementation to date.

We have designed the integrated skills course to model the process of notetaking, reflection, and communication that students will engage in at university. The course relies on materials created and compiled since 2010, most of which are shared with the students digitally. We have compiled the majority of these materials in Google Docs that link videos, lectures, and texts about a given topic. Using these documents, teachers can provide content through a mixture of in-class activities and homework. The amount of class time dedicated to notetaking and pre-discussion activities can be adjusted as necessary. Over the course of the term, this cycle would be repeated at least three times. Sample materials are available at the following URL: tinyurl.com/discussionfltt.

The discussions are structured to provide opportunities for all participants to contribute. Each group of 5-6 students speaks for 20 minutes. Students begin by presenting key points from the provided lecture and reading then responding to the 2-4 questions provided in the prompt. These questions relate to different aspects of the issue under discussion and often require students to apply concepts from the lecture and reading to their own context. For example, after taking notes on a reading and
lecture about the effects of media violence on children, students could be asked to discuss the following questions:

1. Should the amount of violent content in media be restricted in Thailand more than it currently is?
2. If so, what types of media should be targeted and why?
3. How should any new restrictions be enforced?

Students initiate, maintain, and close topics to touch on each within the given time limit. After answering the questions, the students conclude by briefly summarizing themes in their group’s discussion.

The students’ academic discussion skills are assessed in an integrated skills examination. These examinations have several components. Students first take notes on a text of approximately 1,000 words about a given topic (e.g., land leasing in developing countries, peak oil, bilingual education) for 30 minutes. They then take notes on a 20-minute lecture about the same topic, and consolidate their notes for a further 10 minutes. After taking notes on the lecture and reading, students are given a question to which they must respond in an argumentative essay of approximately 350 words. The students have 30 minutes to prepare an outline for their essay, drawing support from the notes that they have taken. The students have 90 minutes to complete the essay, which must include APA citations and references for the lecture and reading. Once the students have completed the essay, they are given the questions for the discussion which is held the following day.

Students prepare for the discussion by completing additional independent research and consolidating their notes. They are allowed to bring two pages of handwritten notes into the discussion, which are collected after the conclusion of the discussion. Collecting the students’ notes discourages them from scripting their answers, and insisting on handwritten notes discourages students from bringing excessive text and reading during the discussion. These requirements were implemented after four years of experience using this type of test, and they have resulted in much livelier and more authentic discussions.

The evening before the discussion, students are told the time of their discussion but not the names of the participants. In our experience, allowing students to prepare for the discussion with the other members of their groups leads to excessive scripting. On the day of the discussion, students wait in an assigned classroom before being called in groups of 4-5 by the teachers. Two teachers assess each group of students. Teachers
participate in norming sessions to enhance interrater reliability and the discussions are video recorded to allow the option of viewing cases of disagreement. After the exam, the teachers provide feedback to the students following the rubric outlined below.

The grading rubric for the discussion includes three dimensions: *original input and use of sources*, *ability to interact*, and *language skills*. These dimensions overlap with the elements of interactive competence highlighted in the CEFR and are included in Table 1.

### Table 1

*Grading Rubric Criteria*

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<th>Criteria</th>
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| Original input and use of sources | ● Makes a range of relevant and informed contributions  
● Demonstrates understanding of the direction of the discussion and provided sources  
● Integrates and cites provided source and independent research smoothly and effectively |
| Ability to interact              | ● Responds to the ideas of others (e.g., agrees / disagrees with support, asks for clarification when needed)  
● Asks relevant questions to initiate and maintain discourse topics  
● Expands on the ideas of others with relevant supporting details and examples  
● Has a constructive influence on the discussion by seeking to involve others |
| Language skills                  | ● Able to paraphrase, summarize, and clarify when necessary  
● Uses appropriate citation when necessary  
● Effective use of key source vocabulary and other academic language  
● Causes limited strain for listeners |

This approach to teaching academic discussion skills integrates reading, writing, speaking and listening in an authentic target task. Students are able to develop their communicative ability by engaging in activities similar to those that they will soon face in English-medium content courses. By providing necessary structure and scaffolding, students are led through the process of notetaking, reflection, and communication that is vital to success at university. The use of a rubric that values the communication of meaningful content as well the behaviors that facilitate interaction further emphasizes the importance of communicative and interactional competence.
Further discussion of this approach in the context of the available literature is included below.

4. Findings and Discussion

The approach to teaching and assessing discussion skills described above is an evolution of existing approaches, such as that of Green et al. (1997), informed by recent research on interactive features (e.g., Ducase & Brown, 2009) and integrated skills (Shin & Ewert, 2015). Our aim was to build on previous work to develop a learner-centered approach to teaching discussion skills that scaffolds the process of preparing for, participating in, and reflecting on interaction. The program we have designed structures a cycle of pre-discussion, discussion, and post-discussion activities to include reading, writing, and listening skills that culminate in an interactive speaking task. This approach builds on previous work through the use of educational technology, and by including a rubric that incorporates a broader range of interactive features and citation use for integrated skills. Unlike Green et al. (1997), we require participants to take notes on a set of inputs before each discussion and to reference several sources during each discussion. Much of the technology that we use to facilitate this process (e.g., online video sharing and multimedia Google Docs), has been developed since Green et al. (1997) published their article. While our approaches are fundamentally similar, we make use of newly available educational technology to facilitate our referenced integrated skills approach.

Our approach to teaching and assessing discussion skills is aligned with current theory on micro-level interactional competence, particularly that of Ducase and Brown (2009) who identified three categories of interaction features: non-verbal interpersonal communication, interactive listening, and interactional management. Students receive direct instruction in non-verbal interpersonal communication before their discussions. They are asked to complete reflection activities afterwards, and we provide videos of the discussions to raise students’ awareness of their non-verbal behavior. Our approach both teaches and assesses interactive listening. Students practice using a variety of phrases (e.g., “I see your point, but...”) before the discussions, and the rubric assesses students’ ability to respond to others through agreement, disagreement, clarification, etc. Interactional management is also included as we emphasize the importance of turn taking, progressing the discussion, and questioning. Students receive feedback about these features from their peers and teacher after each discussion. Several descriptors on the rubric (e.g., “Asks relevant questions to initiate and maintain discourse topics”) assess this feature. We also target topic development and connection in our assessment. Previous research has associated some of these features with interactional competence (Ducase & Brown, 2009); however, few documented attempts have been made to explicitly teach and assess these features.
5. Conclusion

By explicitly targeting interactional competence in our approach to teaching discussion skills, we aim to prepare our EAP students to communicate effectively in English-medium content courses at university. We build on existing materials by taking a referenced integrated skills approach, using educational technology, and aligning our instruction and rubric with current research on interactional competence subskills. Further research will provide additional insight into the most effective means of developing students’ interactional competence; however, we are confident that the approach presented here will be of use in a wide variety of educational contexts.

References


Use of Vocabulary Learning Strategies by Pre-Service EFL Teachers in Turkey

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Abstract

The study aims to discover the use of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) of students at the department of English language teaching in the University of Aksaray, Turkey. A total of 40 pre-service EFL teachers participated in the study. Participant students were asked to complete a vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire and asked about some demographic data relevant to their language backgrounds. The data were analyzed through quantitative methods using the measuring instruments: a vocabulary learning questionnaire used to discover students’ VLS preferences and the demographic backgrounds. The overall findings suggest that the Turkish EFL learners reported using a higher range of VLS. Furthermore, there were some statistically differences between male and female learners in their overall strategy use. Moreover, there were some striking VLS that they think have been using, such as using a vocabulary notebook and monolingual dictionary, guessing meaning from context, making lists of words, and using the technology.

Keywords: Vocabulary Learning Strategies, Undergraduate ELT students, Gender, Year of study

1. Introduction

Vocabulary plays a central role within the process of language learning because of the fact that it is not always possible to learn a new word and keep it in the long-term memory. The use of some particular strategies seems to be the major drawback in the process vocabulary learning.

Vocabulary knowledge is generally considered to have multiple aspects of the overall knowledge. Therefore, knowledge of vocabulary in a language is often referred to “the number of words the meaning of which one has at least some superficial knowledge, or the knowledge that refers to how well or functional one knows lexical
items in a language” (Nation, 1990). Both of these two dimensions of vocabulary knowledge are important in language learning.

In terms of learning and improving vocabulary in a target language, it is a multi-dimensional task that takes a long process, due to the fact that new words are conceptualized when they are encountered in a listening or a reading text for the first time. Furthermore, such words can be soon forgotten as long as they kept in the long-term memory. According to Nation (1990), the first question to ask when one needs to make sure of the knowledge of vocabulary is “do we actually want to test recognition or recall of vocabulary in a language?” He further explains that in recall tests the researchers are often interested in a learner’s producing the word; and in recognition tests they are interested in discovering whether learners know the meaning of a word after they firstly hear or see it.

In respect of learners’ background knowledge of words and the VLS they apply, this research tries to investigate the pattern of vocabulary learning strategy use employed by a group of Turkish undergraduate students.

2. Vocabulary Learning Strategies
The research on language learning strategies dates back to the 1970s, when Rubin (1975) started such studies. Upon these studies a great deal of research was done regarding learning strategies (O’Malley, 1987; Oxford, 1989, 1990; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990). Such studies also came up with results on how successful language learners should behave in the learning process.

For the last three decades, the focus was directed from learning strategies to vocabulary learning, and researchers, curriculum designers, materials developers, and teachers themselves have tried to discover how learners could use strategies to encode new words or to recall those words that they have previously acquired.

According to Bialystok (1981), the conception is that students are no longer passive recipients of knowledge, and that they need to participate in the teaching procedure actively; that is to say that learners must be given responsibility of their own learning. So, it is an ideal class to have profoundly thinking participants who can influence their own vocabulary learning. Raising students’ awareness regarding these strategies can make them not only more prepared for learning, but also it can make more analytic thinkers about the vocabulary learning strategies they employ themselves.
Such research was followed by the classification of vocabulary learning strategies just as it was described in the Oxford’s (1990) inventory language learning strategies (SILL). There have been some researchers (e.g. Schmitt, 1997; Stoffer, 1995; Nation, 2001) who have tried to create the classifications of VLS. Differently from the classification of Oxford (1990), Schmitt’s taxonomy further classified strategies into five sub-groups. The discovery category includes determination and social strategies. In his classification, the second main consolidation sub-category includes social, memory, cognitive, and metacognitive strategies. Schmitt (1997) defines these five categories of strategies: determination strategies are those “used by a person when faced with discovering a new word’s meaning without recourse to another person’s expertise” (p. 205). Social strategies are the ones that are used when one asks other people in the neighborhood (e.g., classmates or teachers) to understand the meaning of a word. Memory strategies entail linking the new word to be learned with some reference to previously learned knowledge. The next category of cognitive strategies was adapted from Oxford (1990) as “manipulation or transformation of the target language by the learner” (p.43). Finally, metacognitive strategies involve “a conscious overview of the learning process and making decisions about planning, monitoring, or evaluating the best ways to study” (Schmitt, 1997, p.205).

3. Research Questions
Considering of research on Turkish EFL learners’ pattern of vocabulary learning strategy use, the research aims to discover the aspects of vocabulary learning strategy use as perceived and reported by a specific group of pre-service English teachers in Turkey. In particular, the study intends to answer the following questions:
- What is the vocabulary learning strategy use among a group of Turkish undergraduate ELT students, in terms of their overall strategy use?
- Is there any significant relationship between gender and vocabulary learning strategies?
- Is there any significant difference or correlation between the use of vocabulary learning strategies and the year of study they are involved in as well as their vocabulary learning backgrounds?

4. Methodology
The study particularly investigates the Turkish students to see whether they use VLS significantly different from each other. It also tries to explore the relationship between these learners’ VLS and the study year and the prep class backgrounds.
Another aim of the study is to find out whether there are any differences in the use of in terms of gender.

In the current study, the term gender is used following this conceptualization of gender which is defined as culturally constructed male identity and female identity, not the biological differences between males and females. Some scholars believe that gender is a completely different concept from sex and it is not a biological fact at all (Aslan, 2009). According to Butler (1990), the concept of gender is brought into being when it is the matter of performance. Gender is therefore not something you acquire once and for all at an early stage of life, but an ongoing accomplishment produced by your repeated actions.

4.1 Participants
The participants in this study were first and third year undergraduate ELT students (40 students=20 +20) majoring in English Language Teaching (ELT) department at the University of Aksaray (16 females and 24 females). Their age ranged from 19 to 26, with a mean age of 20.24 (SD = 3.39). Most of them were in their twenties (19-22 years), so they reflect the actual age of most university students.

4.2 Data Collection Instruments
The data were analyzed through quantitative methods using two different measuring instruments: a vocabulary learning questionnaire was used to discover students’ VLS preferences and the demographic aspects of participants in terms of gender and the study year they are registered in.

VLS scale is based on the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) the version 7.0 of by Oxford (1990) containing of 50 items, and characterized into six subscales:

- memory strategies (items 1 to 9),
- cognitive strategies (items 10 to23),
- compensation strategies (items 24 to 29),
- metacognitive strategies (items 30 to 38),
- affective strategies (items 39 to 44),
social strategies (items 45 to 50).

These 50 items of the SILL are evaluated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The number indicates how often a learner uses the strategies. The questionnaire was chosen to measure the range and the frequency of vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) that undergraduate ELT learners’ use. It was related to VLS items that have been developed in some studies (e.g. Schmitt, 1997, Kocaman & Kizilkaya, 2014) and proved to be effective in obtaining data about learners’ VLS. The scale of the current study was taken from Kocaman and Kizilkaya (2014). The scale development process is said to have consisted three stages: a) writing the items related to vocabulary learning strategies based on Oxford's (1990) sub-dimensions of "Language Learning Strategies Inventory," b) editing the items in accordance with expert opinions and implementing the pilot study, c) implementing the scale to the students (N = 923), and establishing the validity and reliability studies. Firstly, exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the data collected. According to the results of the analysis, a total of 32 items were determined in six dimensions: memory, cognitive, compensation, meta-cognitive, affective and social strategies just as available in the SILL scale.

4.3 Data Analysis
We made a descriptive analysis of the vocabulary learning strategies questionnaire (VLSQ) items to identify the overall pattern of VLS used by the respondents:
- Analysis on the perceptions of the participant students on the use of VLS.
- Analysis on the gender differences on the basis of the Independent T-test and the use of VLS.
- Analysis on study year and language background differences and the use of VLS.

5. Finding and Discussion
Descriptive statistics was employed to investigate the vocabulary learning strategies that undergraduate ELT learners report using.
Table 1 above illustrates that the mean of frequency of overall strategy use was at a little higher than medium (mean=3.14). Results also reveal that affective and metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used ones among six strategies.

The VLSQ items were firstly analyzed using descriptive statistics and the normality test. Normal Q-Q plots can be quite effective in highlighting outliers in a data sequence.
Q-Q plots above show that the data points are not seriously deviated from the fitted line. The figure 1 consistently indicates that the variable is normally distributed. So we can say that the plots are quite symmetrical as well.

Table 2
Tests of Normality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory Mean</td>
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<td>.212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>.193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Mean</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>.193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation Mean</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Mean</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>.096</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Mean</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>.168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social Mean |    |    |    |    |    |    |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.938</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.919</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is a lower bound of the true significance. Lilliefors significance correction According to the Shapiro-Wilk results of the normality, all means of the strategy use seems to be normally distributed except for the memory means for the males.

The first sub-problem of the research was analyzed through using the independent T-test. To solve the problem, the VLS scale was performed on the male and female students. The average values of group statistics and the results of the T-tests of both groups are given in following Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3

Use of strategies in terms of gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memory Strategies</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X mean</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.7361</td>
<td>.34185</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1352</td>
<td>.58931</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Strategies</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X mean</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.4063</td>
<td>.5441</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.5324</td>
<td>.53438</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compensation Strategies</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X mean</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.5759</td>
<td>.65069</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.5417</td>
<td>.55375</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metacognitive Strategies</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X mean</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.8194</td>
<td>.59196</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.7533</td>
<td>.59705</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affective Strategies</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X mean</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8221</td>
<td>.65009</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>.60193</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Strategies</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X mean</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.4271</td>
<td>.34977</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3542</td>
<td>.32578</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were some statistically differences between male and female learners in their overall strategy use. In this current study, female learners showed significantly greater use of learning strategies than the male learners in three of five categories except for the metacognitive strategies. The findings of gender differences are in accordance with previous research studies (Oxford, 1993; 1989; Bekleyen, 2006). According to Oxford (1993), one possible explanation might be related to female’s stronger verbal skills, and greater conformity to academic and linguistic norms.
Table 4

Independent T-test results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Strategies Mean</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>1.650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-2.788</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-test was performed to examine the relationships between gender differences and the use of vocabulary learning strategies. Based on the independent T-test analysis, some significant differences were found between male and female learners in overall strategy use (t=3.14, p<.05). The mean of frequency of male learners in overall strategy use was 2.95, and the mean of frequency of female learners was 3.32; therefore, female learners presented more frequently in using overall strategy than the male learners.

For the second research question about the study years of the participant students, the descriptive results were found as follows:

Table 5

Study Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender * Year of Study Crosstabulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to see whether study year they are involved in influence learners’ use of learning strategies, the results are shown as follows:

Table 6

*Use of Strategies in terms of study year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X mean</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Sd</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Memory Strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.0333</td>
<td>.57238</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.505</td>
<td>.702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.9778</td>
<td>.60083</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive Strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.4679</td>
<td>.58143</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.308</td>
<td>.393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.4000</td>
<td>.49455</td>
<td>.37</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compensation Strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.3083</td>
<td>.67164</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>-1.812</td>
<td>.073</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.6417</td>
<td>.47524</td>
<td>.34</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metacognitive Strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.8511</td>
<td>.61482</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.885</td>
<td>.382</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.7086</td>
<td>.48936</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affective Strategies</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.9083</td>
<td>.49108</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>.801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.9333</td>
<td>.74614</td>
<td>.33</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Strategies</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 1 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.4417</td>
<td>.93701</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.442</td>
<td>.651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 3 students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.3250</td>
<td>.71630</td>
<td>.36</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the results of six subcategories of strategies respectively, significant differences did not exist in the use of cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, and affective strategies in respect of study years. In general, majority of students who majored in the ELT department in this study somewhat showed minor differences in using vocabulary learning strategies. The higher score of metacognitive strategy of undergraduate students may suggest their efforts to improve their learning in order to fulfill the study prerequisites of department courses. Thus more learning experiences gained during the years of study can decrease the need for help since students may be better informed about use of other learning strategies.

With reference to the research questions posed in this study, the findings and discussions were summarized as follows:

In general, there was not a big difference among the frequency of each strategy that Turkish undergraduate learners report using, all in a bit higher than medium-use level. According to the rank order of the frequency of use, the most frequently used strategy was metacognitive strategies compensation strategies and followed by memory strategies, social strategies, cognitive strategies and affective strategies. In line with the previous studies (Chang & Huang, 1999; Klassen, 1994; Bekleyen, 2006) the finding of the current study reveals that metacognitive strategies were most frequently used. In addition, the mean of frequency of overall strategy use was 3.29, which seems to have appeared in medium use.

The results show that there appears to have been some statistically significant correlations among memory strategies and cognitive, affective and social strategies. This means that participants correlate their memory strategies with their use of cognitive, affective and social strategies.

Some other results of subcategories of VLS are as follows:

- Memory strategies: learning a new word, a phrase or idiom together was positively correlated with the two measures.

- Metacognitive strategies: using technology programs was positively correlated with reading English newspapers.
Another case is that 62% percent of the students said to have attended one year of English preparatory course before they came to study at the ELT department. On the other hand, 38% of the participant students reported that they passed the proficiency test and came to the department. These results about their language proficiency backgrounds may give us the impression that the students in the latter group could not have acquired or exposed to the VLS that they would need in their studies at the ELT department of the university.

### 6. Conclusion

Vocabulary learning is one of the biggest challenges that a language learner could face and one of the most problematic issues that a teacher has to deal within the process of language learning and teaching. For these reasons, so as to facilitate learning and teaching procedures it is a good idea that language learners are familiar with the vocabulary learning strategies. The prospective ELT teachers in this study report that they have used VLS a bit higher than the average level. The frequent use of metacognitive and social strategies indicates that most of the pre-service teachers seem to have self-regulation or plans for their own learning. On the other hand, the use of other four strategies could also be supported via the instruction in their academic courses. The findings are consistent with those of Moir and Nation (2002) that found out that their subjects were not responsible for their learning and unaware of what learning vocabulary requires. In sum, it is of great importance to carry out studies that focus on measuring VLS in relation to different variables of learning backgrounds, individual differences, proficiency and vocabulary size.
Prospective language teachers can be provided explicit input and instruction on the VLS given feedback on their perceptions. Furthermore, novice language teachers may not know how VLS could contribute to their own professional development. Once pre-service teachers are equipped with the active strategy use themselves it will be much easier to motivate and teach their prospective students on the use of VLS.

References


A Discourse Analysis of Chinese Junior High School English Textbooks: Cultural Components and Ideological Construction

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Abstract
Textbooks, as the carrier of cultural transmission in English classroom, act like a window that helps teachers and learners to look into cultural knowledge. This session attempts to examine cultural representation in junior high school English textbooks in China and to explore ideological construct behind these textbooks. The study is grounded in critical discourse analysis and English as a lingua franca framework. It addresses the dominant ideology of the West that has been deeply influenced media and material design in English language and learning in China. Data are collected from three textbooks offered by three private publishers. Content analysis and qualitative systematic interpretive approach are applied to generate a coding system and thematic categories. Finally, it is hoped that this study will shed some light on English language education and will invite language educators to pay attention to the role of textbooks in cultivate not only knowledge but also ideology.

Keywords: Textbooks, Cultural components, Ideological construction, Discourse analysis

15. Introduction
With globalization, the number of English users has always been increasing. A belief in the power of English is clearly prominent in current society. Mastering English can indeed help people for self-development and advancement throughout the world, even the fluency can be a huge step of struggling for their self-sufficiency and success (Johnson, 2009). Nowadays, English is not specially used in native-speaking countries as well as in those countries where English is regarded as second or foreign language (Lamb, 2004). Therefore, the status of the English language has changed from English as Second/Foreign Language to World English/English as International Language/English as Lingua Franca. In most non-native-speaking countries, China as an example, English has been included as compulsory subjects from primary school to university.
The English language teaching development in China has gone through 4 stages, the restoration stage, the rapid development stage, the reform stage and the innovation stage (Wang, 2007). From the restoration phase to the innovation phase, the teaching method has been changed from the audiolingual, grammar-translation to the communicative method. The focus of teaching has been transferred from test-oriented to learner-centered. The present phase is the innovation stage. At this stage, the latest syllabus named National English Curriculum Standard was issued in 2011, which covers 5 main parts: linguistic skills, language knowledge, emotional attitude, learning strategies and cultural awareness. What needs to be given attention at present is cultural awareness (CA). CA includes four parts in terms of cultural knowledge, cultural understanding, awareness of cross-cultural communication and ability in cross-cultural communication with the aim to help learners to use language more properly when they are aware of others’ culture as well as their own culture.

The ELT development also brings about the evolution of textbooks. With more publishers entering the ELT industry, the English learners have access to a wider variety of textbooks. Textbooks, as the school discourse, are laden with ideology and supervisory controlled by the government (Weninger & Kiss, 2013).

Based on the background introduced before, the researcher concludes four research purposes and research questions for the present study.

The study aims:

1. To examine the types of cultural items shown in the Chinese junior high English textbooks.

2. To examine how culture is represented in Chinese junior high school English textbooks.

3. To explore how cultural representations reach the expectation of National English Curriculum Standard.

4. To find out what ideological orientation is constructed in Chinese junior high school English textbooks.
This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What kinds of cultural representations are shown in the Chinese junior high English textbooks?

2. How culture is represented in Chinese junior high school English textbooks?

3. To what extent the cultural representations meet the needs of National English Curriculum Standard?

4. What kinds of ideological constructions are hidden in the English textbooks?

16. Literature Review

16.1 Discourse, textbooks and ideology

As one of the written discourse and school discourse, textbooks work as “a teacher, a map, a resource, a trainer, an authority, a de-skiller and an ideology” (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999, p. 199-200). Textbooks can transfer the hidden ideologies through its textual materials and visual materials, which also can contribute to build an imagined community (Anderson, 1983).

Ideologies organize social group’s identity, actions, aims, norms and values, and resources as well as its relations to other social groups (Van Dijk, 2001). It is worth mentioning that ideology can be regarded as not only structures of political domination but also cultural beliefs manifested in cultural practices and materials (Weninger, & Kiss, 2013).

Arguably, the best-known description of a nation is Benedict Anderson’s (1983) conception of nations as imagined communities. Concerning foreign language learning, imagined community connects with the language-use groups. (Kanno & Norton, 2003). The connection of language learners and imagined community can be linked through the power of imagination; and the potential model of language communities may be sought by learners also based on the power of imagination (Norton, 2001).

16.2 Types of culture

On the one hand, culture can be divided into two general groups: Big “C” culture and little “c”. (Lee, 2009; Peterson, 2011). Big “C” culture refers to the culture representing the facts and statistics relating to arts, history, geography, business, education, festivals and customs of a target speech society (Lee, 2009). Little “c” concerns the aspects of daily life such as food, hobbies, popular music, clothing styles, preference or taste, opinions, gestures, and certain knowledge (Peterson, 2011). Big “C” and little “c” covers major aspects in the social groups. However, both Big “C” and little “c” did not mention the perspective of philosophy and psychology.
On the other hand, culture can be divided into three groups in terms of target culture, source culture and international culture (Cortazzi & Jin, 1999). Source culture refers to the content which relates to learners’ own culture. Target culture means the most popular culture instructed in textbooks, such as British culture and American culture. International culture covers a wide range culture from the countries where English is used as first language to those where English is used as second/foreign language.

16.3 Previous study
One textbook analysis related to college English textbooks was done by Xiao (2010). The goal of study was to investigate the cultural categories and types presented in college English textbooks. After frequency analysis, the researcher used questionnaires to examine the perceptions, attitudes and expectations of learners towards to cultural learning and abilities on cultural implementation. The findings found that the textbooks focus on the target culture from English-speaking countries such as Britain and America. Also, most representations of cultural elements are preferred to be big “C” culture which refers to economy, politics and history while a low percentage of little “c” culture has been presented. The EFL learners had positive attitude towards culture learning, but most of them perceived culture learning was impeded because of boring teaching and insufficient intercultural information shown in the textbooks.

17. Methodology
This study is grounded in a mixed research method which employs a qualitative systematic interpretative approach with statistical techniques applied to the content analysis of textbooks (Bernard, 1952; Lee, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

17.1 Materials of the present study
Three 9th grade English textbooks published by three different presses in China are selected as materials for analysis. The reason why the researcher chooses these three textbooks is based on the influence of these three presses in China (Rankings of Chinese Internet and Press in 2015, n.d.). The three presses are Yilin Press (YLP), Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press (FLTRP), and People’s Education Press (PEP). All of them are listed in the top 10 presses in terms of textbooks production. The 3 textbooks are published respectively in 2012, 2013, and 2014 by Yilin Press, Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press and People’s Education Press.
17.2 Instrument
The data come from textbooks’ content, and the instrument to analyze data is the coding system (Lee, 2007).

Table 1

*Five categories of content analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook Representation</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textual material</td>
<td>1. Words</td>
<td>The most basic and smallest unit in analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Themes</td>
<td>The topic and general idea of text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Concepts</td>
<td>Specific part within texts or definition determined by its nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Characters</td>
<td>Figures appeared in the text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual materials</td>
<td>5. Illustrations</td>
<td>Non-verbal things like pictures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two groups (textual and visual material) include 5 main categories. Textual material includes words, themes, concepts and characters. Visual materials refer to pictures in textbook.

17.3 Data analysis
The data can be analyzed at 4 steps. Firstly, the researcher reads all textbooks in order to get a general picture of three textbooks before designing a coding system. Secondly, the researcher reads the textbook again for selecting relevant data and identifying them for the purpose of making a coding system. After building a coding system, the researcher will group the data into different categories, which is prepared for the next stage, statistical analysis. The third step is to count the percentage and frequencies of the relevant cultural representations happen in the textbook. And the last step is to conduct meta-analysis and trend analysis. What needs to be mentioned here is the cyclical approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994) applied in the second step. It is not easy to select, identify and group the data. The researcher needs to read the text numerous times to recheck whether the selective data is culturally relevant and then group them into similar categories. These steps needed to be done again and again until the researcher acquired the most relevant data.
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4. Findings and Discussion

Data analysis yield the following findings:

1. The initial coding system

Table 2

The initial coding system

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main category</th>
<th>Sub-category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information of Press</td>
<td>co-work press, cultural issues, nationality of editorial staff, dominant figures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>self-knowing, travel and nature, festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre/theme</td>
<td>conversation, interview, story, letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit cultural</td>
<td>name, belief, scenic spots, country/city</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are five main categories involved in the present coding system, information of three press, subjects of every units, genre and theme of the cultural content, explicit cultural representations and graphics. Each main category has its own sub-categories. The categories of the coding system are derived from the processes of text reading, data identification, data classification, data reduction, then a redoing of the steps until reaching the goal of data analysis.

**The information of press** can be summarized in terms of co-work press, nationality of editorial staff, cultural issues and dominant figures. Editorial staffs coming from different cultural backgrounds focus on different nations’ cultures, which may result in various cultural informations shown in textbooks. Knowing what each press states in the cover, preface and postscript can help understand the textbooks in terms of reflecting the publisher’s attitude for according with the curriculum standard.

**Subject.** refers to the explicit topic of each unit. There are three subjects in the present coding system, self-knowing, travel and nature, and festival.

**Genre** Genre is the writing which refers to the written format, and contexts (Hyland, 2002). There are several written forms included in textbooks such as conversation, story, letter, diary and so on. The written formats of genre are various according to different countries, so that genre can represent different cultures in terms of formats.

**Explicit cultural components** There is no single, fixed or universal definition referring to cultural components but rather using unique items related to culture within texts linking to cultural components (Namenwirth & Weber, 1987). Those items could be people’s names (famous people), proper places (traveling spot), special festivals and custom, beliefs and religion etc.

**Graphics** Not only verbal information can transmit culture knowledge, but also non-verbal language such as graphics can work in this way. Visual information makes the textbooks colorful and attractive to learners.
2. The types of cultural items presented in the present study.

As presented in the chart above, the proportions of target culture, source culture, and international culture are respectively 42%, 39% and 19%. Target culture refers to western culture, native-speaking-countries’ culture. Source culture refers to local culture. International culture refers to non-native speaking-countries’ culture except for Chinese culture. The data shows that Target culture has a dominant status in the textbooks which means most of the cultural content are western-oriented. And the source culture has a similar portion compared to western culture, which tells us that the government and the publisher also pay attention to Chinese culture and address Chinese identity through cultural content input. The least part is international cultural items. It has a significant difference between international culture and western/local culture.

Compared to the requirement in National English Curriculum Standard, the preliminary finding just reaches the goal of cultural knowledge. For the aspects of cultural understanding, cultural awareness, and cross-cultural ability, it does not show much information about them.
When compared to one previous study (Xiao, 2010) in China, the result is similar in that the textbooks focus on the culture knowledge from English-speaking countries. However, in Xiao’s (2010) study, most cultural elements are preferred to be economy, politics and history content while the present study focus more on basic cultural knowledge. In other words, the present findings show that most of the cultural items are small c culture while the focus of previous study is big C culture.

5. Conclusion

The present study intends to investigate the cultural components and ideological construction in Chinese junior high school English textbooks. The findings indicate that both western and local culture are dominant in English textbooks while international culture needs more chances to be shown in textbooks. Not only the cultural knowledge but also the cultural awareness and cross-cultural communication ability also need to be addressed in textbooks. It is hoped that the finding can shed some light on textbook publication, ELT teaching and material design.
References


The Effectiveness of Peer Assessment in Tertiary Level EFL/ESL Classrooms

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Abstract
Assessment is an important aspect of teaching and learning. Peer Assessment (PA) can save teacher time and promote efficient classroom practices. During PA, students provide feedback to one another on specific tasks. For effective feedback, students need a clear understanding of the task & criteria and should know what to look for (NCLRC, 2008). Studies have shown that when students participate in assessment, their motivation and engagement levels increase. Through PA activities, students develop their metacognition: “the ability to monitor one’s current level of understanding and decide when it is not adequate” (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000). In EFL/ESL, PA provides many advantages: 1) language skills development, 2) the promotion of critical thinking skills, and 3) opportunities to develop self-confidence. During Semester I of 2014, PA was implemented in Level 5 classrooms with 86 sophomores. The syllabus required students to produce two written and two oral assignments. This quantitative study examined the effectiveness of PA via 3 research questions: 1) From both the perspectives of the students and the researcher, what were the advantages and disadvantages that had been experienced while incorporating PA? 2) What were the specific views held by students with respect to giving & receiving feedback and grades from their classmates? 3) In the view of the researcher, had the processes required to successfully promote PA been an efficient use of teacher and classroom time? The research tool was a 5 Likert self-administered questionnaire, and the data was analyzed to obtain percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

Keywords: Peer Assessment, Rubrics, Self-administered questionnaire, 5 Likert Scale
1. Introduction
The researcher’s interest in PA stems from his desire to explore using rubrics and find new methods to increase student participation in his classes. When reflecting on the study’s direction, he speculated about several issues: 1) Would it be a challenge to keep the students engaged in PA over an entire semester? 2) Would students accept the process as an opportunity to further expand their language skills? 3) How much Thai would the students want speak during PA?

While conducting the literature review, it was discovered that PA in educational circles has been a highly controversial topic. Fifteen years ago a case was heard by the U.S. Supreme Court. A mother of a special needs child filed a case, Falvo vs. Owasso School System, to stop her child’s teacher from using PA in the classroom. The Supreme Court’s unanimous decision reaffirmed the popular view that grading each other’s tests is valuable, saving teacher’s time and augmenting student learning (Sadler & Good, 2006). Sadler and Good (2006) further stated in their study that self-grading and peer-grading aid in saving teacher time, but unlike self-grading, peer-grading does not result in increased student learning. The researcher found this point intriguing and wished to conduct his own research to uncover the truth of the statement.

The goal of this research was to examine the efficacy of PA in Tertiary ESL/EFL classrooms. The study was conducted in the researcher’s classes, consisting of 6 sections of Level 5 courses offered by Khon Kaen University Language Institute (KKULI) during Semester I of School Year 2014-2015. The sample consisted of 86 sophomores taking mandatory English classes from various faculties of KKU. The semester syllabus included 4 assignments based upon the contents of the textbook. The syllabus included 2 written essays (the first, an individual essay, and the second, a pair essay) and 2 oral presentations done in groups.

2. Literature Review
Creating student-centered activities, that can bring autonomy in to EFL/ESL classrooms, are vital to practicing English language learning skills. Several benefits are thought to be derived from PA including taking action based on instincts that can help students to become more efficient learners and promote independent, reflective, and critical learning (Race, 2001; Freeman, 1995). Ellis (2001) further stated that peer assessment improves critical thinking and promotes group assertiveness. In this paper, the efficacy of using PA in the EFL/ESL context at the tertiary level is examined. The
following three literature reviews attempt to demonstrate and support the theory that in EFL/ESL classrooms, PA is an effective tool to promote language learning.

In a study by Race (2001), he stated that assessing group work is more complicated than assessing individual work. He continued by noting that the assessment and grading criteria should be clear, reliable, and fair. Rubrics should be used to inform students of the goal, the project problems, and the processes of the course. Furthermore, the grading points should be clarified as a part of communications skills. Race developed seven approaches for assessing the group and a few can be applied herein: 1) giving the same grade for all involved students, 2) dividing group tasks into different parts, and 3) giving general grades to an entire group.

In a study by Freeman (1995) a PA experiment was conducted with 210 final-year undergraduate business students in 41 groups or teams. Teams of peers rated the quality of the presentation in terms of content and presentation by using a 22-point guide. It was recognized that the group work had encouraged deeper learning. Furthermore, Freeman posited that student autonomy had been promoted by giving some of the responsibility for teaching and learning to the students. In addition, he noted that PA reduces academic time with respect to giving feedback and grading.

In study by Ellis (2001), both elements of self-assessment and peer-assessment for Doctoral students in Social Service Supervision were examined using a video project. Regarding PA, she stated that the range of different suggestions can provide students opportunities to personally grow and can help them to challenge their blind spots about their own work. Because the students in her study had been required to watch each others’ presentations, they had had opportunities to make comparisons and to identify their own areas of competence and areas that needed improvement. As a result, they had developed their personal and professional confidence. One disadvantage, faced by Ellis, was the need to give students a lengthy explanation before the start of the PA process to allay their anxieties. She noted that despite the initial discomfort, the students’ anxieties had soon disappeared. To conclude, students’ skills practices can be assisted by: 1) developing the ability to function as independent learners, 2) exercising judgment (critical thinking), and 3) gaining the ability to transfer learning from one context to another.
3. Methodology

3.1 The Administration of the In-Class Assessments

At the start of the semester, course requirements, assignments, and scoring information were distributed. The Level 5 syllabus required two written essays and two oral presentations which were targeted for PA and for which rubrics were designed, distributed, and explained in advance. All PA procedures were undertaken in class. The first writing assignment was an individual essay, and using the rubric, a PA pair graded another class member’s essay. Afterwards, the researcher graded each assignment, and then both scores were averaged. In the second writing assignment, a small group assignment, a PA team graded another group’s essay.

When assessing group oral presentations, a PA Team graded another group’s work using a rubric. During the presentations, students in the PA teams were not allowed to talk to one another, but listened and took notes in order to score their peers. After each PA Team had listened, they met and considered the score. Next, the PA team joined the researcher and the presenting group members to explain their scoring. The assessing students addressed the presenters regarding the quality of their speaking, presented the scores, and gave their rationale for giving the score. Finally, the groups being assessed were allowed to ask questions.

In order to create an activity that encompassed all class members, the remaining students were also invited to listen to the PA process. Involving the entire class served two purposes: 1) to engage them in listening to increase their listening skills and 2) to prepare them for their participation. After the students had completed their assessments, the researcher gave his. Before the PA session ended, the students, who had been assessed, were allowed to ask questions. The scores were then averaged and given to the students. Finally, for research purposes, the researcher retained all assessments for all sections.
3.2 The Research Questions

The following 3 research questions were used to formulate the 13 statements used in the self-administered questionnaire:

1) From both the perspective of the students and the researcher, what were the advantages and disadvantages that had been experienced while incorporating PA?

2) What were the specific views held by students with respect to giving & receiving feedback and grades from their classmates?

3) In the view of the researcher, had the processes required to successfully promote PA (creating rubrics, demonstrating PA, and empowering students to participate fully in the process) been an efficient use of teacher and classroom time?

3.3 The Administration of the Research Tool

At the beginning of the final class, the students were introduced to the self-administered 5 Likert Scale questionnaire. To provide better feedback, the questionnaire was both in Thai and English. The four parts consisted of Part I: the Nature of Peer Assessment; Part II: Receiving Assessments; Part III: Giving Assessments; and Part IV: A Section for Comments. Twenty five minutes were given to complete the questionnaire and the researcher waited outside.

4. Findings and Discussion

The data was manually calculated and was then analyzed using SPSS for Windows Version 17 to derive the mean, the standard deviation, and the percentages. The findings, listed in Table 1 below, represent the data from all 86 respondents.
Table 1

The Results from Parts I – III with Means, Standard Deviations & Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P I</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I felt that this process of Peer Review is fair.</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>80.2 %</td>
<td>AGREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The Teacher’s Feedback is the most important feedback to me.</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>90.2 %</td>
<td>STRONGLY AGREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I do not feel that my fellow classmates are qualified to assess my work.</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>49 %</td>
<td>DISAGREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I understand the benefits that can be derived from participating in peer assessments.</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>81.6 %</td>
<td>AGREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The rubrics created for all 4 assignments were clear &amp; easy to follow.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>84 %</td>
<td>AGREE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P II</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I remained open-minded when I received feedback from my peers.</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>89.4 %</td>
<td>AGREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I was able to fully understand my peer’s critique of my work.</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>84.4 %</td>
<td>AGREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>After PA, I felt that my peers had fairly graded my work.</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>79.4 %</td>
<td>AGREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I have been able to use peer feedback to increase my</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>78.2 %</td>
<td>AGREE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
language skills and confidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P III</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I felt that I was adequately able to express my opinions in peer feedback.</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>76.8 %</td>
<td>AGREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I felt that I had adequate English skills to give fair verbal feedback to my peers</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>65.8 %</td>
<td>UNDECIDED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>After PA, I felt that I had fairly graded the work of my peers.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>84.0 %</td>
<td>AGREE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I felt that my peers were able to clearly understand my critique of their work.</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td>78.2 %</td>
<td>AGREE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.1 Advantages & Disadvantages of PA

Both the students and the researcher had encountered advantages and disadvantages while incorporating PA. Looking at the advantages, 80.2% had agreed that the PA process had been fair for the students. According to Fry, Ketteridge, and Marshall (2009) there is a lot of student anxiety about PA concerning its fairness and effectiveness. Fry further stated that the issues surrounding the PA of group project work can range from unfairness, favoritism, and collusion, to outright vendettas. Furthermore, the results showed that 79.4% of students had agreed that their work had been fairly graded by their peers. Race, Brown, and Smith (2005) observed that students had shown greater interest in PA when the scores given to each other had counted towards their grade. With respect to grading, the researcher notified all students that the PA scores and the researcher’s scores would be averaged. One student commented, “After peer assessment, I felt that my teacher and classmates had fairly graded the work.” The data showed that 81.6% of students had agreed that they had understood the benefits that they had derived from their participation in PA.
A positive result in the findings showed that 76.8% of students had been adequately able to express their opinions in PA. Topping (1998) stated that PA as a tool for Learning in EFL contexts may also lead to outcomes as good as the teacher’s assessment and sometimes better. Given that PA had taken place in the researcher’s classroom, he had been able to listen to the feedback sessions and had found that the students had been able to express their opinions. However, to obtain more comprehensive feedback, PA teams were constantly encouraged to give their classmates more information in order further practice their English skills.

When examining the disadvantages, it was discovered that 65.8% of the students were undecided as to whether they had adequate English skills to give fair verbal feedback to their peers. Moreover, 49% had disagreed with the statement suggesting that their peers were not qualified to assess their work. Students, who doubt themselves and their abilities, face a mounting degree of hesitation. Dudley-Evans and St.John (1998) stated that over time this hesitation builds a gap between the student’s peers and the teacher. Therefore, it is imperative that adequate motivation and support be given to struggling students in order to remove their doubt and promote self-confidence. In these higher level classes, students still struggled. Therefore, scaffolding became necessary. According to Dickson, Chard, and Simmons (1993) scaffolded instruction is the “systematic sequencing of prompted content, materials, tasks, and teacher and peer support to optimize learning.” Hogan and Pressley (1997) summarized the literature and stated that there were eight essential elements to scaffolded instruction as follows: 1) engaging with the students’ needs & curricula before the class/activity, 2) establishing a shared goal, 3) actively diagnosing the students’ needs & understandings, 4) providing tailored assistance, 5) maintaining the pursuit of goals, 6) giving feedback, 7) controlling the students’ frustration & their risk-taking, and 8) assisting students to become more independent by relying less on the teacher.

Following up on element #8, another disadvantage was that 90.2% (9 students out of 10) had strongly agreed that the teacher’s feedback was the most important to them which meant that they had relied on the teacher more, not less. Regarding giving instructions, teachers can relay information to students on how to complete an assignment or can give feedback on how well they have completed it. Sadler (2010) stated that this feedback before and after the fact shares an important characteristic. “As one-way messages from the teacher to the student, they are essentially about telling, or disclosure. Yet despite the teachers’ best efforts to make the disclosure full, objective and precise, many students do not understand it appropriately because ... they are not equipped to decode the statements properly.” (p. 539). Sadler states here that students may not comprehend the Teacher’s feedback because they cannot decode it. Understanding this, the researcher paid close attention to the students when giving feedback. At any sign of confusion, the researcher restated his feedback and if
necessary, role modeled any part of it. In order for students to act upon teacher feedback, Sadler (2010) contended that they must develop appraisal expertise which relies on knowledge of concepts in three areas: task compliance, quality, and criteria. These three areas were also emphasized within the rubrics.

### 4.2 Giving & Receiving Assessments

The process of receiving and giving PA had required the use of the productive (speaking & writing) and the receptive (listening & reading) skills. With respect to the data from Receiving Assessments, 89.4% of respondents had agreed that they had remained open-minded when receiving feedback. According to Ennis (1991), critical thinking is reasonable reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. Being open-minded and mindful of alternatives is one of the concepts of critical thinking. 84.4% of students had agreed that they had been able to fully understand the feedback received from peers. Ennis (1991) further states that another aspect of critical thinking is the ability to identify conclusions, reasons, and assumptions. With respect to the final statement of the students’ abilities to use PA to increase language skills and confidence 78.2% had agreed. Metacognition, according to Bransford, et al. (2000), is the ability to monitor one’s current level of understanding and decide when it is not adequate. The results showed that over three quarters of students had been able to utilize their metacognitive skills to recognize a shift in their own skills and level of confidence. One student wrote, “I agree with Peer Assessment. Accepting comments (assessment)… (can help me) to develop myself better.” The researcher acknowledges the vast nature of metacognitive skills in language learning and that the topic has only briefly been touched upon in this study.

With respect to Giving Assessment, 84% of students had agreed that they had fairly graded their peers’ work, while 78.2% agreed that their peers had been able to clearly understand them when they had critiqued their classmate’s work. As in receiving feedback, the students had utilized their critical thinking skills. Giving PA requires students to develop and defend a reasonable position (Ennis, 1991). The assessor must decide upon the quality of the performance given by the person being reviewed and that is their “position”. When the assessor is asked by a student why a particular score has been given, it requires the assessor to defend why that choice had been made. Then the assessor has to give evidence to support his/her decision. These all represent aspects of critical thinking.
4.3 Three Areas for Successful PA Promotion

From the researcher’s point of view, the following three areas were required to successfully promote PA: 1) the creation of the rubrics, 2) demonstrating PA (including how to successfully use rubrics and how to conduct an entire feedback session through simulation), and 3) empowering students to become effective “givers of feedback” by encouraging them to be more articulate and to give more linguistically complex assessment.

4.3.1 Rubrics: Creation & Implementation

Successful PA activities begin with an accurate rubric consisting of 3 components:

1) the criteria, the characteristics of performance; 2) the levels of performance, the degree to which any student is expected to meet the criteria; and 3) the descriptors, specific explanations linked to each criteria and level of performance (University of Oklahoma, 2015). There are two common types: analytic rubrics and holistic rubrics. Analytic rubrics can identify and access the components of a finished product, while holistic rubrics assess the student’s work as a whole. The analytic rubric was chosen for its ease of development, its ability to provide useful feedback on the student’s strengths & weaknesses, and for the fact that the criteria could be weighted to reflect the importance of each dimension.

Creating and utilizing rubrics for PA was time-consuming outside and inside the classroom. Yet, the researcher believes that utilizing rubrics is highly valuable in the EFL/ESL context. Suskie (2009) stated that rubrics are beneficial because they: 1) help to clarify vague goals; 2) help students to understand the teacher’s goals; 3) help students to self-improve; 4) inspire better student performance; 5) make scoring easier, faster, more accurate, unbiased, and consistent; 6) improve feedback with students; and 7) reduce arguments with students about grading. Furthermore, it is important to note here that rubrics are also an element of scaffolded instruction that provides “tailored assistance” during PA as summarized by Hogan and Pressley (1997). Few students had had any experience using rubrics. Therefore, it was important that the language of the rubrics be precise so that the students could distinguish an excellent presentation from a good one or a good essay from a fair one. The results showed that 84% of the students had agreed that the rubrics, that had been created, were clear and easy to follow. One student expressed, “The rubric is convenient and easy to use. It helps me to cover all of the topics that I have to grade.”
4.3.2 Demonstrating Peer Assessment

Role plays, an element of the Communicative Approach, represent the production stage of PPP (Presentation/Practice/Production). According to Liu and Ding (2009), 4 factors are related to their proper use: 1) a real and relevant topic, 2) a verbal expression of appropriate language, 3) a proper method of error correction, and 4) a shifting role for the teacher (facilitator, spectator, or participant). To express PA, the researcher created a simulation acting as a participant (student) who had just heard another student’s oral presentation. Using the rubric, the teacher followed the 4 factors mentioned above to simulate a successful feedback session. (See Table 2).

Table 2
The Communicative Approach: Four Factors for Successful Feedback via Role Plays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Real &amp; Relevant Topic</td>
<td>Giving Peer Assessment to a fellow student about his/her written or oral assignment using a Rubric</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| The Verbal Expression of Appropriate Language | **SPEAKING**  
  “Your introduction was good, but it lacked…”  
  “I felt that your presentation had several grammatical problems, such as…”  
  “The level of creativity could be improved because….”  

  **WRITING**  
  “The topic sentences were…”  
  “There were grammar problems, such as…”  
  “I gave you this score because….” |
| A Proper Method of Error Correction | **SPEAKING**  
  “I feel that you spoke too quickly.”  
  “Try using better connectives, like ‘Last of all, we will examine…’”  
  “You did not engage enough with your audience. Next time…”  

  **WRITING**  
  “You did not write a thesis statement. Why not?”  
  “You had some problems with reported speech. Why?”  
  “Your conclusion summarized some of the essay’s main ideas, but not all.” |
| The Role of the Teacher      | **PARTICIPANT** |

The role play had served as a scaffolded activity. By simulating the PA process, the researcher had assisted students by providing necessary vocabulary, constructing a platform for giving feedback, and by offering phrases and prompts. The researcher’s
goal was to give students a framework for expressing their opinions and ideas in the form of feedback. It was his hope that the students’ confidence would develop allowing them to participate more fully. In fact, the scaffolding had helped to dispel doubts and give them more confidence. One student noted, “This is not my first experience in Peer Assessment, but in this class it was the most effective. The teacher has made it more effective. He always asks the students to give their opinions about the assignments. Peer assessment has made me more confident to give suggestions.”

4.3.3 Empowering Students
For the researcher, empowerment (motivation) is a process of helping students to recognize that the skills they need to learn English already exist within them. By the time that Thai students have reached university, the majority have already studied the English language for about a decade. Yet, considerable uncertainty exists about their English language abilities and manifests as self-doubt and shyness. In fact, according to the findings of this study, 65.8% were undecided as to whether they had adequate English language skills to give fair verbal feedback about their peer’s performance. The level of motivation of students, participating in PA, is affected by their self-confidence. A model by Clement (1980) examined the influence that the social context encountered by students has on their motivation to learn a second language. The results showed that positive language learning experiences could increase learner confidence in EFL/ESL and could further their motivation to learn it. Dornyei (1994) further pointed out that different language learners are motivated differently according to their achievements and levels of self-confidence. Furthermore, the learning situation provides motives through the language classroom, i.e. the course, the teacher, and the group aspects (Clement, Dornyei & Noels, 1994). The following three positive comments from students support Dornyei’s research: 1) “Peer Assessment makes me get more confidence with the teacher, friends, or with foreigners.” 2) “Working with peer assessment with the group made me feel more confident.” 3) “We can make our English skills better because we have to share our ideas by speaking, listening, and thinking (in the target language) or by listening to our classmate’s opinions.” The PA process had derived returns for the students which included learning new procedures (using rubrics & giving feedback), increasing vocabulary skills, and experiencing an overall boost in confidence.

5. Conclusion
At the beginning of this study, the researcher recognized three possible areas of challenge: student engagement, acceptance, and L1 usage in the classroom. However, once the momentum of PA had been reached, keeping the students engaged was easy. Based upon the findings, students had understood the benefits of PA and how it had increased their language skills and confidence. Yet, promoting the exclusive use of English in the classroom is always challenging.
Sadler and Good (2006) stated that peer assessment is only second best to self-assessment. However, the researcher sees PA as a vital tool for EFL/ESL classrooms because students have opportunities to become more engaged in the learning process. When students must listen, take notes, and prepare for feedback, they are more attentive. The process of creating and utilizing rubrics was labor intensive. Yet, their importance cannot be understated because rubrics provide students with the necessary support for PA and help them to gain further experience in real-world tasks, such as asking & answering questions and giving & receiving information. Providing opportunities for feedback can give students a first taste of what it’s like to perform as a supervisor and moreover, can strengthen the resolve of the students to help themselves to improve overall. Throughout this study, the researcher has recognized that in the PA process there is a degree of self-assessment. This takes place when students internally compare their own performance on a task with the performances of their peers and learn from that experience. This internal comparison enhances metacognitive skills and critical thinking leading to success.
References


The Rhetorical Organization of Horoscope Written by English Native Speaker

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Abstract

Given the fact that English has become an integral globally linked channel of communication, writing articles in English is necessary to serve the status of English as an international language and to expand knowledge in the field globally. Specifically, a horoscope is considered one of the most interesting articles in which people from all over the world’s attention is captured. In order for practitioners in different regions to understand these kinds of texts, there seems to be a rhetorical organization prevailing in any piece of writing assisting them to successfully overcome difficult reading. This study attempts to identify rhetorical organizations and linguistic features commonly used in English language horoscopes written by native English speakers. The corpus consists of 10 stand-alone horoscope articles systematically selected from the top ten most prestigious websites appearing in the Google search engine following the survey of http://horoscopereview.toptenreviews.com/ from native English speaking countries. The findings elucidate in the conclusion that the template, adapted from the framework of move analysis by Swales (1990) and Bhatia’s Seven Steps to Analyze Unfamiliar Genres by Bhatia (1993), found respectively five moves forming a typical sequence in a horoscope. The frameworks are beneficial, particularly for the non-native practitioners in the discourse discipline, not only allowing them to understand but also facilitating the procedure of writing English horoscope articles. Pedagogically, this study sheds some light onto the role of genre analysis as an approach to providing a guideline for practitioners to easily comprehend how such horoscope articles are systematically constructed. The study yields procedural steps, elements that come together with a rhetorical move, giving writers an attempt to get a glimpse of a clearer picture with regard to rhetorical organizations of horoscopes for future research studies in the discourse community.

Keywords: Rhetorical organization, Genre analysis, Horoscopes, Writing
1. Introduction

1.1 The prominence of English as an international language

English has become a part of our daily lives and has attained a status of the primary language for international communication in business, education, tourism, politics, science, and religion. With the emergence of this status, it is commonly known that English is used globally and regionally as a medium channel of communication. Also, articles found on websites in English are meant to disseminate knowledge internationally. According to Kanoksilapatham (2005), even though English has been frequently facilitated in the task of the four macro-skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking for decades, competency of Thai learners in using English is at an unsatisfactory level. Furthermore, learners find the task of English writing the most daunting, challenging, intimidating, and laborious.

Snodin (2014) stated that Thailand, where English has been used as a foreign language, was considered as a vehicle for indoctrinating up-to-date ideas, new technology, innovation, and the industrial revolution. She also elucidates further that the importance of English leads to a cultural variation and variety of English in society. In recent years, English has been used by people of all classes of Thai society – business people, academicians, government leaders, waiters, tour guides, hotel officers, police officers, taxi drivers and even bar girls – to achieve their own goals. They have their own objectives whether it be developing their own career advancement, gaining technical knowledge of a particular realm, encouraging tourism industry in a country, or improving their life-long well-being.

Moreover, to disseminate articles internationally, writers have to be equipped with English in order to survive professionally. Kanoksilapatham (2012) claims in her research article that to be competent in English writing, the writers in a particular respective discipline need to be familiar with not only the linguistic features, whether lexical or grammatical but also the rhetorical organization expected to appear in a writing task. As a result, move analysis or genre analysis study emerges in an attempt to provide an organizational pattern in writing for both native English and non-native speakers.

Even though move analysis has been done in a variety of genres such as research articles (Swales, 1990, 2004), job application letters (Bhatia, 1993), personal statements (Ding, 2007), travel articles (Chanpetch, 2011), suicide notes (Samraj & Gawron, 2015), etc., it has cast a dim light on horoscopes which brings me to the focus of this study. Therefore, this study will be making an attempt to answer the following two research questions:
1. What are the rhetorical organizations of horoscope prevailing on websites?

2. What are the linguistic features commonly used in English language horoscopes?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Genre Analysis / Move Analysis approach

Currently, English has been promoted to be an international language in many disciplines. As a result, articles found on numerous websites are unavoidably written in English. For survival, it is often the case that people be able to read and write English in a manner that is acceptable (Kanoksilapatham, 2007). A discourse analysis approach to genre analysis has been acknowledged as a potential approach to providing great insights onto how texts are systematically constructed. According to Swales (1990, 2004) who first invented the analytical framework of genre analysis, a genre is a type of communication. Similarly, Richards, Platt, and Weber (1985) defines a genre as “a particular category of speech event that has certain features contributed to a particular event”. Genre is a greatly significant concept in both academic and professional communication due to the fact that members of individual professions, or so-called discourse communities, share a specific set for communicative purposes. Furthermore, Feak (1994) considered genre as “a product of many considerations, such as audience, purpose, organization, and presentation, with an audience as the most crucial factor”. In order to be a genre, it is expected to have its own structure. The structure, in this case, consists of a number of components. In genre analysis, each component has a move, which refers to a text segment performing a communicative function. Crossley (2007) also defined a ‘move’ as a text segment or text instance that can be realized by its particular linguistic clues. The move allows for a specific function within a text to be performed and signals the content of a specific discourse community within a genre. Similarly, we can state that a genre consists of a number of moves which is sequential in a particular pattern forming an organization. As stated by Loré (2004), in the respect of a move, it is not defined as a fixed pattern since it can vary following to the context.

In genre analysis realm, Swales (1990) mostly focuses his studies on “academic genre” observing the language in research articles with high influential factors. Swale firstly begins Genre Analysis by scrutinizing two key characteristics of ESP genre approaches concentrating on academic and research English, as well as the use of Genre Analysis. There are various genres that have been investigated by a number of researchers such as job application letters, negotiation letters, grants proposals, and language in advertisements (Bhatia, 1993; Connor & Mauranen, 1999; Connor & Uptwon, 2004). Contributing to the achievement of the communicative purpose of a genre, moves prevailing in texts can vary in length and size from several paragraphs to one sentence, but contain at least one proposition (Connor & Mauranen, 1999, p. 51). The aim of genre analysis is to identify the rhetorical organization of the texts belonging to a particular genre. Generally, a genre is structured, stable, and conventionalized. In addition, it is easy to capture the intention of a given genre by
following Swales'genre analysis that sheds light onto the significant overall perspective through the lens of discourse community leading to fully understanding communicative purposes in a particular genre.

However, Bhatia (1993) proposes seven steps to explore any unfamiliar genres. He notes that researchers have to put an emphasis on some or all of the steps, depending on the communicative purpose of the analysis and the focused feature. The framework was created as guiding principles for a researcher who conducts move genre analysis. Bhatia’s seven steps are displayed as follows:

![Figure 1: The Bhatia’s Seven Steps to Analyze Unfamiliar Genres (Bhatia, 1993: 22 – 36)](image)

**2.2 Horoscopes as a media genre**

![Figure 2: Astrological zodiac symbols horoscope signs (Loughlin, 2014).](image)
One of the most interesting genres widely available not only in newspapers or in magazines but on websites is the horoscope. “The term “horoscope” is one of the main concepts and it refers to the schematic map of the planets' position at a specific moment in time usually but not necessarily the moment of a person’s birth. Each Chart is unique, as is its interpretation by the astrologer” (Zareva, 2013). Moreover, it is a diagram of the relative positions of planets or stars and signs of the zodiac of a specific day, week, month or year used for foretelling possible future events in a person. She also explains that horoscopes are popular or “an institution” in many countries. One of the most popular search engines Google yields about 150,000,000 results at the click of the keyword “horoscope” and the majority of them link to websites offering tailored predictions about future events related to our daily lives. Nowadays, mobile producers and operators have offered modern horoscope applications or new horoscope services for their customers to easily access their web pages at all times. Variations of horoscope applications are also widely available in most of the popular social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and numerous social media. In addition, it has been extensively favored by the contemporary mass media to offer daily, weekly or monthly horoscopes to their readers. The emergence of horoscopes in a newspaper, magazine, radio or television broadcast is considered “the outward manifestation of a communicative event” as claimed by Garret and Bell (1998). It is also said that the horoscope consists of textual, linguistic and non-linguistic tools that merge together, and specifically shape it as a uniquely noticeable genre.

“It is an example of media discourse and as such is informative of the ways in which the texts are produced by media workers in media institutions and of the ways in which the texts are received by audiences”

(Fairclough, 1995:6)

It has been highlighted that the horoscope is substantially popularized by the mass media to a certain extent. Zareva (2013) carried out the surveys and found that the horoscope is one of the main reasons that most people want to read a newspaper or magazines given the fact that the psychic predictions of their age, sex, or behaviors make the readers believe such a thing. Originally, the horoscope has astrological sense realized by its uniqueness. It informed the individual and shed light on his or her personality and future. Conversely, it recently obtained the new functions of not only giving advice but entertaining the readers instead of merely predicting and informing about the future event. The newly transformed nature of the horoscope features became a mass media genre and a culture phenomenon. The horoscope reflects recent social trends, employs the culture, and focuses on some of the basic values which are shared by the members of that particular culture.
On the other hand, Willis (2013) pointed out that consumers who read their horoscope daily were likely to exhibit instigating behavior when their zodiac prediction was negative. The horoscope is a proof of improving our mood fostering selfless activities among individuals. The unpredictable change is prone to occur if bad news is mentioned in the horoscope. According to Zareva (2013), the most discussed topics are affection, relationships, friendship, marriage, family, health, work, self-development, spending money, going out to parties and clubbing, food and drinks, and sex, respectively. She further explains that the horoscopes aim to wheedle the reader, providing appropriate advice, warning, criticizing, as well as providing some predictions about possible future incidents. In addition, some of the qualities invariably represented and promoted in horoscopes are taking initiative in life, self-reliance; keeping fit or healthy; taking care of individual appearance; straightforwardness; honesty; and sincerity. The most common linguistic features presented in horoscopes are present and future forms of the verbs, if-clauses, passive voice, modal verbs, and imperative forms.

3. Methodology

3.1 Corpus compilation

Kanoksilapatham (2015) defined a corpus as a sizable database concerned with a set of frequent lexical bundles appearing in written texts and the history of the native speaker’s vocabulary. In this study, a corpus of English horoscope was taken from ten English-language horoscope websites from the year 2016 that appeared when searching for the keyword horoscope via Google without the consideration of writers. Also, it is the world's top-ten hosts for free horoscopes and astrology content. Whether viewed on the website, via mobile devices or in emails, articles on websites are seen by many connected audiences worldwide. With 2.3 Million monthly visitors, 36.8 million monthly page views on website, 58.7 million monthly page views on mobile phone and 58.5 million monthly page views via mobile applications, ten representative websites offer a fun, user-friendly environment with a plethora of entertainment content that creates positive user experiences and reaches receptive viewers while they are actively seeking useful guidance and personal persuasion. The corpus systematically comprises a total of 6,000 words (600-800 each). To avoid a myriad of variations, the researcher selected only ten representative websites according to the survey http://horoscope-review.toptenreviews.com/ in the related discipline.

3.2 Dataset Analysis

After all of the exact verbatim on websites were collected, they were used for determining the patterns and functions of moves. The data were analyzed in four main sections.

The first section identified moves prevailing in the horoscopes. The methodology used was based on the framework of move analysis by Swales (1990), Bhatia’s Seven Steps to Analyze Unfamiliar Genres by Bhatia (1993), and the element of horoscopes writing as a guideline to
analyze the communicative intentions (Zareva, 2013). The data were scrutinized so as to identify the communicative purposes that the writer intends to extend and then assign the name for each purpose.

In the second section, the analysis of three main features are as follows: 1) Lexical features 2) Grammatical features 3) Language construction. The scrutiny was done so as to capture a common set of linguistic features used to perform a particular communicative function in a horoscope.

In the third section, the horoscopes were scrutinized in moves to get a glimpse of each move’s frequency of occurrence. The numbers of occurrences of each move were shown in the form of percentages to reach a high standard of validity and reliability of the analysis. To describe whether the move was classified as obligatory, conventional or optional, the frequencies of each move are illustrated in percentages. If a move appears 100% of the time in the corpus, the move is considered “obligatory”. To be recognized as a “conventional move”, a move occurs more than 60% of the sections in the corpus. Provided that the frequency of a move falls over 60%, it is recognized as “optional” (Kanoksilaphatham, 2005). In the last section, after each move’s frequency of occurrences is calculated, the patterns of move order within horoscopes are also systematically investigated and presented.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Moves in horoscopes

This section shows the function of each move, based on the communicative purposes of the writers of the horoscopes, as well as a common set of linguistic features which facilitate the identification of the moves. Only one horoscope excerpt analyzed by genre analysis is exemplified to representatively illustrate how move demarcation was carried out.

Excerpt 1:

[1] 2016 is a year when Aries may need to take more time on coping with old and new issues. You may find it challenging at times for your work and business. It is a year that Aries’ patience and resilience may be tested. You may find it tiring and challenging at work during the first half of the year. Aries expects to have a better fortune after July. Overall to improve your efficiency, it is may be better to define your goal and strategy.

As shown in excerpt 1, this section was identified as Move 1: Establishing information in general (100%). The observation of grammatical features makes it clear that the use of present tenses verb “is” is commonly employed in this text instance. However, either the use of present tense or the use of future tense is generated by the author. Tense usage is not fixed but it depends on the message that the author aims to convey to the audiences. In addition, the
use of the auxiliary verb (may) expresses possibility in the future. As this genre talks about
the possible future incident, there is no past tense appearing. The use of the lexicon, overall,
makes it possible to identify that this text instance belongs to Move 1. For the language
constructions, to emphasize the statement, the author uses a cleft construction introduced by
it-cleft (It is a year that .....). Due to the functions of Move 1, this move (if used) usually
occupies the beginning of the articles.

Excerpt 2:

[2] Aries expects to have a favorable relationship in 2016. Try to avoid extramarital
affairs. You may find your family not so supportive of your relationship at times. For
married Aries, it is important to spend more time with your partner. Try to avoid taking
stress from work to home as this may cause frictions on your relationship.

The text instance above serves the common function of reporting love and relationship,
identified as Move 2: Upcoming love and relationship (100%). It has been observed that
most readers are really interested in their love and relationship with surrounding people,
especially a soul mate that is expected to come in the near future. The findings of lexical
features indicate that the use of nouns (relationship, affairs, family, partner) and the use of a
participle adjective (married) make it possible in describing the relationship. This text not
only talks about a lover but people, in general, such as friends or family. Besides, the use of
the verb (avoid) shows that the author has an intention of warning readers about what not to
do. In exploring grammatical features of this move, we can see that the present tense is also
used and the use of the auxiliary verb (may) is present. The scrutiny of language constructions
shows that the use of an Extrapolated subject introduced by Anticipatory-It construction (It is
important to...) (Nelson & Greenbaum, 2013), expresses a value judgment towards the
actions to the readers.

Excerpt 3:

[3] 2016 is a year that Aries may need to avoid lending money or entering into a
business partnership with others. It is important to pay attention to your cash flow and set
aside some contingency funds. During the first half of the year, Aries may consider investing
in properties. Try to avoid unnecessary expenditures and think carefully before you invest.

Genre analysis reveals that excerpt 3 represents Move 3: Financial status (100%). With the
use of nouns (money, business, cash, funds), it is obviously seen that this text instance mostly
focuses on a communicative purpose of financial perspectives. Interestingly, in the traditional
English grammar, the auxiliary verb (will) should be employed in the sentence when
indicating future scenarios in general. However, the grammatical features in this genre analysis show that the use of the auxiliary verb (*may*) tends to be frequently equipped instead similar to move 1 and move 2. It can be concluded that the auxiliary verb (*may*) can be employed in the sense of expressing future possibility. Moreover, the present tense still emerges within this move. To reiterate the details of the language constructions, the findings show that the use of *an Extraposed subject* introduced by *Anticipatory-It* construction (*It is important to...*) is present. To end, the author warns the readers using an imperative sentence.

**Excerpt 4:**

[4] 2016 is a year when Aries *expects* to make lots of preparations in order to *gain fame or promotion*. Aries is likely to stay ambitious and persistent. You are prepared to *work hard* in order to gain knowledge and experience. *It is important for Aries to work on self-improvement* in order to stay competitive. Try to avoid over depending on others.

The excerpt 4 reveals how the information presented in **Move 4: Career advancement** (100%). As shown, Move 4 adequately portrays the conditions of work life as recognized by phrases like *gain fame or promotion, work hard, work on self-improvement*. The grammatical features within this move illustrate that almost the same as previous moves 1-3 corpora use the present tense. Nevertheless, the future tense does not occur in this move despite the fact that it is a prediction in a sense. By further observing, it is noted that the language constructions frequently appear in terms of imperative sentence accompanied with *an Extraposed subject* introduced by *Anticipatory-It* construction (*It is important for...to*) to end the prediction.

**Excerpt 5:**

[5] Aries *expects* to have a better time during the second half of the year. *It is important for* you to pay more attention to your health in 2016. Aries *may* find tired at times hence it is important to maintain an active and balanced lifestyle. You need to avoid basking in the sun without sun protection creams. *Try to avoid road rage where possible as this may create car accidents.*

The last instance, **Move 5: Health and wellbeing** (90%), displays the use of certain linguistic devices including the *an Extraposed subject* introduced by *Anticipatory-It* construction (*It is important for...to*), the use of present tense realized by the use of verb “*expects*” and the use of auxiliary “*may*” to indicate a possible future event. In terms of lexical features, the word “*health*” makes it clear that it belongs to Move 5, which mainly talks about health. The imperative sentence, if used, is at the end of prediction.
4.2 The Rhetorical organizations of Move Order Found in horoscopes

After all of moves and their functions are scrutinized, the order of moves is also investigated to identify the possible typical Rhetorical organizations of move order of horoscopes.

Table 1

The Rhetorical organizations of Move Order Found within horoscopes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patterns</th>
<th>No. of occurrence</th>
<th>Frequency in percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5$</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$5/10*100 = 50%$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 - 2 - 4 - 3 - 5$</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$2/10*100 = 20%$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 - 2 - 34 - 5$</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$2/10*100 = 20%$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1 - 2 - 3 - 4$</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1/10*100 = 10%$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 displays that every horoscope article has its own unique move order. Nonetheless, it could be noted that the Move 1, “Establishing information in general” always occurs at the beginning of the order and Move 2, Upcoming Love and relationship, if found, typically follows Move 1. Move 3, Financial status, respectively follows Move 2 while Move 5, “Health and wellbeing”, if found, appears at the end of the order. It is clearly seen that patterns $(1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5)$ frequently occur in 5 out of 10 articles (50%). In contrast, the patterns $(1 - 2 - 4 - 3 - 5)$ carrying the same communicative intentions but different in the order were found in 2 out of 10 articles (20%). Additionally, Move 5 can possibly be removed, forming the patterns $(1 - 2 - 3 - 4)$ article (10%) which barely occurs in horoscopes. Interestingly, the researcher found that Move 3 and Move 4 in a horoscope can be merged into one move forming the pattern $(1 - 2 - 34 - 5)$.

From the foregoing discussions about the patterns of move order, it can be explained that the typical patterns of move order of the horoscope articles can have the following illustration (Figure 3):
Move 1: Establishing information in General

Move 2: Upcoming Love and relationship

Move 3: Financial status

Move 4: Career advancement

Move 5: Health and wellbeing

Figure 3. The Typical Patterns of Move Order of the Horoscopes in the Corpus

As shown above, this section presents the identification of the prototypical pattern of moves in a horoscope. The Moves 1-4 are considered obligatory moves being found in every horoscope; meanwhile, Move 5 is conventional with the occurrence rates ranging about 90%. However, the occurrence of each move depends on the communicative intention that a writer attempts to deliver to the readers. In this analysis, it is used to provide a representative framework for novices in the discipline to follow if a task of horoscope writing is their priority.

In conclusion, this section presents the answers to the research questions of this study. The first section presents the identification of moves found in the corpus which answer the first question, “What are the rhetorical organizations of horoscope prevailing in websites?” The second, third, and fourth section present the frequencies of occurrence of moves, their patterns, and their functions which all answer the second question, “What are the linguistic features commonly used in English language horoscopes?” All the investigations and
discussions on the result section are completed and the research questions are clearly answered.

5. Conclusion

An attempt to find the answers to the questions posed above is based on 10 analyzed horoscopes which were taken from ten representative English-language horoscope websites during the year 2016 according to the survey [http://horoscope-review.toptenreviews.com/](http://horoscope-review.toptenreviews.com/). The selected articles were analyzed using the genre-based theory of Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993). These were employed as a guideline for the identification of the rhetorical elements of horoscopes. For the investigation, it is based on Kanoksilaphatham (2005). The frequency of move occurrences prevailing in 100% of the studied articles that are defined as obligatory moves meaning they always occur at a time when a horoscope is written. Moves occurring in more than 60% of the studied articles are defined as conventional moves. However, moves occurring in lower than 60% at a time, are considered optional moves meaning if found, they rarely occur.

5.1 Issues from the Analysis on rhetorical organization and move order prevailing in the Horoscope

This section illustrates the findings of this study. The conclusions focus on two issues: communicative purposes realized in each move and the significance of the patterns of move order in the horoscope.

From the genre analysis, there are 5 moves found in the horoscope articles as follows:

- Move 1: Establishing information in general 100%
- Move 2: Upcoming love and relationship 100%
- Move 3: Financial status 100%
- Move 4: Career advancement 100%
- Move 5: Health and wellbeing 90%

The genre analysis protocol delineates that the emergence of Move 1 – 5 are typically in horoscopes according to the scrutinizing protocol. Move 1 – 4 are considered obligatory
moves which always appear (in the article) omit on websites. Move 1 leads the readers to a realization of a preliminary overview in the prediction, aiming at attracting the audience. In addition, it includes general characteristics, factual and supportive information. Within this move, the author in the discipline has to professionally use a writing strategy to catch the readers’ attention as an initial move. Move 1, if found, is always at the beginning of the order. Following this, Move 2 is depictive through the lens of love and relationships as a close second in typical horoscopes. Thirdly, Move 3 offers cautious financial planning and an awareness or foresight to earn money, if found, usually follows Move 2. Move 4 talks about career opportunity and advancement. To add, Move 4 can possibly merge into Move 3 as they carry the same communicative intentions. Interestingly, the authors, mostly, in the discipline prefer to separate Move 4 from Move 3 owing to the fact that the demarcation of the topic provides clear information to the audience. Lastly, Move 5 is done in a conventional manner concerning health and wellbeing. If Move 5 is found, it is usually the last move to end horoscopes. The investigation of patterns of move order reports that the most frequent order found in a horoscope is “1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5”. However, despite the combination of Move 3 and 4 forming the pattern of “1 – 2 – 3 4 – 5”, the authors put an emphasis on financial issues more than career opportunities. Apart from the patterns mentioned earlier, the pattern of “1 – 2 – 3 – 4” can possibly occur but it is infrequent in the horoscope discipline. After the scrutiny of the move occurrences has been successfully done, it is clearly seen that the presence of Move 1 – 4 are obligatory moves, meaning they are always there if a horoscope is written while, the emergence of Move 5 is considered a conventional move, which can be removed from the horoscope article according to communicative purposes that the author attempts to convey to readers. To conclude, the analysis seems to suggest that the sequence of Moves “1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5” is highly plausible.

5.2 Limitations of the study
This study highlights the major role of genre analysis in investigating the typical horoscope from an academic perspective. The analysis sheds light onto the organizational components or moves making up the horoscope articles. Given that this research study focuses on horoscope only on 10 websites, the results may not represent rhetorical organizations on other foreign websites. Next, the size of the corpus and the length of each horoscope are limited remaining to be substantiated by subsequent studies analyzing a larger horoscope corpus. Besides, a genre of the horoscope is newly investigated in the discourse analysis realm. Thus, there should be an inside look in future research studies that demystifies and makes it more accessible.

5.3 Pedagogical implications
The results of the study have pedagogical implications to assist authors, and also non-native writers in the horoscope discipline. This study has shown how salient linguistic features can be used as a starting point to help people in the area distinctly recognize and distinguish the different moves. Distinguishing these prominent language features then enables novice writers to further discover and autonomously learn how the major constituent moves can be
clearly presented in horoscope articles. As teachers of English writing, a genre analysis provides an effective tool to facilitate writing skill to be internationally standardized. It can also be concluded that to develop novice foreign language writing expertise, genre awareness, and linguistic knowledge can effectively contribute positively to the enhancement of writing competence. However, despite the fact that in non-native speaking countries, a large number of writers attempt to expand their knowledge internationally, they are inexperienced with the use of English language as opposed to English native speakers. Hence, the explicit genre-based instruction is beneficial for them to clearly see how a genre of horoscope works. At this juncture, the genre analysis instruction should begin with cultivating the learners’ awareness of the overall organization of a particular genre, followed by a set of components making up the genre, featuring a bundle of linguistic features associated with each move and its communicative function as proposed by Kanoksilapatham (2013). As illustrated by this research study, genre awareness is involved with the knowledge of organizational pattern prevalent of each genre. The opportunities to be exposed to and analyze the genre from the perspectives of the discourse protocol and communicative functions can demystify learners with a sharpened sensitivity of genre-based learning. After that, the learners will be ready to further explore and investigate other genres encountered in their daily life without difficulties. In addition, writing and reading skills can also be potentially developed after the genre-based approach is facilitated.

5.4 Suggestions for future study

It should be noted that the experiments in this paper were carried out to provide rhetorical organizations of horoscopes written by native English speakers. Nonetheless, the procedural step, which is the element that comes along with each move contributing to effective and efficient communication, needs to be further investigated.
References


Temporary Ambiguity Resolution of English Relative Clauses

by Thai EFL Learners

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Abstract

While English learners attach relative clauses (RCs) to NP₂ in the NP₁-of-NP₂ order (c.f. Cuetos & Mitchell, 1988; Fernandez, 1999) NP₁ attachment is preferred by Thai and Thai EFL learners (Siriwittayakorn, Miyamoto, Ratitamkul, & Cho, 2014; Wang, 2014). This study investigated Thai EFL learners’ processing of RCs, using the self-paced reading (SPR) task on temporary ambiguity stimuli, a task different from that of Wang (2014). As Thai does not exhibit plural morphology, we chose gender to resolve ambiguity. Two hypotheses were formulated. More reading time (RT) was expected at a critical region in sentences featuring forced NP₂ reading, and less RT in sentences featuring forced NP₁ reading, a strategy of Thai found in prior research. Thirty advanced Thai EFL learners, with an average score of 80% from the Michigan English Placement test, participated. Forty eight window-moving SPR stimuli (12 targets and 36 fillers) with four regions were employed. Comprehension questions with binary choices followed both the target and filler stimuli. A t-
test revealed a significant difference between the RT’s of forced NP\textsubscript{1} and NP\textsubscript{2} readings ($t = 3.81, p < .001$). In terms of comprehension, forced NP\textsubscript{2} incurred wrong answers more frequently than forced NP\textsubscript{1} (64\% vs. 32\% of the time). The two hypotheses were confirmed, supporting the findings in Siriwittayakorn et al. (2014) and Wang (2014). The fact that the advanced Thai learners relate RCs to NP\textsubscript{1} suggests that the L2 strategy remains difficult to be acquired.

**Keywords:** English relative clause, Temporary ambiguity resolution, Thai EFL learners

1. **Introduction**

Relative clauses have been studied extensively in relation to L2 processing because when one associates a relative clause with a head noun, a parsing strategy can be revealed. A study by Felser, Roberts, Marinis, and Gross (2003) is widely discussed in the literature in relation to L2 learners’ parsing of RCs. Felser et al. (2003) investigated relative clause attachment strategies of L2 learners, employing NP\textsubscript{1} of NP\textsubscript{2}-RC and NP\textsubscript{1} with NP\textsubscript{1} of NP\textsubscript{2}-RC structures. The sentences are ambiguous due to the fact that the relative clause may modify either NP\textsubscript{1} or NP\textsubscript{2}. When L2 learners relate an RC to NP\textsubscript{1}, they are said to use NP\textsubscript{1} attachment, also known as, *High Attachment (HA)*. The term ‘High Attachment’ follows the assumption that NP\textsubscript{1} is located at a higher point or site in the syntactic tree. Likewise, when L2 learners relate an RC to NP\textsubscript{2}, they are said to use NP\textsubscript{2} attachment, also known as, *Low Attachment (LA)*. English speakers have been found to attach relative clauses to NP\textsubscript{2} in the NP\textsubscript{1} of NP\textsubscript{2} order (e.g. Cuetos & Mitchell, 1988; Fernandez, 1999).

This study investigated Thai EFL learners’ processing of English RCs, using the Self-Paced Reading (SPR) task on temporary ambiguity stimuli. Thai (L1) resembles English (L2) in that a verb must be adjacent to its complement, a property of configurational languages. According to Gibson, Pearlmutter, Canseco-Gonzalez, and Hickok’s (1996) recency preference, configurational languages favor NP\textsubscript{2} attachment. However, results in previous studies (Siriwittayakorn, Miyamoto, Ratitamkul, & Cho, 2014; Wang, 2014) indicate that Thai informants use NP\textsubscript{1} attachment strategy both in their L1 (Thai) and L2 (English). In addition, NP\textsubscript{1} attachment preference was evident in data from L1 speakers of Dutch, Greek, German, and Spanish (Dussias, 2003; Felser et al., 2003)
In respect of English RCs, when native English speakers encounter a structure with a reading that is inconsistent with their L1 strategy, they will have difficulty in processing the structure. Sentences (1a) and (1b) illustrate this point.

(1) a. The young doctor envied [NP1 the painter] of [NP2 the model] who was smiling all the time he was sketching her.

b. The sponsor trusted [NP1 the painter] of [NP2 the model] who was smiling all the time she was posing.

It is expected that sentence (1b) will be processed by native English speakers more quickly than (1a). In other words, in L1 English learners, the processing load of an NP1 reading which associates he with the painter is heavier than the processing load of an NP2 reading which associates the model with she.

Such ambiguity along with the deliberate resolution at NP1 or NP2 is termed forced NP1 or forced NP2, a tool of our investigation. Disambiguation in this particular case is an integration of gender and plausibility.

The remaining parts of this paper is organized as follows: section 2 presents previous results; section 3 states two hypotheses formulated based on previous studies; section 4 presents the experiments conducted with advanced Thai EFL learners and the results; and section 5 provides discussions, recommendations, and conclusions.

2. Previous results

Regarding studies with native speakers of Thai, Siriwitayakorn et al. (submitted) and Siriwitayakorn et al. (2014) report corpus counts, questionnaires, and reading-time data in their investigation of the parsing strategy for L1 Thai speakers. The stimulus items in the experiments were temporarily ambiguous relative clauses in Thai. Ambiguity resolution is
based on plausibility due to the absence of plural markers or morphological agreement in Thai. Results from Siriwitayakorn et al. (2014) indicate that Thai favors High Attachment while those from Siriwitayakorn et al.’s (submitted) suggest the plausibility of contextual effects, rather than a language-specific strategy, which violates locality.

Wang (2014) investigated Thai high school students’ processing of permanently ambiguous English relative clauses. Moreover, she conducted a survey regarding ambiguity resolution in Thai relative clauses. The survey results confirmed the findings in Siriwitayakorn et al. (2014), i.e. Thai has NP1 attachment preference. In Wang (2014), the student participants took an English Placement Test, consisting of listening and grammar parts, and the Off-line interpretation task. Results indicate that L1 Thai and L2 Thai learners prefer NP1 attachment and that higher proficiency accounts for a decline in L1 strategy.²

3. Hypothesis
Based on Siriwitayakorn et al. (2014) and Wang (2014), we formulated two hypotheses. Firstly, Thai EFL learners would exhibit a longer reading time at the critical region in sentences with disambiguation in relation to NP2. Secondly, they would exhibit a shorter reading time at the critical region in sentences with disambiguation in relation to NP1.

4. Experiments
This section presents the experiment we conducted with a group of Thai EFL learners.

4.1 Participants
Thirty Thai EFL learners who were highly proficient in English participated. Their Michigan English Placement Test scores (Vocabulary and Reading sections) ranged between 35 and 47 out of 50 (70%-94%), with an average of 40.14 and an SD of 3.67.

² Wang (2014) also examined the English NP1 with NP2 structure, which is unavailable in Thai, and found that the student participants preferred the NP2 attachment option. This part of her findings suggests that when L2 learners encounter a structure incompatible with their L1, they develop the strategy that conforms to target language’s strategy.
4.2 Materials
The Self-Paced Reading task was employed. The task consisted of 48 items. An SPR test session presented twelve targets containing NP1 of NP2-RC with disambiguated phrases/clauses and 36 fillers, followed by comprehension questions and binary choices, as (2) illustrates. The regions are marked by slashes.

(2) a. The young doctor envied/ the painter of the model/ who was smiling all the time/ he was sketching her.

b. The sponsor trusted/ the painter of the model/ who was smiling all the time/ she was posing.

Question: Who was smiling all the time?

a. the painter    b. the model

4.3 Procedure
Participants performed the SPR task and took the Michigan Test, consisting of 30 vocabulary and 20 reading comprehension items.

With regard to the SPR task, the participants were tested individually. The test took place in a quiet room. They were seated in front of one laptop computer each. The course of a trial was as follows. The experiment started with an introduction on how the task runs, how to answer after each question, and a sample practice question. Then the experiment took place. Sentences were shown on the screen one sentence at a time. The constituents were masked with dashes. Only after the participant pressed a key, then a word or a phrase was revealed. The phrases never appear with line breaks. When the participant pressed another key, a new word or phrase was revealed and the previous word or phrase became masked again. After each sentence, a question and two choices were displayed on a new screen. This question required them to choose between two noun phrase (either NP1 or NP2 in target items). They
were requested to choose the answer based on what they considered to be more appropriate. The participants were not allowed to discuss, skip items, or return to change the answer which they had chosen. This procedure was adopted to prevent participants from consulting previous items or rereading the sentence when answering the question and thus, noticing the ambiguity. An SPR session was able to accommodate approximately five persons.

On average, it took approximately 15 minutes for them to complete the SPR test and another 25 minutes for the Michigan test. The participants were encouraged to do the Michigan test immediately after they finished the SPR session. However, about half of participants took the placement test at a later time. This procedure was suggested by a few pilot participants. They recommended that the placement test be taken before the SPR task, or separately, so that participants were allowed enough time.

4.3 Data analysis and Results
Figure 1. Thai EFL Learners’ Reading Times of Target Items

The average reading times of the Thai EFL participants at different regions shown in Figure 1 were calculated, irrespective of the correctness of the answers. The average RT at the critical region of forced NP2 is higher than that of forced NP1 (by 483 ms), as shown in Table 1.3

Table 1

Comparison of Critical Region Reading Time by Subjects, Main Experiment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forced NP1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2312.57</td>
<td>720.62</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.0007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced NP2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2795.43</td>
<td>1071.42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

Comparison of Critical Region Reading Time by Items, Main Experiment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forced NP1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2311.72</td>
<td>518.59</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>0.00847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced NP2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2805.95</td>
<td>626.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To check whether or not RTs of critical region of forced NP1 and forced NP2 differ statistically, unpaired t-tests by subject and by item were performed. Both subject analysis and item analysis showed a substantially significant difference (p<0.001 in subject analysis and p<0.01 in item analysis).

3 Forced NP2 disambiguation yielded wrong answers most of the time (35.56%), compared to forced NP1 disambiguation (68.33%).
5. Discussion & Conclusion

5.1 Discussion
The results of the experiment conducted with Thai L2 learners confirmed both hypotheses. To reiterate, we predicted Thai EFL learners’ attachment strategy would attach the RC to NP1. As predicted, the participants exhibited a longer reading time at the critical regions in the sentences with forced NP2 reading, compared to their time spent on the critical regions in the sentences with forced NP1 reading.

This study substantiates a series of findings that do not support the claim that NP2 attachment is a universal strategy (e.g. Cuetos & Mitchell, 1988). In addition, the findings provide evidence to refute Predicate Proximity theory’s claim that speakers of languages with rigid SVO and OVS prefer NP2 attachment.

According to experience-based models, the frequencies of attachments in the past affect the way of parsing ambiguity. In Thai, other unambiguous constructions, namely, NP1-RC of NP2 and NP1 NP2 RC, trigger NP1 attachment. As a result, the parser initially attaches the RC to NP1 in accordance with past exposure to high frequency of unambiguous constructions.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Research
Psycholinguistic research is largely not concerned with qualitative data. There are virtually no reports with regard to participants’ experience and feelings. As some control participants in this study reported their pressure and tiredness after the SPR sessions, we recommend that qualitative data be taken into consideration, particularly in the pilot experiment. Methodological adjustments based on qualitative data can closely satisfy both the participants’ capabilities and the researchers’ needs.

In terms of target stimuli, according to Miyamoto (pc.), thorough norming tests, e.g. tests of NPs and RCs should be conducted to ensure that they are unbiased. An increase in the number of target items is desirable and randomization could be done in a way that a participant does not see both forced NP1 and forced NP2 versions of a given pair.
To reexamine the findings, we recommend an increase in the number of participants in both the experimental (L2) and native speaking control groups (L1s). In addition, a combination of permanent and temporary ambiguity stimuli may yield interesting results.

5.3 Conclusion

This study aimed to reexamine the findings in prior research on how Thai EFL learners resolve RC ambiguity in the NP1 of NP2 RC structure (Wang, 2014), where NP1, High Attachment (HA), was found to be the preferred option. While Wang’s stimulus RCs were of the permanent ambiguity type, ours were temporarily ambiguous RCs. There were two versions of the stimulus items; one features forced NP1 reading, and the other forced NP2 readings.

Two hypotheses were formulated; more reading time (RT) was expected at a critical region in sentences with forced NP2 reading and less RT at a critical region in sentences with forced NP1 reading. The window-moving Self-Paced Reading (SPR) tasks with four regions for each sentence were employed in the experiment with thirty highly proficient Thai EFL learners (with an average of 80% from the Michigan English Placement Test) The results confirmed both hypotheses, suggesting L2 learners’ preference toward their L1 strategy.

We recommend that replication of this study be conducted in a way that target items are not lengthy in sentence final position and NPs and RCs undergo norming tests, for enhancement of accuracy of the experiments.

References


The Use of Caretaker Speech in Thai EFL Oral Narrative Tasks

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Abstract
This paper examines research findings on the impact of oral narrative tasks, the importance of caretaker speech, and their role in the construction of task-based activities in the Thai EFL classroom. The general aim of this study was to merge interrelated research findings put forth by Thai and foreign scholars on the developmental and socio-linguistic conditions influencing learner attitudes and communicative cognition as a consequence of oral narrative instruction. To this end the analyses were drawn largely from international linguistic scholars on the ethnologic mental processes (e.g. cognitive, psychological, and analytical) as well as the socio-linguistic characteristics of Thai EFL learners. The combination of the two constituents provides a path by which EFL instructors can formulate and administer oral narrative/storytelling lesson plans using caretaker speech. The task designs in the sample modules are consistent with the auditory learning preferences of Thai students and thus figure prominently in the implementation of motivational information-gap lesson plans. The composition of these tasks may be adjusted to suit the needs of primary, secondary, and tertiary level learners. Lessons in keeping with CLT-based social constructivism particulars run in opposition to rote memorization lessons. The grammar/translation approach, that has for decades been the dominating method of language learning, has generated little enthusiasm in the classroom and thus the need for alternative communicative-based lesson plans are in demand.

Keywords: Subsumption, Cognitive structures, Discourse analysis, Input modification

1. Introduction
The delay in implementing a task-based syllabus into the Thai academic curriculum is mainly rooted in the question of what is to be done with the standardized forms of assessment. EFL instructors in Thailand recognize the need for a communicative approach to classroom instruction but are divided on to what degree the approach will impede on the better acquainted grammar-translation method. Proper syntactic constructs continue to receive a higher priority than communicative competency, thus scoring well on grammatically-centered comprehensive tests and entrance examinations takes precedence. The English assessment tests, at the majority of Thai educational institutions, are typically grammar focused. This, according to Punthumasen (2007), has become a source of antagonism between grammarians and
advocates of CLT. Education department officials are encouraging schools to expand programs that offer communicative English lessons. As a further matter, businesses are voicing reservations about what they perceive as Thailand’s already low rank in English proficiency in the ASEAN region showing signs of further decline. How this will affect the country’s ability to compete in the global manufacturing sector is a source of concern. Instructors and learners are expressing their lack of enthusiasm for an assessment-based teaching methodology that shows little prowess in engaging the attention of learners with a creative and rousing modality (Saengboon, 2012). With a developing economy and global ambitions comes a greater need for proficient English literacy. As neighboring economies gain ground and others in ASEAN and its circle on the rise, the Thai government is under pressure to endorse a new approach to English competency.

One such contribution to a more productive EFL classroom is the oral narrative or storytelling lesson design as a component of the task-based approach. Oral narratives are an innate form of natural and often authentic discourse through which structured long turns may be applied. The speaker is encouraged to create order and link causes with results through a meaningful and compelling chain of events. In this design, instructors are afforded the opportunity to illuminate on relevant particulars of a story to help the listener mentally construct the context of the drama. Once the approach to creating descriptive order in the target language is acquired, the instructor can employ this skill to create and channel other types of extended monologue.

Creating opportunities for learners to process long chunks of discourse is not often regarded as a modest undertaking in second language learning. With narration, modifications to the tempo and verbiage would allow the prose to fit any proficiency level. Production can involve long pauses and exaggerated gestures for young learners or paced within a natural real-time context for the more advanced. Conversely, there is an inherent interest on the part of the listener to enter the story and understand what is being said, thus a higher concentration level on the narrative is created. What learners form is a menagerie of associations that fashion webs of attachments in maze-like patterns until an unobstructed route is unveiled and channel between what is being transferred and what is already stored as common knowledge completes the process.

2. Review of Literature

Research posited by Khamkhien (2011) found that most Thai students are extrinsically and instrumentally motivated to learn English since there exists a prominence with examination results and future employment opportunities. Research
by Oranpattanchai (2013) found that older learners were more intrinsically motivated. Many learners, however, undertake their studies with a lack of fanfare towards learning the syntactical functions of the English language. Studies suggest that low-interest material negates a portion of the students’ ability to organize their recall facilities (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Barry & Lazarte, 1995). The morphological level of difficulty, coupled with misappropriated enunciation, shows evidence of impinging on learners’ recall abilities. Therefore, the importance of aptly chosen material and at what momentum the narration will be recounted bears consideration.

Belisle and Aden (2005) add that this marks a transition from short interactive conversations to longer productions sometimes referred to as “long turns”. When students are limited to short conversations, their ability to produce only short bursts of language is reinforced. With oral narrative tasks, the students' ability to comprehend the material depends principally on the instructor’s delivery. Brown (2001) refers to this as “teacher talk” or “caretaker speech”. Geddes and White (1978) (as cited in Hadley, 2001) refer to this as “simulated authentic discourse”, meaning the material has been altered to serve a classroom purpose. “Unmodified authentic discourse” refers to naturally occurring language that has not been amended in any form.

Sucaromana (2013) found that Thai learners’ overall attitude towards learning English improved with this style of altering the presentation or speech to improve learner comprehension in this form of input modification. Thai learners find kinesthetic, tactile, and auditory task types in a pair/group setting to be the most favored (Khamkhien, 2012). Accordingly, tasks involving a narrative/storytelling theme, coupled with movement and theatrical effects, are among the best received in the Thai EFL classroom.

Vu (2012) found the absence of oral narrative stories and drama is in some measure responsible for the low level of motivation and the underdeveloped English speaking and listening skills of primary school students in Vietnam. Gibbons (1991) illustrated the benefits of observing English speakers in a typical social setting where an interaction is occurring. Learners can see and hear the attitude of the speaker. Levis and Pickering (2004) emphasize the importance of exposing students to intonation patterns in context, preferably at the discourse level rather than in isolated sentences. McCarthy (1994) adopted the term “discourse analysis” to describe the study of the association between rhetoric and the environment in which it is used.
3. Cultural Considerations

The content of most EFL instructional material makes reference to models of Western culture. Thai learners are subjected to American and European history, topography, technological advances, and other forms of high culture in their lesson plans. Tasks may be more effective if students were to draw upon existing facets of their own culture through the medium of English. With this technique, learners would not be faced with the difficulty of learning a second language and its cultural appointments concurrently. Such a circumstance risks sending learners down a second indeterminate path that may create an experience better suited to the more advanced learners. Since Thai learners are already endowed with a sound understanding of Thai culture, constructing Thai-themed tasks would keep a learner’s sights trained on the English discourse, with their competency in local culture available to assist in their comprehension of the material. Some researchers (e.g. Lalande, 1985) stress the importance of integrating high Western culture into lesson plans but not without possible pitfalls.

Prudence is a necessity when engaging in cultural conversations and demonstrations as it is easy to inadvertently belittle a culture and religion when Anglo-Saxon or Eurocentric ideologies are anchored to instruction. This may have the effect of legitimizing colonial or established powers and resources, and of reconstituting cultural inequalities between English and Thai. Selecting material for use in instruction is an issue that should be touched with cautious hands. Culture-integrated teaching sensitivity is an absolute necessity for all instructors, particularly Westerners, as stereotyping, triviality and political bias can occur inadvertently. Lessons with Christmas, Easter, and Halloween themes may also be viewed as cultural promotion by those who feel learners have no alternative but to endorse the culture of the preeminent language to thoroughly apprehend its linguistic register (Methitham & Chamcharatsri, 2011, pp. 64-65).

4. Oral Narrative Tasks

Oral narratives are a component of task-based learning. This approach was popularized by Prabhu (1987) who came to the realization that learners were just as likely to learn a language if they were reflecting upon a non-linguistic problem then if they were focused on particular language forms. Students are thus presented with a task they would have to perform rather than being preoccupied with language structure. Assimilating the auditory oral narrative with Thai-based content relates to what is described as “subsumption”, a mechanism in the theory of advanced organizer. This theory, put forth by psychologist David Ausubel (1960), claims that learning is based upon the types of subordinate, representational, and combinatorial
processes that are born out during the reception of information; an integral element of learning since new material is related to relevant ideas in the existing cognitive structure on a substantive, non-verbatim basis. Cognitive structures represent the residual of all learning experiences. Celce-Murcia (2001) claims that the use of advance organizer can activate a student’s previously developed knowledge for top-down processing and assist them in linking the new information to what they already know. Lingzhu (2003) claims that students employ the top-down approach at frequent intervals to predict possible themes, only afterwards do students switch to the bottom-up approach to verify their understanding, that is, the process of comprehension is guided by the idea that input is overlaid by pre-existing knowledge in an attempt to find a match.

Hatch (1983) offers a list of considerations instructors may make in promoting caretaker speech:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suprasegmentals</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• exaggerated intonation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• more gestures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• high pitch or wide range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• loudness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more pauses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• slower tempo</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonological</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• clear enunciation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• phonological simplification</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• lower type-token ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more concrete lexicon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more unique lexicon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• increased use of definitions</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntax</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• simplified clausal structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• simplified phrasal structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more tag questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• shorter utterances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more questions, overall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more imperatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Communication Strategy**

- more repetition
- more recasts
- questions asked by known information
- use of fill in the blank questions
- verb and copula omission

Students must then relate the synopsis to their background knowledge. Correspondingly, the new information from the instructor’s reading is mapped against some prior schema, then, as a consequence, students will construct ideas from the verbal prompts generated by the instructor. Rather than forming strictly grammatical elements a number of non-grammatical elements can be employed to convey meaning as oral communication is no longer the sole factor. This includes the supra-segmental components of English responsible for emphasis placement. Rising and falling intonations are functional clues signaling the listeners’ awareness of what is and is not critical to the comprehension of the story. Facial expressions, body language, word stress, rhythm, and pauses, combined with the ebb and flow of intonations, will enable the instructor to engender a coherent illustration of the subject matter. Since the oral narrative is an act of storytelling, the same narrative tenses, (present simple, past simple, past continuous, past perfect, and past perfect continuous) can be employed. Novice level students find present and past simple suitable while the more advanced students could be challenged with the more demanding perfect tenses. Depending on the instructor’s grammatical objective, the task can be adjusted to concentrate on one or a combination of these forms in an altering of presentation or speech known as “input modifications” (Trahey, 1996).

As oral narrative tasks are orchestrated, learners are manipulating the information in dual antithetical processes. In top-down processing, students reflect on previous occurrences as well as forage through their intellectual databases where they assimilate ideas to make predictions. In bottom-up processing, learners weave their understanding of syntactical rules and lexical chunks to compose a visual image of the theme being voiced. Students will already be acquainted with the details of these dramas in their first language-dominated conscious. By illustrating stories in English in the oral narrative task, the instructor is presenting a new phonological arrangement to what is referred to as “existing cognitive concepts” or “proposition”. In this schema, the instructor is not in any real sense manifesting new knowledge, but drawing on the existing knowledge the student already possesses.
5. Methodology
Instructors may find it necessary to make categorical adjustments to improve the continuity of the task. Bardov-Harlig (1992, p. 35) recommends; 1) Create a chronological sequence so the narrative follows a time ordered format; 2) With an oral narrative there should be an introduction, supporting ideas, and a conclusion; 3) Incorporate creative adverbs as well as transition words and sentences; secondly, then, after that, finally; 4) Put stress on the key words and slow the tempo of speech when explaining something that may be a bit difficult to absorb. After the first phase of the presentation, instructors can deduce whether the level of English is at the appropriate proficiency level for the class and make adjustments accordingly. Gentner (2014) in his book, *Teaching English to Thai Learners*, provides intermediate-level samples on the procedures and material that are suitable for this situated inference task type:

5.1 Thai Movie Talk
Introduction:
a) (Warm-up) Begin by asking if students have seen any of the latest movies.
b) Form students into groups of four, five, or six with each group requiring one sheet of paper.
c) Explain the task: Thai movies will be described in English. Learners will write the movie titles in Thai.

1. A Buddha statue is stolen from a village in the north of Thailand. A man goes to find the statue, but he must fight other men, when he fights he says, ‘where is my elephant’. *(Tom Yung Gung)*
2. A boy goes to a boarding school and makes a new friend, but no one can see his new friend. Later, he learns why only he can see his friend. *(Dorm/Dek Hor)*
3. A man has pain in his neck, but when he sees the doctor, he can’t find anything wrong. At home he takes a picture of himself and learns why he has pain in his neck. *(Shutter)*

5.2 Quiz Game
Introduction:
a) Students form into three large groups and each group selects a leader.
b) A quiz diagram is written on the board with categories and point values.
c) Explain the task: Group 1 will choose a category, ‘Ghosts’ in this example, plus the point value and try to answer that question, if not; other groups have an opportunity to answer.

1. (5 points) This ghost is always hungry because it has a small mouth? *(Phi Pret)*
2. (6 points) This ghost likes to eat dirty things, like the inside of a chicken? *(Phi Phop)*

3. (7 points) This ghost has only a head and long entrails hanging down? *(Phi Krasue)*

4. (8 points) This ghost died unnaturally, like an accident or murder? *(Phi Tai Hong)*

5. (10 points) This ghost is not bad; it likes to play with children? *(Goman Thong)*

**5.3 Thai Song Lyrics**

**Introduction:**

a) Begin by humming a popular Thai song and ask students to identify it.

b) Form students into groups and introduce new vocabulary for the songs.

c) Explain the task: Thai songs will be translated into English and the lyrics read to the students. Students write the song names in Thai.

1. The chicken is burning, the chicken is burning, it was stuck with a stick, sticking right, sticking left, so hot hot hot…*(Kai Yang Took Pao)*

2. Welcome to message service, please leave your heart here. Register your heart and give it to a man but keep your body. Give me your heart, take my number, and close the deal…*(Kaw Jai Thur Lak Ber Tho)*

3. Mommy please help me, I was eating a banana on the roof, twenty boxes of balm medicine didn’t help, when I went to see the doctor he wasn’t there, and when I went to see grandfather, he was drinking…*(Mae Ja Choey Noo Doey)*

**5.4 Thai Folk Tales 1**

This sub-section will demonstrate how an oral narrative task can be adjusted, with caretaker speech, to pre-intermediate or advanced level learners. The same story, in this example “The Farmer and the Snake”, with adjustments to vocabulary and sentence structure can be made to fit any target group.

a) Pre-intermediate- One winter’s morning, a farmer left his home. On his way he found a snake. The sleeping snake was almost dead from the cold. Because of the cold, the farmer felt much pity for it, so he bent down to pick it up and held it in his arms to relieve the snake of cold. When the snake got warm, it began to come to life, and then it bit the farmer before crawling away. The farmer couldn’t bear the snake’s poison. He stopped breathing and soon died…

b) Advanced- In the early hours one winter’s day, a farmer set off from his home. While walking he came across a snake. The snake was numb from the cold and nearly passed away. Because of the weather, the farmer sympathized greatly with the slithering reptile, so he reached down to secure the snake in his arms in order warm it from the chill, When the snake achieved a warmer temperature, it
began to stir, then it sunk its fangs into the farmer before slithering away. The farmer succumbed to the poisonous bite. Unable to catch a breath he soon perished…

6. Findings and Conclusion
In the final analysis oral narrative tasks, using caretaker speech, are an appropriate link to the auditory learning preferences of Thai learners. The content of these tasks lends itself to the type of acclimation that allows instructors to reconfigure any existing text from any number of genres to a desired pragmatic or grammatical objective. The resulting syntactic and phonological cues summon images from which learners form assumptions that result in a semantic construct in sharper focus. The use of caregiver speech allows the instructor to heighten the effects of certain vocabulary and exaggerate others to demonstrate the priority of a word or phrase in a sentence. Stress, intonations, and other suprasegmentals of the English language can be delivered, alongside contextualization clues, with dramatic effect.

Instructors are expressing interest in these types of pedagogical techniques but often have little in the way of experience in constructing and orchestrating such a task. Proponents of oral narrative/storytelling tasks point to lower affective filters, increased learner input and expanded participation behavior, as well as better comprehension and linguistic organizational skills. Perhaps the biggest advantage to implementing oral narrative information-gap tasks to a class syllabus is the increase in intrinsic motivation that leads to the desire, in many, to reconsider their hesitancy in regards to the tutelage of the English language. Opponents however, remain unconvinced of the value of oral narrative instruction and are in favor of a more measured approach as lessons affiliated with the task-based approach do not, in the sentiment of many, lend themselves easily to assessment. Learners have for decades been taught a complex English language embedded in unfamiliar foreign concepts and mannerisms, and often delivered in colorless fashion with the rote memorization of words in stilted phrases being the primary objective. With students learning English through the prism of their own culture and in a manner that invites enthusiasm and imagination, the linguistic proceeds of oral narrative tasks outweigh any impingement.
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Developing EFL Speaking Skills via Flipped Classroom Instruction and Constructive Role-plays

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Abstract

Speaking is a crucial skill in English language learning. However, most EFL students rarely have an opportunity to actually communicate in English both inside and outside the classroom. This concern led to the design of the present research: integrating flipped classroom instruction (FCI) combined with constructive role-plays (CRPs). FCI is a teaching method rising in popularity which entails the flipping of explicit instruction from the classroom to online video lectures that saves classroom time for more interactive activities. In this study, grammar and vocabulary instructions, that is useful but time-consuming was flipped, and students received more class time to interact with their classmates, in English, facilitated by role-play activities in a constructivism-based learning environment. A quasi-experimental study was conducted to determine the effects of the integrations with an experimental group treated with FCI combined with CRPs, and a control group which used conventional teaching methods. In the experiment, an oral pre-test and post-test were conducted to determine students’ speaking skills development, and student questionnaires and interviews were used to collect students’ opinions toward the integrations. The data analysis showed that the test scores of the experimental group were significantly improved (p=.005) during the experiment, while the scores of the control group did not show any significant change (p=.582). Generally, the majority of the students held positive opinions towards the integrations for learning speaking skills. The results indicate that the FCI combined with CRPs appears promising as an optimized method for teaching EFL speaking and warrants further studies.

Keywords: EFL speaking, Flipped classroom instruction, Constructivism, Role-play
1. **Introduction**

In the globalization era, English as a lingua franca plays an increasingly significant role in cross language communication. As a result, most of the none-English-speaking countries value English education as highly important. This is especially true for the Royal Thai Government as a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which had adopted English as the lingua franca among the member countries (Kirkpatrick, 2012). The Thai Ministry of Education has increased its efforts to improve the English proficiency of their citizens for the upcoming merger of the ASEAN Economic Community (Teng & Sinwongsuwat, 2015).

Despite the fact that the Thai Government has put considerable efforts to promote English language teaching and learning, these efforts have not achieved the expected outcome as Thai students’ English proficiency still remains low (Littlewood, 2007). This is especially true of Thai EFL students’ oral communication competency as compared to other language skills, which is still unsatisfactorily low compared to students in other Southeast Asian countries (Khamkhien, 2010). Tipmontree (2007) reports that most Thai EFL students often speak with long pauses or require repetition, and are poor in grammar, misunderstand foreign accents and have low confidence or feel nervous when they communicate in English, even though they have studied English for many years.

According to previous studies, several reasons have been reported for this. Initially, in Thailand, English is a foreign language rather than the primary language used in daily life. Therefore, students rarely have an opportunity to gain comprehensible input of English speaking, except in the language classroom (Kirkpatrick, 2012). Comprehensible input, according to Krashen’s input hypothesis (1988), is critical for language acquisition. In addition to Krashen’s input hypothesis, Swain (1985) states that comprehensible output also plays an important role in language acquisition. Swain explains that giving learners the opportunities to generate meaningful linguistic production is required for successful language acquisition. However, this is challenging as the language classes in Thai schools are usually large-sized classes and the allotted time for the classes is limited. Teachers are often frustrated by not being able to implement enough communicative activities since these activities often take considerable time (Islam and Bari, 2012). Consequently, students cannot get sufficient opportunities to actually practice speaking in English in the classroom. Additionally, Wiriyachitra (2004) states that Thai students are passive learners and too shy to use the language to communicate in class. They have low motivation and self-esteem as they are reluctant to participate in communicative activities in language classes (Sirisrimangkorn & Suwanthep, 2013).

In response to these aforementioned problems hindering EFL speaking learning, flipped classroom instruction (FCI) combined with constructive role-plays (CRPs) was employed in the present study as a feasible solution. According to Schultz, et. al (2014), FCI is characterized by the reversion of the typical lecture and homework elements of a course. It means that students gain first exposure to new materials by
viewing online lecture videos as homework, and use the class time to do more difficult conceptual work to assimilate that knowledge through active group-based learning activities. The benefit of FCI is that lower levels of cognitive work, such as understanding and remembering teacher’s instructional delivery, are accomplished outside the classroom. Therefore, students gain additional time in the classroom to focus on higher forms of cognitive work such as applying, analyzing and creating, which are more complicated to accomplish and need more teachers’ or peers’ guidance (Marshall and DeCapua, 2013).

The FCI for English language teaching in the present study entails moving the instructions of grammatical and lexical knowledge to online lectures. The instructor generates lecture videos and assigns these to students as homework, where students can learn the lessons at their own pace. The pre-exposure to necessary grammar and vocabulary could facilitate students to speak English with confidence in the classroom, so as to increase their speaking skills and learning outcomes. Freeman (2000) claims that the goal of language teaching is to enable students to communicate in the target language and, in doing this, students need some language-focused learning to gain knowledge of the linguistic forms, meanings and functions. This is especially true for the English as a foreign language context (EFL), as EFL learners’ linguistic knowledge of the target language is rarely as extensive as their knowledge of their first language; they do not have adequate vocabulary and fail to use proper grammar to convey their ideas in English (Thornbury, 2007). Therefore, in order to develop EFL students’ speaking skills they must be equipped with sufficient linguistic competence in advance (Amin & Marziyeh, 2007). Yet, the instruction takes up such a large amount of the class time that it considerably reduces the time for students to actually practice speaking. It is this concern that led to the utilization of FCI which frees up the class time for speaking training activities.

In order to teach speaking skills, various types of activities ranging from oral drills to games, information gap activities and role-plays had been proposed and implemented to promote the development of students’ speaking skills. Role-play as a communicative-based activity is widely accepted as an effective teaching technique to develop speaking skills (Richards, 2009). Learning speaking through creating and acting out a role-play is very useful because it provides a context for meaningful language production, forcing the learners to use their language resources (Chauhan, 2004). In addition, role-plays provide authentic communicative environments for learners and heighten their speaking abilities (Janudom & Wasanasomsithi, 2009). Moreover, role-plays benefit learners by bringing enjoyment to lessons and increase their positive learning experiences (Haruyama, 2010). In the current study, role-plays were adapted into a constructivism learning environment where learners actively construct their own knowledge of speaking by interacting with their classmates based on their existing knowledge. Constructive role-plays (CRPs) are helpful for engaging students in classroom learning and integrating the knowledge they learned into practice, so as to increase students’ interest in second language speaking (Shen and Suwanthep, 2012).
Though CRPs could possibly promote the development of speaking, it is difficult for teachers to accommodate the activity into classrooms within the allocated class time because doing role-plays generally takes a lot of time (Islam & Islam, 2013). Thereby, in the present study, FCI was implemented to rearrange the class time and enable the instructor to incorporate role-plays into the EFL classes. The study aims to determine the effects of the integration of FCI and CRPs in EFL speaking classes, so as to examine students’ attitudes towards FCI and CRPs in terms of speaking skills development. To achieve these purposes, the present study addresses the following research questions:

1) To what extent does the integration of FCI and CRPs affect EFL students’ speaking skills development?

2) What are students’ opinions on the integration of FCI and CRPs for developing English speaking skills?

2. Methodology

In order to determine the effects of the integration of FCI and CRPs, the study was conducted employing a quasi-experimental design. The participants were 16 first-year students from Suranaree University of Technology. They were assigned to an experimental group of 8 students and a control group of 8 students randomly. All the 16 participants were required to take an oral pretest to measure the baseline of their English speaking performance. Then, the experiment was carried out where both groups of students were taught one unit in their textbook based on the same curriculum, but with different teaching methods. The teaching methods for the experimental group and the control group are shown in Figure I and Figure II respectively.
As Figure 1 shows, the experimental group of students were required to watch two video lessons online before the class as homework. Each of the two videos was around 8 minutes long recorded by the researcher and hosted on an online learning platform called EDpuzzle. Based on the platform, some in-video-quizzes are imbedded in the video to check students’ understanding, and some after-video-quizzes are provided to check students’ understanding and help them to practice immediately. Totally, it took around 30 minutes to complete the online lectures, in which students obtained the language input that serves as a basis for actually speaking English in the classroom.

In the classroom, around 10 minutes were spent on remedial teaching based on the results of the online quizzes. Then, students completed quizzes in groups to consolidate and extend the knowledge, which approximately lasted 20 minutes. For the rest of the class time, around 40 minutes was arranged for doing CRPs. First, the teacher scaffolds the role-plays by stating the aims of doing the role-plays and explains the scenarios of the role-plays, whilst modeling the role-plays. Then, students work in groups planning and rehearsing their own role-plays with peer assistance and collaboration. At the same time, the teacher walks around the classroom to give students individual guidance or help. After that, all the students act out their role-plays with their partners and record their voices via Facebook Message (an application on smartphones) and send to the teacher as their “homework”. After the class, the teacher listens to their role-play recordings and gives them feedback via Facebook Message. Through the teaching process, learners actively construct their speaking skills via rich interactions among peers, role-play tasks and the teacher.

As shown in Figure 2, since the students in the control group did not learn grammar and vocabulary online, the class started with the instruction of grammar and vocabulary knowledge, which lasted around 30 minutes. Then, students had around 20 minutes to do exercises on the newly learned knowledge to consolidate their learning. These two sessions aimed to help students get language input that was necessary for developing speaking skills. After that, they were arranged to do question-and-answer drills in pairs to practice English speaking. In the activity, students simply substitute or add several words to the existing questions and answers, then one student read out these questions to ask his/her partner and the partner read out the answers. After the lesson, students completed homework with some quizzes on the newly learned grammar points and vocabulary to consolidate their learning, which took around 30 minutes. The purpose of doing the quizzes was to consolidate what they had learnt in the class.
Figure 2. Teaching Procedures in the Control Group

At the end of the experiment, all of the participants were required to take the oral post-test. Then, the 8 students in the experimental group were required to fill out a questionnaire, and 4 of them were randomly chosen and interviewed to investigate their opinions on the implementation of FCI and CRPs.

3. Findings and Discussion

The data of the speaking pre-test was analyzed through an independent sample t-test in SPSS 16.0. As shown in Table I, the mean scores of the control group and the experimental group were 13.75 and 13.87, where the gap between the two groups was only 0.12. Moreover, there was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of students’ speaking performance, since the p-value is 0.907, which is greater than 0.05.

Table 1

A Comparison of the Pre-test Scores of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S. D.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>CG</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.7500</td>
<td>1.98206</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EG</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.8750</td>
<td>2.23207</td>
<td>.907</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: EG means Experimental Group; CG means Control Group; p value is 2-tailed and the significant level is 0.05

As shown in Table 2, from the paired samples t-test analysis, the mean scores of the post-test in the control group and the experimental group were 13.7500 and 15.1250 respectively. In the experimental group, there was a statistically significant difference
between the two test scores because the p value was 0.001, which was lower than 0.05 (p = 0.015 < 0.05). However, in the control group, there was no significant difference between the two test scores because the p value was over 0.05 (p = 0.582 > 0.05), and the mean scores of the pretest and the post-test were nearly the same (13.7500/13.2500).

Table 2

Comparison between the Two Tests Scores of the Experimental Group and the Control Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>S. D.</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EG</td>
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<td>.005</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>15.1250</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.72689</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: EG means Experimental Group; CG means Control Group; p value is 2-tailed and the significant level is 0.05

The data elicited from the questionnaires were analyzed through descriptive analysis. The purpose behind the questionnaires was to explain the role of the FCI and CRPs on students’ speaking performance. According to the results of the students’ questionnaires, students generally held positive opinions towards the integration of FCI and CRPs in their English class. Since, 75% of students agreed that they felt more confident in their English learning due to the flipped learning method. All the students agreed that role-play activities were enjoyable and helpful for improving speaking skills. Moreover, the majority of students also held positive opinions in terms of FCI as helping them prepare for the class and promoting autonomous learning. The CRPs motivated them to speak English more and they felt more confident to use the grammar and vocabulary after doing role-plays.

However, 50% of the students reported that they felt shy to perform the role-plays, and 37.5% of the students agreed that the time was not enough for them to prepare and act the role out in class. In addition, there were 25% of the students who preferred doing the question-and-answer drills to creating their own role-plays.

The results from the interview conducted with four interviewees suggested that: 1) students believed that the FCI helped them to prepare for the class through the video lessons, which could increase their learning outcomes; 2) students deemed that they had more time to practically use their knowledge in the classroom, which facilitated their learning; 3) students stated that the CRPs were beneficial for them to acquire...
speaking skills, which helped students use their knowledge to speak, encouraged them to speak more and reduced their shyness; and 4) the guidance or help from their classmates and their teacher facilitated their learning.

Despite the positive findings, some negative opinions on the FCI and CRPs were also found from the questionnaires and interviews. The most frequently reported negative opinions were that students could not ask for clarifications immediately when they had difficulties to understand online lessons. This might reduce the effectiveness of the online lectures and make students feel frustrated. Moreover, as the interviewees reported, it was difficult to do the role plays, especially for those who had low English proficiency.

To sum up, the results of the data analysis provided evidence for answering the two research questions. The results of the oral tests showed that the students in the experimental group who were taught with the FCI and CRPs had more improvement and demonstrated better speaking skills than those of the control group. Therefore, the answer to the first research question is that the integration of the FCI and CRPs had significant positive effects on developing EFL speaking skills. The answer to the second research question is also positive. Generally speaking, students showed affirmative opinions towards the integration of the FC model and CRPs for EFL speaking. Students’ opinions strongly supported the results of the oral tests, which emphasized that teaching EFL speaking with the FCI and CRPs was not only objectively effective, but also considered to be effective by the students.

The results from the small-scale study suggest some implications for future studies as follows: 1) Firstly, the utilization of the FCI and CRPs could be an effective EFL speaking method, which can be employed in further studies 2) The instruments used in the study: the oral tests, the questionnaire items and the interview guidelines are generally valid and reliable, which can be used in a larger scale study with minor perfection, since some problems in the questionnaire and interview arose during the study. Some statements are not very clear which need more revision based on experts’ suggestions. 3) For further studies, researchers should consider to provide more guidance to students when they learn lessons online. Researchers can create an online chatting group that allows students to ask questions and teachers to answer the questions. Moreover, researchers might consider designing multiple role-play tasks with different difficulty levels to fit students in various proficiency levels.

4. Conclusions
In conclusion, the researchers integrated the FCI and CRPs for the purpose of enhancing EFL speaking skills development. The results of the study suggest that the FCI combined with CRPs is a more effective EFL speaking teaching method than the traditional speaking teaching method. Both quantitative data (the oral tests), and the qualitative data (the questionnaires and the interviews) showed positive findings. The findings indicate that FCI combined with CRPs is promising in terms of EFL speaking teaching which warrants further evaluation through larger scale study.
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