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## **Monitoring strategy in shadowing: self-monitoring and pair-monitoring**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines shadowing, or the on-line simultaneous repetition of heard speech, in the EFL context, and suggests how monitoring might be incorporated into shadowing activities to create a learning method. Shadowing has been used as a technique to improve listening skills, especially bottom-up skills. The study investigates two approaches to monitoring — self-monitoring and pair-monitoring — and compares how they affect phoneme awareness development and listening comprehension in lower- and higher-proficiency English learners. A total of 61 Japanese national university sophomores were divided into a 30-student pair-monitoring group and a 31-student self-monitoring group. Quantitative analyses showed that phoneme perception improved in both groups; however, while the self-monitoring group's lower-proficiency learners' listening comprehension skills improved, the pair-monitoring group's did not. Additionally, the higher-proficiency learners in both groups failed to improve their listening comprehension skills. The depth of their monitoring process could be the primary cause.

**Keywords:** Shadowing, monitoring, learning strategy, listening

## **Introduction**

The echoic exercise of *shadowing* has sparked new research interest since its introduction (in Tamai, 1992) into English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching contexts. Mostly used in Japan, shadowing is gradually spreading to other Asian EFL contexts, including those of Malaysia (Omar & Umehara, 2010), Taiwan (Lin, 2009), and Iran (Amoli & Ghanbari, 2013). However, the popularity of shadowing as an EFL teaching technique for listening is still quite limited. Given the fundamental function of shadowing, EFL learners whose first language has a sound system quite different from that of English will benefit most from shadowing. In the field of Japanese EFL, various aspects of shadowing have been investigated by researchers (Hamada, 2011, 2012; Kato, 2009; Mochizuki, 2006; Kuramoto, Nishida, Isobe, & Shiki, 2010; Oki, 2011), as they also have in Japanese as a second language (JSL) research (Iwashita, 2010; Kurata, 2007; Sakoda, 2010; Sakoda, Furumoto, Nakagami, Sakamoto, & Goto, 2009), including its influence on listening comprehension skills, reproduction rate, and working memory.

Kadota (2007, 2012) proposed that shadowing's effectiveness extends beyond listening skills improvement, but that when learners listen to "heard speech" and reproduce it simultaneously, it becomes difficult or impossible for them to monitor their performance on-line. To address this, this study proposes a way to improve the effectiveness of shadowing by compensating for listeners' missed opportunities for monitoring.

## **What is shadowing?**

Shadowing was originally used as a technique for training novice interpreters, but has more recently been imported as an EFL teaching technique for improving listening in particular. Studies on the technique have flourished in Japan (Hamada, 2011, 2012; Kato, 2009; Kuramoto, Shiki, Nishida, & Ito, 2007; Mochizuki, 2006; Mori, 2011; Tamai, 1992, 1997), and at least some other research has examined the use of shadowing in English classrooms in other Asian contexts (e.g., Amoli & Ghanbari, 2013; Lin, 2009; Omar & Umehara, 2010).

Shadowing is an active, cognitively demanding exercise where learners simultaneously track speech they hear and vocalize it as clearly as possible (Tamai, 1997). As shown in the example below, it differs from superficially similar tasks such as repetition in that shadowing is an *on-line* process: learners must vocalize the

speech the moment they hear it. In contrast, repeating is an *off-line* task, allowing learners silent pauses to reflect on and reproduce what they have heard. This subtle difference is crucial: learners focus exclusively on incoming sounds when shadowing, improving their speech perception of the target language (Kadota, 2007). Examples using sentences from Twain (1876/2008) are as follows.

*Shadowing:*

Audio: Aunt Polly looked under the bed. Then she opened the door

Student: Aunt Polly looked under the bed. Then she opened the door

*Repetition:*

Audio: Aunt Polly looked under the bed.

Student: Aunt Polly looked under the bed.

Audio: Then she opened the door.

Student: Then she opened the door.

Shadowing can be explained in terms of Baddeley's (2007) working memory system, which consists of four elements: *central executive*, *episodic buffer*, *phonological loop*, and *visual-spatial sketchpad*. Specifically, shadowing benefits the phonological loop, which consists of two components — a *phonological store* and *articulatory rehearsal* —and plays an essential role in phonological coding and subvocal rehearsal. The phonological loop processes and stores incoming information for two seconds, so shadowing training can be used to help learners retain and rehearse increased amounts of phonological information in those two seconds (Kadota & Tamai, 2004). Through shadowing, learners can improve their listening process from the bottom up, augmenting their perception of speech phonemes while increasing their short-term memory capacity.

Conceptualizing shadowing as a learning procedure, Suzuki and Kadota (2012) proposed a learning model of shadowing and oral reading (Figure 1), in which shadowing helps learners create phonological representations and improve their articulation rate, leading to faster subvocal rehearsal and more effective internalization of vocabulary and content. Shadowing improves phoneme perception and listening skills (Suzuki & Kadota, 2012). Studies confirm the effectiveness of shadowing in improving listening comprehension skills (Hamada, 2011; Kato, 2009;

Mochizuki, 2006; Tamai, 1997), articulation rate (Miyake, 2009), and reproduction rate (Nakayama, 2011; Shiki, Mori, Kadota, & Yoshida, 2010). However, there is no consensus on how shadowing most effectively figures into efficacious language teaching or learning approaches.

*Figure 1.* A learning model of shadowing or oral reading (Suzuki & Kadota, 2012, p.349).

### **Monitoring in the process of learning**

Shadowing confronts a crucial problem with regard to teaching procedure: it is difficult for learners to monitor their performance because of the on-line nature of shadowing. When shadowing, learners concentrate on immediately speaking the heard words; they lack time and cognitive capacity to simultaneously monitor their performance. Tanaka (2004) contends that self-monitoring while shadowing is ineffective because learners' attention is mostly absorbed in shadowing. Thus, language learning is inevitably hindered unless an alternative step is added to the shadowing procedure.

The importance of monitoring has been discussed from at least two perspectives: those of *learning strategies* and *Monitor Theory*. First, from the perspective of learning strategies, monitoring strategy belongs to *metacognitive strategies* (e.g., *paying attention, planning, obtaining and using resources, organizing, implementing plans, orchestrating cognitive strategy use, monitoring, evaluating*). These strategies help learners manage crucial cognitive aspects of

language learning (Oxford, 2011). Monitoring strategy crucially affects the subsequent learning. There are two distinctive types of self-monitoring: (1) *noticing* errors one makes while performing and (2) *correcting* errors the moment they are noticed (Chamot & Kupper, 1989). Both types of monitoring are impaired during shadowing, and this deficit must be alleviated to support and maximize learning.

In addition, the role of monitoring has been discussed as part of Krashen's (1982) Monitor Theory, which puts a great importance on monitoring as a way of linking acquisition and learning. In this theory, acquisition occurs subconsciously and learning, consciously; further, the learned system works as a monitor for the production of the acquired system. To achieve this kind of monitoring, three conditions need to be met, as follows: (1) Learners need sufficient time to consciously use the language; (2) they need to focus on form; and (3) they need to know the rule order to apply it. Though Monitor theory has been criticized, as Shirai (2008) mentions, and is considered somewhat obsolescent, it still conveys the basic theoretical importance of monitoring. Although shadowing has gradually come to be recognized as an effective EFL teaching technique in Asia, further exploiting its potential as a language learning method could significantly increase its effectiveness and broaden its usefulness.

### **Self-monitoring and pair-monitoring**

Research shows that language learning is greatly enhanced when learners can monitor their effort and progress (Bloom, 2013). To create a monitoring strategy suited to shadowing, learners have two choices: *self-monitoring* using an IC recorder (an audio-recording device) and *pair-monitoring* (Nakayama & Suzuki, 2012).

During self-recorded (IC) shadowing, learners' anxiety levels are considered to be lower than when monitored by a partner, since they are not concerned with any communicative or interactional factors and can simply focus on self-study (Nakayama & Suzuki, 2012; see also Ogiwara, 2007). For example, learners need not worry about their partner's reaction to their performance. Self-monitoring in this case is considered an off-line process, with learners receiving stimulus from visual (a written script) and phonological (IC recorder) materials, which they can play back several times. In pair-monitoring, learners receive this opportunity only once (Nakayama & Suzuki, 2012). Therefore, more accurate noticing of errors should occur in self-monitoring than in pair-monitoring shadowing.

However, pair-monitoring has potential advantages as well. Although it may take time for pairs to grow accustomed to checking each other's performance, other opportunities for collaboration potentially emerge when learners have questions or when they stumble (e.g., one person may help the other pronounce a word or may give advice). Learners in a pair-monitoring situation can consider each other's errors (Edge, 1989), fostering better noticing. Additionally, pairs learn to rely on each other for help, becoming less dependent on the teacher (Edge, 1989). It is suggested that participants in pair-monitoring should be at a certain level of proficiency in order to monitor each other's performance accurately and precisely (Nakayama & Suzuki, 2012; Sakoda, 2010). Some studies show that foreign language learners who worked on pair-monitored shadowing do not outperform their self-monitoring counterparts (Nakayama & Suzuki, 2012; see next section) or those receiving instructor feedback (Sakoda et al., 2009). Sakoda et al. theorized that participants' low proficiency level prevented them from checking details and interfered with their noticing. These findings suggest that a certain listening proficiency threshold may be required to benefit from pair-monitored shadowing.

Nakayama and Suzuki (2012) compared the effectiveness of self-monitoring and pair-monitoring on learners' reproduction rate. Three equal-sized groups of Japanese university freshmen (11–12 students each) participated. Their English proficiency was considered equal, judging from the official TOEIC practice listening test they had taken. The *self-monitoring group* shadowed while recording themselves on an IC recorder, then checked their performance against a written script. In the *pair-monitoring group*, student partners checked their performance against a written script. Finally, the *control group* shadowed and checked their recollected performance against a written script. Each group repeated the shadowing activity three times. The results showed that the self-monitoring group outperformed the other two groups in reproduction rate.

These results indicate that self-monitoring serves as an effective alternative to on-line monitoring while shadowing. Although self-monitoring is reportedly effective in increasing reproduction rate, the question remains whether self-monitoring in shadowing contributes to language learning in terms of learners' phoneme perception and general listening comprehension skills over an extended period.

## **Research questions**

This study will attempt to identify effective uses of shadowing as a teaching technique focusing on monitoring strategy, by comparing the effectiveness of self-monitoring and pair-monitoring approaches to shadowing. The first research question is as follows: *Which approach best improves learners' phoneme perception and general listening skills?* Because overall language proficiency is another salient factor in shadowing, the second research question is as follows: *Do learners' improvements in phoneme perception and listening skills differ according to their initial listening proficiency?*

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

A total of 61 Japanese national university sophomores (25 male, 36 female) were divided into a pair-monitoring group of 30 health science majors (2 male, 28 female), and a self-monitoring group of 31 engineering majors (23 male, 8 female). Because this study aims to further the application of shadowing in their classrooms, the participants constitute an appropriate, convenient sample. In general, their English proficiency was considered around intermediate-level, first, based on a listening pre-test that consists of high-school and university-level questions. The mean score was 10.59 out of 22.00, which is neither high nor low (see more details in Materials). In addition, they had received 60 compulsory lessons in English for Academic Purpose in their first year.

To satisfy research ethics requirements, the author received written permission from the participants to use the data collected in the set of lessons for this study. Since pair-monitoring requires some listening proficiency, as already mentioned, the health science group was chosen as the pair-monitoring group because their listening comprehension scores on the pretest were 2.73 points higher than those of the latter group (see Results).

For analysis, each group was further divided into two proficiency subgroups (higher and lower) to enable comparison between the subgroups. The cut-off point was the mean pre-test listening score for all participants, 10.59 out of 22.00.

## Materials

To compare the effectiveness of learners' learning strategies, this research controlled the crucial potential distracter: difficulty of content and vocabulary. An audio-book version of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (Twain, 1876/2008) was chosen for daily shadowing training. The edition was drawn from Oxford's Bookworms Library collection, a series of *graded readers* ranging from levels one to seven. At each level, learners should know a certain number of headwords, or key vocabulary items. *Tom Sawyer* is from the second-lowest of the seven levels, at which learners should know only 400 headwords. The first chapter and the beginning of the second were used (number of words in each passage: 159–184). The text was expected to present few problems for comprehension, even on first reading. The average number of words spoken per minute was 85.9, a relatively slow rate of speech. Flesch Reading Ease (the closer the number to 100, the easier the passage) was more than 90 for all passages, meaning that the passages are quite easy. Most words used in the materials were in the K1000 and K2000 word lists and most off-list words were names, which means the vocabulary appearing in the text was basic. (See more details in Table 1 below). All of the type–token ratios were around 0.50, which means that approximately five out of 10 words appeared more than once in the target passage. Taken together, these findings mean that the vocabulary items in the texts are generally easy and are used repeatedly throughout the passages.

Table 1

### *Details of the Material*

Day	Word number	FRE	Spoken WPM	Type–token ratio	K1000 words (%)	K2000 words (%)
1	165	95.0	79	0.53	84.24	7.88
2	169	94.4	101	0.47	88.17	7.10
3	184	100.0	80	0.47	84.78	7.07
4	168	100.0	85	0.59	82.14	10.12
5	186	99.6	97	0.56	82.26	5.38
6	173	94.0	93	0.52	86.13	5.78
7	159	100.0	73	0.58	87.42	5.03

8	165	95.8	79	0.52	77.06	6.47
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*Note.* FRE = Flesh reading ease, WPM = Word per minute, K1000 = Most frequent 1000 words (Cobb, 2013), K2000 = Most frequent 2000 words (Cobb, 2013), Type-token ratio = number of types: number of tokens.

In order to assess learners' listening comprehension skills improvement resulting from the shadowing training, questions need to measure learners' listening comprehension skills in a way that reflects the bottom-up improvement expected as a result of shadowing training. For this purpose, the author chose questions in which learners listen to a short (30–40 second) dialog and select the best answer to a question from four choices, because this type of question tests the ability to understand short segments of speech employing relatively simple expressions. Ultimately, 22 items were selected ( $\alpha = .70$ ): 10 taken from the Eiken Test in Practical English Proficiency Grade Pre-2 Part II (Eiken Foundation, 2013a), and 12 from Eiken Grade Pre-1 Part I (Eiken Foundation, 2013b). Eiken is a Japanese standardized English proficiency test, published by Japan's Eiken Foundation. It consists of seven levels ranging from Grade 5 (low) to Grade 1 (high). Grade Pre-2 is middle level (appropriate for high-school student); Grade Pre-1 is the second-highest level (appropriate for intermediate-level university students, like the current participants) (Eiken Foundation, 2013c).

To measure phoneme perception improvement, following other similar types of studies (e.g., Kuramoto et al., 2007), a dictation cloze test was considered appropriate because in it, learners were required simply to write down the sounds they hear. It was necessary to eliminate the possibility that they cannot fill in the blank because they do not know the word, or rely on their semantic knowledge to answer when failing to catch the sounds of the tested words successfully. For these reasons, the cloze test's passage was taken from a radio website, *Voice Of America (VOA) Special* (2011), whose materials target EFL learners; 20 function words, mainly articles and prepositions, were blanked out and tested (see Appendix). These function words were selected to test learners on words they all knew. The passage was read at approximately 127 words per minute.

The same tests were used as pre- and post-tests to prioritize reliability matters by avoiding potential issues stemming from using two different sets of questions. To

reduce the disadvantages of the test–retest method, there was approximately one month between the pre- and post-tests, and learners received no debriefing or explanation of the test content after the pre-test. Ideally, a control group would have been included to confirm that any improvement was due to the shadowing training. However, in this case, no control group was used, because past studies have already confirmed the effectiveness of shadowing for listening, and because the study’s primary purpose was to compare the two different monitoring strategies.

## Procedures

Following the initial pre-test for listening comprehension and phoneme perception, participants began shadowing practice. Twice a week for a month (eight times in all), for the first 30 minutes of class, participants practiced the revised version of the shadowing procedures provided by Kadota and Tamai (2004) (Table 2), which has been shown to improve learners’ listening comprehension skills (Hamada, 2012). Based on experimental evidence, Shiki et al. (2010) have proposed that five or six iterations of shadowing for the same passage are sufficient for improvement; similarly, Hamada (2012) employed six iterations—as did the present study.

Differences between the two groups are shown in stages 5 and 8 (Table 2). The members of the self-monitoring group recorded their shadowing voices and checked their performance with an IC recorder, a script, and a pen, highlighting their errors after recording. In contrast, in each pair-monitoring group, one partner used a script and a pen to highlight the errors made by the other; then, the partners switched roles. Afterwards, the pair-monitoring group checked their monitored performance together.

Post-tests were conducted at the conclusion of the four-week session.

*Table 2*

Shadowing procedure used in the experiment

Stage	Instruction
1	Listen to the passage
2	<i>Mumbling</i> twice (silently shadow the incoming sounds without text)
3	<i>Parallel reading</i> (shadow while reading the text)
4	Silently check the script for 3 minutes

5	Recording (Self-monitoring Group); Pair check (Pair-monitoring Group), check afterward
6	Shadowing twice
7	Review the text for 3 minutes, to clarify unclear parts
8	Recording (Self-monitoring Group); Pair check (Pair-monitoring Group), check afterward
9	Describe monitoring results on handout

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## Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the main features of the collected data. Next, to compare improvements in listening comprehension and phoneme perception skills respectively, a two-way ANOVA was employed for each because the model had two variables (Brown, 1988) (learners' *proficiency* for the independent variable and pre–post *time* for the dependent variable). For each group (self-monitoring and pair-monitoring), the mixed-design two-way ANOVA was performed with *proficiency* being the between-subjects factor and *time* being the within-subject factor.

The reproduction rate of shadowing was not assessed, because this study focused more narrowly on the effectiveness of different monitoring styles for improving phoneme perception and listening skills; in addition, it has already been established that self-monitoring of shadowing has positive effects on reproduction rate (Nakayama & Suzuki, 2012).

## Results

Overall, these results show that both groups improved their phoneme perception. However, while the lower-proficiency learners in the self-monitoring group improved their listening comprehension skills, those in the pair-monitoring group did not. Additionally, the higher-proficiency learners in both groups did not improve their listening comprehension skills. Based on the detailed description of the results that follows, their implications will then be considered in the Discussion.

Within the pair-monitoring group, the mean score of the lower-proficiency subgroup on listening comprehension skills increased by 1.82 from 8.36 to 10.18; that of the higher- proficiency subgroup increased by 0.15 from 14.11 to 14.26 (Table 3, Figure 2). A two-way ANOVA showed no statistically significant difference for the

main effect of time ( $F[1, 28] = 3.73, p = .06, \eta_p^2 = .12$ ), with no interaction ( $F[1, 28] = 2.63, p = .12, \eta_p^2 = .09$ ), but it did show a statistically significant difference for the main effect of proficiency ( $F[1,28] = 42.09, p = .00, \eta_p^2 = .60$ ) (Table 4). The results show that the pair-monitoring group had no statistically significant gains in their listening comprehension skills.

*Table 3*

Listening test scores for the LG and MG groups

Skill	Group (N)	Pre-		Post-		Improvement
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Listening	Pair- (11)	8.36	1.67	10.18	1.95	1.82
	Pair- (19)	14.11	2.15	14.26	2.95	0.16
	Self- (21)	7.24	1.92	9.95	2.10	2.71
	Self- (10)	13.4	2.62	13.6	2.97	0.20
Phoneme perception	Pair- (11)	9.55	3.03	12.36	1.87	2.82
	Pair- (19)	12.05	3.00	14.58	2.48	2.53
	Self- (21)	7.29	3.24	9.52	2.87	2.24
	Self- (10)	10.1	3.53	12.4	3.38	2.30

*Table 4*

Listening test ANOVA results

Factor	Group	
	Pair-monitoring	Self-monitoring
Time	$F(1, 28) = 3.73, p = .06, \eta_p^2 = .12$	$F(1, 29) = 6.96, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .19$
Proficiency	$F(1, 28) = 42.09, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .60$	$F(1, 29) = 45.53, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .61$
Interaction	$F(1, 28) = 2.63, p = .12, \eta_p^2 = .09$	$F(1, 29) = 5.18, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .15$

*Note.*  $\eta_p^2$  = partial eta squared, one indicator of effect size.

Table 5

Phoneme Perception Test's Results of ANOVA

Factor	Group	
	Pair-monitoring	Pair-monitoring
Time	$F(1, 28) = 22.25, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .44$	$F(1, 29) = 25.95, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .48$
Proficiency	$F(1, 28) = 7.21, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .21$	$F(1, 29) = 5.73, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .047$
Interaction	$F(1, 28) = 0.07, p = .80, \eta_p^2 = .002$	$F(1, 28) = 0.005, p = .95, \eta_p^2 = .000$

Note.  $\eta_p^2$  = partial eta squared, one indicator of effect size.

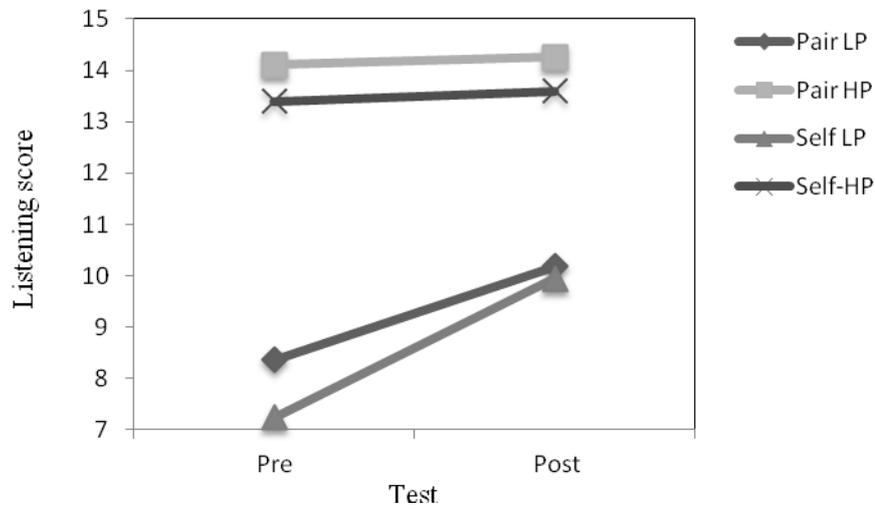


Figure 2. Listening comprehension pre- and posttest scores.

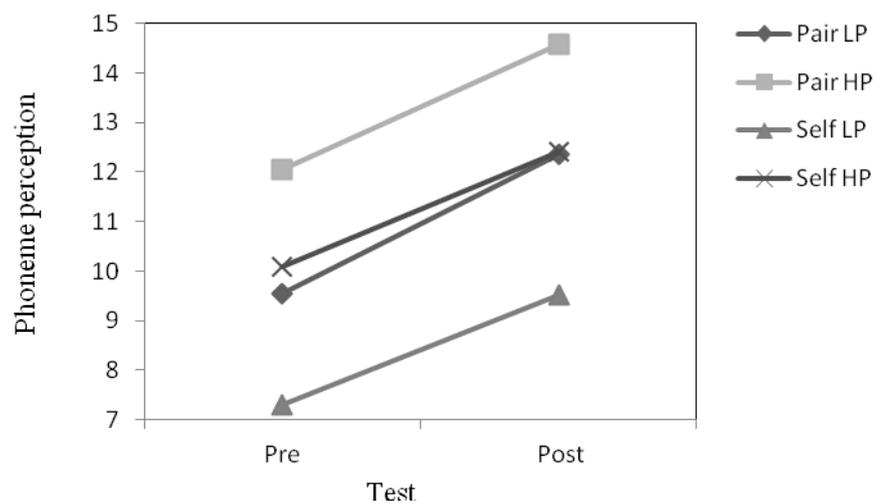


Figure 3. Phoneme perception pre- and post-test scores.

As for phoneme perception, the mean score of the lower-proficiency subgroup increased by 2.81 from 9.55 to 12.36, and that of the higher proficiency subgroup increased by 2.53, from 12.05 to 14.58 (Table 3, Figure 3). A two-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference for the main effects of time ( $F[1, 28] = 22.25, p = .00, \eta_p^2 = .44$ ) and group ( $F[1, 28] = 7.21, p = .01, \eta_p^2 = .21$ ); however, no significant difference was found for the main effect of interaction ( $F[1, 28] = 0.07, p = .80, \eta_p^2 = .002$ ). These results show that both proficiency levels of subgroups improved their phoneme perception (Table 5).

In the self-monitoring group, the mean score of the lower-proficiency subgroup on listening comprehension skills increased by 2.71, from 7.24 to 9.95, and that of the higher-proficiency subgroup increased by 0.20, from 13.40 to 13.60 (Table 3, Figure 2). A two-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference for the interaction ( $F[1, 29] = 5.18, p = .03, \eta_p^2 = .15$ ) (Table 4). The simple main effect of time for the lower-proficiency subgroup showed a statistically significant difference ( $F[1, 29] = 18.70, p < .01$ ), but that for the higher group did not ( $F[1, 29] = .20, p = .83$ ). The simple main effect of proficiency showed a statistically significant difference for both the pre-test ( $F[1, 29] = 51.02, p < .01$ ) and the post-test ( $F[1, 29] = 14.40, p = .001$ ). These results suggest that only the lower-proficiency subgroup improved their listening comprehension skills.

The mean score on phoneme perception for the lower-proficiency subgroup increased by 2.23, from 7.29 to 9.52, and that of the higher-proficiency subgroup increased by 2.30, from 10.10 to 12.40 (Table 3, Figure 3). A two-way ANOVA showed a statistically significant difference for the main effects of time ( $F[1, 29] = 25.95, p < .01, \eta_p^2 = .48$ ) and proficiency ( $F[1, 29] = 5.73, p = .02, \eta_p^2 = .047$ ), but not for that of interaction ( $F[1, 28] = 0.005, p = .95, \eta_p^2 = .000$ ). These results show that both proficiency groups improved their phoneme perception (Table 5).

## Discussion

The results suggest that the phoneme perception of both types of groups improved, offering further evidence for the established perceptual benefits of shadowing. However, statistical evidence of improvement of listening comprehension skills was limited to the lower-proficiency learners in the self-monitoring group. Phoneme perception improvement did not necessarily contribute to listening

comprehension improvement. These results are discussed here from perspectives of *precision of monitoring* and *noticing and attention*, which together suggest three possible explanatory accounts of learners' listening processes. Based on these analyses, the results are discussed further in terms of the nature of shadowing and learners' listening proficiency.

The theoretical advantages of self-monitoring shadowing appear to be greater than those of pair-monitoring in that more precise monitoring is possible under the former approach. In terms of factors affecting *precision of self-monitoring*, both *noticing* and *attention* — two of the most important factors in language learning (Schmidt, 1990, 1993) — may occur during self-monitoring.

In self-monitoring, as also mentioned in Nakayama and Suzuki (2012), learners benefit from more precise monitoring, in that they can check every part of their performance, playing back the recorded self-performance if necessary; thus, self-monitoring is considered to reinforce noticing and attention. In consideration of knowledge acquisition, monitoring enables learners to notice and pay attention to their errors, which in turn enhances learning: Both attention and noticing enhance information input and lead to effective learning (Oishi, 2009). Thus, more precise monitoring is considered to improve both attention and noticing. Moreover, the advantage of self-monitoring over pair-monitoring is that each learner can monitor even minor phonological aspects. For example, in the sentence “Aunt Polly looked under the bed” (Twain, 1876/2008, p. 1), self-monitoring learners can check if they enunciated the reduced sound of *ed* in *looked*, while pair-monitoring learners may not be able to do so unless their partner carefully picked up this feature. This may help the self-monitoring learners prepare for subsequent shadowing, and learners' attention to phonology while shadowing may become more conscious than before. Without these, improvements in phoneme perception are more likely to occur unconsciously, as learners work on the on-line task of shadowing and eventually improve their skill at it. Therefore, the enhanced noticing and attention stemming from more precise self-analysis may shift the process from unconscious to conscious and learning may become more efficient.

Additionally, from the perspective of Krashen's Monitor Theory, the three criteria of *time*, *focus on form*, and *knowing the rule* are met for the self-monitoring group. Both groups know the rule, because the target material was an easy textbook for extensive reading, but quality differences of *time* and *focus on form* may exist.

The self-monitoring group was given sufficient opportunity to consciously monitor their individual performance and to focus on form. However, it may have been difficult for the pair-monitoring group to achieve this, because the shadower in each pair had to rely on their partner's monitoring; therefore, the shadowers did not have the chance to check their performance individually, as the self-monitoring group did; and if the partner failed to monitor precisely, the shadower then could not focus on form.

These analyses suggest two plausible assumptions. First, the degree of phoneme perception improvement may differ across monitoring methods: in the pair-monitoring group, learners' ability to merely recognize heard phonemes improved. On the other hand, because of the deeper monitoring engaged in by the self-monitoring learners, they may have been able to apply their ability to perceive phonemes as an element of word recognition, which could lead to better general listening comprehension skills. Second, more precise self-monitoring could enhance the bottom-up process of listening—consisting of phoneme perception and then word recognition (Rost, 2011)—more efficiently than pair-monitoring. Precise monitoring and careful attention may strengthen the connection between phonological features and word contours in learners' mental lexicon. Through the process of monitoring, learners can thus connect “what was not heard” to “what could be heard.”

However, improvement in listening comprehension skills was limited to the lower-proficiency learners in the self-monitoring group. As other studies (Hamada, *in press*; Kato, 2009; Tamai, 2005) also point out that shadowing is more effective for lower-proficiency groups, it may be that shadowing training improves bottom-up listening skills that more advanced learners have already acquired. With this theory in mind, the results of this study should be interpreted as follows: (1) more accurate monitoring occurred among the self-monitoring group than among the pair-monitoring group, stimulating noticing and attention, which in turn strengthened these learners' bottom-up listening skills; and (2) because shadowing seems to disproportionately benefit low-proficiency learners, the lower-proficiency learners in the self-monitoring group outperformed the higher-proficiency learners in terms of improvement.

The fact that similar improvements in listening comprehension were not seen among pair-monitoring learners can be explained in similar terms. The lower-proficiency learners in the pair-monitoring group may have found the monitoring task

difficult, as also suggested by Nakayama and Suzuki (2012) and Sakoda (2010), dismissing the potential for co-learning in pairs. In pair-monitoring, a partner is required to listen to all the words the other partner produces and evaluate them for accuracy. When the monitoring partner has inadequate listening skills, the monitoring tends to be inadequate as well. On the other hand, in self-monitoring, each learner can check his or her performance by playing it back if necessary, so accurate monitoring is ensured.

In sum, self-monitoring is a more precise method of monitoring that raises attention and may stimulate active, conscious learning. This in turn may enhance the bottom-up listening process by strengthening the quality of phoneme perception and word recognition skills. Further, shadowing seems to disproportionately benefit lower-proficiency learners, which may explain why only these listeners improved in the present study.

Three limitations to the present study require attention. First, incorporating a control group would have increased the reliability of the outcome reported here. In theory, the improvements the learners showed reflected the shadowing effect, but comparison of two groups analogous to the ones here with a control group would confirm this effectiveness. Second, the imbalanced nature of the groups and the small sample size are another consideration. These problems are often inevitable in this type of classroom-based study, and so replications of the present study are necessary to ensure the generalizability of its findings, for example across students with different majors and genders. Last, stricter assessment of the participants' initial English proficiency level (compromised in the present study because of the type of classroom experiment conducted) by means of the TOEIC or TOEFL would make the findings more convincing.

## **Conclusion**

Shadowing is effective for improving learners' phoneme perception skills, and self-monitoring is effective as a learning strategy for lower-level students. Among lower-proficiency learners in the self-monitoring group, monitoring became more precise and attention to phonemes improved. These effects may contribute to an effective cycle of monitoring–noticing–attention–better monitoring, improving both the quality of phoneme perception and the bottom-up process of listening. An

associated pedagogical implication for lower-proficiency learners is that shadowing training with self-monitoring not only encourages phoneme perception, but also improves basic listening comprehension skills. In contrast, higher-proficiency learners need to build such skills in a top-down manner to improve their listening comprehension further.

Though gradually increasing outside Japan, shadowing has historically been used and studied exclusively inside Japan. As Hamada (in press) mentions, shadowing is quite effective when the language distance between the learner's first language and English is large. In this respect, those whose first language does not belong to the Indo-European language family, including speakers of Asian languages such as Chinese, Korean, Thai, and so forth, will benefit in similar degree to Japanese learners. Those who are poor at listening and need to improve their bottom-up listening skills quickly for English examinations can also benefit. I encourage native English teachers to incorporate shadowing into their teaching repertoire to address the fundamental difficulty and importance of phoneme perception for EFL Asian learners.

Learners should choose appropriate strategies and be responsible for self-oriented feedback on their learning to ensure the effectiveness of those strategies (Zimmerman, 1990). Further examination of the findings of this study is of course needed, as outlined above, but the discussion here points toward important implications for the linkages between shadowing, proficiency, and active language learning. The author sincerely hopes this research will trigger interest in this area among more language instructors, especially outside Japan and among English-speakers, and consequently that more EFL learners will benefit from listening.

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#### Appendix: Sample Section of the Dictation Cloze Test

FAITH LAPIDUS: And I’m Faith Lapidus. Nearly three thousand people were killed (1.in ) the attacks against (2.the ) United States on September eleventh, two thousand one. Early (3.that ) morning, terrorists hijacked four passenger airplanes. Two planes struck (4.the ) World Trade Center in New York City. Another hit the Pentagon building, just (5.across ) the river from Washington, D.C.

Passengers on the fourth plane are said to have fought the hijackers. Their plane crashed on (6.a ) field in western Pennsylvania.

The victims were (7.from ) the United States and many other nations. It was the worst terrorist attack (8.in ) American history. But for many people, the event does not feel like history. Today, we hear some (9.of ) the ways the nine eleven attacks changed lives (10.around ) the world.

## **A comparative analysis between the vocabulary learning strategies of EFL from various demographical backgrounds**

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### **Abstract**

Vocabulary learning strategies are one of the most important factors in the teaching of a foreign language. Vocabulary learning strategies are said to aid learners with their acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information. In Taiwan, English has been an important part of the entire curriculum. Therefore, it is equally important to determine how students perceive English is taught. In most cases, the local Taiwanese students would perceive that their vocabulary competency is lower than that of the Vietnamese and Mainland Chinese students. To clarify this issue, this case study shall use the Vocabulary Learning Strategy Inventory (VLSI) to determine the current pedagogical methods employed by the students in a science and technology university. A total of around 400 student participants are surveyed. Frequencies of use within the three major vocabulary learning categories are asked. Such as: the discovery of the meaning of new vocabulary item category (DMV); the retention of the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary item category (RKV); and the expansion of one's knowledge of

vocabulary category (EKV). Results show that there exists a significant gender difference in all of the three VLSI categories. Furthermore, the VLSI results indicated that the expansion of knowledge in newly-learned vocabulary item category ranks the highest among the three learning categories with the Taiwanese students scoring the highest on most of the strategies. Lastly, comparative analyses are also provided for students of various demographics, such as the differences between the Mainland Chinese, Vietnamese, and local Taiwanese students' language learning strategies.

**Keywords:** discovery of meaning, retention, expansion of knowledge, vocabulary learning strategies, survey method, case study

## **Introduction**

In learning a foreign language, the vocabulary size (or the number of known vocabularies) is always crucial in order to become an effective speaker (Cameron, 2002; Hilton, 2008). Although, vocabulary knowledge is not prerequisite to language skills performance; however, knowing a large number of vocabularies can certainly help make a conversation more worthwhile and meaningful (Nagy, 1988). Furthermore, it is said that vocabulary knowledge enables language use, while language use enables the increase of vocabulary knowledge, and so on and so forth (Nation, 1993). In essence, the more exposed a learner to new vocabularies; the faster the learner would gain the language.

In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environment, there is always the question on the numbers of vocabularies a learner should acquire. Studies have shown that a native speaking university graduate would roughly have encountered around 20,000 word families (Goulden, Nation, & Read, 1990). On the other hand, to have a reasonable level of understanding, an EFL learner should know around 5,000 word families (Laufer, 1997; Nation, 1993). However, statistics have shown that existing graduates in EFL countries actually have lower word counts (Kyongho & Nation, 1989). Studies in Taiwan have shown that senior high school students graduate with a knowledge of between 2,000 to 3,000 word size (Chen, 1998), while around 3,600 for a non-English major college graduate (Hsu, 2009). In reality, there is a need to find more effective learning strategies so as to increase the vocabulary size of university graduates.

Within a university setting, observations suggest that most Taiwanese students perceived that their vocabulary competencies are much lower than their Mainland Chinese and Vietnamese student counterparts. With this in mind, the current case study shall layout the results of using the Vocabulary Learning Strategy Inventory (VLSI) developed by Siriwan (2007) as a tool in determining the current pedagogical methods employ by the students in a science and technology university within the Northern region of Taiwan.

### **Vocabulary learning strategies**

Vocabulary learning strategies is define “as the operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information (vocabulary)” (Oxford, 1990, p. 8), There are several different vocabulary learning strategies. Traditionally, students rely on memorizing a word list with definitions (such as words that are found in the dictionary). However, studies have shown that effective vocabulary learning cannot solely rely on rote memorization (Kang, 1995; W. D. Yang & Dai, 2011; Yuan & Lin, 2001). In effect, many experts and scholars have started to suggest and classify various vocabulary learning strategies.

Within the various vocabulary learning strategies, Cook and Mayer (1983) suggested a basic distinction between the activities, such as during the initial discovery of a word’s definition and the recollection of the word. Such classification is better known as the Discover/Consolidation vocabulary learning strategies. While, in a later book regarding vocabulary learning strategies, Oxford (1990) mentioned a total of 62 approaches. She further classified the strategies into *direct* and *indirect*. The strategies used directly in dealing with a new language are called direct strategies. Direct strategies are composed of three categories, namely: Memory, Cognitive, and Compensation. While, indirect strategies are used for general management of learning. Indirect strategies are composed of three categories, namely: Metacognitive, Affective, and Social strategies (please see figure 1 for more details).

Within the direct vocabulary learning strategy, the teacher explains the value, importance, and purpose of the strategy to the learners. This in turn raises the awareness of the learners; allowed them to identify specific strategies for specific tasks, and provided opportunities for practice, reflection, and self-evaluation (Oxford, 1990). While, within an indirect vocabulary learning strategy, learners identify new

vocabularies with previously known materials. Furthermore, learners are encouraged to work with each other, discuss, and help each other (de Arauz, 2009; Oxford, 1990).

After a few years, Schmitt (1997) reorganized the different vocabulary learning strategies by Cook and Mayer’s (1983) and Oxford’s (1990) and added one of his own. He adopted Social (SOC), Memory (MEM), Cognitive (COG), and Metacognitive (MET) strategies from Oxford’s (1990) classifications and added a new category called Determination (DET) strategies. Finally, Schmitt (1997) identified and regrouped the strategies into Cook and Mayer’s (1983) Discovery/Consolidation categories. Table 1 shows the Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies as suggested by Schmitt (1997, pp. 207-208).

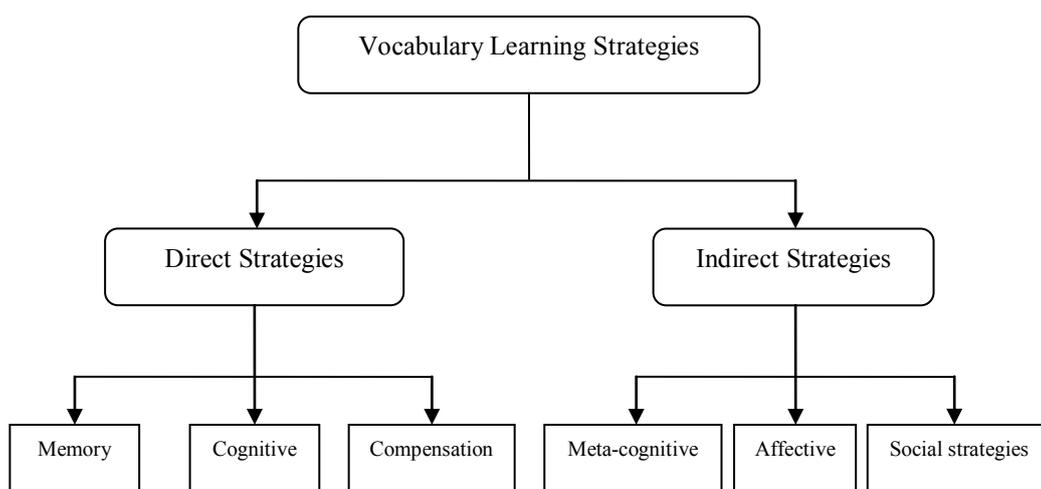


Figure 1. Oxford (1990) classification of vocabulary learning strategies

Gu and Johnson (1996) prior to Schmitt (1997) list of taxonomies, provided their own categories of Second Language (L2) vocabulary learning strategies, such as Metacognitive, Cognitive, Memory, and Activation. The first three are quite similar to Oxford’s (1990) categories, while Activation strategies are said to contain the strategies wherein learners actually use different words in different contexts. In 2001, Paul Nation also proposes taxonomy of various vocabulary learning strategies. The strategies in the taxonomy are divided into three major classes of specifically: Planning, Source, and Processes, wherein each of them is further divided into a subset of key strategies (Nation, 2001).

Nation (2001, p. 222) mentioned that “*planning* involves deciding on where, how and how often to focus attention on the vocabulary item. *Strategies* include the choosing of words, choosing aspects of word knowledge, and choosing strategies as

well as planning repetition. *Source* includes the getting of information about the word. This information may include all the aspects involved in knowing a word. It can come from the word form itself, from the context, from a reference source such as dictionaries or glossaries, and from analogies and connections with other languages. Lastly, *processes* include the establishment of word knowledge through noticing, retrieving and generating strategies”.

**Table 1**  
*Taxonomy of Vocabulary Learning Strategies*

Discovery (Strategies for the discovery of a new word’s meaning)			
DET	Analyze part of speech	DET	Word lists
DET	Analyze affixes and roots	DET	Flash cards
DET	Check for L1 cognate	SOC	Ask teacher for L1 translation
DET	Analyze any available pictures or gestures	SOC	Ask teacher for paraphrase or synonym of new word
DET	Guess from textual context	SOC	Ask teacher for a sentence including the new word
DET	Bilingual dictionary	SOC	Ask classmates for meaning
DET	Monolingual dictionaries	SOC	Discover new meaning through group work activity
Consolidation (Strategies for consolidating a word once it has been encountered)			
SOC	Study and practice meaning in a group	MEM	Use Key word Method
SOC	Teacher checks students’ flash cards word lists for accuracy	MEM	Affixes and roots
SOC	Interact with native-speakers	MEM	Part of speech
MEM	Study word with a pictorial representation of its meaning	MEM	Paraphrase the word’s meaning
MEM	Image word’s meaning	MEM	Use cognates in study
MEM	Connect word to a personal experience	MEM	Learn the words of idiom together
MEM	Associate the word with its coordinates	MEM	Use physical action when learning a word
MEM	Connect the word to its synonyms and antonyms	MEM	Use semantic feature grids
MEM	Use semantic maps	COG	Verbal repetition
MEM	Use ‘scales’ for gradable adjectives	COG	Written repetition
MEM	Peg Method	COG	Word lists
MEM	Loci Method	COG	Flash cards
MEM	Group words together to study them	COG	Take notes in class
MEM	Group words together spatially on a page	COG	Use the vocabulary section in your textbook
MEM	Use new word in sentences	COG	Listen to tape of word lists
MEM	Group words together within a storyline	COG	Put English labels on physical objects
MEM	Study the spelling of a word	COG	Keep a vocabulary note book
MEM	Study the sound of a word	MET	Use English-language media (songs, movies, etc.)
MEM	Say new word aloud when studying	MET	Testing oneself with word tests
MEM	Image word form	MET	Use spaced word practice
MEM	Underline initial letter of the word	MET	Skip or pass new word
MEM	Configuration	MET	Continue to study over time

Note. Source: Schmitt (1997, pp. 207-208)

Some recent strategies also included the notion that vocabularies are acquired through a three stage process of memorizing, using, and recycling (HKUST Center for Language Education, 2003), which actually are combinations of the previously mentioned strategies. More importantly, while learning new vocabularies, learners encountered various combinations of the Cook and Mayer’s (1983) and Oxford’s (1990) strategies. These vocabulary learning strategies actually complement each other (Wu, 2005). There is no doubt that students need these strategies for effective vocabulary language learning. In essence, it is then up to the classroom teachers to determine which strategies are appropriate for their students and become competent learners.

Oxford and Crookall (1990) suggested that teachers should become familiar with numerous vocabulary instruction tools and should be able to teach their students to properly use them. A typical vocabulary learning strategy is listed as follows: a) determine learners' needs by exploring expectations and current vocabulary learning techniques; b) choose relevant techniques to teach; c) find ways to incorporate these techniques into everyday language teaching; d) consider issues of student motivation toward and anxieties concerning learning L2 vocabulary; e) prepare materials and activities; f) conduct completely informed training, in which learners are explicitly told how to use a particular approach to learn a given word, how to evaluate the success of the technique, and how to transfer it to a new word or group of words; g) evaluate the training in terms of improvement in vocabulary learning, attitudes, and self-confidence; and h) revise the training as needed (Oxford & Crookall, 1990, pp. 26-27).

In sum, as previous researchers suggests that vocabulary learning strategies seems to continuously evolve with the passing of time. Furthermore, much emphasis is now placed on collecting and understanding the students' needs prior second language teaching. Hence, it is the goal of this study to determine the current pedagogical methods employ by the students so as to better understand their learning difficulties and ultimately help the students gain the proper motivation towards vocabulary learning. More specific research objective are as follows:

- a. Determine the vocabulary learning strategies used by EFL students.
- b. Determine the difference between the Taiwanese, Mainland Chinese, and Vietnamese EFL students' vocabulary learning strategies.

## **Methods**

This research is designed as a case study, Merriam (1998) views a case as an individual, a program, a class or students, a school, or a community wherein a certain issue needs clarification. Participants of the study are the 407 EFL students of a science and technology university in northern part of Taiwan. Table 2 shows the demographical background of the participants. Among the participants a total of 247 are the local Taiwanese students (61%), 94 are Mainland Chinese exchange students (23%), and the remaining 66 are degree seeking Vietnamese students (16%). For the

gender breakdown, table 2 also shows that there are 226 (56%) female participants and 181 (44%) are male students. Average age of students is 21 years old.

**Table 2**

*Participants' background demography (N=407)*

Items	Female		Male	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Country				
Taiwan	156	38.30%	91	22.40%
China	38	9.30%	56	13.80%
Vietnam	32	7.90%	34	8.40%
Total	226	55.50%	181	44.50%

*Research instrument*

Vocabulary Learning Strategy Inventory (VLSI) is a collection of frequently used vocabulary learning strategies. VLSI is separated into three main categories, including the discovery of the meaning of new vocabulary item category (DMV, 14 items); the retention of the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary item category (RKV, 21 items); and the expansion of one's knowledge of vocabulary category (EKV, 19 items). The VLSI reliability is computed at 0.94 (Siriwan, 2007). VLSI is developed to facilitate simple classification of the common vocabulary learning strategies that best serves EFL students.

*Data analysis*

Quantitative statistical analyses such as the mean and percentage reports, T-test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with the demographical information were computed by means of the statistical software Statistics Package for Social Scientist (SPSS).

*Significance of the study*

Recently, much concern regarding the students' vocabulary learning is observed. With the understanding that an effective vocabulary learning strategy can brought forth numerous advantages for a foreign language learner; it is hoped that this study shall be able to provide various important implications to the academic community, while at the same time increases the students' overall competencies.

## Results and discussions

To determine the current dominant vocabulary learning strategies employed in the science and technology university, the VLSI is administered to around 450 volunteer students. A total of 407 valid survey returns are collected with a total rate of around 90%. Discussions with the various demographical backgrounds shall follow next.

Table 3 shows the various mean scores of the 3 VLSI strategies. Results show that the category *Expansion of one's knowledge of vocabulary* (EKV) scored the highest with a mean of **3.44**. However, the other 2 mean scores are also quite near with each other; *Retention of the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary* (RKV) with a mean of **3.39** and *Discovery of the meaning of new vocabulary* (DMV) with a mean of **3.38**.

EKV are the strategies employed by EFL learners in order to expand their knowledge of vocabulary while outside the classrooms (Siriwan, 2007). This is actually true to most EFL learners, wherein students tend to look for additional opportunity in learning the English language beyond normal class time (Yabukoshi & Takeuchi, 2009).

**Table 3**

*Mean scores of VLSI strategies (N=407)*

Factors	<i>n</i>	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	<i>SD</i>
Total					
Discovery of meaning (DMV)	407	14	70	47.27	9.956
Retention of knowledge (RKV)	398	23	103	71.22	14.606
Expansion of knowledge (EKV)	399	19	95	65.42	15.105
Average					
Discovery of meaning (DMV)	407	1.00	5.00	3.38	0.711
Retention of knowledge (RKV)	398	1.10	4.90	3.39	0.696
Expansion of knowledge (EKV)	399	1.00	5.00	<b>3.44</b>	0.795

DMV are vocabulary learning strategies that involved both inside and outside classroom learning activities (Siriwan, 2007). More importantly, learners must have their own vocabulary learning goals in order for DMV to become effective. Table 4 shows the various items of DMV. Here we can see that the highest item is *Guess the meaning from grammatical structure of a sentence to discover the meaning of new*

*vocabulary items* with a mean of 3.71. This is quite true to EFL learners, wherein grammatical structure is a prerequisite to successful language learning (N. Yang, 1999).

One interesting finding is that EFL students in general tends not to use English to English dictionary as depicted in the item *Use an English-English dictionary to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items* with the lowest mean of 2.79. Most of the time EFL students in Taiwan would use Chinese to English (or vice-versa) dictionaries.

**Table 4**

*DMV items and overall mean scores (N=407)*

	Items	Mean	SD
1.	Ask teachers of English to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	3.40	1.043
2.	Use an English-Chinese dictionary to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	3.59	1.005
3.	Use a Chinese-English dictionary to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	3.40	1.047
4.	Ask classmates or friends to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	3.32	1.122
5.	Guess the meaning from contexts to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	3.36	1.143
6.	Use an English-English dictionary to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	<b>2.79</b>	1.097
7.	Guess the meaning by analyzing the structure of words (prefixes, roots, and suffixes) to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	3.25	1.029
8.	Ask other people, such as members of one's family, native speakers of English, to discover the meaning of new vocabulary item	2.98	1.125
9.	Guess the meaning from a single vocabulary item to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	3.49	1.170
10.	Guess the meaning from grammatical structure of a sentence to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	<b>3.71</b>	1.092
11.	Guess the meaning from word classes, such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	3.60	1.138
12.	Guess the meaning from real situations to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	3.60	1.043
13.	Guess the meaning from gestures to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	3.55	1.169
14.	Guess the meaning from aural features, such as stress, intonation, pronunciation, to discover the meaning of new vocabulary items	3.24	1.226

*Note.* Items in bold are the highest and lowest mean scores.

AS for RKV; similar to DMV, most of the strategies mentioned in RKV are classroom (school) based. However, Siriwan (2007) noted that students also employed RKV outside the classroom in order to achieve some particular goals of vocabulary learning. In essence, RKV are focused on the retention of the vocabulary itself.

**Table 5***RKV items and overall mean scores (N=407)*

	Items	Mean	SD
1.	Sing English songs to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.32	0.961
2.	Listen an English conversation of other people (classmates, friends, teachers, native speakers of English) to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.45	0.897
3.	Look at real objects and associate them with vocabulary items to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.45	0.911
4.	Do English exercises after class to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.19	1.074
5.	Use vocabulary items to converse with teachers of English to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.63	0.971
6.	Review previous English lessons to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.42	1.048
7.	Connect newly-learned vocabulary items to one's previous learning experience to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.48	1.096
8.	Associate newly-learned vocabulary items with previously-learned ones to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	<b>3.67</b>	1.144
9.	Associate pictures to vocabulary items to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.45	1.094
10.	Make a vocabulary list with meanings and examples in one's notebook to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.22	1.024
11.	Use vocabulary items to converse with classmates or friends	3.41	1.053
12.	Use newly-learned vocabulary items to practice writing in sentences to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	<b>3.02</b>	1.115
13.	Group vocabulary items according to the similarity of meaning, pronunciation and spelling to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.23	1.009
14.	Say vocabulary items in sentences repeatedly to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.25	1.080
15.	Group vocabulary items according to the synonyms and antonyms to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.28	1.154
16.	Say vocabulary items with their lexical sets repeatedly to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.36	1.050
17.	Say a single vocabulary item with its meanings repeatedly to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.34	1.075
18.	Look at words' affixes (prefixes and suffixes) to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.56	1.062
19.	Write vocabulary items with meanings on papers and stick them in one's bedroom to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.46	1.002
20.	Use semantic maps to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary item	3.50	1.048
21.	Say vocabulary items in rhymes repeatedly to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items	3.14	1.049

*Note.* Items in bold are the highest and lowest mean scores.

Table 5 depicts that the highest RKV item is the *Associate newly-learned vocabulary items with previously-learned ones to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items* with a mean score of 3.67. This is actually a good way of making connections with previously learnt vocabularies. While, the item *Use newly-learned vocabulary items to practice writing in sentences to retain the knowledge of newly-learned vocabulary items* with a mean score of 3.02 is the lowest. One interesting finding is when compared to the DMVs, retention strategies are less used

than the discovery of meanings. This suggests that students tend to keep on learning new words, but lack the effort of retaining the newly acquired vocabularies.

With regards to the EKV, table 6 shows the various methods used for the expansion of vocabulary knowledge. These strategies are used specifically outside the classrooms. The highest item for the RKV is *Search for English information through the Internet to expand the knowledge of vocabulary* with a mean score of 3.69, while the lowest item is *Listen to English songs to expand the knowledge of vocabulary* and *Practice listening to English lectures, presentation, or cassettes of conversation to expand the knowledge of vocabulary* both with a mean score of 3.28.

Results indicate that students' vocabulary learning methods outside the classrooms are quite dependent on the resources made available (provided) by the school. For the current study case, this science and technology university actually provides opportunities for their EFL students to engage in conversation with L1 exchange students. Such resources have continually provided a source of authentic learning settings.

**Table 6**

*EKV items and overall mean scores (N=407)*

	Items	Mean	SD
1.	Listen to English songs to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	<b>3.28</b>	1.019
2.	Search for English information through the Internet to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	<b>3.69</b>	1.129
3.	Converse with teachers of English in English to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.39	1.110
4.	Converse with foreigners in English to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.50	1.138
5.	Converse with foreigners in English through the Internet to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.56	1.168
6.	Read English articles from different sources, such as texts, newspaper, brochures, leaflets, to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.56	1.144
7.	Watch English-speaking films with subtitles to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.52	1.120
8.	Converse in English with classmates and friends in English to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.36	1.110
9.	Watch English program channels on TV to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.36	1.010
10.	Do extra English exercises from other sources, such as texts, newspapers, Internets, to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.34	1.091
11.	Listen to English radio program to expand one's knowledge of vocabulary	3.40	1.117
12.	Practice translating articles from English to Chinese; or from Chinese to English to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.59	1.069
13.	Take an extra job at tour offices, hotels, and many others to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.63	1.033
14.	Practice using a dictionary regularly to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.34	1.047
15.	Play English games, such as scrabble, crossword puzzles, to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.42	1.047
16.	Study vocabulary items from advertisements, public relations notices, traffic signs, and many others to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	3.44	1.046

17. Read a book of English-Chinese conversation in various situations to expand one's knowledge of vocabulary	3.32	1.027
18. Build a word-network to expand the knowledge of Vocabulary	3.34	1.071
19. Practice listening to English lectures, presentation, or cassettes of conversation to expand the knowledge of vocabulary	<b>3.28</b>	1.243

Note. Items in bold are the highest and lowest mean scores.

In order to have wider perspective on the cultural differences in vocabulary learning, the following tables 7 to 9 showcases the comparative analyses of the various strategies with respect to Taiwanese, Mainland Chinese, and Vietnamese students. Furthermore, in order to have a clearer view in comparison, the mean differences among the Taiwanese and other students are also provided. It is noted that a negative mean difference signifies that the Taiwanese students scored lower than their counterpart students. While a positive mean difference signifies that the Taiwanese students scored higher than their counterpart students.

**Table 7**

*DMV items country comparison (N=407)*

Items	Taiwan	China	Vietnam	Taiwan - China	Taiwan - Vietnam
DMV 01	3.45	3.13	3.56	0.32	-0.11
DMV 02	3.70	3.28	3.61	0.42	0.09
DMV 03	3.40	3.22	3.62	0.18	-0.22
DMV 04	3.38	3.07	3.47	0.31	-0.09
DMV 05	3.54	2.90	3.35	0.64	0.19
DMV 06	2.91	2.63	2.53	0.28	0.38
DMV 07	3.31	2.86	3.56	0.45	-0.25
DMV 08	3.09	2.57	3.14	0.52	-0.05
DMV 09	3.64	3.29	3.24	0.35	0.40
DMV 10	3.85	3.53	3.42	0.32	0.43
DMV 11	3.78	3.45	3.15	0.33	0.63
DMV 12	3.81	3.19	3.41	0.62	0.40
DMV 13	3.78	2.99	3.48	0.79	0.30
DMV 14	3.44	2.68	3.29	0.76	0.15
DMV Total	49.08	42.80	46.83	<b>6.28</b>	<b>2.25</b>
DMV Average	<b>3.51</b>	3.06	3.35	0.45	0.16

Table 7 shows that Taiwanese students scored highest in 9 (DMV 2, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14) out of the 14 items, while Vietnamese students scored highest in the remaining 5 (DMV 1, 3, 4, 7, and 8) items. Results also show that the Mainland Chinese students' scores are not distinctive. Comparative analysis also shows that Taiwanese students scored the highest in the overall DMV items with an overall mean

score of 3.51 (note that the negative values in the mean differences means that the Vietnamese students scored higher than the Taiwanese students).

As for the RKV items, Taiwan students also scored highest with an overall mean score of 3.53. Similarly with the DMV results, Taiwanese students scored highest in 18 (RKV 1, 2, 3, 5 to 17, 19, and 21) of the 21 items, while the Vietnamese students scored highest in the remaining 3 (RKV 4, 18, and 20) items.

**Table 8**

*RKV items country comparison (N=407)*

Items	Taiwan	China	Vietnam	Taiwan - China	Taiwan - Vietnam
RKV 01	3.47	3.01	3.21	0.46	0.26
RKV 02	3.53	3.19	3.52	0.34	0.01
RKV 03	3.52	3.23	3.48	0.29	0.04
RKV 04	3.17	3.13	3.35	0.04	-0.18
RKV 05	3.75	3.34	3.61	0.41	0.14
RKV 06	3.55	3.11	3.36	0.44	0.19
RKV 07	3.66	3.11	3.35	0.55	0.31
RKV 08	3.80	3.20	3.79	0.60	0.01
RKV 09	3.60	2.99	3.56	0.61	0.04
RKV 10	3.41	2.77	3.15	0.64	0.26
RKV 11	3.62	2.98	3.24	0.64	0.38
RKV 12	3.25	2.63	2.71	0.62	0.54
RKV 13	3.45	2.72	3.14	0.73	0.31
RKV 14	3.50	2.79	2.92	0.71	0.58
RKV 15	3.55	2.94	2.76	0.61	0.79
RKV 16	3.47	3.16	3.24	0.31	0.23
RKV 17	3.54	2.73	3.44	0.81	0.10
RKV 18	3.67	3.12	3.77	0.55	-0.10
RKV 19	3.61	3.06	3.45	0.55	0.16
RKV 20	3.62	3.07	3.64	0.55	-0.02
RKV 21	3.29	2.81	3.06	0.48	0.23
RKV Total	74.08	64.15	69.76	<b>9.93</b>	<b>4.32</b>
RKV Average	<b>3.53</b>	3.05	3.32	0.47	0.21

Lastly, for the EKV items, Taiwanese students consistently scored highest with an overall mean score of 3.60. For the individual items, Taiwanese students scored highest in 14 (EKV 1, 3, 8 to 19) out of the 19 items, with the remaining 5 (EKV 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7) items for the Vietnamese students. Furthermore, Mainland Chinese students scored lowest in most of the items in the VLSI. Such result suggests that there is indeed a need for the Mainland Chinese students to practice more on their vocabulary learning strategies.

**Table 9***EKV items country comparison (N=407)*

Items	Taiwan	China	Vietnam	Taiwan - China	Taiwan - Vietnam
EKV 01	3.40	2.93	3.32	0.47	0.08
EKV 02	3.83	3.18	3.89	0.65	-0.06
EKV 03	3.59	2.82	3.45	0.77	0.14
EKV 04	3.60	3.12	3.68	0.48	-0.08
EKV 05	3.66	3.04	3.94	0.62	-0.28
EKV 06	3.65	3.12	3.85	0.53	-0.20
EKV 07	3.60	3.17	3.71	0.43	-0.11
EKV 08	3.66	2.81	3.05	0.85	0.61
EKV 09	3.48	3.14	3.24	0.34	0.24
EKV 10	3.49	2.86	3.45	0.63	0.04
EKV 11	3.61	2.93	3.24	0.68	0.37
EKV 12	3.73	3.37	3.38	0.36	0.35
EKV 13	3.78	3.23	3.65	0.55	0.13
EKV 14	3.52	3.02	3.09	0.50	0.43
EKV 15	3.57	3.05	3.36	0.52	0.21
EKV 16	3.67	3.01	3.18	0.66	0.49
EKV 17	3.47	3.01	3.20	0.46	0.27
EKV 18	3.51	2.93	3.32	0.58	0.19
EKV 19	3.51	2.87	3.00	0.64	0.51
EKV Total	68.34	57.46	65.02	<b>10.88</b>	<b>3.32</b>
EKV Average	<b>3.60</b>	3.02	3.42	0.57	0.18

Further comparison of the mean difference total scores for the 3 groups, suggests that the scores varies quite differently. This is noted in the EKV total mean difference of 10.88 as compared with the Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese students (9.93 for the RKV and 6.28 for the DMV). This suggests that Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese are more different in terms of vocabulary learning as compared to their Vietnamese student peers.

A T-test was also conducted to determine if there is a significant gender difference among the VLSIs. T-test results show that there exists no gender difference among the various vocabulary learning strategies. This is quite understandable, wherein vocabulary learning strategies should be the same for male and female students. Lastly, in order to determine if there is a statistical significant difference between the three countries. An Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was accomplished.

**Table 10***ANOVA comparison between countries and VLSI strategies (N=407)*

Factors	Country			F	p	eta squared
	Taiwan(n=247)	China (n=94)	Vietnam(n=66)			
DMV Mean	3.51	3.06	3.35	<b>14.542</b>	.000	.342
SD	0.678	0.766	0.606			
<i>Tukey Test</i>						
China MD		<b>0.45</b>	0.16			
SE		0.08	0.10			
p		.000	.213			
Vietnam MD			<b>-0.29</b>			
SE			0.11			
p			.026			
RKV Mean	3.53	3.05	3.32	<b>16.288</b>	.000	.401
SD	0.654	0.815	0.499			
<i>Tukey Test</i>						
China MD		<b>0.47</b>	0.21			
SE		0.08	0.09			
p		.000	.070			
Vietnam MD			<b>-0.27</b>			
SE			0.11			
p			.041			
EKV Mean	3.60	3.02	3.42	<b>18.144</b>	.000	.453
SD	0.755	0.882	0.604			
<i>Tukey Test</i>						
China MD		<b>0.57</b>	0.18			
SE		0.10	0.11			
p		.000	.224			
Vietnam MD			<b>-0.40</b>			
SE			0.12			
p			.004			

Table 10 shows the ANOVA results. Results show that there exists a significant difference in between the 3 countries and the 3 groups of strategies (DMV F=14.542  $p=.000$ , RKV F=16.288  $p=.000$ , and EKV F=18.144  $p=.000$ ). This result clearly supports the previous findings in tables 7, 8, and 9 with implications suggesting that there is a significant difference in vocabulary learning strategies for Taiwanese and Vietnamese students.

## Conclusion

The primary objective of this study is to see if there exists a methodological difference among EFL learners in terms of vocabulary learning. A total of 407 students are surveyed using the VLSI, wherein practices in terms of the three main vocabulary learning strategies are collected. Results show that Taiwanese, Mainland Chinese, and Vietnamese students vary significantly in their vocabulary learning strategies. No gender differences are found, while the *expansion of one's knowledge* (EKV) scored the highest among the vocabulary learning strategies.

Looking into their first languages, Vietnamese uses an alphabet system, as compared to the complexity of the Chinese language characters. Hence, differences found within the learning strategies should be acceptable. However, as compared to the Mainland Chinese students; which use the same character language system with Taiwan, nevertheless, also shows a significant difference in the VLSIs (DMV, RKV, and EKV). These results would valid further investigations that are beyond the scope of the current study.

Results of the study also shows that Taiwanese students scored highest in most of the vocabulary learning strategies, however, observations suggest that Taiwanese students tend to be more passive during classes. Hence, doesn't participate much in the discussions. Since, the Mainland Chinese and Vietnamese students are more motivated learners, due to the fact that they are international students studying in Taiwan. Such phenomenon has led to the local students' perception of having a lower language competency as compared to their international student counterparts.

Lastly, it is suggested that practitioners who has international students should be careful and sensitive of the local students' reactions, so as not to discourage the local students. In sum, VLSI provides a clear topological view on how students acquire and learn vocabularies. As for the pedagogical differences, further studies are urged to consider the students' first language as part of the analysis.

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## **Pedagogical implications of using English TV series as supplement for EFL learners**

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### **Abstract**

In teaching EFL students, many practitioners use English TV series as a type of supplementary resource. This started with the early days of *Sesame Street* to the famous sitcoms of today such as *Friends* and *Sex and the City*. In Taiwan, many EFL teachers have also incorporated watching English TV series as part of their teaching activities. However, empirical studies regarding the actual benefits of watching English TV series are still limited. To provide an empirical point of view, the current study shall showcase a case study regarding the effects of watching the TV series *Modern Family* with and without the English subtitles. This study involves 6 EFL students of the Department of Applied Foreign Languages in a technical vocational university in northern Taiwan. The study is accomplished in two stages. First, students watch the episodes with English subtitles, then translate the official English conversations into Chinese. Time limit of each translation is 30 minutes. During the

translation process, students note how many times they use their dictionary. After the translations, students then compare with each other how much they have translated and how accurate their translations are. In stage 2 of the study, the students accomplish the same task, but this time without the English subtitles. Comparison is accomplished on the results of both stages. Results show that during stage 2 of the study, there is an average increase of 2 translated phrases per episodes. Furthermore, the frequency of dictionary use decreases for an average of 5 times per episodes. It is noted that both the repetitive exposure to English TV shows and the repeated translation activities have altogether contribute to the improvement of the students' English language comprehension.

**Keywords:** English to Chinese translation, English subtitles, vocabulary learning, dictionary use, EFL learners

## **Introduction**

In recent years, watching TV dramas has become a popular way in learning a foreign language. Many students claim that they are able to learn Korean or Japanese language by just watching TV dramas every night. Some even believed that confidence in speaking a foreign language can be learnt and developed by watching English TV programs (Academia International, 2012). However, this is not simply the case. In order for learning to take place, there should be some proper procedures or processes that guide learners.

Starting from the early days of *Sesame Street* to the famous sitcoms such as *Friends* and *Sex and the City*, EFL practitioners have in one time or another incorporated TV shows as part of their teaching tools. Many practitioners of English have used the aid of subtitles in TV programs to teach English (Chiu, Hsieh, Lee, Chang, & Wang, 2012; Hayati & Mohmedi, 2011; Yuksel & Tanriverdi, 2009). Movies, TV programs, or the more generic term *films* have been used as an instructional technology for quite some time now. In a seminal study, Fairgrieve (1932) mentioned that films are simple but effective tool in teaching geography. To date, there are numerous applications of films within the teaching pedagogy (Stewart, 2006).

In light of the said effectiveness brought about by watching films, the current study shall showcase a study discussing the effects of watching the TV show *Modern*

*Family* with and without the English subtitles towards the EFL students' English language comprehension. More specifically, determine the possibilities of practicing English to Chinese translation through watching TV shows with and without the English subtitles. In addition, this study would also try to see whether the students' habit of using dictionary would be lessened by the help of watching TV shows with and without the English subtitles.

### **EFL and watching films with subtitles**

There are several studies that involved the usage of films in learning a foreign language. Chiu et al. (2012) mentioned that vocabulary skills can be improved by watching films with subtitles. In their study, 20 volunteer students participated in a video-based interactive learning activity with partial subtitles. The use of partial subtitles is deliberately designed to help the students gradually reduce their dependency on reading the subtitles and consequently learn the new vocabularies effectively.

Chiu et al. (2012) study shows that upon comparison with other students who watched the film with complete subtitles, the students who watched the film with partial subtitles performed similarly in terms of English vocabulary and reading comprehension. This means that even when the students watched the video with partial subtitles, they are able to achieve a level of performance similar to that of the students who watched the video with full subtitles.

In another study, a total of 200 EFL students were tasked to examine their listening comprehension with the use of a subtitled movie. The materials used are 6 episodes (approximately 5 minutes each) of a DVD entitled *Wild Weather*. The students watched only one of the 3 treatment conditions, such as: English subtitles, Persian subtitles, and no subtitles. After each session, 6 sets of multiple-choice tests were administered to examine the students' listening comprehension rates. Results revealed that the English subtitles group performed at a considerably higher level than the Persian subtitles group, which in turn performed at a higher level than the no subtitle group on the listening test (Hayati & Mohmedi, 2011).

These two studies points out that by watching English subtitled films, EFL students' reading and listening comprehension improves. It is also noted that within the two studies mentioned, careful planning and design of the learning activities are needed. Although the researchers believed that subtitles can be used as a learning aid

while watching for leisure. However, if used as an educational tool, proper design should be in place, so as to guide the learners.

### **The effect of subtitles on vocabulary learning**

Watching subtitled TV shows is said to have helped develop students' vocabulary knowledge. In a quasi-experimental study, a total of 120 EFL students from a college preparatory class are tasked to watch a movie clip with subtitles, afterwards incidental vocabulary learning were tested in a pre-test post-test design. Findings show that the group watching the movie with subtitles tends to have more incidental vocabulary gains as compare to those who watched without the subtitles (Yuksel & Tanriverdi, 2009).

In addition, vocabulary learning is not only limited to English TV shows, but it can also be found in watching English cartoons. In another quasi-experimental study on 42 elementary EFL students, pre and post vocabulary tests were given on the two groups of students with one of the group watching a cartoon with English subtitles and the other one without the subtitles. Although there are no significant differences between the two groups of students, however, significant improvement on the pre/post-test vocabulary tests are found (Karakaş & Sariçoban, 2012).

Furthermore, Etemadi (2012) also believes in the different effects of subtitling in foreign language learning. The study shows that subtitles are able to provide a guide for language learners and a source for new vocabularies. While, in another study Koolstra and Peeters (2002) concluded that vocabulary acquisition was greatly helped through watching films with simultaneous English soundtrack and Dutch subtitles.

This goes to show that subtitles can effectively be used as EFL students' learning materials. Looking at the wide genre of films (including TV shows), such as *CSI*, *Friends*, *Gossip Girl*, and many others. These TV series have a wide range of vocabularies, terminologies that are suited for English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. King (2002) points out that films provide more pedagogical options and are a rich resource of intrinsically motivating materials for learners.

### **The effect of subtitles on film comprehension**

In a recent study, 40 senior undergraduate EFL students were tasked to watch two related films; first with English subtitles and then the other without subtitles. Afterwards, students were tested for comprehension for both movies. Results show

that by watching films with and then without subtitles, students gained an overall positive impact on content comprehension of the English movies (Etemadi, 2012).

It is also noted that the time spent on watching TV shows with English subtitles seems to strengthen the students' comprehension (Koolstra, van der Voort, & d'Ydewalle, 1999). While, Hinkin (2009) performed two studies to investigate subtitled movies on the comprehension of movie content. The studies concluded that subtitles can help EFL students learn a new language easily, while at the same time help the students understand the content of the movie.

Besides vocabulary and content comprehension, researchers have also applied films with subtitles to enhance the learners listening skills. In another study, Garza (1991) compared Russian and ESL learners' comprehension of video segments with second language subtitles to that of video segments without subtitles. Five segments of authentic American and Russian video on a particular genre of video (drama, comedy, news, animation, and music), each between 2 and 4 minutes in length were selected. Results suggest that both types of learners are able to comprehend better with the presence of subtitles. In sum, these studies have noted that subtitles are able to enhance not only the learners' comprehension of the film content, but can also help students practice their listening skills.

### **The current study**

Looking into the previous studies done in terms of watching TV shows with and without subtitles, almost all of the studies involved careful planning of the learning activities. In addition, previous results noted that subtitles are able to help EFL students learn new vocabularies, practice their listening skills, and increase their comprehension and understanding of film contents. It seems that the EFL students sort of *pick up* the language as they watch the films with subtitles. They are able to confirm the spelling of the words (or terms used in the film), while at the same time gaining a sense on how the vocabularies are used. In other words, they learn how certain vocabularies are used in different context.

In sum, the effects of subtitles on EFL learners are seen as more beneficial than hindrance to learning. As previous studies depicted samples of carefully planned pedagogy. Hence, the researchers believed that carefully planned film watching would be a good way for EFL students to learn a foreign language.

Following on the previous studies, the current study shall go further into how EFL students comprehend and learn new vocabularies by means of having them translate the English subtitles into Chinese. In this way, students are able to determine the correct terms associated with the scenario (or context). The researchers hypothesized that by doing so, students are able to become more effective learners. Hence, initial research questions are as follows:

- a. What are the effects of English subtitles on the quantity of translated text and the number of dictionary uses?
- b. What are the effects of English subtitles on the similarity and accuracy of translation?

## **Methods**

This study is designed as a case study, wherein the primary goal of the case is to investigate a phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 1984, p. 23). Since watching English TV shows is already a part of the EFL students' routine activity (similar to listening to English music and radio stations), it is quite important to determine whether subtitles are able to assist the students' language learning.

### *Study participants*

To test whether watching English TV shows with and without subtitles are able to help EFL students comprehend and learn new vocabularies through translating the English subtitles into Chinese, the current case study looks for volunteer student participants. Participants of the study includes 5 volunteer junior (3rd year) students from the Applied Foreign Languages Department (DAFL) of a science and technology university in northern part of Taiwan. Average age of students is 21 years old. In addition, students' English language proficiency is considered quite similar, as per initial English language competency tests taken during their first year of study.

### *Study process*

Stage 1 of the study started with students watching each episode with English subtitles. Episodes from 3 to 12 are used, since episodes 1 and 2 were used for initial research design testing. Afterwards, each student translates the official English conversations/script (previously downloaded from the TV show's website) into

Chinese. Time limit on translation is 30 minutes. During the translation process, students also note how many times they check their dictionary for the correct definition of unfamiliar terms. After the translation, students then compare with each other how much they have translated and how accurate their translations are.

It is hypothesized that students should gradually *pick up* and learned new vocabularies after going through the 10 episodes. Hence, during stage 2 of the study, students watched the same episodes, however, this time without the English subtitles. Afterwards, similar to stage 1, each student translates the official English conversations/script into Chinese. Time limit on translation is also 30 minutes. During the translation process, students also note how many times they check their dictionary for the definition of unfamiliar terms. After the translation, students then again compare with each other how much they have translated and how accurate their translations are.

#### *Data analysis*

Quantitative statistical analyses such as the mean and percentage reports between the various translation frequencies, dictionary usage, and accuracy reports were tabulated and computed by means of the statistical software Statistics Package for Social Scientist (SPSS) by the participants along with the assistance of the researchers.

#### *Limitation of the study*

This study is limited to the volunteer participants, which in this case are the 5 Applied Foreign Languages Students of a Science and Technology University in the Northern area of Taiwan. Hence, results of the study shall be limited to these participants. However, generalization can also be made to individuals (and students) who have similar backgrounds and competencies, while, the design of the study can be used as an exemplar for practitioners to help their students.

#### **Results and discussions**

This study is focus on the understanding of the effectiveness brought about by watching English TV show *Modern Family* with and without the English subtitles towards the EFL students' English language comprehension. More specifically, determine the possibilities of practicing English to Chinese translation through watching English TV shows with and without the English subtitles. In addition, this

study would also try to see whether the students' habit of using dictionary would be lessened by the help of watching English TV shows. Results are presented into four sections: 1.) The effects of English subtitles on the quantity of translated text and the number of dictionary use; and 2) The effects of English subtitles on the similarity and accuracy of translation.

*The effects of English subtitles on the quantity of translated text*

The quantity of translated text is tabulated with the premise that as the students watched the TV shows with subtitles, they gradually become familiar with the vocabularies and the context wherein they are used. Therefore, quantity of translated text should increase over time.

The stage 1 of the study started with students watching each episode with English subtitles. Episodes from 3 to 12 are used, since episodes 1 and 2 were used for initial research design testing. Afterwards, each student translates the official English conversations/script (previously downloaded from the TV show's website) into Chinese. Time limit on translation is 30 minutes.

As literature suggests that by practicing translation, vocabulary usage and terms are acquired (Laufer & Girsai, 2008). During the translation process, students also note how many times they check their dictionary for definition of unfamiliar terms. As studies have shown that electronic dictionaries is already a part of the EFL learning pedagogy (Dashtestani, 2013; El-Sayed & Siddiek, 2013), it is noted that as the students become familiar with the vocabularies and with the context wherein they are used, students would become less and less dependent on their dictionaries. After the translation, students will then compare with each other how much they have translated and how accurate their translations are.

Table 1 shows the summary of percentage completion among the 10 episodes. Data suggests that episode 9 is the highest with regards to percentage completion, while episode 12 is the lowest. This suggests that episode 9 is the easiest, while episode 12 is the hardest to translate. However, further analysis also shows that episode 9 has a standard deviation (SD, means how far students differ from the average value of the group) of 15.85; the highest among the episodes, denoting that the students' performance on episode 9 is varied (greatly differs from one another). In other words, the higher the SD value, the more the students' score are different with each other.

Such results meant that percentage completion among the students varies the most; such as 65% completion for student E and 29% completion for students A and D. More importantly, episode 5 shows the lowest SD with 4.95. Denoting students' percentage completion on this episode is quite near and similar. These results suggest that students' competencies with regards to English text within the episodes are not consistent.

During stage 2 of the study, students watched the same episodes, however, this time without the English subtitles. Afterwards; similar to stage 1, each student will translate the official English conversations/script into Chinese. Time limit on translation is also 30 minutes. The same with stage 1, within the translation process, students also note how many times they check their dictionary for definition of unfamiliar terms. After the translation, students will then again compare with each other how much they have translated and how accurate their translations are.

**Table 1**

*Percentage completion of total number of sentences (with subtitles)*

Episodes	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Mean	SD
3	30.00	33.50	32.00	32.00	46.50	34.80	6.658
4	35.00	27.00	26.00	21.00	43.00	30.40	8.649
5	29.00	30.50	30.50	28.50	40.50	31.80	<b>4.945</b>
6	20.50	27.50	27.50	22.00	46.00	28.70	10.177
7	27.00	30.00	39.00	32.00	45.00	34.60	7.301
8	21.00	36.00	34.00	29.50	49.00	33.90	10.225
9	28.50	32.50	31.00	29.00	65.50	<b>37.30</b>	<b>15.845</b>
10	19.50	25.00	27.50	22.00	36.00	26.00	6.354
11	27.50	23.00	32.00	28.50	41.00	30.40	6.740
12	24.00	17.00	24.00	23.00	40.50	<b>25.70</b>	8.772

Table 2 shows the tabulation for stage 2 without English subtitles session. Results show that both the highest percentage of completion is episode 9, which is similar to stage 1 of the study. However, the least translated text is now episode 11. Furthermore, SD have also changed with episode 12 being the most varied results, while episode 7 with the least variation. These results suggest that stage 1 and stage 2 have somewhat different effects on the students. More significant results shall be provided in the following section of comparative analysis in stage 1 and 2 of the study.

**Table 2***Percentage completion of total number of sentences (without subtitles)*

Episodes	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Mean	SD
3	25.00	29.00	32.00	25.50	58.00	33.90	13.768
4	23.00	24.50	24.50	20.00	49.50	28.30	11.993
5	30.00	27.50	35.00	22.00	55.00	33.90	12.691
6	28.50	29.00	32.00	24.50	61.00	35.00	14.778
7	30.50	32.00	30.00	28.50	50.50	34.30	<b>9.142</b>
8	24.00	30.00	26.50	22.00	54.50	31.40	13.254
9	41.50	60.00	37.50	22.00	58.50	<b>43.90</b>	15.801
10	25.50	21.00	25.00	20.00	48.50	28.00	11.710
11	25.00	21.00	25.50	21.00	47.00	<b>27.90</b>	10.888
12	27.00	27.00	31.50	26.50	65.50	35.50	<b>16.893</b>

Table 3 shows that during the without English subtitles stage, although the students have previously watched and translated the same texts. Improvements on the percentage completion (computed by getting the differences from stage 1 and stage 2 results) are not that obvious. Table 3 results also show that the values in negative signify a decrease in percentage completion, while a positive value signifies an increase in percentage completion. It can also be said that even though the students already translated the script once during stage 1, the repetitive translation activity is only effective on 5 of the episodes, which is denoted by the higher mean values.

In addition, results of episodes 5, 6, 9, 10, and 12 shows an average positive increased in percentage completion with the remaining having a negative average percentage completion. However, further analysis has revealed that the overall mean increase is 1.85, which signifies an overall improvement in percentage completion. More importantly, table 3 also shows that only students A, B, and E improved. Student E who has the highest improvement on overall translated text with an increase of almost 10 sentences ( $t=3.58, p<.006$ ).

**Table 3***Difference in percentage completion of total number of sentences (Ideal = Increase)*

Episodes	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Mean
3	-5.00	-4.50	0.00	-6.50	11.50	-0.90
4	-12.00	-2.50	-1.50	-1.00	6.50	-2.10
5	1.00	-3.00	4.50	-6.50	14.50	<b>2.10</b>
6	8.00	1.50	4.50	2.50	15.00	<b>6.30</b>

7	3.50	2.00	-9.00	-3.50	5.50	-0.30
8	3.00	-6.00	-7.50	-7.50	5.50	-2.50
9	13.00	27.50	6.50	-7.00	-7.00	<b>6.60</b>
10	6.00	-4.00	-2.50	-2.00	12.50	<b>2.00</b>
11	-2.50	-2.00	-6.50	-7.50	6.00	-2.50
12	3.00	10.00	7.50	3.50	25.00	<b>9.80</b>
Mean	1.80	1.90	-0.40	-3.55	9.50	<b>1.85</b>

As mentioned earlier, the number of times the students checked the dictionary are also tabulated and analyzed. Since, it is said that by incidental exposures to vocabularies through dictionary usages could increase the learners' vocabulary depth (Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 2004), therefore, the study hypothesized that students' dictionary usage should gradually decreases as they watch the episodes. It is noted that as EFL students encounter new vocabularies, they are encouraged to infer the meaning of the words or to look the word up in the dictionary, these all together constituent vocabulary learning (Hulstijn et al., 2004, p. 337).

To check the number of times the students used their dictionaries, table 4 shows the results of the stage 1 with English subtitles. Results show that episode 5 is the highest with almost 19 times, while episode 11 is the lowest with 8 times. Similar with the previous analysis, after stage 1 with English subtitles the students proceed with the stage 2 without English subtitles. Table 5 shows the results of the stage 2 without English subtitles. Similar with the previous results, there seems to be no significant similarities between the highest and lowest number of times of dictionary use. More significant results shall be provided in the comparative analysis of stage 1 and 2 of the study.

**Table 4**

*Times of dictionary use (with subtitles)*

Episodes	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Mean
3	20	16	17	7	18	15.60
4	35	14	15	8	20	18.40
5	21	15	26	8	24	<b>18.80</b>
6	10	12	7	2	17	9.60
7	20	18	21	14	17	18.00
8	12	9	11	4	8	8.80
9	15	13	13	6	14	12.20
10	16	14	17	5	19	14.20

11	11	6	6	8	11	<b>8.40</b>
12	13	7	6	9	27	12.40

**Table 5**

*Times of dictionary use (without subtitles)*

Episodes	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Mean
3	13	7	5	9	14	9.60
4	15	7	10	6	12	10.00
5	15	4	11	6	14	10.00
6	9	5	5	10	8	7.40
7	13	12	7	7	15	<b>10.80</b>
8	10	7	3	9	10	7.80
9	9	7	4	9	9	7.60
10	13	6	7	5	18	9.80
11	6	6	3	7	10	6.40
12	6	6	5	5	7	<b>5.80</b>

**Table 6**

*Difference in times of dictionary use (Ideal = Decrease)*

Episodes	Student A	Student B	Student C	Student D	Student E	Mean
3	-7	-9	-12	2	-4	-6.00
4	-20	-7	-5	-2	-8	-8.40
5	-6	-11	-15	-2	-10	<b>-8.80</b>
6	-1	-7	-2	8	-9	-2.20
7	-7	-6	-14	-7	-2	-7.20
8	-2	-2	-8	5	2	<b>-1.00</b>
9	-6	-6	-9	3	-5	-4.60
10	-3	-8	-10	0	-1	-4.40
11	-5	0	-3	-1	-1	-2.00
12	-7	-1	-1	-4	-20	-6.60
Mean	-6.40	-5.70	-7.90	0.20	-5.80	<b>-5.12</b>

Table 6 shows the tabulated comparisons of the stage 1 and 2 number of dictionary usage. This is gathered by getting the difference between the two stages. An ideal situation would be that the times of dictionary use to decrease. Results show that the average times of dictionary use per episodes did decrease from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 8 times. These all together suggests that the entire translation practice did minimize the students' tendencies to check the dictionary to an overall average of 5 times ( $t=5.907$ ,  $p<.000$ ). As hypothesized earlier, as the students gradually becomes familiar with the vocabularies, after watching the episodes for the

second time, students tend to learn the terms without having to look for the meaning again.

*The effects of English subtitles on the similarity and accuracy of translation*

As for the similarity and accuracy of translations, students work from both stages are tallied and compared with the official Chinese translation provided by the TV show. Tables 7 and 8 shows the result of the stage 1 and stage 2 comparisons, while table 9 shows their differences. Here data regarding the number of similar translation, almost similar, and different translation results are noted. Similarly, data on the comparison with the actual Chinese translation are also noted.

Results of stage 1 shows that the highest number of difference between students with 11 phrases and number of mistake made with also 11 phrases is episode 3. These is followed by episode 8 suggesting that both episode 3 and 8 is the most difficult to translate and least agreed upon with the participants. Note that the almost the same with other students means that the students use different words to express the Chinese translation. Comparisons of the phrases are accomplished by the participants with the assistance of the researchers.

**Table 7**

*Translation similarity and accuracy (with subtitles)*

Episodes	Comparison with other students			Comparison with original Chinese translation	
	Same	Almost	Different	Correct	Mistake
3	41	8	11	30	11
4	19	13	3	14	5
5	50	6	3	44	7
6	32	4	5	24	8
7	35	7	2	32	3
8	29	4	9	18	10
9	49	6	2	49	6
10	34	5	0	32	2
11	41	4	1	40	1
12	28	5	1	27	1
Mean	35.80	6.20	3.70	31.00	5.40

As with table 8, results clearly show that there is a drop in the value of differences found in both comparison with students and with the original Chinese

translation. These suggest an improvement and effectiveness of the translation practice. However, to be accurate analysis of the differences among the translation similarity and accuracy should be computed.

**Table 8**

*Translation similarity and accuracy (without subtitles)*

Episodes	Comparison with other students			Comparison with original Chinese translation	
	Same	Almost	Different	Correct	Mistake
3	41	8	1	33	1
4	30	7	3	23	3
5	37	7	0	30	0
6	33	3	1	30	1
7	48	6	3	42	3
8	39	4	0	39	0
9	60	1	0	59	0
10	38	2	0	36	0
11	52	1	0	51	0
12	37	5	0	32	0
Mean	41.50	4.40	0.80	37.50	0.80

Table 9 provides the differences among the translation similarity and accuracy, which is gathered from subtracting the values from stage 1 and 2. Ideal results would be the increase in the similar translations among students and the number of correct Chinese translation. While a decrease in the number of almost similar and different among the students, and the decrease in the mistake made in comparison with the original Chinese translation texts. In sum, results on table 9 does suggest that the translation practices have indeed increase the students accuracy by almost 3 phrases, while decreasing their mistakes in around 4 phrases.

**Table 9***Difference in translation similarity and accuracy*

Episodes	Comparison with other students			Comparison with original Chinese translation	
	Same	Almost	Different	Correct	Mistake
3	0	0	-10	9	-2
4	11	-6	0	-14	-7
5	-13	1	-3	6	-7
6	1	-1	-4	10	0
7	13	-1	1	21	-10
8	10	0	-9	10	-6
9	11	-5	-2	4	-2
10	4	-3	0	11	-1
11	11	-3	-1	5	-1
12	9	0	-1	9	-2
Mean	<b>5.70</b>	<b>-1.80</b>	<b>-2.90</b>	<b>7.10</b>	<b>-3.80</b>
Ideal	Increase	Decrease	Decrease	Increase	Decrease

**Conclusion**

As time flies, technologies have improved a lot. The way people learn English has also evolved. In the current study, the researchers used a carefully designed teaching pedagogy with the intention of determining how learners react to subtitles while watching a film. More specifically, how EFL students comprehend and learn new vocabularies by means of having them translate the English subtitles into Chinese.

Using films in teaching does not only attract students' interests, but also let students' acquire more knowledge and insight towards a foreign culture. Furthermore, vocabularies learned are seen within their actual usage. Hence, increases the learners' impression and comprehension on the vocabulary.

Many studies have shown that watching English TV shows have a positive effect on EFL learners. The current action research tested the effects of watching the English TV show *Modern Family* with and without English subtitles. All in all, after the semester long study students have shown to have improved on all the various key areas of the study. For instance, students' quantity of translated text increases, this is also true with regards to other students and in all of the episodes. Similarly, the amount of dictionary use also declined, while the accuracy of the translated text

increases. In sum, such type of learning activity is highly encouraged in order to let EFL students learn and develop a new skill first hand.

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## **Video-mediated listening tasks in the EAL classroom: a sociopragmatic perspective**

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### **Abstract**

Sociopragmatic competence has widely been discussed and examined in second language (L2) classrooms. However, this competence is underrepresented in the English as an additional language (EAL) listening classroom, and there is little discussion on how sociopragmatic competence should be addressed in this context. To fill these voids, this article highlights six central issues, including (1) the unpacking of what sociopragmatic competence means to provide the reader with theoretical positioning of the term; (2) the use of videos as a mediating tool for promoting sociopragmatic competence in the EAL listening classroom; (3) some criteria for selecting spoken texts for EAL listening materials; (4) different

sociopragmatically-oriented listening tasks; (5) some evidence on the use of the tasks in the actual classroom, and (6) implications for EAL listening pedagogy in Asia and beyond. The overall contribution of the article is to build on a pedagogical framework for incorporating sociopragmatic dimensions into EAL listening pedagogy.

**Keywords:** EAL pedagogy, listening tasks, sociopragmatic competence, videos as a technological tool

## **Introduction**

In current scholarly literature on English language pedagogy (henceforth ELP), there has been a growing need for teaching beyond linguistic competence (Chang, 2011; van Compernelle, 2011). This notion does not simply mean that language teachers ignore a linguistic dimension of ELP, but it is used as a linguistic resource to learn English beyond linguistic dimensions (e.g., grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics). This concern has implications for teaching EAL listening. A scholarly discussion of integration of sociopragmatic competence and EAL listening is scanty for some reasons. Firstly, although listening has been called for attention in the EAL classroom, a sociopragmatic issue is rarely incorporated into EAL listening tasks because the foci are placed on understanding lexical and syntactic meanings and comprehending every detail and word to grasp a spoken text or discourse on surface level (Hasan, 2000).

The second reason is that language teachers traditionally perceive listening as a receptive skill in which learners seem to sit quietly and listen to speakers in the recordings (Vandergrift, 2012). They decode aural elements and are automatically expected to understand words, phrases, or expressions. However, in fact, listening is an interactive activity where listeners process information in their minds. Indeed, this undertaking involves cognitive interactivity between student prior knowledge and the recording(s) to grasp what has been said (Vandergrift, 1999, 2012). Whether teaching intensive or extensive listening, language teachers should recognize the fact that listening is an interactional activity in which speakers and listeners negotiate and make meaning or sense of a spoken text. In other words, a listening activity involves intrapersonal and interpersonal communications between listener and speaker. The idea suggests that listening is an endeavor to communicate ideas in a two-way interaction.

Additionally, drawing on what Macalister (2011) pinpoints, the teaching of reading is mostly driven by a series of comprehension questions, and that of listening is no exception. In most of the language classrooms, the teaching of listening does not train students how to make meaning of spoken text and respond to it. This instruction relies heavily upon comprehension questions. Exposing students to a variety of spoken texts does not necessarily equate with the teaching of listening as far as meaning making and responding-to-text tasks are concerned. The common goal of comprehension question-directed listening instruction is to test or assess if students understand what they have heard and answer such questions properly without recognizing how they process spoken input cognitively and respond socially to such input for communicative purposes. What we are also concerned about is that the teaching of listening is mostly framed based on published ESL textbooks whose content may be inappropriate for students. Such textbooks may remain to blindly raise native speaker topics, devalue the home culture and students' sociocultural resources, and promote social and economic hegemony (Gong & Holliday, 2013). These exert influence on student frame of reference that the goals of learning listening in English are to follow a native speaker model and to interact merely with native speakers of English instead of using English for translingual and transcultural communication.

In response to the four main reasons for not including sociopragmatic issues in EAL listening, it is indispensable for EAL teachers to promote sociopragmatic competence in listening classes to help students become aware of the appropriateness of communicative acts, which is originally rooted in Lyster's (1994) definition of sociolinguistic competence in a particular communicative context (Dewaele, 2008). In this regard, listeners are perceived as engaged actors whose task is to encode, process, and make meaning of information so that they are able to respond to the information appropriately. Therefore, as Brock and Nagasaka (2005) point out, it is crucial for EAL learners to acquire sociopragmatic competence because it is a passport to successful communication in linguistically and culturally diverse environments where English currently serves as a transcultural lingua franca among users of English coming from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (House, 2013).

Throughout this article, we make use of the term, EAL, for three main reasons. Firstly, in Asia (e.g., Indonesia) and other parts of the world, a large number of people speak more than two languages because of social and economic mobility. Many languages are spoken in homes and communities around the globe. They also live in

linguistically and culturally diverse societies. Learning a new language is viewed as additional knowledge or competence, and learning English is no exception. Secondly, the term, EAL, seeks to recognize students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds and tap these resources to develop their English ability while maintaining their local identities and cultures. Therefore, EAL learners are in dire need of culturally responsible and relevant ELP through dynamic and empowering learning engagement. Thirdly, Hadzantonis (2013) points out that the adoption of ESL and EFL attempts to align learners' ability with that of native speakers, so this marginalizes the agency of the learners, thereby seeing English learning as an instrumental or temporary endeavor in order to reach the level of native speakers' English competence. In other words, the concept of EFL needs to be clearly defined and reframed based on the contextual landscape of learning EAL to mediate social interaction in which speakers do not share the same languages.

To frame a clear picture of how EAL listening tasks are sociopragmatically designed, this article highlights such key issues as: (1) what sociopragmatic competence mean; (2) how videos as a mediating tool can promote sociopragmatic competence in the EAL listening classroom; (3) what criteria EAL teachers should take into consideration when selecting spoken texts for listening materials; and (4) what kinds of listening tasks can raise student awareness of sociopragmatic positioning. We also present students' reactions to the tasks addressed in the article in terms of the usefulness of authentic multimodal oral texts, appropriation of social behaviors, and familiarity of listening resources. Thus, this article attempts to offer a methodological guide to incorporating sociopragmatic competence into EAL listening pedagogy and to build on theoretical positioning for this pedagogy.

### **Operational Definitions of Sociopragmatic Competence**

The advent of communicative competence has resulted in “a shift in the view of second language (L2) learning from mastery of grammatical forms alone to the acquisition of functional usage of forms in social contexts” (Taguchi, 2005, p. 543). From this perspective, one kind of communicative competence is pragmatic competence, the ability to grasp and produce implied meanings in contexts. It is the capability of construing what speakers say because it pertains to meaning in interaction. As Thomas (as cited in Archer, 2005) points out, pragmatics has a lot to do with meaning making. This meaning making is “a dynamic process, involving the

negotiation of meaning between speaker and hearer, the context of utterance (physical, social and linguistic) and the meaning potential of an utterance” (p. 4). Verschueren (1999) adds that pragmatics should be viewed as “*a general cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behavior*” (p. 7, italics in original). This notion suggests that cognition and social and cultural contexts are inextricably intertwined.

In a listening task or activity, students are trained to comprehend pragmatic meanings. Thus, pragmatic comprehension refers to the ability to recognize speaker’s implied intention “beyond what is literally said” (Verschueren, 1999, p. 25) by using linguistic knowledge, contextual cues, and background knowledge. As Rose (as cited in Rueda, 2006) defines, pragmatic competence involves pragmalinguistics—the ability to use given linguistic resources and sociopragmatics—the capability of using those resources in a contextually appropriate manner (Bella, 2012). Of the two categories of pragmatic competence, sociopragmatic competence is of central discussion in this article.

Sociopragmatics, as described by Leech (as cited in Kasper, 1997), refers to the sociological interface of pragmatics. That is, it deals with “the social perceptions underlying participants’ interpretation and performance of communicative action” (Kasper, 1997, para. 3). Thus, sociopragmatic competence is the functional ability to understand and produce a target language (TL), which fits communicative situations based on sociocultural parameters or a socially appropriate convention (Rueda, 2006). Drawing on Lyster’s definition (as cited in Dawaele, 2008), sociopragmatic competence is the capability of identifying and articulating socially appropriate utterances in a particularly situated context. Further, as Harlow (as cited in Chang, 2011, p. 787) points out, sociopragmatic competence is a capability of varying “speech-act strategies according to the situational or social variables in the act of communication.” Technically speaking, this sociopragmatic competence allows one to modify message or content information, specific linguistic resources, a choice of interpersonal and textual meanings to convey, and the type of behavior or action to take in socially changing contexts. Failure to do so may cause misunderstandings, communication breakdowns, and the stereotyping of the TL (e.g., English) learners as insensitive, rude, or inept (Thomas, 1983). For this reason, contextual factors as social constructs are negotiable in which participants involved can change their dynamics of conversational interaction (Abrams, 2013; Akman, 2000). In short, sociopragmatic

competence is the ability to make meaning of spoken text and perform communicative acts in an appropriate given sociocultural context.

Thus, the goals of promoting sociopragmatic competence in the EAL listening classroom include: (1) to train students to recognize or grasp sociopragmatic meanings in different communicative events or situations; (2) to assist students to raise their self awareness of the fact that a listening activity is sociocognitive in nature and involves intrapersonal and interpersonal negotiations for meaning making; (3) to help students raise their self awareness of contexts as social constructs—a given meaning is socially constructed and deconstructed; (4) to provide students with a wide spectrum of communicative choices because communicative acts can be interpreted not through a single lens, but through multiple lenses; and (5) to enable students to gain an awareness of language appropriation as a culturally embedded construct.

### **Videos as a Mediating Tool for Teaching Sociopragmatic Competence in the Classroom**

Though the use of videos in EAL listening instruction has been much discussed (Gruba, 2004), little attention has been paid to the exploration of sociopragmatic meanings in videos. Videos, one of the electronic instructional media, serve as a spoken input of sociolinguistic competence. In other words, videos can be employed to exploit naturally occurring sociopragmatic utterances. The use of videos in the EAL listening classroom, indeed, reaps six core pedagogical benefits. These benefits include:

- (1) Videos expose students to an array of real time and real life spoken texts from different varieties of English. This is because videos can provide live dialogs between two speakers or more than two speakers, thereby providing students with not only authentic, but also interactive audio visual materials for listening activities (Liontas, 2002).
- (2) A video viewing activity or task for a listening lesson affords students the opportunity to observe real people and situations where different people use the TL (e.g., English), and different cultures can be exposed. This case can be facilitative if teachers select documentary videos as part of the class syllabus.
- (3) By using videos in listening classes, selected TL samples serve as input for in-class discussions after listening tasks. In such a way, listening can be integrated with speaking activities.

- (4) Research (e.g., Gruba, 2006; Weyers, 1999) suggests that videos can aid students' comprehension while watching the videos because in addition to auditory cues, extra-linguistic or bodily cues (i.e., visual stimuli) can increase students' comprehension and retention of lexical items. In addition, such bodily cues can aid listeners' schemata by relating their prior experiences to conversational contexts in the videos.
- (5) Audio visual effects of videos can spark students' interest and motivation to attend to the meanings of utterances heard and seen. For example, visual cues assist students to interpret sociopragmatic meanings of what speakers said in the videos.
- (6) Videos provide a useful means of raising students' awareness of the TL appropriate use (e.g., English) within specific situations and promoting their awareness of cultural appropriation in crosscultural communication.

By considering the benefits of videos, EAL teachers can explore and exploit sociopragmatic utterances. Indeed, videos are a means of introducing sociopragmatic dimensions of the TL to students so that they are exposed to a wide range of sociopragmatic expressions in different communicative events or socioculturally changing contexts. By introducing sociopragmatic features of the TL through online videos for example, students are able to observe conversational setting and scene, participants involved in the conversations, a visible sequence of conversational events, and paralinguistic cues that the participants render. Thus, we argue that in the EAL listening classroom, students should be perceived as listeners who are able to select and interpret sociopragmatically enriched spoken information in the videos. An understanding of this information is facilitated through auditory and visual cues because these cues allow students to figure out what is going on and what the speakers are attempting to say (Gruba, 2004).

### **Criteria for Selecting Spoken Texts for Listening Materials**

Selecting appropriate spoken texts for a listening activity can be a crucial task for EAL teachers. A careful spoken text selection aims at tailoring listening materials to students' needs for learning sociopragmatic competence. Drawing on the concepts of cognitive linguistics and applied linguistics, we suggest some criteria for selecting spoken texts in videos. These include (1) connectivity, (2) selectivity, (3) authenticity,

(4) representativeness, (5) neutrality, (6) familiarity and intelligibility, and (7) comprehensibility.

To begin with, **connectivity** deals with how listening material or text can be relevant to students' prior knowledge. "The role of prior knowledge in facilitating successful L2 listening comprehension has long been established" (Long; Chiang & Dunkel, as cited in Vandergrift, 2007, p. 198). Prior knowledge or schema, as defined by Weaver (1994, p. 18), refers to "an organized chunk of knowledge or experience, often accompanied by feelings." Schemata are an organized structure of linguistic and content knowledge, which comprises past experiences stored in one's long term memory. It is used as the basis for learning and processing new information. It can be said that schemata are related to one's real life experiences. As Bell (2003) reports, studies on comprehension and background knowledge for teaching listening comprehension have emphasized the benefit of activating appropriate schemata in pre-listening activities and grafting new information on to them. In this regard, schemata can help listeners to be able to predict a discursal topic or context and infer a sequence of communicative events (Gebhard, 2006). Thus, in listening comprehension, schemata play a crucial role as a comprehension enhancer, so EAL teachers should choose video materials, which help students recall their schemata to enable them to comprehend the intended meanings of utterances.

The second criterion is **selectivity** that has much to do with how spoken texts are chosen based on student level of English ability. This linguistic capability includes lexical and syntactic (or lexico-grammatical) knowledge of English. In EAL learning, linguistic complexity is of paramount importance because if students are provided with spoken texts whose linguistic complexity is beyond students' current linguistic ability, they will be unable to understand exposed messages. Furthermore, appropriate spoken text difficulty regarding lexical and syntactic features can help students reduce their affective filter—e.g., tension or anxiety (Elkhafaifi, 2005). For instance, if students feel anxious or tense, it is hard for them to grasp the meanings of the spoken texts. Therefore, when selecting spoken texts taken from videos for listening tasks or activities, EAL teachers should weigh their students' language ability. In short, sociopragmatically oriented listening tasks or activities should be at the student's current language ability level so that students' affective filter can be lowered.

Thirdly, **authenticity** has been one of the most important criteria for selecting and evaluating language teaching materials since the advent of communicative

language teaching (Lee, 1995). The concept of authenticity is pedagogically defined as “being as close a match as possible between the language and social context of the input which learners receive in the classroom and the language and social context of everyday life” (MacDonald, Badger, & White, 2000, pp. 253-254). In a listening activity, spoken text authenticity should contain specific communicative stress. This communicative stress refers to sociopragmatic utterances. In this regard, EAL teachers should provide students with real life spoken texts to enable them to make use of that input in social interactions. In turn, the usefulness of spoken text authenticity can lead to positive responses and perceptions of exposed language input (e.g., sociopragmatic utterances). Thus, spoken text authenticity should reflect real life listening, be relevant to students’ lives, and allow for exposure to different varieties of language (Vandergrift, 2007).

Fourthly, **representativeness** refers to how spoken texts represent real life language samples and wide-ranging listening situations. This issue is important to take into account because there has been a growing interest for learning English as an international lingua franca (Bolton, Graddol, & Meierkor, 2011). Representativeness is process based; language teachers gradually provide students with representative spoken texts and communicative situations. This representativeness cannot be achieved only in one class period, but can be achieved in several listening class periods.

The fifth criterion of selecting spoken texts for listening tasks or activities is **neutrality**. This issue touches on selected spoken texts, which show dialogic interactions between native English speakers (NESs) and other NESs, between NESs and nonnative English speakers (NNESs), and between NNESs and other NNESs. The notion of neutrality driven by the concept of World Englishes (WEs) is a crucial issue in the EAL listening classroom because knowing wide-ranging English varieties is a passport to successful intercultural communication (Widodo, 2008). Therefore, students should be exposed to different types of English so as to raise their awareness of the fact that not only Standard American English (SAE) or Standard British English (SBE) is “legitimate English,” but also other varieties of English (e.g., Singlish, Indian English, or Caribbean English) should be recognized as legitimate English. Exposing students to different Englishes may help students have positive responses, perceptions, and attitudes towards a particular variety of English. Students with positive attitudes are willing to understand spoken texts of that variety, and in

turn they will be aware that there are a number of Englishes spoken in different geographical contexts (Bolton, Graddol, & Meierkor, 2011).

Sixthly, **familiarity** and **intelligibility** pertain to how spoken texts are easily understood by students. Regarding familiarity, at the outset, students are exposed to English spoken with familiar accents easier to grasp than unfamiliar accents (Tauroza & Luk, 1997). In addition to accent familiarity, dialect familiarity is believed to aid listening comprehension. Flowerdew (as cited in Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta, & Balasubramaian, 2005; Tauroze & Luk, 1997) sees that NNSs would be more familiar with their own local English accent or dialect than with model English accents or dialects. Whether students understand particular English accents or dialects depends on how much they are exposed to such accents or dialects (Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta, & Balasubramaian, 2005). For example, students will understand SAE more easily than other varieties of English (e.g., Singlish) because they are much exposed to SAE. Thus, accent and dialect familiarity should be gradually taught. This familiarity can lead to intelligibility, the ability to recognize or comprehend exposed spoken discourses. The intelligibility can also refer to “how well listeners actually understand the stimulus” (Munro & Derwing, as cited in Major Fitzmaurice, Bunta, & Balasubramaian, 2005, p. 43). This stimulus deals with naturally occurring spoken texts. Thus, familiarity and intelligibility are inextricably intertwined.

The last criterion of spoken text selection is **comprehensibility**. Munro and Derwing (as cited in Major, Fitzmaurice, Bunta, & Balasubramaian, 2005, p. 43) add that comprehensibility pertains to “the listeners’ perception as to how comprehensible the speaker is.” In other words, comprehensibility can be defined as judgements of how difficult or easy a spoken utterance is to comprehend (Kennedy & Trofimovich, 2008; Matsuura, Chiba, & Fujieda, 1999). In listening tasks or activities, comprehensibility can refer to how spoken texts are learnable or teachable to students. In doing so, EAL teachers should provide students with as much exposure as possible to different varieties of English with intensive gradual training in that exposure.

Thus, the criteria of selecting spoken texts taken from videos, as discussed earlier, are geared to meet student’s individual needs and demands. More importantly, such criteria allow EAL teachers to provide students with a wide spectrum of sociopragmatic utterances. By considering those criteria, sociopragmatically oriented listening activities or tasks involve linguistic, cognitive, sociocultural, and socio-psychological dimensions of EAL listening.

## **Video-Mediated Listening Tasks in the EAL Classroom**

In this section, we would like to offer several video-mediated listening tasks, which are intended to achieve the goals of sociopragmatically focused listening instruction. All these tasks involve students in active viewing (e.g., interaction with video materials), and train them to be critical of meaning making in which they are encouraged to interpret sociopragmatic utterances in multiple lenses. In other words, no single interpretation is used to draw meanings from particular communicative events. Providing students with extensive practice in sociopragmatically focused listening tasks seeks to help students increase critical awareness of language use (Batova, 2010; Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2006; Wipf, 1984). Students also get accustomed to using what is appropriate for a particular communicative or conversational context.

Before students begin to work on any of the listening tasks, they should view data rich video sources (Harmer, 1998; Lonergan, 1984; Saraswathi, 2004). An EAL teacher, in turn, is welcome to use pre-, while-, and post-viewing activities in the video viewing practice to make a task more effective (Hedge, 2000; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005; Frommer, 2006; Ur, 2012). In the pre-viewing phase, the teacher may ask students some questions and introduce topics or issues to activate students' schemata. In this respect, the teacher may use schema-driven and ideational positioning questions below.

- *Have you ever experienced .....*?
- *When did you encounter such a situation?*
- *Where did you experience it?*
- *How many people were involved in this event?*

The main aim of the pre-viewing stage is to stimulate students' interests and lower their affective filter; both of which may affect their motivation when dealing with spoken messages (Gordon, 2007; Saraswathi, 2004). A dialogic pre-listening activity can also help students build a positive attitude towards the text they are going to listen to.

In the while-viewing phase, the teacher provides students with an array of listening tasks. This extensive practice enables students to interact with spoken discourse and prepares them to attend to sociopragmatically laden expressions, which constitute task's inextricable part. Last but not least, in the post-viewing phase, the teacher, among other things, responds to students' listening concerns. Such concerns

include: difficulty in comprehending messages due to limited syntactic ability, new or unfamiliar vocabulary, unfamiliar pronunciation, anxiety, a fast speech rate, speech variability (e.g., phonological changes), or requesting multiple video viewing.

Video viewing tasks allow students to interact with longer stretches of real life texts. Students can individually concentrate on sociopragmatic features. Video viewing tasks allow students to articulate what has been seen or heard subsequent to the viewing. Such tasks provide sociopragmatic input for discussion between students and their peers and between a teacher and students every time differences in interpretations of meanings arise. To facilitate this, we suggest three main video-mediated listening tasks, including (1) **audio and video viewing**, (2) **audio only viewing**, and (3) **freeze scene viewing**. These tasks are detailed below.

### **Audio and Video Viewing**

The first set of activities is natural video viewing in which sounds and pictures go in tandem. The presentation begins with contrastive-critical framing and transformed practice activities, both of which have been borrowed from The New London Group (1996). The former is related to sociocultural, historical, and ideological-political origins of knowledge and social practice, whereas the latter brings “transformed meanings and knowledge gained from previous practice, instruction, and critical reflection to work in other contexts” (Cummins, 2000, p. 272). Thus, in contrastive-critical framing, students work in small groups and compare and contrast communicative acts in spoken texts (contrastive framing). Students analyze and interpret those utterances based on their own social, cultural, historical or ideological values (critical framing). The notion of contrastive-critical framing entails sociocultural contexts because spoken utterances are socioculturally bound. More importantly, students realize that contexts are social constructs, which are changeable and fluid. Students become aware that contexts change, depending on participating actors (e.g., speakers and listeners), communicative settings or events, purposes of communication, and registers (e.g., formal, informal, academic, or technical situations). In the contrastive-critical framing, listening activities can be designed in the following way (see Table 1):

*Table 1. A Framework of Contrastive-Critical Framing for Listening Tasks*

<b>Communicative Situations</b>	<b>Details</b>
Sample Sociopragmatic Utterances	
Meaning Interpretation 1 (TL)	
Meaning Interpretation 2 (SL)	
Meaning Interpretation Gaps (TL-SL)	

In this listening task, students view videos either once or multiple times, depending on speech rate and student's language ability level. The teacher asks the students to jot down communicative situations. Included should be: what the speakers and listeners are involved in, what the goals of the conversations are, and what genre types the shown episodes (e.g., stories, commercials, interviews, or lectures) represent. The sample utterances include TL examples with sociopragmatic meanings for meaning analysis and interpretation. This interpretation is based on the TL, that is, English, and a source language (SL), for instance, Arabic or Polish. If the interpretations are shared in the target and source languages, no meaning interpretation gaps are required. On the other hand, if the meanings are different in the two languages, meaning interpretation gaps between the languages concerned are required so that negotiation for meaning takes place. This process makes listening activities more interactive and challenging.

Based on the contrastive-critical framing, students work on transformed practice. This task encourages the students to transform sociopragmatic meanings into other communicative contexts. In turn, the transformed practice helps make them aware of sociopragmatic meanings in transcultural communication. In the transformed practice, the teachers can design their listening activities, as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2. A Framework of Transformed Practice for Listening Tasks

Issues	Details
Pre-viewed Communicative Situations	
Transformed Communicative Situations	
Meaning Interpretation 1 (TL)	
Meaning Interpretation 2 (SL)	
Degree of Appropriateness (TL-SL)	

As seen in Table 2, a teacher gets students to transform the viewed communicative situations into other communicative contexts. In this respect, the teacher provides communicative situations with sociocultural differences so that the students are challenged to interpret sociopragmatic meanings differently. In meaning interpretation, the teacher should allow multiple interpretations. Listening tasks will then be more challenging and interactive, thereby creating more discussion in the classroom. After the students have arrived at multiple interpretations, they are asked to evaluate the degree of appropriateness. Appropriateness, in this case, does not simply mean *standardization* or *privilege*. Instead, sociocultural conventions must be taken into account as people in diverse speech communities have different appropriateness of utterances. If the teacher has limited time in the classroom, transformed practice based listening tasks or activities may be assigned as homework. In the next class period, students report and share the results with the teacher and the class.

The next activity promotes the sociopragmatic dimension of listening by asking students to focus on a few points. These points include (1) how the speakers open their dialogue, (2) what expressions the speakers use to change topics, and (3) whether the conversation is formal or informal (register). For instance, in an in-class interaction, a teacher can ask students to complete the following table (see Table 3) while listening to a conversation.

*Table 3. Conversational Discourse*

	<b>The Opening Stage</b>	<b>The Middle Part of the Situation</b>	<b>the Closure Stage</b>
Expressions used to begin			
Expressions used to mark (in)formality in			
Expressions used to mark (im)politeness in			
Expressions used to mark topic change in			

In this activity, the teacher can show students the beginning and the end of a real life conversational exchange and ask the class to decide what happened in the middle part. The students work with the transcript, trying to produce the TL and adjust the middle part, in terms of formality/informality, politeness, and directness, to the style applied in the transcript. For instance, the students should be prompted that when speech is too formal in certain contexts, the interlocutors may feel uncomfortable. On the other hand, when speech is too informal, the speakers can be perceived as rude. As soon as the students complete the dialogue, the teacher plays the original version. Then, the students compare their dialogues with the recorded text. Finally, the students are asked to view the scene again. This time, they are asked to look for various aspects of politeness which they place in Table 4.

*Table 4 Politeness in Spoken Discourse*

<b>POLITENESS</b>		
<b>Examples with Modal Verbs</b>	<b>Examples with Lexis Softening the Force of Requests</b>	<b>Examples of Embedded Requests</b>

### Audio Only Viewing

In audio only viewing activities, the teacher turns the picture off and students listen to short extracts. This kind of listening familiarizes students with different accents. It can be used, as well, to predict nonverbal communication signals, also referred to as paralinguistic aspects of communication. These features of language include gestures, eye contact, posture, facial expressions, or proximity. These nonverbal communication signals should constitute an essential part of foreign language instruction. Students are made aware of how body language affects the messages they send, but students should concentrate on sociopragmatic aspects, especially body language while listening to film dialogues. The teacher can provide students with the following list of questions to focus on:

1. *What is the context situated in the dialogue?*
2. *What is happening in the presented episode?*
3. *What is the intended goal of interaction?*
4. *What is the relationship between the interactants?*
5. *What knowledge or information is being shared or negotiated?*
6. *What is the mood of the presented social exchange?*
7. *What emotions accompany this conversation?*
8. *Are there any linguistic resources, which facilitate the flow of communication or interaction?*
9. *Are there any sociopragmatic utterances being negotiated?*

The list is distributed to all students before the actual listening. When the students finish listening to previously selected conversations, they discuss the questions in small groups. Finally, the answers are discussed with the teacher. Additionally, the teacher can ask students to provide clues in what is being said or negotiated on the soundtrack (see Table 5) and to describe a particular scene in terms of body language used (see Table 6) by completing the two tables below.

*Table 5. Describing a Video Scene: Setting, Action, and Props*

<b>Describe</b>		
<b>Setting</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Props</b>

Table 6. Describing a Video Scene: Body Language

People	Sound	Look	Move	Feel

Students can complete the tables individually or in pairs and small groups; the decision is left up to the teacher. We, however, would suggest opting for collective listening as it is more productive, beneficial, and enriching. Students describe the shown scenes from various angles. Some students will notice things that others cannot see. In a different activity, dialogues, music, or audio effects are used. Students can be asked to make predictions about a particular situation and its characters. Since films promote real life dialogues in the classroom, the teacher can easily draw students' attention to pragmatic aspects of spoken discourse. In another listening activity, for example, students can be asked to list various features of spoken discourse, and then discuss with their partners, the difference between the spoken and written types of language (see Table 7).

Table 7. Spoken vs. Written Language

Spoken Language	Written Language

Students' lists of spoken discourse characteristics should contain contracted forms (e.g., *I'll do it later.*), tag questions (e.g., *Stop shouting, will you?*), ellipsis (e.g., *Want me to make us some brew?*), and simple phrases (e.g., *Where? In the pub, What time? Around 8*) instead of complex and grammatically correct sentences. Also, the lists should include hesitation and repetition discourse markers (e.g., *erm, you know, OK*), which not only organize discourse, but also make it more cohesive. Getting familiarized with the features of spoken discourse, students can be provided with post-listening oral practice in which they are encouraged to produce their own sociopragmatically oriented texts.

On a different occasion, the teacher can provide the students with a transcript of a short dialogue and ask them to first practice, and then act it out in front of the

class. The teacher asks the students to work either in pairs or in small groups. After the scene has been acted out by students, the teacher provides the class with the recorded material. After viewing it, students work in small groups again and compare their performances with the one on the screen. This activity provides an excellent opportunity for practicing both paralinguistic (e.g. body language) and prosodic aspects (e.g. rhythm and intonation) of communication.

### **Freeze Scene Viewing**

Films are also appropriate for tasks, which require stops at pre-set points where the attention of the learners can be drawn to the sociopragmatic dimension of listening. The teacher can pause a film every few seconds in order to ask students to predict the part of one speaker. For instance, if there is an interesting dialogue in a film, the teacher can play the part of person **A**, and the class anticipates the part of person **B**. Making predictions is extremely useful for learners as it requires gathering evidence, using logic, refining, revising, and verifying. When making predictions, student prior knowledge is activated, helping students to make connections between what they do not know yet (new information) and what they already know (given information).

In a different activity, the teacher can pause the video at some strategic points in order to check students' understanding of implied meanings or certain prosodic features of the TL speech. Students should be aware that authentic language works differently from the precise language of the course book and that closed questions are not always followed by *yes* or *no* answers. Thus, it is imperative that the students be able to interpret implied meanings (e.g., *A: My grandma seems to be depressed. B: Mmm. Hasn't the weather been good lately?*) by activating shared knowledge of the world. The prosodic aspects, on the other hand, can be practiced while focusing on suprasegmental systems of English, information structuring, word stress, and voice pitch in particular. For example, students should be provided with activities in which information is segmented into meaningful tone groups such as these conversational encounters.

**Instruction: Listen to three people talking about funny situations that took place in their lives. Tick (✓) the segments you hear.**

1. "Peter", said Fiona, "will be 60 in January."

- Peter said “Fiona will be 60 in January.”
2. Mary said, “That teacher is very rude!”  
“Mary,” said that teacher, “is very rude!”
  3. The duke said “the duchess had been unfaithful.”  
“The duke,” said the duchess, “had been unfaithful.”

Also, the students should be able to recognize new and given pieces of information on the basis of word stress and voice pitch. New information receives strong stress and high pitch, but given information is characterized by rather weak stress and low pitch.

Overall, our proposed video based listening tasks are designed to promote a successful development of sociopragmatic competence in the EAL classroom. These tasks help students as engaged listeners learn to listen to and listen to learn sociopragmatic utterances in different situated contexts as well as draw their attention to various linguistic, cognitive, and social demands of TL listening learning.

## **Voices from Our Own Classrooms and Implications for EAL Listening Pedagogy in Asia and Beyond**

### **Voices from Our Own Classrooms**

The tasks presented above have been part of our teaching practice for some time now. More specifically, apart from using traditional CD recorded texts, we systematically promote the development of listening skills through video-mediated tasks. The latter option has turned out to be very successful, and therefore is slowly beginning to dislodge the traditional CD mediated practice in our classrooms. Therefore, the purpose of this section is to not only present four key reasons why our students expect to be exposed to video-mediated listening tasks. At the same time, we wish to create incentives to encourage colleagues from Asian teaching contexts to implement video-mediated listening as part of pedagogical innovation in their classrooms.

Before discussing the four reasons why our students expect to be exposed to video-mediated listening tasks, it is necessary to clarify that the various comments and observations that will be presented in this section come from the listening portfolios our students kept for three months as part of authentic assessment procedure. The students were young adult upper-intermediate EAL learners who represented different nationalities from Europe, South America, and the Middle East. They had learned English for a number of years and for different purposes before they

started our course. They all struggled with listening, and therefore opted for the development of this particular skill as one of their afternoon electives.

In order to help our students to reflect on their listening skills as well as monitor their progress in this area, we decided to introduce listening portfolios. These portfolios were designed by the students themselves and helped them to: (1) develop listening skills, (2) creatively stimulate language development, (3) provoke engagement with different types of texts, (4) encourage personal response to ideas and emotions communicated in texts, (5) lead to the development of interpretive strategies, which were observed to be subsequently applied to other texts and (6) develop interactive language and thinking skills.

The ongoing analysis of these portfolios, done separately and collaboratively with individual learners, helped us to observe certain patterns in our students' thinking, especially with regard to why they valued video-mediated listening practice. Firstly, films as digital mediation or scaffolding were the source of authentic or real-life interaction not easily accessible in the traditional language classroom. As the portfolios reveal, the students enjoyed both the nature of contextualized spoken discourses as well as the variety of accents in the provided materials. In addition, the students appreciated the wealth of body language and discourse markers in everyday encounters. Some of our students made the following comments:

*I like listening to different accents. Of course, it was extremely difficult to understand the speech of some of the actors, but it became easier with time. I still have difficulty understanding Scottish accent, but the rhythm is fantastic. Anyway, what counts is the natural flow of speech and the social interaction that is based on phrases, not full and grammatically correct sentences. This language is different from that in our course book.*

*What I like about these tasks is that I can see what is going on at a particular moment. Obviously, you do not get this experience while listening to CDs. Also, the body language people use in conversations is what I find extremely useful. I have observed that people often convey messages by using gestures, facial expressions or eye contact. I have never thought about it before, I mean, I never thought body language was that important.*

*I like listening to conversations because they contain a lot of useful words/sounds that you cannot find in course books in excess. Some examples are: well, right, okay, oh dear, D'you, oh, yeah, mm, erm. Also, these words/sounds will help me make my speech more native like. Another interesting thing is question tags, which I never thought are used so often and on their own (e.g. Did you?). In our workbook, we only use them at the end of sentences.*

Secondly, our students were eager to know how to behave in target language situations in order not to cause breakdowns in communication or offend their interlocutors. Video-mediated listening practice, as a number of EAL learners pointed out in their portfolios, is replete with socio-cultural aspects that accompany everyday conversations. Thus, students have many opportunities to see what behavior is appropriate or suitable in certain situations and when it is not. In other words, films with sociocultural aspects bridge the gap between the real world and the language classroom. For example, one student commented that:

*It is important to be aware of formal and informal situations and the language and behavior that are required in them. I particularly enjoy watching funny situations that result from the violation of social rules/norms. In this respect, films bring real life situations into the classroom.*

Thirdly, our students found listening practice more engaging and motivating when it contained video elements. For example, two students observed that:

*These videos make me more focused. I can see what is happening and follow the events without being confused, which often happens when I listen to CD material. What is more, video assisted listening also enables me to concentrate on other things such as the people involved, what they do, what they wear, etc. I feel that all my senses are then involved in the listening activity.*

*Video-based listening is more interesting than traditional CDs or tapes. The former is supported by vision, but also depending on the theme of the video, other senses contribute to comprehension as well. For example, sometimes people eat something or talk about fantastic food. In such situations, I feel that all my senses help me to understand these texts.*

Finally, video-mediated learning resources were popular with our students as they facilitated language comprehension. In other words, visual scaffolding or support in films assisted students to interpret what they heard, and thus enhanced comprehension. As our students further clarified in their portfolios course book listening activities are boring as they replicate the same type of activities in every unit. What is more, these activities focus on comprehension skills only. Unlike traditional listening materials, video-mediated resources much more easily lend themselves for creative and problem-solving tasks in which students are encouraged to respond emotionally to the content. As some students noted:

*Watching films is simpler than listening to CDs. It is the visual support in films that makes listening easier for me. Apart from being less complex, it is also more interesting, because the tasks the teacher designs allow for creativity, critical thinking and emotional responses. I especially enjoy problem-solving tasks where students can use their creativity and imagination. We usually do such tasks after we have finished viewing a particular piece of material.*

*Films in the classroom allow me to react emotionally, which I have never experienced in course book listening exercises. For example, last week, the video was so moving that I could not help crying.*

Though the students found the listening activities useful in raising their sociopragmatic awareness, they encountered some challenges. Firstly, the students had to have a solid foundation of listening skills so that they had no difficulty making sense of messages. To this end, we scaffolded the students by allowing them to read spoken texts while listening. In addition, we appropriated the following scaffolds: (1) use of captions and subtitles, (2) caption use and proficiency level, (3) different forms of textual aids, (4) language used in subtitles, and (5) multimodal scaffolds (Yang & Chang, 2014). Secondly, the students had to critically interpret non-verbal codes, which entail cultural meanings, which are not available to their first or second languages (L1-L2). For this reason, we re-taught the students how to make meanings from different transcultural perspectives. Thirdly, the students had difficulty understanding idiomatic expressions, which are not socially equivalent to those of students' L1 and L2. To cope with this, we provided visualization or recontextualization of such messages, which are close in meaning to those of students' L1 and L2. The activities required the students to do autonomous extensive listening on a regular basis. To boost students' motivation, we had to provide them with listening logs to help them record what texts they had explored. We regularly commented on students' listening logs or asked the students to present their listening logs in each of the regular class periods. This autonomous extensive listening could complement intensive listening or listening comprehension instruction, which is widely practiced in EAL classrooms.

### **Implications for EAL Listening Pedagogy in Asia and Beyond**

Despite these possible challenges, video-mediated English listening instruction whose goal is to help learners develop their sociopragmatic awareness/competence and linguistic competences have four pedagogical implications

for innovation and change in English-medium listening instruction. Firstly, we would like to encourage our colleagues in Asia to view listening as an active and interactional activity (Rost & Wilson, 2013), not merely as a receptive skill because learners engage actively in meaning making from spoken input received. This cognitive process involves how they interweave their cognitive resources (schemata) with their linguistic resources to make meaning making possible. Inasmuch as the nature of listening is active and interactional, listening tasks can be integrated into speaking activities because when students listen to any spoken input, they are required to respond to it.

Secondly, we would like to accentuate that videos as digital genres provide students with a wide array of spoken English discourses. Such a technological tool can mediate varied exposure to English. By accessing a myriad of English-medium videos, students can learn not only American English and British English, but also other varieties of English. This helps learners recognize how different people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds speak English with their unique accents. More importantly, this can promote English as an additional language (EAL) because students need to develop their English to interact with people who do not share the same local or national languages with each other.

Thirdly, we wish to motivate our colleagues in Asia to provide technology-mediated listening instruction in order to exploit sociopragmatic resources or values from different English speaking encounters. These resources play a crucial role in increasing learners' awareness of English as a social language in which meanings depend not only on linguistic dimensions, but also on sociopragmatic interpretations. This notion suggests that particular English expressions are shaped by social and cultural values in particular social community contexts. Therefore, we are entrusted to provide learners with socially and culturally sensitive listening tasks. The goals of listening instruction are to help students make sense of spoken English from sociocultural angles; at the same time, to develop their linguistic competence.

Fourthly, video-mediated listening tasks can build and develop independent or autonomous learning in that students can access spoken English resources outside the language classroom and select English-medium videos based on their language ability and sociopragmatic needs. In this way, we can ask our students to create a learning portfolio as a form of assessment for learning so that we can keep track of or monitor their learning development and provide them with appropriate and timely scaffolding.

In such ways, students are afforded the opportunity to engage in vibrant and continued learning experiences. To achieve this, we can build learning groups or communities where they can collaborate with their peers to create learning portfolios (see Cirocki, 2013) and a social space for sharing their learning experience with each other.

The four pedagogical implications seek to reconceptualize English-medium listening instruction as the point of departure for assisting our learners to prepare them for English speaking encounters in diverse social and cultural contexts. Additionally, such instruction attempts to contextually frame the two-fold goals of learning listening, that is, to develop students' linguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence. Such goals recognize learning English not only as learning English as the language system, but also developing English as the social system.

## **Conclusions**

This article underscores the importance of developing sociopragmatic competence, which enables EAL learners not only to successfully use TL to achieve various communicative purposes, but also to understand a particular language in context. Successful development of sociopragmatic competence can be facilitated by the use of videos in the classroom. Using videos as sources of language input for listening tasks or activities, EAL teachers can provide students with auditory and visual features of conversational interactions. In such a way, listening activities become multimodally interactive and may stimulate and maintain students' interests and motivation to acquire sociopragmatic competence. Furthermore, because videos provide ample language input, language teachers should select listening materials or language samples, which contain sociopragmatic utterances. The selection of the utterances should be based on connectivity, selectivity, authenticity, representativeness, neutrality, familiarity and intelligibility, and comprehensibility.

In order to promote sociopragmatic competence in the EAL listening classroom, teachers are encouraged to make use of three types of listening tasks: audio and video viewing, audio only viewing, and freeze scene viewing. Technically speaking, those tasks aim not only at exploiting naturally occurring sociopragmatic utterances, but also at assisting students to raise their critical awareness of language use and appropriateness in particular communicative contexts (e.g., sociocultural

contexts). Such tasks also help students become aware that listening involves intrapersonal and interpersonal negotiations for meaning as a way to construct and deconstruct it and as an endeavor to make meaning of spoken texts.

To conclude, developing sociopragmatic competence through video-mediated tasks is entertaining, motivating and instructive. In many teaching contexts, however, EAL syllabuses still neglect the inclusion of sociopragmatic competence in the language curriculum. Lack of appropriate materials and teacher awareness of needs for developing sociopragmatic competence also contribute to a very limited focus on the issue in question. To fill these voids, we suggest that three steps be taken: (1) developing sociopragmatic competence should be a permanent element of the EAL syllabus, (2) assessing sociopragmatic competence should be integrated into language assessment, and, last but not least, (3) EAL teachers should be methodologically well-prepared and capable of delivering high quality teaching of the TL with video-mediated tasks. The latter would contribute to testing the outcomes and validity of the tasks discussed in this article, at the same time triggering demanded research into this area.

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**“Am I an ‘insane’ L2 teacher?”: practical suggestions for self-directed teacher professional development in Asian EFL context**

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**Abstract**

Self-directed TPD activities (during both pre-service and in-service periods) have drawn a lot of attention in the field of second language teacher education (SLTE) over the last two decades because L2 teacher’s quality plays a dominant influence on student academic achievement. However, it seems that the majority of L2 teachers in Asian EFL contexts are less likely to pursue Teacher Professional Development (TPD) for several reasons. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to briefly discuss the conceptual framework of self-directed TPD, define what it means, and present some pragmatic suggestions on how to practice self-directed TPD particularly in Asian EFL context. This discussion may offer useful insights and implications for L2 teachers in Asian EFL contexts to proactively pursue on-going self-driven TPD that meets their teaching contexts, independent of external professional programs.

Keywords: TPD, self-directed

**Introduction**

Einstein once said, “Insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly expecting the different results.” From Lee (2009)’s perspective, the majority of second language (L2) teachers in South Korea are ‘insane’ as they do not engage in reflective teaching. They just repeat the same routines as did before but wanting to become good teachers.

Lee (2009) points out that this ‘insanity’ phenomenon is attributed to exhaustive administrative chorus, test-oriented curriculum, and low-quality in-service teacher training. This finding has been also supported by the OECD’s (2009) report, which indicates Korean teachers are less likely to pursue Teacher Professional Development (TPD) for several reasons (i.e. inadequate funding for TPD, daily chores, and fatigue). Considering Einstein’s quotation, Korean L2 teachers should act differently in order to get different results – (let’s say) to become a better L2 teacher.

Then, why is a lack of TPD such a big deal for L2 teachers? Lee (2009) claims that the success of an instruction is determined by a quality of its teachers. In other words, teacher quality plays a great influence on student academic achievement. Thus, it is essential L2 teachers receive a good formal training from college of education during pre-service period and continuously sustain their own TPD activities (which will be introduced later in this paper) during in-service period. Unlike other subject matters, in particular, foreign language learners mainly gain L2 exposure by L2 teachers’ oral or written linguistic input in EFL context (Lee, 2009). Because of this reason, L2 teachers should keep pursuing continuous professional development to ensure a quality instruction. Therefore, it is essential that L2 teachers and all interested parties (i.e. the college of education, the public and private school, in service teacher education institution, ELT policy makers) pay more attention to the necessity and practice of continuous TPD throughout their teaching careers for better quality instructions for students and the nation’s sustainable progress.

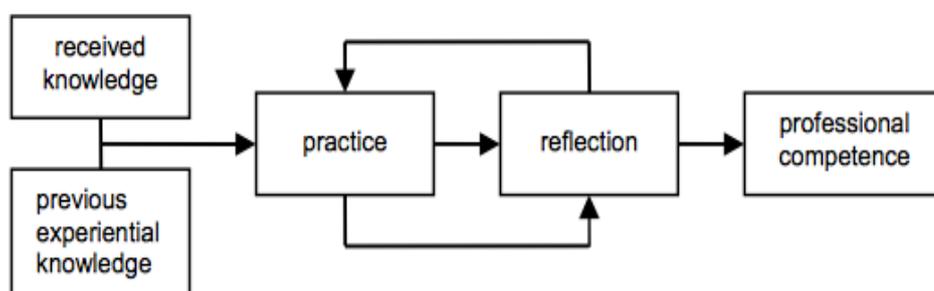
It is important, however, that L2 teachers shouldn’t depend on the external professional programs merely provided by the school or the government. That is because several published literatures (Min, 2006; Im & Kim, 2008; Lee, 2013) have argued that the teacher educational institution is not effective for a variety of reasons (i.e. low quality instruction, theory-based instruction, discrepancy between the training programs and the teachers’ actual needs). In this manner, Johnson (2006) emphasizes that ‘the view of L2 teacher education should be broader, one that encompasses externally sanctioned as well as internally initiated and controlled professional development experiences [by L2 teachers]’ (p.250). That is to say, the L2 teacher education should focus on complex ‘mental lives’ (p.236) of L2 teachers and L2 teachers should proactively undertake on-going self-driven teacher professional development (TPD) that meets their own teaching contexts, independent of such external professional programs.

However, it seems that the majority of L2 teachers in Asian EFL contexts are less likely to pursue Teacher Professional Development (TPD) for several reasons. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to briefly discuss the conceptual framework of self-directed TPD, define what it means, and present some pragmatic suggestions on how to practice self-directed TPD particularly in Asian EFL context.

#### Conceptual framework of self-directed TPD

Self-directed Teacher Professional Development (TPD) is deeply derived from Wallace (1991)'s 'reflective model,' which is regarded as a prevailing paradigm in L2 teacher education research and programs worldwide. As indicated in figure 1, Wallace explains that TPD rotates a cycle of the dynamic process through three stages: *pre-training, professional development, and professional competence stage*. After the *pre-training stage*, L2 teachers experience *professional development stage* where they continuously reflect on their own practice based on the theory (i.e. received and experiential knowledge) and reach the final stage *professional competence*. In a nutshell, this 'reflective model' suggests that L2 teachers develop professionally through a series of on-going reflective teachings on their own practice.

**FIGURE 1. The Reflective Model (Wallace, 1991, p.15)**



More specifically, Gaible and Burns (2005) propose three TPD models: *standardized, site-based, and self-directed models*. Through the standardized TPD model, L2 teacher trainers can quickly disseminate general skills and knowledge L2 teacher trainee. The site-based TPD model, on the other hand, attends to some specific skills and needs that are more closely relevant to L2 teacher trainees' own authentic classrooms. These TPD models are useful but not without limitations. The standardized TPD has some shortcomings mainly due to a significant gap between the programs offered and the trainees' actual pedagogical needs. The drawback of the

site-based is that it does require a significant amount of time and exercise. To fill up these gaps, self-directed TPD is designed. It urges L2 teachers to take the lead in their own TPD, independent of the standardized and site-based TPD. Through self-directed TPD model, L2 teachers in EFL context can understand and address the specific pedagogical needs and challenges they encounter in their own particular classroom and school context, which leads to an ongoing professional growth.

### **Definition of self-directed TPD**

Several teacher education researchers have defined Teacher Professional Development (TPD). Richards and Farrell (2005, p.15) claim, “Your [teacher] professional development does not stop once you have acquired your professional qualifications.” They argue that TPD should be continuously carried out even after obtaining a professional qualification from pre-service teacher education or certificate programs. Wong (2011, p. 142) asserts, “[L2] professionals [should] have the knowledge, skills, qualifications, connections, and accountability to engage in their professions as advocates.... A[teacher] professional development is a lifelong endeavor.” That is, L2 teachers should make continuous efforts to become professional L2 teachers, balancing with areas of ‘knowledge, skills, qualifications, connections and accountability.’ The aforementioned definitions emphasize both pre-service and in-service education including internally motivated self-directed TPD to become a professional L2 teacher.

In this study, I would like to define ‘*self-directed TPD*’ as combined above definitions: ‘*self-directed TPD*’ is a continuous lifelong activity internally motivated by the L2 teacher’s self-determination and keeps reflecting his or her teaching and develops their pedagogical skills, knowledge, expertise and other properties to meet their specific needs in his or her particular school contexts.

### **Practical suggestions on self-directed TPD**

So far, we have discussed the background, the conceptual framework of self-directed TPD and its definitions. In this section, I would like to suggest four major self-directed TPD activities that may be suitable in Asian EFL contexts based on my own first experience and juxtaposed with other scholarships.

- 1) Keep a reflective teaching journal

According to Richards and Farrell (2005), L2 teachers can engage in keeping an ongoing reflective journal in an online or offline mode about what they observe and reflect in relation to their classroom teaching. They also argue that it can help later reflect and evaluate their teaching. From my standpoint, TPD should be intentional because great teachers do not grow automatically. They should be intentional about their professional development, and the best way to implement it is to keep reflecting on their teaching practices on a regular basis. The simplest but most effective way to do it is to keep a reflective teaching journal.

The benefits of keeping a reflective teaching journal are enormous. First, the greatest advantage is to help teachers figure out the issues or problems (i.e. classroom management, motivation) emerged out of the journal entries they need to address. If L2 teachers identify and attempt to correct ‘the one classroom-related problem’ at a time, they can continually become a better and more effective teacher over time. Second, it also helps teachers take a critical look at their decision-making process within their own teaching context. For example, some teachers may challenge themselves by asking ‘why I have decided to give students this vocabulary quiz.’ Through this reflective journal writing, teachers can get a better chance to confront themselves, fix their mistakes and innovate a new approach for the next class. Third, it helps teachers evaluate how much they have progressed compared with their past performance. Suppose you identify a classroom management as a sensitive issue at the beginning of the semester. You attempt to address this problem for a certain period of time and later can assess objectively how much you have mitigated it by reviewing and comparing your prior journal entries.

I strongly recommend you keep a reflective journal in an e-blog. That is because you can easily manipulate the blog, record your entries, and retrieve them later for the reflection and evaluation. The e-blog helps you manage your reflective journal entries in a systematic manner. For instance, I have kept over 1,200 entries in my personal e-blog since 2012, and I retrieve or ‘re-visit’ the old entries on a weekly, monthly, and yearly basis by entering a keyword on the search engine and reflect that particular incident or event again from a new perspective. Depending on the purpose of this e-journal, you can either keep it private or share your entries with the public. Personally, I allow others to read my professional journal entries while keeping all of my private information strictly confidential. In this way, I can freely vent my own

critical feelings and opinions on my professional life without really being too conscious of what others might think of me.

## 2) Conduct self-initiated evaluations

You can assess your teaching performance objectively by monitoring yourself. It can be achieved through multiple sources (i.e. audio-recording, video-recording, teacher evaluation from students and colleagues, compiling a teacher portfolio). For example, Richards and Farrell (2005) discusses that classroom observation through an audio recording and video recording helps take an objective view of what L2 teachers and their students are interacting in the classroom. In addition, Richards and Lockhart (1996) indicates that teacher evaluations from students (i.e. need analysis, teacher evaluation) help gather data on a specific area of teaching or learning from students.

You can yield the best benefits by better understanding yourself as a professional teacher and identifying your instruction's strength and weakness. The more you have effective evaluation tools, the better you can objectify yourself as a teacher and become more aware of which skills and knowledge you need to improve.

It is important to start small, though. Let's say your primary aim is to improve your teaching skills. The first thing you need to do is to identify which area of teaching you want to enhance. Second, you can set up an audio- or video-recording device at a certain place of your classroom. After explaining your students about its purpose (i.e. improving your own teaching), you can regularly record your teaching practice for self-reflection and improvement. In addition to utilizing self-monitoring TPD, you can seek feedback from your colleagues through peer observation or even your students through teacher evaluation. Their feedbacks are sometimes very harsh but help you critically assess your teaching from different perspectives. Also, you can compile all the data relevant to your teaching and create your own teaching portfolio. I favor this teaching portfolio because it clearly indicates how you have implemented your TPD from the inception to the present.

For example, in the early stage of my teaching, I wanted to improve two areas of my teaching – my L1 and L2 explanation and my interaction with my students. That is because some students requested me to clarify my statement in one of their teacher evaluation forms. Personally, I was also unsure of how frequent I gave a chance to my students for participating and speaking during the class. Subsequently, I installed my portable audio-recording device to monitor the clarity of my utterance and the level of

my interaction with students. At times, I set up both audio- and video- recording instruments in different locations for more sources. I also invited my colleagues into my classroom to observe and evaluate such specific areas of my teaching. It is significant because it provides me with diverse standpoints on this particular teaching issue. At the end of the semester, I again conducted the teacher evaluation by my students. Although they touches upon some thorny issues (i.e. you were late for class a few times, you were unprepared for the class on a particular day) and raises some tough questions (i.e. Are you really a good L2 teacher?) from time to time, it is one of my favorite TPD methods to take an objective view of myself as a professional L2 teacher. Taken all aforementioned items together, I can also create a teaching portfolio in a coherent manner. All of those methods can give you a holistic perspective on how effective you are as a L2 teacher. Sometimes, it is hard to confront me objectively but again it is one of the best TPD methods to develop myself professionally.

### 3) Organize a school-based seminar

The third TPD activity I would like to suggest is to organize a school-based seminar.

Unlike the teacher training or education operated by the government or university, the teachers can take initiatives in holding a school-based seminar in order to effectively tackle their own school-related issues.

Several benefits are present. First, teachers can play a proactive role in resolving specific problems in their particular teaching context. For instance, I realized that students did not know how to study English properly when I was in charge of the English department. So, I suggested my colleagues to conduct a team project and create an English-learning strategy book that fit our own unique educational context. Since our school is an alternative boarding school, our students need to study differently from students attending a regular public or private school. In cooperation with our alumni (who had effective English learning strategies adequate for the school's context), we collected and edited a number of essays on how successful English learners studied in our unique school's context. After three months of compiling data, we could finally publish and distribute the strategy books for our students. This project was successful because teachers could meet and discuss regularly during a school-based seminar focusing consistently on one particular

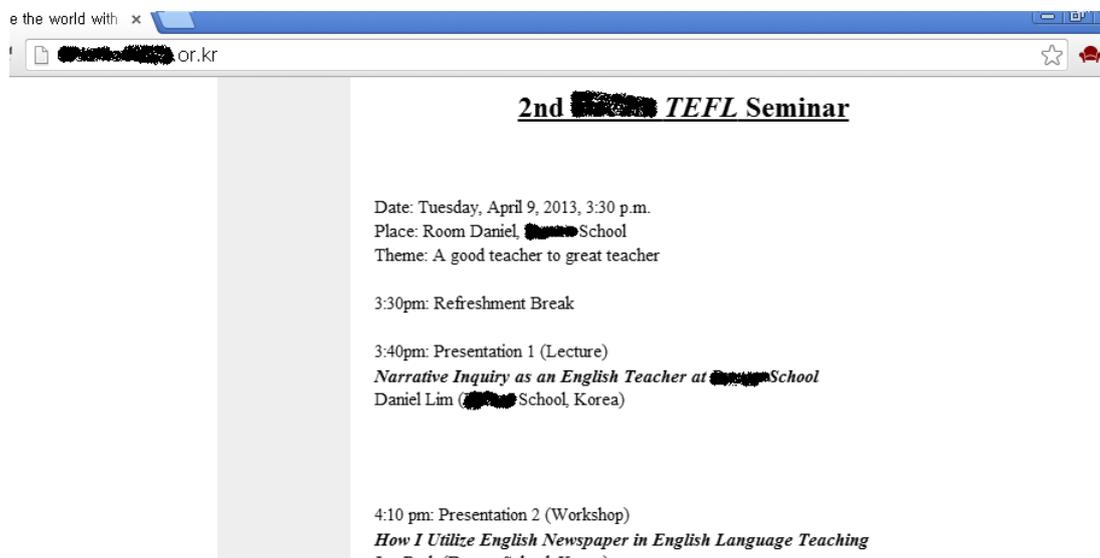
matter. Second, a school-based seminar promotes teacher's autonomous professional development that can meet the teachers' pedagogical needs. For instance, this seminar took place every two weeks. I set a rule that each one of the teachers (i.e. 8 teachers) must demonstrate to other co-teachers about his or her classroom lesson (i.e. how to teach English through newspaper). By sharing their practical skills and knowledge during this school-based seminar, other teachers could learn, modify and apply a variety of these pedagogical knowledge and skills into their own classroom practices. More importantly, it can be also beneficial to the speaker in that he or she should thoroughly study and prepare for the lecture. Unlike the government (or administer)-driven TPD, this autonomous school-based TPD helps teachers cope with the issues more effectively that are closely connected to their students and school.

What procedures are necessary to implement this? First and the foremost, it requires the school leader's or department director's willingness and determination to carry out this school-based seminar. They should make other co-teachers become aware of why it is vital and how they can obtain benefits from it. Second, if all members agree to participate in this TPD, they should assemble and discuss the specific agendas they would like to tackle on a regular basis. According to my experience, the meeting or seminar is unlikely to become productive if the topics are ambiguous and unspecific. It is also very important to select the optimal time (i.e. date and duration) and place for the seminar. As displayed in figure 2, the school-based seminar information (containing specific topic, date, place) can be uploaded on the school website. Finally, the inside leader (i.e. head teacher) or outside expert (i.e. professor) with the adequate knowledge and experience on the school seminar can lead and coordinate the seminar at the beginning stage. Once the participants are used to the process, expert groups can delegate their roles to the other participants, which allow them to take turns leading and organizing the seminar.

When it comes to designing the school-based seminar, three elements (i.e. theory, practice, and students) should be embedded. In details, the first presenter can discuss one of the ELT theories (i.e. Task-Based Language Instruction), followed by the next speaker demonstrating how this TBLI theory can be effectively put into practice in his or her particular classroom context. The seminar can be concluded with the 'reflective teaching' session where participants freely exchange their opinions on the feasibility of how to build this TBLI theory-practice for their own classroom and students. Throughout this process, teachers can not only acquire new ELT theories and

authentic tips but also thoroughly comprehend several issues that currently take place within their school and classroom contexts (i.e. students learning styles, motivation, and sociocultural contexts). In this regard, teachers can fill up the gap between theory and practice in EFL contexts and actually address the students' needs and issues.

**FIGURE 2. Screen shot of a website announcement on school-based TEFL seminar**



#### 4) Present a paper at a conference

From my experience, presenting a paper at a national or international conference is one of the best ways to keep learning new knowledge and growing professionally. Here is how I do on a regular basis. First, I select one topic that is relevant to areas of my interest (i.e. TPD, globalization) and seems interesting to the target audiences. Then, I design the research (i.e. topic, research questions, methodology) usually after discussing with my colleagues or experts (i.e. academic advisors). After conducting a pilot test and subsequently modifying my research design, I conduct the revised version of the research in an actual research setting. When this research is over, I spend a great portion of time analyzing its data and identifying significant findings and implications juxtaposed with other scholarships. Finally, I share those results with other colleagues in my community before presenting them in a national or international conference. When I was a L2 teacher at K-12, the research tended to be small-scale (i.e. action research on a classroom setting). But as I have been gaining my teaching and research experience and currently pursuing higher academic degree,

I can expand the scope of my research (i.e. qualitative research on a global perspective).

The greatest benefit you may get when writing and presenting a paper about is you can pay more attention to your teaching performance and your students. Unlike the routine class, you will make ‘intentional’ efforts (i.e. watching your students reactions more carefully, asking some students extra questions after class, and recording the critical incidents in your teaching journal) to acquire reliable data and information for analyzing and presenting the quality paper. In addition, it will help you reflect and renew your pedagogical curriculum and instruction. For instance, I usually talk about my research findings with several colleagues or experts. They often offer me fresh and diverse perspectives on the findings gleaned from my research, which lead to reflecting and changing my curriculum and instruction. Third, it helps you become a more professional L2 researcher. As you work on your research paper, for instance, you can refer to enormous published literatures that are relevant to your particular study. It gives you both the macro- and micro- perspectives in terms of where your research should locate (in literature review) and thus how you can expand the existing body of the knowledge in the field of your particular study. Last but not least, you can also obtain a variety of constructive feedback from audiences after presenting a paper in the conference. Even after your presentation, some audiences may approach you in order to continuously inquiry over your specific topic. Some researchers who have the similar interest of study may want to collaborate with you in the future research project.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this paper is to make four main practical suggestions how L2 teachers in Asian EFL context can engage in self-directed TPD. To address the objective, the basic background and theoretical lens of the self-directed TPD has been first discussed with its definitions. Next, four hands-on suggestions on self-directed TPD have been presented; 1) keeping a reflective teaching journal, 2) conducting self-initiated evaluations, 3) organizing a school-based seminar, and 4) presenting a paper at a conference.

L2 teachers should not rely entirely on TPD opportunities provided by the government or school administrator. L2 teachers should play a proactive role in

undertaking their own TPD that can meet their own needs in a specific context. Apart from those four TPD actions, they can engage in other TPD activities including mentoring a novice teacher, forming a teacher research group, participating in curriculum development, conducting a group action research, and networking with other L2 teachers or scholars.

For future research, I would like to explore a model that promotes L2 teacher's self-reflection and provide teachers with more practical professional development tips for on-going professional growth over the course of their self-directed TPD that are suitable in Asian EFL context.

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