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Foreword

The Asian EFL Journal held its first Philippine TESOL Conference in Cebu in August of 2009. Over 450 delegates attended and listened to speeches from 45 speakers from 39 countries. Key speakers were the internationally famous Rod Ellis who gave a talk on Task Based Teaching, followed by Professor Phyllis Chew from Nanyang University in Singapore. Her lively speech had the large audience enthralled as she discussed learning scenarios in Singapore and the Philippines. Professor Carlo Magno from De La Salle University, and Chief Editor of the Philippine ESL Journal gave the third plenary on Second Language Acquisition in the Philippines.

As a result of the conference the Governor of Cebu has established a Committee known as CHELE – Cebu Hub for English Learning Excellence- whereby the quasi government authority will be responsible for establishing standards and accrediting of Language providers in Cebu where over 15,000 students come monthly to study English.

A city within the city will be built and is designed to hold 100,000 international students who will study English in first class conditions. CHELE is tasked with the welfare of all international students. This is the first English Hub in the world and the progress is being keenly observed by such cities as Dubai and Singapore who hope to follow suit.

The next conference is scheduled for August 2010 in the International Convention Centre which has bee donated to the Conference by the Governor. The conference will become an annual event to show case Cebu. We look forward to seeing you in Cebu as this event takes proportions that will exceed the TESOL Convention in the USA.

Supporters of the Cebu Hub project are the Australian College, Clark Education City, TESOL Asia and the world’s fist TESOL radio – TESOL FM.

We look forward to your support and participation

Roger Nunn
Paul Robertson
The Methodology of Task-Based Teaching

Bio.
Professor Ellis, a renowned linguist, received his Doctorate from the University of London and his Master of Education from the University of Bristol. A former professor at Temple University both in Japan and the US. Prof. Ellis has taught in numerous positions in England, Japan, the US, Zambia and New Zealand. Dr. Ellis, who is known as the "Father of Second Language Acquisition", has served as the Director of the Institute of Language Teaching and Learning at the University of Auckland. Author of numerous student and teacher training textbooks for Prentice Hall and Oxford University Press, Prof. Ellis's textbooks on Second Language Acquisition and Grammar are core textbooks in TESOL and Linguistics programs around the world.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to consider methodological procedures for teaching tasks. These are of two basic kinds. Firstly, there are those procedures relating to how the tasks specified in a task-based syllabus can be converted into actual lessons. Secondly, there are procedures relating to how the teacher and learners are to participate in the lessons. This paper will address only the first of these.

The design of a task-based lesson involves consideration of the stages or components of a lesson that has a task as its principal component. Various designs have been proposed (e.g. Estaire and Zanon 1994; Lee 2000; Prabhu 1987; Skehan 1996; Willis 1996). However they all have in common three principal phases, which are shown in Figure 1. These phases reflect the chronology of a task-based lesson. Thus, the first phase is 'pre-task' and concerns the various activities that teachers and students can undertake before they start the task, such as whether students are given time to plan the performance of the task. The second phase, the 'during task' phase, centres around the task itself and affords various instructional options, including whether students are required to operate under time-pressure or not. The final phase is 'post-task' and involves procedures for following-up on the task performance. Only the 'during task' phase is obligatory in task-based teaching. Thus, minimally, a task-based lesson consists of the students just performing a task. Options selected from the 'pre-task' or 'post-task' phases are non-obligatory but, as we will see, can serve a crucial role in ensuring that the task performance is maximally effective for language development.
Access to a clear framework for a task-based lesson is of obvious advantage to both teachers and learners. Richards (1996) shows how many experienced teachers adhere to a maxim of planning ('Plan your teaching and try to follow your plan') while Numrich (1996) reports on how novice teachers feel the 'need to be creative and varied in teaching'. A framework such as the one outlined in Figure 1 caters to both needs. It provides a clear structure for a lesson and it also allows for creativity and variety in the choice of options in each phase.

**The pre-task phase**

The purpose of the pre-task phase is to prepare students to perform the task in ways that will promote acquisition. Lee (2000) describes the importance of 'framing' the task to be performed and suggests that one way of doing this is to provide an advance organizer of what the students will be required to do and the nature of the outcome they will arrive at. Dornyei (2001) emphasizes the importance of presenting a task in a way that motivates learners. Like Lee, he sees value in explaining the purpose and utility of the task. This may be especially important for learners from traditional 'studial' classrooms; they may need to be convinced of the value of a more 'experiential' approach. Dornyei also suggests that task preparation should involve strategies for whetting students' appetites to perform the task (e.g. by asking them to guess what the task will involve) and for helping them to perform the task. Strategies in this latter category are discussed below.

Skehan (1996) refers to two broad alternatives available to the teacher during the pre-task phase:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Examples of options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Pre-task</td>
<td>* Framing the activity (e.g. establishing the outcome of the task)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Planning time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Doing a similar task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. During task</td>
<td>* Time pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Number of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Post-task</td>
<td>* Learner report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Consciousness-raising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Repeat task</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: A framework for designing task-based lessons

These alternatives can be tackled procedurally in one of four ways; (1) supporting learners in performing a task similar to the task they will perform in the during-task phase of the lesson, (2) asking students to observe a model of how to perform the task, (3)
engaging learners in non-task activities designed to prepare them to perform the task or
(4) strategic planning of the main task performance. We will consider each in some
detail.

Performing a similar task

The use of a 'pre-task' was a key feature of the Communicational Teaching Project
(Prabhu 1987). It was carried out as a whole-class activity with the teacher and involved
the learners in completing a task of the same kind as and with similar content to the main
task. Thus, it served as a preparation for performing the main task individually. For
example, if the main task involved working out a class timetable from the timetables of
individual teachers, then the pre-task would be the same but with different information in
the teachers' timetables.

Prabhu explains that the pre-task was conducted through interaction of the question-and-
answer type. The teacher was expected to lead the class step-by-step to the expected
outcome, to break down a step into smaller steps if the learners encountered difficulty
and to offer one of more parallels to a step in the reasoning process to ensure that mixed
ability learners could understand what was required. The teacher was provided with a
lesson plan that included (1) the pre-task and (2) a set of graded questions or instructions
together with parallel questions to be used as needed. When implemented in the
classroom, the plan results in a 'pedagogic dialogue'. Prabhu emphasises that the pre-task
was not a 'demonstration' but 'a task in its own right'. It is clear from this account that the
'pre-task' serves as a mediational tool for the kind of 'instructional conversation' that
sociocultural theorists advocate. The teacher, as an expert, uses the pre-task to
scaffold learners' performance of the task with the expectancy that this 'other-regulation' facilitates
the 'self-regulation' learners will need to perform the main task on their own.

Providing a model

An alternative is to ask the students to observe a model of how the task can be performed
without requiring them to undertake a trial performance of the task (see Aston (1982) for
an early example of such an approach). Minimally this involves presenting them with a
text (oral or written) to demonstrate an 'ideal' performance of the task. Both Skehan
(1996) and Willis (1996) suggest than simply 'observing' others perform a task can help
reduce the cognitive load on the learner. However, the model can also be accompanied by
activities designed to raise learners' consciousness about specific features of the task
performance - for example, the strategies that can be employed to overcome
communication problems, the conversational gambits for holding the floor during a
discussion or the pragmalinguistic devices for performing key language functions. Such
activities might require the learners to identify and analyze these features in the model
texts. Alternatively, they might involve pre-training in the use of specific strategies.
Nunan (1989) lists a number of learning strategies (e.g. 'Learning to live with uncertainty'
and 'Learning to make intelligent guesses') that students can be taught to help them
become 'adaptable, creative, inventive and above all independent' (p. 81) and thus more
effective performers of a task. However, the effectiveness of such strategy training
remains to be convincingly demonstrated.

Non-task preparation activities
There are a variety of non-task preparation activities that teachers can choose from. These can centre on reducing the cognitive or the linguistic demands placed on the learner. Activating learners' content schemata or providing them with background information serves as a means of defining the topic area of a task. Willis (1996) provides a list of activities for achieving this (e.g. brainstorming and mind-maps). When learners know what they are going to talk or write about they have more processing space available for formulating the language needed to express their ideas with the result that the quantity of the output will be enhanced and also fluency and complexity. Recommended activities for addressing the linguistic demands of a task often focus on vocabulary rather than grammar, perhaps because vocabulary is seen as more helpful for the successful performance of a task than grammar. Newton (2001) suggests three ways in which teachers can target unfamiliar vocabulary in the pre-task phase; predicting (i.e. asking learners to brainstorm a list of words related to the task title or topic), cooperative dictionary search (i.e. allocating different learners words to look up in their dictionary), and words and definitions (i.e. learners match a list of words to their definitions). Newton argues that such activities will 'prevent the struggle with new words overtaking other important goals such as fluency or content-learning' when learners perform the task. However, there is always the danger that pre-teaching vocabulary will result in learners treating the task as an opportunity to practise pre-selected words. In the case of task-supported teaching this can be seen as desirable but in the case of task-based teaching it can threaten the integrity of the task.

**Strategic planning**

Finally, learners can be given time to plan how they will perform the task. This involves 'strategic planning' and contrasts with the 'online planning' that can occur during the performance of the task. It can be distinguished from other pre-task options in that it does not involve students in a trial performance of the task or in observing a model. However, it may involve the provision of linguistic forms/strategies for performing the task but a distinction can still be drawn between the non-task preparation procedures described above and strategic planning, as the former occur without the students having access to the task they will be asked to perform while strategic planning involves the students considering the forms they will need to execute the task workplan they have been given.

There are a number of methodological options available to teachers who opt for strategic planning. The first concerns whether the students are simply given the task workplan and left to decide for themselves what to plan, which typically results in priority being given to content over form, or whether they are given guidance in what to plan. In the case of the latter option, the guidance may focus learners' attention on form or content or, as in Sangarun's (2001) study, form and content together. Skehan (1996) suggests that learners need to be made explicitly aware of where they are focussing their attention - whether on fluency, complexity or accuracy. These planning options are illustrated in Figure 2. Here the context is a task involving a balloon debate (i.e. deciding who should be ejected from a balloon to keep it afloat). The guidance can also be 'detailed' or 'undetailed' (Foster and Skehan 1996). The examples in Figure 2 are of the undetailed kind. Skehan (1998) gives an example of detailed planning for a personal task involving asking someone to go to your house to turn off the oven that you have left on. This involved instructions relating to planning content (e.g. 'think about what problems your listener could have and how you might help her') and language (e.g. 'think what grammar you need to do the task'). These options do not just provide for variety in planning activities; they also enable the
teacher to channel the learners' attention onto different aspects of language use. For example, Foster and Skehan (1996) found that when students were given detailed guidance they tended to prioritise content with resulting gains in complexity when they performed the task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic planning options</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. No planning</td>
<td>The students were introduced to the idea of a balloon debate, assigned roles and then asked to debate who should be sacrificed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Guided planning - language focus</td>
<td>The students were introduced to the idea of a balloon debate and then shown how to use modal verbs and conditionals in the reasons a doctor might give for not being thrown out of the balloon (e.g. 'I take care of many sick people - If you throw me out, many people might die.')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Guided planning - content focus</td>
<td>The students were introduced the idea of a balloon debate. The teacher presents ideas that each character might use to defend his or her right to stay in the balloon and students were encouraged to add ideas of their own.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: Options for strategic planning (based on Foster and Skehan 1999).

Another option concerns the amount of time students are given to carry out the pre-task planning. Most of the research studies that have investigated this kind of planning have allocated between 1 and 10 minutes. An effect on fluency was evident with very short periods of planning in some studies but longer was needed for an effect on complexity (Skehan 1998 suggests 10 minutes is optimal). Finally, planning can be carried out individually, in groups, or with the teacher.

**Summary and final comment**

In these four ways, teachers can help to create conditions that will make tasks work for acquisition. As Skehan (1998) points out, they serve to introduce new language that the learners can use while performing the task, to mobilize existing linguistic resources, to ease processing load and to push learners to interpret tasks in more demanding ways. However, it is not yet possible to 'fine tune' learners' performance of a task through selecting specific pre-task options. At best, all that the research to date has demonstrated is the likely effects of some of the procedures referred to above. Important questions remain unanswered. For example, we do not know whether task preparation that involves an actual performance of the task is more or less effective than preparation that involves just observation. Nor is it clear to what extent linguistic priming subverts the 'naturalness' of a task resulting in teaching of the present-practice-produce (PPP) kind. Only in the case of strategic planning do we have some idea of how the different options affect task performance.

**The during-task phase**
The methodological options available to the teacher in the during-task phase are of two basic kinds. First, there are various options relating to how the task is to be undertaken that can be selected prior to the actual performance of the task and thus planned for by the teacher. These will be called 'task-performance options'. Second, there are a number of 'process options' that involve the teacher and students in on-line decision making about how to perform the task as it is being completed.

Task performance options

We will consider three task performance options that have figured in the research to date. The first of these options concerns whether to require the students to perform the task under time pressure. The teacher can elect to allow students to complete the task in their own time or can set a time limit. Lee (2000) strongly recommends that teachers set strict time limits. This option is important because it can influence the nature of the language that students' produce. Yuan and Ellis (2002) found that giving students unlimited time to perform a narrative task resulted in language that was both more complex and more accurate in comparison to a control group that was asked to perform the same task under time pressure. The students used the time at their disposal to monitor and reformulate their utterances. Interestingly, the opportunity to plan on-line produced a different effect from the opportunity to engage in strategic planning, which led to greater fluency and complexity of language. It seems, then, that if teachers want to emphasize accuracy in a task performance, they need to ensure that the students can complete the task in their own time. However, if they want to encourage fluency they need to set a time limit.

The second task performance option involves deciding whether to allow the students access to the input data while they perform a task. In some tasks access to the input data is built into the design of a task (e.g. in Spot the Difference, Describe and Draw, or many information gap tasks). However, in other tasks it is optional. For example, in a story retelling/recall task the students can be permitted to keep the pictures/ text or be asked to put them on one side as they narrate the story. This can influence the complexity of the task, as tasks that are supported by pictures and texts are easier than tasks that are not. Joe (1998) reports a study that compared learners' acquisition of a set of target words (which they did not know prior to performing the task) in a narrative recall task under two conditions - with and without access to the text. She found that the learners who could see the text used the target words more frequently, although the difference was evident only in verbatim use of the words not generated use (i.e. they did not use the target words in original sentences). Joe's study raises an important question. Does borrowing from the input data assist acquisition? The term 'borrowing' in this context comes from Prabhu (1987).

He defines it as 'taking over an available verbal formulation in order to express some self-initiated meaning content, instead of generating the formulation from one's own competence' (p. 60). Prabhu distinguishes borrowing from 'reproduction' where the decision to 'take over' a sample of a language is not made by the learner but by some external authority (i.e. the teacher of the text book). Borrowing is compatible with task-based teaching but reproduction is not. Prabhu sees definite value in borrowing for maintaining a task-based activity and also probable value in promoting acquisition. Certainly, from the perspective of sociocultural theory, where learning occurs through 'participation', borrowing can be seen as contributing directly to acquisition.
The third task performance option consists of introducing some surprise element into the task. Skehan and Foster (1997) illustrate this option. They asked students to complete a decision-making task that required them to decide what punishment should be given to four criminals who had committed different crimes. At the beginning of the task they were given information about each criminal and the crime he/she had committed. Half way through the task the students were given further information of a surprising nature about each criminal. For example, the initial information provided about one of the criminals was as follows:

The accused is a doctor. He gave an overdose (a very high quantity of a painkilling drug) to an 85-year-old woman because she was dying painfully of cancer. The doctor says that the woman had asked for an overdose. The woman's family accuse the doctor of murder. After talking for five minutes, the students were given the following additional information: Later, it was discovered that seven other old people in the same hospital had died in a similar way, through overdoses. The doctor refuses to say if he was involved.

However, this study failed to find that introducing such a surprise had any effect on the fluency, complexity or accuracy of the learners' language. This does not mean that this option is of no pedagogic value, as requiring learners to cope with a surprise serves as an obvious way of extending the time learners spend on a task and thus increases the amount of talk. It may also help to enhance students' intrinsic interest in a task.

**Process options**

Process options differ from task performance options in that they concern the way in which the discourse arising from the task is enacted rather than pedagogical decisions about the way the task is to be handled. Whereas performance options can be selected in advance of the actual performance of the task, process options must be taken in flight while the task is being performed.

The teacher's on-line decision about how to conduct the discourse of a task reflect his/her 'theory-in-use' (Schon 1983) and 'practical knowledge' (Eraut 1994). On the learners' part, they reflect the language learning beliefs (Horwitz 1987) they bring to the classroom and, more particularly, to a specific task. How teachers and learners conduct a task will be influenced, to a large extent, by their prior experiences of teaching and learning and their personal definitions of the particular teaching-learning situation. Thus, the options described below are primarily descriptive, reflecting an internal rather than external perspective (Ellis 1998) on the methodology of task-based teaching.

A common assumption of task-based teaching is that the texts, the discursive practices and the social practices of the classroom (Breen 1998) that are constructed by and through a task resemble those found in non-pedagogic discourse. To achieve this, however, is no mean feat, especially if the teacher is directly involved in the performance of the task. As Breen points out, the 'texts' of lessons (i.e. the actual language produced by the participants) are typically teacher-centred with learners 'not actually required to do much overt or explicit discursive work' (p. 123), while the 'discursive practices' (i.e. the means by which the text are produced) 'construct learners as primarily responsive and seemingly fairly passive participants in the discourse' (p. 124) and the 'social practices' (i.e. the organisational and institutional circumstances that shape the texts and discursive practices) are directed at the avoidance of 'social trouble'. Task-based teaching, however,
seeks the converse - texts that are learner-centred, discursive practices that encourage the learner to actively engage in shaping and controlling the discourse, and social practices that are centred on allowing and resolving social trouble. This poses a problem, which teachers need to address.

Figure 3 contrasts two sets of classroom processes. The first set corresponds to the classroom behaviours that are typical of a traditional form-focussed pedagogy where language is treated as an object and the students are required to act as 'learners'. The second set reflects the behaviours that characterize a task-based pedagogy, where language is treated as a tool for communicating and the teacher and students function primarily as 'language users' (Ellis 2001). Thus, which set of behaviours arise is crucially dependent on the participants' orientation to the classroom and to their motives for performing an activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Traditional form-focussed pedagogy</th>
<th>B Task-based pedagogy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rigid discourse structure consisting of IRF (initiate-respond-feedback) exchanges</td>
<td>Loose discourse structure consisting of adjacency pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher controls topic development</td>
<td>Students able to control topic development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn-taking is regulated by the teacher.</td>
<td>Turn-taking is regulated by the same rules that govern everyday conversation (i.e. speakers can self select).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display questions (i.e. questions that the questioner already knows the answer)</td>
<td>Use of referential questions (i.e. questions that the questioner does not know the answer to)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are placed in a responding role and consequently perform a limited range of language functions.</td>
<td>Students function in both initiating and responding roles and thus perform a wide range of language functions (e.g. asking and giving information, agreeing and disagreeing, instructing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little need or opportunity to negotiate meaning.</td>
<td>Opportunities to negotiate meaning when communication problems arise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaffolding directed primarily at enabling students to produce correct sentences.</td>
<td>Scaffolding directed primarily at enabling students to say what they want to say.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Form-focused Feedback vs. Content-focused Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form-focused feedback (i.e. the teacher responds implicitly or explicitly to the correctness of students' utterances)</th>
<th>Content-focused feedback (i.e. the teacher responds to the message content of the students' utterances).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Echoing (i.e. the teacher repeats what a student has said for the benefit of the whole class)</td>
<td>Repetition (i.e. a student elects to repeat something another student or the teacher has said as private speech or to establish intersubjectivity).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Stereotypical classroom processes in traditional form-focused pedagogy and task-based pedagogy

Two questions arise. The first concerns what the participants in a task need to do to ensure that the interactions they engage in manifest the processes described in column B in Figure 3. Implicit in this question is an acknowledgement of the importance of these processes for task-based instruction. The second question, however, challenges this assumption by asking whether in fact these processes are criterial of task-based pedagogy and whether, minimally, they need to be complemented by processes from column A.

It has often been pointed out (see, for example, Nunan 1987) that the processes described in column B are a rarity even in classrooms where the teacher claims to be teaching communicatively. The main reason for this lies in the difficulty teachers and students have in achieving the required orientation. As Goffman (1981) has pointed out, classrooms are governed by an 'educational imperative' which dictates the kind of discourse that arises. It is for this reason that teachers and students find it difficult to consistently orient to language as a tool and to adopt the role of language users when they both know that the *raison-d'être* for their being together is to teach and learn the language. In effect, task-based teaching calls for the classroom participants to forget where they are and why they are there and to act in the belief that they can learn the language indirectly through communicating in it rather than directly through studying it. This is asking a lot of them, especially if the social practices the participants bring to the classroom belong to a pedagogy of transmission rather than of interpretation (Barnes 1976). It is probably easier to achieve when students are interacting among themselves, without the teacher being present, as the greater symmetry of social roles this affords leads naturally to the kinds of risk-taking behaviour required of a task-based pedagogy (Pica 1987). This is one reason why pair and group work are seen as central to task-based teaching.

However, even when the participants in a task are oriented to treat language as a tool and to function as language users, the text of the task may disappoint, manifesting few of the characteristics facilitative of acquisition. Seedhouse (1999) has pointed out that the characteristics of task-based interaction do not always match those described in Figure 3. He illustrates how in some tasks the turn-taking system is conspicuously constrained, there is a tendency for students to rely on topic-comment constructions where verbal elements are omitted (a feature also noted in pidgins) and to produce highly indexicalised utterances. An even greater limitation in task-based interaction, according to Seedhouse, is the minimalization that characterizes some task-based interactions. This is illustrated in the extract below where the students were required to complete and label a geometric figure:
L1: What?
L2: Stop.
L3: Dot?
L4: Dot?
L5: Point?
L6: Dot?
LL: Point, point, yeh.
L1: Point?
L5: Small point.
L3: Dot

Here all the utterances but one consist of a single word. Clearly, such interactions do not help the 'stretch' learners' interlanguages, one of the stated goals of task-based pedagogy (Nunan 1989). Seedhouse suggests that such limited interactions arise because 'learners appear to be so concentrated on completing the task that linguistic forms are treated as a vehicle of minor importance' (p. 154). In other words, the very nature of a task (i.e. the fact it is directed at accomplishing a specified outcome) may result in a restricted variety of communication.

Seedhouse overstates this limitation of tasks. First, it is possible to argue that the restricted nature of the talk shown in the extract above is well suited to the students' purpose. Second, the nature of the interaction depends crucially on the design characteristics of tasks and procedures for implementing them. Thus, richer varieties of communication characterized by more complex language use, are achievable if, for example, students are asked to perform open tasks with divergent goals and are given the opportunity to plan their performance before hand. Nevertheless, Seedhouse's critique needs to be addressed. Clearly, teachers need to monitor their students' performance of a task carefully, examining to what extent the processes described in Figure 3 arise and, crucially, whether the interactions manifest the minimalized and pidgin-like uses of language Seedhouse illustrates. The information obtained from such monitoring can be used to inform decisions about what tasks and procedures to use in subsequent tasks. In this way, teachers can build up a fund of experience of the task characteristics and methods of implementation that will ensure the kinds of interactions hypothesized to promote acquisition. Thus, the solution, to the problem Seedhouse identifies lies not in attempting to manipulate process options directly, which may well be impossible without imperilling the 'taskness' of the task, but through careful selection from the pre-task options and the performance options described above.

Where Seedhouse questions whether the kinds of behaviours shown in Figure 3 are achievable in task-based teaching, others have challenged whether they constitute appropriate goals for interaction in a classroom. Cullen (1998) has pointed out that the classroom context constitutes a communicative environment in its own right that is distinct from the communicative contexts of the world outside and on these grounds has challenged the basis for assessing the communicativeness of classroom discourse. In effect, then, Cullen disputes the assumption that underlies task-based pedagogy - that classrooms need to replicate the kind of communicative behaviour found outside the classroom. He illustrates how 'what appears to be non-communicative teacher talk is not necessarily so in the classroom context' (p. 183) with an extract from an English lesson in Egypt. This interaction is teacher-led, is full of display questions, includes feedback that
is form-focussed and contains a lot of echoing - all processes associated with a traditional form-focussed pedagogy. However, Cullen argues that in the context of the classroom, the interaction can be considered 'communicative' in that the entire sequence manifests a focus on message content, the teacher's questions are carefully structured, the feedback is clear and the use of echoing serves to ensure that the students' attention is not lost. He claims that the discourse is pedagogically effective because the teacher has successfully combined the role of 'instructor' and 'interlocutor'. Arguably, this is what a task-based pedagogy needs to strive for. How might it be achieved?

One way is by incorporating a focus on form into the performance of the task. Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) report this can be achieved in either responding focus-on-form episodes, where one of the participants, usually the teacher, responds to a student utterance containing an error, or in initiating episodes, where either the teacher or a student elects to take time out from the exchange of message content to attend briefly to form, usually by means of a direct query about a specific form. Such attention to form differs from that arising in lessons of the traditional, focus-on-forms kind because, for, as Wilberg (1987) notes, 'the content is dictated by the student, the form only by the teacher' (p. 27). It also differs in another way. As Prabhu (1987) points out, correction during a task is 'incidental' rather than 'systematic' in nature. In incidental correction, only 'tokens' are addressed (i.e. there is no attempt to generalize the type of error), it is seen by the participants as 'a part of getting on with the activity in hand, not as a separate objective' (p. 63) and, crucially, it is transitory. Prabhu excludes preventive or pre-emptive attention to form but, as Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen's study shows this too can be 'incidental'.

Teachers can employ both implicit and explicit techniques to achieve this focus on form. These techniques can be used when some kind of communication problem arises (as occurs in the negotiation of meaning) or they can be used when the teacher chooses to abandon his/her role as a language user momentarily in order to function as an instructor (i.e. to negotiate form rather than meaning). Teachers can play a very direct role by initiating this negotiation but they can also intervene to support a process that students have started for themselves, a technique that involves 'nudging' the learners towards a solution. Teachers can also allow or even encourage students to use the same techniques themselves - for example, by accepting and responding to students' queries about form.

Figure 4 describes some of the techniques that can be used by the task participants. Evidence from research (Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen 2001) indicates that the use of these techniques, even when quite frequent, need not detract from the primary focus on message, which is the defining characteristic of a task. Thus, they serve as important process options for reconciling the roles of 'instructor/learner' on the one hand and 'interlocutor/language user' on the other. Furthermore, they potentially enhance the acquisitional value of a task by inducing noticing of linguistic forms that lie outside or at the edges of students' current interlanguages.
## Type of Technique | Interactional device | Description
--- | --- | ---
Implicit | 1. Request for clarification  
2. Recast | A task participant seeks clarification of something another participant has said, thus providing an opportunity for the first participant to reformulate. A task participant rephrases part or the whole of another participant's utterance.

Explicit | 1. Explicit correction  
2. Metalingual comment/question  
3. Query  
4. Advise | A task participant draws explicit attention to another participant's deviant use of a linguistic form. (e.g. 'Not x but y.')  
A task participant uses metalanguage to draw attention to another participant's deviant use of a linguistic form (e.g. 'Past tense not present tense.')  
A task participant asks a question about a specific linguistic form that has arisen in performing the task (e.g. Why is 'can' used here?).  
A task participant (usually the teacher) advises or warns about the use of a specific linguistic form (e.g. 'Remember you need to use past tense').

---

**Figure 4:** Implicit and explicit techniques for focussing on form during a task

To sum up, it is clear that process options cannot be prescribed. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify, in broad terms, the kinds of processes that the participants in a task performance need to strive for. These are:

1. Discourse that is essentially 'conversational' in nature (i.e. as described in column B of Figure 3). Such discourse can include 'instructional conversations'.

2. Discourse that encourages the explicit formulation of messages.

3. Opportunities for students to take linguistic risks.
4. Occasions where the task participants focus implicitly and/or explicitly on specific linguistic forms.

5. Shared goals for the task.

6. Effective scaffolding of the participants' efforts to communicate in the L2.

**The post-task phase**

The post-task phase affords a number of options. These have three major pedagogic goals; (1) to provide an opportunity for a repeat performance of the task, (2) to encourage reflection on how the task was performed, and (3) to encourage attention to form, in particular to those forms that proved problematic to the learners when they performed the task.

*Repeat performance*

Several studies (e.g. Bygate 1996 and 2001; Lynch and Maclean 2000) indicate that when learners repeat a task their production improves in a number of ways (e.g. complexity increases, propositions are expressed more clearly, and they become more fluent). A repeat performance can be carried out under the same conditions as the first performance (i.e. in small groups or individually) or the conditions can be changed. One interesting possibility examined by Skehan and Foster (1997) is that of requiring students to carry out the second performance publicly. As their study examined the 'threat' of such a requirement on learners' initial performance of the task, it technically constituted a during-task option. However, if students are not told to repeat the task publicly until after they have completed the first performance, it becomes a post-task option. There has been no research comparing the learner production that results from a second performance carried out under 'private' conditions, as in the initial performance, and publicly. Clearly, performing a task in front of the class increases the communicative stress (Candlin 1987) placed on the learner and thus can be predicted to lead to a reduction in fluency and complexity. However, it is not without value if students need experience in using English in front of an audience, as, for example, might be the case with foreign academics training to give oral presentations in the L2. Public performance is likely to encourage the use of a more formal style and thus may push learners to use the grammaticalised resources associated with this style.

*Reflecting on the task*

Willis (1996) recommends asking students to present a report on how they did the task and on what they decided or discovered. She considers this 'the natural conclusion of the task cycle' (p. 58). The teacher's role is to act as a chairperson and to encourage the students. The reports can be oral or written. Willis' examples make it clear that the reports should primarily focus on summarising the outcome of the task. However, it would also be possible to ask students to reflect on and evaluate their own performance of the task. For example, they could be invited to comment on which aspect of language use (fluency, complexity or accuracy) they gave primacy to and why, how they dealt with communication problems, both their own and others, and even what language they learned from the task (i.e. to report what Allwright (1984) has called 'uptake' [1]). Students could also be invited to consider how they might improve their performance of
the task. Encouraging students to reflect on their performance in these ways may contribute to the development of the metacognitive strategies of planning, monitoring and evaluating, which are seen as important for language learning (O'Malley and Chamot 1990).

There is also a case for asking students to evaluate the task itself. Such information will help the teacher to decide whether to use similar tasks in the future or look for a different type. I have suggested that student-based evaluations of tasks can be carried out quickly and effectively using simple questionnaires (see Ellis 1997a for an example).

**Focussing on forms**

Once the task is completed, students can be invited to focus on forms, with no danger that in so doing they will subvert the 'taskness' of the task. It is for this reason that some methodologists recommend reserving attention to form to the post-task phase of the lesson. Willis (1996), for example, sees the primary goal of the 'task component' as that of developing fluency and promoting the use of communication strategies. The post-task stage is needed to counter the danger that students will develop fluency at the expense of accuracy. In part, this is met by asking students to report on their performance of the task, as discussed above, but it can also be achieved by a direct focus on forms. It should be noted, however, that this is not the position taken in this paper. I have emphasised that a focus on form constitutes a valuable during-task option and that it is quite compatible with a primary focus on message content, which is the hallmark of a task. Furthermore, in some tasks (e.g. consciousness raising tasks) a linguistic feature is made the topic of the task. Attention to form, in one way or another, can occur in any (or indeed all) of the phases of a task-based lesson. In the pre-task and post-task phases the focus will be on forms while in the during-task phase it will be on form, to invoke Long's (1991) distinction.

Two obvious methodological questions arise regarding attention to form in the post-task phase. The first concerns which forms should be attended to. The answer is fairly obvious; teachers should select forms that the students used incorrectly while performing the task or 'useful' or 'natural' forms (Loshcky and Bley Vroman 1993) that they failed to use at all. In other words, teachers should seek to address errors or gaps in the students' L2 knowledge. Consideration also needs to be given to how many such forms a teacher should seek to address. Should the focus be placed on a single form that is treated intensively or a number of forms that are treated extensively? Both approaches are warranted and are reflected in the various options described below.

The second question concerns how the target forms should be dealt with. There is a whole range of options available to the teacher. It should be noted however that in many cases the effectiveness of these options has not been investigated.

1. **Review of learner errors**

While the students are performing a task in groups, teachers can move from group to group to listen in and note down some of the conspicuous errors the students make together with actual examples. In the post-task phase, the teacher can address these errors with the whole class. A sentence illustrating the error can be written on the board, students can be invited to correct it, the corrected version is written up, and a brief
explanation provided. Lynch (2001) offers an interesting way of conducting a post-task analysis, which he calls 'proof-listening'. This involves three cycles based on repeated playing of a recording of the task. First, the students who did the task review and edit their own performance. Second, the recording is replayed and other students are invited to comment, correct or ask questions. Finally, the teacher comments on any points that have been missed.

2. Consciousness-raising tasks

CR-tasks constitute tasks in their own right and, therefore, can be used as the main task in a lesson. But they can also be used as follow-up tasks to direct students to attend explicitly to a specific form that they used incorrectly or failed to use at all in the main task. Willis and Willis (1996) and Ellis (1997b) offer descriptions of the various options that are available for the design and implementation of CR tasks. When used as follow-up tasks, CR tasks can profitably take their data from recordings of the students' performance of the task. For example, students might be presented with a number of their own utterances all illustrating the same error and asked to identify the error, correct the sentences and work out an explanation.

3. Production practice activities

An alternative or addition to CR tasks is to provide more traditional practice of selected forms. Traditional exercise types include repetition, substitution, gapped sentences, jumbled sentences, transformation drills, and dialogues. Willis (1996; pp. 110) offers a number of more novel ideas. The value of such production practice activities has been called into question (see, for example, VanPatten 1996) on the grounds that they have no direct effect on learners' interlanguage systems. However, they may help learners to automatize forms that they have begun to use on their own accord but have not yet gained full control over.

4. Noticing activities

A number of suggestions have been made for developing noticing activities as a follow-up to a task performance. Fotos (1994) used dictation exercises that had been enriched with the target structures that students had tackled initially in CR tasks to examine whether the subjects in her study subsequently attended to the structures. She found that they did so quite consistently. Lynch (2001) recommends getting students to make transcripts of an extract (90-120 seconds) from their task performance as a method for inducing noticing. After transcribing, they are required to make any editing changes they wish. The teacher then takes away the word-processed transcripts and reformulates them. The next day the students are asked to compare their own edited transcript with the teacher's reformulated version. In a study that investigated this procedure, Lynch found that students cooperated effectively in transcribing, made a number of changes (most of which resulted in accurate corrections of linguistic forms), and engaged in both self- and other-correction. Lynch also analysed the types of changes the students made, noting that the majority involved grammatical corrections, 'editing' slips (i.e. removal of redundancies, literal repetitions and dysfluencies) and 'reformulation' (i.e. changes directed at more precise expressions). Finally, Lynch comments that there was plenty left for the teacher to do after the students had made their changes.
Using the framework for designing a lesson

What constitutes the main activity of a lesson is largely a matter of perception and therefore, to some extent at least, arbitrary. For example, Prabhu (1987) talks of a 'pre-task' and a 'task'. The former is carried out between the teacher and the whole class. The latter is performed by the students working individually. But, such a sequence of activities could easily be described in terms of 'task' and 'post-task'. Indeed, Prabhu's 'pre-task' involves the type of activity that most task-based methodologists would consider to belong to the during-task phase of a lesson. Similarly, a sequence of activities consisting of 'task' and 'post-task' where the latter involves the kind of transcribing activity advocated by Lynch could also be described in terms of 'pre-task' and 'task', if the transcribing activity is viewed as the main activity.

However, this caveat does not detract from the usefulness of the design framework described above as a basis for planning task-based lessons. Teachers need to decide first on the basic format of the lesson. Minimally, it will consist of the during-task phase but it can also include either or both of a pre-task and post-task phase. Once the basic structure of the lesson has been decided, the specific option(s) to be included in each phase of the lesson can be considered. The description of the process options for implementing the during-task phase of the lesson also provides a guide for the navigation of the actual task and for the teacher's ongoing monitoring of the task performance.

Notes:
1. Allwright's (1984) use of 'uptake' differs from that of researchers who have investigated corrective sequences in classroom discourse. Allwright uses the term to refer to what learners are able to explicitly report having learned as a result of participating in a lesson.

References


Yuan, F. and Ellis, R. 2002. The effects of pre-task planning and on-line planning on fluency, complexity and accuracy in L2 oral production. *Applied Linguistics*
Title
Teaching English as a Second Language Through Literature

Author
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I Introduction

Language is a social construct. It is learned through interaction with others, with social structures and with social forces. It allows one to communicate with others and it plays a key role in the development and the maintenance of culture (Avison and Kunkel, 1987: 51). Language is as integral to culture, as culture is to a person’s sense of being. One of the social functions of a language is to express and pass on one’s cultural ideas and attitudes. Just as language rationalizes one’s environment and its culture, the environment in which one lives influences his language and cultural habits (Marland, 1980; Whorf, 1969). Hence, language enables a person to put across his individuality. However, in this age of accelerated globalization, language, specifically the English language, has also become an instrument in the evolution of various cultures. Despite the security of using the “mother tongue” among relatives and friends, it has become imperative for Filipinos to learn English in order to deal with economic matters, to acquire information, to facilitate learning, and to deal with different social and global citizenship concerns.

As a global citizen with Filipino roots, my experiences in learning English through literature, as well as my formal training in teaching English as a Second Language, have given me a unique perspective on this topic. As well, with formal training in teaching English as a second language in graduate studies and as a classroom teacher in a North American country whose multi-cultural society is composed of citizens learning English as a second language, I feel that I am in a good position to impart some strategies that have been successful in my teaching. In this paper, learning English refers to being able to listen to, read, write and speak English.

I learned English through language immersion. When I first attended school in Basey, Samar, Philippines, the medium of instruction in schools was English. After being colonized by the United States, the Philippines purposefully chose English as its official language, as it did Spanish during the Spanish Colonial times. As the language of colonization, English was regarded with a higher social status and security. Although English was used only in schools, it was brought into our household by our parents who were also educators themselves. English then became part of our daily lives and our habits. I remember how my father would automatically switch from Waray-waray (a Filipino language spoken in the provinces of Samar and Leyte) to English when impassioned or when disciplining someone in the household. It seemed that the use of English brought more conviction and authority to his persona. Although seemingly

negative, my experiences with the English language did not end with authoritative discipline. In fact, my life in English was also laden with happy memories. On a weekly and monthly basis, my siblings and I looked forward to the new issue of Life and Look magazines, and The Saturday Evening Post, to which my father subscribed. We also had old English fairy tale books and adventure comics at home. Although I did not know how to read yet, I still enjoyed looking at the beautiful pictures and the glossy pages that held wonderful stories, which my parents used to tell us about. When we were older, we used to spend our meager allowance on renting illustrated comics at newspaper stands. Everyday we would walk from one newsstand to another practically devouring the fairytale comic books. My siblings, my cousins and I would rent books and read stories together while sitting on the sidewalk pavement of the streets in Manila every summer. I enjoyed learning English and learning to read through colorfully illustrated literature in magazines and books. It was a real treat and one of the most exciting experiences of my childhood.

II Rationale for Teaching English as a Second Language through Literature

Teaching English through literature, to me is the most natural approach to teaching the language. Not only does the method develop a love of learning itself, but it also immerses the learner into a rich repertoire of experiences, first hand or vicariously, through a variety of literary genres. This facilitates an appreciation for and the acquisition of the English language. The National Storytelling Association (1994) asserts that, “Stories give children language experiences that enable them gradually to think about and comprehend their environment. When language is internalized, it becomes thought; when thought is externalized, it becomes language (p. 38). Language and intellectual development are closely linked together, and literature “contributes significantly to the development [of young children’s] thinking and language . . . [of their] understanding of self and their world . . . [of their] communication skills as well as encouraging positive relationships with those close to them (Boot, et al, 1987, p. 7).

Teaching English through literature avoids the pitfalls of teaching the language in a didactic, mechanical way. Literature introduces the language in a meaningful manner by providing the building blocks and structures – the vocabulary, the semantics and syntax necessary for the learner’s self-expression and communication with others. It enables children to find and express meaning through words. In due time, through literature, children find the appropriate vocabulary and expression to convey their own thoughts and ideas without the tedious task of analyzing the language and memorizing rules. I cannot, however, stress enough that teaching should start at the students’ level – not the level at which the teacher or anyone else desires. “Much [language] learning is made easier if we can work with the pupil’s own vocabulary and not drive him too early into words that he cannot himself feel or possess...” (Marland, 1977, p. 180).

Literature can serve as a catalyst for further creative uses of the English language. A child who is inspired by a poem or a story may be encouraged to create his own story or poem or a dramatization. Other feelings stirred by literature may lead to the conception of other literary pieces. Opportunities to experience literature should be frequent in a classroom that endeavors to teach English as a second language.

III Assumptions to Consider in Teaching English through Literature

In teaching English through literature, assumptions are inevitable. They pervade the thought process, as much as they do the learning process. A teacher’s attitude
towards literature and towards children is a major factor in the success of her teaching. A teacher who delivers a functional literature program for the well-being of her students will have a profound effect on her students’ attitudes toward English. A teacher’s positive attitude toward literature will directly translate into molding her students into life-long learners who enjoy reading. Students who, in their young age, found adventure, knowledge and fun through literature are enamored by reading, which becomes a lifetime habit (Whitehead, 1968).

My personal experiences are a testament to this principle. Our parents’ efforts to expose us to English literature through reading materials and through storytelling made us become enthusiastic about learning to read and to acquire new knowledge.

Another assumption is that literature should be enjoyable. When choosing literary materials, a teacher must consider her children’s interests and abilities. There is little learning when students are unable to relate to the materials and are unable to share the pleasure of their literary experiences. Although this may seem axiomatic, the reality of a teacher imposing her interests may cause irreparable harm to her students’ motivation for learning. In my teaching, hardly a day goes by without sharing with my students a story or a piece of news or doing literature activities. When I am reading a novel, for example, I can tell when I do not capture the interest of my class. When I see some of them coloring or doodling, looking around, or plainly looking bored, I stop the activity or I modify it. I relate their situation to the times when I have had to listen to a painfully boring lecture that is either monotonous in tone or so academic that my mind wanders everywhere.

Although it is not possible for a teacher to be familiar with all of the English literature for children, a broad knowledge of different children’s storybooks, poems and other literary genres is essential. A teacher needs to keep abreast of the latest in children’s literature by reading children’s books herself. She may want to start her own collection of children’s literary pieces, which should include a wide range of genres. In so doing, the teacher would have ready access to literature that would enhance the teaching of specific topics, thus hastening her students’ learning. Compiled anthologies that list children’s resources are also an invaluable source of information. Participation in local institutes, seminars, workshops and conferences on literature can also lead to the discovery of hidden literary treasures.

Using a wide range of teaching techniques is another assumption that should be adopted and understood. The variation in teaching techniques only serves to promote an appreciation for literature among the students, which in turn encourages an appreciation for the English language. Robert Whitehead (1968, p. 8), epitomized this notion when he claimed that “Teachers who read to boys and girls the best of children’s literature will, in the process, expose them to the full beauty and flavor of the English language. . . . Children’s awareness of language will be developed into an appreciation by the ever-alert teacher as she reads aloud good poetry and stories.”

IV Strategies in Teaching English as a Second Language through Literature

Below are some strategies that have given me success in teaching English through literature:

1. Independent Reading – a regularly scheduled time for recreational reading. Children are given the opportunity to choose their reading materials during this free reading time. One of the objectives for this activity is for students to discover for
themselves materials or topics that interest them at a level that they can handle. Just like any other skill, to become a fluent reader, a person needs instruction and a time to practice the skill of reading. To start with, a visit to the library would help them make their own booklist. The school librarian can familiarize the students with the library services and how books are set up so students would feel free to find different subjects on their own. If a school library is not available, a teacher may have to give her students access to her private collection of books that are set up in a library corner or a reading nook in the classroom. Accountability for this activity should only go as far as doing a reading response journal which may ask why a child enjoyed or did not enjoy reading the book he chose. At the end of the year, they can make a book recommendation list.

Literature bulletin board that displays the book of the month can entice students to pick up a book. Listening centres where children read along and listen to pre-recorded stories or poetry are an effective way of teaching English. Literature circles or book clubs let children read books of their choice and they come to a circle on a scheduled date to talk about the books they read.

2. Guided Reading – multiple copies of a book are distributed to students in a reading group. Pre-reading discussion of the story is done. Guide questions are prepared by the teacher before reading takes place. Everyone reads the story to a certain point. The teacher leads a discussion by asking some of her previously prepared questions. Then the group continues reading the story once again up to a certain part, where another discussion ensues again. The teacher needs to assign stops at interesting parts of the book. Through discussions the teacher is able to ascertain children’s comprehension of the material and she can also assess appreciation of literature. It is important to note that the teacher should be familiar with the book so that discussion questions raised would encourage higher level thinking rather than regurgitating superficial facts about the story.

To prepare for a successful guided reading activity, a teacher may follow the following steps proposed by Daniels (1994) and Brailsford (2002):

Before Reading –
Develop motivation
Activate prior knowledge
Gather and organize ideas
Develop questions
Determine purpose and strategy
Make predictions

During Reading –
Sample the text
Visualize text meaning
Make connections
Confirm/alter predictions
Solve problems
Keep working

After Reading –
Reflect and contemplate
Reread to refine meaning
Retell, question, discuss
3. Reading Aloud – higher reading level stories are read to the class by the teacher to enrich students’ repertoire of literary genre. The vocabulary may be a bit beyond the listeners’ receptive bank, but the theme and plot should be within the children’s grasp. In some cases, students would read along with the teacher, particularly when reading for information. When reading for fun to the class, the teacher’s enunciation and oral interpretation of the story should be captivating. She has to read with feeling to show that she herself is enjoying the literature.

4. Storytelling – the teacher or a student can take the role of the storyteller. Ample time should be set to prepare the story well. The class can put together a set of criteria for storytelling.

5. Reader’s Theatre – a play, poetry or prose is divided into several parts and each part is assigned to a student or to a group of students to read aloud in class. This is similar to a rendition of a dramatization, except that the lines are read to the audience, not recited from memory.

6. Extend literature study to fine and practical arts such as puppet shows, formal and informal drama, clay sculpture, painting/drawing, mobile, jigsaw puzzles, games, writing activities and others.

V Conclusion

As professionals, we can informally evaluate the success of the literature program in teaching English as a second language without the need for arduous tests to measure a student’s appreciation and knowledge of English. There are a multitude of informal examples: when my students complain about shortening free reading time; when they ask me to read a poem for the fourth time; when they express a desire to write their own play; when I hear them make connections of a story we have read to their own lives, I know that my program has worked. There are other tangible indicators of success, most of which might be manifested by some students. Other students may show only one or two. But it is worth celebrating because such is the nature of any kind of learning – children do not all learn the same way and not in the same pace.

VI References


Title
Accuracy Order of Selected Grammatical Morphemes in the Monitored Written Compositions of Filipino Adult Language Learners

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Abstract
Studies about morpheme have excited researchers in discovering a “built-in syllabus”. Although accuracy order on the “unmonitored language use” has been established, some variations were obtained depending on the task where the data was elicited (Ellis, 1994). This article asserts that there might be an accuracy order for the “monitored language use”. Very few have tried to identify and establish an accuracy order for the “monitored language use” particularly of the adult Filipino language learners. Thus, an investigation such as this was conducted. Specifically, this paper presents the accuracy order of selected grammatical morphemes in the students’ narrative and expository essays and their implications for language teaching.

Data elicitation was through text reconstruction. In this procedure, the participants watched a movie and were asked to retell the film producing a narrative essay and to write a film review producing an expository essay. These essays were then analyzed with focus on specific grammatical morphemes in obligatory context. The criterion level of “acquired” accuracy for each grammatical morpheme is 80 percent which was based on the definition that Brown (1973) used in L1 acquisition research (Ellis, 1994).

The results reveal that the accuracy order of selected morphemes in the monitored written compositions of Filipino adult language learners displayed variation from the established accuracy order in unmonitored language use (Villiers and de Villiers, 1973, Dulay and Burt, 1973/1974, and Bailey, Madden and Krashen, 1974). Further, this paper presents the pedagogical implications of the accuracy order for syllabus design and national curriculum development.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY
A morpheme is the smallest unit of grammar consisting either of a word or part of a word. Morphemes are divided into two basic categories: free and bound. Bound
morphemes consist of two kinds of affixes: derivational and inflectional morphemes. On the other hand, free morphemes with lexical content represent the major parts of speech, which include nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs while the free grammatical functional morphemes include articles, prepositions, and conjunctions (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

Studies about morpheme have attracted and excited the researchers in trying to discover a “built-in syllabus” (Corder, 1967); The concept of “built-in syllabus means that learners not only work on the input with processes such as generalization, transfer, simplification, and imitation, but are also disposed to develop their internal grammar in natural, predictable sequences. Furthermore, these same sequences have been observed even in the spontaneous output of classroom learners who have been taught the correct target forms, suggesting that the internal syllabus often overrides the external syllabus which the teacher or coursebook tries to impose (Littlewood, 1984). One of the pioneers in studying English morphemes is H.D. Brown (1973) and Cazden (1968). They looked at 14 morphemes in the English language. Their study revealed that children acquiring English as first language show a similar order of acquisition for grammatical morphemes in obligatory contexts. The same order of acquisition was revealed in de Villiers and de Villiers’ (1973) cross-sectional study of 20 children. This order is shown in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Morpheme</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Present Progressive</td>
<td>I driving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Preposition “in”</td>
<td>The ball is in the box.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Preposition “on”</td>
<td>The pen is on the table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>balls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Irregular Past Tense</td>
<td>broke, fell, threw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Possessive -s</td>
<td>daddy’s chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Uncontractible Copula “be”</td>
<td>This is hot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Articles “a”/”the”</td>
<td>a, the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Regular Past Tense -ed</td>
<td>She walked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Third Person Present Tense, regular -s</td>
<td>He works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Third Person Present Tense, irregular e.g.</td>
<td>She does.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>has/does</td>
<td>The horse is winning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Uncontractible Auxiliary “be”</td>
<td>He’s a clown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Contractible Copula “be”</td>
<td>She’s drinking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contractible Auxiliary “be”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further studies on how English morphemes are acquired were conducted by Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974). They found out that 250 Spanish- and Chinese-speaking children, aged six to eight, learning English in the United States exhibited significantly related acquisition order using Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM) through picture-cued description. These are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Morpheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Plural ‘-s’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Progressive ‘-ing’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Copula forms of ‘be’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Auxiliary form of ‘be’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Definite and indefinite articles ‘the’ and ‘a’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Irregular past tense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Third person ‘-s’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Possessive ‘-s’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, Bailey, Madden and Krashen (1974) conducted a grammatical morpheme study with adult second language learners (ESL students) at Queens College. The findings show an order for the eight grammatical morphemes similar to that found in child second language acquirers by Dulay and Burt. Thus, after reviewing several English morpheme studies, Krashen (1977) hypothesized a “natural order” as shown in the following figure:
According to Long and Larsen-Freeman (1991), accuracy order and developmental sequences have been established empirically in various second languages for different grammatical domains. One of these studies includes the Zweitsprachenwerb Italienisher und Spanischer Arbeiter (ZISA) project in Germany (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). This project started in the late 1970s. It was made up of a major cross-sectional study of 45 adults and a two-year longitudinal study of 12 adults that looked at German as a second language (GSL) acquisition by speakers of Spanish and Italian. Word-order was the main focus of this study. The project discovered a set of constraints that “are claimed to control all developmental sequences in ILs, not just word order, and to work for any SL, not just GSL” (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991, p. 275), and formed the basis for the Multidimensional Model proposed by Meisel, Clahsen, and Pienemann (1981). This theory predicts that instruction will only succeed in teaching a new developmental structure if the learner is “ready” to acquire it. This notion led to the advancement of Pienemann’s (1985) teachability hypothesis which “predicts that instruction can only promote language acquisition if the interlanguage is close to the point when the structure to be taught is acquired in the natural setting.” This hypothesis was supported by Lightbown’s (1983) study which shows that formal instruction only temporarily succeeded in altering accuracy orders and can possibly delay the start of the learner’s passage through the natural sequence. Another study on the effects of instruction on accuracy orders and developmental sequence was conducted by Perkins and Larsen-Freeman (1975). They compared the accuracy orders of the subjects’ morphemes before and after an intensive two-month ESL instruction. Based on the results, they interpreted that instruction does not change the order of accuracy. Other studies produced the same findings (Fatham, 1978; Makino, 1980; Pica, 1983).

A number of researches during the 1980s argued that grammatical items can be sequenced into a series of stages, each more complex than the last. However, this complexity is determined by the demands made on short-term memory (Nunan, 1999). However, not enough is known about the learnability or students’ readiness to “learn” (conscious effort in learning the language) a particular aspect of the target language which has significant implications for the selection and sequencing of the content for ESL/EFL classes. Although accuracy order on the “acquired language” (as defined by Krashen) has been established, some differences in the order happened as shown in the study conducted by Larsen-Freeman in 1975. She tested 24 adults, six speakers from four different L1 backgrounds (Spanish, Japanese, Arabic, and Farsi) using BSM, a picture-cued repetition test, a listening comprehension test, a modified reading cloze passage, and a writing test. The results show an order significantly similar to the “accuracy order” in the BSM, listening, and repetition tasks. However, a different order was obtained from the reading and writing tasks. Plural s and third-person s rose in the accuracy rank. She hypothesized that frequency of input might be one of the factors for these variations. However, it is contradicted by the fact that articles are the most frequent item in the input but posted a lower score in the accuracy order (Long and Larsen-Freeman, 1991). Further, Ellis (1994) on his article entitled Variability and the Natural Order Hypothesis postulated that two different accuracy orders may arise depending on the performance where the data was elicited. The first is the order taken to be “natural” which is associated with unmonitored language use. The second is the order for monitored language use also known as the “learned competence.”

With this, the researcher has hypothesized that there might be an accuracy order for the “monitored language use” which is different from that of the “acquired or unmonitored language use”. Very few have tried to identify and establish an accuracy order for the “monitored language use” particularly of the Filipino language learners.
Thus, this gap has instigated the researcher to conduct an investigation on the accuracy order of selected grammatical morphemes in a monitored language use specifically in the written compositions of Filipino adult learners. This study would partly answer which grammatical items have higher “learnability” and thus higher teachability. The results of this study would have an enormous impact on the sequencing of grammatical structures to be taught.

**Statement of the Problem:**

This study aimed to determine the accuracy order of selected grammatical morphemes in the written compositions of Filipino adult learners and its implications for the teaching of grammar.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the accuracy level of selected grammatical items in the students’ narrative and expository essays?
2. What is the accuracy order of selected grammatical items in the students’ narrative and expository essays?
3. What are the implications of the accuracy order for the teaching of grammar?

**METHODOLOGY**

The participants of the study included twenty-five (25) Level 3 Nursing students at De La Salle Health Sciences Institute (DLSHSI). Level 3 students were selected because this group does not have English classes anymore that might affect their writing performance. The researcher used a purposive sampling. The subjects were selected through the following criteria: (1) are adult Filipinos, (2) took their elementary and high school education in the Philippines, and (3) underwent at least two years of formal college English education including grammar and writing.

The researcher used a descriptive type of research. Descriptive research involves the description of a given state of affairs as fully and as carefully as possible. It is an attempt to describe existing conditions without analyzing relationships among variables (Fraenkl & Wallen, 2000). Thus, manipulation, influence, and control of variables will not be attempted (Wiseman, 1999).

**Data Collection**

This study involves performance analysis (PA). Data elicitation will be done through text reconstruction also known as story retelling (Larsen-Freeman and Long, 1991). Text reconstruction was chosen because it is the most successful in drawing the learners’ attention to a range of grammatical items (Storch, 2001). In this data elicitation procedure, the participants watched a movie and they were asked to retell or reconstruct the story in writing producing a narrative essay and a film review producing expository essay. After viewing the film, they were given ample time to write and edit their narrative and the expository essays at home to be submitted the next session which is after one week.

The movie used for viewing was the Chinese film “The Road Home.” It was selected because of the following reasons: (1) the story represents Asian culture which the participants can better relate; (2) the dialogue is in Chinese to avoid direct translation which encourage a word-for-word rendition that yield a higher proportion of errors which can be traced back to the influence of L1 (Burmeister and Ufert, 1980). However, an English subtitle is provided for better comprehension; (3) the content and theme of the story were what the participants were familiar with, so that the participants would have fewer barriers in retelling the story.
Specifically, this study focused on the following grammatical morphemes in obligatory context. An obligatory context is where a morpheme is needed in order for the utterance to be grammatical. For example the utterance, “More shoes are in the closet” requires a plural morpheme on the word ‘shoe’ otherwise the utterance would be ungrammatical (Cloutier, 2002):

1. Subject-Verb Agreement
   a. Copula be
   b. Auxiliary verbs
   c. Third person singular present
2. Past Tense
   a. Simple Past Regular
   b. Simple Past Irregular
3. Articles (a, an, the)
4. Pronoun Reference
   a. Subjective
   b. Objective
   c. Possessive
   d. Relative
5. Past Participles

The selected grammatical items were selected based on their frequency in the selected written compositions. The criterion level of acquired accuracy for each grammatical morpheme is 80 percent which was based on the definition that Brown (1973) used in L1 acquisition research (Ellis, 1994).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Problem No. 1. What is the accuracy level of selected grammatical items in the students’ narrative and expository essays?

The following table shows the accuracy level of selected grammatical items in the students’ narrative and expository essays.

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammatical Morphemes</th>
<th>Correct Usage</th>
<th>Incorrect Usage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject-Verb Agreement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copula be</td>
<td>96.61</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary verbs</td>
<td>95.57</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third person singular present</td>
<td>76.66</td>
<td>23.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past Tense</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Past Regular</td>
<td>76.08</td>
<td>23.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple Past Irregular</td>
<td>71.17</td>
<td>28.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Articles</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A/An</td>
<td>88.69</td>
<td>11.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The</td>
<td>97.90</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pronoun Reference</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>98.04</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>96.23</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on Brown’s (1973) criterion level, Table 1 shows that the Level 3 Nursing students of DLSHSI attained accuracy on the following grammatical items: Copula be with 96.61 percent accuracy, Auxiliary Verbs with 95.57 percent accuracy, Articles An/A with 88.69 percent accuracy, Article The with 97.90 percent accuracy, Subjective Pronoun with 98.04 percent accuracy order, Objective Pronoun with 96.23 percent accuracy, Possessive Pronoun with 98.63 percent accuracy, Possessive Pronoun with 91.11 percent accuracy, and Past Participles with 93.26 percent accuracy.

However, the grammatical items that did not reach the accuracy level were the following: Third Person –s with 76.66 percent accuracy, Simple Regular Past with 76.08 percent accuracy, and Simple Irregular Past with 71.17 percent accuracy. This means that the Level 3 Nursing students of DLSHSI committed errors most frequently in Simple Irregular Past with 28.83 percent inaccuracy followed by Simple Regular Past with 23.92 percent inaccuracy and Third Person –s with 23.34 percent inaccuracy.

It was observed that the students frequently committed errors in the use of be verbs and modal auxiliaries in a form of conditionals which can be attributed to L1 interference as shown in the following examples:

- They have a child named Yusheng who is very obedient and respectful.
- When the men in the village is building the school.
- His mother is asking him about the tradition of carrying the coffin back to the remote village by foot.
- There is a problem about the funeral of his father.
- There is a girl who is the most beautiful in her town, she is only 18 years old.
- Changyu don’t really remember but out of respect he says that he like the dishes.
- She even use the old well near the school in fetching water hoping that she can catch a glimpse of the teacher.
- She always prepares foods for the worker but hoping he will choose her dish.
- A sign of promise that he will return.
- She always hoped that her dish will be picked by Changyu.
- Changyu was gone for a long and when it was rumored that he’ll be back, Di waited.

Errors in the use of regular and irregular main verbs were also recorded. However, errors were more frequent in regular verbs. Some of these are as follows:

**Regular Verbs**

- He rush to go back to his hometown.
- Di passes everyday at the school just to hear Changyu’s voice.
- She always prepares food.
- Di expresses her feelings to Changyu.
- He return to their house just to help his mother about burying his dead father.

**Irregular Verbs**

- His mother spend the day sitting in front of the school where his father was the teacher for 40 long years.
He saw her mother Zhao Di at the school where her husband teaches.
She immediately goes to schoolhouse for she knew that he visited her last night.
Their love leads them to marriage.
Di feels love at first sight.

In some instances, overuse of past tense was observed particularly when attached to infinitive to and auxiliary verb did as shown in the following examples:
• She just want to had a glimpse to the young teacher.
• But he didn’t came.
• The hired men did not accepted the money.
• Di learned about it and tried to ran.

In the use of third person –s, it shows that proximity does affect the production of correct subject-verb agreement. That is, the farther the subject from the verb, the higher the tendency to commit errors in subject-verb agreement. This phenomenon frequently appears in the relative-clause antecedents and adverbial phrase as shown in the following examples.
• She is a kind of girl who never give up.
• She still continue what she is doing.
• The movie proves me that first impression really last.
• Because it not only show the romantic side, it shows an educational side.

In some instances, overuse of morpheme ‘s was observed as shown in the following examples:
• I recommend all those people who loves movies movies to watch the film.
• There are some points that catches my attention.
• Simple gestures, smiles, and actions greatly contributes to the simplicity of the movie.
• It does not only focuses on romantic love but also the parental love and dedication to serve others.
• Women this time really sacrifices everything for love and family.
• There were more houses that presents high population.

The accuracy in the use of be verbs in relation to subject-verb agreement was also affected by the proximity of the subject from the verb, when a sentence has compound subjects, and when the subject being referred to by the verb is cataphorically present, that is, the subject being referred to is written after the verb.
• The men in the village is building the school.
• This courtship and love between them was then tested when Changyu had to go back to the city.
• The views or scenes and places where they shot the film was very much old-Chinese community.
• The best part of the movie is the symbolisms used to give importance to the things, decisions, and choices of the characters in the movie.
• I also like about is the different Chinese cultures, practices and traditions showed in the scenes.

Problem No. 2. What is the accuracy order of selected grammatical items in the students’ narrative and expository essays?
The following table shows the accuracy order of selected grammatical morphemes in the written compositions of Level 3 Nursing students of DLSHSI.

Table 2.

Accuracy Order of Selected Grammatical Morphemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Grammatical Morpheme</th>
<th>Accuracy Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Possessive</td>
<td>98.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>98.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The</td>
<td>97.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Copula <em>be</em></td>
<td>96.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>96.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Auxiliary verbs</td>
<td>95.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Past Participles</td>
<td>93.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Relative</td>
<td>91.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A/An</td>
<td>88.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Third person singular present</td>
<td>76.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Simple Past Regular</td>
<td>76.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Simple Past Irregular</td>
<td>71.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that the possessive pronouns are on the top of accuracy order with 98.63 percent accuracy. It is followed by subjective pronouns with 98.04 percent accuracy, article *the* with 97.90 percent accuracy, Copula *be* (S-V agreement) with 96.61 percent accuracy, objective pronoun with 96.23 percent accuracy, auxiliary verbs (S-V agreement) with 95.57 percent accuracy, past participles with 93.26 percent accuracy, relative pronouns with 91.11 percent accuracy, articles *A/An* with 88.69 percent accuracy, third person singular present with 76.66 percent accuracy, simple past regular with 76.08 percent accuracy, and simple past irregular with 71.17 percent accuracy.

By comparing the accuracy order of selected grammatical morphemes in a monitored language use specifically in the written compositions of Filipino adult learners, it shows that the monitored and unmonitored language post variations in their accuracy order. However, these variations are only minimal. Further, the findings of this study and of Villiers and de Villiers' (1973), Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974), and Bailey, Madden and Krashen (1974) show that the Third Person –s, Simple Regular Past, and Simple Irregular Past are in the lower rank of the accuracy order, whether monitored or unmonitored.

**Problem No. 3. What are the implications of the accuracy order for the teaching of grammar?**

Based on the findings of this study, the following implications for the teaching of grammar were drawn:

1. The findings of this study can provide insights in revising the syllabus to be implemented in a grammar-based class. By arranging the contents of the syllabus following the accuracy order generated from this study, learning could better be facilitated.
2. Teachers of intermediate and advanced language learners may exclude those grammatical items that obtain high accuracy level. Hence, they may start from those grammatical items that are near the desired accuracy level.
3. Based on the error analysis made in this study, the teachers can focus on structures where grammatical errors are frequently committed such as in the case of past tense and third person –s. This could be achieved by developing instructional materials focusing on such structures and spending more time on writing tasks.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the finding of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The Level 3 nursing students attained accuracy level on pronoun usage, articles, past participle, and subject-verb agreement excluding the third person –s and have posted low accuracy on the use of third person –s and simple past tense whether regular or irregular.

2. The accuracy order obtained from this study displayed minimal variations compared to the established accuracy order on unmonitored language use.

3. The results of this study have great implications for the teaching and learning of grammar.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are offered:

1. Future researchers may conduct similar studies using the same or different writing genres, and different contexts and modalities to falsify the results of this study.

2. Future researchers may conduct a follow-up study on the same subjects to ensure that these subjects had acquired a particular structure.

3. A syllabus following the accuracy order stated in this study may be developed and experimented if learners have long-term retention on the grammatical items taught to them.

4. Further studies should be conducted using wider scope in terms of covered grammatical items, student’s educational institution both public and private, student age group, proficiency level, and geographical locations. This would be helpful in formulating generalizations useful for national curriculum development.

REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Detailed Table on the Student’s Level of Correct Usage on Selected Grammatical Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Subject-Verb Agreement</th>
<th>Past Tense</th>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Pronoun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Copula be</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Auxiliary Verbs</td>
<td>Past Tense</td>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>Pronoun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd person</td>
<td>Simple Regular</td>
<td>Simple Irregular</td>
<td>An/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>50.00</td>
<td>63.16</td>
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</tr>
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<td>97.96</td>
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</tr>
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<td>96.30</td>
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<td>55.56</td>
<td>75.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>92.86</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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<td>100.00</td>
<td>57.14</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>89.19</td>
<td>100.00</td>
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<td>90.91</td>
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<td>66.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
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<td>97.14</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>100.00</td>
<td>88.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>90.00</td>
</tr>
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<td>94.74</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>70.90</td>
<td>28.57</td>
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<td>90.00</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>100.00</td>
<td>92.59</td>
<td>66.67</td>
</tr>
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<td>94.12</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>83.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>95.24</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>96.15</td>
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<td>86.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>85.71</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>23.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| AVE  | 96.61 | 95.57 | 76.66 | 76.08 | 71.17 | 88.69 | 97.90 | 98.04 | 96.23 | 98.63 | 91.11 | 93.26 |
## APPENDIX B

### Detailed Table on the Student’s Level of Incorrect Usage on Selected Grammatical Items

<table>
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<tr>
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Title
A Comparative Study between Syntactic Structure Identification Training and Integrated Reading Strategy Training in Teaching English Sentence Reading

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Abstract
The objectives of this experimental study were (1) to compare the effectiveness of the syntactic structure identification training and that of integrated reading strategy training in teaching sentence reading comprehension; (2) to identify the relationship between syntactic/sentence structure analysis and sentence comprehension and between translation and sentence comprehension; and (3) to analyze the errors in the students’ translated sentences to find out their strategies in comprehending the text. The subjects were two groups of M.A. students from the School of Public Administration, National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA), who enrolled in LC 4001 Reading Skills Development in English for Graduate Studies 1, in the first semester of the academic year 2008. The scores from the pre-test in both groups were matched to have students with more or less the same ability in the control group and the experimental group (30 students in each group). The control group was trained on syntactic structure identification for 24 hours and on sentence interpretation for 12 hours, while the experimental group was trained on integrated reading strategies for 12 hours and sentence interpretation for 6 hours. Two tests were used as the research instruments. It was found that in the first test the experimental group had a significantly higher mean than the control group in translation and comprehension, but no significant difference was found in sentence analysis. In the second test, the experimental group was also superior to the control group in sentence interpretation, while the mean scores of the pre-test and the post test in the latter group was found to have no significant difference. This indicated that integrated reading strategy training was more effective than structure identification training. As for their reading process as reflected by the errors in translation, it was found that many students often overlooked connectives and supplied their own in translation, resulting in misinterpretation of the text and that the vocabulary problem mainly caused them to activate a wrong schema and thus misinterpret the text, while the main syntactic problem was comprehending nouns with pre-noun modifiers, expressions, and an unusual word order of the sentence.
பதைதல்

(1) புதுப்பியல் சுயித்திருத்தத்தில் பதிவுச் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான பதிவு செய்தவற்றில் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை பதிவுச் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான பதிவு செய்தவற்றில் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை பதிவுச் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான பதிவு செய்தவற்றில் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை பதிவுச் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான பதிவு செய்தவற்றில் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை பதிவுச் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான பதிவு செய்தவற்றில் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை பதிவுச் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான பதிவு செய்தவற்றில் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை பதிவுச் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான பதிவு செய்தவற்றில் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை பதிவுச் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான பதிவு செய்தவற்றில் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை பதிவுச் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான பதிவு செய்தவற்றில் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை பதிவுச் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான பதிவு செய்தவற்றில் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை பதிவு�் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான பதிவு செய்தவற்றில் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை பதிவு�் செய்தவற்றின் ஒரு எண்ணிக்கை சுயித்திருத்தநூற்றாண்டுக்கு முதல் குற்றுப்பாட்டின் செய்க்கை, குற்றுப்பாட்டைப் பட்டியலிடும் வழிகாட்ட்ஸ் வர்த்தமான ப

Background

Since the first semester of the academic year 2008 the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) has increased the number of required English courses for Master’s degree students in all schools from one basic reading course and one remedial course for those who did not pass the former course to three required English courses and one remedial course of 16 hours for the two lower-level courses (LC 4001 and LC 4002) and one remedial course of the highest level of the three (LC 4003). Those who could get exempt would take only LC 4003. Others are required to take one English course per semester. The School of Language and Communication is responsible for teaching these courses. Part of the first course, LC 4001, deals with sentence comprehension with sentence analysis and sentence interpretation in focus. In sentence
analysis, students are taught strategy of identifying and telling the names of phrases, clauses and sentences, including identifying core parts, head words and modifiers for half of the semester or 24 hours. They are expected to answer questions about the test sentences mostly by giving some part of the sentence as the answer. In sentence interpretation, they are taught to recognize restatement and inference from the test sentence for one quarter of the semester or 12 hours.

No one denies that sentence or syntactic analysis is one of the useful strategies for dealing with long, complicated sentences. Urquhart and Weir (1998: 60-61) said that sentence analysis is necessary for sentence reading as proved by omitting most function words and all inflectional morphemes, including shifting words in sentences. However, this analysis must occur automatically to have reading fluency, and according to Grabe and Stoller (2002: 220) it takes thousand of hours of practice to do sentence parsing automatically. From the review of related literature the approaches to teaching syntactic analysis for sentence reading comprehension as recommended by reading scholars are quite similar. Most scholars suggested separating subject from its predicate, and asking questions: “What action? Who/What did the action? Who/What received the action or who/what was done? Wood (1984) suggested finding the base clause of the sentence. The base clause consists of the subject-verb-object core. Here is her example:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{s} & \quad \text{v} & \quad \text{o} \\
\text{To put the matter another way, you} & \quad \text{are capable of exercising voluntary self-} & \quad \text{control, but machines aren’t. (p.181)}
\end{align*}
\]

Her analysis does not focus too much on grammatical terms and on detailed analysis (otherwise “capable… self-control,” would be identified as subjective complement, which consists of “capable as the head word and the prepositional phrase after it as a modifier). Besides recommending readers to find the basal clause like the above, she suggests that exercise for comprehending sentences should include breaking sentences into short sentences and combine short sentences to form a long, complicated sentence.

Nuttall (1996) suggests six steps in reading long complicated sentences. Her technique is a bit different. That is, she suggests crossing out the optional parts of the sentence to get the bare structure of that sentence (Wood calls it “the base clause”), then put them back to the bare structure again to see what part (or word) they are linked with. Clarke, Dobson, and Silberstein (1996) said that reading comprehension process was complex and there was no single easy way to comprehend sentences. They also suggested reading strategies similar to Nuttall, although there was some difference in details.

Wiener and Bazerman (1999) suggested finding the key idea of the sentence. Their strategy focuses on semantics rather than syntax. If part of a dependent clause contains some important idea, that part will be included in the key idea sentence.

Here are two examples:

<table>
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<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Key idea</th>
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<tr>
<td>Even the simplest organism consists of many parts and each of these must do the work properly so that the</td>
<td>Each part of an organism must work properly so that the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
right thing at the right time for an organism can carry out actions.

Because it is cheap and readily available, oxygen is one of the most widely used industrial oxidizing agents.

Oxygen is widely used in industry.

To find the key idea of the sentence, they suggested that the reader shift words around until he understands the sentence meaning, or if necessary, summarize parts of the sentence. Besides, they recommended anticipating the idea in the next part of the sentence and using question words—who, what, where, when, why, how—to pose questions about each part of the sentence.

Unlike the strategy suggested by Wiener and Bazerman, the students in LC 4001 at NIDA are trained to give the name of each phrase or clause, identify the head word of the subject, the head word of the main verb, the head of the object and the head word of other essential sentence elements as the core parts. This strategy is strictly adhered too much to grammar, and sometimes the outcome (the derived core parts) does not make sense. In LC 4001, the core parts from the above two sentences would be:

Sentence 1: Organism consists of parts and each must do thing.
Sentence 2: Oxygen is one.

Also, there is no absolute agreement among the instructors on what should be included in the core parts. Should noun determiners like articles and the negative words “not” and “no” be in the core parts? In other words, are the core parts of the sentence “Don’t cross the street” “Cross street”? If a sentence contains a noun clause or gerund phrase or infinitive phrase as the subject or object of the main clause, should the whole noun clause, gerund phrase and infinitive phrase be in the core parts of that sentence, or the core parts of such a clause or phrase must be identified?

The current practice in LC 4001 has made the researcher have some doubt about the effectiveness of teaching sentence reading comprehension by just telling the name of a phrase, a clause, or a sentence and identifying core parts as illustrated above, as well as identifying head words and modifiers even in some parts of the sentence that do not cause any comprehension problem, would be really helpful in developing students’ reading strategies. Does sentence analysis as currently taught in LC 4001 really positively enhance sentence reading comprehension?

Moreover, Anderson (1991) studied reading strategies of L2 readers and found that poor readers and good readers did not have a different set of strategies in processing reading texts, but their difference was in skills in using reading strategies. He points out that it is not enough to know what strategies are available, but it is necessary to orchestrate these strategies in reading. Nuttall (1996) also states that readers do not always use the same strategy in comprehending the text, so the teacher should teach students or equip them with different strategies. This has inspired the researcher to find out whether it is better to teach students a variety of sentence reading strategies and train them to select one or more strategies appropriate for different sentences.
Objectives of the Study

1. To compare the effectiveness of the syntactic structure identification training and of integrated reading strategy training in teaching sentence reading comprehension

2. To identify the relationship between syntactic/sentence analysis and sentence reading comprehension

3. To analyze the errors in the students translated sentences to find out the strategies they used to comprehend the text.

Significance of the Study

The study will be useful for teaching sentence reading comprehension, since it reveals what should be the focus of teaching sentence comprehension. It also serves as empirical evidence to support the idea that reading is a complex process, and that comprehension cannot be achieved only by teaching only one strategy.

Methodology

Subjects  The subjects of the study were two groups of first-semester Master’s degree students from the School of Public Administration who enrolled in LC 4001 Reading Skills Development in English for Graduate Studies 1 in the academic year 2008. The students were divided into two groups: 30 in the control group and 30 in the experimental group. These students’ scores from the pre-test were matched in order to have the students of more or less the same English ability in both groups before the experimental began. Other students who also studied in both groups were not taken into consideration, as their scores did not match with each other.

Instrumentation  Two tests were used as research tools. The first test was composed of three parts: English-to-Thai translation, sentence analysis (identifying core parts, head words and modifiers), and sentence comprehension. The same five long, complicated sentences were used for all the three parts. The total score was 100 (28 for translation, 47 for sentence analysis, and 25 for sentence comprehension). See an example of the test in the appendix. The reliability of this test was .888. The second test consisted of 10 sentences much shorter than those in the first test, and the total score was 20. Each sentence was followed by another sentence for the students to identify whether it was a restatement or inference of the preceding sentence (The Yes/No part). The students were also asked to translate the test sentence into Thai to check their comprehension. The reliability of the test was .749.

Data collection  The two groups were taught with different approaches. The control group was trained to identify syntactic structure of sentences (telling types of phrases and clauses, and sentences), core parts of sentences, head words and modifiers, as well as answering questions mostly by giving a part of the sentence as the answer. This group assumed to represent the other five groups of students who took the same course was taught by an instructor who had more or less the same qualifications as the researcher who taught the experimental group. After the experimental group had been trained with integrated reading strategies for 12 hours (See Appendix A for examples of strategies), the researcher administered the first test to the group gain as a post-test. For
the remaining 12 hours before the mid-term examination (which tested the students on giving the name of phrases, clauses, identifying core parts, head words and modifiers), the researcher had to teach such topics to prepare the students for the exam. After 24 hours of teaching the control groups were administered the same test.

After the mid-term examination, the researcher taught the experimental group techniques of sentence interpretation for 6 hours and sentence comprehension for 3 hours, using the same materials as in the control group, but half of the number of hours used in the control group (12 hours). The researcher gave the second test to the experimental group right after the lesson was completed, and waited until the end of the semester before the control group was administered the second test. This was because the control group was taught sentence interpretation after it was taught word analysis, contextual clues to meaning and dictionary usage.

Data analysis

In Test # 1 the grading of the three parts of Test # 1 was different because of the nature of the required activities.

Grading translated sentences. The grading of translated sentences in both tests was based on comprehension, not beautiful translation. In the first test, the score for each sentence was not equal, depending on sentence length. The individual sentences were divided into parts, each of which was assigned one point.

Grading the core part, head words and modifiers. The score for each sentence was not equal, depending on the number of components of the core part (one point for one component), the number of blanks to fill out head words and modifiers (one point for each blank). This part could be considered an objective test.

Grading the sentence comprehension items. Although the test format was a mixture of short answers to be supplied by the students and multiple choice items, this part could be considered an objective test, as the answer were fixed.

In Test # 2 each item had 2 points: one point for the translation and one point for the YES/NO question.

To test the hypotheses, Pearson’s correlation was figured out to identify the relationship among the different parts of the test, and t-test was used to find out the difference between the pre-test and the post-test and between the control group and the experimental group.

As the errors made by the students could reflected their comprehension process, errors from translation of sentences in both tests when administered as the pre-tests were roughly analyzed in a qualitative manner and described to find out how the students processed the text in order to comprehend it. (Many students in both groups did not translate all the sentences in the post-tests, so errors in the post-tests were not analyzed.) Comprehension, rather than beautifulness of the Thai language translated version, was given importance. The errors were classified into two categories: errors in vocabulary and those in grammar/sentence structure. Pearson’s correlation was calculated to find out the relationship between translation and comprehension scores.
Findings

**Comparison between the pre-test and the post-test**  When paired sample t-test was used to compare the overall result of the pre-test and that of the post-test in the control group, it was found that the post-test score of the first test was significantly higher than that of the pre-test at the .000 level, but no significant difference was found in the second test. In contrast, in the experiment group, significant difference was found between the pre-test scores and the post-test scores of both tests at the .000 level and at the .01 level, respectively.

When the individual parts of the first test were compared, it was found that in the control group, only the mean score of the sentence analysis part, the second part of the pre-test, was found to be significantly higher than that in the post test at the .000 level. In fact, only this part contributed to a significant difference between the pre-test score and the post-test score. Conversely, the scores from all the three parts in the experimental group in the pre-test was significantly higher than those in the post-test at the .01, .000 and .000 level, respectively.

**Comparison between the control group and the experimental group**  When independent sample t-test was used to compare the overall result of the pre-test and the post-test of Test # 1 between the control group and the experimental group after the experiment, the latter had a significantly a higher mean score at the .01 level. And when the individual parts were considered separately, the experimental group had a significantly higher score in translation and in comprehension than the control group, but no significant difference in the score of the sentence analysis part was found between the two groups. See table 1. The findings support the hypothesis that integrated reading strategy training was superior to sentence structure identification training in teaching sentence reading comprehension.

**Table 1  Comparison of the post test of Test # 1 between the control group and the experimental group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of the test</th>
<th>Control group</th>
<th>Experimental group</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>11.28</td>
<td>-3.809</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>5.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>11.28</td>
<td>7.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence analysis</td>
<td>23.28</td>
<td>21.80</td>
<td>1.172</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>23.28</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>21.80</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>9.91</td>
<td>-2.302</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>9.91</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>43.00</td>
<td>-2.679</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>35.29</td>
<td>10.53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>43.00</td>
<td>11.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Relationship between parts in Test # 1**  To find out the relationship between each part in test # 1, the samples from both groups were considered together (N = 60) and it was found that before the experiment (pre-test), there was a moderate relationship between sentence analysis and comprehension at the .05 level (r = .451) in the control
group, whereas in the experimental group a significant relationship was found between translation and comprehension at the .01 level (r = .486) and between sentence analysis and comprehension at the .05 level (r = .416). However, after the experiment, many members of the control group did not translate many sentences, and thus the score was lower in the post-test than in the pre-test. That contributed to a significant relationship between translation and sentence comprehension. As for the experimental group, no relationship was found between any parts of the post-test.

**Findings from Test # 2** In the second test, the experiment group surpassed the control group in sentence interpretation, as well as in translation. In fact, significant difference was found between the pre-test and the post-test scores only in the experimental group, but not in the control group.

Table 2 Comparison of the post test of Test # 2 between the control group and the experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part of the test</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>-7.56</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>-4.248</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>7.23</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>-8.352</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>13.20</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Errors in Translation**

**Errors in sentence structure/grammar.** The students were found to make errors in translation in both tests because of poor competence in English syntax as follows:

1) As the word order of English and Thai sentences are different only in some parts or components, the students translated the test sentences by following the word order in the English sentences. That is, they sometimes did not notice the head word of noun phrases, especially when that head noun was pre-modified by another noun.

2) When they found any part of the sentence difficult to understand, they tended to ignore the structure of the English sentences and would either summarize that part or the rest of the sentence, using their background knowledge about the topic they were reading.

3) They tended to overlook the connectives that linked between clauses. There were many who knew that a connective was there but did not translate that connective by using an equivalent Thai word. Instead, they created the relationship between clauses
by supplying their own connective, resulting in the meaning deviated from the original English sentence.

4) The derived meaning from the first part of the sentence often predominated or had influence on the meaning of the part that followed. If the student got the wrong meaning for the preceding part, he would get the wrong meaning for the following part, too.

**Errors in Vocabulary.** The students’ most often found problem was lack of adequate vocabulary to understand the text. In both tests they did not know the meanings of, for example, *pursuing, challenge, capabilities, enduring persistence, motto, “grow and die”, sizeable, operation, undermined, tumbles, revoked, loath* in Test #1, and *prosper, regarding* in Test #2. Some did not know the multi-meanings of common words, such as *meet, once, since*, etc. Others did not know Thai words for technical terms and proper nouns, such as *share, listed companies, partner companies, the Revenue Department* in Test #1 and *burning site* in Test #2.

Another problem was that of recognition of word spellings. For example, they thought *forth = fourth, challenge = channel, likely = like*, etc.

Still another problem was finding proper Thai words equivalent to English words. Some knew the meaning of an English word, but could not adjust the Thai word equivalent to fit the context when they translated it into Thai. This often resulted in deriving a wrong meaning. For example, a few students translated *travel agencies as tour brokers* (นายหน้าการท่องเที่ยว)

**Discussion and Conclusions**

Comparison of the mean scores from Test #1 after the experiment revealed that the experimental group got a higher mean than the control group, although the number of teaching hours was half of the latter group. This indicates that in teaching sentence reading comprehension, the integrated reading strategy training approach is superior to the syntactic structure identification training approach. The finding supports Anderson (1991) and Nuttall (1996) who recommend that teachers should train student readers with several strategies because different students tend to prefer different strategies to process the text, and that not a single strategy is suitable for attacking all sentences.

Moreover, no significant difference was found in the mean scores of the sentence analysis part between both groups in the post test, even though the students in the experimental group were not taught this strategy separately from other reading strategies. It shows that syntactic structure identification can be learned along with other strategies. This finding reinforces the superiority of the integrated reading strategy training approach over the syntactic structure identification training approach, which is currently used in LC 4001. For reading purpose, it is not necessary to spend a lot of time practicing identifying and naming phrases and clauses. The finding also implies that the current sentence analysis strategy should be refined because the emphasis on discrete teaching points in sentence analysis might not be practical. It is widely accepted that sentence parsing is useful as a reading strategy for long, complicated sentences, but the process of doing so must be suitable for reading comprehension, which is the goal of the course.
Another finding is that in the control group, the mean score of the comprehension part in the post-test was not significantly higher than that in the pre-test; only the mean score of the sentence analysis part in the post-test was significantly higher than that in the pre-test. This indicates a limited relationship between sentence analysis and sentence comprehension. In other words, sentence analysis strategy as taught in LC 4001 has a limited contribution to sentence comprehension.

In Test # 2, the mean score of the sentence interpretation part of the control group in the post-test was not significantly different from that in the pre-test. This also indicates that the syntactic structure identification training approach does not help much in building a good foundation for sentence interpretation either.

In fact, translated sentences in both tests revealed that vocabulary and background knowledge (schema) on the topic that the students were reading seemed to be the most serious problem for both the control group and the experimental group. The vocabulary problem does not result from not knowing how to guess the meaning of unfamiliar words, but from not knowing various meanings of some words and a small repertoire of general vocabulary. They were unable to find Thai equivalent words when they attempted to use the translation strategy to reduce the burden of their working. Often, the meaning of some word in the text was so important that if the students did not know it, the misunderstanding would result, as they would activate a wrong schema which led them to a wrong path when they processed the text. The finding supports Grabe and Stroller (2002) who state that not only linguistic features but also background knowledge of the thing read is necessary in reading comprehension.

Besides, many students tended to ignore linking devices, especially conjunctions, which indicate a relationship between ideas. They created the relationship among the ideas themselves, causing the derived meaning to deviate from the original English text. They did this not because they did not know the meaning of the conjunction used in the text, but mostly because the meaning of that conjunction does not seem to fit their Thai versions of that sentence, which mostly derived by using top-down processing.

Lastly, what was still a problem is that although the overall mean score of the comprehension part of the experimental group was significantly high than that of the control group, it was still low or unsatisfactory (9.91 out of 25 points) for graduate level. This is not surprising because most of the students in the study did not take the English entrance examination to enter NIDA. However, it is the problem that needs to be addressed.

**Recommendations**

**For instruction**

This study aims to prove that the integrated reading strategy training is superior to the syntactic structure identification training in teaching sentence reading comprehension and the research results show that it is really better. Therefore, it is recommended that this approach be used in teaching sentence reading, as it is necessary to teach a variety of reading strategies in a short time and give the students more practice in using the learned strategies to develop their sentence reading skill.
As it was found that students’ vocabulary was still inadequate to read academic
texts, it is recommended that vocabulary, especially first-sight words, should be taught.
In sentence parsing, too detailed sentence analysis should be avoided. More practice
should be on reading stylistic sentences. Students should be assigned to read widely to
broaden their horizons or to gain more background knowledge in different topics or areas
if they are to read materials from different fields of study.

For further research

Since students were found to have a problem in interpreting the linking devices,
especially internal transitional markers, further studies should find out their influence on
sentence reading comprehension. Also further research should involve sentences in
context to derive the contextual meaning instead of just propositional meaning as in this
research.

References

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Appendix A

Examples of Strategies Taught in the Experimental Group

Sentence: Minimum wage laws have been developed in all capitalist countries at one
time or another in response to the struggles of workers to improve their
living and working condition.

1. Learning to activate the right schema to read the text

2. Divide the sentence into subject and predicate parts.

   Minimum wage laws have been developed in all capitalist
countries at one time or another in response to the struggles of workers to
improve their living and working condition.

3. Identify the head word of the subject and the finite verb, the object, the
   complement, if any.
Minimum wage laws have been developed in all capitalist countries at one time or another in response to the struggles of workers to improve their living and working condition.

4. Reading in thought units.

Minimum wage laws / have been developed / in all capitalist countries / at one time or another / in response to the struggles of workers / to improve their living and working condition.

5. Identify the head word that each phrase or clause modifies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head word</th>
<th>Modifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>have been developed</td>
<td>(a) in all capitalist countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) at one time or another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) in response to the struggles of workers to improve their living and working conditions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

struggles

6. Posing questions: who, what, where, when, why, how….
Each thought unit usually answer a question.

What? where?
Minimum wage laws / have been developed / in all capitalist countries /

When? Why?/ For what purpose?
at one time or another / in response to the struggles of workers /

Why?
to improve their living and working condition.

7. Summarizing the key idea

Key idea: Minimum wage laws have been developed to improve workers’ living and working condition.

8. Guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words using the context clues available.
Notice the part of speech of a word, and beware of multi-meaning words.

9. Noticing collocations, linking devices, and words that often go together such as from…to; if…then; such…that, etc.

10. Indicating what pronouns refer to.

11. Clause reduction

12. Adjusting the words in the mother tongue to fit the context. (If translation is used as a strategy. In fact, students often translate the sentence into the mother tongue in an attempt to understand it.)
Appendix B
Example of Items in Test # 1

Directions: For each item you are required to do three tasks:
1) Translate the following sentences into Thai. Don’t use any dictionary.
2) Answer the questions in each item briefly. Don’t copy the whole sentence. Write only the part that answers the question.
3) Write the core parts and the head words & modifiers of each sentence.

1. When pursuing difficult goals that challenge their capabilities, students are most likely to put forth high effort and enduring persistence to meet them.(15 points)

Section 1: Translation (4 points)

Section 2: Core Parts, Head words and Modifiers (7 points)

Core parts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core parts:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head word</th>
<th>Modifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>most likely</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b) that challenge their capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to meet them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>persistence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 3: Sentence Comprehension (4 points)

1) What kind of goals challenges students’ ability? ____________________________
2) What do students likely react to such goals? ____________________________
3) When you pursue a goal, you try to _________ it.
   a. reach       b. set       c. evaluate        d. better
4) It can be inferred from the sentence that difficult goals are _________ to students.
   a. challenging b. challenger c. challenge d. challenged

Examples of Items in Test # 2 (Sentence Interpretation)

Directions: Decide whether the second sentence is a restatement or an implication of the preceding sentence. Write YES or NO in the space in front of the sentence. Then translate the given sentence into Thai.

1. Burning sites are not abundant since they must be downwind of communities. 
   ____ Burning sites must be located upwind.

2. People must live harmoniously with other life on earth or they will die.
It is necessary for people to take advantage of other living things on Earth if they want to survive.

3. Eating cooked chicken is safe, but villagers do not realize they could be exposed to the deadly virus while they process the raw chicken.

It is not true that eating cooked chicken is always safe.
Title
Attitudes of Pre-service Teachers toward English Language Learners

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Abstract
Together with global demand for English proficiency, the United States, with its rapidly growing linguistically and culturally diverse (LCD) student population, must prepare teachers to meet the unique needs of these students. This study investigated pre-service teachers’ attitudes toward English Language Learners (ELL). Research has suggested that teachers with positive attitudes, adequate preparation, and clear perceptions of effective instruction for LCD students are more likely to engage in appropriate instruction and facilitate students’ learning.

This study investigated whether any relationship exists between Bilingual Generalist major and Generalist Early Childhood major pre-service teachers’ attitudes toward ELL and ELL related courses taken in the teacher preparation program. Further, the study examined whether a difference exists between the two groups in their overall attitudes toward ELL and overall perceptions toward their training and effective instruction for ELL. A theory-based survey was administered to 129 subjects for quantitative data collection; subsequently, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with 12 participants. The quantitative data was analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics; the qualitative data was analyzed with theory-based themes.

The study found participants had positive attitudes toward use of ELL’s native language, importance of content knowledge, and parental involvement, although approximately half of them thought it unfair to expect a regular classroom teacher to teach ELL. Although a statistically significant difference between the different major pre-service teachers’ attitudes toward ELL was not found, participants’ expressed concerns about their own
linguistic skills in ELL students’ first language. Implications of the results for teacher preparation programs are discussed.

**Key words:** English Language Learner (ELL), Pre-service Teachers, Attitudes, ESL

**Introduction**

The English Language Learners (ELL) student population in the United States continues to grow more culturally and linguistically diverse than ever before. As a result of this demographic change, teachers must meet the educational needs of ELL students (Taylor & Sobel, 2001; Youngs & Youngs, 2001). However, it would be unrealistic to ask teachers to learn and understand every student’s language, culture, and background. Coming into contact with students with diverse backgrounds is basically on teachers’ everyday agenda today (Howard, 2003). It is hoped that exposing regular teachers to multicultural perspectives will enhance their attitudes toward their students’ diversity and further facilitate both teaching and learning in the classroom (Grant & Secada, 1990). However, not many studies have been conducted on teachers’ attitudes toward students’ linguistic and cultural diversity, especially teachers’ attitudes toward English language learners (Byrnes & Kiger, 1994; Byrnes, Kiger, & Manning, 1997; Youngs & Youngs, 2001).

**Background**

Youngs and Youngs (2001) studied mainstream teachers’ attitudes toward ESL students and possible predictors that might affect teachers’ attitudes. The results indicated that teachers had neutral to slightly positive attitudes toward teaching more ESL students in the future. The findings also concluded a multi-predictor model of teachers’ attitudes toward ESL students. The predictors included general education experience, such as completion of foreign language or multicultural education courses; specific ESL training; personal contact with diverse culture such as experience abroad; prior contact with ESL students such as working with diverse ESL students; and finally, demographic profile, such as gender. Together, these predictors contributed to mainstream teachers’ attitudes toward ESL-related and cultural diversity. Lastly, the study argued that in order to promote positive attitudes toward ESL students among mainstream teachers, exposing teachers to cultural diversity was, by all means, necessary, including foreign language courses, multicultural education, or ELL related courses.

More recently, Reeves (2006) studied secondary teachers’ attitudes toward including ELL in the mainstream classroom. The study found that teachers reported neutral or slightly positive attitudes toward inclusion of ELL students. However, the study also suggested that teachers’ welcoming attitudes might be selective against students with very limited English proficiency; half of the teachers surveyed in the study reported to be uninterested in receiving ELL related training. Reeves concluded that teachers’ lack of interest for ELL related training could be caused by typical content area teachers’ mentality, one-shot professional development, and beliefs in the irrelevancy of differentiating instruction for ELL students. Finally, the study found that a large number of teachers’ perceptions of second language learning went against research findings. Some teachers reported two years to be adequate for ELL students to develop their English proficiency and questioned the role of ELL students’ native languages.

As issues of diversity rise, teacher educators and researchers have called attention to preparing preservice teachers for diversity (Saffold, 2008; Siwatu, 2007). However,
not many studies have focused on the scope of preservice teachers’ attitudes toward ELL students.

Torok and Aguilar (2000) conducted a study on the effect of multicultural education on changing preservice teachers’ knowledge and beliefs about language issues. Participants were predominately white, female preservice teachers. The results showed that after participating in the multicultural education course, preservice teachers’ scores on personal and professional beliefs about diversity and multicultural education increased significantly. Further, their knowledge and beliefs about language issues also improved.

Leek (2000) studied preservice teachers’ attitudes toward linguistically diverse students. The findings suggested that gender, race/ethnicity, teacher certification sought, political ideology, psychological insecurity, and cognitive sophistication contributed significantly to preservice teachers’ attitudes toward language diversity. Bae (2003) conducted a study on both inservice and preservice teachers’ attitudes toward ESL students, as well as the factors that influenced their attitudes. The results suggested that preservice teachers and inservice teachers, in general, who had more experience in general education experience related to diversity and ESL training; completion of multicultural course, ESL-related course or inservice workshop; and personal multicultural experience tended to have more positive attitudes toward ESL students. Owuor’s (2004) study on preservice teachers’ attitudes showed that (a) participants who took more ESL related courses had more positive attitudes toward ELL students, (b) those participants who had more positive attitudes were also more prepared to teach ELL students, and (c) elementary major preservice teachers had better attitudes, more preparation, and clearer perceptions on effective reading methods and general education practices than secondary/middle major preservice teachers.

Despite the notable quality of previous studies on preservice teachers’ attitudes toward ELL students, there were still limitations. In terms of research design, these studies were inclined to be quantitative and lacked a qualitative supplement. Instead of focusing on a more specific group of preservice teachers, these studies all had a mix of undergraduate and graduate preservice teachers across teacher preparation programs. All in all, given the test that regular classroom teachers are facing regarding the rising ELL student population and diversity issues, teacher education programs must pay more attention preparing preservice teachers for the challenge.

**Purpose of the Study**

This study investigated preservice teachers’ overall attitudes toward ELL. Further, the study examined whether a difference in attitudes exists between Bilingual Generalist (BIL) major and Generalist Early Childhood (GEN) major preservice teachers regarding ELL. In order to triangulate the research, the researchers adopted a mixed research design, a Concurrent Triangulation Strategy (Creswell, 2003), to enhance the research design with quantitative and qualitative methods. The study centered on 6 research questions which included 4 quantitative and 2 qualitative research questions.

**Quantitative**

1. What are preservice teachers’ overall attitudes toward English language learners?
2. What relationship, if any, exists between Bilingual Generalist and Generalist Early Childhood preservice teachers’ attitudes and perceptions, and ELL related courses taken in their teacher preparation programs?
3. What difference, if any, exists between Bilingual Generalist and Generalist Early Childhood Preservice teachers’ overall attitudes toward English language learners, and overall perceptions toward their professional education training, and instructional strategies regarding English language learners?

4. What difference, if any, exists between attitudes of Bilingual Generalist and Generalist Early Childhood preservice teachers toward English language learners?

Qualitative

5. Do preservice teachers feel that there is a relationship between their professional education training and their attitudes and perceptions?

6. What are preservice teachers’ attitudes toward English language learners?

Participants

One hundred and twenty-nine subjects participated in the study, which included both Bilingual Education (BIL) and General Education (GEN) majors. A theory-based survey Preservice Teachers’ Attitudes Survey was administered to these subjects for quantitative data collection; subsequently, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with 12 participants. The quantitative data was analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics; the qualitative data was analyzed with theory-based themes.

Analysis & Results

Attitudes toward ELL

The researchers noted that 92% of the participants agreed that ELL students should use their native language in the classroom and school. Seventy-eight percent (78%) of them also agreed that, for ELL students, the learning of content area is as important as learning the English language. The participants’ opinions were similar to other researchers (Cummins, 2008; Pawan, 2008, Thomas & Collier, 1997), who suggested that students’ first language could facilitate the content knowledge learning, as well as English language learning. The participants had rather positive attitudes toward students using their first language in the classroom or school setting, which was reflected in the positive relationship that the researchers found between number of ELL/ESL related courses taken by the participants and their attitudes toward ELL students speaking their first languages in the classroom and school. Like Isaac, a BIL major, said, “If they [ELL students] are young, I think their first language should be the priority…Their first language should be reinforced. Once they have been reinforced and they have a good idea of what language is, I think they will be able to transfer that to their second language.”

On the other hand, 54% of the participants found that it is unfair to expect a regular classroom teacher to teach ELL. As Walker, Shafter, and Iiam (2004) suggested, teachers who are unprepared in ELL training encounter ELL students, might develop a negative attitude toward ELL students, because of their own feeling of lack of preparedness. Nevertheless, CREDE (2002, 2003) proposed that teacher preparation programs prepare all teachers to meet the needs of all students.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the participants disagreed with the statement that parents of ELL need to teach their children English before sending them to school. The reason why some of the participants thought that parents of ELL do not need to teach their children English before sending them to school could be that parents and teachers of Hispanic background tend to agree that professionals are responsible for their children’s schooling (Lopez, 2006; Stritikus & Garcia, 2005). However, the finding should not lead to a conclusion suggesting that parents of ELL do not want to be involved
with their children’s schooling, or that teachers of ELL fail to involve parents in ELL students’ learning. Fifty-three percent (53%) of the participants did not think ELL students use claims of discrimination to excuse themselves for their performance in school.

In analyzing the results in terms of participants’ majors, the researchers found participants’ opinions to turn in a different direction. Regarding participants’ overall attitudes toward ELL students, the results did not show significant difference between BIL major and GEN major participants, but, interestingly enough, different majors seemed to have different opinions regarding two individual survey items.

BIL majors have taken at least four more courses regarding ELL/ESL than GEN majors. As Youngs and Youngs (2001) suggested, specific ELL or ESL training is one of the factors affecting teachers’ attitudes toward ELL students. Gen major participants’ lack of ELL/ESL training might have contributed to their doubtfulness toward teaching ELL students. Amy, a GEN major, had positive attitudes toward ELL, although she was concerned about the communication with ELL students and parents of ELL students. Amy said, “That [ELL student’s first language] is my one big concern when I start teaching …parents who are monolingual in Spanish and students in my class who are fluent Spanish speakers.” Pamela, a GEN major, was positive toward ELL students too, but she remained worried about not being knowledgeable in ELL students’ and their parents’ first language.

…once you have ELL, more than likely their parents at home speak only Spanish…that would be another obstacle to overcome because I don’t speak any Spanish. So, I would have to find a teacher’s aide or somebody who could change my letters from English to Spanish, to get their parents involved …so when the homework goes home, they can help the students and feel somewhat involved in their school work.

Regarding ELL students’ first or second language learning, ensuring ELL student’s academic development in both languages might be difficult for GEN major preservice teachers since they do not have adequate ELL/ESL training compared to their BIL major counterparts. This was suggested by the negative relationship found between ELL/ESL training and the importance of content area learning and English language learning in the current study. However, in terms of attitudes toward ELL students’ language learning, Pamela, a GEN major, learned a lesson from her personal experience.

… the first language [ELL students’ first language], that’s the foundation for everything. If you can get them [ELL students] to understand one word in their language means this word in our language like in English, then you can start building the bridges up and actually overcoming it… I feel I am coming from there as well, because when I came over here… I was in third grade, not knowing any English, because all I spoke was German.

Reeves (2006) found that teachers’ lack of interest in ELL/ESL training could be caused by the typical content area teacher mentality. This is reflected in the worries that Valerie, a GEN major, expressed when encountering the issues of ELL students.
It scares me because I am not prepared. I can read all those [theories of second language teaching], but I have never applied it. It is different from reading and actually going to a real world classroom. It is going to be an eye-opener.

Unlike GEN majors, BIL major preservice teachers, having received more ELL/ESL training, tended to be more confident in dealing with ELL students in classroom. Parents of ELL and their culture are important to Erik’s teaching; “I would try to bring in, involve the parents. Some of the parents do know the English language, they can help them out. I think parents are very important. Also, whatever the child has to offer, bring that in, culture and anything.” Furthermore, given more ELL/ESL training or experience, BIL major preservice teachers were also positive about teaching ELL students. Considering their linguistic skills in students’ first language and ELL/ESL experience, Lizzete, BIL major, felt confident and looked forward to working with ELL students.

I like it [teaching ELL students], especially I can understand what they are going through since I went through the same process, acquiring a second language so I know. It is easy talking to them because their first language is Spanish and I am strong in Spanish, so I can have conversations with them. I can understand their needs. I can also help them out in English. It has been a really good experience working with them.

In conclusion, regarding preservice teachers’ overall attitudes toward ELL, generally speaking, the participants held positive attitudes toward ELL. The researchers arrived at the following conclusions:

1. Participants were positive about ELL students’ first language use, content area learning being as important as English language learning, and the role of parental involvement.
2. Approximately half of the participants did not think it fair to expect a regular classroom teacher to teach ELL. The also did not agree with the statement that ELL students use claims of discrimination to excuse themselves from their poor academic performance.
3. There was no significant difference in participants’ attitudes toward ELL. GEN majors’ attitudes toward whether or not parents should teach their children English before sending them to school, and ELL students using their first language in the classroom or school, may be due to the fact that the GEN major participants were more concerned about their linguistic skills in ELL students’ first language.

**Relationship between Education Training for ELL and Attitudes toward ELL**

As a whole, the researchers did not find any relationship between ELL/ESL training and preservice teachers’ attitudes toward ELL. Walker, Shafer, and liam (2007) said that most teachers did not start out with negative attitudes against ELL students; rather, the majority of them tend to stay open-minded or hold a neutral attitude toward ELL students. The researchers further examined the individual survey items and found a positive relationship existed between ELL/ESL related courses taken and attitudes toward ELL students speaking their first languages in the classroom and school. In other words, the more preservice teachers are exposed to ELL/ESL related courses, the more likely they are to agree with ELL students using their first language in the school setting. As
most teachers initially tend to have neutral attitudes toward ELL students, as suggested by Walker, Shafer, and Iiam (2007), it could also be implied that with ELL/ESL training or experience, teachers' neutral attitudes can be shifted to be more positive.

Next, the researchers examined the overall attitudes toward ELL students by participants’ majors. For BIL majors, a positive relationship existed in their overall attitudes toward ELL and ELL/ESL training. Many researchers (Bae, 2003; Owuor, 2004; Reeves, 2006; Torok & Aguilar, 2000; Youngs & Youngs, 2001) have suggested that ELL/ESL training can indeed influence preservice teachers’ attitudes toward ELL students. Carmen, a BIL major, knew what it is like to be an ELL student, but she felt that the ELL/ESL training could really benefit those who were born here or have never been exposed to the experience before.

They [ELL/ESL training] do help. I guess they do help those [preservice teachers] who don’t have personal experiences that can’t relate, because I can relate. I can understand those kids and I am thinking, “oh my god,” I know how hard it is for them to translate to understand to develop both languages. I know it is difficult. But, for somebody who is born here, knows English, goes to school here, it’s [English] so easy for them. I don’t think they can relate to those kids.

On the other hand, for the GEN majors, although no relationship was found between their attitudes toward ELL students and either ELL/ESL training or number of ELL/ESL related courses taken, their limited training did indeed suggest a finding. A negative relationship existed between ELL/ESL training and their awareness of balancing the content area learning and English language learning for ELL students. GEN major preservice teachers’ limited ELL/ESL training as opposed to their BIL major counterparts, did not make them aware of the importance that ELL students’ learning in content knowledge is as important as their English language skills. Hughes (2003) suggested that teacher preparation programs should let preservice teachers understand that ELL students’ English language skills do not go hand in hand with their academic knowledge. In other words, Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) do not entail Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1999). However, simply to know or understand is not enough, as Amy, a GEN major, talked about the dilemma she had in the classroom.

I think the courses that I have taken have prepared me enough to where I know what specific to look for; I know they need to master certain core subjects in their own languages first and then move on into the English. I feel those students deserve a teacher that has been taught the full bilingual program. I can’t give them my 100% because I have not taken those extra Spanish courses. I would feel like they deserve better.

Or, perhaps, as Damaris, a GEN major, felt, the GEN major preservice teachers were actually looking for more ELL/ESL training in their teacher preparation programs.

We were talking about how ELL are going to be in the classroom, even if you were a generalist, they are going to be there, you have to teach them, it is your job. Even though I am not extremely good at Spanish, with the classes, they help a lot, finding different techniques. The only thing that bothers me …here at this
university is they focus mostly at students’ first language being Spanish … what if you have a child who doesn’t speak Spanish, what if you have a child who speaks Chinese or French, what are you going to do then? All of your courses are directed to Spanish, not anything else. I think a bilingual program should be about teaching a second language or another language, not just Spanish.

Conclusion
Meskill (2005) suggested teacher preparation programs should infuse ELL issues throughout the teacher preparation curriculum. Hopefully, all preservice teachers, regardless of majors, should be exposed to cultural and linguistic diversity, which allow them to appreciate students who have different backgrounds from their own (Garmon, 2005). It is hoped that enhancing preservice teachers’ experience and preparedness in cultural and linguistic diversity will broaden their horizons and eventually benefit the learning of all students.

References


Title
Item Learning vs. System Learning: Contextualizing the Shift from a Structure-based to a Notional-Functional ESL Syllabus

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Bio Data:
Bonifacio T. Cunanan teaches linguistics, stylistics, language research, and postgraduate courses in the college of education and graduate school in BulSU. In 2002, he used the metafunctions in Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar in a stylistic analysis of point of view in an Afro-American short story for his dissertation for the degree Ph.D. in Linguistics. His line of research and interest include stylistics, SLA research, language testing, and text linguistics. He has been a thesis examiner in the graduate and undergraduate levels in BulSU since 2000.

Abstract
Of the several disciplines, many aspiring language teachers still find linguistics one of the most formidable. Such condition is brought about by the dearth of instructional materials and a limited number of well-trained teachers who can handle one of its allied fields, especially Systemic Functional Grammar. If this problem remains unattended, producing ill-equipped language teachers shall most likely become a vicious cycle. In this context, this paper discusses the observed inadequacies of the structure-based ESL syllabus, and it supports a shift to a functional model in keeping with the recent issues, trends, and development in SLA research. Also, this paper stresses the need to supplement the lexical and morpho-syntactic dimensions of teaching English grammar with some of its suprasentential aspects. To explore the differences between item learning and system learning, this study analyzes and explains how errors, lapses, and artificially correct lexico-syntactic structures manifest in the written compositions of tertiary ESL students. These observed difficulties—the verbal structures in particular—appear to be systemic in nature and cannot be fully attributed only to poor modeling or interference of the first language. In applying some semantic and pragmatic principles to help tertiary ESL students understand and solve these neglected areas of English syntax, this paper will show how the ideational metafunction works in MAK Halliday’s Functional Grammar.

Key words: Item learning, system learning, and Notional-Functional Grammar

Introduction
A language is not just a collection of words. It is not only a system of structures, but it is also a system of systems. To teach a language, one has to remember that language
learning is far more than just memorizing vocabulary words and grammar rules. In teaching ESL one of its requirements is to have a working knowledge of the language to be learned, that is, the teacher has to look into the learners’ language, learning difficulties, structural ambiguities, and interpretation ambivalence.

As an abstract system of systems, a language is realized through strings of words in invisible relations that are subject to different layers of interpretation. These abstract relations are not made available through structural analysis only. ESL learners find these relations ambiguous and confusing. To demonstrate these troublesome aspects of ESL learning, this action research was conducted to answer the following questions:

How may the ability of the student respondents (SRs) in disambiguating grammatical structures be described and compared? Does exposure to the traditional and structural syllabus contribute to the SRs’ ability to disambiguate grammatical structures? Do the abilities of the SRs to disambiguate grammatical structures differ in relation to their exposure to authentic and communicative language learning activities? Do the SRs use item learning strategy more than system learning? Would the empirical evidence be enough to contextualize the shift from traditional structural to notional functional syllabus? If the evidence would be substantial, what would be the scope of a notional-functional syllabus?

Review of literature

Item learning vs. System learning

Language development, to Ellis (1997, p.5), can be explained only in part by external factors like input. Hence, there is a need to consider internal factors like the learner’s intake, interlanguage, and errors.

Any grammar, traditional or contemporary, is very complicated. In his commentary on the drawbacks of traditional and structural grammar, Fries noted, “grammar sometimes means giving traditional definitions to elements of speech, definitions that do not account for the facts of language.” (Lado 1957, p. 51)

Language teaching requires knowledge of, but not limited to, structural analysis of the target language. Ellis (1997, p. 13, 140, 143) noted that second language acquisition (SLA) should attend to how learners develop the target language. For this reason, Ellis differentiates item learning and system learning. To him, while item learning is a process that deals with learning separate and discrete items, system learning deals with the learning of the abstract rules that underlie the use of linguistic items. As regards his position, it is very much interesting to know if ESL learners acquire their target language systemically (p.9).

Structural syllabus

A syllabus is a specific and detailed document that usually contains the scope of coverage and the skills to be learned and reinforced. The most common type of syllabus in the Philippine setting is the structural syllabus (Gonzalez, A. and Romero, MC. 1991, p. 97). This syllabus is largely based on traditional grammar (TG) which stresses that language is a system of structures. The structural syllabus is rooted on traditional or Latin grammar which to Herndon (1976) is problematic because it is based on faulty assumptions and precepts. For example, English that is of Germanic origin is described
like any Romance language (p.13). The main problem in using the traditional grammar lies in the faulty premise that this Latinate model fits the grammars of all languages.

*Notional-Functional Syllabus (NFS)*

A notional-functional syllabus (NFS), on the contrary, views language in terms of the communicative functions that allow for the realization of the meaning potentials of language. NFS deals with what should be learned in terms of how things are done with words: stating, promising, declaring, asserting, questioning, asking, requesting and commenting. Weber (1989, p.58) traces in part the roots of the notional-functional syllabus to Austin’s Speech Act Theory and MAK Halliday’s Systemic-Functional Grammar (SFG), specifically the three metafunctions: textual, interpersonal, and ideational.

Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983, p.65-66) and Brown (2000, p. 252-3) have categorized NFS under the communicative approach by assigning grammatical structures secondary to notions. It also stresses a means of organizing a language syllabus, with emphasis on breaking down the global concept of language into units of analysis in terms of communicative situations in which they are used. It largely developed from the works of Wilkins, Widdowson, Van Ek, and Girard. Notional categories, Baker (1994, p.219) adds, can be taught along with notions of time, quantity, space, motion, sequence, location, and communicative functions like persuasion, inquiry, relaying emotions and establishing relationships. To Bachman (1997), NFS can be contextualized according to the four different language functions: ideational, manipulative, heuristic, and imaginative.

*Comparison of Traditional Grammar and Systemic Functional Grammar*

While TG is limited to the sentential and subsentential dimensions of language, SFG concerns with its sentential and suprasentential features. TG deals with syntax, but SFG does not give much distinction between lexis and grammar because SFG is meaning oriented. To show the meaning potentials and semiotic nature of language, Halliday distinguishes field, tenor, and mode (Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 2008, p.65-67). Field is the social activity in which the language is being used and what is being talked about. Tenor refers to the roles and relationships of interlocutors. And mode is the channel of communication (written or spoken, face to face or remote).

TG takes into account grammatical roles, as SFG with the semantic roles. In addition, Halliday introduces the language metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. The ideational metafunction refers expression of content like promising, narrating, requesting, regretting, among others. The interpersonal metafunction is the expression of commitment that manifests the language user’s sense of certainty and accountability. The textual metafunction serves as the link between the utterance and the extra-linguistic situation, that organizes a text into a thread of unified whole. Table 1 shows the comparison between TG and SFG.

*Table 1. Comparison of Traditional Grammar and Systemic Functional Grammar*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Comparison</th>
<th>Traditional Grammar</th>
<th>Systemic-Functional Grammar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of grammar</td>
<td>Mainly concerned with syntax (+ some morphology)</td>
<td>'Lexico-grammar' – no distinction between lexis and grammar. Both are meaning-creating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in terminology (some examples)</td>
<td>Verb + Predicator Direct object / Indirect object Predicative Adverbial (adjunct / disjunct / conjunct) Noun / verb phrase</td>
<td>Finite + Predicator Complement Adjunct (circumstantial / modal / conjunctive adjunct) Nominal / Verbal group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas covered</td>
<td>Language structure text &gt; sentence &gt; clause &gt; phrase &gt; word &gt; morpheme</td>
<td>The whole communicative event: Ideational, Interpersonal, and Textual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View of the clause Sentence</td>
<td>Syntactic functions, Clause Patterns</td>
<td>Process and Participant: Mood type + modality and Thematic structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Method of Research**

**Subjects**

One hundred tertiary students participated in this action research. These student-respondents (SRs) were enrolled in the college of education majoring in English. For every curriculum level, 25 students were randomly selected. The sample population was primarily composed of female students (N₁ = 76) and a minority of male students (N₂ = 24), with 18.5 years as the mean age. The SRs were grouped according to their curriculum levels, G₁ = freshmen, G₂ = sophomores, G₃ = juniors, and G₄ = seniors.

**Table 2. Distribution of the student respondents (SRs) by group, sex, and age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Group Mean Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Mean Age 18.5

**Instrument**
This study used a three-part locally constructed instrument to gather the needed data. Part I (completion-type, five items) consists of verb category (item nos. 1, 2, and 3), intensifier (item no. 4), and sentence coherence (item no. 5). Part II (multiple-choice type of test, with nine items) includes transitivity (item nos. 6 and 8), verb category (item nos. 7 and 14), verb structure (item nos. 9 and 13), voice of verb (item no. 10), noun modification (item no. 11), and sentence focus (item no. 12). Part III (modified multiple-choice type of test, six items) covers voice (item no. 15), tense-aspect (item nos. 16, 17 and 18), verb category (item no. 19) and transitivity (item no. 20). The items were chosen based on the most frequent lapses in the written compositions of the SRs.

**Data Collection**

The instrument was administered to 100 randomly selected student-respondents (SRs) majoring in English in the college of education. Frequency count and mean scores were used to compare the scores of the four groups of the SRs, giving the participants equal representation. The comparison of the scores shows the trend on how the SRs analyze and interpret the 10 grammatical structures.

**Data Analysis**

To test SRs’ abilities in disambiguating the 10 grammatical structures, they answered the 20-point questionnaire. They supplied the missing structures and passed judgment on the acceptability of usage. The choices set in boldface are the correct options.

**Verb Category**

Choosing between the –s and the –ing inflections, in some cases, appears to be very ambiguous. For example, to complete *the baby _____ because he/she has got a bad cold* (item no. 1) the SRs chose between *coughs* and *is coughing*. The lower group favored the –s form as the upper group did with the –ing form. While the SRs could hardly differentiate one from the other, native speakers of English, in disambiguating this sentence, prefer *is coughing* to *coughs*. The ambivalence cannot be accounted only for the form of the verb (also known as process in SFG) but for its category. In SFG, Halliday (1997, p. 130-140) categorizes processes like *cough* as behavioral in which the subject is not an Actor but an Experiencer of a process. The difficulty of SRs is most likely caused by their inability to identify the category of the processes because they were more particular with its form.

**Table 3. Percentage Distribution in Disambiguating Verb Category**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No. 1. The baby _____ because he/she has got a bad cold.</th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>coughs</em></td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>is coughing</em></td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Item No. 2. Our cousins are more fortunate than _____ because their parents are very successful in doing business. What is the missing word?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>us</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item No. 3. The incident _____ before anyone knew what was happening. What is the missing word?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>occurred</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>was occurred</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item No. 7. The gift pleases her. Which question can probe the given statement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does she like the gift?</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the gift please her?</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is she pleased by the gift?</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item No. 14. The books were quickly disposed of because. . . What is the missing phrase?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>…the books sold quickly.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…they sold the books quickly.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…the books were sold quickly.</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item No. 19. My uncle is doing business. Is business the direct object of is doing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is my uncle a doer/actor?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is the sentence the same as my uncle is a businessman?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As regards the use of verb be (item no. 2), the SRs chose between we and us. For the sentence our cousins are more fortunate than _____ (…), majority of the respondents chose the second option us even if this usage is contrary to what they read in traditional grammar books, in which the use of it is us runs counter to the traditional
usage. According to TG, sentences like *it is me* should be discouraged because the verbs *be* should be followed by pronouns in the nominative case. This grammar prescription, however, opposes Halliday’s idea that the clause *it is I* is simply a “bad grammar” (1994, p.126) because native speakers do not use it. This prescription is one of the grammar rules that do not account for facts of language, as cited in the work of Lado. SFG does not categorize *be* as a linking verb but as a relational process. The SRs’ choice was the same as that of the native speakers’. Their choice can be accounted for some other factors, not with their familiarity with TG.

For conditions involving ergativity, the SRs were asked to choose between two verb structures: one in the active and another in the passive form. The verb/process *occur* was used. In sentences using this verb/process type, the subject is not an Actor but an Existent. In item no. 3, the SRs favored *occurred* more than *was occurred* relative to their group levels. Interestingly, Group 1 preferred to use *was occurred* indicating that they were unlocking structural ambiguities on the basis of the item learned, not on the system that governs its usage. They must have thought that the verb should be in the passive voice.

In probing *the gift pleases her* (item no.7), the SRs preferred *does she like the gift* more than the other two: *does the gift please her* and *is she pleased by the gift*. Group 3 appeared to be most ambivalent with their answers. To Halliday (1994, p. 112), sentences like *the gift pleases her* and *she likes the gift* could be representations of the same state of affairs. Based on their answers, Groups 1 and 3 could not seem to see such condition.

Clauses like *the books sold quickly* (item no. 14) do not in fact show actions. The phrase indicates that *the books are good*. In the *books were quickly disposed of*, the SRs could have mistaken that it is in the passive form (given the assumption that the subject is acted upon by a covert Actor). The sentence, if read closely, would require the phrase *the books sold quickly* to mean *the books were good*. Asked why *the books were quickly disposed of*, the SRs answered *the books were sold quickly*, an expression that is action-oriented and not form-driven. The SRs must have been thinking of the action performed, not of the semantic role of the subject. The data suggest that the SRs were structure-driven in disambiguating the meaning of the sentence.

To the question *what does your uncle do for a living* (item no. 19), a possible answer could be *my uncle is doing business*, which means *my uncle is a businessman*. Here, the Subject is not an Actor; instead, it is identified by giving one of its attributes. Majority of the SRs thought that *business* is the Direct Object of *is doing*. They were uncertain if the argument *my uncle* is the Actor. Also, most of them failed to interpret that the sentence is the same as *my uncle is a businessman*. These data support the earlier observation that the SRs disambiguate sentence structures primarily on the structure level.

**Verb structure**

For the sentence *my friend and I used to write each other* (item no.9), majority of the SRs indicated *write* as the main verb. The rest of the SRs, specifically Groups 1 and 2, thought that the main verb is *used* and *to write* as an infinitive complement, which is superficial because *used to* is a modal expression indicating that the sentence is in habitual past perfective aspect.

---

*Table 4. Percentage Distribution in Disambiguating Verb Structure*
Item No. 9. My friend and I used to write each other.  
*Which is the main verb?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>used</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item No. 13. We’re late. Let’s go to the gym. I think the program. . .

*The missing phrase is. . .*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>has started</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>has been started</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The SRs were asked to complete *we’re late, let’s go to the gym* (…) (item no. 13) by choosing between *has started* and *has been started*. Majority of them, except Group 1, chose *the program has started*. The responses indicate that Group 1 found this item problematic and confusing. They assumed that the verb/process should be in the passive voice probably because the subject *the program* is inanimate and incapable of acting/doing and it is acted upon by an implied Actor/Doer.

*Noun modification*

Using the idiomatic expression *Paul wrote an angry letter* (item no. 11), the SRs were asked which argument is described by the adjective *angry*. Many in Group 1 chose *Paul*, while the rest chose *letter* for their answers. Those who chose *letter* must be generalizing that an adjective precedes the noun it describes. In this sentence, such condition is not possible because *letter* is inanimate and incapable of feeling. The SRs failed to understand that the sentence does not have to be taken literally. Again, those who picked letter relied heavily on the syntactic structure, not on the meaning of the sentence.

*Table 5. Percentage Distribution in Disambiguating Noun Modification*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No. 11. Paul wrote an angry letter. <em>Which is described by angry?</em></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Either Paul or letter</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Intensifier*

The intensifiers *so* and *too* have opposite connotations: the former is positive and the latter is negative. Most ESL learners are confused as regards the uses of *so* and *too* especially if their first language does not give them the opportunity to differentiate one form the other. The SRs were asked to contrast *so* and *too* in the sentence *the professor is ______ good that he can easily explain the lesson even if it seems ______ difficult*
Those in Group 2 showed homogeneity with their answers. Unlike most ESL learners, the SRs did not find this item problematic. However, there were still few of them, especially Group 1 and Group 2, who had relative difficulty with this item.

Table 6. Percentage Distribution in Disambiguating Intensifier

Item No. 4. The professor is ________ good that he can easily explain the lesson even if it seems ________ difficult. The missing intensifiers are . . .

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>so . . . too</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>too . . so</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so . . . so</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>too . . . too</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sentence coherence

The SRs were asked to complete the short dialog:

Man: Will you marry me?
Woman: Yes, I ________.

The responses varied, but majority of the SRs chose will showing that the short dialog appears to be less confusing. Nevertheless, there were few who chose do and am. Also, this item was found less ambiguous by the SRs.

Table No. 7. Percentage Distribution in Disambiguating Sentence Coherence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>will</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>am</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transitivity

Trask (1993, p. 283) defines transitivity as a condition denoting a verb or a clause containing such a verb that subcategorizes for a direct object that is either a Goal or a Patient. To Lyons, transitivity suggests that the effects of the action expressed by the verb pass over from the Actor/Agent to Patient/Goal (1968, 2001, p.350.). Direct object, to Trask, is an obligatory argument that undergoes the action of the verb (p. 82). To analyze transitivity, the SRs were asked to contrast: the dean had the documents signed and the documents had been signed by the dean (item no. 6). They were asked which of the two means the dean signed the documents. Most of the SRs answered this item correctly.
Table 8. Percentage Distribution in Disambiguating Transitivity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No. 6. Which of the two sentences means <em>The dean signed the documents?</em></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The dean had the documents signed.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The documents had been signed by the dean</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Percentage Distribution in Disambiguating Voice of Verb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No. 8. Which of the two sentences makes sense?</th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I sent a letter to Baguio.</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I sent Baguio a letter.</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What appears to be anomalous, however, is that Group 1 scored better than Group 4. Also, they were asked which of the two sentences makes sense: *I sent a letter to Baguio* and *I sent Baguio a letter* (item no. 8). These structures appear parallel to *I sent a letter to John* and *I sent John a letter*. Most of the SRs chose the first item because in the second *Baguio* is a Locative, not Goal/Patient.

Voice of verb

Kroeger (2004, p.54) defines voice as a property of verb denoting change in semantic roles. Voice in structural grammar is either active or passive. To test how the SRs determined voice, they compared *Mary was born in Manila* and *the glass is broken*. Based on the data, the SRs could not clearly decide which of the two is in the passive voice. Groups 1, 2, and 3 chose the first sentence. No one in Group 4 chose the second sentence; they favored both the first and second sentences. All the four groups, most especially Group 4, showed interpretation ambivalence.

Table 9. Percentage Distribution in Disambiguating Voice of Verb
Item No. 10. Mary was born in Manila.  
The glass is broken.

Which of the two is in the passive voice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first sentence</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The second sentence</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first and second sentences</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither of the two sentences</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item No. 15. My spirit is dampened.  
Is this sentence in the passive voice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To Lyons, the first sentence is agentless and an example of an absolute passive (p.375) because it has no active transformation. In addition, the second sentence is considered neither passive nor active—it is in the middle voice. To Halliday, the middle voice has no feature of agency (1994, p.168) that means broken is not part of the verb phrase, but it is an attribute of the subject.

The SRs analyzed the voice of my spirit is dampened (item no.15). Most of those in lower groups agreed that the sentence is in the passive voice. However, the upper group thought that the sentence is not, and the rest could not decide at all. Sentences like this one are neither in the active or passive voice. My spirit is dampened is in the middle voice.

Sentence focus

Nida and Taber (1969, p.201) define focus as the center of attention in a discourse or portion of a discourse. To test how the SRs identify the sentence focus, they were given John ran away (item no.12). Based on the given sentence, the SRs were asked what would they answer if somebody would ask them who ran away? Most of them answered John did. Very few of them chose either he did or he ran away.

Table 10. Percentage Distribution in Disambiguating Sentence Focus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Item No. 12. John ran away.  
Who ran away? |     |     |     |     |
| John did.      | 92% | 92% | 92% | 96% |
| He did.        | 08% | 00% | 00% | 00% |
| He ran away.   | 00% | 08% | 08% | 04% |
Tense-aspect

Trask (1993) defines tense as a grammatical category which correlates most directly with distinctions with time (p.276). Aspect is not always easy to distinguish from tense. Aspect shows contrast in meaning of the following: action at a point in time, over a period of time, complete or incomplete, one time or repeated, begun or finished, etc. (Elson and Pickett, 1964, p. 23).

Whether English has a distinctive future tense has been a controversy. Trask (1993, p.276) stresses that English has two tenses only: past and non-past. This observation was reported much earlier by Lyons (1968:21). The latter explains that the persistence in using future tense was brought about by the 18th century scholars who used the grammatical principles of Greek and Latin as the bases of the English prescriptive grammar. Such parallel prescriptions were based on the faulty premise that whatever was true in Latin can also be true in English. Lyons furthers that will and shall do not, in most cases, indicate futurity but modality (p.306).

The SRs were asked if will in will you please hand me that book (item no.16) indicates the tense of the verb. A greater majority, except Group 4, agreed that will indicates tense. Group 4 did not consider will as tense marker and the rest were undecided. Further, when asked if the action or event happens at the time of speaking, majority of the SRs agreed that it does. Even those who earlier considered will as a carrier of tense believed that the sentence happens at the time of speaking. This item shows that the SRs were uncertain with their choices.

Table 11. Percentage Distribution in Disambiguating Tense-aspect

| Item No. 16. Will you please hand me that book. | Does the word will show the tense of the verb? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | G1 | G2 | G3 | G4 |
| Yes | 68% | 68% | 72% | 40% |
| Uncertain | 04% | 08% | 00% | 00% |
| No | 28% | 24% | 28% | 60% |

| Item No. 17. I have to go now. Does the sentence have an infinitive? | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | G1 | G2 | G3 | G4 |
| Yes | 56% | 44% | 88% | 96% |
| Uncertain | 24% | 32% | 00% | 04% |
| No | 20% | 24% | 12% | 00% |

Does the sentence show ownership?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Is go the main verb?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Is have the main verb?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Item No. 18.** The visitors are about to leave. **Is are a linking verb?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Is leave the main verb?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Does to leave constitute an infinitive?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In another sentence, *I have to go now* (item no.17), most of the SRs thought that *to go* constitute an infinitive. Also, most of them, especially Group 1 thought that *have* indicates ownership. On the contrary, Group 4 perceived that *have* does not mean ownership. Asked which of the two (*go* and *have*) is the main verb, more SRs in Group1 chose *go* and those who preferred *have* were fewer. The SRs in Group 4 were also ambivalent. A little more than half of them thought that the main verb is *have*, while less than half of them thought otherwise.

In the *visitors are about to leave* (item no. 18), whether *are* is a helping verb or not, the SRs, especially Group 1, showed conflicting choices. Those who thought that *are* is a helping verb were fewer than those who did not. A similar dilemma was shown by Group 4. Those who thought that *leave* is the main verb were equal to those who did not. Also, most of the respondents believed that *to leave* constitute an infinitive. Again, the data show that the SRs were ambivalent in their choices.

**Transitivity**

When asked to analyze *I’ll cross the bridge when I get there* (item no. 20), the SRs showed that *the bridge* receives the verb *will cross*. Regarding this item, Group 4
showed that they could hardly decide because those who thought otherwise did not differ much in number. When asked whether the bridge is affected by the action will cross, the majority in Group 1 agreed, but Group 4 did not. Further, when asked if the sentence can be changed into passive the bridge will be crossed by me, most of the SRs agreed. Finally, the lower groups interpreted the sentence similar to I will walk across the bridge except Group 4. Again, the upper group interpreted the sentence according to its syntactic structures only.

**Table 12. Percentage Distribution in Disambiguating Transitivity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No. 20. I’ll cross the bridge when I get there. Does the bridge receive will cross?</th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is the bridge affected by will cross?</th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>08%</td>
<td>08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can the sentence be changed into passive form like the bridge will be crossed by me?</th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the sentence suggest I will walk across the bridge?</th>
<th>G1</th>
<th>G2</th>
<th>G3</th>
<th>G4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>00%</td>
<td>04%</td>
<td>00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

The data show the average of correct scores of the SRs. These suggest how dismal their level of performance was because their overall average scores were below the 50% level. Comparing the scores of SRs, Fig. 1 indicates that their scores do not show much improvement until the end of the third year. It is during this time that the SRs engage more in task-based activities. This figure may also suggest that system learning is reinforced by doing authentic language activities.
The summary of scores in Fig. 1 suggests that the SRs’ abilities to disambiguate grammatical structures tend to gain considerable momentum after three years of immersion in the program. The observable improvement can be attributed to some factors that include—but not limited to—exposure to more task-based subjects. Though this observation needs to be established through some more rigorous statistical procedures, still there are some insights that can be drawn from the said data. The subjects taken by the SRs are shown in Table 13.

Table 13. Checklist of English Subjects for Bachelor of Science in Education (English Major)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIRST YEAR: 6 units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication Arts I, Structure of English, Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts II, Introduction to Linguistics, and Speech and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECOND YEAR: 21 units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campus Journalism, Teaching of Speaking, English for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Purposes, Remedial Instruction, Introduction to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature and Philippine Literature, Language Curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for Secondary School, &amp;Creative Writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THIRD YEAR: 21 units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Reading, Afro-Asian Literature, Mythology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Folklore, Literary Criticism, English and American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature, Introduction to Stylistics, Translation and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editing Texts, and Teaching of Literature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOURTH YEAR: 9 units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation and Evaluation of Instructional Materials,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Literature Assessment, and Language Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results and Findings

While the summary of scores does not represent the overall English proficiency of the respondents, these data can be used in comparing the abilities of the SRs as regards their ambivalence in disambiguating grammatical structures. The overall scores show that the first and the second groups did not differ at all. Overall, the mean scores of SRs were below 50.00%. The mean scores with relatively greater difference lie between the mean scores of G3 and G4.

Discussion

Based on the presented data, the scores of Groups 1 and 2 in disambiguating the 10 grammatical structures did not show any difference at all. Among other factors, over dependence on structures does not favorably help in solving semantic ambiguities. Instead, it leads to interpretation ambivalence. In light of this observation, it may be argued that language development should be considered in terms of how the learner discovers the meaning potential of language by participating in communication (Ellis 1985, p.259). It most likely for this reason that those SRs who engaged more in task-based activities scored better in unlocking and disambiguating grammatical structures. To this condition, Hatch (1978, p. 404) commented:

In second language learning the basic assumption has been… that one first learns how to manipulate structures, that one gradually builds up a repertoire of structures and then, somehow, learns how to put up the structures to use in discourse. We would like to consider the possibility that just the reverse happens. One learns to how to do conversation, one learns to interact verbally, and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed.

The advocates of task-based language teaching believe that a linguistic form is acquired better when doing a communicative task than when doing drills. This position is consistent with the advocacy of Berns (1984, p.325-329) who argues that content is key both to form and function.

Conclusion

This action research supports the earlier observations that learners exposed to traditional and structural syllabus get acquainted with English through item learning, and those who are exposed to task-based activities learn the language through system learning. Therefore, this study puts forward that exposure to the traditional and structural syllabus does not contribute much to the acquisition of the system of English. Further more, some empirical data provide a context for a shift from traditional structural syllabus to notional functional syllabus.

Recommendations

In light of the findings, it is suggested that a shift to notional-functional syllabus be given a chance through the use of functional categories suggested by Finocchiaro and Brumfit (1983, p.65-66) in Table 14.

Table 14. Scope of a Notional-functional Syllabus
Specifically, these functional categories can be taught by creating classroom opportunities so that the students will have the chance to use them for accomplishing communicative tasks.

A. Personal - clarifying or arranging one’s ideas
   - Clarifying or arranging one’s ideas
   - Expressing one’s thoughts or feelings: love, joy, pleasure, happiness, surprise, likes, satisfaction, dislikes, disappointment, distress, pain, anger, anguish, fear, anxiety, sorrow, frustration, annoyance at missed opportunities, moral, intellectual and social concerns
   - Expressing everyday feelings: hunger, thirst, fatigue, sleepiness, cold, or warmth

B. Interpersonal - establishing and maintaining social and working relationships
   - Greetings and leave takings
   - Introducing people to others
   - Identifying oneself to others
   - Expressing joy at another’s success
   - Expressing concern for other people’s welfare
   - Extending and accepting invitations
   - Refusing invitations politely or making alternative arrangements
   - Indicating agreement or disagreement
   - Changing an embarrassing subject
   - Offering food or drinks and accepting or declining politely
   - Sharing wishes, hopes, desires, problems, making promises
   - Committing oneself to some action
   - Expressing and acknowledging gratitude

C. Directive - attempting to influence the actions of others
   - Making suggestions in which the speaker is included
   - Making requests; making suggestions
   - Refusing to accept a suggestion or a request but offering an alternative
   - Persuading someone to change his point of view
   - Requesting and granting permission
   - Asking for help and responding to a plea for help
   - Forbidding someone to do something; issuing a command

- Giving and responding to instructions
- Warning someone
- Discouraging someone from pursuing a course of action
- Establishing guidelines and deadlines for the completion of actions
- Asking for directions or instructions

D. Referential - talking or reporting about things, actions, events, or people, and about language

- Identifying items or people in the classroom, the school the home, the community
- Asking for a description of someone or something
- Defining something or a language item or asking for a definition
- Paraphrasing, summarizing, or translating (L1 to L2 or vice versa)
- Explaining or asking for explanations of how something works
- Comparing or contrasting things
- Discussing possibilities, probabilities, or capabilities of doing something
- Requesting or reporting facts about events or actions
- Evaluating the results of an action or event

E. Imaginative - discussions involving elements of creativity and artistic expression

- Discussing a poem, a story, a piece of music, a play, a painting, a film, a TV program, etc.
- Expanding ideas suggested by other or by a piece of literature or reading material
- Creating rhymes, poetry, stories or plays
- Recombining familiar dialogs or passages creatively
- Suggesting original beginnings or endings to dialogs or stories
- Solving problems or mysteries

Note

1 The mean age of Group 1 was higher than the mean age of Group 2 because there were some older, regular students enrolled in the college of education for their second course.
Appendix

Research Instrument

Name of Student: ____________________  Course and Major: ____________
Year and Section: _________________  Age:_____  Gender: _______

A. Complete the sentences by supplying the missing parts. Circle a letter for an answer.

1. The baby ___________ because he/she has got a bad cold. (coughs, is coughing)
2. Our cousins are more fortunate than _____________ because their parents are very successful in doing business. (we, us)
3. The incident _______________ before anyone knew what was happening. (occurred, was occurred)
4. The professor is _______________ good that he can easily explain the lesson even if it seems _______________ difficult.
   ___________  ___________
   so . . too  so . . so
   too . . so  too . . too
5. Complete the short dialog.  Man:  Will you marry me?
   Woman:  Yes, I __________________ (do, will, am)

B. Read and answer the following items by giving your best choice. Circle a letter for an answer.

6. Which of the two sentences means The dean signed the documents?
   The dean had the documents signed.
   The documents had been signed by the dean.

7. Which question probes the sentence The gift pleases her?
   Does the gift please her?
   Does she like the gift?
   Is she pleased by the gift?

8. Which of the two sentences makes sense?
   I sent a letter to Baguio.
   I sent Baguio a letter.

9. My friend and I used to write each other. In the sentence, the verb is. . . (used, write)

10. Compare the two sentences.
    Mary was born in Manila.
    The glass is broken.
Which of the sentences is in the passive voice?
   a. the first sentence  
   b. the second sentence  
   c. both the first and second sentences  
   d. neither of the two sentences

   a. Paul.  
   b. letter.  
   c. Paul and letter.

12. If you know that John ran away, and somebody asks you, “Who ran away”? Your answer will be. . .
   a. He did.  
   b. John did  
   c. He ran away

13. We’re late. Let’s go to the gym. I think the program. . .
   a. has started.  
   b. has been started.

14. That the books were quickly disposed of was true because. . .
   a. the books sold quickly.  
   b. they sold the books quickly.  
   c. the books were sold quickly.

C. Read the following sentences and give your opinion whether you agree or not to the subsequent items. Mark a column with a check (✓) for an answer.

15. My spirit is dampened.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The verb is in the passive voice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. Will you please hand me that book.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The word will shows the tense of the verb.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the sentence, the event or action happens at the time of speaking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. I have to go now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The sentence contains an infinitive.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sentence shows ownership.
The main verb is go.
The main verb is have.

18. The visitors are about to leave.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are is a linking verb.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main verb is leave.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To leave constitutes an infinitive.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. My uncle is doing business.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Business</em> is the direct object of <em>is doing</em>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>My uncle</em> is a doer or actor in the sentence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sentence means <em>My uncle is a businessman</em>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. I’ll cross the bridge when I get there.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the sentence, <em>the bridge</em> receives the verb <em>will cross</em>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The bridge</em> is affected by the verb <em>will cross</em>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sentence can be changed into passive form like <em>The bridge will be crossed by me</em>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sentence means <em>I will walk across the bridge</em>.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References


Title
CALL-Based Instruction: Toward the Teaching of Speech and Oral Communication at Angeles University Foundation

Author
Remy C. Janda
Angeles University Foundation

Abstract
Forty-four sophomore students, who took their Speech Communication for one semester, used the Digital Computerized Laboratory in listening audio materials, recording their voices. The laboratory is internet connected, so they were able to answer interactive quizzes found in the internet. Various exercises such as news delivery, voice recording, pronunciation drills, and poetry interpretation were done. Before the end of the semester, a questionnaire was given to the students to evaluate the efficacy of using CALL in improving their speech.

The study revealed that the students found the use of CALL more interesting and would want to spend more time in the laboratory than in the classroom. The activities they had were considered meaningful to learning speech. Recording their voices in the laboratory was considered comfortable than letting them speak in front of the class. Although computers were used, the respondents still prefer teacher-student interaction. Lastly, the respondents revealed that the language teacher must have a technical know-how in using the laboratory to provide assistance to students. The use of computer in language teaching does not change the role of the teachers at all rather they will become facilitators of the language teaching. Indeed, their presence is still needed in the learning process.

Introduction
The four macro-skills – reading, writing, listening and speaking- are the main factors needed and taught in an ESL classroom. There are varieties of teaching methods on how to teach these macro skills. Each is of paramount importance in the acquisition of language. Among the four skills mentioned, speaking as the basic means of human communication becomes the most demanding skill to learn (Bailey and Savage, 1994).

The Philippines introduced English as the country’s second language, the other being Filipino as the country’s national language. There could be a variety of English spoken in the Philippines by the media and the majority of educated Filipinos. Furthermore, English is widely used in education, religious affairs, print and broadcast media, and business. Highly technical subjects such as medicine, engineering, nursing
etc. favored the use of English as medium for textbooks and any form of print communication rather than their vernacular translation. In fact, movies and many TV programs in English are not seen with subtitles and are assumed to be understood directly by Filipino viewers.

Although English provides numerous advantages to Filipinos, they still and will find it difficult to acquire the American accent due to the differences of the two languages. Rhythm, stress timing, intonation, vowel and consonant phonemes and connected speech are the most assumed difficulties that Filipino learners face in the study of English. To remedy or at least to assist the students, the teaching of Speech Communication in the tertiary level is offered.

The teaching of Speech Communication has evolved from the traditional method which is from audiolingual that is based on mimicry to communicative language teaching. The use of variety of resources such as audiocassette tapes to CD players had also changed dramatically by computers.

Technology in language teaching had opened its door in 1980s and 1990s when a shift toward communicative language teaching was seen, which emphasizes student engagement in authentic and meaningful interaction. With this communicative trend, the implications of integrating technology into the classroom language skills or projects coincide with the development of multimedia technology as well as computer-aided language learning (computer assisted language learning- CALL).

With the continuing widespread of computers in schools and home and their uses have expanded from computational to language teaching, this paper introduces the use of CALL in teaching speech and oral communication to college-level students. However, CALL is not a teaching approach but rather an aid to develop a number of pedagogical approaches using computers.

CALL provides distinct advantages over the traditional approaches. In listening exercises, it often provides not only sound, but also visual input providing students with more contextual clues. Interacting with the computer uses motor skills, which can have a strong reinforcement effect on the learning process by connecting physical actions with desired results. Students are also allowed to control their own learning process as they make decisions when to repeat questions, exercises and sequences based on their own progress. Hence, more shy students can feel free in their own student-centered development since this will help them boost their self-esteem and improve their knowledge.

Perhaps the strongest impact for the use of computer in the classroom is that of student self-pacing. In the field of pronunciation, students do not actively involve themselves due to fear of making mistakes. In using CALL, they can employ a computer to record themselves and compare their pronunciation to a target pronunciation (e.g. native speaker with American or British accent). This procedure can be repeated endlessly until a student is satisfied with the result. This exercise is often combined with visual aids (intonation graph) to help the students recognize how close or far the recorded pronunciation from the target pronunciation.

Computers can give a new role to teaching materials. Computers can adapt to the need of the students where they can make choices in what and how to learn, skipping unnecessary items or doing remedial work on difficult concepts. Students may prefer exercises where they have control over the content, such as adventures, puzzles or logic
problems. Therefore, the computer has the role of providing the language the student needs.

There were significant studies conducted on the improvement of pronunciation skills among ESL students in CALL-based instruction. Culhane and Ito (2003) identified the weaknesses in the English pronunciation of Japanese-speaking ESL students was due to their tendency to reproduce pronunciation based on three Japanese syllabries, katakana, a system called sound spellings was developed to correct and improve the pronunciation skills of Japanese-speaking ESL students. According to Culhane and Ito (2003), this method was based on techniques used by radio and television journalists which breakdown words into easily pronounced units. This methodology breaks down a word or phrase which allows for a more accurate pronunciation. Two groups of lower level students for CALL sound spelling exercises and two groups using traditional pronunciation exercises were involved in the study; their findings suggest that all groups benefited for the pronunciation study whether administered through CALL based sound spellings or traditional methods. However, students underwent CALL sound spellings scored higher than students who participated in traditional methods classes (Culhane and Ito, 2003).

Another studies conducted by Eskenzai (1999); Masatake, Yasushi and Tatsuya (2004), focus on various CALL-based technologies that give immediate feedback on the pronunciation skills of ESL students. Both studies acknowledge that teaching pronunciation properly in large classroom situations can be time consuming for the second language (SL) instructor. State of the art automatic speech recognition (ASR) technology can play a significant role in correcting the pronunciation of ESL students in a classroom situation (Eskenzai, 1999). In addition, CALL can provide the ESL students with individual practice and feedback on pronunciation skills and provide the results to the SL instructor in a relatively short period of time.

In Malaysia, the same study was conducted to gauge the effectiveness of CALL-based pronunciation exercises with respect to beginner level ESL students at Multimedia University (Harper, 2004). Two groups of students participated; the first group was selected near the end of the first trimester (T1) therefore there was sufficient time to do a complete analysis of the improvement of pronunciation skills whereas the second group were selected at the beginning of the second trimester (T2) and a more comprehensive analysis of pronunciation skills is expected. According to Harper (2004), the pronunciation progress for T1 students are limited due to time constraints. Time was needed to instruct the students on how to use the computer, although it was assumed that the students were familiar with using computer in their first language. After several sessions, the students showed some signs of improvement in their pronunciation skills but the progress was minimal due to time constraints. Students also seemed to have an easier time pronouncing the words when they were broken down into segments. On the other hand, the T2 students were given more time to conduct the sound spelling exercises. The students were given the opportunity to use the words from the sound spelling exercise in a functional and communicative ways to gain some knowledge of word function along with an improvement in pronunciation skills. Initially the T2 students had an easier time pronouncing the words listed than the T1 students, but with one word that was still problematic to T2 students.
In other parts of Asia, numerous researches on the efficacy of CALL were also conducted. Lim (2007) examined the impact of CALL on Korean TAFE college students in an EFL reading classrooms in terms of the students’ perceptions of learning effectiveness, tutor, classroom interest and difficulty. The study compared CALL and traditional reading classes over one semester. A group of 74 first year English majors students was divided evenly into 2 classes. Both groups were taught by the same teacher and covered the same topics in their weekly two-hour reading lesson. A written survey was also administered at the end of the semester. Group interviews supplemented the data obtained from the surveys. The questionnaires were analyzed by a principle component factor analysis, a repeated measure ANOVA and a discriminant analysis whereas the interview with teacher and students were analyzed by a content analysis. Most students in the CALL class showed positive responses. Students in CALL-based English class perceived their learning environment offered many opportunities for collaboration and mutual support, as well as for exposure to, and interaction with, a variety of interesting, enjoyable and useful materials and tasks.

An article was written by Lai and Kritsonis (2006) to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of computer technology for second language learning. The research findings indicate that the use of computer has a positive effect on the achievement levels of second language learners, but still has its limitations and weaknesses, such as financial, isolated, and knowledge required issues. The authors emphasized to recognize both the advantages and disadvantages of using computers to get the maximum effectiveness of technology to enhance second language learning.

On the other hand, a research was done with the purpose to examine how language teachers apply practical experiences from CALL coursework to their teaching (Egbert, Paulus, and Nakamichi, 2002). They examined ways in which teachers continue their CALL professional development. The participants in the study were 20 English as a second language and foreign language teachers, who had completed the same graduate-level CALL course within the last four years and who are currently teaching. Survey and follow-up interviews explored how participants learn about CALL activities; how what they learned in the course interacts with their current teaching context; the factors that influence whether or not they use technology in their classrooms; and how they continue to acquire and master new ideas in CALL. The findings support previous research on technology teacher education as it suggests that teachers who use CALL activities are often those teachers who had experience with CALL prior to taking the course; that lack of time, support, and resources prohibits the use of CALL activities in some classrooms; and that colleagues are the most common resource of new CALL activity ideas outside of formal coursework. Implications for teacher education are that teachers learn better in situated contexts, and technology courses should be designed accordingly.

The researches presented showed positive remarks on the effectiveness of using CALL instruction in teaching the macro-skills in language learning. The most significant contribution it made so far is in the teaching of pronunciation.

The main objective of this study is to find out how much the CALL instruction has an impact on Filipino students taking English 4: Speech and Oral Communication at Angeles University Foundation. The study also sought to identify the roles of the language teacher in a CALL-based instruction.
Methodology

The selected respondents of the study were 43 sophomore students from the College of Nursing taking English 4: Speech and Oral Communication this First Semester, AY 2008-2009. The students attend their class every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9:00AM – 10:00AM. The class holds its regular classroom hours on Mondays and Wednesdays, while they use the laboratory on Fridays.

The study started from June to October (1st semester) of A.Y. 2008-2009, with students taking English 4: Speech and Oral Communication. Students taking this course are required to use the Computerized Digital Laboratory as their venue for practical exercises and to a more intensive speech drills. During the preliminary period, the students studied the importance of learning pronunciation, the differences of American, British pronunciation, and the Philippine English. They had numerous pronunciation drills in the laboratory. The students also recorded their voices as part of their speech assessment test. One advantage of the laboratory is that the students have an access to the internet. They watched how the mouth works whenever a sound or a word is produced. With this, students can imitate exactly the proper production of vowels and consonants sounds.

During the Mid-term period, the lesson was all about the Rhythm of English. At the end of this term, they are expected to deliver news imitating the accent of the target pronunciation and to recite a poem. They watched several video clips from BBC and CNN news which the transcription is written on their textbook. They also had the chance to compare a Filipino newscaster with the native speakers. The students listed the differences they heard from the Filipino newscaster and the native speakers. Then, they chose one news anchor from the list of native speakers to imitate. The students were given two weeks to listen and practice the chosen piece. Before the schedule date of examination, they recorded their voice assuming that they were already delivering the news in front of the class. Lastly, the whole class listened to everybody’s recording and gave comments about the pronunciation, stress timing, intonational pattern and blending of sounds. The discussion was done in the classroom and activities were executed in the laboratory.

The final term was all about Public Speaking. Here, students need to deliver at least two kinds of speeches – Impromptu, Extemporaneous, Reading from manuscript and Memorized text. First, they listened to sample speeches delivered by ex-US Pres. Bill Clinton, Queen Elizabeth II, Martin Luther King and lastly, from Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. The students observed their gestures, manner of delivery, content of their speeches and some mannerisms, which distract the audience from listening. Their observation gave them the idea on how to deliver speech properly after learning the “do’s and don’ts” of public speaking.

The first public speaking they did was an Impromptu speech; however, this was done in the classroom. The second speech delivered and considered their final examination was an Extemporaneous speech, exemplified through a Demonstration Speech. Although the activities were performed in the classroom, the students had an understanding of how the proper delivery of speech can be done by watching the videos in the laboratory and recorded their speech before the actual presentation.
Before the end of the semester, the students were asked to evaluate the use of computer in their English 4 class.

**Results and Discussion**

1. **Reaction of the students**

   The respondents of the study were 43 sophomore students; unfortunately, only 32 of them were present during the evaluation of the program.

   Table 1 shows the students’ response regarding the use of CALL instruction. Using CALL-based instruction in teaching Speech is more interesting (56.2%) for the respondents than the regular classroom while 37.5% of them show enthusiasm with the new approach. However, 6.3% of them reveal that they prefer classroom teaching than CALL-based instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. About CALL</th>
<th>4 (%)</th>
<th>3 (%)</th>
<th>2 (%)</th>
<th>1 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I find it more interesting than the regular classroom teaching.</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I always look forward to using the computers during class activities.</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I want to spend more time in the lab and not just once a week.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I find the activities (e.g. recording, watching videos, listening audios) meaningful to learning speech.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I feel more comfortable recording my voice than to speak in front of the class.</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: 4 – Strongly Agree 3 – Agree 2 – Disagree 1 – Strongly Disagree

Students are highly motivated when they use computers in their class. The respondents (50%) claim that they look forward to attending their Speech class when it is their schedule in the laboratory, which is every Friday. Followed by 37.5% who strongly agree that computers made them motivated to study and attend the class. Since the students preferred the use of the laboratory than the regular classroom, it reveals that 50% of the respondents want to conduct their Speech class in the laboratory than in the classroom.

One biggest challenge in employing CALL instruction is the use of variety of meaningful materials for the students. In this case, the students show a 75% favorable response about the materials they use in the class, however, only 3.1% disagreed with the effectiveness of the materials in improving one’s speech. Recording their voice is one activity they also enjoy doing and listening to their recording makes the students embarrassed yet happy. In fact, 56.3% of the respondents reveal that they feel more comfortable recording and listening their voices rather than standing in front of their
classmates and deliver their speeches. On the other hand, 3.1% claims that they disagree with the idea that recording is more convenient than delivering on the spot.

2. Roles of the teacher

Although the integration of CALL into a foreign language program can lead to great anxiety among language teachers, many claimed that CALL changes, sometimes radically, the role of the teacher but does not eliminate the need for a teacher altogether. As seen on Table 2, the respondents reveal that 50% of them agreed that the teacher should be familiar enough with the resources to be used to anticipate technical problems and limitations. The Laboratory Coordinator may be present all the time, but students will still rely on their teacher/s when problem arises.

Table 2
The Role of the Language Teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II. Role of Teacher: The language teacher should:</th>
<th>4 (%)</th>
<th>3 (%)</th>
<th>2 (%)</th>
<th>1 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Have knowledge in using the computers in the absence of the Lab Coordinator.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Provide assistance in doing exercises.</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Explain the instruction even when they are on screen.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Interact with students to facilitate difficulties while doing the tasks.</td>
<td>59.4</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Still be present while doing CALL activities.</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend: 4 – Strongly Agree 3 – Agree 2 – Disagree 1- Strongly Disagree

Assisting the students in doing different exercises in the computer is highly appreciated by the 56.3% respondents. The respondents (50%) claim that explaining or providing additional explanation about the instructions to be done is very much needed although they are flashed on their screens. Even if the students may be interested in using computers and prefer their class to be in the laboratory, 59.4% of them show the importance of interaction between the teacher and students amidst the use of technology in learning. In addition, the 56.2% of the respondents claim that teacher presence is still very important to students when doing CALL activities.

Conclusions

In light of the above findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The use of computer in teaching Speech is highly accepted by students to improve their speaking skill and receive intensive speech training.
2. CALL instruction is more effective and meaningful to students when paired with a variety of activities which can be accessed online, teacher made and uploaded audio / video clips.

3. The language teacher who opted to use CALL instruction should have a technical “know-how” in using computers in case a laboratory assistant will not be provided by the institution.

4. The role of the language teachers did not change at all rather they became facilitators of language teaching. Indeed, their presence is still needed in the learning process.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn on the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. The cost of the computers and availability of Internet are the major problems in employing CALL. To minimize continuous expense, the institution should purchase software that will provide a more intensive training to the students and will adapt to many purposes in teaching, not just in speech but also to the other linguistic skills needed by the students.

2. Teachers who will handle subjects using CALL-based instruction must be given sufficient training to exploit the possible use of computers and be familiar with the resources to be used to anticipate technical problems.

3. For future researchers, conduct a research in an institution that also uses computer in language teaching but with a bigger number of respondents.

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PDF File 
Date retrieved: September 2, 2008
Title
The Feasibility and Difficulty of Implementing Communicative Language Teaching in the EFL Context

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Introduction
The world has become more and more competitive and interdependent than before, economically and politically. Economists regard English proficiency as a form of human capital in the workplace (McManus, 1985). Kachru (1997) presents his concentric circle model to analyze the spread and diffusion of English. Asian countries, including Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and China, have been categorized in the expanding circle, where English is used primarily as a foreign language. Although there are different voices vis-à-vis the idea of English as the “lingua franca,” the global spread of English in the past decades is remarkable. It is particularly striking in the increasing number of users of language and in the range of functions. For example, Crystal (1997) estimates 90% of published articles in academic fields are written in English, and the percentage is growing year by year. English appears to be the universal language of communication. Affected by the trend of global English, the English users and learners will soar undoubtedly.

Taiwan aims to be one of the competitive partners in the global village, in which English is the major communication medium. Hasman (2000) notes that there is no major threat to English in its global popularity. The impact of English as a global language has compelled the Ministry of Education (MOE) in Taiwan to reform English education. Before September 2001, there was no English course in the elementary school curriculum. Since then, students from elementary to university level are requested to take English as one of their compulsory or elective courses before graduation. Although students may have studied English for several years, many of them have difficulties communicating with English speakers. Huang (1990) notes that the majority of the language learners in Taiwan are capable of learning to read the target language with varying degrees of success, but when it comes to oral communication, most of them become hopelessly dysfunctional (p.54). This phenomenon has sparked widespread attention, and caused voices for improving students’ communicative competence to become louder.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is one of the teaching approaches featured in developing learners’ communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). It has been regarded as a teaching innovation and is arguably today’s most popular teaching method in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). It is extensively practiced in the
English as a Second Language (ESL) setting; however, it is not so clear if CLT is also being applied in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. This paper intends to examine the four domains-- teacher/student roles, peer/teacher correction, group/pair work, and grammar-- in CLT and to discuss its feasibility and difficulty in the EFL classrooms.

**Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)**

Yang (1978) and Wang (1994) note that traditional EFL instruction in Taiwan focuses on teacher-centered, grammar-translation, audio-lingua, and exam-oriented approaches that fail to meet students’ needs when they communicate with English speakers. The traditional grammar-translation teaching/learning approach has caused both teachers and students to neglect the value of communicative competence. Training students to obtain good grades on English tests becomes one of the most vital criteria for being a good English teacher. It is generally acknowledged that the higher the marks, the higher the students’ English proficiency. However, examination-guided instruction and the premium placed on lecturing on selected textbook materials have led to failure in learning real-life communicative English. Many university students with high marks on the TOEFL have difficulties communicating with English-speaking people. Due to such discrepancies, an oral section has been added to the TOEFL test. This dramatic change has prompted language learners adjust their learning strategies.

Communicative Language Teaching is based on the theory that the primary function of language use is communication. Canale and Swain (1980) assert that communication activities must be as meaningful as possible and be characterized by aspects of genuine communication such as its basis in social interaction, the relative creativity and unpredictability of utterance, its purposefulness and goal-orientation, and its authenticity. Brown (1995) claims that CLT provides opportunities in the EFL/ESL classroom for students to engage in real-life communication using the target language. Students, in unrehearsed context, eventually have to use the language, productively and receptively.

Scarcella and Crookall (1990) note that learners acquire language when they are (1) exposed to large quantities of comprehensible input, (2) they are actively involved, and (3) they have positive attitudes and motivation. The dilemma of classroom-based instruction is the lack of reality. Language learning can be most effective when language practice occurs in meaningful contexts instead of isolated linguistic settings. CLT is fundamentally learner-centered, focusing on the communicative aspects of language learning. It enables learners to activate participation, generate motivation, and encourage communication in the class. In addition, the simulated “real life” problems help students develop their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

**Related Study on CLT**

Savignon (1991) claims the term “communicative competence” has prompted reflection from its introduction into the discussion of language and language learning in the early 1970s. She asserts CLT is not restricted to a British, European, or U.S. phenomenon, but rather an international effort to respond to the needs of present-day language learners in many different contexts of learning (p. 261). CLT is widely practiced in the ESL context, but in the EFL context, its feasibility is still being questioned. Many articles reveal factors that affect the feasibility of CLT in EFL contexts. Li (1998) points out teachers’
perceived difficulties in introducing the communicative approach in South Korea. The reported difficulties in implementing CLT derive mainly from teachers, students, the educational system, and CLT itself. Some of the difficulties include low English proficiency, grammar-based examinations, lack of cultural knowledge, lack of communicative teaching materials, and passive learning attitude. In their study on the effect of language context on Chinese teachers’ view of CLT, Burnaby and Sun (1989) reveal that teachers perceive the communicative approach as more suitable for those planning to study or live in an English speaking country, but not for those who plan to remain in China. Matsuura, Chiba, and Hilderbrandt’s (2000) study of Japanese students reveal that the latter prefer traditional methods—learning isolated skills, focusing on accuracy, and the teacher-centered approach. The Chinese students in Rao’s (2002) study prefer non-communicative activities such as audio-lingual drills and workbook type drills over communicative activities. The related studies mentioned above show teachers’ and students’ perceptions toward CLT. It is important to take into account the students’ needs before adopting a new teaching approach, particularly their learning problems. One of the noticeable problems for students in the EFL context derives from their language anxiety. To accelerate learners’ efficiency, it will be helpful to ease their anxiety in the classrooms.

Anxiety in the classroom

The effects of anxiety on foreign language learning have been widely acknowledged. Horwitz et al. (1986) present Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)(Appendix A), aiming to identify anxious university students and measure their anxiety. Based on FLCAS, many studies have been invited to explore the sources or factors that result in different levels of anxiety. Elkhafaifi (2005) makes a study concerning listening comprehension and anxiety in the Arabic language classroom. Phillips (1992) focuses on the effects of language anxiety on students’ oral test performance and attitude. Sellers (2000) presents the relationship between reading and anxiety in Spanish as a foreign language. Cheng (2002) analyzes factors associated with foreign language writing anxiety. Students or language learners in these studies experience different levels of anxiety. Crookall and Oxford (1991) assert that serious language anxiety may adversely affect student self-esteem, self-confidence, and ultimately hamper proficiency in the language acquisition.

Liu (2006) states the facts that a considerable number of Chinese students at each level feel anxious when speaking English in class. The results reveal that the more proficient students tend to be less anxious; the students feel the most anxious when they respond to the teacher or are singled out to speak English in class. But they feel the least anxious during pair work; with increasing exposure to oral English, the students feel less and less anxious about using the target language in speech communication (p.301). Communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation are three components of foreign language anxiety. Each of these components results in adverse effects on language learner’s performance. Accordingly, it is important to understand the difficulties encountered by students during their learning process. Besides, teachers’ perceived difficulties in the classroom are also vital supporting evidence to explain the success or failure of a teaching approach. Horwitz (1986) defines communication apprehension as a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating.
with people (p.127). The typical behavior of communicatively apprehensive people tends to be avoidance and withdrawal from communication (Aida, 1994).

**Unwillingness to communicate**

Language anxiety is a unique type of anxiety that arouses worry and negative emotional reactions (Young, 1999). By definition, there are three categories of language anxiety—trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Brown (2000) claims that trait anxiety is a more permanent predisposition to be anxious; while state anxiety is experienced in some particular events. Although it is similar to state anxiety, situation-specific anxiety limits anxiety to a single context, i.e., moment-to-moment experience. Horwitz (2000) sees anxiety as a cause of poor language achievement. By contrast, anxiety could function as a stimulus. Alpert and Haber (1960) explain the difference between facilitative and debilitative anxiety. The former brings about advantageous impact on students and motivates them to learn more; while the latter impedes language leaning. Campbell & Ortiz (1991) note one-half of both foreign and second language students experience a startling level of anxiety. Learners who experience debilitative anxiety will have feelings of fear or insecurity. They will suffer from poor performance, and then be unwilling to participate and communicate in the foreign language class (Gardner, 1985).

MacIntyre et al. (1998) define willingness to communicate as a learner’s readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons (p. 547). Learners with communication apprehension may have difficulties in interpersonal communication (Gregerson & Horwitz, 2002).

**Methodology**

**Research Questions**

Why do many students appear unwilling to participate in learning discourse? Asian learners from Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, and South Korea are reported passive and unwilling to participate and communicate in the classroom. Studies (Flowerdew, J. & Miller, L., 1995; Ferris, D. & Tagg, T., 1996) reveal culture and previous education are the main reasons to account for student reticence and passivity. Cortazzi & Jin (1996) claim that learning a language for Chinese students is influenced by traditional Confucianism and can be seen as fundamentally concerned with mastery of knowledge which is focused on achieving knowledge of grammar and vocabulary, mainly from two authoritative sources--- the teacher and the textbook. The role of a teacher is to transmit the knowledge about language to students in the language classroom. Students receive the knowledge from their instructors with respect. The interaction between the teachers and students in the classroom is, more or less, influenced by the traditional teaching/learning model.

However, these generalizations do not mean that all individuals, either instructor or learners, will conform to the same cultural norms. Tudor (1998) claims that language learning/teaching is unique to each classroom and difficult to predict in advance. The traditional culture of learning has been changing, partly because of a general social and economic developments, and partly under the influence of communicative approaches to language learning. Thus, more and more attention is paid to student needs as a learner-
centered notion. CLT emphasizes the importance of classroom interaction and student participation as ways of learning and developing skills related to the functions and uses of language. Anxiety, as discussed above, has significant impact on the foreign/second language acquisition; its influence in CLT cannot be overstated. The present study intends to examine students’ perspectives toward CLT and what kind of difficulties they may encounter in the CLT classroom. To achieve this, the following research questions are proposed:

1. What are the selected students’ and teachers’ perceptions toward CLT?
2. What are their attitudes toward pair/group work, peer/teacher correction?
3. What is the status of grammar in the process of communication?
4. To what extent do they experience anxiety in the language classroom?
5. What are teachers’ perceived difficulties in the implementation of CLT?

Research Instrument

The present study uses two instruments: the Communicative Language Teaching Attitude Scale (COLTAS) (Appendix A), Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) (Appendix B) COLTAS is utilized to understand select participant attitudes and perceptions toward the four domains of CLT. FLCAS is used to examine participants’ levels of anxiety in the language classroom.

The Communicative Language Teaching Attitude Scale (COLTAS) developed by Eveyik-Aydin (2003) is a five-point, Likert type attitude scale consisting of 36 statements based on the fundamental characteristics of CLT and categorized into four domains: group/pair work, place of grammar, student/teacher roles, and peer/teacher corrections. Of all the statements, half of them have been designated as “negative” because they support the traditional approach to language teaching, while the other half have been designated as “positive” because they reflect the principles of CLT. As in Eveyik-Aydin’s (2003) study, the positive items on the scale that reflect the principles of CLT are assigned a high score of 5 for “strongly agree” down to a low score of 1 for “strongly disagree.” The negative items on the scale, those that reflect a traditional view of language teaching, are assigned a reverse score of 1 for “strongly agree” up to 5 for “strongly disagree.” Thus, participants in favor of the communicative approach will score between 4 and 5, whereas those in favor of the traditional approach will score between 1 and 2. Accordingly, the higher the scores obtained on COLTAS, the more favorable the participants’ attitudes toward CLT; and the lower the score, the less favorable are the participants’ attitudes. Scores for each participant are calculated and placed within the following categories. Scores between 180 and 144 (36x4) reveal a very favorable attitude toward CLT; whereas scores between 36 and 72 (36x2) reveal a very unfavorable attitude. A score of 108 (36x3) reveals a neutral attitude toward CLT. Scores between 109 and 143 show a favorable attitude with some reservations toward CLT, while scores between 73 and 107 reflect unfavorable attitudes with some reservations. These scores are also tabulated to determine participants’ attitudes toward each of the four domains of the scale—group/pair work, grammar, student/teacher roles, and peer/teacher corrections.

The FLCAS was developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) to measure anxiety specific to a foreign language classroom setting. The scale utilizes five-point Likert items, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” It is used to measure a person’s level of
anxiety and score by adding up the ratings on the 33 items. The range is from 33 to 165; the higher the number, the higher the level of foreign language anxiety.

Participants
The selected participants include two native teachers and 32 students in one of the universities located in the northern part of Taiwan. All the students are full-time workers in various fields of occupation. They are mature part-time students, 21 of them are female and 11 male, aged from 31 to 48. They come to class on Saturday and Sunday. It will take them two years to obtain the B.A. English is their major, so they are requested to take courses related to linguistics and literature. Their English proficiency is between low and intermediate level.

Data Analysis
In December 2008, COLTAS was administered to the students, 28 valid questionnaire samples were collected, and the results show that 4 of the students express a positive attitude, 21 hold a positive attitude with some reservation, and 3 express an uncertain attitude. (Figure 1) Figure 1 provides a clear picture regarding student attitudes toward CLT. Overall, 15% (n=4) of the participants show a very favorable attitude, 75% (n=21) express a favorable attitude but with some reservation; and 10% (n=3) present an uncertain attitude.

Nine out of ten participants show a favorable attitude, despite their reservations. As to student/teacher roles, most of them agree that language classes should be student-centered, not teacher-centered, allowing for more student-student interaction than teacher-student interaction. They affirm that tasks and activities should be designed based
on student needs; and that teachers should help students develop sociolinguistic competence.

Regarding group/pair work, most of the participants agree that it is effective in developing students’ oral conversational skills because it creates a motivating environment for students to use English, promotes a greater amount of student involvement, and increases the quantity of oral/aural language practice. Moreover, it helps those students not willing to speak in front of a full classroom.

In regards to grammar, most agree that to develop communicative skills, explicit grammar teaching is not necessary; though grammar may be included in a communicative lesson, it is not the main goal of teaching. In addition, most agree that teaching should emphasize language use rather than language rules and meaning-focused activities rather than form-focused activities.

Finally, concerning peer/teacher correction, most agree that teacher correction should be avoided when it interrupts the flow of communication; however, it ought to be provided when required for effective communication. They agree that feedback should focus on the content of the activities and the appropriateness of student responses rather than on the form of the language. Furthermore, most favor allowing student-student correction to take place in the classroom.

Although there are 90% of the participants who reveal positive attitudes, 75% of them have some reservation. To get a more complete picture of their perceptions, a 10-minute interview was given to 8 selected participants, four male and four female. They were labeled as M1, M2, M3, M4, F1, F2, F3, and F4. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The interview questions were mainly from COLTAS and FLCAS. The main purpose of the interview is to capture their voices to examine the research questions mentioned above, and to present more objective answers to those questions.

**Discussion and Implication**

The results of the present study show that most of the participants possess favorable attitudes toward CLT. All the participants in the interview agree that traditional grammar-translation teaching methodology and teacher-centered style offer them little opportunities to practice the target language in the classroom. Most of their time has been spent preparing for tests. Although students are good at memorizing vocabulary, grammatical rules, they indeed have difficulties learning real-life communicative English. They reveal that they seldom use English as communication medium in their daily life. In their previous learning experience, local English teachers ask them to memorize a lot of vocabulary and phrases, and analyze grammar rules for them. Affected by the pressure of examinations, they seldom communicate in English in the classroom or after class. L1 is used most of the time in the foreign language classroom. That is one of the causes of student reticence. Kourago (1993) attributes students’ poor English performance to the lack of opportunity, and claims that it is a major factor in input-poor environments, where English is seldom used outside the classroom. Most of the participants reveal that native teachers prefer adopting a student-centered approach, along with more discussion and presentation. Students who are used to traditional teacher-centered model would have difficulties adapting themselves to an innovative learning approach.

Although discussion is productive language practice, some of the participants regard it as useless. One of the female participants (F1) indicates that pair/group activity certainly
motivates and inspires them to practice English in the classroom. The outcome, however, fails to meet their expectations. One of the female participants (F2) notes that teacher correction model is more efficient than peer correction. One of the main reasons for this observation is their deficiency in spoken English. One of the male participants (M1) points out that low English proficiency is the cause of their reticence in the classroom, though they are willing to communicate with teachers or their classmates; limited English proficiency becomes one of their major constraints when they are conducting group work or peer correction. In addition, most agree that teaching should emphasize language use rather than language rules. Nevertheless, the grammar instruction cannot be completely avoided if it enables students to use English more correctly.

Anxiety is one of the shared experiences for language learners in the EFL context. Communication apprehension, test anxiety, and negative evaluation have impacted language learners profoundly. The interviews reveal that sources of anxiety are often intertwined. For example, teachers, activities, pedagogical practices, and evaluation are plausible anxiety-provoking factors in the language classroom. When asked their perception of native teachers, positive and negative comments co-exist. Authenticity or real model for learning language and culture is most applied to account for the status of native teachers. One of the male participants (M2) notes that native teachers offer them a real model to follow, and a real context to use English, if compared to non-native teachers. But, he adds that native teachers do not perform as well as non-native teachers in terms of grammar knowledge. In addition, native teachers rarely acquaint themselves with the students’ native language. Thus, native teachers can hardly anticipate and predict students’ difficulties in the learning process. On the contrary, non-native teachers usually provide a good learner model to their students. Medgyes (1994) claims that both native and non-native teachers are likely to be successful in the EFL/ESL classrooms. He states that an ideal native teacher is one who has achieved a high degree of proficiency in the learners’ mother tongue; an ideal non-native teacher is one who has achieved near-native proficiency in English (p. 348-349).

The role of teachers in the language classroom, suggested by one of the female participants (F3), ought to be one who alleviates students’ anxiety and provides them with supportive and non-threatening teaching methods. One of the male participants (M3) notes that it is impossible for them to learn efficiently in a stressful atmosphere. One of the female participants (F4) reveals her frustration and uneasiness in making a presentation in front of the class. She suffers from stress, mentally and physically. One of the male participants (M4) notes that a more humorous teacher is usually popular because s/he makes the class more fun or relaxed. Language learners who are free from pressure show more confidence and willingness to practice in the classroom. In other words, language must be acquired naturally just as a child who picks up his first language. Krashen and Terrell (1983) promote the Affective Filter Hypothesis to stress the importance of building a classroom environment that is less threatening to anxious students. It is particularly important to ease anxiety for learners with low proficiency and confidence.

Although most of the participants in this study show positive attitudes toward CLT; they also have a high level of anxiety in the classroom (Figure 2). Twenty-five (89%) of the participants obtained scores between 100 and 132, and three obtained scores between 67 and 99. The results indicate that most of the participants had a higher level of anxiety.
As shown in Figure 2, one male participant and two female participants receive lower scores than the rest. When asked about the reasons they feel less anxiety in the language classroom, the three participants all refer to the importance of environment, especially the frequency of exposure to the target language. Because of their occupation, these three participants have a lot of chances to communicate with people from different cultures. They are more attuned to diverse accents and feel less anxious when English is the main communication medium. In other words, the higher the frequency with which L2 is used, the lower the amount of anxiety is felt.

![Figure 2 Distribution of the Scores Obtained by the Participants with FLCAS](image)

CLT puts the focus on learner. The role of the teacher is that of a facilitator, advisor, and co-communicator. The role of the students is to communicate by participating in meaning-negotiation activities and to manage their own learning. The above-mentioned comments are chiefly from students in this study. CLT will fail if teachers have an unfavorable attitude toward it and do not believe that this approach will work for them. In this study, both native teachers show positive attitude to CLT. One of the native teachers notes that he prefers adopting activities such as pair/group discussion as well as peer correction to motivate students’ participation and generate more interaction in the classroom. Although some of the participants are very anxious and shy when assigned to speak in the class, they show a positive attitude and strong motivation to practice. It is very pleasant to adopt the CLT approach in the instruction of language, says another native teacher.

Both native and non-native teachers offer students learning models. The number of non-native English speaking teachers, however, is larger than native English speaking teachers. Canagarajaiah (1999) points out that 80% of the English teachers in the world are non-native speakers. English teachers from countries such as China, Greece, South Korea, and Turkey have made attempts to implement CLT; researches have shown that
teachers from these countries have faced many constraints that have hindered them from fully adopting CLT (Burnaby & Sun, 1989; Eveyik-Aydin, 2003; Karavas-Soukas, 1996; Li, 1998). Some of the more common constraints include large classes, grammar-based examinations, lack of cultural knowledge, lack of communicative teaching materials, and students’ low English proficiency.

The results from the above studies affirm the importance of understanding and taking into account the focus of CLT, especially in the EFL context. Researchers (Campbell & Zhao, 1993; Eveyik-Aydin, 2003; Hu, 2002; Li, 1998) have warned against a full, blind, and unbridled adoption of CLT and called attention to the need for considering the sociocultural milieu of the teaching context where CLT is being implemented. As Hu (2002) contends, “it is important for educational policymakers and teachers to take a cautiously eclectic approach and make well-informed pedagogical choices that are grounded in an understanding of sociocultural influences” (p. 103). There are still some arguments about CLT. For instance, the focus on meaning against form; fluency vs. accuracy; and inclusion vs. avoidance of L1. Although contradictions regarding the feasibility of CLT persist until today, it is more important to take into account the needs of students. In the CLT classroom, both native and non-native English speaking teachers may encounter different problems. Cook (1999) argues that language teaching would benefit by paying attention to the L2 user rather than concentrating primarily on the native speaker. Braine (2005) claims that one group of teachers should not necessarily be superior to the other group. The most important thing that teachers should be concerned about is finding ways to improve their teaching skills and to effectively handle challenges such as professional training, linguistic and sociolinguistic competence, and understanding of the students’ needs. Therefore, Nunan (2003) deems it important to ensure that (1) teachers are well trained in language teaching methodology appropriate to a range of learner ages and stages, (2) that teachers’ own language skills are significantly enhanced, (3) that classroom realities meet curricular rhetoric, and (4) that students have sufficient exposure to English in instructional contexts.

Conclusion

The implementation of CLT in the EFL context is complex and multidimensional. In general, constraints in its implementation derive mainly from teacher-related, student-related, and educational-system related factors. The results of this study reveal that both teachers and students hold positive attitudes toward CLT, in spite of certain levels of reservation. Although there are a lot of difficulties in the implementation, CLT is still one of the teaching approaches that can be certainly applied in the EFL context.

Anxiety can negatively affect the language learning experience; reducing anxiety seems to increase language acquisition and motivation. It is important for teachers to understand students’ learning problems and offer them appropriate learning strategies to enhance their learning efficiency.
References:


Appendix A: COLTAS

Please indicate your degree of agreement on the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Language classes should be student-centered, not teacher centered.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Pair work activities should be avoided as it is difficult for teachers to monitor each student’s performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teacher correction should be avoided when it interrupts the flow of communication via student interaction.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An orderly teacher centered class is necessary for students to get maximum benefit from teacher input in English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students need to have immediate teacher feedback on the accuracy of the English they produce.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pair work develops oral conversational skills in English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Group work creates a motivating environment to use English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Teachers should allow opportunity for student-student correction in English.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. The major role of teachers is to transmit knowledge about language to students through explanations rather than to guide them for self-learning.</td>
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<td>10. Teacher feedback should be mainly focused on the content of the activity not on the form of language.</td>
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<td>11. It is of great importance that student responses in English be grammatically accurate.</td>
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<td>12. Teachers should be the initiators of most interactions in English in the class.</td>
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<td>13. To develop communicative skills, explicit grammar teaching is not necessary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Emphasis should be on language use rather than language rules while teaching English in the class.</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Pair work provides a greater amount of student involvement than a teacher-led activity.</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Group work helps those students who are not willing to speak in front of a full class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Focus on communicative competence produces linguistically inaccurate speakers of language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Teachers should make an analysis of student needs in order to design suitable tasks and activities in English.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Title
The Impact of Phonetic and Phonological Instruction on the Oral Proficiency of Spanish-speaking ESL Learners

Authors
Hsuan-Yu Chen
&
Jaya S. Gowsami

Abstract
Oral proficiency has been one of the important goals in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) because it is important not only in communication, but also in reading and writing, which pave the path to academic achievement. Phonetic and phonological awareness, as related to oral proficiency, cannot be assumed with second language learners as with native speakers acquiring their mother tongue. Therefore, whether phonetic/phonological instruction should be implemented in ESL settings or not, and if so, to what extent, have become important issues for ESL instructors. Different approaches have been incorporated in the curricula; however, neither pronunciation transcription systems nor Phonics has shown satisfactory success in assisting ESL students in achieving oral proficiency in Standard American English (SAE).

In both Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), which are stages of second language development (Cummins, 1976), oral proficiency centralizes and substantiates the skills and strategies required in such areas. In the U.S., Spanish-speaking ESL learners’ general tendency of underachievement in reading performance (NCES, 2007) may be attributed to deficiency in oral proficiency, which can result in problems in reading proficiency.

This quasi-experiment with a “pre-post test” design investigated the effect of phonetic and phonological instruction on Spanish-speaking ESL students’ articulation of individual target phonemes at word and sentence levels. Findings showed statistically significant improvement in the oral proficiency of target phonemes of ESL students after the implementation of phonetic/phonological instruction. Pedagogical implications of the results are discussed to offer possible assistance to Spanish-speaking ESL students in the area of English oral proficiency.

Introduction
With English-speaking populations widely spread among 115 countries (Weber, 1997), English has become an “international language” by means of the media and fast-paced advancing technology (Crystal, 2003). The assumption can be safely made that
English will remain the “global language” in fields of large scale business and e-commerce in the foreseeable future (Pakir, 1999; Spring, 2007). Although the linguistic, historical and cultural values of dialects (Householder, 1969) are studied with interest, the form of Standard American English (SAE) has been continuously promoted due to political, ethnic (Ovando, Combs & Collier, 2006), and economic (Spring, 2007) reasons. In fact, SAE has become the dominant choice for English as a second (ESL) learners in the US with the intention of being accepted as a bona fide member of a social group (Langacker, 1968).

Need for Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness has been reported to be a predictor of later reading success (Badian, 1998). Graphophonemic knowledge, the letter-sound correspondence that Phonics tries to promote, and phonemic awareness are critical to children’s academic development, in particular, the development of reading skills (Jenkins & O’Connor, 2001). The early intervention or implementation of phonetic and phonological instruction among ESL learners should have similar effectiveness. In particular, such training may be used in assisting learners’ reading proficiency, which can lead to successful academic achievement (Scott, 2001). Further, ESL learners’ Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) are also developed.

In Lado’s (1956) research on the comparison between English and Spanish sound systems, he believed that second language learners tend to transfer their whole knowledge of sounds in their first language, including phonemes and allophones, patterns of syllables, and words and intonation, into the second language, and these transfers result in “funny accents” perceived by native speakers of the second language. These differences, which lie in phonetic and phonological distinctions, are described as “sound-to-sound” interference. Orthographic differences, described as “cross-language” phonological differences, may also interfere during the transfer and affect pronunciation (Nash, 1973). For native Spanish speakers who learn to speak and spell in their first language, English orthographic systems can cause difficulties because of phonological interference (Terrebone, 1973). Therefore, knowledge of specific phonological contrasts may compensate for ESL learners’ pre-set phonological awareness, so as to prevent their phonological and/or phonetic miscues that could result in oral proficiency deficiency and lead to miscommunication.

A change in a phoneme results in a change in meaning; it is the minimal, meaningful unit of sound. This linguistically significant difference is realized in its phonetic form, i.e., the actual pronunciation of its sound. Incorrect and/or inappropriate realizations of different phonemes may result in miscommunication and/or misunderstanding for ESL learners, if they do not master the English phonemes that differ from their first language. For instance, Spanish speakers may mispronounce the voiceless postalveolar fricative /ʃ/, as in wash, as the voiceless postalveolar affricative /ʧ/, as in watch. Because of the lack of the /ʃ/ sound in Spanish, some Spanish speakers tend to fail to perceive the difference between the sounds /ʃ/ and /ʧ/, which are linguistically significant in English. Such misperceptions, resulting in mispronunciations, are frequently found as in cash the check vs. catch the shack. These problems can be
prevented or remedied by implementation of phonetic and phonological instruction (Chen & Wang, 2004, Goswami & Chen, 2008).

The relationship between phonological training and literacy in an orthographic system is not totally dependent, but reciprocal (Stanovich, 1986). Even highly experienced second language learners may produce pronunciation errors in the second language because of phonological interference from their first language. However, training in the perception and production of segmental and suprasegmental aspects of the second language, that is, phonetic training, is one of the factors that affects ESL learners’ pronunciation (Piske, MacKay & Flege, 2001). A study investigating Japanese adults’ improvement in the pronunciation of English /l/ and /r/ indicates that phonetic training has a positive influence on second language pronunciation (Flege, Takagi & Mann, 1995); however, such intervention may be “boring” because of repetition, and result in off-task and resistant behaviors (Castiglioni-Spalten & Ehri, 2003).

Statement of the Problem

Knowledge of distinctions among phonemes, or phonological awareness, assists in reading success, which influences learners’ later academic achievement (Chard, Pikulski & Templeton, 2000). Intervention as early as possible is the first step to ensure children’s literacy skills, a priority goal set by the No Child Left Behind Act (Bishop, 2003). In this study, the target sounds consisted of sets of consonant contrasts based on “A key to pronouncing the consonants of American English” (Dale & Poms, 1986; Whitley, 2002).

For data analysis purposes, the consonants were grouped into three categories, based on the sounds in Spanish as it is spoken in Mexico and South Texas, as follows (Table 1):

**Group 1** – sounds which differ in a phonetic feature (place of articulation): voiceless dental plosive /t/ as in Spanish taco; voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ as in English ten; voiced dental plosive /d/ as in Spanish dos and voiced alveolar plosive /d/ as in English den.

**Group 2** – sounds which differ in a phonological behavior (allophone vs. phoneme): voiced labiodental fricative /v/ as in Spanish viva (alive) (an allophone of voiced bilabial plosive /b/ in Spanish); voiced labiodental fricative phoneme /v/ as in English vase; voiced alveolar fricative /z/ as in Spanish zapato (shoe) (an allophone of alveolar fricative /s/ in Spanish); voiced alveolar fricative phoneme /z/ as in English zoo; voiced interdental fricative /θ/ as in Spanish lado (side) (an allophone of voiced dental plosive /d/) and voiced interdental fricative phoneme /ð / as in English there.

**Group 3** – sounds which are absent in Spanish: voiceless interdental fricative phoneme /θ/ as in English think; voiceless postalveolar fricative phoneme /ʃ/ as in shoe.
### Purpose of the Study

With the subjects’ articulation of target phonemes as the independent variable and the subjects’ oral proficiency as the dependent variable, the purpose of this quasi-experiment was 1. to investigate the effect that the instrument (phonetic and phonological instruction) may have on subjects’ overall oral proficiency of the target phonemes; and 2. to investigate the impact that the instrument (phonetic and phonological instruction) may have on subjects’ articulation of individual target phonemes.
Research Questions
What impact, if any, does phonetic and phonological instruction have on Spanish-speaking ESL learners’ overall oral proficiency of target phonemes?

What impact, if any, does phonetic and phonological instruction have on Spanish-speaking ESL learners’ articulation of individual target phonemes?

Subjects & Sampling
The subjects in this study were 25 ESL learners attending a private high school in South Texas. The researchers were subject to the school schedule and distribution of students in various classes; as such, the quasi-experiment was conducted in a convenience-sampling framework (Urdan, 2000). Convenience sample refers to the selection of participants based on “proximity, ease-of-access, and willingness to participate” (Urdan, 2000, p. 3). Subjects in this study were conveniently-sampled groups because of the school’s placement and scheduling policies. Therefore, participant selection for this study was based on the roster of their ESL classes. Upon arrival at the school, all students take a placement test -- Secondary Level Proficiency Test (SLEP) – administered by the school. Students who obtain a combined listening and reading comprehension score of 40 or below (46th percentile or less) are assigned to an English as a Second Language (ESL) class. Some sophomore and/or junior students, who score below 400 in the Institutional Testing Program for English Proficiency (ITP), are also assigned to the ESL class. Based on this classification of students, the researchers assumed that the oral English proficiency of all the participants was approximately at the same level prior to this study. Nevertheless, each subject’s pre-test and post-test data were collected, compared, and analyzed to reach any conclusion in any findings of this study.

Prior to any data collection, the researchers obtained approval for the study from the researchers’ university’s Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Intervention
Subjects received phonetic and phonological instruction for ninety minutes during each class session, five days a week through a six-week period. The instruction was delivered in the classroom, in formats of, but not necessarily in the order of, verbal instruction, handouts, PowerPoint presentations and pronunciation exercises/activities. Details of the phonetic and phonological instruction are as follows.

1. Lecture materials: These included instructions and explanations from both the instructor (one of the researchers) and computer software such as Pronunciation Power 1 & 2 (Buffel, 2000) developed by English Computerized Learning, Inc. The instructor-researcher has a Master’s degree in Linguistics, and has taught American English Conversation courses at a national university in Taiwan, thus

2. Technology materials: These included presentations made by the researcher using Powerpoint, incorporating animated components such as GIF (Graphics Interchange
Format) and/or Flash with an emphasis on interaction between the audience (subjects) and the program (phonetic and phonological instruction).

3. Communicative/Interactive materials: These included exercises such as minimal pair discrimination as well as activities designed by the researcher in both handout and Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) formats using SWISH templates available online (www.swishzone.com).

Data Collection

Due to the lack of randomization of sampling and uncontrollability of other possible variables during the instruction, this study employed a quasi-experimental pre-post test (Trochim, 2001) to answer the research questions.

Although the pre- and post-tests in this study were not graded on a one hundred percent scale, the grading of subjects’ accuracy of pronunciation of the target sounds was accounted for and integrated into the format described below.

1. Data Integration: Subjects were given a pre-test and post-test which were identical in both content and format. In the evaluation process of both pre-test and post-test, the subject’s pronunciation was accounted as correct (+) when the evaluator perceived the correct phonetic realization of the target sound; on the other hand, it was accounted as incorrect (−) when the evaluator perceived the target sound as incorrectly pronounced. Each target sound was tested twice in each word position, that is, there were two items containing different words with the same sound in a specific position. For instance, the target sound /t/ in initial position was tested in two items: ten and talk. Consequently, the target sound /t/ was tested twice in initial, medial, and final positions, for a total of six instances of /t/ overall. Since there were seven such target phonemes: /t/, /d/, /v/, /z/, /ð/, /θ/, and /š/ (7 × 6 = 42), and three corresponding contrasting sounds /b/, /s/, and /č/ (3 × 6 = 18), the total number of sounds tested was 60.

Word-Level Proficiency Test

Altogether 60 words were used in the pre-test and post-test. Both tests utilized the same set of words. Of the total number of words presented, six words for each target phoneme, with the target sound occurring in initial, middle and final position, were ordered randomly for testing. Thus, 42 words contained the 7 target sounds. The remaining 18 words contained corresponding contrasting sounds, such as /b/, /s/ and /č/ to contrast with /v/, /z/ and /š/ respectively. Each word was printed on one side of an index card, and the image of the word on the other side of the card. These flashcards were laminated and shown to the subjects in the tests. The image side of the flashcard was not shown to the subjects unless they indicated difficulty in understanding the meaning/notion of the word as presented during the test.

Sentence-level Proficiency Test

In order to assess subjects’ proficiency not only at isolated word levels but at sentence-level utterance, seven meaningful sentences were shown to the subject to elicit their sentence-level pronunciation proficiency. Each sentence consisted of words
containing target sounds in initial, middle and final positions. The subjects were asked to read the sentences aloud after they had completed the word-level section of the test.

Results of the evaluations from both evaluators were integrated for statistical analysis. As a result, each subject had four grades for each tested sound: (1) grade by Evaluator 1 for item 1, (2) grade by Evaluator 1 for item 2, (3) grade by Evaluator 2 for item 1 and (4) grade by Evaluator 2 for item 2. These grades were summed up to form a scale from 0 to 4. That is, the combined evaluation of each subject’s pronunciation of each tested item was depicted as a number from “0” to “4.” For instance, if the evaluation of an item tested by one evaluator was incorrect (−), a value of “0” was assigned as the grade. If the evaluation of an item tested by one evaluator was correct (+), a value of “1” was assigned as the grade. All the grades of items tested were summed up as the final score as shown in the table 2.1 to table 2.5 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.1 Evaluation Criterion 1</th>
<th>Evaluator 1</th>
<th>Evaluator 2</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Final Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.2 Evaluation Criterion 2</th>
<th>Evaluator 1</th>
<th>Evaluator 2</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Final Score</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<th>Table 2.3 Evaluation Criterion 3</th>
<th>Evaluator 1</th>
<th>Evaluator 2</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Final Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2.4 Evaluation Criterion 4</th>
<th>Evaluator 1</th>
<th>Evaluator 2</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Final Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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Table 2.5 Evaluation Criterion 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Evaluator 1</th>
<th>Evaluator 2</th>
<th>Total Score</th>
<th>Final Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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1. Data Analysis: After the pre-test and post-test, the data collected was analyzed in SPSS Version 13. A dependent Paired-samples t-test was chosen to serve the purpose of the analysis because (1) there were two samples: the pre-test and post-test “scores,” and (2) there were matched subjects; in this case, subjects were matched with themselves by comparing their pre-intervention and post-intervention scores.

Results

Research Question 1 asked whether or not there is any impact of phonetic and phonological instruction on subjects’ overall oral proficiency of the target sounds. Application of paired-samples t-test to the pre-test and post-test scores resulted in, as shown in Table 3, $t(25) = -13.687, p = .0000$. That is, subjects’ overall performance score of the subjects’ in the pre-test ($M = 4.93, SD = 3.59$) was statistically significantly different from that of the post-test ($M = 5.88, SD = 3.88$). With the significance ($p$) value obtained as .0000, which is less than .05, the researchers concluded that the implementation of phonetic and phonological instruction had a statistically significant effect on the proficiency of pronunciation in this study.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Differences between Pre-test and Post-test of Performance in the Group (N = 25) Variable</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$t(25)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score of performance in pre-test</td>
<td>4.93</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>-13.687†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score of performance in post-test</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

†$p < .05$

Research question 2 asked whether or not there is any impact of phonetic and phonological instruction on subjects’ articulation of individual target phonemes. A paired-samples t-test was run on all pre-test and post-test data collected for individual target sounds. Paired-samples t-test was chosen with the aim of determining whether there is improvement in the pronunciation of each target phoneme and, if so, whether or not the improvement is statistically significant. Data from the tested target phonemes consist of the oral production of seven target sounds in three different word positions (word-initial, word-medial, and word-final).
Table 4 below shows whether there was any statistically significant improvement, or other possibilities such as regression, of all the target phonemes. This table shows the overall improvement of articulation of sounds as well as in individual positions of all target phonemes at both word and sentence levels.

Table 4
Performance in the Articulation of Target Phonemes at the Word and Sentence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonemes</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Word</th>
<th>sentence</th>
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<tr>
<td>initial</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>overall</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>phonemes</th>
<th>level</th>
<th>word</th>
<th>sentence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>initial</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>middle</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<td>final</td>
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<tr>
<td>overall</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
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<tr>
<th>phonemes</th>
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<th>word</th>
<th>sentence</th>
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</thead>
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<td>√</td>
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<td>√</td>
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<td>final</td>
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</table>
Research question 2 investigated the impact of phonetic and phonological instruction on subjects’ articulation of individual phonemes. The results indicate that subjects in the study achieved statistically significant overall improvement at both word and sentence levels. The overall-improved phonemes were: (1) category of sounds in different place of articulation: voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ and voiced alveolar plosive /d/, (2) category of allophone/phoneme: voiced labiodental fricative /v/, voiced alveolar fricative /z/ and voiced interdental fricative /ð/, and (3) category of absence: voiceless interdental fricative /θ/. This finding indicates the success of the intervention with phonetic/phonological instruction which led to the statistically significant improvement at post-test in this group.

**Pedagogical Implications of the Study**

The following pedagogical implications can be made based on the above findings.

Voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ at initial position, voiced labiodental fricative /v/ at initial position, and voiced alveolar fricative /z/ at all positions all showed statistically significant improvement at both word and sentence levels. This indicates that these phonemes may be relatively unproblematic for Spanish-speaking ESL learners to correct in their speech after phonetic and phonological instruction. Although these sounds are contrasted between Spanish and English in place of articulation (/t/) and in allophone/phoneme distinction (/v/), Spanish-speaking ESL learners may find these sounds relatively straightforward to learn. In a similar phonetic and phonological instruction program, these particular sounds can be introduced prior to other more problematic phonemes, in order to motivate students.
Subjects showed no statistically significant improvement on voiced labiodental fricative /v/ (at middle and final positions), voiced interdental fricative /ð/ (at middle positions), and voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ (at middle positions) at sentence level. However, statistically significant improvement of these sounds was shown at word level. This indicates that these sounds at these particular positions may seem more problematic at sentence level than word level for Spanish-speaking ESL learners to correct in their speech. Instruction and/or materials for practice on these particular sounds at such positions should be emphasized. In addition, more research on oral proficiency of these specific sounds at isolation, word, sentence, and discourse levels should be conducted to further investigate such discrepancies.

For postalveolar fricative /ʃ/, which is absent in subjects’ native language (Spanish), regression was noted in word or sentence level. This regression may be explained by the absence of the sound in the first language, which is in the middle range in the hierarchies of difficulties (Lado, 1957). Lado (1957) labeled the transference from first language to second language with its accompanying differences and consequently, predictable difficulty, into six levels. This Hierarchy of Difficulties was described as level 0 -- total transfer, for instance, bilabial nasal /m/ in Spanish and in English, to level 6 -- split, for instance, bilabial plosive /p/ in Spanish splits into aspirated /ph/ and unaspirated /p/ in English. Level 6 is the most difficult structure to learn because one structure in the first language becomes two or more structures in the second language. According to this hierarchy, postalveolar fricative /ʃ/, which is absent in Spanish, falls in level 3 -- absence. While a structure at level 3 is not the most difficult to transfer, a certain amount of effort is required.

However, for voiceless interdental fricative /θ/, which is another sound absent in Spanish, regression did not occur in this study. On the contrary, statistically significant overall improvement was observed at both levels. This may indicate the need for another future study with more extensive articulation tests, at both word and sentence level, of these two particular sounds -- postalveolar fricative /ʃ/ and voiceless interdental fricative /θ/ -- which are absent in Spanish.

Conclusion
This quasi-experiment investigated the impact of phonetic/phonological instruction on the oral proficiency of Spanish-speaking English language learners and reasserted the claims made by previous studies that phonetic instruction helps ELL improve oral proficiency. The results of this study shed light in areas such as curriculum design and development of appropriate supplementary materials for teaching English pronunciation to Spanish-speaking ESL learners. Furthermore, the study calls attention to the need for ESL/EFL teachers’ professional development in Phonetics and Phonology in order to successfully implement such intervention.

References


Title
The Eight-fold Path of Vocabulary Development

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Introduction
In Buddhist philosophy there are four “Noble Truths.” The first Noble Truth states that life is suffering. The second great truth says suffering has a cause. In our profession, we know what that cause is—foreign language learning!

Although we might joke about it, learning a second or foreign language is truly the source of much pressure, disappointment and discouragement for many learners. Feeling confident about the choices we make as teachers is also not automatic—the choices, the methods, the materials, and the priorities are many. Adding to the complexity, the results of research are not always clearly conveyed or summarized in ways that are beneficial to teachers or learners. My purpose here is to share a metaphor by which we may organize our understanding about vocabulary learning research, and guide our thoughts and decisions in the classroom. This metaphor may be equally useful in helping our students do likewise, and thus aid them in becoming more effective and independent as learners. The goal, in the Buddhist spirit of things, is to reduce “suffering” and improve our performance. In Ch’ an or Zen Buddhism the “way” to reduce suffering is called the “Eight-fold Path”—because it consists of eight principles.

We should be grateful, of course, for the renewed focus on vocabulary development and maintenance (our students have long thought it important), but the renewed emphasis has led to a virtual avalanche of ideas. Where second language vocabulary was once the subject of neglect, it is now, for many, a subject of some confusion. Many teachers have been led to ask, “Which of the many ideas, dictionaries, methods, and texts (not to mention words!) are most useful for my purposes and for my learners?” Hopefully, this paper will help to sort out some of the answers to these and other questions and help us find a way to systematically enlighten our students. Perhaps a lucky few will even approach Nirvana.

Siddhartha Gautama, (called “the Buddha” or the enlightened one) founded Buddhism as a religion or philosophy in India around 525 B.C. Siddhartha, as a member of nobility, was raised in much comfort and luxury; however, at the age of 29, he left the palace grounds to learn more of life and found much misery around him. Over time his thoughts and philosophies began to crystallize. Over the millennia, differing schools of
thought and branches of Buddhism have emerged, but common and fundamental among them all is the Eight-fold Path—eight principles to clarify one’s thoughts and guide one’s actions.

These principles together represent a practical guide to ethical and mental development with the goal of freeing the individual from delusion; and leads to understanding the truth about all things. Great emphasis is put on the practical aspect, because it is only through practice that one can attain a higher level of existence or performance. The eight are not a sequence of single steps; instead they are highly interdependent principles that must be seen in relationship with each other.

In first teaching them, it is said that the Buddha set in motion the wheel of the dharma—a visual metaphor to steer our lives by.

**Figure 1**

![Dharma Wheel](image)

--- Buddha Dharma Education Association Inc / BuddhaNet

**Eight Principles for Vocabulary Development**

In that same spirit I will use these principles as a metaphor to organize the many strategies, principles, and reams of advice that have been put forth by authors, teachers and researchers. I will define each principle in turn and look at how each may summarize or symbolize insights from the literature regarding second language
vocabulary learning and maintenance. For the purposes of this paper, I will cluster these eight principles as follows: (See Table 1)

Table 1

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1. Right View

_Explanation_

Right view is simply the ability to see and to understand things as they really are. As such, right view yields right thoughts and right actions.

_Application_

The “right view” of the role of vocabulary development in second language learning is that it is extremely important and worth consistent, systematic, conscious, curricular, and individual effort. Few in our profession would disagree with the axiomatic nature of this position, though for decades, language teaching professionals ignored the pleas of learners for more and better vocabulary instruction. The neglect, no doubt, stems from the decades during which syntax was thought to be the key to second language acquisition. Teachers and learners often shrink before the sheer volume or size of the task. Indeed, English contains more words (approximately 1,000,000 words) than any other language on earth, now or ever.

How does one approach a “list” that large? Fortunately, the vocabulary of English has come into better focus in recent years. This clearer focus has allowed for the development of the right view an aspect of language teaching that appeared both unknown and unknowable
Thanks to computer technology, one million does not seem like such a large number anymore, and thanks to corpus linguistics, it appears that the number of lexical items which are relevant to learning English as a second or foreign language is far less than a million. Indeed, research indicates that it need not extend much beyond 5-10,000. (Gould, Nation and Read, 1990).

Moreover, at this point there is sufficient research to allow us to prioritize those words that are most necessary among those 10,000. Research indicates that most oral conversation takes place with a core 2,000 word vocabulary. In fact, much of such conversation revolves around an even smaller set of conventional, routinized phrases, which help speakers negotiate the normally highly interactive, often predictable, and repetitive nature of spoken interaction. (Nation, 2001).

Regarding written language, the necessary vocabulary is somewhat larger. In academic contexts, several researchers have identified a specific body of words (a little over 500 of them) which contribute greatly to the comprehension of academic discourse (lectures and textbooks). The latest list, produced by Averil Coxhead, is available at the following website: http://www.vuw.ac.nz/lals/research/awl/info.html. Her research goes on to prioritize these 570 words according to relative frequency so that teachers in EAP contexts can spend their time where it is most useful. Other lists of the most frequent words of English are available at: www.lextutor.ca. In the near future, other researchers in the field of ESP will surely identify those words which are of particular importance to specific fields of endeavor (tourism, law, finance, healthcare, and so on).

We also have a clearer view of the second language learner’s mental lexicon these days. Recent research says that the L2 mental lexicon does not grow in the same ways as the L1 lexicon. The majority of words learned in one’s native language are acquired in rich, communicative contexts, thus creating new lexical entries that are at once multifaceted and complex, and which grow further in richness over time.

Due to the constraints present in most instructed language contexts, new L2 lexical entries are usually the result of context-poor lists, reading passages, and other assignments. Research (e.g., Jiang, 2000) indicates that the initial L2 lexical entries are therefore more focused on, or anchored by, the forms of the words (spelling and pronunciation) and share relatively few semantic connections to other existing words/concepts (other than the default connections to L1 semantic networks). This view of the second language lexicon has important implications for our methodology, which we will explore a little later.

In sum, for many years we have been like the proverbial five blind men who sought to describe what an elephant was, each feeling a different part and blindly assuming their “experience” to be right. These days we see a much clearer view--dare I say, the “right view.” And with this new understanding, we now have sufficient wisdom to feel confident in committing ourselves to the task of teaching vocabulary. This brings us to our second aspect of the Eight-fold Path.

2. Right Intention

Explanation
While “right view” refers to what we might call the cognitive aspect of wisdom, “right intention” refers to the volitional aspect (i.e., the kind of mental energy that controls our actions). Right intention can be described best as commitment to ethical and mental self-improvement.

Application

In the past, it was difficult to commit ourselves to teaching vocabulary because we had an unclear view or understanding of the subject. Likewise, learners did not know how or where to begin. Efforts often bore little fruit.

Nevertheless, research has shown that learners who approach vocabulary in a conscious, structured, proactive way are more successful than those who simply learn what they are asked to. (Folse, 2004a; Sanaoui, 1995; Gu, 2003) Put another way, successful learners do not merely respond to assignments, or simply react to new words, but develop motivation to improve their vocabulary from an internal, self-improvement perspective. Moreover, those who maintain a consistent commitment to vocabulary development ultimately acquire more strategies for vocabulary maintenance. This is what I mean when I say we must approach vocabulary learning with “right intention.” We must intend to develop and maintain our vocabulary. Likewise, we as teachers must be intentional as how we incorporate vocabulary into our curricula.

With a clear view of the subject and a resulting commitment to the task, we are ready to observe the principles of proper action or conduct.

3. Right Speech

Explanation

Right speech is the first principle of proper conduct in the Eight-fold Path. The importance of speech in the context of Buddhist philosophy is obvious: words can break or save lives, make enemies or friends, start war or create peace. Positively phrased, this principle means to tell the truth, speak warmly and gently, and to talk only when necessary.

Application

Right speech is no less important to learners of a foreign language. An inappropriate remark, a poor choice of words, or the lack of a word can result in frustration, embarrassment, social isolation, denial of admission, or the loss of a job opportunity.

As mentioned earlier, much of conversation revolves around a small set of words and conventional, routinized phrases, which help speakers negotiate the somewhat repetitive and predictable nature of human interaction. If this “view” is accurate, successful speech results from numerous opportunities to develop an ability to use a relatively small body of lexical items in increasingly automatic ways, to greet, respond, take turns, signal attention, agreement, and so forth.

From a different angle, we might also look at the role of sound and pronunciation in developing and maintaining the second language lexicon. As mentioned earlier, L1
learners acquire vocabulary in richly contextualized ways. Lexical instantiation is therefore richly multi-faceted from the beginning, with a lexical entry often having oral, orthographic, semantic, collocational, social, and cultural dimensions, among others. This instantiation process in L2 contexts is generally more one-dimensional in nature and suffers greater dependence on formal properties (spelling, pronunciation, identification of affixes and root) in the creation of a new lexical entry. According to studies by Henning (1973) Jiang (2000), Meara (1978, 1984) and Wang (2007), second language learners quite often initially store vocabulary items phonologically or orthographically; only later does lexical knowledge and organization operate primarily on the basis of semantics. In other words, a new lexical item gains its first foothold in our mental lexicon through representations (complete or not) of spelling and/or sound.

One implication of recent research in this matter is that the introduction or presentation of new words ought to be accompanied by repeated opportunities for auditory recognition, modeling, and practice of accurate pronunciation. Empirical studies by Kelly (1992) and others consistently show that saying new words aloud assists retention. Right “speech” in this case, is helpful in initial stages and makes possible long-term retention and subsequent development of L2 vocabulary.

Some L1 research (e.g., Carver, 2000; Stanovich, 2000) in reading indicates that fluency is not just a product of the automatization of the decoding process in general or in some abstract principled way, but is the result of the automatization of the decoding of individual words. The implication is that words need to become proceduralized, routinized or automatized individually. Instruction, therefore, which seeks to present and maintain new vocabulary must do so not only with definitions and information concerning usage, but must also with opportunities to decode the items in isolation and in context, both in written and spoken form, not just multiple, but numerous times.

4. Right Action

Explanation

Unwholesome actions lead to unsound states of mind, while wholesome actions lead to sound states of mind.

Application

With regard to vocabulary learning, what can learners be doing in an active way to promote vocabulary development? It sounds traditional and out-of-date, but we can use our hands! In this day and age, when so much of what we do is digitized or computerized, L2 vocabulary experts like Paul Nation, say the best way to increase one’s vocabulary is to carry around little sets of papers or cards with target language words on the front and simple L1 translations and definitions on the back. This allows learners to make use of the existing L1 semantic system and make use of idle minutes standing in line at the cafeteria, waiting for a bus, etc. The cards also serve to make learners conscious of the need to think often about the importance of vocabulary and to act accordingly. Such cards, of course, only introduce words in a shallow sense, but they are quite effective in initializing the learning process. Once noticed and temporarily
internalized, subsequent encounters in more naturalistic settings (extensive reading/listening) will fill out the lexical entries with both breadth and depth.

Regarding vocabulary maintenance and development, learners must actively seek out opportunities to use the words they are learning. A motorcycle or any other fine machine is not made to sit in the garage. In fact to let it sit is to ruin it. Fluids will break down or harden, parts will freeze up, and so on. Moving parts were meant to move and language is meant to be used. This involves finding opportunities to use the words in written and spoken contexts. This has been relatively difficult in traditionally EFL contexts where contact with users of English is limited. However, the role of internet-based resources and activities such as corresponding with key-pals or participating in ESL-oriented chat rooms lessens the isolation some learners have traditionally felt. A fairly new example of the social networking power of the internet to being language learners together in each others’ assistance is Livemocha (www.livemocha.com). This site (free) orchestrates a large community of language learners and language learning resources where learners volunteer to help each other learn. One’s ability to obtain assistance, as well as provide assistance, is quite unlimited.

It must also be pointed out that knowing a word requires more than one “act.” Just because we have memorized a word and its definition, does not mean we “know” the word. To “know” a word is complex, and developed over time, exposure, and usage. Some have argued against the role of output in second language acquisition, but there are studies (see Loucky, 2006 for a recent review) which demonstrate the effectiveness of “pushed output” (oral and written) in vocabulary development and retention.

5. Right Livelihood

Explanation

Right livelihood refers to earning one's living in a righteous way and that wealth should be gained legally and peacefully.

Application

Speaking to ESL professionals such as ourselves, in earning our livelihood as language teachers we are obligated to be professional in our training and preparation, and to provide the very best of instruction. Based on general theories of education and language learning, that instruction should include four basic characteristics. The first three are: repeated exposure (for fluent decoding or word recognition), integration (internalization within pre-existing knowledge structures and lexical webs), and elaboration (i.e., “semantization” Beheydt, 1987). This third quality attempts to describe the elaboration that goes on when newly “learned” lexical entries are enriched in both breadth and depth of understanding through multiple, meaningful opportunities to recognize and use words. Include these three and you are earning an honest living!

The fourth key characteristic is strategies-based instruction. We not only need to systematically teach vocabulary, but we must systematically make our learners better vocabulary learners. There is a growing body of research dedicated to identifying vocabulary learning strategies (apart from the more general language learning strategies).
Researchers distinguish between strategies for language learning and language use. There are strategies which are useful in the discovery and decoding of new words (morphological analysis, guessing from context, mnemonics, etc), and those strategies which are most effective in retaining and enriching newly acquired words (e.g., extensive reading, personal vocabulary system, goals, social strategies, etc) (See Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997, p. 205).

Speaking of livelihood, in the world of vocabulary learning and literacy in general, it seems true that the rich only get richer. This was called the “Matthew effect” by a prominent researcher (Stanovich, 1986). It sounds like a case of naked capitalism and an unfit concept for a Buddhist approach, but this is truly a case of right livelihood. The more words learners know, the more words they can learn. The more words they know, the more numerous and richer the connections are within the mental lexicon. The richer the lexicon, the more learners can benefit from the incidental learning of new words through extensive reading and listening. Accelerating the initial stages of vocabulary development, therefore, is crucial.

6. Right Effort

Explanation

Without effort, which is in itself an act of will, nothing can be achieved, but misguided effort distracts the mind from its true task, and confusion or injury is the consequence. Mental energy is the force behind right effort; it can occur in either wholesome or unwholesome states.

Application

Effort alone is not enough to ensure success. We must have right effort. This principle speaks to the methods we use as teachers and learners. For some time now we have been told that vocabulary should be learned only in context, with the rationale that this is how native speakers acquire seemingly huge amounts of new vocabulary. The rationale or assumption was misguided however. Second language learners generally are not exposed to new vocabulary in the same ways nor do they have the same years of time available to them. Second language vocabulary development necessarily must employ different methods. Most research on incidental, contextualized acquisition of unknown vocabulary indicates that the rate is quite slow (12-15 occurrences of a word in context, on average, are necessary) and the chances for error and faulty conclusions are high (see Folse, 2004 for a review).

Research by Nation (1982), Carter (1987), James (1996) and others indicates that the initial learning of words can be done in isolation more effectively than in context. Indeed, a few studies have shown that contextualization may lessen the saliency of the words to be learned, and thus lessen retention (e.g., Shefelbine, 1990). Lists should, however, include more than just a dictionary definition.

Regarding how these lists might be studied, a review of memory research concludes that spaced or distributed practice is more successful than massive amounts at one time. Moreover, there is a singularly successful pattern of distribution which ought
to be taught to learners. It involves systematically increasing the lengths of time between review cycles.

Are there other useful methods or approaches to acquiring vocabulary? The answer is yes. The study of word parts is useful. This is particularly true of prefixes, where just slightly over a dozen prefixes represent 80% of the instances in running text. The research is less dramatic for suffixes, but all in all, the study of word parts is worth class time and individual effort (Nation, 2001, p. 267).

One final question: Should words be introduced or taught in semantic sets? Yes and no. Thematically organized sets may be learned effectively, but the tighter the sets are, the harder the individual items are to keep separate. For example, imagine learning the following list of words as if it were your first time: *Invigorate, stimulate, scintillate,* and *exhilarate.* They are semantically related, but teaching them together as a group will only result in lexical confusion. Their relative semantic closeness is further magnified by the relative similarity in their form.

### 7. Right Mindfulness

**Explanation**

Right mindfulness is the controlled and perfected faculty of cognition. It is the mental ability to see things as they are, with clear consciousness. Usually, the cognitive process begins with an impression induced by perception, or by a thought. We interpret these and set them in relation to other thoughts and experiences. The mind then posits concepts, joins concepts into constructs, and weaves those constructs into complex interpretative schemes of the world around us and the tasks at hand. All this happens half consciously, and as a result we often see things obscured, or confuse reality with our internal construction or interpretation of it. Right mindfulness enables us to be aware of the process of conceptualization in a way that we actively observe and control the way our thoughts go.

**Application**

Buddha emphasized contemplation. Some in our field have used the word “reflection.” To these terms I would like to add another: metacognition. This precept encourages us to monitor our thoughts and thought processes. We as educators need to raise our learners’ awareness of the role of vocabulary in second language learning and increase their ability to be conscious of the efforts they are making and the relative effectiveness of the strategies they are using. Right mindfulness, as traditionally defined, also encourages us to make connections between momentary impulses and this must be done with vocabulary as well. “Lists” of words in the mind are not nearly so useful as those which are interconnected in rich semantic, cultural, and collocational ways. Research has long shown that retention is dependent on the relative breadth or richness with which items in memory are instantiated, reinforced, and enriched over time (Craik & Tulving, 1975).

Regarding the ability of students to be aware or mindful of their use of strategies, Peter Gu (2003) has made it clear that strategy application is not a straightforward matter,
and that the relative efficacy of various strategies depends on the individuals, the context, and the task. In other words, learner must not only think for themselves, but think about the relative effectiveness of their efforts, for the paths to success are many.

Ask yourself, What does it mean to “know” a word? Once you have memorized the definition for a word, do you “know” it? Not any more than having remembered the name of your new colleague or the names of your new students! Knowing something or someone is as much a process as it is a complex product. To truly know a word includes, among other things: the ability to fluently decode or recall it, a knowledge of its definition(s), its pronunciation and spelling. It also means being aware of its natural habitat and surroundings (collocations and register), its metaphorical extensions, grammatical limitations and parameters (count/non-count; transitivity, etc), and its relatives (derivations). Lists get learners off to a fast start, but we must find ways to develop or enrich the learners’ representations of each lexical entry over time (Nation, 2001). This complex process of enrichment is accelerated when there is a conscious awareness of the need to focus and persist and a consequent desire to do so. This brings us to the final quality an effective learner must possess.

8. Right Concentration

Explanation

The eighth principle of the path, right concentration, refers to the development of a mental force. Concentration in this context is described as the focus of mind, meaning a state where all mental faculties are unified and directed onto one particular object. The meditating mind focuses on a selected object, and then sustains concentration.

Application

Focusing or concentrating on vocabulary instruction was possible but not effective in the past (other than teaching the 1000 most basic words). Beyond the immediately obvious function words and survival words and phrases, there was no clarity without corpus linguistics. Today we are able to identify what words are most important for given areas of study (right view), making concentration accurate and effective. Regarding our learners, they must be taught that successful development of a large and useful vocabulary in the target language is the product of sustained, conscious effort and thought. There are no shortcuts, royal roads, prep manuals, keystrokes, or Wikipedia pages that will compensate for lack of concentrated effort over time. Principles 6, 7, and 8 all focus on the need to commit oneself to a process of continual improvement.

Conclusion

Our learners, and our profession, will continue to benefit from a sustained ability to focus on the role of vocabulary development in second language learning and instruction. To put it in another way, the secrets of vocabulary development and maintenance will yield themselves to our sustained concentration. As the research is published and those secrets unfold, they might best be digested, organized and presented to learners with a mnemonic
or “scaffolding” device similar to the dharma wheel I have used here. Any future insight can be placed neatly into one of its eight principles of right living or learning.

**Note:** If you would like to learn how to cut out a dharma wheel and teach your learners as well, there is a very clear set of instructions and pictures at: http://familydharma.pulelehua.design.com/wheel2.htm

**References**


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Title
Teaching Basic Verbs to Japanese Adults Using the Core Image Method

Abstract
Basic verbs such as “go”, “come”, “take”, and “have” not only have several entries for meaning in a dictionary, but they are also combined with a variety of participles, prepositions and nouns to form idiomatic expressions. Therefore, contrary to the nomenclature, basic verbs can sometimes be difficult for learners of ESL to master. Based on the principle that the basic verbs are not complicated, but rather have simple but ambiguous meanings, the core image is used to help students understand how they can apply the core meaning (simple) of a verb to various different contexts (ambiguous). It is a technique proposed by Shigenori Tanaka (1990) in “Ninchi imiron: Eigo doshino Tagino Kozo” to help students visualize the most fundamental meaning of a word and has applications beyond verbs to other parts of speech as well. In this paper, the use of the core image method to enable learners to first acquire the basic meaning of each of these verbs through a cognitive recognition of the verb’s core image, and subsequently, applying this to the explanation of idioms, will be explained. I will also suggest some pedagogical methods of helping students learn basic verbs which have been proven useful in the classroom.

1. Introduction

Many Japanese learners of English have problems with the usage of English prepositions. For example, they would often add a preposition when it is not required, and say for example, “phone to him” instead of just “phone him”, or use a wrong preposition as in “write by English” when it should be “write in English.”

A couple of issues are reflected in the examples above. Firstly, there is the difference between English and Japanese. In Japanese, the verb “phone” <denwa o suru> takes the following pattern:

(1) Taro ga Hanako ni denwa o shita.
   Taro NOM. Hanako DAT. Phone ACC. Do-Past
“Taro phoned Hanako.”

As shown in (1), the indirect object, Hanako, takes a morphological case marker “ni” to express the dative relationship between the subject and the (indirect) object. The word for “phone” <denwa> acts as the direct object. On the other hand, in English, “phone” is an intransitive verb which takes Hanako as the direct object.

Secondly, many learners have a tendency to translate a Japanese sentence in its original expression format without carefully considering the differences between the language, such as whether the verb is transitive or intransitive. Hence, for the above sentence, many Japanese learners would add “to”, which is the equivalent of “ni” when they make the same sentence in English, i.e. “Taro phoned to Hanako.”

Knowing the answer to why “Taro phoned Hanako”, does not require a “to” is the key to nurturing the “English sense”. In this paper, an approach we adopt to answer this question will be to focus on the relationship between expression (form) and contents (meaning). We posit that when the form is different, the meaning consequently differs.

Adult learners are different from child learners in the sense that they are more prone to interference from their Mother Tongue Language and have more difficulties in acquiring the “English sense”. What is important and useful to adult learners is to have a good understanding of the structures of English, and making practical use of it based on their sound knowledge of grammar. A constant cycle of learning and using is the key to being able to use English with no difficulties.

This paper adopts the following as a learning pattern for adult learners (Tanaka et al., 2006):

(2) The Awareness-Raising-Networking-Automatization (ARNA) Method
   (i) From asking “Why is it so?” to understanding “Is that so? I see!” (Awareness-Raising)
   (ii) Extending and applying the principle to other aspects. (Networking)
   (iii) Actively using what is learnt and striving to automatize the knowledge. (Automatization)

The question “why” is one of the most important ones a learner should be asking. “Why is “to” not necessary in “Taro phoned Hanako”? May be a simple question but indicates commitment to the learning of English. If the learner can understand the answer, then his thirst for knowledge will be satisfied, leading to a strong motivation to study English further. Moving on, if he can organize his own experiences and knowledge, then he would be able to convert the simple question of “why” to a learning strategy and get on his way to becoming a competent user of the language.

This paper first presents the world of basic verbs, the foundation of the English language, in the next section. In section 3, prepositions will be discussed. In both these sections, the “core theory” will be used in the explanation. In section 4, I will also
suggest some pedagogical methods of helping students learn basic verbs which have been proven useful in the classroom. Finally, I will summarize the main points of this paper in Section 5.

2. Basic Verbs

2.1 Introduction

To many people, a person’s vocabulary is judged by the number of words he knows. How many words a person knows, however, do not guarantee fluency and accuracy when using a language. The key to effective and accurate communication is how you use the vocabulary you know, more precisely, “differentiating and exhausting” your vocabulary is the main essence of your word power. But many users cannot confidently proclaim that they are able to do so.

One reason is that as there is no theory that captures the many meanings of basic verbs, learners are not taught how to “differentiate and exhaust” their vocabulary. In fact, many learner’s dictionaries show the meanings of basic verbs to be complicated and varied. We, on the other hand, claim that basic verbs have simple but ambiguous meanings. It is this ambiguity that gives rise to different interpretations according to the context of an expression, but how the simple meaning can be distilled is the main point.

Following the above discussion, this paper adopts the cognitive method of expressing physical experiences as diagrams (images) and explains the variety of meanings through these diagrams.

2.2 Students understanding of polysemic words

According to Tanaka et al. (2006, 3-5), there is hardly any literature on a systematic pedagogical approach to teaching polysemic words. For learners to master all the meanings of a word in a dictionary is difficult and does not guarantee that he will remember all of them. For example, the word “take” has the following meanings:

(3) (i) move from one place to another cf. “toru”
    “Take the book up to the third floor of the library.”

(ii) accept or have cf. “uketoru”
    “Do you take credit cards here?”

(iii) to move in order to hold something in the hands cf. “tsukamu”
    “He took my arm and led me outside.”

These are just some of the many meanings of “take”. Expecting a learner to remember them all is a tall order. Furthermore, if we shift our focus to the Japanese words, we end up with another problem. The respective translations of the Japanese words yield the following English verbs:

(4) (i) Toru: take, catch, get, etc.

(ii) Uketoru: take, receive, accept, etc.
(iii) Tsukamu: take, seize, grasp, etc.

In other words, “take” may correspond to n-number of Japanese translations and vice versa. Although it is natural for one to depend on the relationship between our Mother Tongue and the target language when learning a new language, this method of learning new meanings in the target language can produce negative results such as problems of “overextension” or “underextension”. To overcome such problems, we propose the “core” theory.

2.3 “Core” Theory

“The mind is freer than the tongue” (Bolinger 1977). It is more natural to find several meanings in a single word than to give one meaning to several different words. Thus said, there is still a limit as to how many meanings can be found in a single word, and a single overarching meaning that controls all these meaning still exists.

(5) Now we find a single overarching meaning which performance variables imbue with local tinges that pass for distinct senses. The deception is like what happens when we meet an acquaintance in an unexpected setting: we may not recognize him.

(Bolinger 1977: 19)

The “single overarching meaning” referred to by Bolinger is what we call the “core meaning”. The core meaning of a word refers to its common semantic base for all its composite meanings and is theoretically “context-free”. It only takes on a different meaning which is “context-sensitive” when it enters a particular pattern and is modulated by the context.

Figure 1.

Applying the above diagram to the core image of “break”, for example, we will find that it is used in different meanings after undergoing context modulations in different contexts, e.g. “He broke the world record”, “The day will break soon”, and “Peter broke his leg yesterday.” But “break” has a core meaning which exists even before the word enters a particular construction. And the core meaning of “break” is as follows:

(6) Core meaning of two-place predicate “break”
“x” acts on “y” to cause “y” to damage its inherent property (e.g. shape, function, movement).
When “break” is used in different contexts, it takes on context-sensitive meanings according to the argument it predicates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context-free</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Context-sensitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘X’ causes ‘y’ to change by adding a force on ‘y’</td>
<td>break a vase</td>
<td>change shape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>break his computer</td>
<td>change function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>break an egg</td>
<td>change shape and function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>break one’s journey</td>
<td>stop the movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>break the world record, the habit, a promise, a rule</td>
<td>stop the status quo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What are some of the meanings of “break”? The Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary contains 12 different entries for the verb “break”.

(7) 12 meanings of “break”

(a) damage
   “The dish fell to the floor and broke.”

(b) end
   “The enemy were unable to break the code.”

(c) not obey
   “He didn’t know he was breaking the law.”

(d) divide
   “I asked her to break her expenses down into food, accommodation, travel and personal costs.”

(e) interrupt
   “We usually break for lunch at 12:30.”

(f) use force
   “He threatened to break the door down.”

(g) emotion (to lose self-control, etc.)
   “He thought she would break under the strain.”

(h) become known
   “It was the local newspaper which first broke the story.”

(i) waves (moving and reaching the beach, cliff, etc.)
   “A huge wave broke on the shore.”

(j) day/dawn
   “Dawn broke over the city.”

(k) voice (changing from one state to another)
   “Her voice was breaking with emotion as she pleaded for her child’s return.”

(l) tennis (to win a game in which another player is serving)
   “Graf broke Sabatini’s serve in the second set.”

All these meanings when translated into Japanese have different words, for example, <kowasu> (damage), and <yaburu> (not obey). A learner will therefore try to use his list of Japanese words to understand the meanings of “break”. But <kowasu> can also be
translated into “smash” or “ruin”, so there is a problem of trying to complete map “break” onto <kowasu>. The learner will see that when he tries to understand “break” by applying his list of Japanese words, he will end up with more English words to remember when he realizes that the Japanese words correspond to different English ones. As a result, the meaning of “break” is not understood.

A comprehensive explanation of “break” is therefore necessary. To this end, we can further explain the core meaning of “break” (6) by dividing “y” into [+ motion] entities and [- motion] entities.

(8) a.  y = [- motion] entities
     break a vase, break the computer, break the story, break one’s heart
b.  y = [+ motion] entities
     break the world record, break one’s promise, huge waves break (against the cliff)

What is common among the [- motion] entities is an image of “damage to the shape or function” of the entities. For example, to “break a vase” is to cause its shape to change while “to break the computer” would be to damage its ability to function. If we imagine the entity to be broken as a “container”, then it would not be difficult to project the image of even an abstract entity such as the heart to take on the shape of a container.

Figure 2.

For the examples of y = [+ motion] entities, we find a common meaning of “stopping/ending the motion”. Sharing the same root with “break” is “brake”. “Brake” means to stop the movement of a vehicle in motion and this connotation is foregrounded in breaking the motion of a moving entity. For example when a promise is made, its effectiveness continues and “break one’s promise” can be interpreted as ending the effectiveness of the contract.

The words “core” and “peripheral” are often expressed in concentric rings as in the diagram on the left. But in this paper, to show that the core meaning is a common semantic base of all the composite meanings of a word, we prefer to diagrammatically express it as shown on the right.
A benefit of our image is the ability to express the sphere of control the core has over all the other meanings whereas in the image that is conventionally used, there is the implication that the bigger the ring, the further the meaning gets away from the core meaning. In the proposed core image diagram, the core meaning forms the base for all the different meanings, A, B and C, that the word takes on when it enters into different contexts. It encompasses the whole semantic field, i.e. all the meanings. The bigger the cone, the bigger the range of meanings it encompasses and the higher the cone, the more abstract the core meaning becomes.

The use of a core image to analyze the meaning of a word is called the “core theory”. The “core theory” advocates the following:

9) Core Theory:
(A) The meaning changes with the form.
(B) If the forms are the same, there is a common meaning.

The first point refers to the rejection of complete synonymy. For example, “take after” and “resemble” both mean roughly the same thing. Nevertheless, going by (A), there is a difference between these two forms as illustrated below:

10) (a) Ms. James resembles Ms. White in many respects.
    (b) ?Ms. James takes after Ms. White in many respects.
    (c) John takes after his father in many respects.

As the instability of (b) shows, the use of “take after” must satisfy two prerequisites, i.e. the two persons must be blood relatives and only a younger person can take after an older person. It is also strange to say that someone takes after an animal.

In addition, in the two expressions, “She threw away the key” and “She threw the key away”, the location is emphasized in “threw the key away.” The first point of the “core
theory” therefore applies not only to the lexical level but is also fundamental at the syntactic level.

The second point refers to the scope of core theory. In other words, the relationship between meanings may be opaque on the surface but in fact there is an underlying common thread linking all of them together. The advantage of the “core theory” is that it explains the continuum of meaning by showing connectivity of seemingly unrelated meanings. For example, “miss” in “I miss you” and “I missed the last train” may seem to have completely different meanings. But if we can imagine that the core meaning of “miss” is “to not be able to take hold of the target”, then we can see that the two different meanings are actually connected to each other.

Here, we use “take” as another example to explain the second point. “Take” according to The Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary contains 15 different entries

(11) 15 meanings of “take”

(a) move from one place to another
   “Take the book up to the third floor of the library.”
(b) accept or have
   “Do you take credit cards here?”
(c) move in order to hold something in the hands
   “He took my arm and led me outside.”
(d) remove something
   “Has anything been taken?”
(e) go somewhere with someone
   “We’re taking the children to the zoo on Saturday.”
(f) travel somewhere by using a particular form of transport
   “I always take the train – it’s less hassle than a car.”
(g) need
   “Parachuting takes a lot of nerve.”
(h) swallow or use a medicine, drug
   “Take this medicine three times a day.”
(i) do or perform
   “Shelley is taking economics at university.”
(j) think about something or someone in a particular way
   “We’re taking the bomb threats very seriously.”
(k) have or come to have a particular feeling or opinion
   “He doesn’t take any interest in his children.”
(l) receive money from sales or as payment for entrance to an event
   “The show took an astonishing $100,000 in its first week.”
(m) get possession of something or someone
   “Adam, I’d like you to take control of the aircraft now.”
(n) write
   “I hope you’re all taking notes.”
(o) work or perform as expected
   “These new plants haven’t taken – they don’t like this dry soil.”
The following expressions capture the complexity presented by the various meanings of “take” nicely:

(12)  
Take nothing but pictures.
Leave nothing but footprints.
Kill nothing but time.

“Take” in the first expression refers to both taking pictures and taking nothing. Seemingly different, the core meaning linking both meanings can be expressed as the following:

(13) Core meaning of two-place predicate “take”
\(<x \text{ take } y> : x \text{ leads } y \text{ into its world of HAVE}\)

What (13) means is that there are three aspects at work here as shown in Figure. 4, i.e. \(<x> \text{ moves } <y> \text{ from its location (A) to its own location (C) through a certain means (B)}.\)

Figure. 4

The meaning of “take” encompasses all three aspects and depending on which point is focused or foregrounded, the meaning also differs.

(14) A is foregrounded: take y from ~: [steal, remove, extract, subtract, etc.]
“Someone took my camera from my bag.”
B is foregrounded: have it in the hand: [grab, grasp, seize, etc.]
“He took her hand and looked into her eyes.”
C is foregrounded: lead y to one’s location: [receive, accept, acquire, etc.]
“He took the first prize at the contest.”

2.4 Summary

To summarize what this section has been discussing, we get the following points:

(15) (i) Basic verbs have a core meaning which is the common semantic base for all meanings.
(ii) Core meaning is context independent.
(iii) Core meaning can usually be visually represented.
(iv) Visual representation helps students to grasp the concept of core meaning.
3. The Extended World of Prepositions

3.1 Introduction

Prepositions are one of the most difficult grammar items for Japanese to acquire. This is attributable to the fact that the world of spatial relationships is expressed differently between the two languages. Take for example the following:

(16) E: an apple in the box
     prepositional phrase
     J: Hako no naka no ringo
     noun phrase GEN. apple

In English, the preposition “in” is used to express the spatial relationship between the “apple” and the “box”. In Japanese, a noun phrase using the formal noun “naka” (inside) is used; there is no Japanese equivalent to “in”.

To explain prepositions to Japanese, visualizations using the “core theory” are effective. There are three important schemas to bear in mind in this case:

(17) (a) Schema of projection
     (b) Schema of foregrounding
     (c) Schema blending

3.2 Schema of projection and prepositions

Prepositions express the spatial relationship between two entities, x and y. The most basic relationship is physical and when this relationship is schematically represented, it can be projected to express temporal, social and even psychological relationships. Taking the case of “in” as an example, we get the following different types of relationships:

(18) Schema projection of “in”:  
     x \hspace{10pt} \text{in} \hspace{10pt} y  
     a man \hspace{10pt} \text{in} \hspace{10pt} the room \hspace{10pt} [Physical]  
     a war \hspace{10pt} \text{in} \hspace{10pt} 1918 \hspace{10pt} [Temporal]  
     students \hspace{10pt} \text{in} \hspace{10pt} the radical group \hspace{10pt} [Social]  
     a woman \hspace{10pt} \text{in} \hspace{10pt} love \hspace{10pt} [Psychological]

The core image of “in” is “internal space”, and be extrapolation, a “container”. This can be clearly seen in the “a man in the room” example, where it is easy to imagine a person in a bounded three-dimensional space. Through schema projection, the image of a bounded space can be extended to the other examples, i.e. within the “space” of 1918, inside the radical group, inside the “boundary” of a feeling called love.

Nevertheless, such a projection is subject to certain constraints. In this case, it is restricted by the “principle of consideration”. This refers to how a person looks at the noun in question and the extent he considers it as a projection of the image the base word
conjures. With “in”, it means how much he considers the noun phrase as being “container-like”, to the effect of the following:

(19) Principle of consideration for “in”:
Consider the relationship of \(<x>\) and \(<y>\) as something expressed by “in”

The relationships expressed by a majority of prepositions are developed based on the principle of schema projection and principle of consideration, as seen in “in” above. Another principle governing the development of prepositional relationships is schema foregrounding.

3.3 Schema of foregrounding

We saw earlier with “take” how the schema of foregrounding can be used to explain the different meanings. Namely, the aspect of the word which is foregrounded will yield a particular meaning for the word. To explain schema of foregrounding, let’s look at the preposition “over”.

The core image of “over” can be represented as shown:

Figure 5.

(I) Source: The cat jumped over the fence.
(II) Path: The plane is flying over the Pacific Ocean.
(III) Coverage: He put a cloth over the table.
(IV) Goal: There is a castle over the mountain.

As seen above, there are four possible focus points – source, path, coverage, and goal. Depending on which point is focused, the nuance will vary accordingly. For (II), “above” may seem like a substitutable preposition but under (9A), when the form is different, the meaning is also different, we propose that the difference between “over” and “above” is that for “over”, the point foregrounded is in motion and all other points are backgrounded but for “above”, the point foregrounded is static and the other points are also foregrounded.

(20) a. The plane is flying over the Atlantic Ocean from London to New York.
    b. ?The plane is flying above the Atlantic Ocean from London to New York.

Thus, this schema of foregrounding when coupled with a diagrammatic representation of the prepositional relationship between two entities is useful in the explanation.
3.4 Schema blending

“Take over” is a phrasal verb using “over” and like the two examples below, have
different meanings when used in different contexts.

(21) a. The new teacher took over Mr. Smith’s class.
    b. A big Chinese company has taken over the company.

In (a), the meaning of “take over” is to take a position after someone else (“succeed”),
and in (b), it refers to becoming responsible for something (“control”). At the surface
level, both meanings do not seem to be linked, despite the fact that they share the same
syntactic form. This, however, can be explained with “schema blending”. In (a), (I) in
Figure. 5 is foregrounded and the act of succession is expressed as an arc starting from
the source position. On the other hand, in (b), (IV) in Figure. 5 is foregrounded, and the
smaller company is expressed as having been put under the control of the bigger
company. With schema blending, the relationship of seemingly unrelated words can be
expressed diagrammatically and easily understood.

Phrasal verbs use prepositions such as “over”, “around” and “in” to extend, emphasize
or to clarify the meaning of the verb it is used with. “Take” is used with prepositions such
as “over” and “down” to form phrasal verbs and the meaning of each verb differs from
the other. Alone, “take” does not have the meaning of “to succeed”, but coupled with
“over”, it acquires that particular meaning. This is an example of an extension of
meaning. With an adverb “away”, the nuance of “remove from somewhere” that is the
core image of “take” becomes emphasized. “Cut in” and “cut off” modify the meaning of
“cut” and make it clearer how the cut was made.

In this way, we can see that the meanings of phrasal verbs are not arbitrary but rather
derived from the process of schema blending of the verbal and prepositional or adverbial
schemas. Like basic verbs, this has implications on how students acquire phrasal verbs
and in the next section, we are going to look at some pedagogical methods that can be
used to help students in their learning process.

4. Pedagogical methods
4.1 Method Utilizing Schema Foregrounding

An effective way to teach prepositions is to use networking. For example, when we are
teaching a preposition such as “over”, we can choose to compare it with other
prepositions that express “path”, such as “across”, “along” and “through”. Focus on each
preposition and allow the students to realize the common semantic thread running
through all these prepositions.

[Teaching Point]
Foreground one aspect of the schema to show how the preposition develops its meaning and the similarity it shares with other prepositions. For example, with “path”, the meaning of “over” means to travel across a surface, the difference between over and the other prepositions is the manner in which the traveling is carried out.

Figure 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PATH</th>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>PERSPECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>across</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="across" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="across" /></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>through</td>
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<tr>
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<td><img src="image" alt="over" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="over" /></td>
<td><img src="image" alt="over" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 Method Utilizing Schema Projection

This is an effective method in teaching the meaning of “at”. First of all, the core image of “at” is to pinpoint a specific location.

Figure. 7

After establishing the core image, turn to show the systematic development of “at” as follows:
(22) Systematic Development of “at”

(23) Projecting the basic meaning of “at” onto abstract concepts

[Place] I’ll wait at the gate.
[State] He is still at work.
[Degree] He maintained at 80 km/hr.
[Condition/Reason] I’ll get even with her at any price/He ran away at the sight of a dog.
[Time/Order] Can you meet me at 2p.m.?/My brother left home at the age of 18.

[Teaching Point]

This method is to show students that “at” is not something that has many meanings, but rather it has developed from expressing a location, to expressing a state, condition, and the time, etc.

4.3 Method Utilizing Schema Blending

Schema blending is effective in teaching phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs are a combination of a verb with a preposition or adverb expressing space. Therefore, the meaning of a phrasal verb can be understood as a blending of the schema of the verb with the schema of the spatial word. By placing the verbs on one axis and the spatial words on the other axis to create a matrix as seen below, students can choose to confirm the meaning of the phrasal verb by centering on the verb or centering on the spatial word.
As mentioned in the last paragraph, we can choose to focus on the spatial word by centering on the verb. For example, by centering on “hold”, we get “hold in”, “hold off”. This enables students to see the connectivity between the different phrasal verbs using “hold”. Or conversely, students can choose to center on a spatial word, such as “in” and understand the common meaning underlying all the permutations with “in”. In this way, they are expected to understand the core meaning of “in”.

5. Conclusion

In this paper we have seen that all verbs and prepositions, even if they express different meanings in different contexts have a common semantic base which is context independent. This core meaning of a verb can usually be visually represented and is proven useful in helping students to grasp verb concepts.

We have also seen how the “core theory” works. The basic principles of the “core theory” reject complete synonymy between two different forms and claim that a common semantic thread runs through forms which are similar. The “core theory” explains how seemingly unrelated meanings are in fact just dots on the continuum of a particular meaning.

Furthermore, we know that there are three important schemas in the “core theory”, namely, the schema of projection, the schema of foregrounding, and schema blending. Each schema serves to develop on the basic core meaning of a verb and preposition through extension, highlighting or combination. Taken together, the schemas and the principles behind the “core theory” show that the meanings of basic verbs are not complicated and varied, but rather just ambiguous. In other words, such verbs have simple meanings which take on different nuances when they undergo different processes.
such as schema projection. This is an important point to stress to students because it takes away much of the psychological and actual burden of having to remember all the meanings of different verbs.

The “core theory” has been effective in helping students acquire the meaning of not only verbs, but also prepositions. It is a vital concept in learning because visual perception is one of the most important gateways to cognition.

References