# Table of Contents

1. **Jeffrey Dawala Wilang and Wareesiri Singhasiri** ........................................ 4-37  
   *Specific anxiety situations in the intelligibility of Englishes as a lingua franca*

2. **Jariya Sudtho and Wareesiri Singhasiri** .................................................. 38-60  
   *Exploring pre-service teachers’ professional identity formation through the lens of critical incidents*

3. **Phutsacha Tippanet and Pornpimol Sukavatee** ....................................... 61- 78  
   *Effects of creative writing instruction: A comparison between face-to-face and online learning settings*

4. **Meixiao Lin** .............................................................................................. 79- 98  
   *Oral English proficiency of Chinese university students of different English levels in expressing their native culture*

5. **Nisita Rittapirom** .................................................................................. 99- 135  
   *Development of Task-Based English oral communication course for EFL undergraduate tourism students*

6. **Chaehee Park** .......................................................................................... 136- 158  
   *English L2 spelling developmental patterns: Comparison of English only phonemes and common Phonemes*
Specific anxiety situations in the intelligibility of Englishes as a lingua franca

Jeffrey Dawala Wilang*
jeffzhao0908@gmail.com

Wareesiri Singhasiri**
wareesiri.sin@mail.kmutt.ac.th.

Bioprofile: Jeffrey Dawala Wilang is a PhD Candidate in Applied Linguistics at the School of Liberal Arts (SoLA), King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT). His research interests include foreign language anxiety, English as a Foreign/Second Language and World Englishes.

Wareesiri Singhasiri is Assistant Professor in the Department of Language Studies, School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi. She has a PhD from the University of Essex. Her interests are learning strategies, learning styles and research methodology.

Abstract

This study explores specific anxiety provoking situations when Englishes is used as a lingua franca among non-native speakers (NNSs) in an out-of-class setting. A newly designed anxiety survey in using Englishes as a lingua franca called the Anxiety Scale in Spoken Englishes as Lingua Franca (ASSELF) was distributed online to select the participants. Out of 240 respondents currently enrolled in the universities in Thailand, eleven graduate students were chosen purposely based on Kachruvian’s divide - Outer and Expanding circles, and their levels of anxiety, intelligibility and comprehensibility. The participants joined a Situation-task, a group discussion wherein they talked about a random topic and were observed by the researcher. Afterwards, they were individually interviewed separately about their experiences. The interviews were transcribed and themes on anxiety

* King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi 126 Pracha Uthit Rd., Bang Mod, Thung Khru, Bangkok 10140
provoking situations related to intelligibility emerged. Linguistic-related specific anxiety situations include accentedness of speech, linguistic knowledge of the participants and speech rate; and, nonlinguistic-related specific anxiety situations consist of the interlocutor’s ability to express, attitudes, familiarity of other interlocutors, fear of negative evaluation, knowledge of topic, among others. Further findings have shown that the circle specificity of anxiety provoking situations by using Kachruvian’s framework is inconclusive due to the varying circumstances Englishes is being used. Nevertheless, the study provides English language teachers of situations where anxiety is most likely triggered in a NNS-NNS communication setting.

**Keywords:** Englishes, intelligibility, lingua franca setting, anxiety situations

**Introduction**

“I couldn’t understand anything; accent – people’s accent. It was awful, my god!”

“If you speak too fast, I can’t catch the meaning!”

“…it’s different from what they are trying to say.”

The above utterances are just a few of the many specific anxiety situations deduced from students’ insights in using Englishes as a lingua franca. It is a result of an in-depth investigation to know several variables related to anxiety and intelligibility of interlocutors’ utterances in an out-of-class setting. The present study is an attempt to understand what makes the students anxious in a setting where the interlocutors are from different countries and with differing first languages, of which English is used as the main language of communication. English, as widely known, is the ‘lingua franca’, ‘international language’, or ‘world’s language’ for wider communication (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2007; Deterding and Kirkpatrick, 2006; Jenkins, 2003; Kirkpatrick, 2007, McArthur, 2004; McKay, 2002, Seidlhofer, 2001). Recent development advocated the plurality of Englishes to reflect on the belief that spoken texts by each interlocutor carry their own linguistic variety based...
on their sociological backgrounds (Jenkins, 2009) noted in the phonological, morphological, and syntactic, among other characteristics of Englishes. Kachru’s paradigm (1984, 1985) on the global spread of English is the widely used model in literature in understanding the sociological origin of the variations of interlocutors’ English, which categorized English users into three circles: Inner circle, Outer circle, and Expanding circle. Supposedly, Inner circle variants of English are considered as norm-providing, spoken Englishes in the Outer Circle are norm-developing, and those found in the Expanding Circle are norm-dependent (Kachru, 2006). Both speakers of the Outer and Expanding Circles are referred to as non-native speakers (NNSs).

NNSs, having their respective variants of English, in an interaction may experience communication failure or success. And in a setting where role of the interlocutor in the interaction is collaborative, wherein the listener has to provide responses – ‘speaker’, recognizing words or intelligibility and understanding its meaning or comprehensibility are essential (Buck, 2001; Smith and Nelson, 1985) for communication success (Rost, 2002). The factors known to be impacting the intelligibility of utterances include linguistic features such as phonology, syntax, morphology, pragmatics, among others (Jung, 2010), and nonlinguistic factors, for examples, the speakers, listeners, purpose, and setting (Rost, 2002). Particularly, the interlocutor’s affective domain, specifically, anxiety has been established to have a debilitating effect on cognitive processes – input, processing and output (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991), including intelligibility (Matsuura, 2007). With a heavy emphasis on the sociological origin of the participants and their anxiety levels, this paper discusses specific anxiety provoking situations which affect the intelligibility of Englishes as a lingua franca by using a newly constructed anxiety measurement scale – Anxiety Scale of Spoken Englishes as Lingua Franca (ASSELF), and individual interviews.
Understanding foreign language anxiety and intelligibility

Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope’s (1986) has been widely referred in the literature since their inception of foreign language anxiety (FLA), a situation-specific anxiety (MacIntyre and Gardner, 1991) that could be alienated from other constructs of anxiety – state and trait. The above authors argued that foreign language anxiety is a distinct anxiety specific to foreign language learning. Their definition is widely used in many studies as a “distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language process” (p. 128). Between state and trait anxiety, Spielberger (1983) posited that trait anxiety is a stable disposition while state anxiety is a temporary emotional state which vanishes over a period of time.

Accordingly, FLA is attributed from communication apprehension, test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz et al, 1986). Since then, subsequent foreign language anxiety research focused much on the correlational relationship of anxiety and language performance. Previous studies on anxiety in the late 70’s produced inconsistent results (Elkhafaifi, 2005) attributed to the lack of standardized measuring instruments (MacIntyre, 1999). Not until in the mid 80’s when Horwitz et al. (1986) were able to isolate FLA from the generalized form of language anxiety, by using a new scale, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS). Correlational research on anxiety then produced consistent debilitating results in language learning such as among immigrant ESL students (Pappamihiel, 2002), high school students (Zhao, 2007) and advanced EFL learners (Toth, 2011); oral performances (Hewitt and Stephenson, 2011), pronunciation (Szyszka, 2011), reading comprehension (Wu, 2011), final grades (Lu and Liu, 2011), motivation and autonomy, (Liu, 2012), listening (Atasheneh, 2012), academic confidence and learning effort (Liu, 2013), task motivation (Poupore, 2013), among others. To date, there is a shift of perspectives away from classroom anxiety scales, for instance, FLCAS, into a more contextual situation-specific instruments like that of Arabic Foreign Language Anxiety Questionnaire by Al-
Saraj (2013, 2014) for Saudi Arabian learners, and Second Language Speaking Anxiety Scale by Woodrow (2006) for international students studying in Australia. The recent development suggests that cultural context and an out-of-class setting are as important as those variables found in-class in understanding language anxiety. Although the correlational framework between anxiety and performance is still being utilized, participants’ perspectives as well as the context are frequently added in the methodology. Other authors, for example, Matsuura (2007) extended anxiety studies into the intelligibility of Englishes.

Matsuura’s (2007) study has yielded the most solid evidence on the debilitating effect of anxiety in the Japanese’s intelligibility (word recognition) of US English and HK English. In her study, she asked Japanese students to listen to US and HK Englishes and fill-out a 15-item anxiety scale. Correlating the results of the cloze dictation task and the scale, Matsuura found out that those students with lower anxiety performed better in the dictation task as compared to students with higher anxiety. There is a need, however, to have closer look on how the two variables link into a more specific situation so that experiences of anxiety emanating from the listening stimuli that affected the intelligibility of Englishes maybe identified. The study could also be extended into the effect of anxiety on ‘utterance meaning’, known as comprehensibility.

Literatures on the intelligibility and comprehensibility of Englishes as well as factors in listening comprehension in language learning attributed similar factors such as attitudes to the speaker, listener’s beliefs, listening stimuli, difficulty of the task, among others. For spoken French, Graham (2006) reported factors including task difficulty, low ability, poor listening strategy, lack of practice, speed delivery, segmentation of spoken words, and understanding an utterance. Salient features of the spoken texts such as clarity, intonation, fluency and pauses affected the Japanese’s perceptions of American and Irish Englishes (Matsuura, Chiba, & Fujieda, 1999). And Goh (1997, 1999, 2000) enumerated factors such as listener’s role, listening task, vocabulary, background knowledge, speech rate, type of input,
accentedness of speech, understanding the intended message, speech recognition, attention failure, word recognition, among others.

Investigating the degree of interaction between the interlocutors in using Englishes, many studies have used a specific context-situation by using Kachruvian’s framework – circle specific or non-circle specific, where non-collaborative interaction, listening *per se* is common. The circle-specific focuses on Kachru’s specific circles (Inner, Outer and Expanding) in speaker-listener roles while the non-circle specific latter deals with a combination of two or more circles. For example, Van der Walt (2000) employed comprehensibility tests of five South African varieties to an international audience. Although the varieties are comprehensible internationally, the challenge of a real-life communication may result to a different degree of comprehensibility. Among South African listeners of Korean English, Rooy (2009) found out that the latter’s speeches are not ‘readily intelligible’ (p.31) to the former. Authentic listening stimuli as compared to recorded speeches are recommended to be used. Separately, Jung (2010) measured the attitude of NNS (non-specific circle) towards World Englishes. He suggested that to avoid intelligibility problems, an interlocutor must be exposed to the linguistic features, for example, pronunciation of English. On the other hand, to attain comprehensibility, the grammatical, cultural, socio-linguistic and pragmatics aspects of World Englishes must be learnt. Generally, intelligibility or comprehensibility have been widely explored either quantitatively or qualitatively, for example, in the intelligibility of English speakers. The merging of the three circle-specific interlocutors to measure and give insights of their intelligibility experiences in a real-time communication, i.e., Outer-Expanding, needs further study to provide richer perspectives on the intelligibility of Englishes.

To date, very limited studies have addressed the anxiety experienced by the interlocutors in using Englishes as a lingua franca. Apart from that, most FLA research had focused on in-class communication rather than out-of-class communication settings. As Englishes has become the main language of
communication in the world and anxiety’s negative impact on language performance is alarming, it is imperative to explore anxiety where Englishes is used in a real-world context. Smith (1988) insinuated that the spread of English into a wider setting, as it happened in the past, generates instances where English speaking people are unintelligible to others who also speak English. A study, which directly considers the relationship of anxiety in a lingua franca setting with intelligibility, as a performance variable has to be explored.

Not only is there limited empirical evidence regarding the role of language anxiety in determining intelligibility of an utterance when Englishes is used as a lingua franca in an out-of-class setting but also there are lacking of research on English as lingua franca (ELF) situations in listening that cause anxiety and an instrument which embodies congruent sources of anxiety and unintelligibility of Englishes.

**The Present Research**

This paper is a part of an ongoing research exploring the existence of specific anxiety-provoking situations among users of Englishes as a lingua franca. The data presented are restricted on intelligibility anxiety-related experiences of 11 students from Asia pursuing their graduate studies in international programs in Thailand. The goal of this paper is to understand specific anxiety situations while using Englishes as a lingua franca in an out-of-class setting. One research question from the larger part of the ongoing research is addressed: What are the specific anxiety situations which affect the intelligibility of Englishes in a lingua franca setting? Additionally, practical implications into teaching will also be recommended.

**Intelligibility defined**

Smith and Nelson (1985) suggested three levels of intelligibility: intelligibility – recognition of word(s) or utterance(s); comprehensibility – understanding the
word(s) or utterance(s); interpretability – recognition of meaning behind an utterance. In this study, only two levels of intelligibility were included as performance variables – intelligibility and comprehensibility. Thus, intelligibility in this paper would mean both recognition and understanding of word(s) or utterance(s), unless both terms are stated separately. The inclusion of intelligibility and comprehensibility as performance variables correspond to the correlational nature of anxiety research.

**Englishes lingua franca anxiety**

Anxiety when Englishes is used as a lingua franca is derived from the construct of foreign language anxiety (Horwitz, et al, 1986). Recent studies on FLA shifted its focus on situation-specific settings (see Al-Saraj, 2003; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Woodrow, 2006; Zheng, 2008) away from generalized foreign language settings. Thus, an out-of-class situation-specific setting within the sphere of language anxiety phenomenon is primarily considered in this study. Henceforth, we focus on specific anxiety situations arising from the use of Englishes as a lingua franca, and propose it to be known as EsLF anxiety.

**Methods**

The research design for the ongoing research employs mixed methods. As mentioned earlier, the results presented in this paper are limited only to those data deduced quantitatively by using a survey and qualitatively through individual interviews in the Situation-task. The individual interviews were transcribed and reviewed accordingly. Themes were analyzed and interrater agreement was sought afterwards.

**Anxiety Scale in Spoken Englishes as a Lingua Franca (ASSELF)**

A newly designed questionnaire aimed to collect and measure the participants’ level of anxiety experienced when Englishes is used in lingua settings was utilized in the
study. The Anxiety Scale in Spoken Engishes as a Lingua Franca (ASSELF) is a new scale developed specifically from the experiences of local and international students in Thailand. The scale was submitted to three language experts and then piloted to a sample population. The internal consistency of the scale in the pilot study is Cronbach alpha .96 and .94 in the final study, both showing very high levels of internal consistency. It means that all items in ASSELF were assessing a single underlying construct, which is, EsLF anxiety. ASSELF consists 21 items, rated in a 5-point Likert scale: 5 – extremely anxious, 4 – very anxious, 3 – moderately anxious, 2 – slightly anxious and 1 – not at all anxious. The anxiety situations experienced by the interlocutors are derived from literatures of non- and collaborative interactions including lexical familiarity, comprehension of words or phrases, accentedness of utterances, among others. Scores on the questionnaire fall into five categories: not anxious (1.0-1.7), slightly anxious (1.8-2.5), moderately anxious (2.6-3.4), very anxious (3.5-4.2), and extremely anxious (4.3-5.0). The ASSELF was administered online from December 2014 – April 2015 to several Thai universities.

**Measurement of Intelligibility and Comprehensibility of Engishes (MICE)**

The widely used measurement to test intelligibility is an orthographic transcription test (Smith and Nelson, 1985; Matsuura, 2007; Van der Walt, 2000). In MICE, the participants were asked to transcribe the utterances of the speakers. The speakers were three representative speakers from Kachruvian’s framework: each one from the Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle. The result of the orthographic test was used to determine the level of the participants’ intelligibility. A certain speaker’s speech contained information about his/her impression of Thailand. The average length of the speeches is 55-58 seconds. Pauses were also inserted to provide time for the participants to key-in their answers into the box provided for their answers.
Like the orthographic test, the results of the comprehensibility test were used to determine the participants’ comprehensibility. The speech samples are continuation of the topics spoken by the same speakers above. The comprehensibility test contained general questions about the speaker’s topic, length of stay in Thailand, profession in Thailand, language difference between Thailand and the speaker’s country of origin, and cultural difference between Thailand and the speaker’s country of origin.

**Creation of a Situation-task**

The Situation-task was created to explore the interrelationships of the four variables – sociological background, anxiety, intelligibility and comprehensibility. A Situation-task is referred to as a lingua franca setting where Englishes is used by the interlocutors in their discourse. It is hypothesized as an interactive atmosphere among the participants and an anxiety-filled task due to the nature of collaborative interaction. The 11 participants were selected based on the following variables Kachruvian’s circle, EsLF anxiety, intelligibility and comprehensibility (see participants). The participants were given a primary task to discuss random topics by rolling a dice onto a board with very specific (for example, differences on how adults and teenagers make friends) and broad topics (for instance, daily routines). The participants were requested to freely say their opinions or ask questions about the topic at hand.

**Individual interviews**

One of the most crucial methods in the study is the use of individual interviews, in which, the participants were allowed to voice out their views and individual perspectives with regards to the anxiety provoking situations in the Situation-task. The individual interviews were conducted as soon as the task was done. The researcher used semi-structured interviews focusing with prompts from ASSELF. The scope of questions include the participants’ feelings after the task, situations
which bothered them before, while and after listening to a participant’s talk, and elaboration of their most anxiety provoking situation as indicated in ASSELF. All questions are related to the intelligibility of Englishes.

**Participants**

Only eleven participants were selected and voluntarily attended the Situation-task situated in one of the universities in Thailand based on four variables including Kachruvian Circle, anxiety, intelligibility and comprehensibility (see Table 1). The inclusion of the variables are based on previous studies which suggest the following: (1) high level of anxiety debilitates language performance (Al-Saraj, 2013; Elkhafaifi, 2005; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994; Woodrow, 2006), for example Zhang and Bank; (2), low level of anxiety improves language performance (Matsuura, 2007), for instance, Shoreh and Tamang; and (3), high level of anxiety may actually help language performance (Oxford, 1999), for example, Edgar and Noom. Other characteristics were also included such as those possessed by Pueng and Tata (both had low levels of anxiety but with low levels of intelligibility and comprehensibility); Zimik, who had low levels of anxiety and intelligibility but with high comprehensibility; and Zahir and Andi, who had difficulty in recognizing words in an utterance but with high comprehensibility (Nelson, 2011; Sewell, 2010). The selection of the participants including the differing characteristics in terms of the variables mentioned above is aimed at providing an empirical data on specific listening anxiety situations experienced by NNSs.

**Analysis**

Knowing that intelligibility is a multifaceted cognitive process, this paper only focuses on the analysis of the means of scores on ASSELF during the Situation-task, and the list of specific anxiety situations related to intelligibility. Although the presented data are derived only from eleven participants in the Situation-task, individual interviews were conducted to understand the participants’ perspectives
regarding how they experienced anxiety when Englishes is used as a lingua franca in an out-of-class setting and what caused them anxiety while listening to other interlocutors. The mean scores of the 240 participants in the main study is $M=3.07$, which is slightly lower than the mean scores of the eleven participants ($M=3.37$), but both falling into the same category - moderately anxious (see ASSELF). In the thematic analysis of the individual interviews, the interrater reliability for the raters was found to be Kappa = 0.92, a very good agreement (Altman, 1991; Cohen, 1960), which is highly acceptable.

### Table 1. Profile of Situation-task participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Kachruvian Circle</th>
<th>Level of anxiety</th>
<th>Level of intelligibility</th>
<th>Level of comprehensibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Edgar</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Outer Circle</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noom</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zahir</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Outer Circle</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andi</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoreh</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamang</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Outer Circle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pueng</td>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tata</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>Expanding</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimik</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Outer Circle</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Results

The results of the study are presented into two sections: findings of the ASSELF survey summarized in Table 2, and the lists of anxiety provoking situations deduced from individual interviews of the participants illustrated in Tables 3 and 4.

#### The measurement of anxiety through ASSELF survey

The responses of the eleven participants in the Anxiety Scale of Spoken Englishes as Lingua Franca (ASSELF) during the Situation-task are shown in Table 2. The average ASSELF scores ranged from 2.45 to 3.81 ($N=11$; $M=3.37$). The summation of the means of all 21 items fall into 3 categories - 11 items as very
anxious (Items 13, 4, 21, 12, 16, 7, 3, 10, 17, 19, 11); 9 items as moderately anxious (Items 9, 5, 15, 8, 14, 18, 2, 20, 1, 2); and, item 6 within slightly anxious. It can be noted that all participants experienced anxiety during the Situation-task. The highest rated lingua franca anxiety situation is item 13, *When the interlocutor uses unfamiliar words* ($M=3.81$) while the least rated lingua franca anxiety situation is item 6, *When the interlocutor speaks a non-native accent* ($M=2.45$).

**Table 2. Anxiety Scale of Spoken Englishes as a Lingua Franca (ASSELF)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Lingua franca anxiety provoking situations</th>
<th>Anxiety level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability of the interlocutor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11)</td>
<td>The interlocutor asks me a question where I am not prepared to answer.</td>
<td>VA***</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>I cannot understand the meaning behind an utterance.</td>
<td>MA**</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15)</td>
<td>It is my turn to speak.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>The interlocutor is a proficient speaker of English.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accentedness of speech</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>My accent is difficult for the interlocutor to understand.</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>I am not familiar with the interlocutor’s accent.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>The interlocutor speaks a native-like accent.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>The interlocutor speaks a non-native accent.</td>
<td>SA*</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attitude of the interlocutor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(21)</td>
<td>The interlocutor seems unwilling to communicate.</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(17)</td>
<td>The interlocutor shows some sign(s) such as facial expression to make me uncomfortable.</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18)</td>
<td>The interlocutor corrects my utterance(s).</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Familiarity of lexis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13)</td>
<td>The interlocutor uses word(s) or phrase(s) I am not familiar with.</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>I cannot decode the interlocutor’s words/phrases.</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16)</td>
<td>I cannot use the word(s) correctly.</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10)</td>
<td>I don’t know the word(s) for saying something.</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Familiarity of topic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12)</td>
<td>I don’t know the answer to a question.</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19)</td>
<td>The interlocutor asks me difficult question(s).</td>
<td>VA</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14)</td>
<td>I am not familiar with the topic of the discourse.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of interlocutors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20)</td>
<td>The interlocutors talks about specific topic(s).</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8)</td>
<td>There are more than two or more interlocutors.</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speech rate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The 21 items are categorized into seven themes including (1) ability of the interlocutor, (2) accentedness of speech, (3) attitude of the interlocutor, (4) familiarity of lexis, (5) familiarity of topic (6) number of interlocutors and (7) speech rate. In the first category, the listeners are very anxious when a response to a question is necessary. Other situations such as the ability of the listener to understand the hidden meaning of a spoken text, the speaker’s high proficiency in English, and turn-taking events in the talk activate moderate anxiety level among the participants. In the second category, four items about accentedness of speech produce varying anxiety levels from slightly anxious to very anxious. The speaker’s native-like or non-native accent appeared not to provoke much anxiety as compared to the participant’s perception that his/her accent is difficult for others to understand. In the third category, the attitude of the interlocutors where they are reluctant to communicate and where some facial expressions are shown debilitate the participants. Surprisingly, all participants experienced high levels of anxiety with regards to word-related aspects such as unfamiliar words, unintelligible words, etc. The situations in the familiarity of topic wherein the participants have to provide answers to questions trigger high levels of anxiety as compared to familiarity of topic. The last two categories in which there are two or more interlocutors provokes moderate anxiety while fast speech rate highly debilitates all the participants.

*SA – Slightly anxious; **MA – Moderately anxious; ***VA – Very anxious

Anxiety provoking situations: Outer and Expanding Circles

The anxiety provoking situations in the Situation-task can be understood distinctively by using the participants’ sociological origin- Kachruvian’s framework. The data presented was obtained from in-depth individual interviews after the Situation-task was conducted. These situations are presented in Table 3–
linguistic-related specific anxiety situations, and in Table 4 – nonlinguistic-related anxiety provoking situations.

**Linguistic related themes**

This section discusses the linguistic-related specific anxiety situations. Specific themes in Table 3 are anxiety situations closely linked with lexical and grammatical contexts such as (1) prosodic features, (2) accentedness of speech, (4) linguistic knowledge, and (4) speech rate. There are 25 specific anxiety situations listed where 2 categories are both shared by the Expanding and Outer circles such as accentedness of speech – difficulty in comprehending an accented and native-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Kachruvian circle</th>
<th>Specific themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accentedness of speech</strong></td>
<td>Expanding circle</td>
<td>(1) Speaker speaks an accented utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both circles</td>
<td>(2) Listener has difficulty in comprehending an accented utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Listener has difficulty in comprehending a native-speaker utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linguistic knowledge</strong></td>
<td>Expanding circle</td>
<td>(4) Listener has difficulty in recognizing some words in an utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(5) Listener has difficulty in comprehending some words in an utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(6) Listener has difficulty in comprehending the final part of an utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(7) Listener has difficulty in comprehending specific topics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(8) Listener has difficulty in comprehending the question being asked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outer circle</td>
<td>(9) Speaker uses unfamiliar words in an utterance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(10) Speaker says words in chunks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(11) Listener has a difficulty in recognizing words spoken by a native speaker of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(12) Listener has difficulty in comprehending other interlocutor's Engishes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(13) Listener translates from L1 to L2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(14) Listener has difficulty in comprehending the interlocutor's words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(15) Listener has difficulty in comprehending the spoken vocabulary of Englishes.
(16) Speaker’s utterance has differing grammatical forms and sentence types.

(17) Speaker uses different words from the listener’s perception.
(18) Listener has difficulty in comprehending the meaning of an utterance.

| Prosodic features | Expanding circle | (19) Listener cannot recognize the speaker’s voice.
|                  | Outer circle     | (20) Speaker’s tone is difficult to recognize.
|                  |                 | (21) Speaker has difficulty in the pronunciation of words.

| Speech rate       | Expanding circle | (22) Listener has difficulty in comprehending an utterance on time.
|                  |                 | (23) Listener has difficulty in comprehending a fast utterance.
|                  |                 | (24) Listener has difficulty in synthesizing a slow utterance.
|                  |                 | (25) Speaker speaks fast.

Table 4. Nonlinguistic-related anxiety situations for intelligibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Kachruvian circle</th>
<th>Specific themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to say/express/explain</td>
<td>Expanding circle</td>
<td>(26) Speaker cannot say the keywords clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outer circle</td>
<td>(27) Speaker cannot explain the topic clearly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(28) Speaker cannot express some words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(29) Speaker has difficulty in expressing himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(30) Speaker did not know how to explain about the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude of the interlocutors</td>
<td>Expanding circle</td>
<td>(31) Listener has a negative attitude toward the interlocutor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outer circle</td>
<td>(32) Listener perceives that the speaker is more proficient in English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(33) Listener perceives that the speaker doesn’t want to explain about the topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity of the interlocutors</td>
<td>Expanding circle</td>
<td>(34) Listener isn’t familiar with the interlocutors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear of negative</td>
<td>Expanding circle</td>
<td>(35) Speaker asks a question to the listener.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
speaker utterances, and linguistic knowledge – difficulty in comprehending the meaning of an utterance. Moreover, it is interesting to note that speech rate is solely identified with the Expanding circle. Under prosodic features, acoustic problems such as voice and tone are associated with the Expanding circle while the speaker’s mispronunciation is tied with the Outer circle. With regards to linguistic-related specific anxiety situations identified by the Expanding circle participants, most items are related with word and word-segments such as difficulty in recognizing and understanding words, unfamiliar words spoken by the speaker, among others. For anxious Outer circle participants, specific anxiety situations related to linguistic knowledge are results of the speaker’s differing grammatical forms and sentence types and choice of words. It led the listeners to get ‘lost in translation’ and misunderstood the lexical meaning of the spoken text.

**Non-linguistic related themes**

Apart from linguistics, 18 specific themes in table 4 were derived from extra-linguistic factors categorized under (1) participants’ ability, (2) attitudes, (3) familiarity with other interlocutors, (4) fear of negative evaluation, (5) knowledge of the topic, (6) proficiency of the interlocutor, (7) voice projection, and (8)
willingness to communicate. Not only the inability of the speaker to say/express/explain or to speak loudly trigger anxiety among the Expanding and Outer circle but also the proficiency of the speaker. Moreover, listeners from the Expanding circle are anxious if they are unfamiliar with other persons in the task while the speakers from the Outer circle feel high anxiety when the listener is unwilling to communicate. More findings indicate that the speaker provokes anxiety in situations where he/she is unable to communicate effectively by saying, expressing or explaining the word or topic. Besides, a low voice affects the listening skill of the participants from both circles. Similarly, a competent user of English incites anxiety. Yet the onus of provoking anxiety in the Situation-task does not only rest to the speaker, but also to the listener’s attitude, knowledge of the topic, and fear of negative evaluation.

The specific themes deduced from the interviews support the items in ASSELF, specifically those identified as highly anxiety provoking situations. Accordingly, very anxious lingua anxiety provoking situations shared by both Outer and Expanding circles are (#13) speaker’s use of unfamiliar words or phrases (familiarity of lexis), (#4) listener cannot decode the speaker’s words and (#3) the difficulty of the listener to understand the speaker’s accent, both under accentedness of speech. Meanwhile, four highly anxious items are identified with the Expanding circles: (#12) I don’t know the answer to a question and (#19) The interlocutor asks a difficult question, both under familiarity of topic; (#11) The interlocutor is not prepared to answer the question (ability of the interlocutor); and, speech rate – (#7) The interlocutor speaks fast. For the Outer circle, (#21) unwillingness of the interlocutor to communicate adversely affect their attitude in the task.

To sum up the anxiety experienced by the participants in the Situation-task, 12 categories which fall under linguistic and nonlinguistic groupings, and comprise of 43 specific themes are known to provoke anxiety situations affecting the intelligibility of Englishes. The listed themes are triggered either by the speaker or the listener during the task.
Discussion

The individual interviews show that the eleven participants in the Situation-task, selected from 240 participants, did experience anxiety and can be utilized to support the findings of the Anxiety Scale of Spoken Englishes as a Lingua Franca (ASSELF). The specific anxiety situations reported by the participants such as fear of negative evaluation, accentedness of speech, speech rate, among others have been reported in the voluminous research on anxiety and intelligibility (Elkhafaifi, 2005; Gynan, 1985; Ho, 2009; Horwitz, et al., 1986; Jenkins, 2000, 2002, 2007; Kirkpatrick, 2007; McKay, 2002; Munro and Derwing, 1995; Pakir, 2010; Politzer, 1978). However, the unexpected findings with regards to the high anxiety provoking situations in ASSELF as supported by the specific themes deduced from individual interviews need attention and explanation so as to be able to understand those specific anxiety provoking situations in a lingua setting where Englishes is used as the main language of communication.

Findings have shown that ASSELF items matched with Kachruvian’s sociological divide are identified as shared or circle-specific. Accordingly, the shared highly anxious items include (1) unfamiliar words or phrases used by the speaker, (2) the listener’s inability to decode the spoken word(s), and (3) their difficulty to understand the speaker due to accent. Firstly, the interlocutor’s use of unfamiliar word(s) or phrase(s) provokes the most anxious feeling among the participants and could be attributed to the nature of the spoken language – Englishes noted to have differing features of pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, idiom and discourse style (Jenkins, 2009). Edgar explains (see extract 1) about the different construction of their English sentence and Zahir (see extract 2) can distinguished that their English is different. The cognitive processing which involves language transfer, i.e., L2-L1 could lead to lost in translation or meaning. Additionally, the unfamiliarity of words may also be the result of the participants’ lack of exposure to each circle’s varieties of English, in which the Outer circle are ‘norm-developing’ such as Taglish (Filipino English), Indian English, among others and Expanding
circle as ‘norm-dependent’ (Kachru, 2006) relying on the language norms set by the Inner circle’s standardized varieties. Recent development, however, suggest that emerging varieties such as those found in the Expanding circle, i.e., Thailish (Thai English) could have affected how the Outer circle perceived the spoken vocabulary of the Expanding circle participants as those Englishes are not yet widely published. Familiarity of word is indeed a significant predictor of intelligibility (Hardman, 2010).

Yeah actually their construction of English sentence is also different like they have very basic English as compared to the Filipino English …. but for them it's like very basic and it's quite different like the predicate is before the subject they speak the subject in the last part of the sentence like okay something like car big shirt blue… Edgar, extr 1

…their English is different so only I can understand if I am familiar with them so when they explain in English I feel nervous… Zahir, extr 2

Secondly, the highly anxious participants who cannot decode the spoken text maybe attributed to the low-level proficiency of the majority of the participants as indicated by their level of intelligibility in MICE. So it is not surprising to say that themes under linguistic knowledge heavily point out the difficulties of the listeners to recognize, understand and interpret the meaning of words or phrases in an utterance. What is interesting above is that it suggests scenarios where anxiety provoking situations are triggered within Smith and Nelson’s two-level (out of 3) definition of intelligibility used in this study. To illustrate, specific themes numbers 4, 9 and 11 highlight unintelligibility due to unfamiliar words. And in some instances (refer to utterances below) where words are recognized as illustrated by ‘can capture one word’ and can catch the first part of the sentence’, the participants implied miscomprehension by saying ‘cannot understand’ the sentence, and ‘cannot catch’ the rest of the sentence. The utterances revealed that the first level of intelligibility transpired, but without achieving the second level of intelligibility - understanding the whole sentence’s meaning. It also indicates that intelligible but unfamiliar words could lead to incomprehensibility of an utterance and its intended
meaning(s). Likewise, word- or phrasal-level intelligibility affects sentence-level comprehension. Similar to that of cognitive studies in language, intelligibility reveals a ‘complex system’, which involves linguistic, pragmatic and psycholinguistic processing (Rost, 2002), possibly triggering various anxiety provoking-situations that filter the intelligibility of Englishes.

(I) can capture one word but (I) think about the meaning so rest of the sentence (I) cannot understand... Bank, extr 3
(I) can catch the first part of the sentence but the rest of the sentence (I) cannot catch... Tata, extr 4
…what they are saying it's different from what they are trying to say…Edgar, extr 5

Thirdly, accentedness of speech has been long proven as a factor of unintelligibility of spoken Englishes (Munro and Derwing, 1995). So it is not surprising that NNS of English are worried that their accent may not be well-received by other interlocutors. Previous research had established that negative attitude of the NNS with regards to the inferiority of their own non-native English, specifically, when compared against native varieties (Episcopo, 2009; Zhou and Christianson, 2014).

The highly anxious situations among the Expanding circle include question-related phenomena, situations where they are asked with a question and they are not able answer and/or prepared to answer it due to lack of knowledge about the topic. During the Situation-task, Andi had requested to change the topic the dice landed on the board when she tossed it. Accordingly, it was easier for her talking about her family rather than discussing the dice-selected topic - the differences on how adults and children make friend. Apart from hard questions, fast utterance seemed to be another issue. A plausible explanation is the nature of spoken texts in the Situation-task, as opposed to language learning settings, happens very fast and real-time processing occurs. Previous studies suggested that those students with high level of anxiety do have lower language proficiency (Price, 1991) as well as lower word
recognition in dictation-task (Matsuura, 2007). The interpretation is supported by Andi when asked about the effect of anxiety on her cognitive ability.

Does anxiety make you feel better think deeper listen better? **Researcher, extr 6**

...no with my anxious I cannot feel better I cannot think better I cannot listen better… **Andi, extr 7**

Separately, the Outer circle participants find it very anxious when the interlocutors in the task are unwilling to communicate as it would be difficult to guess what the others are thinking. This could be related to the saving face strategy by the non-native speakers rather than losing face in face-to-face discussions (Huang and Van Naerssen, 1987). Apparently, staying silent is better than losing face, but could be construed as a negative attitude in collaborative talks. The circumstance above could also be the consequence on how English is being used in each circle; presumably, Outer circle uses English as a second language (ESL) while Expanding circle learns English as a foreign language (EFL). There is a high possibility of language exposure among Outer circle participants where they become well-versed while Expanding circle’s exposure is limited hampering their communicative ability to express their thoughts in English.

Interpretability, an excluded measure of intelligibility in the study, in fact has been documented to provoke anxiety situations and indirectly affects the intelligibility of Englishes as revealed by specific themes under the nonlinguistic-related specific anxiety situations. Although the construct of interpretability is difficult to measure (Pickering, 2006), the participants suggested that interpretability in reality are composed of situations enumerated as nonlinguistic specific themes such as paralinguistics, context of situations, among others (Nelson, 2011). These situations referred to as voice projection, attitude of the participants, ability to express, etcetera somehow filter the participants’ ability to understand the meaning behind an utterance (Smith and Nelson, 1985). Zhang has indicated that he loss the intention to listen if the interlocutor doesn’t want to answer his
question while Zimik becomes anxious when the speaker chooses not to elaborate the topic at hand. Those situations could lead to misunderstanding and the fear of giving an erroneous response arises. In a bigger picture, the fear of negative evaluation has long been established as debilitating to the students in a language learning setting. The fear mediates into language processing allowing the learner to freeze up resulting to devastating effects, for example, quitting a program of study (Oxford, 1991). Like Zhang, he is worried about his future if he continuously ‘can’t get the meaning’ due to nonlinguistic aspects provoking anxiety situations in a lingua franca setting. We suggest that this topic has to be explored in future studies.

In the study, although we are able to point out the shared and circle-specificity of the highly anxious lingua franca provoking situations by using Kachruvian’s sociological divide, it is important to note that the above findings must be interpreted only within the context of the task and cannot be generalized to all situations or settings where Englishes is used as a lingua franca. The exclusivity of the specific themes deduced from the interview data to the Outer or Expanding circle remains inconclusive. Nevertheless, using individual interviews provided greater confidence in the findings to support the larger aim of the study - to explore of the existence of specific anxiety situations among users of Englishes as a lingua franca.

**Conclusion**

The results in this paper are part of an ongoing study focusing on the existence of anxiety when Englishes is used a lingua franca among non-native speakers in an out-of-class setting. A Situation-task was created to bring the participants of differing backgrounds together to discuss about general or specific topics randomly spread in a board. Afterwards, individual interviews were conducted to know, identify and understand the participants’ insights about anxiety and intelligibility of Englishes. Thematic analysis generated the lists of specific themes categorized under linguistic- related anxiety provoking situations, which strongly support the
items found in the theoretically-derived scale, the Anxiety of Spoken Englishes as Lingua Franca (ASSELF). Although the study excluded interpretability as a measure of intelligibility, there are situations where the participants in the task referred to it as specific themes covered by nonlinguistic-related specific anxiety situations. Other findings in the study have found clear evidence that specific anxiety situations can be shared or specific to Expanding circle or Outer circle participants in the Situation-task.

**Practical implications**

In today’s English language learning and teaching, foreign language teachers cannot disregard the variability of Englishes spoken in the world. The integration of the linguistic features of language inputs or stimuli by the students or by peoples with differing sociological backgrounds could provide a holistic approach in second or foreign language learning and teaching. Foreign language teachers with wide knowledge of anxiety provoking situations, specifically in intelligibility, may provide lingua franca language simulations in the classroom to better prepare the students to the world where the primary language of communication is undoubtedly English or Englishes. For example, the lists of linguistic and non-linguistic anxiety situations could provide a backbone on what skills or sub-skills should be taught or learn in the classroom to preempt highly anxiety provoking situations. Although there remains an argument as to how intelligibility can be taught in the classroom, it is wise to gauge students’ anxiety by using classroom-based anxiety scales, for example, FLCAS, or a more practical real-world research-based anxiety scale, for instance, ASSELF. By knowing the anxiety background of the learners, teachers can design anxiety reduction activities for the whole class, a group, or an individual. Meanwhile, the list of non-linguistic related anxiety situations provides an idea on how a listener or speaker may act in collaborative interactions.

Perhaps the results of the study related to teaching is the exposure of the students to authentic or real-world language learning settings. Should the students
be exposed to all accents? How do teachers design contextual activities related to the real-world? While it would be difficult to answer the questions above due to varying factors in the language classroom, for example, course objectives, learner personality, teacher’s beliefs, among others, the adoption of a Situation-task as a classroom activity could be an alternative. A carefully designed Situation-task could be a useful activity to abate anxiety and to prepare students to become able-interlocutors of spoken Englishes in a lingua franca setting especially in a collaborative interaction. As suggested by Edgar, exposure to Englishes could be the key to intelligibility.

…and that's why it's very difficult (to comprehend their utterances) but umm maybe through time I will be able to understand them yeah but for now it's like umm I need to listen many times. *Edgar, extr 8*
References


Jung, M. Y. (2010). The intelligibility and comprehensibility of World


Rost, M. (2002). *Teaching and researching listening.* UK: Pearson Education.


Appendix 1

Anxiety Scale for Spoken Englishes as a Lingua Franca (ASSELF)

Dear participant,
This survey attempts to measure your anxiety when English is used as the main language of communication in a particular setting. Please complete the following information sought to the best of your knowledge. Your answers are strictly confidential.
Thank you so much.

Country of origin _______________ Nationality __________________

**Directions:** Encircle the letter of choice which represents the anxiety level you feel when English is used as a lingua franca.

**Example**
I will be __________________________ when the speaker is handsome.
   
   a. extremely anxious
   b. very anxious
   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious
   e. not anxious

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) I will be __________________________ when the interlocutor is a proficient speaker of English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) I will be __________________________ when the interlocutor speaks a native-like accent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) I will be __________________________ when my accent is difficult for the other interlocutor to understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(4) I will be ________________ when I cannot decode the interlocutor’s words/phrases.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious

(5) I will be ________________ when I am not familiar with the interlocutor’s accent.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious

(6) I will be ________________ when the interlocutor speaks a non-native accent.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious

(7) I will be ________________ when the interlocutor speaks fast.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious

(8) I will be ________________ when there are more than two or more interlocutors.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious

(9) I will be ________________ when I cannot understand the meaning behind an utterance.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious

(10) I will be ________________ when I don’t know the word(s) for saying something.
    a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
    d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious

(11) I will be ________________ when the interlocutor asks me a question where I am not prepared to answer.
    a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
    d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious

(12) I will be ________________ when I don’t know the answer to a question.
    a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
    d. slightly anxious    e. not anxious
(13) I will be _____________________ when the interlocutor uses word(s) or phrase(s) I am not familiar with.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious   e. not anxious

(14) I will be _____________________ when I am not familiar with the topic of the discourse.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious   e. not anxious

(15) I will be _____________________ when it is my turn to speak.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious   e. not anxious

(16) I will be _____________________ when I cannot use the word(s) correctly.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious   e. not anxious

(17) I will be _____________________ when the interlocutor shows some sign(s) such as facial expression to make me uncomfortable.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious   e. not anxious

(18) I will be _____________________ when the interlocutor corrects my utterance(s).
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious   e. not anxious

(19) I will be _____________________ when the interlocutor asks me difficult question(s).
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious   e. not anxious

(20) I will be _____________________ when the interlocutors talks about specific topic(s).
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious   e. not anxious

(21) I will be _____________________ when the interlocutor seems unwilling to communicate.
   a. extremely anxious   b. very anxious   c. moderately anxious
   d. slightly anxious   e. not anxious
Exploring pre-service teachers’ professional identity formation through the lens of critical incidents

Jariya Sudtho*
gate.jariya@gmail.com

Wareesiri Singhasiri**
wareesiri.sin@kmutt.ac.th

Bioprofile: Jariya Sudtho is a PhD. Candidate in the Department of Language Studies, King Mongkut’s University of Technolog Thonburi. Her research interests are teacher training education and classroom action research.

Wareesiri Singhasiri is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Language Studies, School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi. She has a PhD from the University of Essex. Her interests are learning strategies, learning styles and research methodology.

Abstract

This study explores negotiation processes of the professional identities of four Thai pre-service teachers during their teaching practicums. The notion of actual and designated identity (Sfard & Prusak, 2005) is used to see how the individuals transformed from their actual identities (who they are) to their designated identities (who they want to become as teachers). By using critical incidents, i.e. events that are significant for the participants to reconsider their actual identity and which trigger desires to possess a designated identity, the process by which the participants form their professional identities can be understood. In addition, Symbolic Interactionism perspective by Blumer (1996) offers the analytical lens that the interaction with different objects—including factors such as personal beliefs, people, and materials—allows for the complexity of professional identity formation

* King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi 126 Pracha Uthit Rd., Bang Mod, Thung Khru, Bangkok 10140
to emerge. Pajares’s (1992) concept of core and peripheral beliefs is also employed as an explanation of the identity formations. The results obtained show that critical incidents can be used to spot the shifts and changes in the participants’ professional identity formation processes. The participants complied with their actual identities, influenced from core beliefs or abstract objects, about teaching and learning, as the guideline of the teaching practice. The participants’ actual identities were resulted from their core beliefs about what teaching and learning should be. The designated identities were triggered when they had been faced with different objects during teaching, i.e. physical and social ones, which lead them to adjust their peripheral beliefs to match with the situations. The researchers hope to shed light on teacher training education on the importance of both internal and external factors affecting the professional identity formation process of pre-service teachers.

**Keywords:** professional identity formation, pre-service teachers, critical incident, symbolic interactionism

**Introduction**

Forming a teacher identity is a complex process as it deals with particular context, time and place within various instructional situations (Danielwicz, 2001). There are multiple elements directing an individual in the process of becoming a teacher such as construction of personal knowledge, formation of self as teacher, and identity development (Connelly & Clandinin, 2000). Although it is believed that teacher education programs can make a difference in this personal process of forming one’s professional identity, there is still a large variability in how individuals view themselves as teachers in a specific context, depending on their experience, self-perceptions and social expectations (Flores & Day, 2006).

According to Sfard & Prusak, (2005), actual identity, or who they are, and designated identity, or who they want to become, can be used to investigate the process of professional identity formation. The actual identities tend to encompass what the individual thinks and does while designated identity often is derived from
some kind of turning point or event which makes one realize that the previous identity they had held was not suitable for their current situation. Since critical incidents such as the time when teachers have to deal with challenging learners’ behavior, curriculum or school policy have been mentioned within the education field as a way to provide opportunities for an analysis of classroom practice (Patahuddin & Lowrie, p.3), these significant events or critical incidents have become useful in seeing how individual identity is formed over a certain period. Thus, the researchers were positive that the participant’s critical incident would have signified us the formation of the participants’ actual identities and designated ones.

**Literature Review**

*Teacher’s professional identity*

Teacher’s professional identity is seen as a complex and on-going process and has emerged, especially in teacher education, as a subfield of identity theory (Beijaard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004). Various definitions have been used to define identity according to practitioners and researchers in their particular fields of study (Gee, 2001). Regardless of the diverse definitions, Luehmann (2007) has summarized some common features of identity in that it is being socially constructed, constantly formed and reformed, consisting of different interrelated features, and founded in interpretations and narrations of experiences.

Investigating teachers’ perceptions of roles is useful as it is closely linked to teacher-identity (Ben-Peretz et. al., 2003). This is because, in order for pre-service teachers to attain the goal of being a good teacher satisfying their perspectives, they need to maintain the coherence between their identity and the roles of teachers that they expect to enact (Sexton, 2008).
Formation of professional identity

Pre-service teachers often come to a teacher training program with their preconceived ideas and beliefs of how a teacher should be (McAdams, 2001). Until the classroom reality confronts them during practicum, their beliefs about teachers and teaching might be shifted. This shift of concern was common for pre-service teachers, as according to Fuller & Brown (1975) who identified four stages of concerns that novice teachers have gone through. Starting from non-realistic based role of teacher, then they often change their ideal role when entering the practicum. Afterwards, pre-service teachers are likely to come across with stressful period when the conflicts between theory and practice occur before reaching the last stage where they fully focus on students’ learning.

Factors influencing professional identity formation

Botha & Onwu (2013) have summarized the factors influencing teachers’ professional identity formation into two categories: external and internal. According to them, external factors include the national curriculum, national educational reform publications, public expectations, and school culture (Jansen, 2003; Jita & Vandeyar, 2006; Onwu & Mogari, 2004). Internal factors refer to pre-service teachers’ knowledge of curriculum objectives, their pre-existing identity, educational background and their own beliefs about teaching and learning.

The internal factors relate to what Pajares (1992) called core beliefs influencing other beliefs and practices. To Pajares (1992), a belief system can be categorized as either core or peripheral. Core beliefs are central to an individual’s understanding about instructions, perception, judgment, and behaviors while peripheral beliefs tend to develop according to the core beliefs of each person (Brownlee et. al., 2001).

Symbolic Interactionism, as proposed by Blumer (1969), also states a similar idea that people tend to form their identities according to both the internal
and external objects they interact with. According to this viewpoint, humans act toward objects and people based on the meaning that those objects and people have for them. In a teaching context, objects can be classified by three types: abstract objects (beliefs about a person), social objects (students), and physical objects (materials and subject content). These factors can also affect how pre-service teachers set their own designated identity or the idealized picture of teachers that they want to become. Therefore, they try to complete the roles that are in-line with their expectation of becoming the type of teacher dictated by their designated identity.

**Critical incidents**

Critical incidents refer to the significant situations or events that are “unplanned, unanticipated and uncontrolled” (Woods, 2012, p.5). These events are important since they might mark “a significant turning point or change in the life of a person (Tripp, 1993, p.24). Therefore, examining the participants’ critical incidents is found to be useful in viewing the initial engagement of changes, especially when they mention about their designated identity, or what kind of teacher they would like to be.

In teacher training contexts, critical incidents are useful for understanding pre-service teachers since they allow the possibility to uncover insights of the “learning to teach” process (Farrell, 2008). Griffin (2003) used critical incidents in a supervised field experience to examine the effectiveness of the method in developing reflective and critical thinking skills. The results revealed that expressing the critical incidents could lead to pre-service teachers’ personal growth and inquiry.

**Objectives**

The objective of this study was to investigate how four pre-service teachers formed their professional identity by observing their actual and designated identities. In
addition, critical incidents concept was used as the method of analysis in viewing the formation of each individual.

**Methodology**

**Participants**

There were four participants involved in this study. Their pseudonyms were Meena, Maysa, Roberto and Anna. All of them were students enrolled in Master of Arts (English Language Teaching), King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi, which required them to engage in a fifteen-week teaching practicum in a high school. This requirement is geared to help prepare student teachers for the realities teaching in an authentic school context. They were purposively selected due to their limited teaching experience, previous educational background and their willingness to participate in the study.

**Context**

All the participants had chances to gain access to teaching experience through a course called “Teaching Techniques in Practice”. The course aimed to improve pre-service teacher’s teaching methods and to expand professional education skills by placing them into a school for one semester.

The school where the participants did their practicum in was a medium sized school, operating grades 7–12, located near King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi. At the time of data collection, the school was very new, having been established for six years, with some new equipment provided for each classroom, such as computers and overhead projectors. The participants taught for one semester (May–September) in 2013. They were responsible for teaching grade 10 students who had just entered high school level. All pre-service teachers taught on Wednesday mornings for one hour and forty minutes. There were forty total teenagers (ages 15–17) whose English proficiency level was considered to be at lower intermediate. Each class consisted of a mix of males and females. All pre-
service teachers were assigned to teach in the same school but in different classes. The participants were appointed to teach “Fundamental English” for grade 10 students. The course aimed to equip students with Basic English skills. Since the focus was to improve students’ vocabulary, grammar, and reading skills, all pre-service teachers need to prepare lessons to engage students in various activities such as drills, practices, games and role-plays.

**Data collection**
Semi-structured interviews were used as the main instrument for this study. The series of interviews were conducted from May until September 2013, once a week over fifteen-week practicum. The questions were developed from the participants’ written reflections on their classroom practice, which suggested understanding of the teaching profession. After obtaining their permission to be interviewed and audio recorded, the meeting place was then arranged. In each interview, participants were encouraged to reflect upon their teaching practice, the interaction between students, co-teacher and supervisor, and how they viewed themselves. This process lasted about 30-45 minutes each time.

**Data analysis**
We have divided our analysis into stages as follows:

*Creating the list of roles for each participant*
Since we viewed that identity is closely linked to the concept of roles, we defined and identified the roles that each participant had mentioned throughout their practicum. Then, we saw how each participant mentioned the teachers’ roles differently in each period of practicum. We decided to divide the period of teaching into 3 periods. (1) the first three weeks when the participant had tried to adjust themselves with the new teaching environment and take up new roles as teachers instead of as student in the MA course. The first few weeks of practicum was often
filled with anxiety and worries about being accepted by the school system, the students and whether they could adapt themselves to the new environment. (2) The second period refers to the period of teaching from week four until week twelve, when pre-service teachers strive to grow professionally and to improve their skills as educators. It was also times when the participants were trying and testing new ideas within collaborative relationships, and for adjusting themselves to fit the teaching and learning in their contexts. (3) The last three weeks, from week thirteen to fifteen was the time when they had opportunities to re-think their experience of collectively practices.

**Recognizing professional identity development**
Guided by Sfard & Prusak ‘s (2005) concept of actual and designated identity, we split our data into two types: actual identity or stories relating to state of affairs, and designated identity or what the subjects expected to be sometimes in the future. We identified the difference of the two types of identity by looking at how the narratives have been presented. Actual identities were observed when the subjects told their stories in present tense such as “I am a strict teacher” or “I have an average management skill when it comes to classroom management”. For the designated identity, we could recognize them by words that show wish, obligation or future commitment such as “I want to become a teacher who can understand my students’ problem”. By observing the evaluation of identity from existing and actual to designated and accomplished, typical types of how the participants formed their professional identities could be unveiled.

**Examining critical incidents**
We observed that when the participants pointed out their desires to possess a new role, i.e. a designated identity, there always were striking events which made them reconsider performing their actual identities of being teachers. We examined these
events, critical incidents, to see how they provided a sound basis for the better understanding of each participant’s identity formation journey.

Looking for factors

After seeing the development of pre-service teachers’ professional identity formation, we then carefully examined the cause of the participants’ perceptions in taking on particular roles. By using Botha & Onwu’s (2013) ideas of external and internal factors affecting the formation, we have identified some major influences that these factors could direct how ones possessed their identities.

**Results**

Since the co-teaching was the principle of practicum practice in KMUTT, each pair of pre-service teachers will be discussed separately.

The first pair was Meena and Maysa, co-teachers with similar educational backgrounds but different beliefs about teaching. Meena clearly defined herself as a controller since the beginning of the practicum because she viewed that discipline was the heart of teaching. However, Maysa focused more on creating positive atmosphere in learning since she believed that a constructive learning environment could enhance academic rigor. The ways they perceived their professional identities had shifted and changed as observed in the following sections:

**Meena**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>Actual identity</th>
<th>Designated identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Controller</td>
<td>Nurturer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Controller, nurturer</td>
<td>Prompter, problem solver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Controller, prompter</td>
<td>Problem solver</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meena held the belief about teaching that discipline should be prioritized in classroom which led to her actual identity as a controller. That was why she had tried to take control and enforce discipline from the very beginning of her teaching. With this actual identity, her classroom remained orderly at all times. Students were quiet and she retained full control. At first, she was quite happy with this quiet and neat classroom since she did not have to worry that students would miss an
important topic. However, by the third week of teaching, she started noticing that her instructions got boring for the students. She could observe that their minds wandered, and seemed to miss the important contents. This was the first critical incident leading her to have a designated identity as she wanted to become a nurturer who could build rapport with students so that they could relax more during the class. Meena commented on this change that:

“I was too strict with them because it seemed like they did not want to answer my questions or talk to me about their misunderstandings or anything. I asked them about what we have learnt before, but they just kept quiet. It was not good to realize that the class atmosphere had been too serious. It was good for me that I could finish all teaching objectives, but it was not so good for students. I had to start being nice to them more”. (3rd week interview)

From this critical incident as mentioned above, Meena tried to allow students to express themselves, ask questions and direct their own learning. She could see the role of nurturer as her actual identity for a few weeks. However, after trying, she could clearly notice her students becoming less motivated and more prone to misbehaviors as seen in the following extract:

“I became a strict teacher with them again. Because I was very kind to them, it made them lost their discipline. They started talking. Today, I decided to give them a relax minutes and you know what happens. After five minutes of free time, they could not get back to the lesson. They were chatting, playing on mobiles and yelling at each other. It gave me a real headache when I had to bring them back to study. That was why I said to myself that I would not try to be too kind again.” (4th week interview)

From this critical incident regarding student misbehavior, Meena kept carrying out her controller role, together with being a nurturer, since she knew what type of classroom environment was most suitable for learning at different times.

Apart from these two actual identities, Meena faced some classroom facility problems which led her to establish a new designated identity as a problem solver.
and, because of the poor facilities, Meena had to learn how to deal with unexpected problem such as and classroom facilities as she mentioned that:

“It was hard to deal with the facilities in the class, sometimes it worked but most of the time it did not. I prepared the Power Points to help the students with the difficult content because I wanted to make sure that the students paid attention well. What happened was that the projector did not work, so I had to let the students use graphic organizer to ease their understanding instead. I had to let them create something on their own unless they would start talking and it would be difficult to regain their attention. It was like I had to prepare several activities because I really could not predict what would happen” (6th week interview).

Because of the classroom facility problems, Meena had greater awareness that, instead of relying on the use of technology or other facilities, she had changed herself into a prompter by allowing students to think independently. For example, when she could not make use of Power Point presentations to aid students’ understanding, she tried to solve the problem immediately by asking the students to draw mind-maps to help them group concepts together through their own creativity. That was when she found out that the technological trouble had led her to the new identity of being a prompter promoting a learner-centered approach.

Meena held the actual identity of being a controller throughout the semester, as she viewed that she could make her students properly behave. When she thought about students’ interaction and participation, she tried to accomplish her designated identity of being a nurturer for a few weeks. Afterwards, the critical incidents caused by classroom discipline issues brought her back to the actual identity: controller. At the same time, classroom facility problem led her to possess another designated identity, that of a problem solver. While trying to overcome the technical trouble, she took on the role of prompter by allowing opportunities for students to explore the tasks by themselves rather than by relying on her lectures together with other classroom facility assistances.
Maysa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Periods</th>
<th>Actual identity</th>
<th>Designated identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nurturer</td>
<td>controller, organizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nurturer, Organizer</td>
<td>Strategic controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nurturer</td>
<td>Strategic controller</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maysa’s actual identity of being a nurturer ran as a core principle in her teaching. She always believed that a teacher should nourish and foster students’ potential capabilities in a nurturing, learning atmosphere. However, after discovering her inability to manage the classroom, she pointed out her designated identity as a controller during the first period of teaching. The critical incidents occurred when Maysa compared her authoritative manner with her co-teacher who could manifest various forms of control and power over the teaching-learning process, so she expressed that:

“I wish I could be strict and able to control the students like my co-teacher. I just wanted to make sure that at least they listened to teacher when we taught because we could not check the students’ understanding”. (3rd week interview)

Another designated identity she had during the first period of teaching was as an organizer because of the teaching content. She had to find ways to arrange the content appropriately in order to make the students understood. This role became her actual identity in period two, together with the role of a nurturer who encouraged students to learn at their own paces.

Again, the issue of controlling the class was still her designated identity in the second period of the practicum. It seemed as her students were not aware that she was the authority figure because she mostly revealed herself as a gentle and caring teacher. Maysa had tried several classroom management strategies but she felt that they were not a match with her personality. With these struggling times, she had critical incidents that made her realize that being a strategic controller was vital for her survival in the practicum, which was difficult for her to attain:
“I hope to control the class better because when I could not manage the class, I did not want to be a teacher. I started realizing that teaching contrasts with being myself. Teacher should have the controlling personality a bit, so the classroom can go smoothly. I was having trouble with that. Actually, teaching was fun but when I could not deal with the students, I did not like being in that kind of situation. It makes me tired. Practicum makes me realize that I was not suitable for this profession”. (6th week interview).

After that critical incident, Maysa gradually increased her controlling ability by gathering students’ attention into the lessons by using games, activities and interesting visuals. Even though she could not perform this role well in the first few attempts, she kept trying new controlling strategies until reaching the third period of teaching. She found solace in her mind when she viewed herself as being able to make students stay on task by selecting the activities which matched with their interests. However, she did not perform well enough to include the role of strategic controller as her actual identity.

Maysa shifted her roles according to several critical incidents she had faced i.e. comparison with her co-teacher’s authoritativeness, students’ behavior and teaching content. Her major actual identity of being a nurturer appeared at all times. On the other hand, her designated identity progressively occurred when found in conflict with her classroom management skills. Maysa had tried to accomplish her designated identity of being a strategic controller by selecting the appropriate activities to engage her students. This role was still her designated identity until the end of the practicum because she could see the endless possibility to develop her classroom management skills.

The second pair of pre-service teachers was Roberto and Anna. Their personalities were different, so they paired up with each other to learn to teach collaboratively. Roberto has a strong personality who could be influential and powerful while Anna was mostly presenting herself as caring and was likely to be a follower.
Roberto started his teaching with his actual identity of being a controller because of his student’s behaviors. The group of talkative teenagers made him use his power to ensure his ability to manage the class. He spent copious amounts of time lecturing and evaluating student performances. However, his students’ reactions made him realize that teacher power alone was not enough to maintain equilibrium in his class since he could gradually see the glazed-over look in their eyes when engaging in the monotonous lectures. That was the first time he considered taking on the role of organizer by designing activities that students can carry out, and as entertainer, as can be seen in the following extract:

‘My students looked bored. I wanted to reduce the amount of my talk. I would come up with interesting new games and new ways to give knowledge. I would facilitate them to think more and let them express their misunderstanding during the class. I wanted to let them reflect themselves. I wanted to make my class fun. I wanted to be entertainer because I think learning should come with happiness and they should try doing things by themselves. It would make the classroom atmosphere better’. (2nd week interview)

After aiming to take on the roles of both organizer and entertainer, Roberto was able to make his students excited about learning. They collaborated with each other and tried to come up with new approaches to complete the task enjoyably. At the second period of the practicum, Roberto succeeded in accomplishing his designated identity since he could make the learning pleasant and could promote a student-centered approach. However, he had to find the way to manage the over-excited learners when they were doing their tasks. Although he treasured their flood of creativity, he had to consider that the noises could disturb classes nearby. Thus, Roberto mentioned his new designated identity of being a strategic controller.
because he wanted to find the way to implicitly manage his students’ behaviors. He tried several techniques to maintain both learners’ collaborative working and classroom order, and he kept improving the situation during the second period of teaching. He mentioned his progress through one of the critical incidents that:

“I have more strategies to attract their attention. This time, I acted as a tutor, gave them explanation, guided to the answer and checked whether their answers are right or wrong. It was quite fix steps and easy for students to lose concentration. Normally, I could not really bring them back to the lesson after they start talking wildly. However, this time, my strategy was to allow them to express whatever they want to say. I thought when they could see that the teacher listens to them; they felt like they have to pay attention to the lesson to pay back. I had to improve my controlling technique though because I knew that this technique could not be used all the time”. (6th week interview)

Roberto kept trying new strategies to keep his students calm and happy, as well as focused on the lesson. He set up rules about classroom noises. He simply stopped and asked for students’ attention when they were too loud and, sometimes, he wrote on the black board to remind his students to recalibrate their voices to a more pleasant level.

With all techniques he had tried from the second period until the third period of the practicum, he finally viewed his actual identity as a strategic controller who could subtly control the student and make them learn in enjoyable ways.

However, when approaching the end of the practicum, Roberto paid more attention to each student’s individual confidence. He observed that his learners interacted successfully in groups, but when he asked each student to talk individually, some of his students felt daunted. For this reason, being a motivator became his latest designated identity that he wished to possess as he could see that:

“It is important for teacher to make them gain their confident before start learning anything. I think it is normal for Thai students to be so shy and not try to show that they know or don’t know. It was partly their ability that did not allow me
to teach them in constructivist way. They needed to be encouraged a lot. I had tried to let them engage in class discussion but I had to set up the condition that they had to come to present in front of the class. I wanted to make them have more confident”. (13th week interview)

Afterwards, he could somehow make his shy students become more comfortable and willing to share their voices in the class as he tried to provide a sense of safety for his students. He became aware that, in order for him to develop students’ confidence, he needed to understand their thoughts, fears and emotions—which he had very limited time to do.

Roberto focused on classroom discipline and collaborative learning when entering the practicum. Therefore, his actual identity was as a controller while organizer and entertainer became his designated identities. At the second period of teaching, he came to realize that being a strategic controller allowed him to combine various professional roles i.e. organizer, entertainer and strategic controller to maintain students’ attention level. His ability to balance roles continued to be his actual identity as a strategic controller until the end of the practicum. After he was certain that his students were behaving in an appropriate manner, his designated identity of being a motivator became his interest since he shifted the focus from a group of learners to individual ones.

Anna

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Actual identity</th>
<th>Designated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nurturer, organizer</td>
<td>Organizer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nurturer</td>
<td>Controller</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nurturer, Organizer</td>
<td>Controller</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anna started her practicum with the influence from her belief that promoting rapport was the most important role for a teacher. For this reason, she often viewed her actual identity as a nurturer who assisted, guided and shared her knowledge in
a kind manner. At the first few weeks, she was happy to see that her students became more open to learning and sharing what they knew, and were likely to talk about their problems with her. Her designated identity of the first period of practicum was to become an organizer who could organize content, classroom activity and her own duties effectively. Anna started to achieve this role by engaging in self-examination. She began to see her weak points in running the classroom. For example, providing the outline of the class was vital in letting the students know what she expected. Starting from there, Anna attempted to inject better structure into the management of her class until she could view the role of organizer as her actual identity in the third week.

Until reaching the second period of teaching, she realized that students’ behaviors could affect tremendously how she performed in class. She was trying to capture a large number of students’ attention and was failing to engage them with interactive tasks. Influenced by the external factors, such as her supervisor’s comment about classroom management issues, Anna knew she had to settle her problems and prevent them from occurring so that she could spend more time on teaching the content. She then mentioned her designated identity as that of being a controller.

Anna’s critical incidents provoked her desire to become a controller, the role she had never wanted to be earlier. She faced the form of disruption by one student who refused to participate in activities. Related to this disruption, other students did not behave themselves. For this reason, she thought that being a controller would help her in this kind of situation, as can be seen in the extract:

“This week, there is one student entered the classroom. That student’s level of proficiency is quite higher than the rest of the students. I have to think about how to give extra works to do. For other students, they are talkative as usual. I have to bring them back to the lesson several times because they talk a lot while I am teaching which is not so good. I have to keep telling them to pay attention. I wish
that I could find some activities or any method to make them concentrate more. I do not happy with my management skill at all.” (5th week interview)

Since then, Anna progressively shifted her role into that of controller who strategically maintained classroom order in a merciful way. She viewed herself as a stricter person, as well as finding the balance between strict and kind. She had to accept that the role of controller was also vital in the classroom due to the fact that a neat classroom was expected as it was a reflection of her classroom management skill. Although being a controller became her actual identity, Anna felt that she was struggling to gain control over her class because using power was in contrast with her gentle personality. She had to adopt so many techniques to keep her class calm. She tried stopping and waiting for the class to calm down, as well as shouting over noises in some situations.

When approaching the third period, Anna reported her actual identity as a mixture between being an organizer and being a nurturer. She was able to prepare clear steps in teaching and organizing lessons to promote thinking skills. When she gave instructions systematically, the students tended to engage in their tasks without disruptive behavior. However, being a controller was still her designated identity since she was not confident in her ability to regain students’ attention by using her power as presented in the following critical incidents:

“It was mainly my personality. I could not raise my voice or use my power to make them quiet for a long time. Today, I was shouting at them to tell them to lower their voices. They did for a few minutes and after that, they started chatting again. Comparing with when my co-teacher told them to stop, they behaved themselves. I realize that they did not really listen to me. I felt powerless.” (14th interview)

Anna’s actual identity of being a nurturer was the main professional identity which she carried throughout the practicum. Her major focus was on building rapport with the learners, as well as adjusting the materials to match with their learning styles. Until her students’ behavior struck her to a designated identity of
being a controller, she aimed at promoting classroom order while continuing her trustworthy manners. When approaching the last period of teaching, she realized that several roles were needed to maintain classroom discipline. Therefore, she combined the use of being a nurturer, an organizer and a controller harmoniously.

**Discussion and conclusion**

The obtained results suggest that the process of forming a teacher’s professional identity includes two types of identities: actual and designated (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). The results also imply that belief plays an important role in the process of becoming a teacher. According to Pajares (1992), core beliefs are central and connected to most other beliefs whereas peripheral beliefs about learning and teaching are derived from these core beliefs and are more easily reflected upon and changed.

It can be seen that the actual identities, which repeatedly appeared in every period of practicum, resulted from the participants’ core beliefs having been built up from several sources such as family, apprenticeship of observation, and the process of training. This type of identity often guided pre-service teachers’ behaviors and how they viewed themselves throughout the practicum. Designated identities, on the other hand, appeared from time to time depending on factors at a particular time of teaching. When affected by different factors, each pre-service teacher tended to set a new goal of achieving a new professional identity in order to cope with each classroom situation.

It can be seen that the beliefs of each pre-service teacher affected the way they formed their professional identities. However, not only were beliefs vital in shaping their identities but factors around them also closely aligned with their formation processes. According to the Symbolic Interaction Perspective by Blumer (1969), factors affecting how one forms their identity can be categorized into three major “objects” including physical, social and abstract objects. Abstract objects (interpretations of beliefs about teaching or professional development) affect
individual’s actual identity by shaping the ways of thinking. From the findings, it can be seen that these objects related to the concept of actual identity since they influenced each pre-service teacher tremendously in their self-realizations during their practicums. (Physical objects (offices, spaces, and textbooks), social objects (interactions with teachers, students, colleagues, and others) closely linked with designated identities because these objects could direct pre-service teachers to shift and change their roles while engaging in their practicum.

Symbolic Interaction Perspective would imply that the changes in professional identity, from actual to designated, had taken place when the pre-service teachers were challenged to reconstruct their practices to match with their surroundings. According to this viewpoint, people, including teachers, are active agents adjusting their behavior and identity in response to the interpretation they make with surrounding objects. Being active agents in their professional identity formation process was crucial as it influenced the emergence of designated identity—or which teacher’s roles they would like to become. When the pre-service teachers constantly identified themselves as teachers, they evaluated their own practices and were willing to adjust their roles to achieve their goals of being good teachers according to their perspectives.

By observing each participant through their critical incidents, it becomes clear that identities derived from actual identity, stemming from individual’s core beliefs, had been repeatedly mentioned throughout the practicum period. On the other hand, designated identities had been pointed out from time to time when the participants interacted with specific objects, such as physical and social ones. The attempts to enliven their instructional situations led pre-service teachers to modify their professional identity to reach their instructional goals. Setting up a new goal to achieve implies that pre-service teachers simultaneously raise their awareness of their own professional identities. It is assumed that critical incidents ultimately led to the raising of awareness as they allowed the pre-service teachers to make choices about which roles to play in order to better deal with their situations.
As pre-service teachers seek to come to an understanding of what they need to do and how they need to perform to achieve the status of being a good teacher, they raise their awareness by evaluating their choice of teacher’s roles they can possibly play. That means that they considered adopting designated identities because it meant that they were involved in the “meaning” making process and were engaged in making potential choices of selecting designated identity to match with the context. Additionally, this process evolves over time, is influenced by different factors, and varies according to each person’s expectations.

In conclusion, the results obtained from this study can serve to remind pre-service teachers to be aware of their own beliefs about teaching and learning. Since beliefs might influence their practices, they need to constantly monitor themselves while engaging in instruction, together with focusing on teaching content and seeking for appropriate teaching strategies. Furthermore, the results may be beneficial for teacher trainers in that they should be aware of trainees’ core beliefs about teaching and learning prior to engaging in common practices of observing and providing feedback on their practice. It is vital for teacher educators to focus on a related, but somewhat different, set of beliefs in order to facilitate learning to teach. Essentially, the practicum supervisor should also notice factors affecting pre-service teachers to help them make sense of the complexity of teaching and professional identity formation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
This study was funded by Office of Higher Education Commission, Thailand: University Staff Development under Higher Education Research Promotion, USD-HERP.
References


Effects of creative writing instruction: A comparison between face-to-face and online learning settings

Phutsacha Tippanet*
phutsacha@gmail.com

Pornpimol Sukavatee, Ph.D.**
jjpornpimol@gmail.com

Bioprofile: Phutsacha Tippanet received her master degree in TEFL from Chulalongkorn University. She is an EFL high school teacher, and has 6-years’ experience in teaching English.

Pornpimol Sukavatee is a lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University. Her research interests are curriculum and materials development, and technology- supported language learning.

Abstract
This study intended to improve students’ writing ability and create positive writing motivation by integrating online instruction and creative writing skills into a writing course. Thirty-eight of grade 7th students, who were taking basic writing in the second semester academic year 2014 at a provincial high school in Thailand, were randomly divided into two groups: online creative writing group (OCW) and face-to-face creative writing group (FCW). Both groups were required to take a creative writing pre-test and a creative writing post-test. During the 12-week experiment, the OCW worked independently online, while the FCW group received the treatment in a classroom setting. After the experiment, students’ learning and writing motivation were investigated. The results revealed that students’ creative writing ability in both groups was improved due to the experiment. When the OCW group post-test score was compared with the FCW group, there was a significant
difference in the post-test score in favor of FCW instruction. However, it was found that online learning can promote students’ motivation more than face-to-face instruction, and keyboard skill and internet connection affected online students’ motivation.

**Keywords:** creative writing / online instruction

**Introduction**

In today’s world, people change the ways that they communicate (Colford, 1996), and the role of English writing becomes more important as a tool to communicate through technology. However, as previous studies have shown, the Thai students’ English writing ability needs to be improved. For example, Wongsothorn (1993) studied the levels of English skills of Thai students. The participants in this study were 697 grade 9th students, 525 grade 12th students, and 493 first, second, and third year Chulalongkorn University students. The research findings showed that the students’ English skills, especially writing skills, at all levels needed improvement. Prapphal (2003) investigated English proficiency of Thai students and directions of English teaching and learning in Thailand. This study examined the CU-TEP scores of Thai students who graduated from local universities that were submitted to attend the Graduate School of Chulalongkorn University in 2001 and the TOEFL scores of graduates from ASEAN countries. The results revealed that the average English proficiency of Thai students was lower than students from other ASEAN countries. When focused on writing ability of graduates from local universities, the average writing score of graduate students in science, non-science, and international programs were all 50% lower than the average score of students from other countries. The results suggested that Thai students who graduated from local universities in Thailand need more practice in every language skill. Prapphal also suggested that English skills, computer skills, and cultural knowledge should be integrated into language courses in order to help students communicate at a global level.
A reason that may explain why Thai students have such a low ability in English writing is that writing is considered the most complex and difficult skill for language learners (Joshua et al., 2007), and Thai language interfered with students’ writing ability. The errors fell into the following 16 categories: verb tense, word choice, sentence structure, article, preposition, modal/auxiliary, singular/plural form, fragment, verb form, pronoun, run-on sentence, infinitive/gerund, transition, subject-verb agreement, parallel structure, and comparison structure, respectively, and the number of frequent errors made in each type of written tasks; narration, description, and comparison/contrast was different Watcharapunyawong and Usaha (2013). Seren (2011) explored the problems in Thai students’ writing ability at Roi-Et Rajabhat University. He found that most students have problems with writing skills, even at basic sentence level. These writing problems were in vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, content, and organization (Volante, 2008). In addition, students’ lack of writing skill and confidence is another reason leading to the students’ poor writing ability (Phochanapan, 2007).

In writing class, there are many writing assignments that students are expected to do and grammatical rules that students need to focus on. Focusing too much attention on them can block learners’ ideas (Brown, 2007) and these expected writing assignments deny students the opportunity to use their creativity, block learners’ fluency, and do not provide space for students to play with their ideas inside the assigned topic (Fleming, 1991). In effect, students’ writing pieces are controlled, predictable, generic, and unemotional.

Employing creative writing in the classroom can make students’ work livelier and enhance students’ writing ability (Cremin, Gouuch, & Lambirth, 2005). That is because it provides open-ended assignments which can encourage students to take risks and tolerate ambiguities. Besides, creative writing encourages students to convert their thoughts into a form that others may appreciate and enjoy, and the end product helps students to have positive attitudes about themselves as well as about writing in a face-to-face classroom (Bigler, 1980).
Feedback is important in writing class (Carter, 2010; Essex, 1996). Essex (1996) suggested that peer feedback is sometimes useful more than a teacher’s feedback. Having students read each other’s work and comment upon it can help both reader and writer. Writers are provided an audience for their work, and the reader may pick up on techniques of their friends’ writing. The writing class can be a platform for critical thinking skills that students are encouraged to use in their learning. Peer feedback also promotes student interaction in classroom. Thus, this feedback needs to be modeled and monitored. Moreover, students should follow the same pattern in giving feedback; for example, students give positive comments first, and then they give constructive feedback (McNally, 2010). Teachers should emphasize the importance of feedback and make sure that students read their friends’ work slowly and carefully (Carter, 2010). Besides, written feedback on grammatical errors from teachers can play a significant role in improving second language students’ writing, but this role is complex and requires careful reflection to be used effectively (Hyland, 2003).

Motivation is a factor that affects successful language acquisition (Brown, 2007). He explained that each individual second language learner’s motivation is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors include the learners’ attitudes towards the activity, its intrinsic interest, and the perceived relevance and value of the activity. Gardner (1985) defined motivation in language learning as a factor that effects how an individual behaves or works to learn the language due to a desire and satisfaction obtained from this activity. Internet based work can increase students’ motivation because computer and the Internet are a key component of youth culture in this generation, and Internet offers meaningful language and authentic content (Lewis, 2009). This makes students learn language better when the language they are exposed to is meaningful. The internet also creates contexts for language use which, through their authenticity, become purposeful in the eyes of the students. The students actively manipulate the language for a clear and logical purpose.
There are previous studies that pointed out that online activities can enhance students’ motivation and writing abilities. For example, Duan (2011) investigated the relationship between students’ motivation and second language writing. In her study, she mentioned online writing lab as a source for authentic materials where learners can learn about grammar and writing, interact in an authentic English environment, develop their language proficiency through self-access sites, and achieve their writing skills through corpus technology. The result showed a positive correlation between motivation and second language writing. She explained that, in online writing, students are encouraged to be autonomous learners. They play active roles as actors, creators, writers, discussants, and editors. Additionally, Merchant (2003) conducted a study to investigate how e-mail can develop students’ writing ability, motivate children by providing a real purpose for writing, and provide a genuine audience for interactive written discourse. The study showed positive effects on students’ writing ability. She discussed that e-mails encourage more writing ‘from within’ narrative, where students can explore their virtual and assumed identities in depth. Kitchakarn (2012) compared students’ summary writing ability before and after they were taught through blogs. The results revealed that after the students worked together on web-blogs, their English summary writing mean score of the post-test was higher than that of the pretest, and they had positive attitudes towards using web-blogs in learning.

Thus, this study aimed to investigate the effects of using online creative writing ability on grade 7th students by answering the following questions:
1. Is students’ creative writing post-test score after taking online creative writing (OCW) instruction significantly higher than those who took face-to-face creative writing (FCW) instruction?
2. What is the students’ motivation towards each type of instruction?
Objectives

1. To compare grade 7th students’ creative writing ability after taking the online instruction and face-to-face instruction.
2. To compare grade 7th students’ motivation after taking the online instruction and face-to-face instruction.

Research Design

Participants
The participants of this study were 38 grade 7th students who were studying at Kannasootsuksalai School in Suphan Buri province, Thailand. The participants were randomly divided into 2 groups: the online creative writing group (OCW) and the face-to-face creative writing group (FCW).

Procedures
This study was divided into 2 phases. The first phase, the online creative writing instruction and all instruments were developed. Steps in teaching creative writing, free writing, teacher modeling, class writing, sharing writing, opening, discussing, and concluding was integrated with the activities support by web 2.0 tools to create the online creative writing instruction. The second phase was the implementation of the online creative writing instruction and all instruments. The experiment was held in this phase for 12 weeks.

Before the experiment, both OCW group and FCW group took a creative writing pretest. During the experiment, the OCW group worked independently with online creative writing instruction, while the FCW group received face-to-face creative writing in a classroom setting. After the experiment, both groups took a creative writing post-test and completed the motivation questionnaires.
Tests and scoring procedures
In pre- and post-test, students were given writing prompts. They had 90 minutes to plan, write, and revise their stories. Two raters evaluated students’ creative writing ability by following the criteria on the creative writing scoring rubric. There were six traits on the creative writing scoring rubric; characters, setting, organization of plot, creativity, sentence fluency, and convention.

Two creative writing motivation questionnaires were developed for online instruction and face-to-face instruction to measure students’ motivation after the experiment. Both questionnaires were parallel. There were 14 items in each questionnaire to investigate students’ motivation. Item 1 to 13 were rating scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) focus on students’ writing motivation, and Item 14 was a multiple choice item for instruction types for students’ next writing course.

Results
Pretest of the study
The pretest was to ensure the researcher that the OCW and the FCW had the same level of creative writing ability before the experiment. Both groups’ mean scores were statically very close. Therefore, there was not a significant difference between the two groups at the .05 significance level.

Research question 1
The first research question asked if students’ post-test score after taking online creative writing instruction was significantly higher than those who took face-to-face instruction. The results revealed that the FCW post-test mean score ($\bar{x} = 16.21$) was significantly higher than the OCW post-test mean score ($\bar{x} = 14.63$) at the .05 significance level. In other words, the FCW appeared to improve their skill higher than the OCW due to the experiment.
Research question 2

In regards to students’ motivation towards each type of instruction, the results revealed that online creative writing instruction promoted students’ writing motivation more than face-to-face creative writing instruction. The OCW mean score was 4.18, while the FCW mean score was 3.87. OCW showed higher positive motivation than FCW in every statement, except the statement which says “I feel I want to write because of this instruction”.

Discussion

Students’ creative writing ability

The results revealed that the creative writing ability from both groups was improved. This result is in alignment with the previous studies conducted by Dai (2010) and Temizkan (2011). When considering the post-test score, there was a significant improvement after students took OCW; however, students in the face-to-face creative writing instruction (FCW) seemed to have better performance on the post-test.

With both OCW and FCW, after students submitted their work, they waited approximately 24 hours to get feedback from their teacher. In OCW, the feedback went directly to students’ blackboard accounts, while students in FCW received handwritten feedback directly on their written work. In other words, both groups received text feedback from the teacher in an asynchronous way. In OCW, after students received feedback from the teacher, they did not respond or ask any questions with regards to the feedback, nor follow the teacher’s feedback, although the tools were provided to do so. In FCW, there was some interaction between the teacher and the students while the teacher was walking around the classroom to check students’ progress. These interactions could encourage students to write more, give students some ideas, or help with some grammatical errors. On the other hand, in the OCW, the teacher was only able to see students’ progress as a progress percentage on the class dashboard. The teacher saw the finished work and then gave
some feedback on that work. This lack of synchronous feedback could affect students’ achievement in OCW as Hockly and Clandfield (2010) discuss; teachers should offer constant encouragement in an online environment. Also, teachers should give individual feedback and celebrate individual and group achievements (Carter, 2010).

Besides missing synchronous interaction between teacher and students in OCW, those students missed synchronous interaction with their classmates as well. During the last stage of each instruction, students had the opportunity to share their writing in order to give and receive feedback to and from their friends. In OCW, after students published their work online, their work was shown in the online class library, a page where students’ published stories were collected, to allow classmates to read them. Students used web 2.0 tools as a platform to give comments. They also gave a heart emoticon to the work that they liked most. In FCW, after students finished creating their story books, they displayed their work on tables in the classroom. Each student had a heart-shaped paper to give to the work that they liked most. Students mingled around the class to read their friends’ works, gave comments, and gave a heart-shaped paper to the work that they liked most. Students from both groups needed to consider whether that story had a good plot, well-developed characters, a clear setting, and a twisted conflict before they gave a heart emoticon or a heart-shaped paper to their friends.

From the observation, there were interactions between readers and writers in FCW such as asking for clarification and using gestures to check their understanding. Once the readers commented, the writers asked for in-depth explanations on how they could improve their work. Writers and readers came to agreements on how to improve the story. Then, the writers edited their stories based on the feedback that they agreed to follow. This was unlike the OCW where the readers posted their comments but there were not any replies or questions on the feedback. The sample of FCW student’s written feedback is presented below:

*Fun story. But why the boy doesn’t use his skill to escape.*
The sample of follow up conversation between a reader and a writer in FCW:

Reader: What can the boy do?
Writer: He can run fast. He can fly. He can see super far.
Reader: But he used a bomb to escape. He can fly out.
Writer: Ha ha ha. I want to make it like in an action movie.
Reader: You can use a bomb. Then, fly out and arrest all bad people.

This was unlike the OCW where the readers posted their comments but there were not any replies or questions on the feedback.

Picture 1: Sample of OCW students’ feedback

Guardado and Shi (2007) discussed in their study that lack of interaction between readers and writers could turn online peer feedback into one-way communication. This created misunderstandings and left the important comments unaddressed. Likewise, Liu and Sadler (2003) found out in their study that face-to-face communication is more effective than online (MOO) communication. Jurkowitz (2008) discussed that there are nonverbal and social cues that help ESL students understand the meaning of feedback in face-to-face situations. Wang (2008) studied the effects of a synchronous communication tool (yahoo messenger) on online learners’ sense of community and their multimedia authoring skills. The results suggested that the synchronous communication tool did not create the same sense of community as in a face-to-face environment. Therefore, face-to-face students had a stronger sense of community than online students had because of lack of interaction between readers and writers for the online students.

Although the interaction between writers and readers could occur using the web 2.0 tools, students in the present study seemed to miss this opportunity. The reason for missing this opportunity could be that online peer feedback is not easy
for ESL students. ESL students are challenged not only linguistically but also by the demand to review each other’s writing critically (Guardado & Shi, 2007). In this study, the participants were in the beginning level so they might have had difficulty giving comments and asking for clarification, especially in an online environment. Therefore, the OCW students provided simple surface feedback to their friends and they added emoticons along with their feedback, while the FCW students provided more thoughts in their feedback. Furthermore, students in FCW used other strategies such as gestures and asking questions to check their understanding. On the other hand, students in OCW could not use gestures in an online environment, and asking questions or providing effective feedback seemed to be difficult for them. Moreover, according to the interviews, some students found typing their assignments online took a long time. This could affect students’ creative writing ability as well. Van Leeuwen and Gabriel (2007) discussed that students who worked with notebooks and pencils could maintain their focus on a writing task longer than students who worked on computers, and students with poorer keyboard skills could be left behind.

**Students’ motivation**

When investigating students' motivation towards each type of instruction, the results showed that OCW was able to motivate students for learning and writing English better than FCW. This result confirms the findings of previous studies conducted by Duan (2011), Kitchakarn (2012), Cummings (2004), and Merchant (2003). According to the results of the motivation questionnaire, OCW students had more enjoyment and less anxiety about writing and learning than FCW students. This is in agreement with Pennington (1993), Lewis (2009), and Wilcox, Yagelski, and Yu (2014). Besides, Mills (2005) discussed that the multimedia features of the World Wide Web can motivate students to work with information and content, and to reflect on the material. Likewise, Lewis (2009) explains that Internet-based work can increase motivation because of its colorful and exciting interface.
Although the OCW group showed higher positive motivation than the FCW group in every statement, FCW had a higher score for a statement which says “I feel I want to write because of this instruction”. In this statement, the OCW mean score was 3.58, while the FCW mean score was 3.79. This could be because, according to the interview, some of the OCW students had poorer keyboarding skills. In addition, some of the OCW students faced internet connection problems when they submitted their work as well.

Thus, the results of the present study do not support several previous studies that showed a positive relationship between students’ achievement and their motivation (Amrai, Motlagh, Zalani, & Parhon, 2011; Hashemian & Heidari, 2013; Özgür & Griffiths, 2012). Hartnett (2012) suggested that the relationship between achievement and online motivation is more complex than in a traditional classroom as there are many factors involved such as the nature of tasks, assessments approach, and students’ participation. In her study, students’ participation was used as an indicator of motivation. The results revealed that there was a relationship between achievement and active online participation, and there was a relationship between achievement and passive participation as well. However, in this present study, anxiety (Alpert & Haber, 1960) seemed to be an important factor affecting students’ creative writing ability and motivation.

There is a negative relationship between anxiety and motivation (Brown, 2007b). In other words, having high anxiety could lead to low motivation. This claim could support the findings of the motivation questionnaire since FCW seemed to have higher anxiety and lower motivation for learning and writing.

As discussed in a previous session, for the FCW the readers gave comments to the writers in person, unlike the OCW students who posted their feedback in the comments box. This face-to-face feedback could create anxiety for students in FCW because students could feel nervous in giving feedback and receiving negative feedback (Guardado & Shi, 2007). They explained that giving feedback in an asynchronous way could be beneficial for students in some cultures. That is because
students could avoid giving direct comments to their friends. Furthermore, Mills (2005) discussed that online discussions can increase the participation of students who are shy or uncomfortable speaking in front of the whole class. This could support the findings from the motivation questionnaire which showed that students in FCW felt anxious when their friends read their work in their presence and when they had to share ideas in the classroom. The results from the motivation questionnaire also pointed out that students in FCW had more anxiety than those in OCW when they submitted their work. Rezaei and Jafari (2014) explained that the biggest cause of anxiety were cognitive anxiety and the fear of teacher's negative feedback. In conclusion, anxiety could be the reason that explains why 21% of students who received face-to-face instruction wanted to have online instruction in their future course.

Although anxiety is associated with low performance among second language learners, this anxiety could drive students to perform better. Having the right amount of anxiety, not too much or too little, could lead to good performance; anxiety could lead to intrinsic motivation that drives students to perform better on an exam (Khalaila, 2015). Alpert and Haber (1960) classified types of anxieties as facilitative and debilitative anxiety. Facilitative anxiety is seen as a drive to improve performance, while debilitating anxiety blocks a learner’s achievement. In a study conducted by Bailey (as cited in Brown, 2007b) on competitiveness and anxiety in second language learning, facilitative anxiety was one of the keys to success, closely related to competitiveness.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following are some aspects that could be investigated in further studies:

First, for further study, the researcher recommends considering a mixed method research methodology. Conducting an experiment and an interview could bring more precise results about students’ achievement and motivation.
Second, researchers should train students on how to give effective feedback in an online environment. A combination of online and face-to-face feedback can help students improve their writing skills. Therefore, students could benefit from working in both online and face-to-face environments. For instance, students can work at their own pace and think about the feedback in asynchronous communication such as message boxes, comment boxes, or discussion boards. Also, students will benefit from using nonverbal and social cues in negotiation of meaning.

Third, the researcher recommends conducting a study with participants who possess a higher English proficiency level which could eliminate the factors that may affect the results such as relying on spell check or writing support tools. Also, students with a higher English proficiency level could communicate to their classmates better than students with a lower English proficiency level. This could make students provide more thoughtful responses and create an in-depth discussion online, as in a face-to-face situation. Also, students could make the best use of synchronous and asynchronous tools offered in web 2.0 tools.

Fourth, blended creative writing courses could be considered for further research. According to the discussion, it seemed students in online instruction missed the benefits of using synchronous interaction. The integration between face-to-face and online instruction could therefore offer the benefit of the two types of instruction.
References


motivation, test anxiety, and academic achievement among nursing students: Mediating and moderating effects. Nurse Education Today, 35(3), 432-438. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2014.11.001


Prapphal, K. (2003). English Proficiency of Thai learners and Directions of English Teaching and Learning in Thailand. The English Teacher, 6(2), 144-


Oral English proficiency of Chinese university students of different English levels in expressing their native culture

Meixiao Lin*
linmeixiao@hotmail.com

Bioprofile: Meixiao Lin holds an Ed.D (doctor in education) in TESOL from the University of Leicester, the UK. She teaches College English at Foshan University, Guangdong Province, China. Her primary research interest is teaching English as a foreign language.

Abstract
The paper addresses the issue of oral English proficiency of the first-year students (FYSs) and second-year students (SYSs) at the university level in communicating Chinese culture from the perspective of conversation analysis. To examine their performance in this regard, group discussion data about the traditional festival, Chinese New Year, produced by FYSs and SYSs in the classroom was collected for assessing the similarities and differences in their performance when they talked about this festival. The results indicate that SYSs performed better than FYSs when expressing Chinese culture orally in English, but overall the oral English proficiency of the Chinese students in this aspect appeared to be unsatisfactory as they sometimes switched to Chinese in their conversations.

Keywords: Chinese students; oral English skills; native culture; intercultural communicative competence

* Foshan University, No.18, Jiangwan 1 Road, Chancheng Region, Foshan City, Guangdong Province, China, 528000
Introduction
As China’s reform and economic globalization go further, intercultural communication is becoming more and more frequent. *College English Curriculum Teaching Requirements* (2007) in China state that English knowledge, English proficiency, intercultural communication and learning strategies are the main contents of College English education. It is clear that helping students develop their intercultural communicative competence is an indispensable part of language teaching to cater for the current situation. In the EFL context, it is necessary to equip students with certain language knowledge and the target culture, and help them improve their proficiency in expressing their native culture in intercultural communication. In order to examine university students’ English proficiency in expressing Chinese culture, some studies (Han & Zheng, 2008; Xiao et al., 2010; Cui & Yang, 2011; Lin, 2015) have been carried out in the EFL context and the results reveal that the students’ overall performance was unsatisfactory. The quantitative research (Han & Zheng, 2008; Xiao et al., 2010; Cui & Yang, 2011) explored the students’ proficiency in expressing Chinese culture in written English. To gain an in-depth understanding in this regard, Lin (2015) conducted a conversation analysis of Chinese students’ oral English skills after they had finished the required two-year English study at college and their English proficiency had reached intermediate level. Following Lin’s study, to obtain a more comprehensive picture of their oral skills in expressing Chinese culture, this study attempts to examine the similarities and differences of the first-year students’ and the second-year students’ oral performance. Specifically, the paper addresses the following research question:

*How well can the Chinese university students of different English levels express their native culture orally in English in the EFL context?*

*Intercultural communicative competence*
Some scholars (e.g., Canale & Swain, 1980; Byram, 1997; Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006) put forward some models of communicative competence from different
perspectives. To help learners achieve intercultural communicative competence through listening, speaking, reading and writing, Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor (2006) proposed a model of communicative competence on a basis of previous literature. The core competence of this model is the ability to explain and create a spoken or written text as the manifestations of the four skills. The model consists of linguistic competence, discourse competence, pragmatic competence, intercultural competence and strategic competence. Linguistic competence is viewed as the ability to apply the knowledge about all the elements of the linguistic system to explain or produce a spoken or written discourse. Discourse competence means the ability to produce a spoken or written text in a cohesive and coherent manner for a situational context and specific purpose by selecting and sequencing utterances or sentences. Pragmatic competence is viewed as the ability to use the language like speech acts appropriately in particular contexts and to understand the function or illocutionary force that the spoken text performs. Intercultural competence means the ability to explain or create a spoken or written text in a specific sociocultural situation, and it includes cultural knowledge such as cultural differences and similarities, cultural awareness in intercultural communication. Strategic competence is considered as the ability to apply learning strategies in their language learning and use communication strategies to solve communication breakdowns. In the view of Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor, all components are interrelated, and some progress in one component may contribute to overall progress in the whole construct of communicative competence. The model suggests that cultural dimension is an important feature of intercultural communicative competence.

Similar to the meaning of Usó-Juan and Martínez-Flor’s intercultural competence, Byram’s intercultural competence model (1997) indicates that the knowledge about a foreign culture and one’s own culture and about the relationship between two cultures is fundamental in intercultural communication. “Intercultural communication occurs when large and important cultural differences create
dissimilar interpretations and expectations about how to communicate competently” (Samovar & Porter, 2003, p. 59). A key property of communication is cultural and “much of communication is influenced by the linguistic and cultural socialization process in one’s home environment” (Jackson, 2014, p. 90). As Liddicoat (2005) argued, learners’ home cultures are viewed as an indispensible part of interacting with a new culture from an intercultural perspective. Therefore, to be interculturally competent, it is crucial for language learners to know about the features and values about their own and the target culture as well as vocabulary and grammar rules.

Culture is a complex concept. It can be viewed as the total way of life that particular groups of people have, and it includes what they think, say, do and make (Kohls, 1996). China has a 5000-year history, and the history endows China with a profound culture and distinctive customs. Chinese culture includes arts and crafts, festivals, architecture, cuisine, medicine, religion and philosophy, etc. Chinese people celebrate a number of traditional festivals like the Spring Festival, Lantern Festival, Tomb-sweeping Festival, Double Seventh Festival and Mid-autumn Festival. Each festival has its own typical features and customs, and people express their desires for a happy and satisfactory life. The festivals are a cultural inheritance and the embodiment of ethnic features. It is necessary to explore how well university students of different English levels can express in English the unique cultural features of Chinese traditional festivals such as their origins, traditional food, activities, customs and greetings in the communication process.

**Research methods**

**Participants**

The participants were 12 first-year students (FYSs) and 12 second-year students (SYSs) specializing in International Economy and Trade in a Chinese university. There were 3 groups of FYSs and 3 groups of SYSs with four students in each. FYSs just enrolled at the university and started their College English course. They
were identified as low, average- or high-achievers according to their national college entrance written and oral English exam scores. They were broken up into groups of mixed ability with comparable English level. Their English level was considered as pre-intermediate.

SYSs had studied College English for two years. They all took CET-4 (national College English Test Level 4) and had a mock CET-4 speaking test at the end of their second year. Based on their CET-4 and their mock CET-4 speaking test scores, they were divided into groups of mixed ability with similar English level. As their CET-4 average scores were 447 (the full scores are 710) and their oral English proficiency reached Grade B on average, their English proficiency had reached intermediate level on the whole.

**Data collection: group discussion**

Group work can provide opportunities for students to exchange ideas with their peers. This can offer information about the interactional features of their oral communication and real English proficiency. One task for group discussion was developed for this study, and it was about the biggest festival in China, the Spring Festival. The task was described in Chinese (see Appendix), and discussion suggestions were provided including the origin of the festival, preparations, traditional colours, activities, traditional food and blessings. These suggestions offered the basic feature of the festival, and the students could use them for their discussion or they could have their own ideas. FYSs carried out the task in groups just after they started their English course at college while SYSs did it at the end of their second year. All of students in class carried out the task in groups as they usually did. They were asked to interact and exchange ideas on the topic for about 8 minutes. The groups of FYSs and SYSs chosen for this study had been told beforehand that they would be digitally recorded, but they would not be tested.
Conversation analysis

Conversation analysis views naturally occurring interaction as the basic data for analysis. Mainly based on the conventions developed by Atkinson & Heritage (1984), the recordings were transcribed verbatim. In the transcriptions FYs1-12 and SYSs1-12 are used to substitute the student names to ensure anonymity. Lin’s classification (2015) of the students’ typical features of expressing culture was adopted for this study. The features were classified as correct expression, approximation, cultural explanation and switch to Chinese. Some illustrative excerpts will be used to exemplify these features.

1) **Correct expression.** This means that a word or a phrase was correctly used for expressing a cultural feature of the festival.

2) **Approximation.** The student used a word or phrase to convey her or his message that was close to the actual cultural meaning of the festival.

1) **Cultural explanation.** When the student talked about a cultural feature related to the festival, its cultural connotation in the context was given.

2) **Switch to Chinese.** When the student talked about a cultural feature in Chinese and did not give any explanation of its meaning in English, this was considered as switch to Chinese. Repeated Chinese in the same utterance was counted only once. (Lin, 2015, p. 3-4)

The results

The features of the English oral proficiency of FYs and SYSs were compared to assess the similarities and differences in their performance in talking about Chinese New Year. SYSs’ discussion data and excerpts are adopted from Lin’s study (2015). The main features in the students’ accounts of the festival are summarized in the table.
Table 1: Main features in the students’ accounts of the festival

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Correct expression</th>
<th>Approximation</th>
<th>Cultural explanation</th>
<th>Switch to Chinese</th>
<th>Correct expression</th>
<th>Approximation</th>
<th>Cultural explanation</th>
<th>Switch to Chinese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correct expression
As shown in the table above, when talking about Chinese New Year, FYSs used only 7 correct expressions in total. These expressions were dumpling, firework, the Spring Festival, lucky money in the red envelope and lion dance. Excerpt (1) is an example of this. (The features shown in all the excerpts are in italics and bold.)

Excerpt (1)
FYs2: In that day we show our good wishes to everybody no matter who you are, family, friends and even strangers.
FYs3: Lucky money
FYs2: Lucky money in the red envelope.
FYs1: Yes.
FYs4: We should give lucky money to the children in the red envelope. In the street we can see lion dance and we fire the firework. It is very beautiful and exciting.

The number of correct expressions used by SYSs doubled that of FYSs’ discussions (16 versus 7). SYSs seemed to be better at using correct words and phrases to talk about the cultural features of Chinese New Year in groups. Apart from dumpling, firework, the Spring Festival, lucky money in the red envelope and lion dance, they were able to use dragon dance, visit relatives and Chinese New Year’s Eve. This is exemplified by Excerpt (2).
Excerpt (2)
SYS4: What will you guys do during the Spring Festival?
SYS1: I received pocket money, oh lucky money in the red envelope. In a red envelope there was one hundred yuan, so happy.
SYS3: It’s a traditional thing in China. Parents or grandparents would like to give the lucky money to children. Wish the children can get a high mark this year and have a healthy body.

…
SYS1: Is there any special activity?
SYS2: It is very common to see dragon dance and lion dance. Dragon and lion are symbol of China, so I think it’s very amazing.

Approximation
The numbers of approximations used by both groups were the same (10 and 10). When they did not know how to say target culturally-loaded words and phrases in English, the students sometimes used similar expressions to talk about the cultural features. Unable to say stroll around the flower street, do a thorough cleaning, have a family reunion dinner and Spring Festival Gala, both SYSs and FYSs could instead say go to the flower street, clean the house, have a big dinner together and Spring Festival Party, which were close to, but not the exact meanings for Chinese New Year. This can be illustrated by Excerpt (3) from FYSs and Excerpt (4) from SYSs.

Excerpt (3)
FYS7: In my opinion, we always eat dumplings and 汤圆 (tr: rice balls) in our Spring Festival. On the eve of the Spring Festival we always eat and have a meal together. After the meal we will see the Spring Festival Party together and we always go to the street we will play the firework and so on.

Excerpt (4)
SYS3: They also eat fish. There is a traditional word 年年有余 (tr: there is an abundance each year) in China. 余 is the same accent of fish in Chinese, so they will prefer to eat fish in their 除夕 (tr: Chinese New Year’s Eve) midnight. They will eat they will have a big dinner together in the 除夕 midnight and eat some eat some food which has special meaning.
The phrases *have a meal together* and *have a big dinner together* used in the excerpts just have the meaning of eating together, and do not indicate the traditional meaning of members reuniting with their families on Chinese New Year’s Eve.

**Cultural explanation**

Chinese people like to express their good wishes by using some elements, and the elements have their specific cultural connotations for a festival. When talking about the Spring Festival, the students provided cultural connotations of some elements in the context. As shown in the table above, FYs provided 5 cultural connotations related to these elements: *red colour, fish, chicken* and *firework*. This can be shown by Excerpts (5) & (6) below. It seems that they could provide basic information for very limited number of cultural elements.

Excerpt (5)

FYS3: 要讲有什么春节活动，对吗？(tr: I need to talk about some activities during Chinese New Year, don’t I?) In my family we also eat fish. **The Fish that means that make you have more for every year**. There are many activities on the on the Spring Festival.

Excerpt (6)

FYS10: The people often eat chicken and fish. **That means that we will have a lot of money in the new year**. In the spring festival we will say some say some we will wish others healthy and happy.

In contrast, SYSs provided almost 4 times as many cultural connotations as FYs did (19 to 5). SYSs could express the cultural meanings of the following elements: *red colour, orange tree, dumpling, lucky money, reunion dinner, fish, 福 (blessing), 年糕 (rice cake) and do a thorough cleaning*. Excerpts (7) and (8) are examples of this. Compared with FYs, SYSs were able to talk about a lot more cultural elements.
Excerpt (7)
SYS12: What is the traditional food?
SYS9: Dumplings.
SYS11: Oh, yes. We also have 年糕 (tr: rice cake), a kind of cake. It means we can grow taller.

Excerpt (8)
SYS9: I agree with you. The important point is the family spend some time together. What about you?
SYS11: It depends on which period I’m going to. Before the spring festival, we clean the whole house. We also put 福 (tr: blessing) on the door. the Chinese word 福 on the red paper and means happiness.

Switch to Chinese
When they had linguistic difficulties talking about some cultural features, the students switched to Chinese and did not give any explanation of them in English. As presented in the table above, both FYSs and SYSs sometimes switched to Chinese, and obviously FYSs used more Chinese in their discussions (34 to 28). This can be illustrated by Excerpts (9) & (10) from FYSs and Excerpts (11) & (12) from SYSs. Meanwhile, their switches to Chinese fell into the following categories: culturally-loaded expressions, turn-management, asking for confirmation and asking questions (numbered below). When they had no idea about a culturally-loaded word or phrase in English, FYSs and SYSs tended to switch to Chinese ([1], [3], [7] and [8]). Apart from this, FYSs sometimes monitored their conversation in Chinese ([2] and [4]), asking for confirmation in Chinese ([5]) and asking questions in Chinese ([6]). It seemed more difficult for FYSs to sustain the conversation in English when they discussed Chinese New Year.

Excerpt (9)
FYS7: In my opinion, we always eat the dumplings and 汤圆 (tr: rice balls) in our Spring Festival. On the eve of the Spring Festival we always eat and have a meal together. After the meal we will see the Spring Festival ceremony together and we always go to the street we will play the firework and so on.
FYS6: In my hometown we often eat 年糕 (tr: rice cake), 煎堆 (tr: sesame balls) and 松糕 (tr: sponge cake). On the eve of the Spring Festival we often eat dumplings. 汤圆 stand for 团圆 (tr: reunion).

[1. Culturally-loaded expressions]

Excerpt (10)
FYS2: 我说了过年前，你问我好了。 (tr: I just talked about the activities before Chinese New Year. You can ask me some questions.)

[2. Turn-management]
FYS1: On the Spring Festival what will you do?
FYS2: My family will have a dinner together. After the dinner, we will turn on the TV and watch the TV on CCTV. 刘谦 (a magician from Taiwan) will give us a magic and act famous performance to us. Our whole family will enjoy the programs on that day. On our table we can see dumplings and 汤圆 (tr: rice balls).

[3. Culturally-loaded expression]
FYS3: 让我讲吃鱼。 (tr: Let me talk about having fish.) [4. Turn-management]
FYS4: OK.
FYS3: 要讲有什么春节活动，对吗？(tr: I need to talk about some activities during Chinese New Year, don’t I?) In my family we also we also eat fish. The Fish that means that make you have more for every year. There are many activities on the on the Spring Festival. [5. Asking for confirmation]

(Laugh)
FYS4: What will you do?
FYS3: 哪个什么什么？ (tr: What is it?) In my hometown we usually hold a big ceremony to celebrate the Spring Festival. What do you do?

[6. Asking a question]

Excerpt (11)
SYS7: During the Spring Festival, people eat dumplings and 汤圆 (tr: rice balls). We also eat 年糕 (tr: rice cake).
SYS6: I know dumpling and 汤圆. Dumplings are salt and 汤圆 is sweet. When we meet each other on the day, we say “恭喜发财，年年有余”. We wish you earn much money and you will have enough food to eat all the year round. We also say “身体健康，万事如意” (tr: may you have good health and everything goes well for you).

[7. Culturally-loaded expressions]
Excerpt (12)
SYS1: What do you guys do before Chinese New Year?
SYS2: Oh, that’s a good question. Before the Chinese New Year, we will sweep all the houses. It means sweep all the old and bad things and bring into the new and lucky things. We also decorate the house with 春联 (tr: New Year Scrolls) and put 福 (tr: blessing) on the door.

[8. Culturally-loaded expressions]

The main findings in this study can be summed up as follows. The number of approximations used for expressing the cultural features in these two groups was the same (10 and 10). Compared with FYSs, SYSs could use more correct expressions (16 to 7) and provide a lot more cultural connotations of the festival (19 to 5), and switch to Chinese less frequently (28 to 34). SYSs performed better than FYSs when expressing Chinese culture orally in English, but on the whole the oral English proficiency of the Chinese students in expressing their native culture appeared to be unsatisfactory as they sometimes switched to Chinese in their conversations.

Discussion and pedagogical implications
As expected, the results indicate that SYSs did better than FYSs in expressing Chinese New Year orally in English. SYSs had studied College English for two years, and they had better English proficiency than FYSs on the whole. College English teaching aims at developing students’ communicative competence. With China’s economic development and more frequent international exchanges, university students are aware of the significance of improving their English communicative competence for their future careers. It was likely that in the College English course SYSs had been offered opportunities to draw on their linguistic knowledge to engage in linguistic experimentation and to actively communicate with others, and this could help to contribute to their productive proficiency. As a result, SYSs were able to use more correct expressions and provide a lot more cultural connotations regarding Chinese New Year in English, showing a better understanding about the festival. On the contrary, although Chinese New Year is a
familiar topic to FYSs, they used fewer correct culturally-loaded expressions and gave limited information about cultural connotations. This was probably due to their limited English proficiency and thus they could not express what they knew about Chinese New Year well in English.

Both FYSs and SYSs sometimes switched to Chinese, and FYSs used more Chinese in their group discussions. One of their common problems was a lack of target culturally-loaded vocabulary items. In order to obtain good marks in the annual college entrance English exam, FYSs likely focused solely on exam materials in high school and neglected some practical English skills such as describing their native culture. SYSs’ difficulty in expressing target culturally-loaded expressions was probably due to the fact that there are not many native culture contents in the present College English textbooks (Zhang, 2013; Wang, 2014) and that there has been an absence of teaching Chinese culture in the College English classroom (Cui, 2009; Yuan, 2006).

It is necessary to integrate more Chinese culture into the English textbooks and supplement materials about Chinese culture in class so as to help students improve their English proficiency in expressing Chinese culture. The practice in this aspect can be conducted through Nation’s four-strand framework (2007, p. 1): meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development. In Nation’s view, meaning-focused input strand means that through listening and reading can learners acquire knowledge and accordingly use the language in a receptive manner. Contrary to the first strand, meaning-focused output refers to learners’ own production of the language through speaking and writing. Fluency development strand is to help learners become fluent in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output and fluency development are viewed as meaning-focused activities, and the learners focus on receiving and communicating messages. Different from them, language-focused input is viewed as deliberate learning of language features and learning strategies.
Firstly, the design of Chinese culture practice should provide opportunities for students to interact with their peers so as to offer sources of meaningful-focused input and stimulate meaningful-focused output. It is argued that cooperative learning is carefully-structured group work, which would increase students’ opportunities to engage in use of language in the classroom (Lin, 2009). There are quite a few cooperative learning techniques created and used in the language classroom such as Jigsaw II (Slavin, 1986) and the Structural Approach (Kagan, 1989). In Jigsaw II, students are asked to assume responsibility for a specific part of a reading text. First they study their own individual materials, then talk about their materials in “expert group”, go back to their home group and introduce their own materials in turn. The Structural Approach (Kagan, 1989) includes techniques like Think-Pair-Share, Timed-Pair-Share and Three-Step Interview, which can promote exchanges between students. These cooperative learning techniques would increase quantities of communication, and the students would receive meaningful input, but also be pushed to produce meaningful output. Practice generated from these techniques can also help learners become fluent in English. For example, Timed-Pair-Share provides the student with an opportunity to talk on his own within designated time.

Secondly, to help students convey the messages of Chinese culture, it is very important to have some language-focused learning activities such as the deliberate learning of English expressions about Chinese culture and communication strategy training. The input of English vocabulary items would help promote their spoken English in fluency and accuracy when they talk about Chinese culture. When the learners in the EFL context encounter communication difficulties in expressing Chinese culture, strategies such as “approximation” and “paraphrasing” may help them reduce the use of Chinese and improve the quality of their oral communication. When the students do not know how to say the target words about Chinese culture, “paraphrasing” can help them describe those words in other linguistic forms so as to communicate their intended meanings. As for
FYSs, they had difficulty not only in talking about the target culturally-loaded vocabulary, but also in managing their group discussions. Strategies such as “turn taking”, “asking for confirmation” and “appealing for help” can help them keep the conversation going and sustain the conversation in English.

It is also important to raise students’ intercultural communication awareness in the EFL context. FYSs and SYSs sometimes switched to Chinese in their group discussions, having no English explanations of some Chinese characters, which may cause comprehension problems to native English speakers. Chinese and western cultures are different, so some elements are unique in Chinese culture. These elements may not have equivalents in English and they are not familiar to native English speakers. For example, in Excerpts (9) and (11), the Chinese characters “汤圆 (rice balls)” and “年糕” (rice cake) are mentioned, but the student did not provide any English meaning, which will not make any sense to many native English speakers. When the Chinese cultural elements do not exist in the target culture and native English speakers have no such knowledge, it is necessary to introduce these cultural elements and their connotations to native English speakers. This needs to help learners raise their awareness of the differences between their native culture and the target culture, and learn to identify and interpret areas of non-understanding in intercultural communication. It would be helpful to have students listen to their recordings or look at the transcriptions of their conversations about Chinese culture, then encourage them to identify and evaluate the expressions that may cause non-understanding or meaninglessness to native speakers, and finally provide them with suggestions to improve their oral interactions.

One limitation of the study was the small sample size and the findings need to be treated with caution. It would be worth investigating Chinese students’ oral English skills in expressing Chinese culture during the face-to-face communication with native English speakers. This would produce a real picture of Chinese students’ oral performance in intercultural communication. The students in
this study had difficulty in saying some culturally-loaded items in English. It would be a worthwhile focus to examine the impact of oral communication strategy training on the improvement of Chinese EFL learners’ oral proficiency in expressing their native culture.

Concluding remarks
The study explored the oral English skills of Chinese university students of different English levels in expressing Chinese culture from the perspective of conversation analysis. The results suggest that the Chinese students’ oral proficiency appeared to be unsatisfactory in expressing Chinese culture. As Cui (2009) argues, a learner’s command of the target culture is based on the understanding of his native culture, and learning to describe his home culture in English would help him improve his overall communicative competence. It is indispensible to integrate Chinese culture into the College English classroom to improve their intercultural competence.
References


Liddicoat, A. J. (2005). Teaching languages for intercultural communication. In D. Cunningham & A. Hatoss (Eds.), *An international perspective on language policies, practices and proficiencies* (pp. 201-214). Belgrave:
Editura Funda_iei Academice AXIS & Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes.


Usó-Juan, E. & Martínez-Flor, A. (2006). Approaches to language learning and teaching: Towards acquiring communicative competence through the four skills. In E. Usó-Juan & A. Martínez-Flor. (Eds.), *Current trends in the development and teaching of the four language skills* (pp. 3-26). Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.


Appendix

The Topic for Group Discussion

In Chinese

Topic A: 中国春节

请在小组内谈论中国春节，可参考下列关键词来谈论，同时可谈论体现春节文化特色的其它方面。

春节来源："年"的民间传说

过年前：大扫除、贴春联、贴“福”字、逛花街、买年花

传统颜色：红色

除夕：团圆饭、春节晚会

传统食物：饺子、年糕、汤圆

春节活动：拜年、给小孩压岁钱、放鞭炮、舞狮

祝福语：恭喜发财、年年有余、身体健康、万事如意

In English

Topic A: Chinese New Year

Please talk about Chinese New Year in the group. There are some suggestions you can talk about, and you can also talk about the other cultural aspects of Chinese New Year.

Origin: the folklore about Nian
Before Chinese New Year: do a thorough cleaning, paste Spring Festival Scrolls, paste the character “blessing”, stroll around the flower street, buy New Year flowers

**Traditional colour:** red

**Chinese New Year’s Eve:** family reunion dinner, Spring Festival Gala

**Traditional food:** dumpling, rice cake, rice ball

**Activities:** pay sb. a happy new year, give children lucky money in a red envelope, set off firecracker, perform lion dance

**Blessings:** May you have a good fortune; may you always get more than you wish for every year; may you have good health; everything goes well
Development of Task-Based English oral communication course for EFL undergraduate tourism students

Nisita Rittapirom*
lovely_nisita@hotmail.com

Bioprofile: Nisita Rittapirom is a Ph.D. candidate in English Language Studies at the Department of English, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, Thailand. She is a lecturer at the Department of English, Songkhla Rajabhat University. Her research interests include ESP, course development, task-based language learning, and World Englishes.

Abstract
Due to the establishment of ASEAN Economic Community in 2015 and Thai graduates’ insufficient English language proficiency for the workplace, this study proposed the development of an English for field experience preparation course in the hospitality sector, mainly for Songkhla Rajabhat University, Thailand. It was based on an in-depth need analysis gained from semi-structured interviews with 15 hotel managerial positions and 20 alumni working in the hotel industry, a questionnaire distributed to 60 senior tourism students with field experience, documentary research and site observation. The main purpose was to obtain information on target tasks frequently performed by hotel front desk, actual language use, oral communicative difficulties, and strategies used in this local context of Southern Thailand where most of the communications were between non-native speakers. Based on the findings, the course components were presented taking into consideration the needs of the senior students and the

* Department of English, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Songkhla Rajabhat University, Kanjanawanit Road, Amphoe Muang, Songkhla Thailand 90000
stakeholders’ with an adaptation to English as a lingua-franca oriented toward English teaching and evaluation, emphasizing language features that concern intelligibility, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, and other related issues. The implication of this study is that ESP teachers in an ASEAN context need to think of revising the existing curriculums to prepare their students for future professions crucial for global communication.

**Keywords:** English for Specific Purposes, Needs Analysis, Task-Based Language Teaching, Course Development, English as a Lingua Franca

**Introduction**

To maintain international competitiveness in a globalized world, English has been widely used as a communication tool in almost every section of our society, ranging from the business and international business sectors to the education, tourism and hospitality sectors (Muller and Brown, 2012). The dramatically increasing significant lingua franca role of English as the official language for both international and intra-communication between the ten nations which make up the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Kachru, 2005 cited in Kirkpatrick, 2010) has brought similar concerns and considerable impact to many countries, including those in ASEAN. Being responsible for the tourism aspect of the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community, Thailand is pursuing ASEAN’s vision to achieve a free flow of tourism services; thus resulting in the removal of all limitations to market access and national movements in the service sectors. Such establishment of the service liberalization definitely plays a significant role in education. As English will be the means of communication, the ability to use the language to communicate becomes crucial for both regional competitiveness and cultural understanding for all ASEAN country members including Thailand. The Ministry of National Education in each ASEAN country except Indonesia has launched a series of new education reforms and adopted their
curriculum to equip their citizens with the English language skills necessary for employment opportunities (Kirkpatrick, 2010; Muller and Brown, 2012).

Despite the government’s policy changes to shift the focus towards teaching English as a tool for engaging in communication, the teaching practice of English for Specific Purposes courses in the Thai higher education context has been limited to specialized lexicons, and grammar structures. This approach leads to low motivation in the students’ English studies; thus, resulting in poor performance later when they use English in their future professions. A number of studies indicate the lack of Thai graduates in English oral communications and the failure to meet the demand of stakeholders in the workplace especially in the hospitality sector. Other studies involving a SWOT analysis of Thailand’s hotel industry also indicates that despite being rich in natural resources and, well-known in the hospitality and service mind, Thai hoteliers have weaknesses in terms of language barriers and are unable to communicate well in English.

These situations are similar to those at Songkhla Rajabhat University (SKRU) where the researcher works. A preliminary interview with the Department Head of the Tourism Department, Faculty of Management Sciences revealed that the stakeholders in this specific context of Southern Thailand are dissatisfied with the performance of our senior undergraduate tourism students once they start their field experience and careers in the hospitality sector, mostly in the hotel industry. In response to such concern, the Tourism Department Head agreed that there is a need to set up a course to prepare the students for AEC integration. The course will be a part of a curriculum revision project course ‘Preparation for Professional Experience in Business Administration’, which senior undergraduate tourism students are required to attend before undergoing their field experience. With the increasing role of English as a lingua franca in the Asian context, English language teaching methodology may need to shift its focus more to language features that concern real spoken interactions in class, communication strategies, and other essential issues, rather than focusing on grammatical accuracy, native-speaker-like
pronunciation, and syntax. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to investigate and address the needs of all stakeholders in this era of ELF to develop an English oral communication course with appropriate teaching methodology, concerning task-based language teaching with meaning as a primary goal for these target groups of students. In spite of all the efforts in the field of English for the hotel industry, there are no systematic studies related to curriculum development implementing task-based language learning with an adaptation to ELF. Needs analysis was also done mostly in a native speaker or ESL setting. Therefore, this study attempted to bridge the gap between theory and practice through an in-depth target situation needs analysis by conducting interviews with representatives of the professions in the workplace, using a questionnaire survey with the students in the field, observing oral communication difficulties, strategies and language use in context, and going further by using the obtained information to suggest recommended course components and materials to fulfill the target situation needs of these non-native, Southern-specific groups of learners in Thailand.

**Literature Review**

The theories, principles and concepts that are relevant and necessary for the development of English for an oral communication course for senior undergraduate tourism students are explored as follows:

**Course development**

A framework of the course development process is introduced by many scholars in second language teaching and learning. In identifying the course components for EFL, the study of the diversity of each context in terms of the educational setting in which the course is to be taught is considered to be the key factor (Grave, 2001; Richard, 2000; Yalden, 1983). Richard (2000) identifies his views on the consideration of in-depth situational analyses by addressing the issues of the different roles of foreign language in the community, the different types of
institutional policy in each context, and various types of learners in terms of language proficiency, language needs, background, expectations, beliefs, and preferred learning styles.

**Needs analysis**

Needs analysis is an important process in curriculum development. It is the process of gathering information about students’ needs and preferences with respect to the target language. In English for specific purposes courses, needs analysis or needs assessment can lead to the focus of the course (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998). By interpreting the derived information, the course developer will be able to identify the necessities, distinguish between target needs and learning needs, and the lacks and wants of the learners which lead to the selection of relevant contents and appropriate materials designed to match their expectations (Hutchinson and Waters, 1984). Grave (2000) proposes different methods of needs analysis data collection which include questionnaire distribution, interviewing students and employers, observation, and participation in situations in which students will use English as a pathway to design a course. An example of this was provided by the related study of Bosher and Smalkoski (2002) who demonstrated that a variety of needs analysis procedures including interviews, observation and questionnaires helped them to design a successful health-care communication course to address an area where immigrant students in the U.S encounter great difficulties in their real-life communication in a clinical setting, resulting in more effective communication skills of the nursing students.

In the needs analysis for English for Specific Purpose courses, the process of gathering the information from stakeholders is considered to be a crucial step. By examining the stakeholders’ needs and goals, the course designer can develop courses that have relevant content for the target group of students; thus facilitating their language learning in an environment that is closely related to the real-life situations they will encounter (Fatihi, 2003; Long, 2005). Any curriculum that fails
to do this may ultimately lead to language learning failure in the target group of students’ (Long 2005). To support such a view, Kassim and Ali (2010) conducted needs analysis by gathering information concerning the specific communicative skills needs requirements from multinational chemical companies in Malaysia to make sure that the ESP course offered at the engineering-based university prepared the engineering students with all the communicative skills required in communicative events in those industries. The results demonstrated that oral skills should be more emphasized when it comes to the real situation business environment in their context.

**English as a lingua franca**

Communication nowadays is not only limited to conversing between native speakers and native speakers but also shifts its focus to between non-native speakers to non-native speakers. English as a lingua franca, therefore, has increasingly become the global form of English in the world to be used among non-native speakers across multi-cultures for business transaction, tourism, and social interaction (Jenkins, 2003; Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2006). The standard varieties of English may not now be limited to only those of British or American English but also a variety called “World Englishes”. These local characteristics with their own local linguistic and cultural influences can affect the way such forms of English are spoken in its L2 locations in terms of accents, pronunciations structures, lexis, and pragmatic features (Jenkin, 2003). With the three significant dimensions consisting of intelligibility (the ability to understand the utterances of one another); comprehensibility (the ability to understand the meanings spoken by one another); and interpretability (the capability to perceive the intended underlying meaning of one another), the English language teaching and testing in a lingua franca setting may need to assess the students on the scope of their improvement rather than base their achievement on native speaker competence criteria (Jenkins, 2006).
**Task-based language teaching**

The key feature of a task-based approach is that it “provides learners with opportunities to explore both spoken and written language through activities designed to engage learners in authentic and purposeful tasks” in order to enhance language acquisition (Candlin, 2001, p. 233). Towards this approach, language is learned for communication, with meaning as the primary goal. Learners are required to complete a task being assigned by the teachers (Skehan, 1998). Five major components proposed by Candlin (1987) to be embedded into an implemented task-based approach in order to accomplish each task are: input or the selection of task by the teachers, the role or specific duties of each participant, procedures to follow, the monitoring of the teachers by selecting certain language features, and the outcome of the task and follow-up by feedback and evaluation of the task. Carless (2007) also proposes from his study that the implementation of task-based learning needs to be adapted to local characteristics and the importance of ‘making task-based learning realistic’ in the teaching situation (p. 600) so as to make the TBL successful in effective communication. A framework for task-based language teaching consists of three phrases which are pre-task, task cycle (actual task), and post-task (Willis, 1996; Skehan, 1996). The teacher’s role is to be a facilitator who assists and guides whenever students need such help. Compared with the other two scholars, Ellis’ (2003) framework tends to emphasize four aspects of communicative competence which consist of linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence as the main aim of the task.

**Communication strategies**

One of the common features of communication strategies associated with discourse strategies during the interaction process is negotiation of meanings (Ellis, 2003). This refers to a process in which a listener requests the message to be clarified and confirmed and the speaker give responses to those requests often via repetition,
elaboration or language simplification with an attempt to prevent communication breakdown. Negotiation for meaning occurs when learners are forced to produce language output that is understandable to their interlocutor. Strategies such as clarification requests, confirmation checks, and recasts are used to repair communication breakdowns between one another and believed to facilitate second language acquisition at the end (Oliver, 2002).

Another common feature within communication strategies also includes reduction strategies which happen when the speakers abandon the message they would like to pass on. And achievement strategies which happen when the speaker continues to move on his conversation with another speaker by implementing other factors including word replacing, sentences’ paraphrasing, the code switching to L1 and even seeking for help from the others. All of these strategies are embedded with the same purpose which is to facilitate effective communication (Ellis, 2003).

**Intercultural communication competence**

Intercultural competence or intercultural awareness can be defined as “the ability to help shape the process of intercultural interaction in a way that avoids or contextualizes misunderstanding, while creating opportunities for cooperative problem solving in a way that is acceptable and productive for all involved” (Thomas, 2003a, as cited in Rathje, 2008).

Intercultural competence is a person’s ability to interact in their own language with people from another country and culture. In this respect, he or she needs to use his or her knowledge about intercultural communication, attitudes of interest in otherness and skills in interpreting, relating, and discovering. Using these skills effectively results in his or her overcoming cultural differences and enjoying intercultural contact (Byram, 1997). Language ability plays a part in intercultural communicative competence in enabling a person to succeed in intercultural contact with other people from different cultures in a foreign language.
The Present Study
This paper describes ongoing research investigating the needs of the stakeholders, alumni, and Songkhla Rajabhat University senior undergraduate tourism students who have undergone their field experience in the hotel industry in order to identify the course components and develop an English oral communication course that is suitable for these target groups of students in this specific context of Southern Thailand. The data presented here are the findings of the two research questions from a larger Ph.D. research study as follows:

1. What are the needs of the stakeholders in relation to the functional tasks, skills and other important aspects necessary in the hospitality sector?

2. Based on the needs analysis, what components should be incorporated into a task-based English oral communication course for Songkhla Rajabhat University senior undergraduate tourism students?

Methodology
The present study consists of the first phase which involves the process of course development. In order to develop the course, a needs analysis has been conducted. The ethics applications for the study were submitted to Thammasat University’s Human Ethics Committee and have been approved for data collection in April, 2015. To determine the needs of the stakeholders, the study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods as follows:

Documentary studies
The related documentary studies consisted of Songkhla Rajabhat University’s educational policy, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Educational Plan, language knowledge, skills and tasks needed at work together with the Standards of English for occupations including, front officers by The English Language Development Center (ELDC) Thailand (2005).
Site observation

In this study, site observation has been used in the preparation stage to formulate the researcher’s ideas before developing each instrument, for triangulation purposes in the pilot study, and to acquire an overview of what the hotel front desk are actually doing in their job, and to identify their needs and problems. However, with the nature of the hotel business and its standards, it is impossible to conduct actual site observation while staff members are performing their job functions. As Mingsarn et al. (2005) states, in order to develop the relevant curriculum for the students, teachers who don’t have real experience should conduct action research by working with the tourism sector. Therefore, in May 2015, the researcher decided to take the role of a participant as observer by asking for the permission to work as a trainee at one of the four-star hotels in Songkhla where the alumni were working for two weeks. The participants in the study were informed that this was a part of the researcher’s information gathering for a Ph.D. dissertation. Initially, the researcher had informal interviews with front desk officers, their manager and utilized opportunities to study the hotel’s relevant documentations and manuals in an attempt to build a report on the target language use, linguistic features, and vocabulary used in context. An observation form was adapted from the site observation form by Vasavakul (2006) which was designed to conduct a site observation in her study of ‘Business English Oral Communication (BEOC) for customer service staff at international banks: translating needs analysis to a course development’. This instrument was developed as a means to help the researcher focus on how staff members used English in their jobs and other relevant information. The actual conversations between front desk officers and hotel guests on the phone and in the reception area, the communication problems as well as the strategies that they used while handling each task were observed and noted.
Semi-structured interview with stakeholders

A semi-structured interview was conducted with two groups of domain experts. The first group of participants consisted of 15 hotel managerial positions who were working in seven different hotels located in Songkhla where more than 50% of the guests were Non-Thais and where we usually send our senior tourism undergraduate students for their field experience. The second group of domain experts consisted of 20 Songkhla Rajabhat University alumni. Both groups were selected based on purposive sampling and convenience sampling. Both groups of domain experts are considered to have direct experience in the domain and familiarity with relevant situations so they would be able to provide reliable and accurate information as professionals in this area of the hotel industry. Convenience sampling was used to obtain participants who were able to contribute their time in the interview in spite of their tight schedules. The interview questions were constructed to obtain information about hotel front desk current practices, in relation to their tasks, the strategies they use, and their perception of problems, as well as other aspects essential in this job function. Each interview took approximately 30 minutes. The information collected from the interviews was recorded and analyzed qualitatively using content analysis (categorizing).

Needs analysis questionnaire distribution

During May 2015, 60 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to sixty senior undergraduate Tourism students who had already enrolled in a ‘Preparation for Professional Experience in Business Administration’ past course and had completed their field experience. A 100% response rate was achieved. This successful response may be due to the researcher’s careful technique in managing the distribution of questionnaires and her efforts to encourage the target students to realize the importance of the study. The contents of the questionnaire are based on data from informal interviews with senior students, relevant documentary studies including ELDC, and the findings by Masoupanah (2013). The questionnaire
consisted of six areas—the participant's background information, their perceptions and self-assessment in terms of their English oral communication ability to perform their job functions in the hotel industry, their preferred learning style, their perceptions towards the importance of English language learning, teaching, and expectations from the course. The students were asked to rate their needs, perceptions, and other mentioned issues using a Likert five-rating scale (1-5). Open-ended questions were provided in the last section to allow for additional suggestions concerning the existing curriculum, the teachers, classroom activities, and teaching and assessment methods.

**Findings**

The needs analysis results were as follows:

**Documentary studies**

The information gained from the following documentary studies was studied as follows:

*Songkhla Rajabhat University’s educational policy*

Songkhla Rajabhat University has adjusted its educational plan policy (2012-2015) to prepare the students for this new era. The policies that are related to this study are: 1) to promote the students’ language proficiency including English, Malay, and other ASEAN languages to communicate with non-natives from ASEAN countries and 2) to enhance the student’s knowledge and awareness of local culture within their own community.

*ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Educational Plan*

Two related significant aims are to prepare ASEAN people for implementation of the ASEAN community by designing the course and teaching materials embedding ASEAN shared value and cultural heritage to develop the learning language and
promoting mutual understanding within the region (ASEAN Economic Community, 2008).

*Standards of English for hotel front desk staff by the English Language Development Center (ELDC) Thailand*

As the language proficiency of the target group of EFL learners in this present study is considered to be low, only some required basic language and communication skills mentioned in the standards were selected as below:

**Table 1: Selected language skills and communication skills obtained from Standards of English for Hotel Front Desk (by the English Language Development Center (ELDC) Thailand)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language skills</th>
<th>Communication skills: verbal communications in aspects to language appropriacy</th>
<th>Communication skills: non-verbal communications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using Spoken English.</td>
<td>Using an appropriate language variety and register according to audience, purpose and culture</td>
<td>Understanding and using non-verbal communication appropriate to audience, purpose and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Use and respond to basic courtesy formulas, e.g. greetings, leave-taking, introductions</td>
<td>1. Use appropriate language register to interact with guests/customers</td>
<td>1. Identify nonverbal cues that cause misunderstanding or indicate communication problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ask and respond to guests’ questions, request, opinions, suggestions, and advice</td>
<td>2. Respond appropriately to complaints, refusals, negative value judgments, criticism, and complaints from guests/customers</td>
<td>2. Use appropriate gestures promptly and appropriately in various situations, e.g. when having more than one guest or group to attend to, when guests are faced with problems or difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Give guests directions, instructions, suggestions, advice, confirmations, apologies</td>
<td>3. Use polite language to interact with guests, especially when persuading, handling complaints, expressing value judgments, emotions, and negotiating</td>
<td>3. Understand and use gestures, facial and body language appropriate to guests’ cultures, e.g. hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Explain and describe information to guests, e.g. bookings, hotel facilities, current promotions, daily activities, problems, weather</td>
<td>4. Recognize humor and respond appropriately (optional)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Promote house activities, special functions, special</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
offers by providing specific details along with using convincing language

6. Provide precise information upon guests’ queries about Thai history, cultures, institutions, Thai dishes, drinks, fruits, current events

7. Initiate and carry on small talk

8. Handle phone situations and diplomatic replies

9. Speak fluently with clear pronunciation patterns

10. Adjust language for clarity and accuracy

signaling to accompany a verbal welcome and leave-taking, acknowledging guests’ presence, level of eye contact, spacing

4. Use intonation, pitch, volume and tone of voice and nonverbal behavior appropriately

**Semi-structured interview with hotel managerial positions and Songkhla Rajabhat University (SKRU) alumni (See Appendix, p.26)**

The results gained from the semi-structured interviews with hotel managerial positions indicated the importance and impacts of AEC towards the hotel industry in this specific context of Southern Thailand. There was 100% agreement by hotel managerial positions that priorities would be given to other Asians who were proficient in English and were able to switch or rotate to perform other English speaking duties immediately. There was also a high possibility of laying off those whose English competency was at the low level.

In terms of the hotel front desk’s main tasks at work, the top-three priorities that everyone in the two groups of domain experts agreed on for performing the procedures of hotel reservations for taking room reservations were: dealing with check-in check out tasks, explaining the available hotel services on the phone and in person, and giving direction to the hotel guests. Recommending places of attraction, restaurants and shopping centers, dealing with hotel guests’
complaints, giving a brief account of the historical places in the province and nearby and arranging a one-day itinerary trip/tour package came second. Furthermore, explaining details about local transportation and other nearby places, convincing the guests to use facilities available at the hotel, conducting a tour to the guest’s room and reserving local transportation were also considered important tasks for hotel front desk staff. Listening and speaking were the two of the most needed and improved language skills according to 100% of the two groups of domain experts.

Considering the tourists’ interests toward Thai culture, both groups of domain experts partially agreed (80%) that non-natives from Malaysia, Singapore, and China, were usually interested in Thai local dishes and places of attraction especially Thai temples, shopping centers, local restaurants, Thai massage, and night entertainment. On the other hand, those who came from Europe and Japan were interested in natural resources like Songkhla lake, waterfalls, the local floating market, local festivals, local Thai food, museums, Kao Yor, Songkhla zoo and aquarium, the Sunday market, and the Songkhla walking street.

Regarding the important aspects for performing job duties at work and oral communication difficulties faced by hotel front desk staff, the results of the two domain experts seem to be correlated as 100% of the experts mentioned the lack of self-confidence in speaking which stemmed from many reasons including insufficient vocabulary knowledge, their own worries about speaking like native speakers, the inability to understand the variety of accents of hotel guests, and non-verbal clues (gestures, body language) appropriate to guest culture. Despite the solid theoretical knowledge in the field, the majority of them (90%) mentioned that they were unable to handle prompted problem-solving tasks as well as carrying on small talks. Part of all these difficulties came from a lack of skill in using communication strategies such as asking for clarification, comprehension check, confirmation checks, etc.
**Site observation**

The information gathered from the observations has been categorized into the frequency of each type of technique used in handling each task. The results are presented in the table below.

**Table 2: Frequency of each type of call and face to face interaction on site problem solving skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Techniques used to handle each task in English (staff may use more than one technique)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speech repetition - unable to ask for clarification because of low proficiency</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request assistance from colleagues</td>
<td>26.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer the line or asking the supervisor for help</td>
<td>22.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switch to using other languages like Chinese &amp; Malay- Code switching</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Questionnaire to identify students’ needs**

The results from questionnaire responses from 60 senior undergraduate tourism students were categorized according to the following six parts of the questionnaire: However, only three outstanding findings to be incorporated into the course components are presented as follows:

**Table 3: Problems concerning students’ English oral communication ability and English language learning and teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.51-5.00</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.51-4.50</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.51-3.50</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.51-2.50</td>
<td>Low to moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.00-1.50</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problems concerning oral communication abilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Feel nervous and not confident when speaking English with Non-Thais</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Having little knowledge of vocabulary and unable to orally convey their ideas and information to others</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unable to catch the main ideas and details when receiving information either over the telephone or face to face contacts</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Unable to have basic daily life conversation fluently and properly</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Problems concerning English language learning and teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The content doesn’t suit their real needs in the workplace</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lack of practices in the class</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Too little time and too few English courses are provided</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lack of motivation to learn</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Their ratings of the problems showed that lacking self-confidence when speaking with Non-Thais was the most difficult concern with regard to English oral communication ability. This could result from insufficient vocabulary knowledge and ability to catch the main ideas while conversing. Regarding the problems concerning English language teaching and learning in past ESP English courses, these senior undergraduate tourism students indicated irrelevant contents to their real-life situations as the priority and the lack of practice in class which demotivated their learning.

Regarding the students’ self-assessment on how well they could perform these tasks during their field experience in the hotel industry, the results are presented in Table 4 below.
Table 4: Students’ self-assessment concerning their performance in hotel tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>4.51-5.00</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.51-4.50</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.51-3.50</td>
<td>Quite good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.51-2.50</td>
<td>Not so good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.00-1.50</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems concerning hotel task performance</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 I can use some proper communicative strategies to help myself when being asked some difficult questions</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 I can provide information about the hotel facilities and other services</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 I can answer and give information about places of attractions and local culture</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 I can use basic courtesy formulas and carry on small talk appropriately with foreigners</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 I can use English to give directions to foreign guests</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 I can communicate with hotel guests who are non-natives</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 I can persuade, convince the guests to use the services and products provided at the hotel</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the students’ self-assessment, the ability to use proper communicative strategies when being asked some difficult questions came in first place.

In terms of the students’ wants and expectations, the results are shown in Table 6 below:

Table 5: Students’ wants and expectations of the needed hotel tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>4.51-5.00</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.51-4.50</td>
<td>Moderate to high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.51-3.50</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.51-2.50</td>
<td>Low to moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.00-1.50</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ expectations of hotel tasks</td>
<td>mean</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I can use some proper communicative strategies to help myself when being asked some difficult questions I can answer and give information about places of attractions and local culture</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I can use basic courtesy formulas and carry on small talk appropriately with foreigners.</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I can communicate with hotel guests who are non-native speakers (Non-Thais)</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can answer and give information about places of attractions and local culture.</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I can provide the information about the hotel facilities and other services.</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I can use English to give directions to foreign guests.</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I can persuade, convince the guests to use the services and products provided at the hotel</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey results showed that proper communicative strategies played a significant role for these target groups of students, followed by the ability to handle and carry on small talk appropriately according to the hotel guests’ various cultures. Knowledge about places of attraction and local culture also played a significant important role according to the students’ expectations for the course to be developed.

Regarding the last part with open-ended questions, 26 out of 60 respondents did not provide any suggestions. From those who provided answers in this part, the suggestions were grouped using content analysis. The results are demonstrated in the table below.
Table 6: Students’ additional suggestions and expectations concerning related issues toward course development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course contents</th>
<th>Teaching and learning activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• More authentic language</td>
<td>• Student participation was preferred rather than teacher’s talk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusion of intercultural communications in terms of social interactions,</td>
<td>• Intelligibility should be more emphasized rather than immediate grammatical corrections all the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social norms and non-verbal cues with hotel guests</td>
<td>time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Useful vocabulary items for each particular case should be taught.</td>
<td>• Conversation should be mostly emphasized rather than grammatical structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The inclusion of local festivals, places of attractions, local transportations, and cultures.</td>
<td>• Classroom discussions were preferred to engage students into classroom discussion and various role-play simulations similar to what they are likely to encounter in their real professional lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The use of polite language should be suggested and taught in class as there</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>are a number of staff who use sentences that sound impolite like, “you must pay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>this now” causing the hotel guests’ dissatisfaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching materials</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Audio-visual clips are needed to help the students to see a better picture of</td>
<td>• If possible, authentic assessment should be implemented during field experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>task performance in real-life situations.</td>
<td>• Various kinds of assessment should be combined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Listening clips for a variety of English accents should be implemented</td>
<td>• Role play-simulations resemble real-life situations should be another form of assessment in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>frequently in class.</td>
<td>class rather than paper-based ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exposure to variety of English accents is needed in class</td>
<td>• Field-trip experience before the actual one should be implemented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

This present study demonstrates the significant process of conducting the needs analysis to identify the real needs of the target group of the students and the stakeholders who participated in this study. By following Grave (2000)’s proposals
in collecting information implementing several research instruments consisting of related documentary studies, site observation, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, and questionnaire distribution with senior undergraduate tourism students after their field experience in the hotel industry, the researcher has ascertained the real needs in the target situation in which learners will be using English during their field experience in hotel industry. The information derived from the needs analysis helps to identify and determine the content selection, and teaching and learning activities to find relevant domains and language use situations appropriate for the target group of the students to help prepare them to meet the standard needs of the stakeholders.

In response to the widespread role of English as a lingua franca, task-based language teaching underpinned language acquisition theory with a comprehensive input, interaction, and output hypothesis with an adaptation to English as a lingua-franca oriented on English teaching and evaluation is believed to be appropriate to this particular local context in Southern Thailand where most communication is between non-native speakers. Non-native speaking varieties of English in teaching and testing are crucial. Learners should be taught and assessed according to the needs of non-native speakers who use English with non-native speakers. Performance-based assessment emphasizing the ability to communicate through conversation to perform specific tasks in the hospitality industry should be focused on separately from solid tourism content knowledge. Other essential characteristics including local cultural knowledge, language skills (listening and speaking in terms of variety of accents and language forms), communication strategies, and appropriate social interactions including verbal and non-verbal communications in intercultural interactions with hotel guests, have proven to be crucial in this study and have been taken into consideration to the evaluation of the course.
Course components for English oral communication course

All the triangulated information derived was analyzed and synthesized to obtain the relevant needed information to pave the way to explore the theoretical framework to develop the course as follows:

Course contents

All major hotel front desk tasks associated with English language used at work were selected, specified, and sequenced according to the integration of Gysen and Avemaet (2006), Richard (2001) and Ellis (2003)’s perspectives. In terms of task specification, the mixture of both focused and unfocused tasks are included and sequenced to their level of difficulty appropriate for these specific target groups of students with low English proficiency. With the information derived from the needs analysis, tasks become the prime units for the selection of objectives in response to the stakeholders’ needs (Gysen and Avermeat, 2006). All hotel front desk target tasks are embedded into one thematic of giving the information (Ellis, 2003) which includes: a.) providing details of hotel facilities, services, and accommodation on the phone and in person, b.) taking room reservations by phone and face to face interaction, c.) dealing with hotel guests’ complaints, e.) describing and recommending places of attractions, restaurants, shopping centers, f.) giving directions, g.) giving a brief account of historical places in the province and nearby, h.) explaining details about local transportation and other nearby places, i.) arranging a one-day itinerary trip / tour package, and j.) convincing the guests to use facilities available at the hotel.

The inclusion of culture of inner circle and expanding circle

Due to the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015, as discovered from the needs analysis, the culture of inner circle countries and expanding circle countries, local knowledge, and places of attractions will be included as part of the listening inputs and audio-visual projects. Under the ASEAN Socio-cultural Community’s educational plan, pedagogical tasks should aim to
promote mutual understanding among ASEAN members. The local cultural knowledge within these specific communities of Southern Thailand with sufficient vocabulary needs to be included, as it fits the Songkhla Rajabhat University educational plan, which is to enhance and promote students’ awareness of Thai culture - especially local culture within their own community.

**Teaching methodology, materials and activities with an adaptation to English as a lingua franca**

*Task-based approach*

The instructional process in this present study was an integration of Ellis (2003), Willis (1999) and Nunan (2004) with meaning as a primary goal. At the pre-task stage, the learners would be explicitly introduced to consciousness-raising activities embedded in knowledge of social exchange and exposed to audio-visual and listening inputs of hotel front desk tasks with a variety of English accents. They were introduced to noticing specific languages features and observing communicative strategies which would be beneficial in accomplishing the assigned target task during the task-cycle stage. Role-play simulations in pairs and small group work interactions to enhance strategic competence were designed to be done extensively at the task cycle or during the task stage, followed with reporting and presentation to the whole class. Problematic linguistic features for each pair and group work were provided for whole class discussion at the end.

Since the English oral communication course was developed based on the literature review and the needs analysis. The underpinning theories and principles of language acquisition, the input and output hypothesis and task-based approach together with the needs analysis were incorporated to construct the course framework yielding the relevant and effective course components. The developed course was for Songkhla Rajabhat University senior tourism students whose English level was low and was not familiar with task-based language learning. Therefore, the course was designed in a way that enhanced the merit if the course
fostering learners’ language acquisition, motivation and encouragement together with learning task engagement. The researcher developed the inputs as the materials used in this course. They afforded the participants rich inputs of the target language. They were the inputs that provide greater exposure to the target language with linguistic and non-linguistics. The authentic materials used in this study were considered, selected, and developed based on the belief of the effectiveness of comprehensible inputs with receptive skills, authenticity of exposure and the evidence of listening and speaking skill focus for a hotel front desk. As a result, many audio-visual inputs and tailor-made audio listening inputs with a variety of accents containing the needed language features, functions, and expressions together with authentic brochures, maps and tour package were included. These input-providing materials were carefully selected and adjusted to fit the participants’ level of proficiency, their needs and serve the goals of learning in order to make them comprehensible.

Teaching materials and activities

Both internet-downloaded and tailor-made authentic listening inputs and audio visual material of hotel front desk staff performing different functional tasks will be embedded into the course to provide pragmatic knowledge. The objective of implementing these materials is to help the students become familiar with a variety of accents and to be able to cope with difficulties in terms of understanding the pronunciation or accents of non-native, English speaking hotel guests. In addition, tailor-made task-based materials associated with the required English language functions covering handling small talk and problem-solving skills will be emphasized most, as these were indicated as the two most-needed improvements by the two groups of domain experts. Exposure to teaching material on these types of authentic real-life situations will pave the way for their learning improvement and help them to be able to negotiate and engage in problem-solving activities resembling those they will encounter in real-life situations during their field experience.
The inclusion of intercultural communication

The findings indicated clearly that our senior undergraduate tourism students need to be exposed to hotel guests whose diverse identities, social norms, values, beliefs, cultural features and interests are different from their own. Therefore, intercultural communication in terms of nonverbal communications, in the form of facial expressions or gestures, as well as the interactional context, cultural background knowledge, gender, and more are considered to be essential and worth taking into consideration. As people from different parts of the world communicate and interact differently, hotel front desk staff whose role is to cope with the hotel guest first, need to be well-prepared for effective communication in order to get their message across without any misunderstanding or confusion. Such practice will finally achieve the aim of a mutually satisfactory outcome.

Course evaluation

In terms of the whole course evaluation, two micro-evaluation of tasks proposed by Ellis (2003) will be chosen as an evaluation model. The first one is to examine the students’ attitudes towards the task by using questionnaires and focus group interview after the implementation of the course components. Second is a learning-based evaluation which aims to examine whether the task has resulted in these target group’s students’ language learning by implementing pre-test and post-test. Performance-based assessment using analytical rating scales based on non-native speakers’ criteria will be designed and implemented in this present study.

Conclusions and implications

This study demonstrated how task-based English oral communication course can be developed based on both literature review and needs analysis. Some distinguishing features of the study including the findings of the needs analysis, the process that have contributed to the course development are discussed.
The findings derived from conducting the needs analysis in this present study validate the significance of oral communication for senior undergraduate tourism students. It also reveals that both hotel managerial positions and SKRU alumni perceive needs quite similarly. Not only do the two groups emphasize the importance of oral communication for senior undergraduate tourism students but the senior undergraduate students, who will be future job candidates, are also aware of the situation and the demands of the job waiting for them.

Despite the fact that the ELDC list of competencies of performing a job function as hotel front desk provides useful information and a good basis for developing the course of the study, it was developed based on working professionals. Therefore, it was occurred to the researcher that an in-depth investigation of the needed competencies for senior tourism undergraduate students was still in need in order to respond to the specific needs of the stakeholders and particular learners in this Southern local context of Thailand. The information obtained from various sources may reveal certain areas of diversity. That is to say that a need to find more information from other sources in order to triangulate the information so that the researcher or teacher can obtain the accurate and relevant information for the developed course. In this study, for example, the needs analysis of the significant language skills and communication skills and their main tasks, obtained from ELDC, hotel managerial positions, SKRU alumni and the senior undergraduate students, has some slight differences. Regarding the main tasks and the language functions used, both ELDC listed by working professionals and hotel managerial positions indicated the aspect of not only providing information on hotel facilities compared to SKRU alumni. They also see the significance of using convincing language on trying to persuade the guests to use facilities provided at the hotel at the first priority. This demonstrates clearly how the management views this part differently from their staff. It may be because of hotel business nature that they have to compete with other hotels in the area. Also, while ELDC, hotel managerial positions, and SKRU alumni see the importance of being able to initiate
and carry on small talk as well as handle problem solving situations, the hotel managerial positions provided an in-depth perspective regarding this matter. They elaborated that the staff needed to become more observant. For example, initiating a small talk should not be brought about with the guests who were tired from the long journey but could do so when they came up to ask for suggestions. Knowing when would be the appropriate time to initiate the talk and how to deal with the problems arisen is very important. Being observant, therefore, is considered very important skill for hotel management. This may be due to their being professionals with long-term working experiences, as most of them mentioned that the staff needed more experience to cope with these problems.

Another thing that the staff seem to miss out is having cross-cultural awareness. The hotel managerial positions viewed this part as very important. This may be because there are many non-Thais tourists staying at the hotel, having this knowledge will definitely help the staff during their interactions with the guests and lead to mutual understanding between each other. Also, while the staff feeling nervous of making mistakes while speaking, the hotel managerial positions viewed the notion of fluency rather than accuracy. Part of this is because the majority of tourists in this specific area can also have different structural patterns, therefore, the ability to communicate is more important than being 100% grammatical corrections.

In spite of the slight differences, other issues including the course contents and the suggestion for teaching methodology are similar. The awareness of difficulties of understanding of native/ non-native’s pronunciation or accents, more active learning in class in terms of speaking activities and role-play resembling real-life situations are recommended. The reason could be that the majority of the visiting guests are from diverse culture such as Malaysia, Indonesia, China, Singapore, Japan and from European countries. Another reason could be the establishment of AEC. There will be more visiting guests from more diverse cultures than those mentioned here.
In the aspect of task-based language used in this study, the teaching methodology in this course may help foster students’ communicative competence. The key features of the task-based language approach are relevant to communicative competence. Meaning primacy, for example, fits with the language knowledge of communicative competence, with emphasizes meaning fulfillment of the language. Similarly, authenticity and tasks are the main means for learning fit with the pragmatic knowledge, while group work interaction using the target language to carry out the tasks fits with the strategic competence requiring learners to make use of verbal and non-verbal communication in an attempt to get the job done. Effective communication occurs when the communicator possess communicative competence. This is the key to achieving successful communication.

Moreover, the course aims is to devote less time and effort to focus on grammar. The participants used English to convey the message they wanted to convey without grammatical error correction. This method probably resulted in the students’ higher motivation and relaxed mood. In addition, the tasks might have enhanced their motivation in learning since what they practiced was what they would do in the future career. Also, working collaboratively among close friends, they felt safe, supportive and engaged in learning. The previously mentioned relaxed environment of teaching and learning may have established participants’ motivation, self-confidence and a feeling of trust, which in turn, enhanced their English oral communication ability. This study reveals that task-based language instruction is a beneficial method for learners who cherish collaborative work, which is a means to facilitate co-construction of knowledge among learners of mixed ability.

With the significant role of English as a lingua franca in the Asian context, language skills (listening and speaking) and communicative strategies have become necessary for the transaction of an ongoing business. To teach English without relating it to real-world tasks seem to be inadequate in preparing students for their
future professional careers. Therefore, the development of a task-based English oral communication course in this present study is expected to be beneficial in so many ways. With the adaptation of teaching methodology and teaching materials in response to the significant lingua franca role and AEC integration, the course components aim to prepare senior undergraduate tourism students to perform the target task, apply the communication strategies in authentic, real-life situations, and interact appropriately with hotel guests from different cultural background during their students’ field experience. Through the implementation of task-based language instruction, learners are providing the opportunities to use language to interact and communicate in meaningful tasks. In short, learners are expected to be able to use the target language needed to perform appropriately in real-life functions both inside and outside classrooms. Therefore, tourism students at Songkhla Rajabhat University will not only obtain improved English oral communication ability, but they will also gain better language skills, communication strategies, cultural knowledge, and intercultural interactions which are crucial for global communication. Moreover, since this course is aimed to prepare students to be ready for their field experience in the hospitality sector, it can also help the students to be ready and qualified for future hospitality employment and to be able to get a job in the field of their expertise.

From the findings of this study, the developed course using a task-based approach, combined with the opportunity for language use for social interaction both in and outside class in real situations, are recommended as the English course for Thai students especially for the ESP courses. However, using English to carry out the assigned tasks seems to be very demanding for them because they have linguistic limitations and are not familiar with using English all the time to carry out the task. Accordingly, it is strongly suggested that it is important to set a friendly and relaxed learning environment and establish a close rapport with learners in order to activate their motivation, self-confidence, and relaxed mood which in turns enhance their learning achievement.
Despite the fact that Thai education treats English as a foreign language and Thai learners seldom speak regularly even in English classes, English teaching and learning in Thailand usually emphasizes the native targets of grammar, pronunciation and syntax. Because of the global trade with the high proportion of non-native speaking tourists relative to native speakers, English teaching and learning may need to prepare learners to cope with a variety of “World Englishes” which inevitably come with local linguistic and cultural influences affecting the way such English is spoken in its L2 locations in terms of accents, structures, lexis, pragmatic features and etc. (Jenkins, 2003). To do so, English teaching and learning in Thailand may need to place a strong emphasis on intelligibility to serve the situational relevancy of the vital role of English as a lingua franca especially in the business sectors. The results derived from conducting the needs analysis with all the stakeholders reveals that almost of the hotel guests they met were non-native English speakers and their accents were very difficult to understand. This study included the English input with a variety of accents of non-native speakers as well as the intelligibility of learners’ English. In addition, English intelligibility of learners should be put more emphasis on promoting learner’s confidence, and view of making mistakes as part of their learning and a process that may foster their language internalization.

In terms of program evaluation for task-based language learning, this study focuses on Ellis’ micro-evaluation only which is aimed to investigate the course effectiveness in terms of the students’ English oral communication ability and the language function used among the students as well as the students’ attitudes towards the course. As the course is considered to be an ESP course, it would be interesting to investigate the macro-evaluation of task-based course which is aimed to look at the program evaluation to examine the merit of the program. The stakeholder’s perspectives should be involved as significant role since they can determine the continuity of the program.
References


## Appendix

Table 4.2 Comparative Information from semi-structured interviews with hotel managerial positions (HM) and Songkhla Rajabhat University (SKRU) alumni

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>HM N=15 %</th>
<th>SKRU alumni N=20 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impacts of AEC towards hotel industry in Southern Thailand</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hotel will need to be more selective with hotel staff who are communicative compared with other Asian countries</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priorities will be given to other Asians who are proficient in English and are able to switch or rotate to perform other English-speaking duties immediately</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibilities of laying off those whose English competency is low</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hotel front desk staff main work tasks</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing the procedure of hotel reservation (check-in check out-procedures, taking room reservation on the phone and in person)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining the available hotel services on the phone and in person (the view of the hotel, the advantages of the hotel room and facilities)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving directions (both inside and outside the hotel)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommending places of attraction, restaurants and shopping centers</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with hotel guests’ complaints</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving a brief account of historical places in the province and nearby</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrange a one-day itinerary trip/ tour package</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining details about local transportations and others nearby places.</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convincing the guests to use facilities available at the hotel</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting a tour of the hotel’s room</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserving local transportation</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Most needed skills for a hotel front desk staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**English language functions used by a hotel front desk**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greeting</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and responding to a phone call</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving information and answering questions</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making/Carrying on a small talk</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking for repetition or an explanation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with complaints</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making suggestions and using convincing language</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening, continuing and closing the conversation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tourists’ interests towards Thai culture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Non-natives from Malaysia, Singapore, China, are usually interested in Thai local dishes and places of attractions especially Thai temples, shopping centers, local restaurants, Thai massage, night entertainment</th>
<th>80</th>
<th>80</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-natives from Europe and Japan are interested in natural resources like Songkhla lake, waterfalls, local floating market, local festivals, local Thai food, museums, Kao Yor, Songkhla zoo and aquarium, the Sunday market, the Songkhla walking street</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Necessary aspects important for performing job duties at work (in order of importance)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Understanding non-native speakers’ variety of accents</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>100</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using communication strategies such as asking for clarification, ask for repetition or explanation when needed</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Using and understanding non-verbal clues(gestures, body language) appropriate to guest culture</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Knowing intercultural communication interactions in terms of social norms and cultural values</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Difficulties and problems regarding oral communication of a hotel front desk and waiter & waitress**

<p>| Difficulty | Ability to answer the hotel guests’ detailed questions | 100 | 90 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lack of confidence in speaking</th>
<th>100</th>
<th>90</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too worried about being like native speakers in terms of grammar and pronunciation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone manners</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient vocabulary knowledge about hotel facilities/Thai dishes/Thai drinks/Thai culture/local festival/places of attraction</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to understand pronunciation or accent of non-native English speaking’ hotel guests</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid theoretical knowledge/background in the field but unable to carry on the task and handling promptly problems solving skills</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incapability to use communication strategies such as asking for clarification, comprehension check, confirmation checks</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unable to carry on small talk with hotel guest</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-verbal communication problems</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills needed to improve most</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications of a hotel front desk in terms of the language skills, communication skills and other skills</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having effective language skills (listening and speaking)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having effective communication skills</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having effective problem solving skills</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having sufficient knowledge of places of local attractions and other nearly provinces</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having cross-cultural awareness in terms of non-verbal communications of multi cultures</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effective ways used in English class to help the students to communicate with hotel guests effectively</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students should have a chance to use English and practice listening a lot more to a variety of English accents</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students should have a chance to practice doing the actual task to get familiar with it before going out for their field experience</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency and ability to convey the meaning is a priority and should be emphasized rather than grammatical structures</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students should be encouraged to speak without worrying about grammatical correctness | 100 | 100 |
Role playing resembling authentic situations/real-life situations in handling functional tasks is highly recommended | 100 | 100 |
Both language skills and communication strategies should be emphasized | 87 | 100 |
Useful vocabulary items for each particular functional task should be taught | 87 | 100 |
Knowledge of local places of attraction/local Thai food should be included. | 87 | 85 |
Students should be more exposed to polite language use in hotel industry/field trip is highly recommended. | 90 | 85 |
English L2 spelling developmental patterns: Comparison of English only phonemes and common Phonemes

Chaehee Park*
Chaehee Park chpark@sunmoon.ac.kr

Bioprofile: Chaehee Park, Ph.D. is an assistant professor in the Department of English at Sun Moon University, Republic of Korea. The research area mainly includes L2 spelling and vocabulary acquisition.

Abstract
This study examines English L2 spelling developmental patterns in terms of comparison of English only phonemes and common phonemes. Elementary school children (57 from 4th grade, 59 from 5th grade, and 57 from 6th grade respectively) participated in real word spelling tasks, non-word spelling tasks, and vocabulary measure tasks. Task materials of both real words and non-words include target phonemes which do not exist in Korean (English only phonemes) and common phonemes which exist in both languages. All words in the task materials were recorded by a native English speaker, and participants listened to them and wrote them down on a sheet. The results of the experiments indicate that 1) children’s spelling performance significantly improved in grade 5 and grade 6 in both real and non-word tasks, 2) children spelled real words more accurately than non-words in each grade, 3) they spelled common phonemes more accurately than the English only phonemes in each grade, 4) they reached almost the same degree of accuracy in common phonemes (both non-word and real word spelling tasks) in grade 6, but not in English only phonemes. It is concluded that even though children’s spelling performance improves over time, spelling developmental patterns of English only

*Sun Moon University, Tangjeong-Myeon, Asan-Si, Chungnam, S. Korea.
phonemes and common phonemes were different, and children’s awareness of English only phonemes needs to be emphasized in English education to help EFL learners develop literacy.

**Keywords:** L2 spelling developmental patterns; English only phonemes and common phonemes

### Introduction

Accurate spelling skills are one of the critical factors in literacy development. Research on the spelling skills in English has documented various aspects of the skill including the developmental spelling patterns (e.g., Bear & Templeton, 1998; Ehri, 1997; Gentry, 1984), a detailed inventory of the various types of difficulties caused by the English phonology and orthography (e.g., Treiman, 1993; Treiman, Zukowski, & Richmond-Welty, 1995), and comparisons of L1 and L2 on the basis of phoneme and orthographic differences (Ibrahim, 1978; Bebout, 1985; Fashola, Drum, Mayer & Kang, 1996; Wang & Geva, 2003a; Park, 2012a; 2012b; Yeong & Liow, 2010). These studies have emphasized that learning to spell in English is a complex, long-term process that requires at least some basic skills: (1) knowledge of the letters, (2) phoneme awareness, the ability to consciously analyze and manipulate speech at the level of phonemes, and (3) phoneme-grapheme encoding skills (Caravolas et al., 2001).

A great number of studies have discussed how phonology and orthography play a role in children’s spelling performance (Goswami & Bryant, 1990; Lundberg, Olofsson & Wall, 1980; Mann & Liberman, 1984). Phonological awareness (Stahl & Murray, 1998; Treiman, 1985; 1992; Treiman & Zukowski, 1991; Kim, 2007) and orthographic knowledge (Treiman & Cassar, 1997; Bryant, 2002; Kessler & Treiman, 2003) were key factors facilitating children’s spelling and reading acquisition. Particularly, since English language allows inconsistent correspondence between grapheme and phoneme, orthographic awareness which
refers to “a visually mediated ability to analyze and recognize letter and letter strings” (Katzir et al., 2005, p. 846) is very important in spelling words correctly.

In recent years, a great deal of studies examined how spelling skills develop over time (e.g., Ehri, 1989, 2000; Treiman, 1993; Treiman, Zukowski, & Richmond-Welty, 1995). Particularly, a number of L1 studies have discussed developmental spelling patterns (Bear & Templeton, 1998; Ehri, 1989, 2000; Larkin, 2008) and how children progress from a lower stage of spelling ability to an increasingly more advanced spelling ability. However, very few studies have examined developmental spelling patterns of L2. Although it has been continuously pointed out that L2 learners experienced difficulty spelling L2 only phonemes (Ibrahim, 1978; Bebout, 1985; Fashola, Drum, Mayer & Kang, 1996; Wang & Geva, 2003a; Park, 2012b), few studies have focused on developmental spelling patterns comparing L2 only phonemes and common phonemes of L1 and L2 through a cross-sectional perspective. The goal of this study was to understand English L2 spelling developmental spelling patterns in terms of comparison of English only phonemes and common phonemes.

**Literature Review**

A great deal of L2-based research suggested that ESL spelling errors were related to L2 phonology and orthography (Ibrahim, 1978; Bebout, 1985; Fashola, Drum, Mayer & Kang, 1996; Wang & Geva, 2003a; Park, 2012a; 2012b). It usually compared native L1 and English L2 in terms of its phonology and orthographic differences. In general, the phonological differences between L1 and L2 caused difficulty in L2 spelling, particularly L2 only phonemes being a source of spelling errors (Ibrahim, 1978; Wang & Geva, 2003a; Yeong & Liow, 2010; Park, 2012b) and the degree of orthographic transparency (see Katz & Frost, 1992 for details) of two languages also played an important role in L2 spellings performance (Fashola, et al., 1996; Park 2012a; Sun-Alperin & Wang, 2008). Learners of transparent L1 orthography rules had difficulty spelling English vowel sounds which have indirect
grapheme-phoneme correspondence. For instance, Sun-Alperin and Wang (2008) recruited 26 native Spanish-speaking and 53 native English-speaking children in grades 2 and 3 and examined their spelling errors. They found that, in pseudo-word spelling task, native Spanish-speaking children committed significantly more vowel spelling errors that were consistent with Spanish orthography. That is, error types were more phonologically legitimate in Spanish (e.g., mit for meat and mun for moon), which suggests that transparent orthographic properties of Spanish L1 influence children’s English L2 spelling performance.

Of the English vowels, there can be some degree of orthographic transparency caused by the number of graphemes to which a phoneme is corresponded. Yavas (2005) viewed considered /i/ as rather less transparent since it can be corresponded to 10 graphemes; whereas the vowel /ɑ/ was regarded as more transparent due to only five graphemes corresponded to it. Park (2012a) is of particular interest in examining errors of these English vowels. Park’s (2012a) study involved 30 native English speaking children and 36 native Korean speaking children. Korean EFL learners’ spelling errors on a pseudo-word spelling task for the less transparent vowel /i/ and for the more transparent vowel /ɑ/ were examined. The results showed that both groups made more errors in the less consistent vowels than the more consistent vowels. An in depth-analysis indicated that Korean-speaking children produced more errors in words containing less consistent vowels than did English-speaking children.

ESL spelling errors related to L2 phonology and orthography were also examined by Fashola, Drum, Mayer and Kang (1996) and Wang and Geva (2003a). Wang and Geva’s (2003a) longitudinal study involved both Cantonese-speaking primary level children learning English as a second language (ESL) and English speaking children. In this longitudinal study, four times of developmental spelling task were performed by children during the experiment (two years: from the beginning of grade one to the end of grade two) and spelling accuracy on each time was compared to measure developmental patterns of each group. The results
suggested a significant interaction between language group and time with respect to spelling accuracy. This interaction pattern showed a similar developmental trajectory of spelling levels across time for Cantonese ESL and English L1 children. An in depth-analysis showed the ESL children improved significantly their spelling performance from Time one to two, from Time two to three, and from Time three to four, whereas the English L1 children did not improve their spelling performance from Time two to three, although they showed a significant improvement from Time one to two, and Time three to four. However, the mean scores of each group were not significantly different by Time four, indicating that Chinese ESL children reached the similar level of accuracy with English L1 children. This longitudinal study also examined spelling development of two novel English phonemes (/ʃ/ and /θ/). The spelling errors of the Chinese ESL children reflected difficulty in representing phonemes that are absent in Cantonese phonology. Specifically, in spelling /ʃ/, Chinese ESL children made significantly more phonological errors than English L1 children at Time one. However, from Time two, the difference between groups was not significant. In regard to spelling /θ/, Chinese ESL children made significantly more errors than English L1 children in Times one and two. However, at Times three and four, the groups were not significantly different from each other. The results of this study were somewhat different from Fashola, et al. (1996) in that spelling accuracy of Chinese ESL children eventually reached almost the same degree of accuracy with that of L1 children even if the target phonemes are absent from their L1. Whereas these comparative studies provide us insight on individual phoneme accuracy in L2, the spelling development pattern has been usually discussed to provide important insights into how a learner’s spelling develops over time.

Current theories of spelling development are mostly based on the research with native speaking children. A number of studies have investigated spelling development in terms of its developmental phases (Bear & Templeton, 1998; Ehri, 1989, 2000; Larkin, 2008). One of the perspectives on spelling development is the
stage-based theories. Bear and Templeton (1998) divided spelling developmental stages into six and provided more detailed information on each of the spelling stages, particularly on transitional stages (stage one, *prephonemic spelling stage*; stage two, *semiphonemic or early letter name spelling stage*; stage three, *letter name spelling stage*; stage four, *within-word pattern spelling stage*; stage five, *syllable juncture spelling stage*; stage six *derivational constancy spelling stage*; see Bear & Templeton, 1998 for details on each stage) These stage-based accounts of spelling provide important insights into learner’s development of knowledge of phonology, orthography and its mappings.

In addition to these observations, some researchers (Siegler, 1996; Kwong & Varnhagen, 2005, Nassaji, 2007) have suggested alternative perspectives of spelling development. Nassaji’s (2007) study is of particular interest in ESL study. Nassaji (2007) viewed spelling development as strategic, overlapping and wave-like rather than a stage-like as in L1 development. His longitudinal case study involved ESL children from grade 1 through grade 4 and he reviewed misspelling data from the learners’ writing to examine overall patterns of spelling development and the word specific changes in the spelling of individual words. The learner’s misspellings in each period were examined using Ehri’s (1992) six-stage model of spelling development (*preliterate state*, *pre-phonetic stage*, *phonetic or letter-name stage*, *within-word pattern*, *syllable juncture*, and *derivational consistency*). The review of misspellings indicated a significant interaction between grade levels and misspelling types, which suggests a general developmental pattern as the learner moved to higher levels. Multiple comparisons between grade levels showed phonetic errors were decreased over time but it was not linear because the learner also produced errors which belong to different developmental stages at any given time. There was also variability in children’s spelling errors when the child spelled the same word at different times, and the children’s errors show features of earlier developmental stages when he was more advanced developmental stages. Thus,

As discussed, there are a number of studies inquiring spelling development pattern in L1 (Bear & Templeton, 1998; Ehri, 1989, 2000; Larkin, 2008) and most of these studies have investigated spelling development in terms of its developmental phases. Despite growing interest in spelling development, only a few studies have examined L2 spelling development (Wang & Geva, 2003a; Nassaji, 2007). The goal of this study was to extend the documentation of L2 spelling development research by examining L2 spelling performance based on the comparison of L2 only phonemes and common phonemes. The research questions were posed:

**Research Questions**

1. Are the Korean EFL learners able to correctly spell the words containing English only phonemes?
2. How do the accuracy rates of English only phonemes and common phonemes differ from children’s grades?
3. How do the Korean EFL learners’ developmental spelling patterns of English only phonemes and common phonemes change over time?

**The present study**

**Participants**

Participants of the study were 172 children who were attending a public elementary school and learning English as a foreign language in Korea. Children were from 4th grade to 6th grade (56 from 4th grade, 59 from 5th grade, and 57 from 6th grade respectively). All participants had received formal education in their L1 through 4th grade which ensured that they were phonologically developed in their L1. The teacher also reported that all participants in each group can read and write in their L1. One of the considerations concerning the participants is to ensure that their
awareness on English L2 phonology is developing because participants at least need to know how to write the English alphabet to map English letters to sound. To ensure this literacy skills in English L2, an English vocabulary test using Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised (WRMT-R, Woodcock, 1987) was administered in addition to teacher’s rating on students four basic language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) in English.

**Materials**

*Non-word spelling task*

Following a task used in previous L2 spelling research (Wang & Geva, 2003a; Sun-Alperin & Wang, 2008), a non-word spelling task was used in this study. Non-words are pronounceable combinations of letters that do not include semantic meaning but can be decoded and pronounced via phonological processing and alphabetic (letter-sound) knowledge (Frederickson, Frith, & Reason, 1997). In non-word spelling task, participants listen to the non-words and write them down on the sheet. 10 monosyllabic non-words were created. Five non-word items include target phonemes which do not exist in Korean (/f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/ and /r/ for the English only phonemes) and the other five non-word items include phonemes which exist in both languages (/t/, /k/ /p/, /m/, /n/, and /s/, as the common phonemes). Each non-word was created by changing only one phoneme of a real word. For instance, the pseudo word feace [fis], targeting consonant /f/, is based on the real word peace [pis].

*Real word spelling task*

Real word task was also adapted from Wang and Geva (2003a) and Sun-Alperin & Wang (2008), but includes more phonemes which are absent in Korean but present in English (/f/, /v/, /θ/, /ð/ and /r/). The Minister of Education, Science and Technology of Korea (MESTK) suggests 800 words should be acquired in elementary school level. On the basis of 800 words recommended by the MESTK, 10 words for the task were selected with careful consideration of participants’ grade. Five words include target phonemes which do not exist in Korean (/f/, /v/,
/θ/, /ð/ and /r for the English only phonemes) and the other five words include phonemes which exist in both languages (/t/, /k/ /p/, /m/, /n/, /d/ and /l/, as the common phonemes). One syllable words (CV or CVC) were selected for the task but for the phoneme /v/, two-syllable word (visit) was included due to lack of one-syllable words beginning with /v/ in the list of 800 words.

**Vocabulary measure**

Vocabulary list consisted of words from the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised (WRMT-R) (Woodcock, 1987). The selection criterion for the stimulus was the appropriateness for the current participants’ literacy proficiency. The 10 real words were selected from the items suggested for grades two through four. A native speaker of English pronounced the words and the pronunciations were recorded by a digital voice recorder. Children listened to an audio recorded pronunciation of each word and wrote down the meaning of the word as well. The mean scores of the vocabulary test of grade 4, 5, and 6 was shown 4.08 (SD = 2.59), 5.66 (SD = 2.48), and 7.10 (SD = 2.15) (max. 10) respectively.

**Coding**

A coding scheme was adapted for scoring the task to reflect word spelling performance more precisely. Following the procedure used in Treiman, Berch, and Weatherston (1993), the spelling the children produced was scored as either correct or incorrect according to the native speakers’ answers. The non-word spelling task material consists of two types of non-words: the consonants that exist in both English and Korean (the common phonemes) and the consonants that do not exist in Korean but exist in English (English only phonemes). Monosyllabic words were used for the test, and only consonants (syllable initial and syllable final) were considered to score points. When the participants spell two consonants without a vowel between them (e.g., m_p for [mep]), the first was counted as initial <m> and the second as final <p>. Participants received two points for items answered
correctly, one point for items misspelled by one letter, and zero points for items misspelled by both consonants. The same coding scheme was applied to the real word task. For vocabulary measure, when children provide either correct English spell or the correct meaning in Korean, it was regarded as a correct answer. One point was given to the correct answer.

**Procedure**

As mentioned earlier, the participants were elementary school children learning English as a foreign language. Prior to data collection, consent was obtained from the participants and their parents. The non-words, real words, and words for vocabulary measure were recorded by a native speaker of English. Before administering the task, the researcher first explained the purpose of the study and the task procedure to the participants. After that, the tasks were administered by the researcher during class time but it was not a part of the regular lesson. For the non-words, the participants listened to the recorded pronunciation of each non-word and each non-word was repeated twice with five second intervals and participants wrote down the non-words on the sheet. For both real words and words for vocabulary measure, participants listened to the words three times in a row. The participants initially listened to the word in separate, then the word was provided in a sentence in three second intervals, and finally, the word was provided in separate in three second intervals. Participants were allowed to write down the words on the sheet at any moment while listening to each word. It took about 20 minutes for the children to complete all tasks. A sheet and pencil were provided for each child, and the children were not allowed to put anything but the sheet and pencil on the desk to avoid distraction. The children were encouraged to write down as possible as they could.
Results

Summary statistics of spelling tasks (English only phonemes, common phonemes, real word, non-word, real word English only phonemes, non-word English only phonemes) in each grade appear in Table 1.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations (SDs) of each word type in each grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Type</th>
<th>4th grade</th>
<th>5th grade</th>
<th>6th grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English only phonemes</td>
<td>6.66(3.93)</td>
<td>8.79(4.36)</td>
<td>11.03(3.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common phonemes</td>
<td>11.14(4.34)</td>
<td>14.03(5.16)</td>
<td>16.10(2.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real word</td>
<td>9.30(5.53)</td>
<td>11.86(5.39)</td>
<td>14.70(4.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-word</td>
<td>8.50(4.08)</td>
<td>10.96(4.12)</td>
<td>12.43(2.16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real word English only phonemes</td>
<td>3.95 (3.07)</td>
<td>4.98 (2.83)</td>
<td>6.70 (2.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-word English only phonemes</td>
<td>2.71 (1.73)</td>
<td>3.81 (1.87)</td>
<td>4.33 (1.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real word common phonemes</td>
<td>5.36 (2.83)</td>
<td>6.88 (2.88)</td>
<td>8.00 (2.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-word common phonemes</td>
<td>5.79 (2.68)</td>
<td>7.15 (2.60)</td>
<td>8.11 (1.23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Mean comparison of English only phonemes in each grade (LSD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th grade</td>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>-2.13590*</td>
<td>.72895</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

146
Table 3. Mean comparison of common phonemes in each grade (LSD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Difference</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th grade</td>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>-2.89104*</td>
<td>.78318</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-4.4371</td>
<td>-1.3450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>-4.96241*</td>
<td>.78984</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-6.5216</td>
<td>-3.4032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>2.89104*</td>
<td>.78318</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.3450</td>
<td>4.4371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>-2.07136*</td>
<td>.77964</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>-3.6105</td>
<td>-.5323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>4.96241*</td>
<td>.78984</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>3.4032</td>
<td>6.5216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>5th grade</td>
<td>2.07136*</td>
<td>.77964</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.5323</td>
<td>3.6105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* the mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 2 and 3 illustrate mean differences, standard error, significance value, and confidence interval for mean differences of English only phonemes and common phonemes respectively. A repeated measures of ANOVA was performed with grades as between subjects (4th, 5th, 6th) and word types (English only phonemes
and common phonemes). Results showed that the main effect for the grades was significant, $F (2, 169) = 21.508$, $MSE = 308.302$, $p < .0001$, indicating that the 4th graders made much more errors than the other graders, followed by than 5th and 6th graders. The main effect for word types was also significant $F (1, 169) = 495.048$, $MSE = 4178.258$, $p < .0001$, indicating that the children made more errors in English only phonemes than the common phonemes. The interaction between grades and word types was not significant $F (2, 169) = 1.061$, $MSE = 8.959$, $p = 0.34$, indicating that mean differences of English only phonemes and common phonemes in each grade are not significant. Post-hoc analyses showed that children’s spelling performance improved significantly from grade 4 to grade 5, $p < .0001$, and grade 5 to grade 6, $p < 0.003$.

![Figure 1](image_url)

**Figure 1.** Mean change of real word and non-word task of each grade

Figure 1 represents developmental patterns of spelling in real word and non-word of each grade. The results demonstrated that children spelled more accurately the real words than the non-words in each grade. Statistical analyses also indicated that the 6th grade children showed highly accurate spelling performance, followed by 5th and 4th graders. However, means of real word and non-word spelling of each grade
were not significantly different suggesting that even though children improved in both tasks as getting higher grade, it is hard to conclude that children’s spelling performance was more pronounced in real word tasks than non-word tasks. The one way ANOVA revealed that mean differences of real word spellings of each grade were significant, \( F(2, 171) = 15.811, \text{MSE} = 412.085, \ p < 0.001 \). The one way ANOVA also revealed that mean differences of non-word spellings of each grade were significant, \( F(2, 171) = 17.410, \text{MSE} = 223.551, \ p < 0.001 \). When comparing means of real word and non-word tasks in each grade, the differences were largest in 6\(^{th} \) grade and followed by 5\(^{th} \) and 4\(^{th} \) grade; the mean differences between real words and non-words spelling were 2.27 in 6\(^{th} \) grade but 0.8 in 4\(^{th} \) grade, 0.9 in 5\(^{th} \) grade.

![Mean change of English only phonemes and common phonemes](image)

**Figure 2.** Mean change of English only phonemes and common phonemes

The means of English only phonemes and common phonemes in each grade appear in graphic form in Figure 2. Mean of English only phonemes of grade 4, 5, 6 were 6.66 (SD = 3.93), 8.79 (SD = 4.36), and 11.03 (SD = 3.33) respectively, means of common phonemes, 11.14 (SD = 4.34), 14.03 (SD = 5.16), and 16.10 (SD = 2.64) respectively. A one way ANOVA revealed that mean differences of English only
phonemes were significant, \( F(2, 171) = 17.709, \text{MSE} = 270.359, p < 0.001 \). A one way ANOVA revealed that mean differences of common phonemes of each grade were significant, \( F(2, 171) = 19.902, \text{MSE} = 350.723, p < 0.001 \). A one way ANOVA revealed that mean differences of common phonemes of each grade were significant, \( F(2, 171) = 19.902, \text{MSE} = 350.723, p < 0.001 \).

**Figure 3.** Mean change of English only phonemes and common phonemes in real word and non-word

Children’s spelling of English only phonemes and common phonemes was also reviewed in terms of real word and non-word spelling performance. Figure 3 represents developmental patterns of English only phonemes and common phonemes in real word and non-word in each grade. The results demonstrated that children spelled most accurately non-word common phonemes in each grade followed by real word common phonemes and real word English only phonemes. Non-word English only phonemes were the most difficult for Korean EFL learners to spell. It seems that Korean EFL children felt almost the same degree of difficulty spelling non-word common phonemes and real word common phonemes. The mean differences were 0.43, 0.27 and 0.11 in grade 4, 5 and 6 respectively. However,
when comparing means of real word English only phonemes and non-word English only phonemes in each grade, the differences became larger even in grade 6. These mean differences were 1.24, 1.17 and 2.37 in grade 4, 5 and 6 respectively.

Discussions

Research questions one and two revisited

(1) Are the Korean EFL learners able to correctly spell the words containing English only phonemes? (2) How do the accuracy rates of English only phonemes and common phonemes differ from children’s grades?

First, children’s spelling performance in terms of real word and non-word spelling performance was also reviewed. The results demonstrated that children spelled more accurately the real words than the non-words in each grade. Statistical analyses also indicated that the 6th grade children showed highly accurate spelling performance, followed by 5th and 4th graders. However, means of real word and non-word spelling of each grade were not significantly different suggesting that even though children improved in both tasks as revealed by higher grades, it is difficult to conclude that children’s spelling performance was more pronounced in real word tasks than non-word tasks.

The results showed that the children spelled the common phonemes more accurately than the English only phonemes. Similar results were found in other studies (Park, 2012b; Wang & Geva, 2003; Yeong & Liow, 2010). Yeong and Liow (2010) investigated spelling accuracy for the common phonemes in Mandarin and English (/f/ and /p/) and English only phonemes (/v/ and /b/) with the degree of its frequency. It was found that Mandarin L1 children had made more errors in spelling low frequency words containing English only phonemes than their English L1 counterparts. The results confirmed that congruent phonology between L1 and L2 yields more accurate spelling, and incongruent phonology can be one of the linguistic differences causing spelling errors. However, error rates were reduced in grade 5th and 6th in both English only phonemes and common phonemes indicating that children’s spelling ability is much better in higher grade 5 and 6 than in grade
4. Analysis of data showed that although children’s overall developmental path was progressive in that they produced increasingly more accurate spelling in both English only phonemes and common phonemes, there was much difference in accuracy between English only phonemes and common phonemes. This difference was not reduced in higher grades, which is somewhat different from our expectation. Children’s performance was a lot better in common phonemes than English only phonemes in each grade and mean differences were relatively large (4.48 in grade 4, 5.24 in grade 5, and 5.07 in grade 6). This finding differs slightly from Wang and Geva’s (2003a) comparative study on spelling development of two novels (/ʃ/ and /θ/). In their longitudinal study, the results indicated that Chinese ESL children reached almost the same degree of accuracy in spelling performance with native English speakers on these two novels by the time they reached the second grade. Chinese ESL children’s awareness of English only phonemes can be fully developed as that of English L1 students; however, developmental trend of English only phonemes suggests a similar developmental trajectory to common phonemes. As seen in Figure 2, the rate of development of both English only phonemes and common phonemes is almost similar to each other even though it seems that children experienced more difficulty in spelling English only phonemes than common phonemes.

**Research question three revisited**

(3) How do the Korean EFL learners’ developmental spelling patterns of English only phonemes and common phonemes change over time?

The overall results of spelling performance on real words and non-words were similar to the results of Wang and Geva (2003b). Children usually produce more accurate spellings on real words than on non-words, but more depth analyses provided us a little different insight on spelling performance. We expected children would be better at spelling both real words and non-words in higher grades, assuming that their phonological awareness much more developed than in lower grades (see vocabulary measure task). But the degree of differences in each grade
did not reflect our expected developmental patterns. It is assumed that children’s lexical knowledge may affect real word spelling task since vocabulary measures were also highest in 6th grade.

In regard to spelling development patterns comparing English only phonemes and common phonemes, an interesting point is that children spelled non-word common phonemes most accurately rather than real word common phonemes even if the mean differences in each grade were not significant. We expected that children would spell real words better than non-words (Wang & Geva, 2003a), and they would spell common phonemes better than English only phonemes (Park, 2012b), but the results indicated that regardless of word types, when children spell common phonemes, they do not experience as much difficulty as they experience when spelling English only phonemes. Particularly, there was not much difference in mean accuracy of spelling common phonemes both in real and non-word tasks. It seemed that mean differences of non-word English only phonemes and real word English only phonemes were also becoming smaller in grade 5 and 6, compared to grade 4 (0.43 in grade 4 and 0.27 in grade 5). They reached almost the same degree of accuracy in grade 6 with only 0.11 differences. However, it is difficult to find any consistent spelling change in non-word English only phonemes and real word English only phonemes. Mean differences between real word English only phonemes and non word English only phonemes in grade 4 and 5 were almost the same (1.24 in grade4 and 1.17 in grade 5) but it became larger in grade 6 (2.37). This means that as children’s vocabulary knowledge increases, their spelling performance of real words also improved. However, children’s performance on English only phonemes did not reach the same degree of accuracy with common phonemes even in grade 6. Children’s awareness of English only phonemes needs to be emphasized in English education to help EFL learners develop literacy

153
Conclusion

We have discussed English L2 spelling development in terms of English only phonemes and common phonemes. Drawing from previous findings in English L2 spelling performance (Bebout, 1985; Cronnell, 1985; Fashola et al., 1996; Sun-Alperin & Wang, 2008; Park, 2012a; 2012b;) and spelling development (Bear & Templeton, 1988; Ehri, 1989; Nassaji, 2007), this study examined EFL children’s spelling performance on English only phonemes and common phonemes. The data demonstrated the following: (a) common phonemes between L1 and L2 yield more accurate spelling, and English only phonemes can be one of the linguistic differences causing spelling errors and (b) English only phonemes in both real words and non-words tend to develop slightly later among EFL children, indicating that EFL children’s spelling development takes longer than that of ESL children. This suggests that EFL children need to receive much more phonology-focused instruction for their early literacy development. It should be noted that only monosyllabic words were considered for these experiments; however, future studies should investigate errors in multi-syllable words in order to confirm the results of this study. This study also used data only from very limited sets of English words containing the L2-specific phonemes. Children’s familiarity with these words might have affected their spelling performance, particularly for the real word task. Future research should include more various sets of words taking multi-syllable words into consideration.
References


Treiman, R. (1992). The role of intrasyllabic units in learning to read and spell. In P. B. Gough, L. C. Ehri & R. Treiman (Eds), *Reading acquisition* (pp. 65-
106). Hillsdale, NJ; Erlbaum.


