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The EFL Professional's Written Forum

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Book Reviews

Foreword

Dear Readers,

The Asian EFL Journal's quarterly September issue continues the tradition of providing EFL professionals throughout the world with insight into some of the most pertinent issues affecting language learning. Readers will be able to explore the work of researchers investigating a variety of perplexing topics of interest in an Asian context. Enriched with diversity, the world's largest continent provides scholars with a vast resource of distinct and varied language learning environments readily available for analysis. The articles presented in this issue are a true reflection from the heart of Asia with research originating from China, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and Thailand.

In an inquiry into the problems of student motivation, James Life presents an extensive study involving nearly 700 undergraduate students enrolled in university EFL courses in Korea, China, and Japan. In examining motivational differences and similarities between these North-East Asian cultures, the author provides detailed information that may allow instructors to better anticipate the needs of their students. Information concerning student preferences is a crucial aspect influencing motivation and we are given a thorough explanation in this study.

In addressing the challenges faced by Chinese EFL composition students, Justina Ong investigates writing from an error analysis perspective. The author provides further invaluable information by specifically identifying problematic writing errors of the participants. Along with the accompanying explanations, we are given a clearer portrayal of the seriousness of these problems. In pinpointing high frequency errors and writing patterns, educators are given invaluable information in areas demanding attention.

Otoshi and Heffernan examine three psychological needs presented in the Self-Determination Theory – autonomy, relatedness and competence – the authors emphasize the importance of these aspects to intrinsic motivation in a study involving two groups of students. In a comparison of English and business majors, differences were found between the groups in causal relationships of the three psychological needs with intrinsic

motivation. Based on the findings of the study, the authors recommend that teachers carefully consider the psychological needs of learners in relation to language learning activities.

In an investigation of the role of counselors in a university self-access center, Pornapit Darasawang examines the delicate distinction between those catering to the immediate needs of the learner versus those promoting the long-term goals of self-sufficiency in autonomous language learning. An analysis of knowledge, beliefs, and behavior of counselors has led the author to distinguish two groups: teaching-oriented and independent learning-oriented. In essence, although some counselors could be described as being more characteristic of tutors, others maintained the objective of facilitating autonomous learning.

In Yangyu Xiao, Gerard Sharpling and Hongyun Liu's study of Chinese high school student perspectives of a national English proficiency examination, a significant washback effect was found that directly influenced the development and utilization of student learning strategies. Despite the impact of the English proficiency examination on the development of learning strategies and reading skills, an ability to adopt metacognitive, compensation and affective language learning strategies, along with advances in reading skills were revealed in the study.

Shu-chin Yen examines the effectiveness of a particular form of educational material developed to improve academic writing; specifically, rhetorical consciousness raising instruction. Materials containing these attributes are schematic in structure, and contain rich language features and text. The author further explores frequency of use, preferences, focus areas, opinions, and an assessment of the effectiveness of these materials on learning.

Katayoon Afzali, Manoochehr Tavangar, Mohammad Amouzadeh, & Abass Eslami Rasekh investigate the needs of Iranian university students in reading literary and non-literary texts strategically and how these needs differ when reading literary texts as opposed to non-literary texts. The researchers studied thirty participants who read three literary and two non-literary texts and wrote their own questions to the related reading. Next, these questions were categorized into different types. The findings show that the principal problem for the students were in the textually implicit aspects of the texts. The

practical implications of the study suggest that understanding students' strategic reading needs can assist teachers in promoting better academic reading skills. The authors recommend this can be done specifically by transferring more responsibility to the students, encouraging authenticity in student questions and increasing engagement with the reading texts.

Anne Ma examines the perceptions of what students think they are learning in the language classroom and what teachers believe they are teaching. She finds the perceptions are often quite different. The focus is a case study of young learners in a primary ESL classroom in Hong Kong. The researcher looks at perceptions of learning, the purpose of the main classroom task, and student conceptions of difficulties in the task. The study incorporated pre- and post-lesson interviews with the teacher and post-lesson interviews with individual learners. Findings show that the learners had a different understanding of what the pedagogical objectives were from that of the teacher and there were also variations in the concerns of learners of different abilities. Recommendations are provided on classroom learning implications for teachers.

Authors Btoosh and Taweel explore the use of rhetorical features (specifically inflation and over-assertion devices, verbal voices and polyphonic visibility) in L2 learners' and native speakers' academic writing. The study attempts to uncover the reasons underlying divergence in the L2 learners use of the target language features. The database for the study consisted of two corpora, namely, the Interlanguage Corpus of Arab Students of English and the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays. Findings show that L2 learners' writing is characterized by numerous rhetorical features primarily attributed to L1 influence and learners' general tendencies. Chief among these features are L2 learners' overuse of intensifiers, underuse of passive voice, and strong visibility in the text. The study presents an implication for EFL teachers concerning the importance of corpora in linguistic analysis, and how differences between L2 and L1 students, in terms of the overuse, underuse or incorrect use of lexical items or grammatical features should be approached in EFL teaching.

Ali Reza investigates metacognitive strategy instruction, specifically paraphrasing strategy intervention to improve reading comprehension. His study was conducted with college students in India. The effect of this instruction was measured by the students'

performance in reading comprehension. Based on a proficiency test, students were grouped into high and low levels, considered to be another independent variable in addition to gender. Findings indicate that intervention or explicit instruction was effective in improving Indian ESL students' reading comprehension. Although there was no interaction between gender and learners' performance in reading comprehension, the study found that college students can be taught to improve their reading through the development of their paraphrasing skills.

This qualitative case study by Jianwei Xu explores how self-confidence is socially constructed by investigating the experiences of two Chinese advanced learners of English in Australia. Expanding on the social and cultural concepts of L2 learning and theories of self-confidence as being socially constructed, the researcher shows that a learner's sense of confidence is influenced by external factors such as power relations and internal factors such as a learner's previously established L2 identities shaped by the concept of *investment* in learning the second language. Through in-depth interviews the researcher constructs a description of the learners' language development and attitudes, providing an understanding of the dynamic process of confidence construction. This study also provides useful observations of the significance regarding the complex relations between language, investment and identity.

Masataka Kasai, Jeong-Ah Lee and Soonhyang Kim explore Japanese and Korean secondary school students' perceptions about their native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), concerning their competence in the target language and in language teaching, cultural and personal traits, teaching styles, and the classroom atmosphere. The purpose of this study was to examine and extend previous research findings concerning the characteristics of NESTs and NNESTs. This study only partially supported the previous research. While it corroborated the studies that reported language competence and cultural aspects as NESTs' strengths over NNESTs, differences were found when it came to personal aspects and competence in teaching language skills. The findings suggest that students' perceptions about NESTs and NNESTs are situational, and contextual particularities and strengths and/or weaknesses of all teachers need to be understood on an individual basis rather than assumed as characteristic of any group of teachers.

Su-Jen Lai and Ming-i Lydia Tseng develop an ecological view of literacy in EFL learning contexts. Following a qualitative multiple case study approach, the authors combine in-depth interviews along with reading tasks, written assignments, and observations to investigate Taiwanese EFL literacy learning. The study justifies the importance of adopting an ecological perspective of literacy when examining how students' English literacy learning is culturally embedded and socially constructed. The research findings suggest that EFL teachers should adopt a reflective curriculum, encouraging EFL students to take an ethnographic viewpoint towards their English literacy learning. This study offers a new perspective for EFL teachers, researchers and students from which to rethink how an ecological view of literacy can be implemented in an EFL literacy class, creating more opportunities for students to work together with their peers as well as to become more engaged in learning. This research is relevant to teachers who are interested in EFL literacy education as it demonstrates how such an approach to literacy can generate new insights for the field of ELT, particularly in EFL reading and writing instruction.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to all of those who have contributed to an extensive process requiring the expertise and dedication of countless reviewers, editors, and proofreaders. Last but not least, we are especially grateful to all of the authors for sharing their valuable research and insight.

Motivation and EFL University Students in North-East Asia

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Biodata

James Life is a member of the English Linguistics Department at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies in Korea. His graduate degree is in higher education – curriculum development, from the University of Victoria. His areas of interest and research include language strategies, conceptual expression, instructional methodology, and curriculum development.

Abstract

How can instructors motivate Asian university students in their EFL classrooms? One way is to ask the students directly about their preferences and other motivational factors through survey questionnaires and follow up assessments by the students. Is there a difference in motivation between the cultures of North-East Asia? Does the motivation vary when other group factors are considered? To answer these questions, a survey questionnaire was given to university EFL students in Korea, China, and Japan (669 questionnaires in total).

The survey questions considered various aspects of motivation such as: self-efficacy – student's confidence in their general English abilities; goals and needs – personal goals in learning English; the self – student preferences; and disincentives – problems in EFL education. Comparisons between students from the different cultures were made using underclassmen responses from each country with subgroups exploring the influence of other factors such as; gender, English and non-English major, years of university experience, and general English ability. The results were then reviewed and analyzed in part, by the students surveyed. The purpose of the research is to add insight into what motivates the students so that instructors may anticipate student needs and expectations in their overall approach to EFL pedagogy. The findings displayed general trends in current EFL motivation that serve as an example for the larger Asian forum.

Keywords: student motivation; self-efficacy; student voice; instructional methodology

Background

Like many new scholars, when I first arrived in Asia to instruct EFL to university students I was inundated with numerous anecdotal perceptions of what learning preferences and motivations students had. Some appeared to be correct while others clearly were not. I could not help wondering if some of this was a self-fulfilling prophecy for the student or an extension of my desire to try to disprove trends that were counter to my own sense of what motivates students. Studies by scholar such as Cheng (2000), Lui

(2007) and Wu and Wu (2008) suggested that many traditional preferences and motivations were in the process of change. This inspired further research by my colleagues and me, to clarify the issue and help lessen the confusion presented to new instructors unfamiliar with Asian culture. Often we are too quick to associate what motivates Western students as being equivalent for Asian students, or we fall victim to passing on misconceptions about traditional preferences and motivations. The survey we produced expands on areas of preference and other aspects of motivation such as the sense of self-efficacy, and reiterated the main sources of frustration and de-motivation as a follow-up on the concerns raised in the studies done by Sewell (2006) and Xiao (2006).

In 2007 and 2008 the author conducted three separate motivation surveys with colleagues in Korea, China, and Japan. The wealth of information available from these surveys prompted the author to incorporate the raw data to form a broader and more comprehensive collective case study of North-East Asia as the area is often considered a common subject and marketing group for EFL education. The initial survey focused solely on Korean students. The same questionnaire was then used for a separate analysis of Chinese students. In 2008 the questionnaire was used a third time in both Korean and Japan for comparing motivation between the two cultures. Although there were complications as a natural part of a developing methodology, the size of the data base offers credibility in the trends suggested in this overall analysis of the surveys.

The paper integrates references to current literature and the views of the students with the practical observations of the author throughout the text. The results of the surveys are offered for the reader to consider in the context of their own learning environment. This is followed by a discussion of the overall differences between the surveyed groups and factors that affect the practical application of instructional methodology based on the findings.

Methodology

The research represents a collective case study and therefore can only suggest trends through comparing and contrasting student responses. However, findings cannot definitively link any specific issue directly with a specific subgroup or culture as there is more individual diversity in the response within a group as there is between groups.

Although all students were Asian EFL university students, they do not have identical educational environments as they were surveyed from a range of educational institutions involving different instructors. Therefore any application developed from the data presented in this study would need adjustment in consideration of the specific learning environment where it is applied.

The survey questionnaires were completed by 116 Chinese, 340 Korean, and 213 Japanese university students with the main target group being underclassmen, given in 2007 (Life & Kim – in press) and 2008 (Life, Fallout & Murphey 2009). Underclassmen, first and second year students, were used as the standard group for comparison between the three cultures to minimize the maturity bias which a two-year military service requirement for male students in Korea, may have on the results for upperclassmen, third and fourth year students. The final survey also included comments by many of the students surveyed as a means of adding new views and interpretations to the results of the questionnaire survey. My own views and experience supported by contemporary voices in instructional theory give support and critic the findings of the survey.

Description of the Survey Groups

The students surveyed attended the following universities in China, Korea, and Japan: Shanghai Maritime University in China; Inha University, Korea University, and Dongguk University in Korea; and Nihon University and Kanda University of International Studies in Japan. The surveys were conducted during two time periods, the first semester in 2007 (Shanghai Maritime, Inha and Korea University) and the first semester in 2008 (Nihon, Kanda and Dongguk University). The 2007 Korean survey also considered student ability and the 2008 survey considered gender, university experience and student majors.

The following were the main survey groups:

- Korean underclassmen 2007 (118)
- Chinese underclassmen 2007 (116)
- Japanese underclassmen 2008 (120)

The following were the survey subgroups:

- Korean underclassmen - low ability 2007 (62)
- Korean underclassmen 2008 (66)

- Korean upperclassmen 2008 (69)
- Korean female students 2008 (73)
- Korean male students 2008 (62)
- Japanese upperclassmen 2008 (85)
- Japanese female students 2008 (79)
- Japanese male students 2008 (123)
- Japanese non-English majors 2008 (129)
- Japanese English majors 2008 (83)

The differentiation between universities within the various countries is beyond the scope of this paper but a brief description of the schools is in order. Nihon University is the largest institution in the studies representing a total student population greater than 80,000 with the survey subject group being engineering majors. Korea, Dongguk, and Inha University have a student enrollment between 20,000 and 30,000. The students surveyed at Dongguk University were mostly English majors with the students at Korea and Inha University representing a mixture of English and non-English majors. Shanghai Maritime University, which has an enrollment between 15,000 and 20,000 students, focuses on the shipping industry with the surveyed group being both English and non-English majors. Kanda University of International Studies with an enrollment between 3,000 and 4,000 students, specializes in international studies, in particular the area of foreign languages and intercultural communication; most students surveyed were English majors. The survey group at Nihon University was mostly male and the students at Kanda University of International Studies were predominantly female; the other schools were gender balanced. Unlike most schools in Korea, Inha University has the policy of separating EFL students by ability determined by test results prior to registering for classes. Because of this a survey was also done for the labeled ‘low-achievers’ at that school. These students were taught with separate instructional material and the training was considered more remedial, therefore the results were not included when considering overall trends for Korean underclassmen students.

The Questionnaire

The survey questionnaire consists of questions regarding student comfort and confidence, student needs and goals, individual preferences, and problems in EFL education (using a 5 point Likert scale). This highlights four key areas of student motivation theory, self-efficacy, needs and goal incentives, the rise of the 'self' in a traditionally communal society, and de-motivation. Perceived inhibitors, de-motivators, are equally as important as motivators in the learning environment, as discussed in Falout and Falout (2005). Overall students took less than 10 minutes to complete the form. There was a high level of response in completing the questionnaire and little confusion in analyzing the results suggesting that the questions were generally understood.

Follow-up: Comments from the Students

During the third survey, students were asked for their opinions on the results obtained from the survey. They were told the results of the survey and then asked to work in groups of two to four to summarize their views and offer comments. The comments were added to the paper as they allow for more direct student input in the interpretation of the survey results. [**Note**: the comments given by Japanese students were translated into English].

Results

Self-Efficacy: Student's Confidence in their General English Abilities

A student's confidence is a part of self-efficacy and considered one of the major motivators for a learner. Self-efficacy is the internal growth of the self, focusing on ability and confidence in one's abilities. The more one becomes self-aware, the more one tends to strive for greater self-efficacy and this is a generation of increasing self-awareness. The desire for greater self-efficacy is a powerful driving force when there are clearly achievable levels of skill and success. Fortunately a sense of self-efficacy usually promotes self-motivation. The questions that follow suggest that student self-efficacy as illustrated through confidence and comfort, is still a concern in EFL education.

<u>General English Confidence in their Education and Ability to Learn</u>

Table1 Student confidence

Survey questions	Korea	China	Japan	Average
1) Out of 5 points, how good was your English education until the end of high school? (1=very bad, 5=very good)	3.36	3.47	2.99	3.27
2) Out of 5 points, how difficult is it for you to learn English? (1=very easy, 5=very difficult)	3.32	2.79	3.72	3.28

Above average appreciation for their general education resonates with students in China and Korea but a below average appreciation with students in Japan. This appreciation dropped significantly with the upperclassmen students in both Japan (2.63) and Korea (2.45) and Korean underclassmen surveyed in 2008 (2.79) responded more negatively than those surveyed in 2007. In both cases students are losing confidence in their education systems and this from cultures where education is traditionally highly respected. Many students consider high school English education as memorizing and grammar exercises with little practical application.

> *We think English Education system from elementary school to high school is not practical. Most of university students can't speak well in English communication. Especially in high school it has too much focus on grammer to get a good grade*. (Korean)

Korean and Japanese students feel insecure about their English abilities with Chinese students having the most confidence. This lack of confidence in the quality of their English education and in their ability to learn English was highest with Japanese males (2.68/3.80) and non-English majors (2.58/3.86).

> People who doubt their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks which they view as personal threats. They have low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. When faced with difficult tasks, they dwell on their personal deficiencies, on the obstacles they will encounter, and all kinds of adverse outcomes rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully. They slacken their efforts and give up quickly in the face of difficulties. They are slow to recover their sense of efficacy following failure or setbacks. (Bandura, 1994, p.71)

In the study by Lei and Quin (2009) on EFL learners in China, they note that one of the three variables contributing to failure as identified by their study students was the lack of confidence. It is perhaps a hopeful sign that Chinese students are confident in their English skills. Having said this, many students believe English is difficult to learn because they see it as a foreign language for study only and unrelated to their practical

communications. If this perception continues it is unlikely that most students will ever feel wholly comfortable with their use of English.

Learning to English is very difficult because it's foreign language. (Korean)

Comfort Level within the Classroom Setting

Table 2 Classroom comfort level

Survey questions	**Korea**	**China**	**Japan**	**Average**
1) Out of 5 points, do you like answering questions in class? (1=strongly dislike, 5=strongly like)	3.17	3.06	3.11	3.11
2) Out of 5 points, do you like having to speak English in class? (1=strongly dislike, 5=strongly like)	3.54	3.57	3.70	3.60

Students will not be motivated to learn if they do not have confidence in their ability to display their knowledge and understanding. The most comfortable environment for them to show their skill is in the classroom. Students have an above average comfort level in answering questions in class with an even higher comfort level in speaking English in class. Xiao (2006) notes a similar response in his study of Chinese university students and adds that the main reason for not wanting to answer questions in class may be related to the issue of 'losing face'.

> *We were surprised that both Korean and Japanese students like to speak English in class because in actual many people get embarrassed when someone ask questions in English*. (Korean)

Over the course of my ten years of instruction in Korea I have seen a significant change in students' use of English in front of others in the classroom environment where students now show substantially less afraid of 'losing face' in front of others. My colleagues concur on this suggesting that students are gaining confidence in their use of their English skills in the classroom. The more confident the students become, the more likely they are to participate in the learning experience in the EFL classroom.

Answering question activity in class is very helpful for learning English. (Korean)

The greatest difference in response came between majors with non-English majors giving a low response for answering questions in class (2.87) and English majors giving a high response for speaking in class (4.27).

Among Japanese students, science students are afraid of stating their opinions. (Japanese)

Comfort Level outside the Classroom Environment

Table 3 Outside comfort level

Survey questions	**Korea**	**China**	**Japan**	**Average**
1) Out of 5 points, how comfortable would you be using English in a foreign country? (1=I couldn't, 5=I would feel very comfortable)	2.71	3.32	2.50	2.84
2) Out o f 5 points, do you like to use English outside of your English class? (1=strongly dislike, 5=strongly like)	3.02	3.26	3.87	3.38
3) Out of 5 points, do you like learning English? (1=strongly like, 5=strongly dislike)	3.30	3.77	4.07	3.71

The classroom is an artificial environment for using English and does not reflect the complications and insecurities of using English in a more public setting. Chinese students were most confident in using English in a foreign country with both the Korean and Japanese students having below average confidence; the least confident were the non-English majors (2.01). Students, particularly Japanese students, appear to be comfortable in using English outside the classroom although students commonly do not use English in public. English majors resonate the most confidence (4.23).

I think the gap in the average values between English majors and science majors lies in the situation that students in English major use English in their daily life while science students use English only when they take English classes. (Japanese)

Wu and Wu (2008) in their study of Taiwanese students note:

> By redefining the sense of which places and times are included in the English-learning environment, CTU [the test university site] could help instructors and students redefine their concept of "authentic" interaction. If students are enabled to see the usage of English as a necessary part of an authentic environment, even if accuracy is not the ultimate goal, students will understand that they can improve the environment just by using English, and teachers would not feel so bound by the textbook and traditional teaching methods. In turn, EFL English learners at CTU would understand that the entire world and the entire day is their classroom. (p 219)

The third question directly asks the student if they are motivated to learn English and clearly they are with the most enthusiastic response coming again from English majors (4.64).

Students majoring in English love it. (Japanese)

In summary, students tend to lack confidence in their English abilities but resonate an enjoyment in using their skills. The most confident students are Chinese with Japanese students being the least confident. Students want to display their English skills in class with English majors being the most eager and non-English majors being less eager. This suggests that instructors should continue to enhance student confidence especially with non-English majors, and can best do this by encouraging the use of English by students both inside and outside of the classroom. The next section will expand on this by addressing goals and needs related to their English skills both in the class and in their lives.

> *I think people who like English have a different life-style from those who don't like English. People who like English keep English around them*. (Japanese)

Goals and Needs: Personal Goals in Learning English

The Importance of Learning English in the Classroom

Table 4 English in the classroom

Survey questions	**Korea**	**China**	**Japan**	**Average**
1) Out of 5 points, do you think it is more important to make friends in class than to get a good grade? (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)	3.05	3.04	2.38	2.82
2) Out of 5 points, do you think it is more important to have fun in class than to learn a lot of English? (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)	3.01	2.70	3.28	3.00

"Motivation is the process whereby goal-directed behavior is instigated and sustained" (Schunk, 1991, p.229). Students need to feel that what they are learning is relevant in their lives and helping them attain their individual goals and needs. The more important they feel their studies are during class time the more likely they are to give a sincere effort in this learning environment.

Japanese students believe it is more important to get good grades, in particular English majors (2.10). Chinese students are more interested in learning English with Japanese males and non-English majors (3.78) being more interested in having fun. Koreans prefer the social aspect of EFL classes but also see the importance of good grades. It is interesting that Japanese students recognize the importance of get a good grade yet they are the group most interested in having fun. This may suggest that Japanese students, in particular males and non-English majors, may be motivated to work harder if they consider the exercise to be fun.

If we were learnt a lot of English, we would be bored. So, we might lose the motivation of learning English. In our opinion, playing games or talking about some interesting things are quite important to have motivation. (Korean)

The Importance of Learning English in their Lives

Table 5 English in their lives

Survey questions	**Korea**	**China**	**Japan**	**Average**
1) Out of five points, do you just want to pass the course or is it important to pass with a good grade? (1=just pass is enough, 5=I must pass with a good grade)	4.33	4.19	3.87	4.13
2) Out of 5 points, is it important to get a good grade in English to make your parents happy? (1=no, 5=I must get a good grade for my parents)	3.38	3.47	2.89	3.25
3) Out of 5 points, do you think English is important for your future life? (1=not important, 5=very important)	4.63	4.80	4.62	4.68

How important English is to the student in the classroom tends to determine how attentive they are during the class but it is how they judge the importance of English in their lives that will motivate them beyond the classroom. The students clearly consider learning English and getting a good grade as important. Korean students are the most interested in passing with a good grade with Japanese male students (3.37) being less interested. The most eager to achieve a good grade were the high achievers (4.66).

Students majoring in English have more passion for English because they try to get good grades more than science students. (Japanese)

Most Korean students think getting a good grade in English is the most important thing in their English class. When most Korean students focus on getting good grade, the genuine purpose of learning English is prone to be destroyed. (Korean)

The practical reality is that many students see good grades as a requirement for a good job. Korean and Chinese students feel a strong social pressure to succeed as is also reflected in their response to the next two questions.

We want pass with good grade because we want to get good job. (Korean)

Pleasing their parents resonates with Chinese and Korean students, with the Japanese being less concerned. Korean underclassmen surveyed in 2008 were more concerned about what their parents wanted (3.73) and the importance of English in their futures (4.91) compared with the 2007 survey (3.38/4.63), suggesting that Korean

students may be feeling more social pressure to achieve in English studies. It is interesting to note that the second question drew the greatest variation in response within each group. In all groups students were clearly more interested in achieving for their own futures rather than to please their parents. Many involved in EFL education emphasize the influence of Confucian thought and family in motivating Asian students but this is not supported by our study. Weiner (1990) notes "it is evident that the self is on the verge of dominating motivation" (p.621). Having said this, it is clear in the student's comments that this is still an important issue.

> *In Korea, we take a serious view of making parents happy. So getting a good grade in English to make parents happy is important in Korea*. (Korean)

> *Many Koreans students make an effort to get a good grade in English. However they are eager to get a good grade not because of their parents but because of their future*. (Korean)

All groups strongly believe that English is important in their future.

> *In Korea, English is very very important for our life because we judge someone's smartness or personality by their English skill*. (Korean)

The strongest appreciation for the importance of English came from Chinese students. This supports the findings by Liu who also found Chinese students to be highly motivated to learn English as a means to a better future. He notes:

> This could be attributed to the fact that the rapid development of economy in China in recent years has yielded an increasingly high demand for university graduates with high English competency in various fields such as education, market, business and science and technology. (Liu, 2007, p.139)

Bandura (1986) suggests that because of their cognitive capacity to foresee the likely outcomes of prospective actions, people can sustain their efforts by symbolic motivators over a long time perspective. Long-term, more general social goals tend to be better motivators than more specific short-term goals. The problem with the long-term general goals is that the student must truly believe they are obtainable and that they are of significant value to them in comparison with the effort to achieve the goal.

Needs and goals do not work in isolation but often reinforce each other as motivators. When they do, they either act as a strong directed motivation or become an obsession that may override the diversity of learning opportunities in the learning

environment. This last point is particularly true for students who feel social pressure to meet a specific goal at the expense of the enjoyment they may receive from the experience of learning.

> *We have to pass the course with a good grade so we can get a good job. And that makes our parents happy*. (Korean)

To summarize, students value both the academic and social aspect of EFL education equally and this needs to be respected for an effective learning environment. This means that instructors are wise not to embellish one at the expense of the other; learning should be fun and productive. As an example, I find that integrating technology, creative design, and a certain amount of individual discretion into an exercise allows for individual expression and freedom which students often enjoy, motivating them to spend more time working on a project which focuses on developing their language skills. Students want to achieve as individuals but also remain connective and interactive with the group. They see value in learning English for their future well-being and this can be used as a strong motivator. I have found that when students are given projects related to their potential use of English in their individual lives, they become noticeably more productive. This may be particularly true for Japanese students who tend to be least motivated to achieve a good grade or to please their parents yet still see a great benefit in learning English for personal success.

The Self: Student Preferences

Preferred use of English

Table 6: Preferred use

Survey questions (1=strongly dislike, 5=strongly like)	**Korea**	**China**	**Japan**	**Average**
1) Reading English books or magazines	3.78	3.77	3.34	3.63
2) Listening to English music	4.33	4.44	4.50	4.42
3) Watching English movies or TV shows	4.29	4.53	4.29	4.37
4) Writing English stories or emails	3.44	3.14	3.25	3.28
5) Speaking in English with friends	3.76	3.49	3.69	3.65

There are distinctly different skills in English that a student may or may not be motivated to learn. Which skills they prefer to learn or not learn is often reflected in their preferred

uses of English in their lives. There is a clear preference to listening and watching English but this may be a little deceiving as their answers may be showing more of an interest in the entertainment value of English.

> *Korean and Japanese student like to listen English music and watch English movies or TV shows. But it doesn't help to increase their English skills. They just enjoy it for fun.* (Korean)

Reading, speaking and particularly writing English are less preferred ways of using English. The poorest responses for reading, watching English TV, writing, and speaking came from non-English majors (2.87/4.03/2.47/2.95).

> *We think that it is difficult to write English stories or emails. It need English structure and grammar knowledge to make perfect sentence*. (Korean)

The findings illustrate a positive response for all categories confirming that students wish to apply their English skills in their lives. English majors were the group most interested in watching English TV, writing in English, and speaking in English to friends (4.65/3.83/4.46).

Preferred Learning Method

Table 7 Learning method

Survey questions (1=strongly dislike doing this, 5=strongly like doing this)	**Korea**	**China**	**Japan**	**Average**
1) Lecture style	3.02	3.30	2.87	3.06
2) Audio-visual style	3.66	3.83	3.74	3.74
3) Grammar exercises	2.57	2.70	2.75	2.67
4) Individual projects	2.63	3.42	2.80	2.95
5) Individual presentations	2.63	3.36	2.41	2.80
6) Group projects	3.13	3.68	--	3.40
7) Group presentations	3.22	3.63	3.73	3.53
8) Class projects	2.71	3.54	3.65	3.30
9) Class presentations	2.78	3.44	3.13	3.12

Students are not only motivated by what aspects of English they see as important to them but also by the learning method. They generally prefer instruction with audio-visual support and dislike grammar exercises.

Audio-visual style is easy and not boring that's why it ranked the most preferred learning method we think. (Korean)

If teachers teach you grammar from the beginning of your English education to the end of it, you won't like English. (Japanese)

Students still feel comfortable with lecture style instruction although this may be more because it is a common style of instruction rather than a preferred one. Group and class work are preferred over individual work.

To learn English, group project is obviously good way to Koreans and Japanese. (Korean)

It is interesting to note that the lowest rating for class projects and presentations came from the Korean high achievers (2.54/2.54) with the highest rating coming from the Japanese English majors (3.84/3.45) suggesting differences in the two cultures regarding group and individual work preferences. Although Korean students resonate a strong desire to belong to a group they feel an equally strong need to compete within the group to distinguish themselves and receive recognition for their individual accomplishments.

Koreans don't get together with their group members. And they have less ability to cooperate with members. Korea is very a competitive country. (Korean)

Low achievers and non-English majors gave the lowest rating for audio-visual aids (3.25/3.65) implying they may be over-used as a means for compensating for poor English skills. They also gave the lowest response for grammar exercises (2.47/2.47), individual projects (2.46/2.43), and individual presentation (2.29/2.05) suggesting that group work may be a good motivator for them. The use of audio-visual aids oriented to the student's use of English outside of the classroom could be a particularly strong motivator for English majors. [**Note:** there was a clerical error in the questionnaire given to the Japanese students and the section on group projects was omitted.]

Regardless of what styles the student likes or dislikes some styles will be more appropriate than others depending on what is being learnt. Also students prefer variety in instructional styles as even their preferred learning style can become boring and monotonous if it never changes.

Current English classes around the world are diversified in teaching methods, and if teachers keep presenting the course in the same way, students will not want to study English. (Japanese)

Preferred Quality of Instructor

Table 8 Instructor qualities

Survey questions	**Korea**	**China**	**Japan**	**Average**
1) Out of 5 points, how important is it to have a friendly teacher? (1=not important, 5=very important)	4.53	4.71	4.81	4.68
2) Out of 5 points, how important is it to have a knowledgeable teacher? (1=not important, 5=very important)	4.46	4.76	4.51	4.58
3) Out of 5 points, how important is it to have a teacher that has a comfortable teaching style? (1=not important, 5=very important)	3.90	4.68	4.71	4.43

One of the strongest motivators in learning is the personal qualities of the instructor, both as a teacher and role-model. Students usually consider friendly, knowledgeable, and comfortable/understandable as the most important qualities in their instructors and all three are clearly important to students. There is a perception among many non-native instructors that friendliness is more important to the student than an instructor that is knowledgeable. The survey illustrates that students prefer a balance between friendly and knowledgeable suggesting the most motivating instructors possess both qualities. Korean students surveyed in 2007 were least interested in having a teacher with a comfortable teaching style (3.90).

Disincentives: Most Significant Problems in EFL Education

Table 9 Disincentives

General question categories	**Korea**	**China**	**Japan**	**Average**
1) Classes focus on passing the university entrance exam	**50.0%**	**41.0%**	**32.0%**	**41.0%**
2) The English that is learnt is not practical	**33.5%**	**52.0%**	**36.0%**	**40.5%**
3) No conversation practice	**34.5%**	17.0%	**39.0%**	**30.0%**
4) Instruction is too grammar centered	**29.5%**	**28.0%**	**28.0%**	**28.5%**
5) The system encourages memorization not integration	**31.0%**	**28.0%**	20.0%	26.5%

Each respondent was asked to choose three areas of concern in EFL education. The response was clear, Asian students consider their English education as not practical for their needs and focus too much on grammar and passing the university entrance exam. [Note**:** the categories used in the survey for de-motivation were originally identified by Asian students and generalized in a study conducted by Sewell (2006). All but one of the 28 generalized categories were used with the five most significant ratings given above. The numbers represent the percentage of students that identified the item as one of the three most significant.] The findings re-enforce those of Xiao (2006) who suggests that too much focus is given to grammar and structure and not enough to oral English practice, and Lei and Quin (2009) who note the lack of practical use and test oriented learning as the remaining two factors for student failure.

> *It is clear that English education in Japan starts and ends with grammar*. (Japanese)
>
> *In Korea, instruction is too grammar centered. It's the fact that every Korean knows*. (Korean)
>
> *We learn English in high school, but it focused on passing the university entrance exam*. (Korean)
>
> *When the English classes are all about grammar and test preparation, and without practical elements, then it's just mechanical, monotonous work*. (Japanese)

Another concern was that the instruction style was too fixated on memorization rather than practical application skills.

> *Students just memorize not study for practical English*. (Korean)

Lesser concerns included 'the lack of cultural references' for Chinese students, 'instructors not caring if their students understand' for Korean students, and 'the instructors being too stiff and boring' for Japanese students. This suggest that too much focus on the academic study of English may be destructive in general student motivation to learning English whereas linking instruction to practical application may work as a motivator as previous questions have already illustrated.

> *Korea's society need someone who graduate from great school. So student of Korea have to study for entrancing great university instead of satisfying oneself. It is a sad reality.* (Korean)

Summary of Survey Results

The following are the general findings for the Asian EFL university students from the data gathered:

- Students generally appreciate their EFL education but may become less appreciative with time.
- Japanese students, and to a lesser extent Korean students, still lack confidence in their ability to learn English.
- Students generally want to use their English both inside and outside of the classroom environment.
- Students believe the social and academic aspects of their EFL education are equally important.
- The desire to please their parents is still a motivator for many students although this may be changing.
- All student groups believe English is important in their future.
- Students prefer to listen and watch English compared to reading, writing, and speaking although students clearly would like to apply their English skills in everyday life.
- Students tend to enjoy classes supported by audio-visual aids and dislike grammar exercises.
- Students generally enjoy group work more than individual work although Korean students tend to display a stronger individual, competitive spirit.
- Students consider friendliness and knowledge ability as equally important qualities in their instructors.
- Students consider the focus on academic study and exams rather than practical application of their English skills as the greatest problem in EFL education.

Discussion

Cultural Variation

Korea, China and Japan are often viewed as a natural market group for EFL education both in curriculum development and instructional approach on the assumption that the North-East Asian students have similar motivation. In many trends this is true such as in the desire to learn English and apply English skills in their day-to-day life. When viewed by individual culture, variations become more apparent such as the confidence of Chinese students and the increasing social pressure to succeed displayed by Korean students. This means that broad generalizations about Asian motivation may not, and often do not, hold true within a specific cultural group. For example Japan is arguably the country most influenced by modern American values and is also the group least concerned with holding to the traditional view of respecting their parent's desires above their own or respect for their previous education.

> *Japanese students don't study English to please parents but Korean students do*. (Japanese)
>
> *Most of Japan student think it is more important to have fun in class than to learn a lot of English. Korean student just study English for find a good job*. (Korean)

Variation between Subgroups

Majors

A second theme to this study was the testing of different variables to identify significant factors that affect the motivation of EFL students. The subgroup analyzes came from smaller survey bases and should only be viewed as indicators of possible areas of variation. Of the subgroups tested, the contrasting groups showing greatest variation were between English and non-English majors. To put it simply, non-English students were much less motivated to learn English believing their skills were low, and show less interest in class participation and in integrating English into their lives. This may support the idea of separating these students at university level as many Asian universities do, but I personally do not support this view as I find there is a greater variety in ability and motivation within each group compared to the variations between the groups. Both English majors and non-English majors believe that English is very important in their future lives although English majors tend to be more positive about the EFL environment and the ones most motivated to learn English.

Maturity

There were not significant differences in preferences and motivation between underclassmen and upperclassmen. This was particularly true for the Japanese student but there is one subgroup that is worth mentioning, male students before and after military service in Korea [this usually takes place between the second and third year of university]. Many instructors see a significant difference with this group as military training tends to act as a natural maturity milestone increasing the desire to prepare for work and a more adult life-style. In the 2007 survey a small subgroup of students who had completed their military service (26 students) were compared with the overall student population and the results supported this view. The over-all results suggest that more mature students generally have not changed their motivational preferences and views; they have simply changed the goals they wish to attain. This was particularly true for acquiring a good job which appeared to be the exclusive goal and motivation for many returning soldiers.

Gender

> While social psychology research shows that the behavior of men and women sometimes differs, these differences are small to moderate in size. (Myers, 1986, p.367)

In their gender and motivation study of high-school EFL students, Rusillo and Casanova (2004) noted minimal differences in the responses given. Boys were slightly more motivated by intrinsic goals and girls slightly more confident in information processing and in general language skills; otherwise the over-all responses were very similar. This was also evident in our study where gender was less significant a factor than the student's major.

> *In Korean it seems that females are more introspective than males. Because they want more quiet work and individual projects. But in case of males, they are more likely to have group activity and presentations*. (Korean – female)

Although the student's comment illustrates a perceived difference between genders, the data itself does not support this view. The differences between genders in preferences were roughly consistent for Korean and Japanese students with gender differences being slightly more distinct in Japan. The genders may have differing goals in

the application of their English skills but how they want to acquire those skills and the skills they consider most valuable are similar.

Ability

> Students who are low in achievement motivation and students who are high in achievement motivation will perform differently on certain academic tasks when working independently. Students low in achievement motivation will need more supervision, direction, and structure in some curriculum areas. The high-motivation student, if he is working in an area he values, will require little encouragement or direction. (Gage & Berliner, 1975, p.311)

The survey results do not offer justification for or against separating students by ability. There is a difference in confidence in their English ability and use of English but little difference in the desire to learn English and appreciation for the value of English. Cultural norms and trends are a better indicator of what is an appropriate educational policy regarding the separating or merging of students by gender or ability. Having said this, it is important to note that there may be a significant individual lack of self-efficacy in low-achievers.

> One means of avoiding failure is to pursue easy goals where success is assured. Another means is to cheat, although cheating is problematic; one might copy answers from a student who does poorly on an exam, and there is the possibility one will get caught. Another way to avoid failure is to escape from a negative situation. Students who believe they will fail a course are apt to drop it; those who are failing many courses may quit school. (Schunk, 1991, p.242)

More attention will need to be given to motivate individual students who fear failure or simply do not appear to like English. Asia is a culture of success or failure with little grey area in-between. I do not agree with minimizing the need to succeed as this is a culturally driven motivator in Asia, but I believe it is important to show students how to turn what appears to be failure into potential success by showing the merits of limited success and progressive gains.

The Political and Social Realities that Affect the Learning Environment

Government Policies

It is the government policy in China, Korea and Japan to embrace communicative language teaching (CLT) strategies but as discussed at length by Life, Falout and

Murphey (2009), this is not reflected in actual practice. For various reasons there has been resistance in the learning environment to change from the traditional reliance on memorization and grammar exercises to a more interactive and practical based form of instruction. This difference between policy and reality in the classroom is reflected in the student's response to the main problems in EFL education. The problem does not lie in policy but in the implementation of policy and the support of policy by school administration and those that must implement policy in the classroom setting – the instructors.

The Social Affect on English Instruction and Application

Above all, the learning environment is governed by people and people are subject to social constraints regardless of government policies and what may or may not motivate students to learn more effectively. The instructors are what guide students to learn in the classroom and society guides the use of this knowledge in practical application outside of the classroom. There are varied reasons for the resistance to applying CLT practices in the classroom by native professors in North-East Asia as discussed by Li (1998), Liu (1999) and Taguchi (2005). One reason is social pressure on the native instructor from their peers and students to 'save face' by not exposing themselves to ridicule for any perceived lack of English ability. There is also the perception that the instructor may be trying to upstage other professors in the department.

Outside the classroom there is social resistance to the use of English especially spoken English, in public areas. Students are encouraged to use English in the classroom and when talking with native English speakers but often discouraged in using English with native Asian speakers and around other Asians.

> *Actually we don't have many chance in Korea to speak English. We only speak English when some foreigner ask us some questions. We barely speak English between Korean*. (Korean)

In the classroom students may shy away from using English as they are directly and indirectly being judged on their level of competence but that should not be the case when they use English with their friends in public and yet they tend to limit their English conversation with friends to short, quiet exchanges and usually in private locations such

as their homes or a coffee-shop. I believe the desire to use English is there; the constraint is a social one.

> *When someone talk in English Korean people think that he (or she) shows up his (her) English skills. So Korean like to speak English outside but they don't do that.* (Korean)

The local critics may imply that students are showing off their language skills or assert that the use of English is diminishing the local language. On Hangul Day in Korea, it is common to hear criticism regarding the corruption of Korean by English through language mixing. Korea and to some extent China and Japan, have a dichotomy with English culture and the English language. For many Asians English represents America and to a lesser extent Europe with historical and current political and economic themes that resonate in the consciousness of Asian society. Many hesitate to openly criticize America and Europe but will vent their feelings of insecurity or inadequacy through their opinions regarding English language.

There is a desire to integrate with English culture and this is a driving force behind the obsession of many to have their children learn English. There is also the sense of exclusion that comes with losing connection with the community by not using the local language. A few years ago the book 'Language in Danger: The Loss of Linguistic Diversity and the Threat to our Future' by Andrew Dalby was translated into Korean by Oh Young-Na and became popular with many Korean academics. In the book Dalby (2002) discusses the loss of minority languages including Korean, which caused a backlash towards the use of English as discussed in the Korean Times article 'Loss of Native Languages' by Chung Ah-Young (2008). Although little documented research has been done on the dichotomy of people's views towards English and local languages here in Asia, research has been conducted in America regarding the use of English and native Asian languages. For example, Jin Sook-Lee and Sarah Shin (2008) note that English is used in only 4% of first-generation Korean household but by 78% of second generation Korean households. They also note that over 90% of enrollment in college-level, Korean language courses are by native Koreans eager to learn or relearn their traditional language. There is no scientific proof that acquiring English actually diminishes the knowledge of

your native language but the perception that it might is very real with many Koreans who view their language as vulnerable.

I think the problems also goes a little deeper to a more common fear of exclusion that some may feel if they do not understand English; the idea that English is a language of secrets. Whatever the source reason, the public use of English is often avoided rather than having to endure a perceived disapproval. This I believe is one of the prime fundamental flaws in the process of English language acquisition in Asia generally and Korea specifically. Student's motivations will continue to change over time and so will policy but general public attitudes take much longer to evolve and are haunted by all too human flaws. But change does come and the survey illustrates that many students, notably Japanese English majors, appear to be more interested in using their skills regardless of the occasional look of disapproval from others.

People who like English are not afraid of speaking English. (Japanese)

Integrating Current Student Perceptions into EFL Practices

Effective instructional methodologies are specific to the needs and character of each individual group and only broad general recommendations can be made here. It is recommended that the instructor abandon pre-conceived ideas based on traditional Asian beliefs in relation to the opinions and motivation of EFL students today. Littlewood (2000) and Cheng (2000) help dispel the myth that Asian students are somehow defined by the hierarchy of Confucian thought. Traditional practices do not offer interactive and practical English training which is clearly what the student wants. Littlewood notes that:

> …if Asian students do indeed adopt the passive classroom attitudes that are often claimed, this is more likely to be a consequence of the educational contexts that have been or are now provided for them, than of any inherent disposition of the students themselves. (2000, p. 33)

The student's lack of confidence should not be equated to a lack of desire. When I first came to Asia I was told that Asian students work hard in high school and play at university; students want easy courses, little homework and an automatic good grade. Personally I was highly offended by such generalizations because they were often put forward as an encouragement to complement an instructor's or institution's agenda rather than as an accurate assessment of students for the purpose of improving instructional

methodology. I did not buy into this view and challenged my students to strive for a higher standard on the assumption that meaningful success was a better motivator than passive attendance. I followed this strategy at a university where the students have a wide selection of native English speaking professors to choose from. What surprised me was the high number of lower achievers that continued to choose me as an instructor when my classes were considered more difficult and good grades were harder to achieve. Clearly it was not a good grade or minimal work that motivated them but instead the challenge to improve their skill even when the improvement and recognition of their efforts, was modest. There will always be examples that characterizing the passive nature of students and the cultural need to adhere to Confucian thought but it is wise to balance this with current research as a measure of general trends and consensus rather than losing perspective by viewing isolated examples and extrapolating them to represent the views of an entire group.

Conclusions

The collective survey and student's comments create a clearer understanding of what motivates EFL university student in North-East Asia today. Matched with contemporary education theory and my own experiences, this helps put the knowledge in context with the reality of the learning environment. In this respect, teachers are advised to instruct from the premise that students want to learn English and want to use their English inside the classroom and in their lives. This means using relevant topics and examples with emphases on practical individual and group projects that develop skills they can use outside of the classroom. Students want to practically apply their English skill and understand how they can do so.

Understanding student motivation and desired government policy offers a goal for instructors to strive for, understanding that social norms and the practical reality of the Asian education system allow for change but only gradually and within the social context if the goal is to be met. A colleague, who is a native-Korean, instructs their EFL class in English for an hour and a half and then summarizes the main points in Korean for twenty minutes. This is progress as this would not have occurred ten years ago. Pioneers like this are changing the face of language acquisition in Asia and their courage and the

courage of the motivated student will be the future of EFL education as innovators changing from within the learning and cultural system.

It is the hope of the author that the results of the surveys and the general trends they indicate will help instructors design EFL programs and methodologies more appropriate to today's EFL learning environment in North-East Asia specifically, and Asia generally. It is also hoped that publishers of support material and developers of educational policies will also consider the trends in student motivation implied in this research. What is most important to remember is that the students want to be heard and have their preferences considered in program development and implementation.

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Appendix A

Complete Survey Data by Specific Groups

(a composite of collected surveys responses)

Group Identification:

Kor – Korean underclassmen 2007 (118)

Chi – Chinese underclassmen 2007 (116)

Jap – Japanese underclassmen 2008 (120)

KorL – Korean underclassmen – low ability 2007 (62)

KorH – Korean underclassmen – high ability 2007 (53)

KorF – Korean underclassmen 2008 (66)

KorS – Korean upperclassmen 2008 (69)

KorW – Korean female students 2008 (73)

KorM – Korean male students 2008 (62)

JapS – Japanese upperclassmen 2008 (85)

JapW – Japanese female students 2008 (79)

JapM – Japanese male students 2008 (123)

JapX – Japanese non-English majors 2008 (129)

JapE – Japanese English majors 2008 (83)

	KorU	ChiU	JapU	KorL	KorH	Kor8U	KorS	KorF	KorM	JapS	JapF	JapM	JapX	JapE
A1	3.36	3.47	2.99	3.30	3.25	2.79	2.45	2.79	2.40	2.63	3.04	2.68	2.58	3.18
A2	3.32	2.79	3.72	3.59	3.12	3.20	3.25	3.15	3.31	3.79	3.63	3.80	3.86	3.57
B1	3.17	3.06	3.11	2.76	3.14	3.17	3.45	3.32	3.40	3.18	3.11	3.10	2.87	3.52
B2	3.54	3.57	3.70	2.85	3.43	3.58	3.84	3.62	3.82	3.45	3.85	3.37	3.12	4.27
C1	2.71	3.32	2.50	2.34	2.74	2.77	3.16	3.08	2.84	2.23	2.68	2.18	2.01	2.95
C2	3.02	3.26	3.87	2.65	3.24	3.06	3.36	3.38	3.02	3.44	3.94	3.52	3.32	4.23
C3	3.30	3.77	4.07	3.03	3.55	4.29	4.16	4.25	4.19	3.82	4.32	3.72	3.47	4.64
D1	3.05	3.04	2.38	3.05	2.90	3.02	3.10	3.01	3.11	2.38	2.45	2.45	2.59	2.10
D2	3.01	2.70	3.28	3.02	2.90	2.80	3.10	2.88	3.05	3.61	3.78	3.78	3.78	2.82
E1	4.33	4.19	3.87	4.27	4.66	4.45	4.45	4.56	4.32	3.48	4.15	3.37	3.42	4.18
E2	3.38	3.47	2.89	3.05	3.61	3.73	3.22	3.63	3.27	2.71	2.73	2.85	2.85	2.72
E3	4.63	4.80	4.62	4.58	4.61	4.91	4.87	4.93	4.84	4.58	4.71	4.56	4.52	4.76
F1	3.78	3.77	3.34	3.69	3.98	3.61	3.52	3.62	3.50	3.07	3.44	3.07	2.87	3.73
F2	4.33	4.44	4.50	3.93	4.66	4.17	3.99	4.19	3.94	4.40	4.60	4.38	4.33	4.63
F3	4.29	4.53	4.29	4.15	4.34	4.44	4.43	4.59	4.26	4.31	4.54	4.15	4.03	4.65
F4	3.44	3.14	3.25	3.34	3.68	3.15	3.13	3.23	3.03	2.74	3.60	2.62	2.47	3.83
F5	3.76	3.49	3.69	3.46	3.76	3.70	3.88	3.92	3.65	3.42	4.19	3.11	2.95	4.46
G1	3.02	3.30	2.87	2.92	3.24	3.21	3.00	3.15	3.05	2.88	2.96	2.85	2.81	2.99
G2	3.66	3.83	3.74	3.25	3.75	3.74	3.70	3.77	3.66	3.81	3.91	3.68	3.65	3.94
G3	2.57	2.70	2.75	2.47	2.76	2.80	2.78	2.90	2.66	2.59	2.97	2.47	2.48	3.02
G4	2.63	3.42	2.80	2.46	2.78	2.89	3.14	3.04	3.00	2.67	2.78	2.66	2.43	3.18
G5	2.63	3.36	2.41	2.29	2.76	2.62	3.32	2.88	3.10	2.44	2.58	2.28	2.05	3.04
G6	3.13	3.68	--	3.28	2.98	3.09	3.17	2.92	3.39	--	--	--	--	--
G7	3.22	3.63	3.73	3.28	2.90	2.98	3.12	2.79	3.35	3.46	3.56	3.67	3.48	3.84
G8	2.71	3.54	3.65	2.89	2.54	2.76	2.88	2.73	2.94	3.62	3.59	3.66	3.48	3.84
G9	2.78	3.44	3.13	2.77	2.54	2.74	2.83	2.71	2.87	3.20	3.05	3.20	2.98	3.45
H1	4.53	4.71	4.81	4.47	4.48	4.56	4.71	4.60	4.68	4.75	4.78	4.78	4.77	4.82
H2	4.46	4.76	4.51	4.45	4.57	4.39	4.36	4.47	4.27	4.36	4.51	4.41	4.35	4.63
H3	3.90	4.68	4.71	4.18	4.19	4.33	4.41	4.30	4.45	4.69	4.70	4.70	4.71	4.72
J1	50.0	41.0	32.0	56.5	55.0	39.5	44.5	38.5	47.0	43.5	35.0	32.0	31.0	36.0
J2	29.5	28.0	28.0	36.5	30.0	45.5	57.0	48.0	55.0	22.0	29.0	20.5	21.0	27.5
J3	31.0	28.0	20.0	36.5	22.5	20.0	19.0	19.0	19.5	25.5	14.0	25.0	25.5	14.5
J4	33.5	52.0	36.0	23.5	22.5	26.0	19.0	26.0	18.0	28.0	32.5	27.0	30.0	26.5
J5	34.5	17.0	39.0	31.5	42.5	38.0	43.0	34.0	48.5	27.0	36.5	27.0	26.5	37.5

Survey

General English Confidence:
A1) Out of 5 points, how good was your English education until the end of high school? (1=very bad, 5=very good)
A2) Out of 5 points, how difficult is it for you to learn English? (1=very easy, 5=very difficult)

Comfort with using English in Class:
B1) Out of 5 points, do you like answering questions in class? (1=strongly dislike, 5=strongly like)
B2) Out of 5 points, do you like having to speak English in class? (1=strongly dislike, 5=strongly like)

Comfort with English Abilities:
C1) Out of 5 points, how comfortable would you be using English in a foreign country? (1=I couldn't, 5=I would feel very comfortable)
C2) Out of 5 points, do you like to use English outside of your English class? (1=strongly dislike, 5=strongly like)
C3) Out of 5 points, do you like learning English? (1=strongly dislike, 5=strongly like)

Importance of Learning English in Class:
D1) Out of 5 points, do you think it is more important to make friends in class than to get a good grade?
(1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)
D2) Out of 5 points, do you think it is more important to have fun in class than to learn a lot of English?
(1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)

Importance of Learning English in Your Life:
E1) Out of five points, do you just want to pass the course or is it important to pass with a good grade?
(1=just pass is enough, 5=I must pass with a good grade)
E2) Out of 5 points, is it important to get a good grade in English to make your parents happy?
(1=no, 5=I must get a good grade for my parents)
E3) Out of 5 points, do you think English is important for your future life? (1=not important, 5=very important)

Preferred Use of English (personal application): (1=strongly dislike, 5=strongly like)
F1) Reading English books or magazines
F2) Listening to English music
F3) Watching English movies or TV shows
F4) Writing English stories or emails
F5) Speaking in English with friends

Preferred Learning Method: (1=strongly dislike doing this, 5=strongly like doing this)
G1) Lecture style

G2) Audio-visual style
G3) Grammar exercises
G4) Individual projects
G5) Individual Presentations
G6) Group projects
G7) Group presentations
G8) Class projects
G9) Class presentations

Preference in Instructor's Abilities: (1=not important, 5=very important)
H1) Out of 5 points, how important is it to have a friendly teacher?
H2) Out of 5 points, how important is it to have a knowledgeable teacher?
H3) Out of 5 points, how important is it to have a teacher that has a comfortable teaching style?

The Most Significant Problems in EFL Education: (choose the three most significant problems)

[**Note**: for the sake of simplicity, only the five most significant responses are given here]

J1) Classes focus on passing the university entrance exam.
J2) Instruction is too grammar centered.
J3) The system encourages memorization not integration.
J4) The English that is learnt is not practical.
J5) No conversation practice.

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Investigating the Use of Cohesive Devices by Chinese EFL Learners

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Bio data

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Abstract
This study investigated cohesive errors in expository compositions of People Republic of China (PRC) students, who were learning English as a foreign language in a university in Singapore. It was based upon an error analysis paradigm and Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion framework and taxonomy. The purpose was to illuminate the students' difficulties in using cohesion by examining the cohesive errors quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analysis investigated the frequency and percentage of (1) the cohesive errors in main and sub-categories of cohesion, and (2) the types of cohesive errors, committed by the students. Results show that they had the greatest difficulty in using reference cohesion, followed by conjunction and lexical cohesion. Generally, redundant repetition and misuse of cohesive devices posed the greatest challenge for them. The qualitative analysis consisted of a detailed linguistic description and explanation of the cohesive errors. It detailed how cohesion was used erroneously in their writing. The study concluded with a discussion and its limitations.

Keywords: China EFL Learners, Cohesive Errors, Expository writing

Introduction

Of the four skills in language learning, writing poses the most challenging task for English as a Foreign Language learner. A need, therefore, arises to illuminate the various aspects of EFL learners' writing problems, and to better understand the ways to improve instructional support to them. The need becomes urgent as EFL forms a large and growing group of learners of English worldwide. A prominent group of EFL comes from People Republic of China (PRC), which claims to have the largest English learning population (Cheng, 2003; Jiang, 2002; You, 2004).

The number of Chinese EFL learners learning English has been increasing at an exponential rate, particularly after China entered into the World Trade Organization in 2001 and after it held Summer Olympics in 2008. Basically, the Chinese learn English to have access to modern scientific and technological advances, and to communicate with countries where English is a major language (Boyle, 2000). The necessity for people in China to learn the language becomes increasingly crucial as China opens up its economy further. In order for the country to expand and function efficiently in its industrial, scientific and economic roles, China has to raise the English proficiency of a large number of its people. This has resulted in an increase of PRC learners being sent abroad to learn English (Boyle, 2000).

Despite remarkable progress in the teaching of English since the late 1970s, writing remains the weakest area in the students' overall performance in English (Hu, 1994 as cited in Zhang, 1997). At the tertiary level, Chinese learners of English struggle to produce the required academic prose, for example, writing in the expository genre. Generally, their writing problem does not lie in producing sentences, but rather, in producing a text (Johns, 1984). It is reported by Yang (1993) that Chinese learners of English find it very difficult to construct an organised and coherent English written text (Zhang, 1997). Their difficulties revealed through text analysis include an inadequate use of example and detail, poor topic continuance, the restricted use of lexical items and inappropriate use of cohesive devices. It is the last aspect on cohesion that I am investigating in this paper, in particular, the erroneous use of cohesive devices by Chinese EFL learners.

The reasons why the focus of this paper is on the erroneous use of cohesive devices are because first, an appropriate use of cohesive devices is an important tool in English language production. An erroneous use of such devices signals to the readers the wrong intention of the writer, leading the readers to misunderstand what the writer intends to convey. It also creates difficulty in reading comprehension. Second, it is found that one of the greatest difficulties the Chinese learners face in composing a text is using the cohesive devices appropriately (Wang & Sui, 2006). Studies on the use of cohesive devices in English by Chinese learners have been conducted by Green, Christopher and Lam (2000), Tickoo (2002) and Lake (2004). Although they investigated a small component of the cohesion system in learners' writing, their studies provide us with an understanding of some of the Chinese learners' difficulties in using cohesion. Green et al. (2000) examined two sentence-initial position of 'for' and 'concerning' and three

logical connectors, 'besides', 'furthermore' and 'moreover' in the expository writing of Chinese learners at a Hong Kong University and compared them with native-speaker corpora. It was found that the Chinese learners had a greater tendency than native speakers to use connectors in the theme position which had a deleterious effect on the information structure of English.

Tickoo (2002) investigated a temporal conjunction 'then' as used by Vietnamese learning English as a Second Language (ESL) and Chinese learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at Hong Kong University. It was found that both groups of learners misused this supposedly simple conjunction. According to him, the use of 'then' must be preceded by a completed event and followed by some new information. This new information is further defined as an event that is not presupposed, shared and anticipated. Tickoo (2002) found that learners had used 'then' less stringently and often violated one of the conditions defined as new information for its proper use, thus, resulting in misuse of the item.

Lake (2004) found that the Chinese learners had difficulty in using one of the adversative conjunctions, 'on the contrary', in their academic writing. They consistently misused 'on the contrary', confusing it with 'on the other hand'. In Lake's study, such misuse was furthermore identified as a teacher-induced error, rather than due to their L1 influence. His study suggested some implications for the teachers, that is, to provide students with examples where the phrase is used appropriately, rather than merely explain what it means. This may help the Chinese learners use the conjunction correctly and ultimately, attain proficiency in academic writing.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigates the difficulties Chinese learners of English have in using cohesive devices when writing expository writing – a significant EFL learner's writing problems. The investigation is based upon an error analysis paradigm, and Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion framework and taxonomy. Specifically, the study intends:

(a) to find out the frequency and percentage of cohesive errors in the main category and the sub-categories of cohesion,

(b) to classify the cohesive errors into its types,

(c) to find out the frequency and percentage of the types of cohesive errors and

(d) to provide a linguistic description and explanation of the cohesive errors.

Justification of the Present Study

Several reasons motivate this study. First, according to Zhang (1997, 2000) and Feng (2003), research on cohesion errors in the written work of Chinese EFL learners is scarce; such a limited amount of research study has impelled the current one. A review of existing literature shows that the investigation of errors was exclusively carried out in one or two categories of cohesion (Crewe, 1990; Field, 1994; Field & Yip, 1992; Green et al., 2000; Johns 1984; Lake, 2004; Tickoo, 2002). Crewe (1990) and Field and Yip (1992) exclusively looked into one category of cohesive errors, i.e., conjunctions. Crewe (1990) examined the effect of misuse and overuse of logical connectives in ESL undergraduates' writing. His findings revealed that ESL students frequently misused and overused logical connectives. Field and Yip (1992) conducted a quantitative study of conjunctions in the L1 and L2 writing. They found that many L2 writers misused and overused conjunctions such as 'on the other hand' and 'besides'. Johns (1984) examined two categories of cohesive errors, i.e., conjunctions and lexical cohesion on Chinese tertiary-level English trainer teachers' essays. She observed that conjunctions were over-used and lexical cohesion was not used as extensively as in the native's speaker discourses. It is only Zhang (1997) and Feng (2003) who attempted to study more categories of cohesion. Both Zhang (1997) and Feng (2003) examined reference, conjunctions and lexical cohesion. However, Zhang (1997, 2000) has allocated only a small part of his research to find out the difficulties the Chinese learners have in using the cohesive devices.

Second, previous earlier researchers (Conner, 1984; Crowburst, 1987; Jafarpur, 1991; Neuner, 1987; Norment, 1994; Witte & Faigley, 1981) who studied cohesion attempted only to correlate writing quality with the quantity of cohesive devices by using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesion framework. One major criticism against such studies is that learners' erroneous use of cohesive devices which deteriorated the quality of text has not been considered. Thus, I argued that it is not the quantity of cohesive devices used that makes a text hang together or improves the readability of it, but rather the correct use of them.

Third, a qualitative analysis involving an explanation of the common types of cohesive errors committed by the learners would have imperative practical application to both teachers and curricula designers. Teachers could point out to similar groups of learners what was erroneous in the usage context, why it was erroneous and how it could have been corrected. Learners would benefit from such an instruction. Curricula designers would be informed by the

results of this study in designing materials of relevance to beginners EFL learners' language needs.

Review of Related Literature

What is an error?

This present study views learners' errors as deviant, which is Corder's (1967) standpoint. It rejects Corder's (1971) standpoint in viewing learners' errors as a language system in its own right. The learner's deviation from the target language is studied as a problem and viewed from the perspective of a language teacher. An error is defined as an unacceptable and unwanted use of the language in reference to Standard English (George, 1972). The cohesive errors of the Chinese EFL learners are viewed with respect to it. The Chinese EFL learners are learning Standard English in Singapore, with the ultimate goal of learning effective communication through written or spoken medium.

Halliday and Hasan's (1976) Cohesion Framework

Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesion forms the framework of error analysis in this paper. The reasons why Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesion was selected as a framework were because they provided the fullest account of cohesion ties in English and a very detailed coding scheme for analyzing the ties. Until today, Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesion remains the most influential framework. Their taxonomy of cohesion has been widely used. Recent studies which have used it include Wang and Sui (2006), Genc and Bada (2006) and Zhou (2007). The major work in the area of cohesion appears in this 1976 cohesion theory (Bloor, T & Bloor, M., 1995). Although Connor (1984) has discussed about cohesion, his work is more focused on the contrastive rhetoric of first and second language writing rather than a comprehensive cohesion framework like that of Halliday and Hasan's (1976).

Cohesion is defined as the "relations of meaning that exist within the text" and "it occurs when the interpretation of some elements in the discourse is dependent on that of another" (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p.4). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), there are two common forms of cohesion: anaphora and cataphora. Anaphora refers to the presupposition of some elements that has been mentioned before. Cataphora refers to the presupposition of some

elements that is to follow. Cohesion is not unrestricted by sentence boundaries. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), there are five major cohesive devices: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. Each category is further divided into a number of sub-categories. Reference uses personal pronouns, demonstratives and comparatives to establish a cohesive relation between the cohesive item and its antecedent. Substitution refers to "the replacement of one item by another" while ellipsis refers to "omission of an item". Conjunctive cohesion can occur within and between sentences. Halliday and Hasan (1976) further classify conjunctions into four sub-categories: additive, adversative, casual and temporal. Lexical cohesion consists of two major types: reiteration and collocation. A reiterated item may be a repetition, a synonym or a near-synonym, a superordinate, or a general word (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p.278). Cohesion in collocation is about the linking of lexical items that often co-occur in a span of text (Halliday & Hasan, 1976, p. 284).

A Closer Examination of Feng's (2003) Study

As the present study stems from Feng's (2003) research, I will begin with a brief review of her research, followed by a discussion of some inadequacies in her research. Feng (2003) investigated cohesive errors in the compositions of Chinese first-year undergraduate who were non-English majors. Her research study consisted of a qualitative discussion of 55 typical examples of cohesive errors, followed by a quantitative study of the types of errors which distinguished low rated essays from higher rated ones. She adopted Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy and framework for all the categories of cohesive devices, except lexical cohesion. Eighty out of 150 essays written in an essay contest were randomly selected for cohesion error analysis.

First, Feng's (2003) research methodology comprised of identification, classification and description of errors in cohesion. However, she wrote about errors without referring to any paradigms or approaches related to the study of errors. This led to questions pertaining to the definition of error and the reference to which those errors were viewed. Second, Feng (2003) approached the study of cohesive errors from a qualitative angle, without a frequency count of the types of cohesive errors committed by the learners. As such, we do not know what type of cohesive devices pose the most or least problem for this group of learners.

Third, Feng (2003) used Halliday's (1994) taxonomy for her lexical cohesion investigation. However, in her data analysis, she located only two lexical cohesion errors, repetition and synonym, which could have fit into the 1976 model or 1994 model, without making much difference. The study of collocations in lexical cohesion was excluded. The reason given was that "collocation occurs across sentence boundaries, i.e. inter-sentential, which is a rather flexible concept that depends more or less on the particular context of writing" (Feng, 2003, p. 43).

Fourth, Feng (2003) defined the types of cohesive errors, mainly, as overuse, misuse and under-use. No further discussion was conducted on how the types of cohesive errors cause cohesion in the text to be erroneous or ineffective. Furthermore, a closer examination of her study reveals that some examples of misuse of cohesive errors do not seem to fit into her definition of misuse. For example, no correct form was given for misuse of the definite article and comparatives. This contradicts her definition of misuse, which says that "use of cohesive tie is inappropriate and even misleading to the reader; another tie should have been used to replace it according to the contextual meaning" (Feng, 2003, p.40). The instances of misuse in her data can be categorized as 'unnecessary addition' or 'overuse'. Built on Feng'(2003) study, the present study has considered some inadequacies identified in hers.

Research Design and Methodology

Data Collection

The expository essays written by a group of 20 Chinese EFL learners who were studying at a local university in Singapore formed the data collected for this study. The learners were from a class of an Intensive English Course (of one year duration) where the objective of the course was to help them achieve a pass standard in GCE 'O' Level. At the time the data was collected, they had been in the English Course for barely 3 months. The essays, therefore, served to be a rather authentic sample from beginner EFL writers since the writing had not been influenced by the teaching methods and curriculum materials used in the course for long. This group of learners' data was selected for analysis as they formed a homogenous group of learners in the following respect: (i) Their native language is Chinese, (ii) They are learning English as a foreign language and (iii) They were of similar language and instructional background.

The compositions were the first test done at the beginning of the English Intensive Course. The reasons for investigating writing under supervised test conditions were its authenticity and its neatness in data collection. In addition, variables such as time spent on the writing and amount of resources students had for the writing task were controlled for. It was assumed that students would try their best to produce an error free piece of writing during a test. Ten out of 20 test compositions collected which were of the same topic were selected as data for close examination. Halliday and Hasan (1976) point out that a particular text or mode may exhibit a tendency for a certain category and frequency of cohesive devices. This could, in turn, affect the frequency of erroneous cohesive devices used. For this reason, the topic of the compositions chosen to be examined was kept the same. The topic of the composition was "Explain why having an education is important".

Identification and Classification of Errors

Identification involved scanning the texts to detect a cohesive error. Other grammatical and lexical errors were ignored. Interpretations were made on whether a particular cohesive device had affected the cohesiveness in a text or not; therefore, resulting in an error. The first step involved designating the erroneous cohesive device to its categories, namely, reference, substitution and ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion. The second step involved classifying the error into its sub-categories. These two steps in classification were based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesion. The third step involved classifying the error into its types. What was found in the data is most suitably classified into (1) misuse, (2) unnecessary addition, (3) omission and (4) redundant repetition of cohesive devices. The definitions of each type of cohesive errors are given as follows:

(a) **Misuse cohesive device** occurs when a particular cohesive device is used wrongly. More specifically, a correct form should be used to replace the wrong one.

(b) **Unnecessary addition** occurs when a particular cohesive device is used unnecessarily or redundantly in the text.

(c) **Omission of cohesion device** occurs when a particular cohesive device is expected in the text but is not there.

(d) **Redundant repetition of cohesive device** is used to describe the cohesive devices which are used more than once in the text but either some or all of the use can be replaced by other words.

Results

Quantitative Findings

A total of 140 cohesive errors are identified in the ten expository compositions. However, in the constraint of space, only 13 examples are discussed in the qualitative section. The quantitative findings show that reference had the highest percentage of errors, 42.9%, followed by conjunction, 29.3% and lexical cohesive errors, 27.9%. The gap between reference and the other two categories of errors suggests that the former posed the most difficulty for the students writing expository texts. Substitution and ellipsis errors were not found. Table 1 shows the percentage of the main categories of cohesive errors committed by the Chinese EFL learners in writing an expository essay. (see Table 1 in Appendix 1)

In the sub-categories of reference errors, the highest frequency of errors committed by the students was in the use of the definite article, 48.3%, followed by pronominals, 25.0% and comparatives, 18.3%. The lowest frequency of errors committed by the students was demonstratives, 8.3%. In the sub-categories of conjunction, the highest frequency of errors committed by the students was additive errors, 34.1%. This was followed by adversative errors, 26.8%. The lowest frequency of conjunction errors committed by them was temporal and causal, 19.5%. In the sub-categories of lexical cohesion, repetition of the same word had the highest frequency of errors, 61.5%, followed by collocation errors, 23.1%. The lowest frequency of lexical errors was synonym errors, 15.4%. Table 2 shows the sub-categories of cohesive errors committed by Chinese EFL learners in writing an expository essay.(see Table 2 in Appendix 2)

First, Chinese EFL learners most frequently repeated the same words or phrases in writing an expository essay. Second, they often unnecessarily added the definite article. Third, they frequently misused the reference errors, for e.g., the definite article, pronominal and comparative, the conjunctions, for e.g., addictive and adversative and collocation. Table 3 shows the classification of each type of error, whether it has been misused, unnecessarily added, omitted or redundantly repeated.(see Table 3 in Appendix 3)

Qualitative Findings

Reference: Definite Article Errors

Unnecessary Addition of the Definite Article

Example 1	First, I think we can learn a lot of knowledge to serve our country, adapt the changing nation and live a good life. Through education, we can arm ourseeves with a lot of knowledge that cannot be brought by money. Then we can devote ourselves to the country's contribution to give our little strength. Everyone a little helps a lot. Also, the world is changing rapidly, and **the [to omit]** competition is very fierce. (S1)

Applying the four possible uses of the definite article, specified by Halliday and Hasan (1976), "the" in "the competition is very fierce" is used unnecessarily. When the writer puts "the" in front of the item, "competition", it leads readers to think that the item is mentioned before or the readers should know the existence of it. In this example, the item is not mentioned in the preceding sentences and the readers do not know the existence of what "the competition" refers to. Therefore, it is preferred that "the" be omitted.

Misuse of the Definite article

Example 2	Compared to the old China, the modern China has provided a lot of more opportunities to her people for their educations. However, some people donot take it seriously. They donot go to school anymore or leave school before they graduated. That is bad for themselves. Education is important to everyone f for it can benefit people a lot. First, educated people are more likely to have a successful career. Education not only gives people **the [a]** general idea of the world but also teaches people to be skilled in several particular parts. (S2)

The writer first mentions the item, "general idea". The definite article modifying "general idea" is misused here. When the writer uses "the", it leads readers to think that "general idea" is mentioned before. It creates an idea that this item is specified by reference back in the text, which is not, in this case. Neither is "general idea" an item known to readers. Therefore, the indefinite article "a" should be used to replace "the".

Example 3	First, people can build up there career easily if they have a good education. Take the former story for example, because they didn't even finish **the [their]** nine-year education, they could only work as a waiter or waitress with low salary. (S7)

The definite article is misused here. By writing, "the nine-year education", it leads readers to refer back to preceding sentences for anything that may be mentioned before. A pronominal "their" is suggested to replace "the" since the writer is referring to "they" or "the drop outs" in the preceding text.

Reference: Pronominal Errors

<u>Misuse of Pronominal</u>

Example 4	When I started my junior middle school in the town, we had six classes and a total of about 300 students in the same grade. But as time went by, more and more students droped out of school stepped into society to find a job. I graduated, there were only less than 200 students left. Unfortunately, most of these people lead a bleak life now because lack of education. Some of them even become addicted to smoking and alcohol without having a job. Why? The reason is that only having an education can help one to build up his/her career develop his/her mind. First, people can build up there career easily if they have a good education. Take the former story for example, because **they [the drop outs]** didn't even finish the nine-year education, they could only work as a waiter or waitress with low salary. (S7)

The writer begins the two sentences at the beginning of a paragraph. It is clearer if he uses "the drop-outs" instead of "they". There will be no difficulty locating who "they" refers to since the tie is remote. Besides, "they" is not made explicit. The story mentions about "the students", "those who left school prematurely" and "the remaining students who continued their education". The use of pronominal "they", therefore, has multiple presuppositions, causing ambiguity in its use.

Example 5	Second, we can learn the way to study when we have educations. The way to study is more important than the knowledge you had studied, though the later is very important. When we have educations, we can learn the way to study and we can learn how to study is better. The teachers would also tell ^ **[us]** the way to study **to their students [to omit]**. The teachers can also help **their** students **[us]** when **they [we]** have wrong ways to study. (S5)

Since the writer addresses his readers, using pronominals "we" and "you" in the preceding sentences, it follows that he should use "us" and "we" to maintain this reference consistency, and not "their" and "they". The writer changes pronouns abruptly, causing cohesion to be undermined. There are altogether three reference errors, classified as pronominal disagreement.

Reference: Comparative Errors

<u>Misuse of Comparative</u>

Example 6	Generally, who receives better education has is more successful career, a happier marriage, **good [a better]** reputation and **high [a higher]** status. Thus, education do have a profound influence on our life. (S6)

Two errors in comparative are identified here. In the preceding text, the writer uses comparatives such as "better education", "more successful career" and "a happier marriage" to elaborate "what a better educated person will receive". However, he does not continue to use comparatives when he writes about "good reputation" and "high status". It is, therefore, suggested that he replaces "good reputation" with "a better reputation" and "high status" with "a higher status".

Conjunction: Additive Errors

<u>Misuse of Additive</u>

Example 7	The professors are almost the Doctors **and [but]** the Master postgraduates only can be assistants.(S2)

The writer tries to show a contrast between the status of the professors and the postgraduates but he uses an additive conjunction "and" instead of adversative "but".

Example 8	The other reason is that education makes people more competitive. Nowadays, our society is filled with fierce competitions. Everyone competes for a better school, a better job and a higher social status. Too many people compett for too few opportunities, so only the best can win. Good education can prepare people for the cruel competition. For example, millions of old employees in Chinese national corporations are laid off these years because of insufficient education and out-of-date techniques. **Another example is that [In addition],** educated people tend to get higher salary and rank in higher positions in almost every occupation, according to latest survey. (S9)

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), *for example, for instance* and *thus* are additive conjunctions in the exemplification sense. They are used to indicate what follows is one instance of what has gone before (Raphael, 1995). What follows after the conjunction "for example", should be an example of "good education can prepare people for the cruel competition", but it is not. The writer uses "another example" which is again not an example of the above statement. Since he is adding to a new point, an additive conjunction "in addition" may be more appropriate.

Conjunction: Adversative Errors

<u>Misuse of Adversative</u>

Example 9	In the whole world, in every area, **however [whether]** it is poor or rich, accepting education is the basical right of citizens. (S1)

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), both conjunctions *however* and *whether* are adversatives. The conjunction *however* has a meaning of "contrary to expectation" (1976, p. 250). The conjunction *whether* is a generalized form of the adversative relation. It dismisses some presupposed circumstances. It is preferred that the writer uses "whether" instead of "however" in above example to express the meaning of "it does not matter if the area is poor or rich". This is because his intention is to presuppose some circumstances that have been referred to be dismissed as irrelevant or not important now.

Reiteration Errors – Repetition of the Same Words[1]

Example 10	Second, to avoid the knowledge be used in evil things, **people** should have an education. The fruit of wisdom can bring **people [them]** happiness, however, it can do **[them]** harm **to people [to omit].** (S4)

The writer uses the word "people" thrice. This can be avoided by the use of a cohesive pronominal tie "them" to point to the word "people" in the second and third instance of use. This repetition makes reading of the text dull and monotonous.

Example 11	When we grow up, when we are in the society, we have the same mind to serve **others [to omit],** to be polite to **others**, to be talorant **others [towards them]**, conflicts and trouble will reduce. (S1)

The writer repeatedly uses "others" thrice within a sentence. This retards the flow of text, making it uninteresting and repetitive. It is preferred that the first instance of "others" be left unmentioned. This points out that the student is not able to use ellipsis cohesive device. To avoid repeating "others" in the third instance, the writer can use a pronominal "them" to refer back to "others". It is suggested that the writer writes the sentence as "When we grow up, we will have the same mind to serve and be polite to others, and be tolerant towards them".

Example 12	That's why many parents send their children to **better** schools or **better [to omit]** universities to have **better [quality]** educations. (S5)

The writer uses the adjective "better" thrice in a sentence. The text reading becomes dull and monotonous. To avoid repeating "better", the writer can use ellipsis in the second instance of use and use a synonym "quality" in the third instance of use. This example reflects that the student does not use ellipsis cohesion when required, and is unable to use synonym.

Collocation[2]

<u>Misuse of Collocation</u>

Example 13	Through education, we can recaeve good things, learn how to be a human being. how to deal with every possible situation, and the **good mind** must be **planted [cultivated]** and **growing** in our hearts little by little. (S1)

The writer may be attempting to form a lexical chain with “good mind”, “planted” and “growing”. However, a good mind collocates better with the word “cultivated” instead of “planted”. The word “cultivated” is anaphoric; it points back to “a good mind”. A collocation error is, thus, committed.

Discussion

A high percentage of errors implied that the Chinese EFL learners indeed had problems using the cohesive devices. The high frequency errors were, therefore, emphasized in this study. A low frequency error count did not imply that they were competent in that area as they could have employed the avoidance strategy. It could also be that the particular genre did not require a use of some cohesive devices, as such, fewer errors in the sub-categories resulted.

It is further found that the students used certain conjunctions more frequently than the others. Some conjunctions were, in fact, absent in their writing. Additive conjunctions such as ‘in other words’ and ‘for instance’, adversative conjunctions such as ‘nevertheless’, ‘despite this’, ‘on the other hand’ and ‘instead’, causal conjunctions such as ‘arising out of this’, ‘to this end’ and ‘apart from this’ and temporal conjunctions such as ‘to sum up’, ‘in short’ and ‘briefly’ were absent. The absence of these conjunctions implies that this group of EFL learners either did not know how to use them or they had difficulty retrieving unfamiliar conjunctions. Being unfamiliar with the proper use of conjunctions could have resulted in avoidance of use. The absence of substitution and the failure to use ellipsis further show that the learners were unable to utilize the comprehensive range of cohesive devices available. Thus, these indicate that they had a relatively low level of proficiency in cohesion.

Reference Cohesive Errors

In reference cohesion, the Chinese EFL learners had the most difficulty in using the definite article. The definite article was often unnecessarily used and misused. This finding is supported by Zhang (1997). Feng (2003) reported that the definite article was mostly misused and under-used in her data. However, a closer examination of her misuse examples revealed that they could

be classified as “unnecessary addition” or “over-use” as no alternative cohesive device was suggested by her.

The qualitative analysis of the cohesive errors reveals how the EFL learners struggled with using the reference cohesive devices in their writing. They used the definite article “the” to modify a noun, without understanding that “the” and “the noun” must point back by reference to a mentioned item in the preceding text for cohesion to be correct. They confused the definite article “the” with the indefinite article “a”. The definite articles were also used where pronominals such as “their” and “her” should be used to track back by reference to some people mentioned before in the preceding text. Evidently, this group of EFL learners lacked understanding of the function and use of the definite article which has resulted in unnecessary use and misuse of the definite article.

The use of pronominals posed the second most difficulty for the EFL learners. Pronominals were found to be predominantly misused in this study. This finding is similar to Feng (2003) and Zhang (1997). The qualitative analysis shows that they used pronominals with multiple interpretations, without an explicit reference and to point by reference to an unintended item. They used singular pronominals to refer to plural pronominals and vice versa, and abruptly changed pronouns in a short span of text. Their inability in maintaining reference clarity and consistency resulted in ambiguity and disagreement of pronominals.

The use of comparative posed the third most difficulty for the EFL learners using reference cohesion. Comparatives were mostly misused. This finding is similar to Feng (2003) who has reported only misused comparatives. Zhang (1997), however, did not identify misuse of comparative as a problem for Chinese learners. The present study found that the students were not able to select the correct comparatives when showing comparisons.

Conjunction Errors

The two most frequent conjunction errors committed by the EFL learners involved the use of additive and adversative conjunctions. Both categories of conjunction were often misused. Feng (2003) and Zhang (1997) found not only misuse but also over-use of additive in their data. The qualitative analysis reveals that simple additive conjunctions, such as “and”, “in addition” and “moreover”, were used without its cohesive effect of adding to new or more information. Instead, these additives were used to express adversative relations. Apart from this, the additive

conjunction “for example” was used without the purpose of exemplifying an idea from the preceding sentences. It is found that they used the wrong adversatives to express adversative relations, for example, “whether” for “however” and “even” for “even if”.

Lexical Cohesive Errors

The EFL learners had a strong tendency to repeat the same words in their writing. A look at the frequency of sub-categories of cohesive errors alone would reveal that in fact, repetition of the same words in lexical cohesion was more of a problem than that of the definite article. This finding is shared by Feng (2003) and Zhang (1997) who reported that repetition of the same words was the predominant type of lexical errors in Chinese EFL writing. As found in many cohesion related studies, repeating the same words is a common problem among learners of English as a Foreign Language or weak writers. This result was arrived by Witte and Faigley (1981) in their analysis of low rated quality essays and also Connor (1984) and Khalil (1989) in their analysis of EFL writing.

The repetition of the same words in the qualitative analysis illuminates three problematic areas for the EFL learners. First, they were not able to use reference cohesive devices effectively. Some repeated words could have been replaced by pronominals such as ‘it’ and ‘them’. Second, they failed to use ellipsis, when required. They could have avoided repeating the same words in their writing by leaving some of the words unmentioned, yet presupposed. Third, they were deficient in their vocabulary, as a result, they were not able to elaborate and extend their ideas using synonyms. Such cohesion problems retarded the flow of the text and made text reading dull, monotonous and uninteresting.

The second difficulty the EFL learners had in using lexical cohesion was with the use of collocation. Misuse collocation points again to the learners lacking a range of vocabulary and their inability to use synonyms as alternative cohesive devices. Misuse of collocation identified in this study occurred across clauses or sentences. Unlike examples of misuse of collocation identified by Zhang (1997, 2000), the errors occurred within a phrase itself. This contradicts Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) description of a collocation, that is, it normally occurs between a pair of words or a chain of words. As such, Zhang’s (1997, 2000) identification of collocation cohesive errors can be regarded as merely a wrong choice of lexical item selected by the Chinese EFL learners.

Conclusion

The results of the quantitative study show that the PRC students in this study had the most difficulty in using reference cohesion, followed by conjunction and lexical cohesion. They committed the most reference errors in the use of the definite article, pronominals and comparatives. The definite article was mostly used unnecessarily and misused. The pronominals and comparatives were predominantly misused. Simple additive and adversative errors formed the bulk of the conjunction errors. Both sub-categories of conjunctions were frequently misused. In lexical cohesion, repetition of the same word has the highest frequency of errors. This was followed by misuse of collocation. The results of the qualitative study suggest that the PRC students in this study did not know the function and use of the definite article. At the same time, they were not able to use reference cohesion to maintain reference clarity and consistency. Wrong comparatives were used to show comparison. They used simple additives without the cohesive purpose of, first, adding to new or more information, and second, exemplifying an idea. They also used wrong adversatives to express contrary relations. The lexical cohesive errors in repetition of the same words reveal that the students were not able to use reference cohesion, when required. Furthermore, they were unable to use ellipsis, when necessary. The lexical cohesive errors in the misuse of collocation point to the students' deficiency in a wide range of vocabulary which had resulted in their inability to elaborate and extend ideas using synonyms or other cohesive devices.

The results of this study are believed to have imperative practical application to language teachers, Chinese EFL learners and curricula designers. Language teachers would be informed of the difficulties beginning Chinese EFL learners face in using cohesive devices in their academic writing. Teachers may cite the common errors identified in this paper to raise Chinese EFL learners' awareness of the common errors committed by them. They may focus on teaching the learners the correct usage of cohesive devices as suggested by Halliday and Hasan's cohesion framework. The Chinese EFL learners would be enlightened by the most common types of cohesive errors committed. In addition, they would be informed of what was erroneous in the usage context, why it was erroneous and how it could have been corrected by the qualitative findings of this study. Curricula designers could use the findings to construct relevant writing materials for beginning EFL writers.

Limitations

The group of Chinese EFL learners from whom the compositions were collected for investigation constitutes a small percentage of the total number of the students studying in that local university every year. As such, the findings of this study are tentative and cannot be generalized to all Chinese EFL learners studying in Singapore. With a small number of essays studied, the cases of errors identified were few. The first limitation was the constraint faced by the researcher in interpreting more from the percentage of errors, especially in the sub-categories of cohesion. It is not possible to claim a broad significance for the results of such error analysis. Nevertheless, the frequency count and quantifying of errors allowed us to know the categories and sub-categories of cohesion that posed the greatest challenge for this beginning group of learners in English Language. The second limitation lay in the scope of an error analysis, which allowed the researcher to examine only the cohesive errors committed by the learners. This meant that non-errors were disregarded. Instances of correct use of cohesive devices may reflect learners' knowledge of the system. Furthermore, error analysis cannot, in principle, provide any evidence and account for 'error-avoidance' behaviour of learners. The third limitation of the study is that this study did not examine the cohesiveness of the essays using Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA) software, as seen in Foltz, Kintsch & Landauer (1998) and Wang and Sui (2006). Investigating the semantic similarities between words, sentences and paragraphs using the latest software, Latent Semantic Analysis (LSA), was beyond the scope of the present study.

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Footnotes

[1]According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), reiteration is a form of lexical cohesion which involves the repetition of a lexical item or the use of a synonym, a superordinate and a general word. Reiteration errors found in the students' writing in this study are of two types (1) repetition of the same words and (2) synonym.

[2] A collocated item has some kind of semantic relation to the previous or the following lexical item mentioned in the text. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), collocated items do

not involve repetition, synonym, superordinate and general items. All the lexical cohesion relationships which cannot be properly classified as lexical reiteration are included in a 'miscellaneous class' called collocation (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). A cohesive force is generated if two lexical items occurring in adjacent sentences share similar patterns of collocation. The cohesive effect is not just limited to a pair of words but it tends to occur in a chain of words. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 286), "such patterns occur freely both within the same sentence and across sentence boundaries; they are largely independent of the grammatical structure."

Appendices

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Cohesive Errors in Writing

Main Categories of Cohesive Errors	No. & % of Errors
1. Reference	60 (42.9%)
2. Substitution	0 (0%)
3. Ellipsis	0 (0%)
4. Conjunction	41 (29.3%)
5. Lexical Cohesion	39 (27.9%)
Total	140 (100%)

Table 2

Sub-categories of Cohesive Errors

Reference Errors		Conjunction Errors		Lexical Cohesive Errors	
Definite article	29 (48.3%)	Additive	14 (34.1%)	Reiteration – Repetition of the same words	24 (61.5%)
Pronominal	15 (25.0%)	Adversative	11 (26.8%)	Collocation	9 (23.1%)
Comparative	11 (18.3%)	Temporal	8 (19.5%)	Reiteration – Synonym	6 (15.4%)
Demonstrative	5 (8.3%)	Causal	8 (19.5%)		
Total : 60 (100%)		Total: 41 (100%)		Total: 39 (100%)	

Table 3
Summary of Main Quantitative Findings

Cohesive Errors In Main Categories & Sub-categories	Compositions N = 10
Reference Errors	60 (42.9%)
The Definite article	
(1) Unnecessary Addition of the Definite article	15
(2) Misuse of the Definite article	11
(3) Omission of the Definite article	3
Pronominal	
(1) Misuse of Pronominal	11
(2) Omission of Pronominal	4
Comparative	
(1) Misuse of Comparative	7
(2) Omission of Comparative	4
Demonstrative	
(1) Misuse of Demonstrative	5
Conjunction Errors	41 (29.3%)
Additive	
(1) Misuse of Additive	7
(2) Unnecessary Addition of Additive	4
(3) Omission of Additive	3
Adversative	
(1) Misuse of Adversative	6
(2) Unnecessary Addition of Adversative	5
Temporal	
(1) Unnecessary Addition of Temporal	5
(2) Misuse of Temporal	3
Causal	
(1) Misuse of Causal	4
(2) Omission of Causal	3
(3) Unnecessary Addition of Causal	1
Lexical Cohesive Errors	39 (27.9%)
Reiteration	
(1) Repetition of the same word	24
Collocation	
(1) Misuse of Collocation	9
Synonym	
(1) Redundant synonym	5
(2) Omission synonym	1
Total Errors	140 (100%)

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An Analysis of a Hypothesized Model of EFL Students' Motivation Based on Self-Determination Theory

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Abstract
The present study focuses explicitly on how the three psychological needs of Self-Determination Theory (SDT) – autonomy, relatedness and competence – were determinants of the intrinsic motivation of two groups of students: 203 English majors and 82 business majors. Since intrinsic motivation is an independent pole in which all three psychological needs have strong relationships, and demonstrates the most autonomous conditions on the intrinsic/extrinsic motivation continuum in SDT, this study explicitly focused on intrinsic motivation.

The results reveal that the three psychological needs have a different causal relationship with intrinsic motivation depending on majors. While relatedness and competence displayed a substantial influence on intrinsic motivation in the English majors, only competence showed a statistically significant influence on intrinsic motivation in business majors. Also, autonomy did not display a causal relationship with intrinsic motivation in either group. Furthermore, TOEIC scores were statistically affected by intrinsic motivation and competence only in the English majors. From these results, it is suggested that language teachers should undertake activities to improve the language skills of EFL college students while incorporating more communicative approaches and cultivating a clear reason for them to study English.

Keywords: motivation, Self-Determination Theory, psychological needs, different majors

Introduction

There has been an abundance of research carried out on the two poles of motivation (Vernon, 1969) – intrinsic and extrinsic – in the last few decades, resulting in researchers being able to state that the second/foreign language learners' (SL/FL or L2) "attitudes, desires and effort to learn the L2" (Gardner, Tremblay & Masgoret, 1997, p. 345) are key determinants of SL/FL achievement (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Motivation is a relevant aspect of L2 learning, and has a great impact on the language learner and how he or she acquires the language (Clement, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994; Dörnyei 1994; Ellis, 1997; Oxford & Shearin, 1994).

This study is an investigation of a relatively unchartered aspect of motivation in language learning: how it relates to Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the different types of motivation that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners majoring in English and business possess. The literature review will demonstrate the gap in research that exists between these two research fields, with the subsequent results of the study filling this gap with some new and unique findings.

Background

The presence of motivation in L2 learners can greatly assist them in succeeding in the target language (TL). Motivation for L2 learners implies that they may exhibit the autonomy needed to succeed in language learning (Ushioda, 1996). While this has been affirmed by research over the past few decades, (Dörnyei, 1998; Ellis, 1985; Ely, 1986), Gardner and Lambert (1972) further stressed that although language aptitude accounts for a considerable proportion of individual variability in language learning achievement, motivational factors can override the aptitude effect. Students who are highly motivated, both intrinsically and extrinsically, will seek out opportunities to use and further develop their abilities in the TL. Gardner (1983) suggested that once the student enters an informal language learning context, language aptitude is influential, but motivational factors dominate because they determine if learners can take advantage of these contexts (p.77).

Self-Determination Theory and Language Learning

The handful of studies dealing with SDT and language learning in the Japanese setting focused mainly on motivational development (Hiromori, 2006), enhancing motivation (Hiromori, 2003; Tanaka & Hiromori, 2007), and how participation in international events influences motivation (Sakai & Koike, 2008). The use of SDT in the present study was inspired by the gap between the research on motivation, the motivation learners with different majors possess, and the language learning outcomes – notably on the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) – that these learners attain. Indeed, there is too little research in this area to determine how these three psychological needs are different in affecting intrinsic motivation depending on student majors.

Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2002) is a theory of personality and motivation that is concerned with the actual quality of two types of motivation: one based on intrinsic interest in an activity and the other based on rewards extrinsic to the activity (Noels, Pelletier, Clement & Vallerand, 2000; Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006). SDT is also a theory of human motivation where choice, or autonomy is at the fore (Moller, Ryan & Deci, 2006).

People are motivated in two ways: intrinsically or extrinsically. Intrinsic motivation is the motivation to do something because it is enjoyable and satisfying (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b). Vallerand (1997) set out three sub-elements of intrinsic motivation: knowledge (exploring new ideas), accomplishment (feelings related to accomplishing a task) and stimulation (feelings of fun and excitement). Conversely, extrinsic motivation refers to performing an activity because it leads to an independent outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Vansteenkiste, et al., 2006), such as learning a language in order to please ones parents or to compete with friends.

Ryan and Deci (2000a) proposed that any understanding of human motivation requires a consideration of three psychological needs. These are autonomy, competence and relatedness, and are the main elements that people need for healthy psychological development (see Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Deci & Ryan, 1987, 2000; LaGuardia & Ryan, 2000, 2007; White, 1959). Autonomy refers to people being capable of making an informed decision, or possessing a sense of choice in their behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1987; LaGuardia & Ryan, 2007); competence is the feeling of accomplishment in overcoming the challenges of everyday life (White, 1959); and

relatedness is a feeling of connectedness to others (Beaumeister & Leary, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

SDT is also concerned with goal pursuits. According to the theory, the main issue for humans when they are pursuing their goals is to what degree are they capable of satisfying their basic psychological needs as they pursue these goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Generally, people distinguish between different types of motivation based on the reasons for performing an action (Ryan & Deci, 2000b), which in turn affects their performance. In the case of language learning, the relevance of SDT can be viewed through the prism of motivated students pursuing their goals of being able to speak the TL, all the while becoming more involved in their own learning, and thus taking a more active role in it.

There are four salient types of motivation that directly affect this discussion of SDT. They are: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation and amotivation. External regulation is a form of extrinsic motivation that derives from behavior performed to satisfy an external demand, such as the need to do well on a test (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b). Another form of extrinsic motivation is introjected regulation, which sees a person perform an act in order to enhance his or her self-esteem or sense of worth (Ryan & Deci, 2002), or to receive some approval from others. Introjected regulation results from pressure incorporated into oneself to perform a task. Identified regulation occurs when a person identifies with the importance of a behavior, and thus performs the activity for reasons that are personally relevant (Noels et al., 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000a), like when learners of English realize the underlying values of learning English in order to develop themselves more fully. Finally, amotivation refers to the lack of intention to act upon something (Ryan & Deci, 2000a), and occurs when a person does not value an activity (Ryan, 1995), or does not feel competent enough to perform the activity (Deci, 1975), thus quits soon after starting.

If viewed on a continuum, as these three types of regulation (external, introjected and identified) move closer to intrinsic motivation, they become more internal and independent. They then gravitate more towards intrinsic motivation than extrinsic motivation, with intrinsic motivation acting as an example of autonomous motivation (Gagne & Deci, 2005). In other words, the continuum moves from controlled to autonomous behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Learners with high levels of intrinsic motivation exhibit high self-determination, while amotivation and external regulation relate to lower levels of self-determination. If learners are

amotivated to learn the TL, clearly they will have difficulties in the classroom and will have different expectations than those of their more intrinsically motivated classmates. Conversely, if learners sense there is a reward, boost in self-esteem, or a conscious value in performing the activity, they are more likely to apply themselves to the task at hand and be more satisfied with the learning process.

A correlation between SDT and motivation in the EFL classroom exists: if language learners possess autonomy, competence and relatedness to both the tasks they perform inside and outside of the classroom, and to their fellow learners and teachers, they will be more psychologically satisfied and motivated with the whole language learning process. However, what is not clear – and what has not been previously researched – are the different types of motivation learners in different majors possess. Additionally, the three psychological needs are considered crucial sources of intrinsic motivation in SDT. It is highly possible that the strength of each psychological need is different depending on student majors.

In their study, Honda and Sakyu (2004) discovered that intrinsic motivation positively predicted learners' proficiency based on their TOEIC scores, while Matsubara, Nishimata and Tanno (2001) found that integrative motivation positively affected TOEIC gain scores. Mori (2007) suggested that learners' majors may have an effect on whether they exhibit an increase in their TOEIC scores: with English majors not always demonstrating the highest gains.

For the present study, the authors deemed it necessary to analyze the predicting factors influencing participant students' intrinsic motivation of learning English. Moreover, this study took the sample students' TOEIC scores into consideration for analyses. Since TOEIC scores are designed to measure learners' practical English skills, we thought it valuable to examine how TOEIC scores are related to the sampled students' intrinsic motivation and psychological needs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to test a hypothesized model of the relationships between the three psychological needs, intrinsic motivation, and TOEIC scores for EFL college students, while taking their majors into consideration. As outlined in the previous section, the three psychological needs are considered to be positive predictors of intrinsic motivation. Among the three, in particular, competence can be hypothesized as the predictor with the most influence on student outcomes, and specifically of TOEIC scores. Since competence refers to the feeling of

accomplishment or sense of capability in terms of SDT, it is hypothesized that it has a relationship with TOEIC scores when taking the three psychological needs into account. Therefore, this study is designed to test the hypothesis that the three psychological needs can be predictors of intrinsic motivation, and that competence can influence TOEIC scores directly.

For the purposes of this research, the study is divided into two parts. Study 1 identifies the types of motivation and the three psychological needs the participant students possess. Following this analysis, the hypothesized model is evaluated to ascertain how well the lower scale items pertain to the constructs for all of the participants. Study 2 aims at comparing the hypothesized model depending on the participant students' majors.

Method

Participants

There were 285 Japanese college students in the study, in two groups: English majors and business majors. There were 203 first- and second-year English majors at a small public women's university in eastern Japan, and 82 first-year business majors at a large private university in western Japan. The method of sampling was purposeful sampling, as the authors were specifically targeting Japanese English and business majors. Since the English majors were considered to have a stronger interest in learning English, the study was aimed at how their motivation and learning attitudes toward English were different from those of other content majors, and specifically, business majors. While the English majors were taking approximately 15 hours a week of English classes (divided into the four skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing), and required English classes such as literature and linguistics, the business majors were studying compulsory four skill classes for 10 hours a week when the survey was conducted in November and December of 2007.

The Test of English for International Communication Institutional Program (TOEIC IP) was a mandatory proficiency test for both groups of students. All participants were required to report their current TOEIC score when responding to the questionnaire. The English majors took the TOEIC IP in July, 2007, and the business majors took the test in September, 2007.

The mean score of the TOEIC was 578.12 for the English majors and 418.9 for the business majors. The TOEIC Steering Committee (2008) reported that the mean TOEIC scores for Japanese university English majors in 2007 was 491, and 408 for business majors. While the

business major students' mean scores were about 10 points higher than average, there were more than 80 scores higher than the mean among the English majors in this study. One of the reasons for these high scores might be that the English majors had mandatory TOEIC preparation classes with a stated goal of 730 points. On the other hand, the business majors did not take part in such mandatory training classes, and their mean TOEIC scores are not very different from the average for business majors elsewhere in Japan.

Survey Instruments

The questionnaire (available upon request) – administered in Japanese – consisted of 19 items designed to measure English learning motivation, and 13 items designed to measure the psychological needs of learning English, and was adopted from previous motivation studies based on SDT (see Dörnyei, 1990; Hayashi, 2006; Hiromori, 2005; Noels, 2001; Tanaka & Hiromori, 2007), and modified for this study.

The questionnaire items were recorded on a 6-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (6) with no "not applicable" included. With this even-numbered point system, participants had to decide on their attitude on either side of each statement (Likert, 1932). All statistical analyses were carried out by SPSS 15.0 and Amos 16.0.

Results

Study 1

English Learning Motivation

In order to gain the best possible perspective of the participants in this study, the authors decided to divide the results into two sections: one dealing with all of the participants and the other dealing with an analysis of the two majors.

Table 1 presents the results of the descriptive analysis of the 19 items of English learning motivation of college students in Japan. Screened by descriptive statistics on each item, five items (1, 4, 16, 17, and 32) were deleted because they demonstrated the ceiling effect. Among these items, three (1, 17, 32) were concerned with motivation, so this factor could not be extracted in this study. From this initial assessment, an exploratory factor analysis using a primary factor method with a promax rotation of the remaining fourteen self-report motivation items was conducted on 285 students. According to the recommendation on sample size for

factor analysis by Meyers, Gamst, and Guarino (2006), the size in this study is acceptable for a 15-item inventory.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of English Learning Motivation for English Learning Subscale

	English Learning Motivation Scale Items	*Mean*	*SD*
1.	Honestly speaking, I don't understand the purposes of studying English.	5.21	1.08
2	I'm studying English because a good command of English leads to a high evaluation in Japan.	5.16	1.19
3	I would be looked upon as cool if I'm good at English.	4.72	1.37
4	I want to be an international person who is also capable with other languages as well as English.	3.53	1.45
5	I would find it interesting if I understand things well through studying English.	3.60	1.38
10	I'm studying English because it is necessary for proficiency tests such as Eiken and TOEIC.	3.48	1.35
11	I can consider myself as an international person if I can use English well.	4.80	1.25
12	I would be happy to discover a new side of myself if I can use English well.	2.81	1.40
16	I'm studying English because of my parents' expectations.	3.20	1.33
17	I don't understand why I am studying English.	3.46	1.41
18	I can develop myself through studying English.	3.96	1.36
20	I'm somehow embarrassed if I'm not good at English	3.46	1.45
21	I'm studying English because I want to get a better job in the future.	4.22	1.20
23	I feel anxiety if I'm not good at English.	4.60	1.41
25	I'm studying English because I want to acquire practical English business skills.	4.21	1.26
26	I feel excited when I study English.	4.59	1.30
30	I'm studying English because I want to be bilingual.	4.27	1.32
31	I'm glad to discover new things through studying English.	4.65	1.31

Items (N=285)

Using the Kaiser-Guttman retention criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1.0 (Guttman, 1954), a four-factor solution provided the clearest extraction. These four factors accounted for 58.3% of the total variance. Table 2 presents the results of the factor analysis of motivation for learning English. Factor 1 (eigenvalue=4.4) has five items (5, 12, 18, 26, 31), accounting for 28% of the total variance. These five items are related to integrating the underlying values of learning English with other aspects of the self, as well as experiencing enjoyment through learning English. Consequently, this factor can be labeled intrinsic motivation (I). Factor 2 (eigenvalue=2.62) received loadings from four items (2, 10, 21, 25), and accounted for 18.3 % of the total variance. This factor has a connection with the benefits or outcomes that result from learning English. Therefore, this factor is labeled external regulation (II).

Factor 3 can be characterized by the loading from four items (23, 20, 11, 3), accounting for 7.5 % of the variance. These four items pertain to wanting to learn English because of some type of pressure that individuals have put upon themselves. Therefore, this factor can be called introjected regulation (III). Factor 4 has two items (4, 30), accounting for 4.5% of the total variance. This factor is concerned with the recognition of the underlying values of learning English and individuals have accepted them in order to develop themselves more fully. This factor can thus be labeled identified regulation (IV).

Table 2 Results of Factor Analysis for Motivation to Learn English

English Learning Motivation Scale Items	I	II	III	IV
31. I'm glad to discover new things through studying English.	.83			
5. I would find it interesting if I understand things well through studying English.	.82			
26. I feel excited when I study English.	.72			
12. I would be happy to discover a new side of myself if I can use English well.	.68			
18. I can develop myself through studying English.	.64			
2. I'm studying English because a good command of English leads to a high evaluation in Japan.		.76		
10. I'm studying English because it is necessary for proficiency tests such as Eiken and TOEIC.		.74		
21. I'm studying English because I want to get a better job in the future.		.74		
25. I'm studying English because I want to acquire practical English business skills.		.68		
23. I feel anxiety if I'm not good at English			-.70	
20. I'm somehow embarrassed if I'm not good at English			-70	
11. I can consider myself as an international person if I can use English well.			.62	
3. I would be looked upon as cool if I'm good at English				.52
30.I'm studying English because I want to be bilingual.				.53
4. I want to be an international person who is also capable with other languages as well as English.				.47

Note. I= intrinsic motivation; II= external regulation; III= introjected regulation; IV= identified regulation

In order to examine the internal reliability for each motivation subscale, Cronbach's alpha was employed, resulting in intrinsic motivation being estimated at .840 and external regulation at.73. In terms of introjected regulation, items 20 and 23 were negative statements and the scores for these were reversed to examine their internal consistency. As a result, introjected motivation had a reliability of .670. Previous research concerning language learning motivation has shown that introjected regulation has been known to have lower Cronbach α values (Hayashi, 2006; Noels et al., 2000) because of the complicated nature of psychological feelings. However, in the present study, the reliability of identified regulation was even lower at 5.14. Since this construct has only two items, it was not a reliable construct for this study.

When we take the aforementioned purposes of the study into account, and consider the factor analysis of English learning motivation, only intrinsic motivation will be used for further analysis. Seeing as its Cronbach's alpha is high enough to make a reliable construct, it can be

used for further analyses.

Three Psychological Needs

Using the same procedures as English learning motivation, an exploratory factor analysis was also conducted for the three psychological needs. Table 3 indicates the results of the descriptive statistics of the psychological needs. There were no items to indicate a floor or ceiling effect. As a result, a three-factor solution provided the clearest extraction. These three factors accounted for 60.52 % of the total variance. Table 4 presents the results of the factor analysis for the psychological needs for English learning for the twelve items. Factor 1 (eigenvalue=3.51) had four items (6, 14, 19, 22), accounting for 31.9% of the variance. These four items pertained to the learner's perceptions towards relationships with his or her peers in the classroom. Therefore, this factor can be labeled relatedness. Factor 2 (eigenvalue=1.91) received loadings from four items (7, 13, 24, 28), and accounted for 17.3% of the total variance. This factor is connected with the learners' ownership for learning English, while taking an active involvement in the English classroom into account. It can thus be called autonomy. Factor 3 (eigenvalue=1.22) can be characterized by the loading from four items (8, 9, 15, 27), accounting for 11.1% of the total variance. These four items are related to the self-recognition of the learners' English study and outcomes. Consequently, this factor can be labeled competence.

As for the internal consistency of each need, relatedness had a reliability of .842; autonomy .73; and competence displayed the lowest Cronbach alpha value at .601.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of the Psychological Needs for English Learning Scale Items (N=285)

Psychological needs for English learning scale items		
6. I think that English classes have an atmosphere in which we can learn with friends and from each other.	4.11	1.36
7. I think that English teachers should give students more say in their classwork	4.50	1.07
8. I think that studying English hard will lead to improvement of my English skills.	5.01	1.00
9. I think that I have been good at English for a long time.	3.12	1.33
13. I think that it is a good idea for the students to have a choice for their English class assignments.	4.12	1.21
14. I get along well with my classmates in English classes.	4.61	1.13
15. I think that I have satisfying grades in my English classes.	3.24	1.16
19. I think that we can study English while cooperating with other students.	4.04	1.22

22. It is fun for me to have group work in English classes.	4.03	1.33
24. I think that it is important for students to express their opinions on English learning.	4.42	1.03
27. I think that I always study hard in English class.	4.13	1.24
28. I think that it is a good idea to incorporate student ideas into the content of English lessons.	4.29	1.05
29. I sometimes feel that I'm not very competent at English.	2.81	1.71

Table 4 Results of Factor Analysis for Psychological Needs of Learning English

	Psychological needs for English learning scale items	I	II	III
19	I think that we can study English while cooperating with other students.	.86		
6	I think that English classes have an atmosphere in which we can learn with and from friends each other.	.82		
22	It is fun for me to have group work in English classes.	.78		
14	I get along well with my classmates in English classes.	.77		
28	I think that it is a good idea to incorporate student ideas into the content of English lessons.		.82	
13	I think that it is a good idea for the students to have a choice for their English class assignments.		.72	
7	I think that English teachers should communicate more with students during the lesson.		.69	
24	I think that it is important for students to express their opinions on English learning.		.69	
9.	I think that I had been good at English for a long time.			.77
15	I think that I have satisfying grades in my English classes.			.76
27	I think that I always study hard in English class.			.64
29	I sometimes feel that I'm not very competent at English.			.54

Note. I= relatedness; II= autonomy; III= competence

Although the internal consistency of the content of the items within the category was confirmed, the lower scale items of the questionnaire were examined by confirmatory factor analysis along with the other constructs.

Figure 1 shows the hypothesized model of the causal relationships between the three psychological needs, intrinsic motivation, and TOEIC scores. In this model, relatedness, autonomy, competence, and intrinsic motivation are the latent variables and indicated in the oval boxes. The numbers in the square boxes for each latent variable come from the questionnaire, and indicate the observable variables for each construct. Amos 16.0 evaluated the internal consistency for each construct, and each was deemed to be statistically significant.

Furthermore, in this model, the causal relationships between intrinsic motivation and the three psychological needs were examined. TOEIC was also examined to check the relationships

with competence and intrinsic motivation. As shown in Figure 2, all three psychological needs have statistically significant relationships with each other at a level of .001. In particular, the path coefficient between relatedness and competence is the highest, with a value of .53. As for the influences from the psychological needs, while relatedness and competence show statistically significant values, autonomy does not. Regarding the effects on TOEIC scores, competence demonstrates as significant an impact as was hypothesized; however, intrinsic motivation became a negative predictor to TOEIC scores.

Although the chi-square test was significant, X^2 (84, N =285) = 776.83), the results yielded acceptably high goodness-of-fit indexes (GFI=.871, AGFI=.828, CFI=.889RMSEA=.042.), indicating that the hypothesized model fits the observed data.

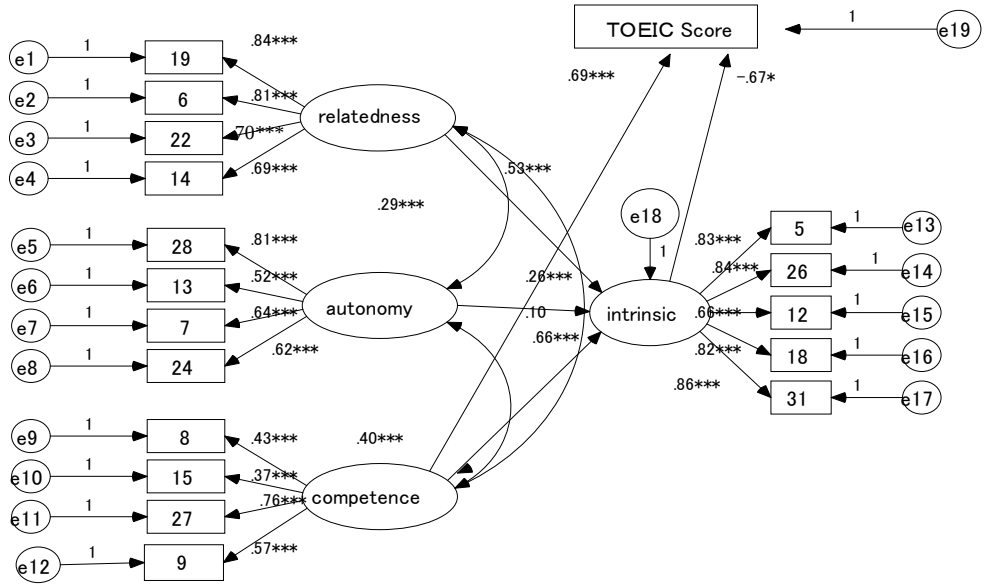

Figure 1 Hypothesized Model of the Relationships between the Three Psychological Needs, Intrinsic Motivation, and TOEIC Scores

Note. ***p=.001 *p = .05; The number in the squares indicate the item number on the questionnaire.

Study 2

In this section, the hypothesized model of the relationships between the three psychological needs, intrinsic motivation, and TOEIC scores across the two groups (English majors and business majors) was examined separately to assess the path coefficients.

Figure 2 and Figure 3 demonstrate the path analysis model for the English and business majors respectively.

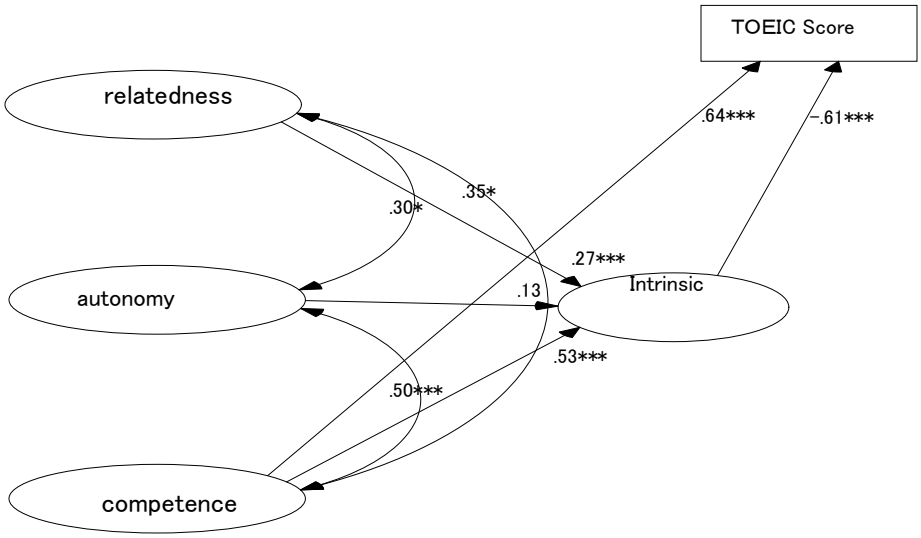

Figure 2 Path Model of the Relationships between the Three Psychological Needs, Intrinsic Motivation, and TOEIC Scores for English Majors

Note. N= 203, ***p=.001 *p = .05; Lower scale variables and unique variables are omitted.

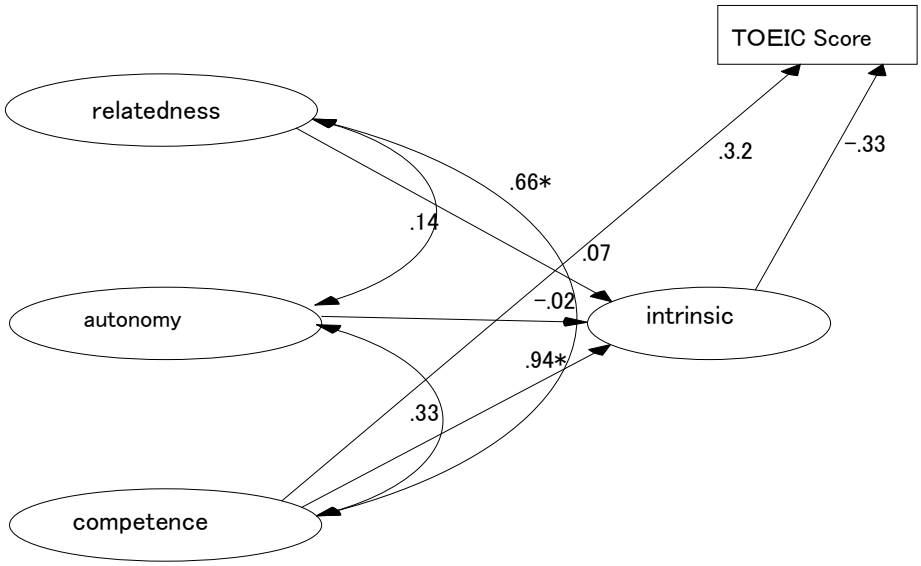

Figure 3 Path Model of the Relationships between the Three Psychological Needs, Intrinsic Motivation, and TOEIC Scores for Business Majors

Note. N= 82 ***p=.001 *p = .05; Lower scale variables and unique variables are omitted.

In terms of the causal relationship between the psychological needs and intrinsic motivation, relatedness and competence showed statistically significant path coefficients in the English majors; however, in the business majors, only competence was statistically significant. Furthermore, autonomy did not become a statistically significant predictor to intrinsic motivation in both majors. In terms of the relationships between the three psychological needs, although the English majors displayed statistically significant relationships between all three psychological needs, the only statistically significant relationship between relatedness and competence was found in the business majors.

Regarding the path coefficients to TOEIC scores, in the English majors, competence showed a statistically significant positive value of .64, but the path from intrinsic motivation to TOEIC showed a statistically significant negative value of -.61. On the other hand, with the business majors there were no statistically significant influences on TOEIC scores from both competence and intrinsic motivation.

Discussion

The findings of this study are mostly consistent with past studies that investigated the pertinence of SDT and L2 learner motivation (Hiromori, 2003; Noels, 2001; Noels et al., 2000; Tanaka & Hiromori, 2007). However, this study differs in that it demonstrated the strong effect of competence on intrinsic motivation when considering two different majors in a Japanese EFL setting. The results reveal that although the three psychological needs correlated with each other, competence was the construct with the most influence on intrinsic motivation. Thus, the learners' beliefs in their own competence in learning English are important factors in their choice to pursue their studies, and may even act to improve and increase their motivation. In fact, the learners in this study sought to improve themselves by learning new skills in an effort to become more proficient in English.

While there were different magnitudes to the results, competence was a significant factor with intrinsic motivation and TOEIC scores, especially with the English majors in the study. This tendency became even stronger in the business majors, whose core subjects are not English. This implies that the business majors have the ability to do well with tasks in the EFL classroom, but

may require some extra tutoring in order for them to reach their full potential. These learners may be encouraged by the ability to use the target language, with their motivation increasing when they accomplish a task successfully. In turn, this increase in competency may encourage them to attempt more tasks in the TL. Another salient finding of this research is that autonomy did not become a statistically significant predictor for either group. While this finding may cause some disagreement among researchers who view autonomy as a key element of intrinsic motivation, similar results have been found in the past with previous studies that took students' individual characteristics into account (see Hiromori, 2005).

As for the relationship between the latent variables and TOEIC scores, TOEIC scores were positively influenced by competence, but intrinsic motivation had a statistically negative influence on TOEIC scores. Thus, the authors can surmise that the TOEIC cannot be used as a test to improve university students' intrinsic motivation because they do not understand the clear purposes of the test and the reasons why they must take it in a university setting.

When we look at the two groups separately, we can deduce that while the business majors were not greatly affected by the three elements in the SDT continuum, the English majors were affected to some degree – although not to the degree originally hypothesized by the authors. Therefore, we can assume that the English majors are more psychologically satisfied with the process of learning English.

While the three psychological needs can be predictors to intrinsic motivation in both groups, the English majors exhibited higher levels of motivation than the business majors. Indeed, while the above results showed the English majors with statistically significant differences to the business majors, the English majors also seemed to be less intrinsically motivated to do well on the TOEIC than their business major counterparts. Due to these results, we believe that the business majors have a higher interest in the TOEIC, while the English majors need to be convinced of its usefulness.

The authors can further ascertain that consistent with Mori's (2007) findings, the English majors do not see the TOEIC as being important to them for their academic careers and beyond, while the business students clearly need the TOEIC for future success. In fact, since intrinsic motivation became a statistically negative predictor of TOEIC scores, the TOEIC might be even harmful for the English majors' intrinsic motivation. This could be due to the fact that the English majors felt pressure to reach a pre-set target score of 730, or suffered from anxiety over

the required TOEIC preparation classes at their university. Consequently, we believe that taking the TOEIC is not compatible with the needs of the English majors in this study.

Since this research revealed which needs could be predictors to intrinsic motivation, we can suggest some activities that may be useful for both groups of students, while taking into account their psychological needs. First, because of the perceived lack of interest in the TOEIC by the English majors, teachers can focus on assessing other facets of language ability that also make use of the three psychological needs in learners, such as oral presentation skills and writing. Although the English majors do not need to be reminded of the importance of their language training for their future careers, they may be discouraged by having to take a mandatory test such as the TOEIC. Thus, by utilizing other methods of authentic assessment, teachers can nurture the English majors' enjoyment of the language without focusing solely on test preparation.

On the other hand, the business majors are aware of the need to garner a high score on the TOEIC because it corresponds with their specialization. While the results indicate that the TOEIC should not be used as a test to improve intrinsic motivation –and the authors do not believe that students should spend more time studying for the test – teachers can incorporate activities into the classroom that utilize the skills that are currently on the test. Namely, teachers can work to directly develop the passive skills of listening and reading equally to the direct skills of speaking and writing. For example, journal writing, peer-review activities, extensive listening practice and more speaking activities could fundamentally alter the business majors' perceptions of the needs for these abilities for their future, and in the meantime, foster the necessary skills needed for success on the TOEIC.

Finally, since autonomy was not a predictor of intrinsic motivation with either group of students, it might not fit well in EFL contexts, and especially with business majors. That is, since learning English is not the main focus of their college study, the business majors do not have as many interactions with their teacher in the TL as the English majors, thus they may need more guidance from their teachers than the English majors.

As a result of the above discussion, the authors suggest that teachers employ a more communicative and democratic style with the English majors and should undertake activities to improve the language abilities of the business majors, while cultivating a clear reason for them to study English. In particular, teachers who can foster a sense of competence in their learners are more likely to see an increase in both their intrinsic motivation and TOEIC scores.

Conclusion

The present study focused explicitly on how the three elements of Self-Determination Theory (autonomy, relatedness and competence) factored into determining the intrinsic motivation of two groups of students, with competence showing the greatest effect on intrinsic motivation. Since this had not been previously investigated in the Japanese context, these results are unique and can offer some guidance for teachers in Japan, and indeed elsewhere in Asia. Primarily, the comparison made between the English majors and business majors here may point to the need for teachers to consider the psychological needs of their learners when conducting language learning activities. Knowledge of these findings will allow teachers to target instruction to different groups of learners depending on their motivational desires.

This study demonstrates that the learners with highly internalized reasons for studying English are more comfortable with carrying on their studies, which points to the need for teachers in Japan to foster a classroom environment that is conducive to the three psychological needs delineated in SDT. Considering the difficulty college graduates in Japan face obtaining new employment, the TOEIC plays an integral part of college English education. Since target scores are set by each department or major in many universities in Japan, students in all departments are well aware of the importance of gaining a high score on the test. Therefore, college English teachers should understand their students' specific needs and motivation towards learning English in order to make their college English classes more meaningful. It is hoped that teachers will then be capable of making precise judgments about how to motivate their learners, and thus be able to provide a more fulfilling experience for them.

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Becoming a Counsellor: Between Belief and Behaviour

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Bio data

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Abstract

The preparation of out-of-class learning not only focuses on advice to learners about how to take responsibility for their own language learning, but also involves helping teachers to become aware of their roles in guiding learners towards autonomy. Self-access centre use represents one means for students to engage in out-of-class learning. Such centres provide facilities for autonomous learning and also support learners by providing counsellors to help learners plan and conduct learning for their own needs and purposes. This research was conducted to find out if the beliefs of counsellors have any effect on learner performance. It was conducted with eight student teachers taking a course on how to set up and manage a self-access centre. They were trained how to be counsellors through the provision of theory, modelled by the use of video clips on how to give consultation, and involved experiential learning through a consultation practicum where they could apply the learned theory to work as counsellors with undergraduate students for six weeks. The data revealed how the participants applied the knowledge learned to conduct the consultation sessions and how their behaviour as counsellors was affected by their beliefs, which in turn affected how they assisted students develop their skills and awareness of self-directed learning. According to their behavioural patterns, the participants were separated into two types of counsellors: teaching-oriented and independent learning-oriented counsellors. The teaching-oriented counsellors focused on teaching the students, whereas the independent learning-oriented counsellors tended to help the learners to learn how to learn. Therefore, the latter were able to better prepare the learners for out-of-class learning. The behaviour of these two types of counsellors was affected by their beliefs deriving from their experiences as language learners and language teachers. Thus, helping the counsellors to analyse and realise the influence of their beliefs as language learners and teachers was seen as useful training to give effective consultation.

Keywords: language counselling, counsellors, beliefs, self-access centre, independent learning, self-directed learning

Introduction

One of the main purposes of a self-access centre is to provide learning consultation to help learners develop learner autonomy. Counselling is different from teaching in that a counsellor must respond to the learners' needs individually and, rather than teach them, must help learners learn how to learn; therefore, the counsellor has to understand language and learning strategies to help the learners learn how to learn (Dickinson, 1987), and also be sufficiently flexible to deal with individual differences and needs of learners. Thus, training is needed for effective counselling. However, training in general tends to focus on providing theory and putting the theory into practice without taking into consideration other factors which may affect the trainees' performance, such as their experience and beliefs. In the context of this study into pre-service teachers changing their roles to become language counsellors, some pre-existing beliefs were regarded as detrimental to their learning (Horwitz, 1985 cited in Peacock, 2001). This study aims to investigate if the trainees' beliefs have any effect on their performance as counsellors.

What is language counselling?

Language counselling or language advising is a type of language support which normally happens in a learning centre or self-access centre. It aims to provide guidance to students about their language learning in order to encourage the development of learner autonomy (Reinders, 2008). In essence, it focuses on the process of learning a language and focuses on the specific advice given in consultation sessions to each individual learner. For this purpose, Gremmo (1994, cited in Karlsson et al., 2007) points out that counsellors should provide conceptual information, methodological information, or psychological support to students during a counselling session. These three provisions help learners to become aware of themselves, know the tools to learn on their own, and be ready to accept their new roles; i.e., making decisions on the learning objectives, choosing the materials and learning strategies, and evaluating their learning performance when they learn independently. Counsellors should also help the learners to recognize and reflect on their beliefs and the meta-cognitive notions of their role as learners (Karlsson et al., 2007), because the process of analyzing their ability in relation to their current task, the requirements of the task, and effective strategies for the performance of that task aids better decision-making about their learning.

Teaching Counselling

Voller et al. (1999) think that counselling sessions can lack clear objectives and so lead to failure in providing sustained guidance; this is seen in studies where the students voluntarily come only once to the consultation session and never come again (Fu, 1999). Karlsson et al. (2007) suggest that counsellors have to understand how they counsel and why they make certain decisions. Therefore, it is necessary to train them to understand how to deal with individual students so that they can help the students develop self-directed learning skills and learner autonomy. For example, a video produced by Voller (1998) demonstrating the one-to-one consultation process focuses on communication strategies used for active listening - summarizing, paraphrasing, eliciting information, clarifying problems, and remaining silent. Also, because the consultant has to negotiate with the learners during the consultation process, the video stresses empathising, encouraging, building on learners' past experience of learning, and sharing the consultant's own experience of strategy use to help motivate the learners to be open to the consultant and stay engaged in the learning process. It also introduces basic elements to be covered in the first consultation, namely, goal-setting, narrowing down the goals, time planning, study management, and giving advice on available resources. Teaching counselling thus mainly focuses on the methodologies the counsellors have to be aware of when they provide consultation because a counselling role is different from teaching in class.

It can be said that teaching counselling is skill learning in the teacher education process. However, there are other aspects which have to be considered in teacher education. Teacher learning is also important as it is regarded as a cognitive process which covers teacher beliefs and thinking and how they influence teacher performance (Richards and Farrell, 2005). Personal construct happens at this stage when new learning fits into the teacher's personal framework (Roberts, 1998).

Counselling is concerned with helping and giving advice in which counsellors should not offer ready-made solutions (Randall, 2004). In teacher education, counselling happens during a feedback session. However, it does not mean that the trainer has to constantly focus on the problems of the trainees. Egan (1990 cited in Randall, 2004) thinks that the trainer should support the trainees in order to help them go through a development process. Heron (1994 cited in Randall, 2004) examines how the trainer helps the trainees through intervention during the feedback session. This intervention process separates the trainers into two types: the authoritative

trainer who directs the trainees, gives information or knowledge, and raises the trainees' consciousness about teaching; and the facilitative type of trainer who lets the trainees express their feelings, discover themselves, and praises what they do.
The degree of control by the trainer or the trainee is the main factor which contributes to the particular type of intervention.

Beliefs

Teacher learning involves a cognitive process where the beliefs of the teachers and trainees should be considered. In teaching counselling, the beliefs of trainees should not be overlooked, as the decisions the trainees make not only come from the knowledge they have learned from theory, but also their beliefs about language learning, their roles as consultants, and the important role of their learners (Richards and Lockhart, 1996). Beliefs are 'psychologically held understandings, premises, or propositions about the world that are felt to be true' (Richardson, 1996 cited in Peacock, 2001: 178). Research reveals that teacher beliefs have an influence on teachers' actions in class. Kennedy (1996) thinks that change in teachers' practices can happen only when we change their beliefs, because beliefs shape a teacher's actions. Sujiyama (2003 cited in Riley, 2009) found from the study of four Japanese teacher trainees that their beliefs about teaching and learning were transformed by their knowledge and practical experience as students. Not only beliefs as teachers, but beliefs concerning language learning which come from their experience as English language learners also play a role in the consultation process as counsellors need to share their learning experiences with the learners, meaning that they may suggest to learners those techniques which worked for them.

Most of the research on beliefs was conducted with teachers and learners, but there is little literature on beliefs of counsellors (see Reinders, 2008) who may be familiar with the role of a teacher, but who have to change their roles while counselling. To address this gap in the literature, this study aims to investigate whether the participants who are language learners and teachers carry over any beliefs when they conduct counselling, and whether those beliefs affect their behaviour while giving counselling. The research question to be answered is 'How do beliefs affect counsellors' behaviour?'

Research Methodology

The study was conducted with eight student teachers in the Master's Degree programme in a public university in Thailand who were taking a course on how to set up and manage a self-access centre (SAC). Training to be a counsellor was one of the course components offered in their third semester. In the last two semesters, the participants took the same compulsory courses - Principles of Teaching, Linguistics Description, and Language Learning Theory - which provided them with the basic language teacher knowledge. Some students had teaching experience but only as private tutors. The participants were from different study programmes, two of whom were from the Resource-Based Learning programme (RBL), where they had extensive knowledge about learner autonomy – the theoretical background of learner autonomy, how to conduct learner training, learning strategies, self-assessment, and how to prepare self-access materials - the foci of the programme. The other six students were from the English Language Teaching programme (ELT) and also had some knowledge about learner autonomy and learning strategies. In contrast to the two students from the Resource-Based Learning programme, their study programme focused on teaching. While taking this course, the participants in the ELT programme were also undertaking a teaching practicum in secondary schools and receiving feedback about their teaching from supervisors who observed their teaching. The participants will be referred to as A-H. Participants A and B were from the RBL programme, and the remainder were from the ELT programme. All of them were knowledgeable about learner autonomy and principles of teaching; however, A and B had more theoretical knowledge about learner autonomy, whereas C to H knew more about teaching techniques.

Training Process

The process of training included theory on giving input, modelling and experiential learning through practicum where the participants applied theory to practice. The input covered the concept of helping the learners in the SAC to become independent learners. This involved assisting the learners to determine their learning objectives, plan learning to suit their objectives, choose appropriate materials, monitor their own learning, and evaluate their learning performance. The training also included roles the counsellor should assume, skills used in counselling - both macro and micro skills such as active listening and negotiation - and consultation tools such as needs analysis questionnaires and record sheets. Various kinds of tools

were presented and discussed so that the participants were aware of the advantages and disadvantages of each tool. Thereafter, the participants conducted role-playing as a counsellor, a student seeking help, and an observer so they could identify the macro and micro skills used by each counsellor. Subsequently, the process of giving consultation was modelled using a video (as in Voller et al., 1998) to enable the learners see how counsellors help learners to set learning goals, choose resources, and record their learning.

After exposure to the theoretical background, the participants had the chance to apply the theory learned. This entailed acting as a counsellor to two undergraduate students for six weeks to help them develop their skills in self-direction through a self-study programme co-designed by the student and the counsellor. It was expected that, by the end of the six week practicum, the learners would learn how to set objectives, choose strategies, and learn independently. The researcher, who was also a teacher on the course, video-recorded one session of the participants' counselling periods from a micro-teaching room, and asked the participants to audio-record one session. Following that, the researcher gave feedback to the participants individually twice during this six-week period based on the data from the video and audio recordings. The feedback, which focused on good points and points for improvement in their behaviour, applied to the students' sense of self-direction. The study data emanated from participant reports submitted at the end of the semester in which they were asked to explain in detail the process of counselling, the students' backgrounds, the tools used at each stage and their justification for using those tools, the samples of materials the students used which were also included in the appendix, and suggestions for other counsellors. The participants had to reflect on what they did by analysing whether their actions and decisions were as effective as expected. The reports were written in English and they ranged from 8-12 A4 pages in length.

The data was analysed by looking at the consultation process the participants went through, the tools they used and their behaviour in order to find patterns among the participants. Content analysis to look for their beliefs came from their justifications and their opinions.

Results

The results are separated into two parts: firstly, application of the knowledge presented in the input session by looking at the process and the tools the participants used in the consultation sessions; secondly, participants' beliefs which affect their behaviour by looking at their

reflections on and justification of their decisions and actions. The data shows that the participants used the tools presented in the training, but there was variation in use as follows:

Standard Tools Presented in the Theoretical Part of the Training

- Semi-structured interviews for needs analysis and to get to know the students (8)
- Needs analysis questionnaire (5)
- Record sheets (6). Among those who used the record sheet, only one participant chose it from the samples provided during theoretical background; the other five used the newly-designed record sheet.
- Learning contract (7)

However, the participants also used other tools as follows:

- Learning style inventory (1)
- Motivation inventory (1)
- Placement test (3)
- Counsellor's record (2)

From the data, it can be seen that the participants tended to use the tools suggested in the theory presented in the input session. The other tools they chose were additional, and they used information which the participants needed in order to understand the students more. The counsellor's record was used to monitor their counselling process.

Regarding the procedure the participants used to conduct the self-directed programme, they performed the following tasks:

- Helping students to set up learning goals/study plan
- Introducing learning resources
- Helping students to choose activities and let them do activities
- Having students record their learning
- Giving feedback to students based on their problems and performance

Goal-Setting and Planning

After the needs analysis, the participants guided the students in setting learning goals and planning their learning. Ideally, the goals and the learning plans should have come from the students with help from the counsellors only if the students had not known how to do so.

However, findings showed that the participants went through this stage differently. For example, some teachers helped the students to set their own goals. One teacher explained that she *'told him the purposes of setting up the objectives so every time he would like to watch the movie, he will be aware of what he is doing.'* Others decided on learning goals for the students as stated in the report: *'I help the student set the short term goal of the language learning.'*

The researcher wrote in her notes after each feedback session making the following reference to goal-setting:

> *I think this stage is the most important stage because it helps the students to get started. I found that the participants were aware of that and they tried to convey this to the student.*

Introducing Learning Resources

The second stage after the students set up the learning goals or planned their learning was finding resources which were suitable for the objectives. To introduce learning resources to the students, some participants prepared the resources for the students, one stating:

> *I prepared/found the resources in order to give the participants as choices for their learning as many as I could….I thought these materials were easy to find and have variety for the learners who started learning independently.*

Some participants provided a list of resources for the students without giving them the chance to choose the resources by themselves.

However, some participants tried to help the students know more about the available resources so that they knew where to learn by themselves. One participant wrote in the report:

> *I took her to the SALC and asked her to survey materials in two corners. After she looked at the materials, she changed her mind to practice grammar because she said the materials in the writing corner were difficult.*

Practice According to the Plan

While the students were practising, the participants were mostly engaged in the process by directly teaching the students some techniques, such as guessing meaning from the context: '*I showed him one part of the song and taught him how to guess the meaning.'* One participant suggested to a student practicing writing to write an outline. When the students chose to work on improving speaking skills, one participant was involved in the exercise by being their interlocutor. She wrote:

He agreed to practice speaking 2 hours/week and he practiced speaking with me or a foreign student.'

However, some participants wanted to help the students to learn how to learn, suggesting strategies, techniques and resources for the students so that the students could '*choose and learn by themselves.'* In her notes, the researcher remarked:

> *It is interesting to see how the participants worked with the student individually by trying to keep counsellor's role. I think some of the participants were trying to respond to the student's needs as well as they could. Sometimes, this made them change their role to be a private tutor especially when the students wanted to practise speaking which is a productive skill, they offered themselves to practise with the students. It's pretty difficult to balance their roles.*

Recording Learning

Recording learning was one means used to help the learners monitor their learning and check if they had achieved their learning goals/objectives. To do this, most of the participants designed a record sheet and asked the students to use it. One participant was aware of giving choices so she '*gave him two choices and explained why he had to record and how he could write in the record sheet.'* Recording learning is associated with reflecting on learning if the counsellors want to do more than just help the learners to keep records. And, reflection is an effective method to help the learners be more critical about their learning. Therefore, one participant explained in the report how she introduced this concept to the student:

> *I taught her how to reflect and how to write down all the details required in the record sheet after she finished each task so that she would be able to do it by herself in the next activity.*

Feedback

It is important for the language learners to know about their performance, therefore, the participants gave feedback to the students in various ways. Some explained the language points to the students because they thought that the students did not understand them. One participant introduced self-assessment to the students. She stated in the report that:

> *I wanted them to assess themselves on sentence structure, participants -verb agreement, article, spelling, verb use. My intention is to raise their language awareness because I think most errors they made are in these areas.*

Choices were also given at this stage as one participant said that the students could choose if they wanted the feedback to come from the counsellors or from the students themselves. She wrote in the report:

> *The counsellor should consider whether the students really want the feedback or advice from the counsellor or not. It meant that the feedback must primarily come from the students themselves; the counsellor's feedback should be an alternative one.*

In the researcher's notes, she mentioned the influence of participants' beliefs:

> *I found that the decisions the participants made during their consultation were related to their experience as a learner and as a teacher because they are doing their teaching practice. So they transfer what they are doing in class to teaching the student. When I asked them to give me reasons, many times they related it to their beliefs. We discussed that a lot because there is no right or wrong about teacher's belief but they have to be aware that it affects their performance. I think their beliefs come from their experience as well because they tended to justify it according to their successful learning or teaching experience but hardly talked about theory.*

From the above data, it can be seen that although the participants went through the same stages of giving consultation—goal-setting and planning, introducing learning resources, having learners' practise according to their plan, having the students record their learning and give feedback to the learners—the participants dealt with their students differently. We can separate their behaviour into two types of counsellors: teaching-oriented type and independent learning-oriented type. The teaching-oriented counsellors tended to deal with the students as if the counsellors were teaching in class by imposing their ideas on materials they wanted the students to practice, by teaching the points the students did not understand, and by explaining the feedback to the students. The independent learning-oriented counsellors, on the other hand, tried to help the students to develop skills to work on their own such as self-assessment, helping them to know the available resources, and letting them make decisions of what to learn on their own. They tended to give choices to the students throughout the process and negotiated with the students. However, it should be noted that the types of counsellors were not two separate dichotomies; there is a continuum between the two dichotomies and the counsellors' behaviour fall somewhere along this continuum.

The field of study did not really affect the participants' behaviour because both the ELT and RBL students acted both as teaching-oriented counsellors as well as independent learning-

oriented counsellors. Their beliefs affected their choice of behaviour as seen from their reflections on their action and their justifications in the report submitted at the end of the course.

Beliefs of the Teaching-Oriented Counsellors

Findings from the reflections clearly show some counsellors' justifications why they decided to follow a certain strategy with the students. The teaching-oriented counsellors saw the importance of guiding and suggesting because they thought that less proficient students needed more support. This included the feedback they gave to students:

> *The students can learn more from the feedback, not only the feedback from the exercises but also from the counsellor. I think they need to know more about how they have performed, whether they go in the right direction or not.*

Regarding the role a counsellor should adopt, one participant thought they should teach these students when they did not understand something. Another participant reported that she acted as an advisor rather than as a facilitator because she was dealing with students. The roles of a counsellor were discussed in every feedback session because the counsellor had to respond to a student's request, and it was very difficult for the counsellor not to act as a private tutor.

The participants, reporting on their beliefs about the learning process, said they worked with the students differently. On the subject of teacher talk, one participant stated:

> *At the first and second times of the consultation, I spoke too much because I was still familiar with the attitude of ELT programme which seems to focus on teaching. So I guided and controlled the participants about everything. I also wanted to prevent the students from getting lost because they have never done this before.*

A few of them suggested resources to the students because they did not want the students to encounter difficulties when looking for resources by themselves. One said that they did it because the students did not know any resources.

Beliefs of the Independent Learning-Oriented Counsellors

When expressing their beliefs about counselling, independent learning-oriented counsellors said that they should be careful not to assume the role of tutor because the students might not be familiar with self-directed learning. However, one participant thought that she should act as an

advisor as she *'usually suggested techniques used for their learning and resources as choices which they could choose and learn by themselves.'* The beliefs about the roles of the counsellors included their realization of focusing only on how the students perform tasks and think rather than on how much work they do.

Some participants helped the students become involved in learning, such as introducing self-assessment to raise language awareness:

> *If learners are aware of the language and practise until it becomes a habit, they will understand and may not make mistakes easily. Therefore, I think this point can support life-long learning.*

One counsellor said that the consultation would help them to become independent learners:

> *At least they can negotiate about time, evaluate their own performance, learn with friends and they try to ask me to give more resources in order to learn by themselves.*

Discussion

The counselling practicum was flexible so that the student teachers or the participants could apply the theory to design the self-directed programme to suit their students. Consequently, the data showed that the participants followed the procedure suggested in the training session and used the standard tools to help develop self-direction in learning, although they did not exactly use the same tools. This reflects their awareness that consultation should cater to the needs of individual students and that familiarization of students through different tools could help the counsellors effectively respond to student needs. This was evident when one participant used the learning style inventory and the motivation questionnaire with the students although these two tools were not introduced as standard tools in the theoretical component of the course.

The interaction between the counsellors and students and the subsequent actions the counsellors undertook during the consultation sessions reflect the counsellors' beliefs about their roles and the process of how to help the students develop self-directedness. From the findings, we can separate the counsellors into two types: the teaching-oriented counsellors and the independent learning-oriented counsellors. The teaching-oriented counsellors tended to work with the students as if they were teaching in class, such as preparing materials for the students, teaching the students and getting involved in the practice stage with the students. In brief, they sometimes imposed their ideas on the students. In contrast, the independent learning-oriented counsellors focused on equipping the students with the tools which they could use to learn by

themselves, such as self-assessment and self-correction. They also focused on helping the students understand how to use the meta-cognitive strategies of planning and monitoring by teaching the students how to reflect on the learning process.

From the report which justified why the counsellors decided on certain actions in the consultation, we can see that the beliefs of the counsellors had an effect on their behaviour. The field of study did not really affect their beliefs, but the knowledge they had about language learning or their experience from teaching might have had some effect on their decisions. The participants considered as teaching-oriented counsellors believed that counsellors should be advisors and should teach students if their language proficiency was insufficient, for example, in giving feedback. One counsellor said that this feedback should come from her because the students might not be able to assess themselves. From the excerpts, we can see that they were more concerned about passing on knowledge to students, which in turn transformed them into private tutors rather than facilitators. The independent learning-oriented counsellors were more conscious about their roles and provision of choices, which are not normally evident in Thai language classes. They tried to involve students in the learning process and encouraged them to make more decisions in learning. Their justifications show that their beliefs came from their learning and teaching experiences, not only from the theory they had learned (Horwitz, 1985; Kern, 1995).

When working with the students on a one-to-one basis as in consultation sessions like this, it is difficult to avoid teaching the students because the students might expect the counsellors to act as private tutors. As a result, the counsellors had to be aware of the goals of language counselling in relation to the development of self-directedness**.**

Implications and suggestions

The results of this study confirm the two perspectives that play an important role in teacher education. A positivist epistemological perspective focuses on transmitting knowledge about teaching and learning to the teacher trainees by means of theoretical reading, lecture, and providing professional development workshops in order to prepare the teacher trainees to teach. The knowledge mainly involves what the teachers need to know, how they should teach, and how they learn to teach (Johnson, 2009). The input sessions in which the researcher gave training to the participants involved those issues. The other perspective is socio-cultural and regards

teacher education as a dynamic process in which teacher learning comes from their participation in social practices in the classroom. Therefore, what teachers know and how they use knowledge in the classroom depends on knowledge of self, setting, curriculum, and community (Johnson, 2009).

From this study, it can be seen that training counsellors embraces more than just providing theory and knowledge to conduct consultations. The beliefs of the trainees should be taken into consideration as these may have an effect on their actions. Discussion of their beliefs about their roles, self-directed learning, and the process of developing their self-directedness may help them to be aware of themselves both as learners and counsellors. Knowing what kind of learners they are themselves is helpful because in the consultation, the counsellors have to share their learning experiences with the learners to suggest learning techniques which may be shaped by their own success in learning. If the trainees are teachers who have taught for some time, their teaching experience may also determine their beliefs and in turn affect their performance. Consequently, Brown and McGannon (1998 cited in Peacock, 2001) suggest that it is important to help the trainees reflect on and discuss such beliefs due to their impact on counselling. Findings from this study show that, if the participants believed they could teach the learners, then they acted as private tutors by imposing learning techniques and giving feedback to the learners, instead of encouraging them to correct their own mistakes.

Almarza (1996) also agrees that reflection is important for the trainees' practices. This awareness raising process can help trainees to be more critical in the training course because it helps them to analyse the reasons which affect their performance, and also analyse if their performance can enhance or hinder the development of self-directedness of the learners. The comparison between the teachers' roles and responsibilities and those of the counsellors' have to be undertaken continuously and linked with the goals of language counselling.

In conclusion, to provide training for consultation, the trainer should incorporate static knowledge on good language counselling, as well as encourage trainees to share their beliefs as language learners and continuously reflect on what they do during the counselling. Learning from other counsellors who conduct consultation based on their students' needs and their interpretation of the contexts can help trainees develop their knowledge and understanding of the counselling process. In brief, this indicates that training should not focus on one model alone.

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Washback of National Matriculation English Test on Students' Learning in the Chinese Secondary School Context

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Bio data

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Abstract

Tests play a powerful role in the Chinese educational system, and exert significant washback on students' learning. This study investigates the washback effect of the high-stakes National Matriculation English Test (NMET) within a Chinese high school from the students' perspective. It considers, in particular, the washback effect on the process and product of learning from the standpoint of reading strategies and skills. By considering data collected from two questionnaires, a reading test and a series of semi-structured interviews, the study shows that although the development of learning strategies and reading skills is overshadowed by the high-stakes nature of the test, students show an ability to use metacognitive, compensation and affective language

learning strategies, and attainment in reading skills, by coping well with the modified authentic texts used as the basis for the test paper administered by the researchers. The current study also offers some thoughts on issues behind the strong washback that emerges in the study, and makes suggestions in regards to bringing more formative types of assessment into the classroom.

Keywords: washback, reading, reading learning strategies, reading skills, high school

Introduction

In China, examinations play a crucial role in students' education, with learners being faced with numerous examinations almost as soon as they begin school life (Qi, 2004). The National Matriculation Test (NMT), in most cases the sole determinant of university entrance, remains highly competitive and high-stakes in nature; this pathway has been labelled evocatively as a 'single-log-bridge'. Since English is a compulsory core subject in high school teaching, the NMET (National Matriculation English Test) remains a major component of the NMT. NMET is a standardized, norm-referenced test, designed to select candidates for institutions of higher education; to promote English language teaching in schools; and to evaluate high school education in China (Cheng & Qi, 2006). The test is assumed to have accepted levels of difficulty and discrimination, and to work as a reliable measurement device for selecting candidates for universities (Cheng & Qi, 2006; Examination Centre, Ministry of Education 2008). Due to the large number of test-takers per year and the high requirement for reliability, multiple-choice questions remain the major test format used in the test.

The impact of tests has been examined in Hong Kong secondary schools (Cheng, 1997, 1999) or within the Chinese university context (Tang, 2005), but comparatively little attention has been accorded to matriculation tests in Chinese mainland secondary schools. Where washback studies have been undertaken, little research has been devoted to meaningful considerations of students' experience (Jiang, 2007; Ma & Bai, 2007). Some researchers, while purporting to look at tests from students' perspectives, have merely consulted teachers about their understanding, rather than speaking to the students directly (Tsagari, 2007). The purpose of this study is to redress this balance, by researching into the impact of the National Matriculation English Test (NMET) on students. We focus particularly on the reading component of the test, due to its comparative importance within the test battery as a whole, and its relatively neglected status in previous research.

The present study was conducted within a key high school in Hubei Province, two weeks prior to and one week after the 2008 National Matriculation Test (NMT); 89 third year students were invited to this study. The study draws upon the framework of washback advanced by Hughes (1993), and cited in Bailey (1996), i.e. washback on participants, process and product of learning. This paper will focus in particular on the impact of tests on the process and product of learning, from the particular standpoint of learning strategies and skills. Whilst Cai (2008) argues that 'the NMT, with its ancient pedigree in the old civil service examination, fails to satisfy the rapid changes undergone in China which needs new intellectuals to secure its development', we hope to seek a deeper understanding of NMET washback on students' learning strategies and reading abilities, by triangulating data from a mock reading test, two questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. For this purpose, two research questions have been addressed, as indicated below:

1. What are the washback effects on students' learning processes in terms of the use of reading learning strategies?
2. What are the washback effects on students' learning products, i.e. their reading skills and reading abilities?

Literature Review

Prior to discussing the research in greater detail, a literature review is provided, divided into two main parts. The first part draws attention to washback studies, while the second part focuses on language learning strategies, with particular reference to reading strategies.

Washback Studies

Within language testing, the concept of washback refers to the impact of a particular test on teaching and learning within the classroom, the education system and wider society (Alderson & Wall, 1993; Messick, 1996; Shohamy, Donitsa-Schmidt, & Ferman, 1996). It is regarded as a natural corollary of high-stakes tests. In general, tests may be seen to drive the curriculum, teaching methods and students' approaches to learning (Biggs, 1995); they can either reinforce certain attitudes or behaviours, making students work hard, or bring about pressures which could lead to abnormal behaviour (Tsagari, 2007).

A detailed overview of the washback effect is provided by Alderson and Wall (1993), whose fifteen hypotheses incorporate a variety of possible aspects of washback, including the impact on what to teach/learn, how to teach/learn, the rate and sequence of teaching/learning, the

degree and depth of teaching/learning and the attitudes towards teaching/learning. The authors purposely complicate the simple assumptions that 'tests have influence on learning and teaching', as it is necessary to know more precisely what washback might be before its nature can be investigated (Alderson and Wall, 1993), which indicates that washback is a highly complex phenomenon. Hughes' (1993) tripartite backwash model, cited by Bailey (1996) further clarifies the washback effect, by distinguishing between washback on participants, processes and products of learning and teaching. 'Participants' refers to students, classroom teachers and administrators, 'whose perception and attitudes towards their work might be influenced by a test'; 'process' refers to 'any actions taken by the participants which may contribute to the process of learning; meanwhile, 'products' refer to 'what is learned (facts, skills, etc.)' and the quality of learning (Hughes, 1993, p. 2).

Drawing on Hughes's (1993) model, Bailey (1996) develops a revised model of washback that incorporates participants, processes and products and categorizes the washback effect as including both washback to learners and washback to the programme (i.e. the influence on teachers, administrators, counselors, curriculum developers etc.). We can thus see that the washback of assessment extends to all stake-holders, and society at large (Hamp-Lyons, 1997). Wall and Anderson (1991) also report from their Sri Lankan study that there is evidence of washback on the content of teaching, and that teachers are anxious to cover those parts of the textbook most likely to be tested; nevertheless they find no clear washback on the teaching methods themselves. Teachers, the authors claim, use methods suggested by the Teachers' Guide, which seems to contradict the methodology anticipated by the textbook designers. More recently, Green (2007) observes that IELTS test participants remain central to setting the stakes of the test, since their perceptions of the uses to which test results will be put are of considerable importance. McNamara and Shohamy (2008) further indicate the societal impact of testing, generated by the power of assessment to control and shape society. Given our major interest in test-takers, our study design will be based on Hughes (1993) and Bailey's (1996) model, and particular attention is paid to washback on learners.

In surveying the literature on washback of testing on teaching and learning in China, it may be noted that many more non-empirical than empirical washback studies have been published in recent core Chinese foreign language studies journals (Jiang, 2007; Liu & Wang, 2006). In addition, more attention has been accorded to tests at tertiary level, with little active

research being carried out on NMET (Jiang, 2007; Liu & Wang, 2006). Moreover, students' voices are frequently neglected in past research (Jiang, 2007; Tsagari, 2007), as is the case in the general literature on washback. As Hamp-Lyons (1997, p. 299) comments, 'many more studies are needed of students' views and their accounts of the effects on their lives of test preparation, test-taking and the scores they have received on tests'. For these reasons, the present study focuses particularly on the washback of NMET from a student-based perspective.

NMET, in itself, has been seen as promoting the improvement of English teaching in high schools, given that students must reach a certain level to be able to sit for the test; yet the wide use of MCQs continues to encourage the use of test papers as practice material whilst making students merely 'study' languages, instead of 'using' them (Zhou, 2003). A gap is thus observed between intended washback and actual practice: in spite of the communicative nature of the writing task, traditional ways to teach and learn writing are favoured by teachers and students, so as to secure a higher mark (Qi, 2007); this is similar to an earlier finding of Qi (2004), namely that although skills are included in instruction, the teaching methodology goes against test designers' intention, with MCQs being widely used and considered to be the most effective way to increase marks. It seems that NMET is beset by an almost inbuilt tension between two opposing roles: selecting students and promoting change (Qi, 2003). This tension turns NMET into 'a powerful trigger' for teaching to the test, so that it remains ineffective in changing teaching and learning in the way intended by its constructors and policymakers (Qi, 2003).

NMET is considered to promote students' motivation to study English, as reflected in more after-class learning and the higher sales of simplified readers (Li, 1990), though it is not clear whether this conclusion was drawn from teachers' opinions of students' attitudes, or directly from the students (Tsagari, 2007). NMET invokes a sense of anxiety, uneasiness and fear on the part of students, whilst at the same time motivating students and drawing their attention to learning (Tang & Xu, 2004). We can see that tests, as Alderson & Wall (1993) argue, influence what students learn and how they learn. It might thus be instructive to analyse this phenomenon in greater depth, by focussing on one specific area, so as to understand how the test might influence learning.

This study chooses to focus on the reading section of NMET, which accounts for 46.7% of the total mark in the test (30 points for Cloze, and 40 for Reading Comprehension passages).

The study is developed from a larger-scale research project, designed on the basis of a tripartite washback model, i.e. washback on participants, process and products, focuses in particular on the washback on process and product. The 'process' in the present paper refers to the language learning strategies the participants used when learning to read in schools, while the 'product' refers to the reading abilities and skills they develop. This study will thus investigate the sort of impact that the test has on learning strategies for reading, and the skills needed for effective reading ability.

Learning Strategies and Reading Skills

Language Learning Strategies (LLS) have been defined as 'specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations.' (Oxford, 1990, p. 8). LLS can also be helpful in solving specific problems and in seeking to compensate for a deficit in learning (Cohen and Macaro, 2007). LLS are divided into direct strategies (memory strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies) and indirect strategies (metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies) (Oxford, 1990). In the present study, we choose to focus on three particular areas of learning strategies: metacognitive strategies, compensation strategies and affective strategies. These strategies are regarded as particularly interesting for the purpose of this study, since an understanding of them helps us to 'read between lines' of what the students are doing, and the level of self-awareness they have about their own reading skills. This understanding, in turn, helps to probe more deeply into students' approach to language work.

These three strategies, as delineated by Oxford (1990), may be summarised as follows: *Metacognitive strategies*: actions involved in monitoring strategy use, which enable learners to centre their attention on newness, organize and plan their studies and coordinate the learning process, so as to 'center', 'arrange and plan' and 'evaluate' learning; *Affective strategies*: strategies used by learners to gain control over emotional factors in learning, including lowering anxiety, encouraging oneself and 'taking one's emotional temperature'. *Compensation strategies*: strategies used to make up for inadequate knowledge of grammar **or** vocabulary.

When considering the product of learning, which is central to our second research question, it is instructive to focus on what good readers do. Good readers 'engage in predicting

and guessing, accessed background knowledge related to the text's topic, guess the meaning of unknown words, reread the entire passage, identify the main ideas and monitor comprehension' (Saricoban, 2002, p. 73). Reading for a higher level goal involves both surveying the text effectively and activating pre-knowledge through the appropriate use of skimming and sources, so as to build up a global awareness of the topic; readers will then skip or skim through any part of the text that does not help to reach these goals (Schramm, 2008). Successful readers are also able to 'verbalize' their reading strategies. Such strategies typically involve determining importance, summarising information, drawing inferences, generating questions and monitoring comprehension (Ahmad & Asraf, 2004). Co-operation with the author, meanwhile, involves gaining an appreciation of the author's goal, insofar as it relates to that of the reader (Schramm, 2008). These strategies are, to some extent, connected with learner autonomy, as prescribed in the NMET syllabus. Here, candidates are expected to read short passages on various topics, and be able to (1) understand the main ideas; (2) read for detailed information; (3) infer the meaning of words from context; (4) make simple inferences and judgments; (5) understand the basic structure of a passage; (6) understand the author's purposes, opinions and attitudes (Examination Centre, Ministry of Education 2008, p. 326).

A further important issue considered by the literature on reading strategies is how students' performance in standardised reading comprehension tests compares with the strategies they use when reading for academic purposes. In this regard, Anderson (1991) shows that the processing strategies used by the students are generally the same in each case, though individual learner factors such as interest, motivation, learning style and background play a more significant role in extensive reading. Despite this, it is believed that reading strategies (such as skimming, scanning, inferring or reading for detail) in test settings may differ from those used within a more general academic setting. Test-takers are likely to use a combination of language learning strategies, test management strategies and 'test wiseness' (Cohen, 2006). As early as 1960s, Wiseman (1961) remarked that students know how to get things right through 'intelligent deduction' in coaching classes where practicing test items and techniques rather than language activities are used. The use of test wiseness, as the concept has come to be known, betokens a native ability to engage in test questions without undue preoccupation with its linguistic challenges. This might include, for example, making educated guesses in MCQ items where the text may be difficult to comprehend (Cohen, 2006). The conundrum of whether reading

strategies are the same within and outside test settings is aptly summarised in an interview with Steve McDonough, former professor at Essex University, UK:

> There are certainly lots of test-taking strategies which are the same as the strategies you would use if you were doing those language tasks not in a test. If you've got strategies for reading comprehension and then you do a reading comprehension test one would hope that the test will pick up the fact that you know how to deal with a reading comprehension. But it will also pick up the fact that you know how to interpret test questions. (McDonough and Archibald, 2006, pp. 68-69)

Amongst those studies that seek to differentiate between test taking strategies and reading strategies in the 'real world', an earlier study with Hebrew students having French as a second language finds that 'respondents may perform in a manner which does not represent their linguistic competence, either because of flaws in the test itself, or due to the use of inappropriate strategies which do not suit the requirements of the test' (Nevo, 1989, p. 201) Through a combination of the test itself, a checklist of strategies completed by the students immediately after the test, and a more reflective questionnaire, Nevo indicates an interplay between those strategies likely to lead to the selection of the correct answer (labelled 'contributory' strategies), such as 'returning to the passage' and 'background knowledge', and those that do not promote correct answer selection (referred to as 'non-contributory' strategies), such as 'guessing'. Anderson (1991) further contends that strategies in test taking are affected by item type, as well as other factors. In the current study, a test paper is used as an eliciting device (Nunan and Bailey, 2009), to enable students to better reflect on how they approach the process of reading comprehension. Although this test was conducted under test conditions, it offered students opportunities to better reflect on their strategy use. The research process, including the use of the test paper, is further discussed in the methodology section.

Methodology

In this section, issues related to methodology, including the participants, the research instrument and the research procedures, will be presented.

Participants

The school where this study was conducted is one of the top high schools in Hubei Province. Altogether, 89 third year students participated in this study, 62 from a general science class[i], and 27 were selected randomly from a top science class. The composition of the sample, using a 'Quota Sampling' method, was decided upon based on the overall ratio between general science students and top science students in grade three. After the initial data analysis, nine students were invited for interview, on a voluntary basis; the students interviewed had diverse views (positive, negative, or indeed, paradoxical) with regard to the exam, which were detected from their answers to the questionnaires. As the school is an acknowledged key high school, we can see from Table 1 that our respondents generally gained good results in English.

Table 1 Portrait of Interview Respondents

Student	Gender	Self-reported Average English Score	Score of MCQ in the Current Test	Class
Amy[ii]	F	120-130 (Out of 150[iii])	99 (Out of 110)	G[iv]
Bill	M	110-120	76.5	T
Clark	M	121-130	95.5	T
Dora	F	>130	96.5	T
Eric	M	<100	68	G
Frank	M	120-130	103.5	T
Garth	M	110-120	84.5	G
Henry	M	110-120	91.5	T

Research instrument

The research instruments for this study were threefold: a two part, 5-point Likert scale questionnaire with open-ended questions at the end; an English mock reading test, similar in nature to NMET (including a cloze selection and four reading comprehension passages); and follow-up interviews. The first part of the questionnaire concerned general washback on students' reading motivation, their purpose in reading, and their approach to studying; part two was designed to enable the students to evaluate the reading skills they used in the test. The questionnaire as a whole was related to the three aspects of the tripartite washback model, i.e. the participants, process and products. Open-ended questions at the end of the second questionnaire

offered students the chance to express their thoughts more freely regarding washback. In the present article, the results concerning the process and product of learning are reported.

With the help of a proficient test designer, a mock test was designed, to offer students a stimulus to reflect more closely on the reading strategies/skills that they utilised, and to check how well students actually performed in the reading task. The reading texts covered a variety of topics such as disaster, love/care in human life, new technology and scientific research, as required by the curriculum syllabus (National Education Commission 2004). Five authentic articles from British magazines and newspaper (for example, the Reader's Digest and the BBC news) were selected, given that a well-constructed reading comprehension test should comprise texts and tasks that closely reflect equivalent situations that the test taker is likely to meet outside the test setting (Weir, 2005). To ensure that the difficulty of the text lay within the expected level of difficulty (i.e. less than 3% of words lying outside the vocabulary requested by the syllabus), minor modifications and simplifications were made to the texts. We further attempted to incorporate the reading skills prescribed in the NMET syllabus into the test questions, for example, grasping the main idea, detecting detailed information, obtaining clues, guessing the meanings of unfamiliar words, understanding the intention or emotions of the writer, and inferring the implied meaning from the facts given (Examination Centre, Ministry of Education 2008). One of the reading passages is provided in Appendix Two.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students (See Table 1 for the profile of the students), to follow up issues of note that emerged from the questionnaires. These interviews allowed the researchers to be responsive in formulating questions, and to allow for possible diversions emerging from the respondents' answer (Merriam, 1998, Gray, 2004). Although the formulation of the questionnaire did anticipate, to some extent, what the main areas of focus would be in terms of language learning strategies, we nonetheless also allowed students' strategies use to emerge naturally from the research process, especially through the interviews. Due to the restriction brought about by the long distance between the researchers and the students, interviews were carried out via a chatting software programme. Interview summaries were then sent to students for member checking, to enable the participants to comment on the accuracy of what would later be reported.

Research Procedure

It is helpful to mention here how the three research instruments were used in the study. Section one of the questionnaire was sent off on May 22nd, 2008, two days before the respondents' mock exams, in order to minimize the possibility that students would respond unduly negatively or positively in terms of general washback if they had performed worse or better in a specific test. Students then sat the NMT mock exams on May 24th and 25th; the English test took place in the afternoon of May 25th. Hence, Section Two was sent off to students one hour after English test (students had one hour break after the exam) in the evening class, so that they still had a fresh memory of the reading skills and strategies they used in the exam. Test papers were marked within 3 days of the exam. After the 2008 Matriculation Test, which took place on June 7th and 8th, follow-up interviews were conducted between June 19th and June 24th, before students obtained their final result for the exam. We chose to interview students during this time, in the hope that the timing of these interviews would not disturb students unduly before such a key examination, and would avoid the inclusion of inauthentic comments, possibly influenced by the results of NMET themselves.

Following the data collection, SPSS was used to analyse the questionnaire data; this procedure included a measurement of means and standard deviations. Interview transcripts were coded, according to the emergent issues, and were translated into English.

Results and Discussion

In the following section, we present and discuss noteworthy findings emerging from the questionnaires and follow-up interviews.

Impact of NMET on Students' Reading Learning Strategies

Metacognitive Strategies

We selectively report on the parts of the results which appear to be noteworthy. More detailed information about the responses can be found in the questionnaire in the Appendix. The present study shows that practising test papers is highly favoured as a means of test preparation, though extra-curricular reading is also considered to be useful. As the school has a tradition of giving students one test paper per one/two weeks, we asked our interviewees in the follow-up interviews whether they would have chosen other means of improving reading if they had not

been given numerous test papers. Students stated that they would have preferred to practise the test papers on their own, since this was deemed to be the 'fastest way to make improvement' (Garth), 'it is the most frequently used and useful way to practise reading' (Dora), and 'a certain amount of exercises are necessary to ensure familiarity' (Clark). This is in line with previous findings: where MCQ items are adopted in a test, students tend to become absorbed by practising such items, and pay less attention to language activities which reflect language use in real life (Pan, 2001; Tang, 2005) and preference has been given to those types of practise that engender high marks (Qi, 2007).

Regarding their self-evaluation and self-monitoring abilities, students in the present study seemed to have an appreciation of their weaknesses (40). Although some reported that they felt confused about how to deal with such weaknesses, others coped more positively through asking teachers for suggestion (Eric), re-checking items carefully to find out the reasons for getting them wrong (Amy), reminding themselves by putting a note on the desk (Bill), attending out-of-class tutorial (Garth), or making up plans to solve the problem (Clark). Nonetheless, Clark pointed out that it was difficult to stick to his plan, as the workload from the school was heavy, so that he did not regard himself as being highly efficient. This might be representative of those students who were less able to make appropriate plans (39[v]).

Affective Strategies and Compensation Strategies

Results show that students adopted a variety of affective strategies to lower their anxiety in the exam, such as slowing down, getting back on track, encouraging themselves and taking a deep breath. This indicates that exams may exert significant pressure on students and place them in a potentially stressful position and at the same time shows that students were capable of using variety of affective strategies mentioned by Oxford (1990) to cope with stress and anxiety

Compensation strategies are also used by students to overcome difficulties in reading; here, the most prominent ones are re-reading and drawing on subject knowledge. Re-reading was the most frequently used strategy, and students seemed to be unwilling to 'jump over and continue to read the rest of the text' (45), which seemed to go against the grain in terms of how to approach reading texts and hence raised our interest. In this case, a follow-up interview question was asked, to determine why students chose not to skip over difficult parts. Garth commented that he had become accustomed to reading paragraph by paragraph, and found it

difficult to understand the rest of the passage if he jumped over any part. Many other students said that they felt afraid that questions might be set at a later date on the parts they did not understand, and the most difficult part was always the part that was likely to be tested; Eric added that if it were extra-curriculum reading, he would skip over this as getting the whole picture of the text was enough. This seems to explain why students preferred to read over the difficult part carefully once they encountered it. Students' ways of approaching the text seemed to be impacted by NMET in this sense. Among our interviewees, one student reported that she considered the skipping strategy to work well for her, so the test impact and the consequent strategies for dealing with reading vary among groups of students.

Impact of NMET on the Development of Reading Skills and Abilities

As has already been stated, we developed a test of our own, which was used together with the second section of questionnaires, to examine how students can use and perceived their use of reading skills in doing the reading comprehension passages. In Table 2, the data in the second column shows students' perception and last column demonstrates the facility index of each item, with the test item number in brackets. The facility index is an expression of the difficulty of a given item, in terms of the proportion of candidates getting that particular test item right. For example, if the facility index of an item is 0.7, this means that 70% of the candidates answered the question correctly.

Although it is generally reported that high-stakes tests tend to affect students negatively (Noble & Smith, 1994), our data shows that students have a satisfactory level of attainment in reading skills, despite the high-stakes test driven educational context. Indeed, students' overall perceptions of their capabilities in using reading skills remained quite high; the facility index was also high. All but question 79 had a facility index of over, or nearly 0.6, which shows that students answered the questions testing detailed information well. Most questions (62, 65, 67, 70) testing the understanding of details in the passages had a high facility index, with the minimum being 0.73, indicating students were generally effective in understanding detailed information, whilst the low facility index on item 79 probably resulted from the high difficulty coefficient.

From Table 2, it can be seen that students had particular strengths in grasping the main ideas, understanding the author's purposes, appreciating the emotions of the people in the story

and recognizing the genre, which are required by the national syllabus, as well as forming part of what good readers do (Saricoban, 2002; Schramm, 2008). Yet while students were more capable of guessing the meaning of words from the context, they seemed less able to use word-formation knowledge; informal talk with the students' English teacher showed that guessing words through word-formation knowledge was seldom tested in the NMET, and little training was given to this part, which may support the idea that the test may drive what has been taught. For some skills, such as 'inferring the hidden meaning between lines', students seemed to be less confident about their abilities (15b); but they actually performed surprisingly well in the test. This, therefore, raises the question of how we may help students to realize that they are making improvements.

Table 2 Comparison between Student Reflection and Test Performance

Questions	Mean	Facility Index
22b.Inferring the sentence meaning from its specific context.	3.74	0.764 (77)
16b.Understanding the emotion of the people in the stories.	3.6	0.933 (63)
9b.Guessing the meaning of a word from its context	3.55	0.697(71)
12b.Recognizing the different genre (style, type) of a passage.	3.53	0.944 (61)
21b.Knowing the author's purpose of writing a passage	3.45	0.82 (76)
11b.Using cultural knowledge.	3.49	0.843 (69)
14b.Being able to pay special attention to the details information.	3.44	0.966(62)+ 0.588(64)+0.955 (65)+0.854(67)+0.876(70)+0.73 (73)+0.461 (79)
15b.Inferring the hidden meaning between lines.	2.96	0.899(66)+0.573(74)
8b.Guessing word meaning through word-formation Knowledge.	2.92	0.551 (78)
Main idea		0.956 (68), 0.798 (75)

In spite of the informative nature of these results, it is well to bear in mind that a single test cannot be a sufficiently precise measurement in revealing whether students can operationalise certain skills; moreover, the level of difficulty of certain items may have an impact on the overall percentage of correct answers. Taking item 9b as an example, though students perceived that their capacity to guess meaning from the context was good, only 69.7% students actually got the answer right. We cannot be sure from a single test whether students did not get the answer right because the question was difficult, or because they were not good at this particular skill.

In broader terms, our students seemed to be positive with regard to what they had learned. For example, they became better able to read (22), read much faster (31), they became more confident (18) and their marks increased (17). In discussing these issues with students through in-depth interviews, students tended to agree that while much attention during three-year high school study had been devoted to NMET preparation, this helped them to hone their language skills and strategies. After doing a large number of reading comprehension test papers, Eric now felt more settled when reading an English passage; Amy, Garth and Frank, meanwhile, emphasised that they had learned a considerable amount in three years, otherwise they would not have performed well in the exams; Frank added that teachers' input was rich and useful, but unfortunately he could not internalise all the information, otherwise he might have been able to learn even better. Clark and Amy believed that what they had learned in these three years was not limited solely to study itself; the enhancement of confidence or the ability to cope with difficulties were likely to be transferable to further aspects of their lives.

At the same time, our students to some extent agreed that the skills they developed were more akin to test-taking skills than anything else (19); Frank commented that many of the skills he developed were, to a large extent, useful only for exam preparation itself; they were thus not fully applicable to 'real-life' reading situations. Our study (17b, 20b) shows that students frequently used 'test wiseness skills' such as guessing through deduction and this is in line with the view that skills used in exam settings may differ from that in real-life settings and the development of test wiseness strategies probably comes from the wide use of MCQ-s. As Wiseman (1961) points out, it is inevitable that students will know how to get things right through a process of intelligent deduction if practising exam techniques and items are employed in coaching classes; however, we believe that some reading skills, which may developed through test practice, might contribute to the students' positive performance in the exam. As Qi (2004)

observes, while teaching methodology goes against the test constructors' intentions, with MCQ being considered to be the most effect way of increasing marks, drilling and practise do remain beneficial in some way. Our own test, consisting of modified authentic reading passages, supports this statement, as students employed a variety of reading skills, with the exception of some more challenging ones, such as making predictions and transferring what they had learned to other areas.

Further Thoughts: behind the Strong Washback

This section presents some post-discussion thoughts, as it might be meaningful to refer to our research context again and think over the possible reasons and influencing factors for the strong washback. The high-stakes nature of the Matriculation test is likely to be important. As we mentioned, for most students, this particular test would be the only determinant of whether they can go to a university, and what kind of university they are able to enter; very few students are able to gain exemption from this test, and this would only be likely to occur if their performance in schools was seen as exceptional. Though most students in the high school where our study was conducted were able to get into universities, attending a university with a higher ranking still remained highly attractive.

Students were concerned about the test, and would do anything they could to increase their marks. Hence anything that would contribute to an increase in marks was favoured; practising test papers played a dominant role, especially in the third year. Boring repetitive practising arranged by the school, resulting from the high-stakes NMET, conversely exerted a more negative impact. Frank noted that cramming education in the third year 'fed' students with numerous words, sentences and reading passages, which would be of great help if students were to incorporate them into their knowledge frames, but unfortunately, this made study less interesting, and more inclined to be described as boring. In spite of this, students were still willing to accept the need for cramming, simply because it was an effective way of increasing marks.

Meanwhile, the design of the NMET is constrained by the particular context within which it operates. The large population sitting the test requires reliability through the use of machine-scorable formats, in an attempt to reduce the subjectivity of the marker (Qi, 2005). Though test designers recommend that MCQ should not be used in learning activities (Qi, 2005: 149), the

practice of MCQ remains favourable. Moreover, while test constructors consider that they are successful in incorporating communicative elements into the exam paper (Qi, 2007), it is known that teachers do not prepare students for exam communicatively, especially in the final year. All these issues emerge from the important status of a single, potentially detrimental test. Indeed, the government and Ministry of Education is attempting to give some universities more autonomy and encourage universities to take more aspects besides NMT into consideration when recruiting students; but how this might be carried out fairly with such large numbers of candidates is still uncertain.

While MCQ-s are regarded by many researchers as detrimental to language teaching in that they narrow the teaching practice and learning processes (Alderson, Clapham, & Wall, 1995; Cheng & Gao, 2002), our students hold a different view. Frank pointed out that even with any possible format change, teachers would continue to summarize many "strategies to answer the questions", and so any change of format would be less likely to exert benefit. This has also been confirmed in relation to recent observations from Hong Kong senior secondary classes; the public exam is task-based and communicative, but teachers do not prepare students in a communicative way, as they believe that practising will secure a higher mark in the test. This indicates that teachers' beliefs about what effective teaching strategies are may well influence their classroom practice. A further reason for our respondents favouring MCQ-s is that they consider open-ended questions to be more difficult than MCQ, so they will not get a high mark if questions are open-ended in nature.

We cannot yet be sure whether any improvement might be made in language teaching in high schools if the test format does change, but we may witness the fact that students' attitudes towards any potential change of test format is not as positive as one might imagine. It is paradoxical that on the one hand, students consider what they have learnt from MCQ as being limited to test-taking skills, but on the other, that they still do not welcome other test formats, since they feel afraid of losing marks because of their difficulty.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, several noteworthy aspects in terms of the washback of NMET have emerged. Much of this washback is likely to be due to the continuing status of NMET in

recruiting students for higher education. Students are, understandably, concerned about their marks, and will do anything to increase them.

In this study, attention has been devoted to how this impact could be reflected in students' development of learning strategies in general, and reading skills in particular. Certain strategies are, to some extent, over-shadowed by the exam; for example, students prepared for the NMET mainly by practising test papers, and elected not to skip over any difficult parts in the text, for fear of losing marks. However, we may also see that students were capable of monitoring the learning process through metacognitive strategies, lowering anxiety through affective strategies and using compensation strategies to make up for deficiencies in reading abilities. The development of these strategies, which may in themselves arise from the pressure of exams, or at least the fear of losing marks, seems in some measure to contribute to students' further development, both within and outside the classroom.

The improvement in general attainment is also reflected in the reading skills used by the students and their ability to cope with modified authentic texts; students' performance in the mock test demonstrates their capability of using a variety of reading skills. This seems to indicate that drilling and practising, which are not generally considered to be a desirable means of learning, remain effective to a large degree (Qi, 2004). Meanwhile, students seem to use better skills if these are prescribed in the test syllabus, and are frequently practised in mocks; for example, guessing the meanings of words from a context is perceived to be a better developed strategy than guessing the meanings of words through word-formation knowledge. The impact of tests on the use of reading skills also is also reflected in students' 'high competence' in test wiseness strategies.

Our study also goes some way to supporting the views that a test can influence 'what learners learn', 'how learners learn' and 'the degree and depth of learning' (Alderson & Wall, 1993). A detailed inquiry into the impact of the test with reference to reading learning strategies and skills helps us understand how this influence is actually reflected within the Chinese context. The deeper the understanding we have of our learners, the better we are likely to help them to learn and minimize negative washback. One simple example might be that while it may be necessary to set questions on the most difficult part of a text, and 'urge' our students to read word for word, in real life reading, we do not tend to focus unduly on difficult detailed information, as is tested in the NMET syllabus.

A further aspect to emerge from our study is that the washback of NMET, whilst not always desirable, is not necessarily negative or harmful, and can be effective in promoting learning. In this sense, washback cannot readily be classified as negative or positive. The NMET, which has been used for over 20 year and has been designed to 'promote English Language Teaching in schools' (Cheng & Qi, 2006; Qi, 2004, 2005; Zhou, 2003), indeed contributes to the development of reading skills and the capability of using metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and compensation strategies; the NMET seems, in a sense, to make its own contribution to learning in some measure. Yet what other things can we do to promote students learning despite the important status of the NMET? Can we help students learn more from various assessment/tests and find a synergy between formative learning and summative assessment? Formative assessment is reported to benefit students of different levels (Black & Wiliam, 1998) by sharing learning goals, involving students actively in the assessment process, and providing constructivist feedback which students can actively engaged with (Rust, O'Donovan, & Price, 2005); in a context where high stake tests cannot be avoided, it seems that pre-emptive formative assessment can be usefully incorporated to aid performance in summative assessment (Carless, 2007) and information from summative tests can be used formatively too (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003). Further, a more detailed study of these areas will consider the potential of classroom assessment in the same high schools, by looking at students' participation and responses to various types of assessment and its relationship with learning.

Regarding reading skills, the continued need for students who are preparing for tests to read extensively in their learning development, rather than simply studying for the test, in 'snippets' can also lead to a sense of 'automaticity' (Alderson, 2000); thus how to encourage students to read extensively is worthy of further consideration.

Whilst this study is necessarily limited in terms of its scope and depth, it is hoped that it has been able to offer us a picture of washback from a specifically student-oriented perspective, which has hitherto been somewhat neglected, while at the same time providing some reflections on how the washback effect might be minimised, with students' perception in mind.

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Footnotes

Students are either placed in science classes or arts classes, depending on whether they will take combined science or combined arts in NMET. The school also divided students into two different types of classes—general classes and top classes according to their levels.

[ii] Pseudonyms

[iii] The total mark of the English paper is 150 while the MCQ-s part is 110. As our test is only a progressive mock test, the writing and blank filling parts were not marked; the MCQ-s part was marked by machine.

[iv] T refers to the top class and G refers to general class.

[v] The number in the bracket here and thereafter (except for those in table 2) refers to the corresponding questionnaire questions; numbers with a letter ‘b’ after it refer to questions in the second section of the questionnaire.

Appendices

Selected Questionnaire Data

Table 3 Impact of NMET on students' reading learning strategies and reading strategies

	Mean	SD
Metacognitive Strategies		
15. I prepare for NMET Reading Comprehension through practising Test Papers	4.2	1.057
16. I feel extra-curriculum reading is beneficial for NMET preparation.	3.49	1.149
39. I have my own plan to improve my reading ability.	2.53	1.349
37.I change speed depending on the difficulty of the text.	3.97	1.256
33. I scan a text before deciding whether I will read it.	3.2	1.539
40. I am aware of my own weakness in reading and try to overcome it in my own ways.	3.51	1.244
49. I have developed my own way of doing Reading Comprehension in the Exam.	3.37	1.191
Affective Strategies		
43. When I find a part of a text difficult, I slow down my reading speed	4.36	0.815
42. I try to get back on track when I lose my concentration.	4.0	1.011
46. When I come across difficulty in reading, I am able to encourage myself to persist	3.63	1.038
48. I try to lower my anxiety level by taking a deep breath etc.	3.15	1.266
Compensation strategies (only key words in the items kept)		
44. Re-read to increase understanding.	4.13	1.110
41.Try to draw on knowledge of subject to help with understanding.	3.96	1.065
17b Got the right answers through eliminating the wrong answers.	3.75	1.045
36.Translate sentences into Chinese while reading to help understanding.	2.96	1.389
38.Look up in the dictionary for the words I do not know	2.88	1.278
35. Paraphrase to have a better understanding.	2.74	1.353
45.Jump over and continue to read the rest of the text.	2.3	1.191

Table 4 Impact of NMET on the development of reading abilities and reading skills

Questions	Mean	SD
Overall outcome		
22. I become more able to read through NMET preparation	3.7	1.081
31. I read much faster.	3.67	1.053
18. I become more confident in reading comprehension after test preparation.	3.22	1.295
17. Generally, my mark increases through NMET preparation.	3.53	1.315
19. I do not learn as many reading skills as test-taking skills.	3.37	1.101

20. I do not learn as many reading skills as grammatical knowledge from reading.	2.48	1.067
27. I do not learn much from reading comprehension test preparation.	2.3	1.256
Reading skills related		
28. I become better at guessing the meaning of an expression from context.	3.66	1.082
29. I become better at guessing the purpose of the author.	3.42	1.064
30. I become better at summarizing the main idea of a passage.	3.35	1.099
4b. I was able to choose right answers according to the context in doing the cloze	4.02	0.853
3b. I was able to get the main idea of the cloze before filling the blanks.	3.74	1.093
32. It's difficult to get the main idea of a passage via scanning.	3.34	1.356
47. I can grasp the main ideas though there are a lot of new words.	3.24	1.108
10b. Got the main idea of a passage after reading the whole passage in detail.	3.21	1.102
6b. Predict how a story went on while doing the cloze.	2.9	1.034
24. I can apply what I learnt from reading comprehension to Vocabulary MCQ.	2.71	1.110
23. I can apply what I learnt in the reading comprehension to writing.	2.63	1.191
Test wiseness strategies		
17b. I always got the right answers through eliminating the wrong answers.	3.76	1.04
20b. I knew how to guess an answer when I was not sure about the answer	3.21	1.06

Reading Comprehension Sample Passage

Passage D

Scientists who use animals in research will have to provide extra information to funding bodies to prove that they are not using more than the minimums necessary.

These changes are contained in new guidelines for using animals in research published this week by five of the UK's major research funders. Researchers seeking new grants (许可) for work involving animals will be obliged to adhere to the guidelines, 'Responsibilities in the use of animals in the bioscience research: expectations of the major research council and chartitable funding bodies'.

The guidelines outline the legal controls on using animals in research and detail how researchers should apply 3Rs-'replacement, refreshment and reduction'. The guidelines are intended to help researchers who use animals in universities and research council institutes—and their laboratory staff.

There are various obligations (义务) on researchers to implement (执行) the 3R-s, but they do not always manage to implement out fully. This document will assist them in doing that. The document also applies to researchers who study animals in their natural habits.

Under the Animals Act 1986, which regulates animal research in UK, there is a legal obligation to implement the 3R-s, which state that a project should use minimum number animals required to answer the scientific question being investigated. However, Dr Prescott said, the Act contains few specific details about how researchers must meet the obligations, and not all funders have spelt out their expectation for researchers.

"A lot of people just think about their study design and their sample size for minimizing numbers…But in this guidance we are saying that you need to think about your entire programme of work", Dr. Prescott said.

"If you are breeding animals, how many are you breeding? Can you schedule experiments? And how have you established what is the minimums number to use in each experiment?"

"In the past, a researcher might have said, 'I propose to use X dogs to answer this question, and this is the minimum I need.' Now researchers will be required to provide evidence of how they arrived at those sample sizes."

Also introduced are new rules to deal with laboratory standards outside UK. Although some funders have previously had statements on overseas cooperation, it was often unclear who had the responsibility for ensuring consistence (一致的) welfare and moral standards, Dr Prescott explained.

"What research funders are now saying is that researchers and their local ethics committee need to investigate the welfare standards at overseas laboratories and make a judgment about whether those standards are consistent with what you expect in UK…any significant difference from expectation needs approval from the funding body", he said.

72. The purpose of the guidelines is to _____
A. investigate welfare standard at overseas laboratories
B. protect animals from being killed.
C. make sure scientists use minimal animals to do research.
D. know how many animals are needed in the experiment

73. If you need to use dogs in an experiment, you need to _____
A. report that you need X dogs to answer the question.
B. obey the regulation in the Animal Act 1986
C. use dogs raised by yourself to schedule the experiment.
D. consider the whole experiment to present the number needed.

74. What can be inferred from the ninth paragraph in this passage?
A. The regulation on animal experiment is carried out in and outside UK.
B. The regulation on animal experiment is introduced to UK.
C. The funders knew clearly who has the responsibility.
D. Only moral standards are considered in the regulation.

75. The best tile for this passage is_____
A. Call for animal protection

B. Using animals is forbidden
C. Improved guidance on animal research
D. Fund needed in animal use

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L2 Students Use of Rhetorical Consciousness Raising Instructional Materials in Writing Research Articles

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Biodata

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Abstract

This study proposes to explore L2 undergraduate use of three types of rhetorical consciousness raising instruction (RCRI) materials during the process of research writing. These instruction materials are schematic structure, rich language features, and text. All the participants received the RCRI in class through extensive instruction on each type of the RCRI materials. To better probe how the participants interacted with these types of RCRI materials, they were requested to interact with the RCRI materials stored on the topic map-based e-learning (TMBEL) system during their process of writing and to say aloud what they were thinking as they processed the RCRI materials. The participants' interaction with the TMBEL system and their think-aloud data were recorded. At the end of the experiment, a semi-structured interview was conducted to triangulate the data. Results indicated (1) text was the type of RCRI materials that students visited most during their writing process; rich language features, the least; (2) schematic structure was the first type of RCRI materials that most students referred to before they began to write, (3) communicative purpose of each move, the linguistic components signaling transitions between moves, mechanistic elements and rich language features were students' learning focus, (4) students held positive opinions toward the RCRI materials, and (5) RCRI materials effectively lowered students' writing anxiety. Findings emerging from the results suggest that mapping structural concepts are most students' strategy when writing research articles, schematic structure and text are two interweaving types of RCRI materials for students to rely on while writing and RCRI materials have a potential for building genre awareness. Further study on RCRI suggests that students' assignments need to be investigated to make the study exhaustive.

Keywords: rhetorical conscious raising instruction (RCRI); genre-based approach; schematic structure; rich language features; text; topic map-based e-learning (TMBEL) system

Introduction

Research writing is one of the most challenging courses for college students because of their unfamiliarity with this genre of writing. Therefore, introducing students to the academic community, familiarizing them with academic discourse and further helping them to complete their writing tasks are of importance. A genre-based approach has been a widely used alternative in the field of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) for beginners since the genre-based approach enables beginners to familiarize themselves with the genre (Henry and Roseberry, 1998; Hyland, 2003; Hyon, 1996; Johns, 2002; Paltridge, 2001).

Current studies on a genre-based approach in the instructional context for undergraduates, where English is taken as a second or foreign language, have yielded fruitful findings on the efficacy of various applications of the genre-based approach (Tardy, 2006). For example, Charney and Carlson (1995) explored the extent to which exposure to model texts benefited students' academic writing. One group was given students' written models while the other group was not. The result indicated that model texts had a positive influence on students' content and organization of writing. Henry and Roseberry (1998) used the technique of explicit instruction and metalanguage on "the brief tourist information" genre. Students' writing tasks based on pre- and post- instructions were analyzed. The result indicated that the extensive instruction and metalanguage could significantly improve students' writing from the aspects of move and texture (cohesion and coherence). Pang (2002) compared the efficacy of two techniques--textual analysis and context-awareness--of the genre-based approach. Textual analysis focused on schematic structure, lexical and grammatical features, while context-awareness emphasized types of publication, communicative purpose, and writer and reader's role. The results suggested that the contextual awareness group showed a better performance in the discourse function. The textual analysis group outperformed the mechanistic elements (which included the use of mood, person, structural move and linguistic features). However, these studies of the genre-based approach only focused on the aspect of genre writing where a genre-based approach showed its efficacy. The process of students' interaction with designated teaching materials in the process of their writing remains unknown.

In response to the research problem, the study proposes a genre-based approach—rhetorical consciousness raising instruction (RCRI), a term borrowed from Swales (1994, p.4) to explore students' referring to RCRI materials in their process of writing a research article. The RCRI is a teaching method with focus on rhetorical organization, rich language features and socio-rhetorical contexts supported by these organizational and language features (Swales, 1990; Swales & Feak, 2000, 2004). The RCRI comprises three types of materials: schematic structure, rich language features and text. By using RCRI as a teaching method, we investigate the types of RCRI materials that students access at various stages of their writing process. To reach the research purpose, one main research question was generated: How do undergraduate L2 students make use of RCRI materials in writing different sections of a research article?

The focus of students' use of genre-based instructional materials benefits teachers to become aware of L2 undergraduates' use of strategies when writing a research article and the usefulness of the genre-based instructional materials. This issue has been rarely treated in previous studies and hence the significance of the study.

Literature Review

Conceptualization of Rhetorical Consciousness Raising Instruction (RCRI) Materials

Adam and Artemeva (2002) held that Swales viewed genre from a "teachers' perspective" (p.180). The rhetorical consciousness raising instruction (RCRI) is an application of the ESP genre-based instruction proposed by Swales (1994). Swales held that his genre-based approach was "analytical and rhetorical" (p.2). It is analytical because the part genres such as introduction, method, results and discussion of a research article are analyzed by means of move. It is rhetorical because each part genre is enriched by rich language features. In the light of the RCRI rationale, the RCRI material comprises the following types: schematic structure, rich language features and text.

Schematic Structure

Schematic structure is the first type of RCRI materials. It refers to a genre's global organizational pattern central to the ESP school (Christie, 1991, Feez, 2002). For many researchers in the ESP school, the first stage in the rhetorical analysis of genre is to break it into its components to show

its schematic structure (Bhatia, 1993; Husan, 1984; Martin, 1992; Swales, 1990). Among the researchers in the ESP school, Swales' genre analytic framework is perhaps the most influential one. Texts are conventionally divided into "stages" that serve functions for both the writer and the community. The "stage" is known as a "move" being understood as a "defined and bounded communicative act that is designated to achieve one main communicative objective" (Swales & Feak, 2000, p.35). For example, Swales' creation of a research space (CARS) in the research introduction introduces the moves of establishing a research territory, establishing a niche and occupying a niche. Each move in the CARS model serves a "communicative purpose of a research introduction" (Shim, 2005, p.29)

Rich Language Features

Swales' move analysis has been enriched with rich language features (Bartons, 2002). Barton defined rich language features as linguistic features that point out the relation between a text and its context. ESP researchers hold that rich language features include basically two types. The first type of rich language features help to analyze discourse quantitatively and qualitatively as Cheng (2005). Cheng pointed out that that rich language features were quantitative because "they can be defined, categorized, coded and counted." They were qualitative because "they can be connected to matters of meaning and significance" (p.18). Examples of the first type of rich language features involve hedging (Hyland, 1994, 1998), stance marker (Hyland, 1999), citation practice and report verb (Bolch & Chi, 1995), to name just a few. The second type of rich language features referred to linguistic components of an academic or professional genre that function as a prototype in genre analysis (Shim, 2005). These linguistic components signal transitions between moves. For example, there are steps of linguistic components signaling transitions between moves in the CARS model in a research article introduction. Studies of rich language features involve establishing a research territory (Move 1) by claiming centrality and reviewing previous studies through source citation; establishing a niche (Move 2) by indicating a gap through the use of quasi-negative subject; and occupying a niche (Move3) by using a purpose statement (Swales, 1994; Shim, 2005). The two types of rich language features as Hyon pointed out "convey[ed] writers' stances toward the text content or audience[s]" (p.126).

Text

Schematic structure and rich language features are the integral elements of a text in that text provides a picture of how the schematic structure and rich language features are operated. According to Johns (2002), texts serve the function of genre models for writers. Textual models provide students with the work of professional writers which students then analyze and imitate. Thus, studies indicate that interaction with texts is significant in conscious genre learning for young learners (Shine & Roster, 1999) and for L1 and L2 undergraduate and graduate students (Gentil, 2005; Palmquist, 2005; Tardy, 2006). Studies suggest that textual models benefit three aspects of students' writing: rhetoric, structural organization and terminology acquisition. Textual models initiate students into the rhetorical norms of academic discourse and introduce them to the vocabulary of academic discourse. That is, students borrow discourse or imitate formulaic expression found in published writing. In terms of structural organization and terminology acquisition, textual models allow students to build the generic structure of a paper. Specific texts pertaining to students' topics help students to acquire terminology in their fields. Moreover, texts also serve the function of resources. For example, when students practice their writing, texts provide students with resources such as writing styles (Dong, 1996) and a writing guideline (Angelova & Riazantseva, 1999) to follow.

Research Methodology

The Participants

Twenty senior English major students were selected from the student population of Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. They were all native speakers of Mandarin Chinese who were learning English as a foreign language. Documentation of the students' scores in the College Student English Proficiency Test (CSEPT level 2)[1] and the writing courses that they had taken before they took the course of research writing were the sources that indicated the participants' language proficiency and writing experience. Among the twenty participants, fourteen of them had passed their graduation benchmark; that is, their total scores for the CSEPT were above 260, therefore at a high intermediate level. Among those who had failed their graduation benchmark, the total scores in the SCEPT ranged from 207 to 255.

Moreover, the students' annual grade report showed that before the course of research writing, each student in the English Department has been required to take courses pertaining to writing: English Reading and Writing (I), English Reading and Writing (II), Grammar & Rhetoric and Discussion & Writing. These documents suggested that (1) these participants' language proficiency ranged from intermediate to higher-intermediate, (2) they could be identified as quite frequent English writers; however, (3) their writing experiences were limited to general English writing, and a few ESP writing experiences, and (4) they had no academic writing experience; that is, they had a zero or low-level knowledge of EAP genres.

Instructional Content

"Research Writing" is a required course for seniors in the English Department in Wenzao College of Languages. Students met for this course two hours a week. This course lasted two semesters. At the end of this course, each student was required to complete a research article of fifteen to twenty pages. The syllabi of this course covered the first and second semesters. There were eighteen weeks in the first semester. In the first five weeks, an introduction to the research process was given. During week six, an on-line learning instrument, the TMBEL system, was introduced and the process of system registration was conducted. From weeks seven to eighteen, along with the whole second semester (fourteen weeks in totality), we focused on the instruction of academic genre.

The syllabi were divided into four categories: week, main topic, assignment and key source(s) of teaching materials (see Appendix 1). The main topic and key source(s) of teaching materials were the main points of the syllabi. The main topic referred to the teaching focus of a particular section. For example, in the first section, the main topics centered on the major theoretical dimensions of genre. Concepts such as genre, text, rhetorical situation from a sentential level to a discourse level were involved. The second, third, fourth and fifth sections shared a similar pedagogical goal: of consolidating the participants' understanding of academic genre through the concepts of moves, claims and hedges.

Yokhontova (2001) maintains that *Academic Writing for Graduate Students* (*AWG)* made an insightful explanation on the proper use of move and that of linguistic features in each RA section. Thus, *AWG* was the main source of teaching materials for the types of schematic

structure and rich language features. Papers collected from domestic academic journals and the researcher's previous students' writing assignments graded "A" were the source materials of the text type. These were the materials to which the participants were exposed. Through textual exposure, we expected that students' awareness and ability to analyze genre would be enhanced.

Moreover, compared with the remaining RA sections, the introduction section occupied much of the syllabi. As Swales and Lindemann (2002) maintained, the introduction section was regarded as a very difficult part of genre for learners. It was hoped that investing in instruction in this part would increase the participants' ability to use genre analysis as a tool to increase more independent explorations of the other RA sections.

An E-Learning Environment

The participants learned the instructional content via the topic map-based e-learning (TMBEL) system. The TMBEL is an assembly hub of the designated types of RCRI materials. The designated RCRI materials were arranged according to RA sections such as introduction, method, result and discussion. Each RA section was designed in terms of schematic structure, rich language features, and text. The type of schematic structure materials involved move analysis in each RA section. The type of rich features materials included the linguistic features that realized each move to achieve one main communicative purpose. The text types of RCRI materials covered the selected text models from the source materials. Papers collected from domestic academic journals were one example of source materials.

Instruments

Logging Time Calculations of the TMBEL system

The logging time calculation of the TMBEL system served the function of collecting the data of the participants' interaction with the designated types of RCRI materials. The device of the students' learning log was employed to report the participants' login time to the system, the number of times that the participants interacted with the RCRI materials and the participants' retrieval of the system.

Think-Aloud Technique

The think-aloud technique was utilized to collect the data of what students were thinking or noticing when they stayed on a particular type of RCRI materials during the process of their writing. The participants' think aloud oral reports were collected via CDS handed to them by the instructor.

Interview

A semi-structured interview between the researcher and the participants was conducted at the final phase of the experiment to provide information in greater depth. To facilitate data collection, the participants were interviewed in Mandarin. The duration of each interview was conducted in a stress-free atmosphere. It began with a casual conversation and then led to the core issues of the study such as which type(s) of RCRI materials they believed to be the most helpful in their writing process, which type(s) of RCRI materials they interacted with first and last during their writing of each RA section, and finally their opinions of the usefulness of RCRI for the course "Research Writing." The interview was designed to elaborate the reports of the learning logs produced by the participants' interaction with the TMBEL system and students' think-aloud reports.

Research procedure

The research progressed in three phases. The first phase focused on the in-class rhetorical consciousness raising instruction (RCRI), which constructed the participants' academic generic knowledge. The on-line RCRI materials stored in the TMBEL system was the main teaching material that the researcher utilized in class to develop the participants' knowledge of academic genre. The second phase emphasized the participants' cognitive learning during their interaction with types of RCRI materials, which helped them to develop their writing. A writing task was assigned when the instruction of one RA section was finished. During the time of the participants' writing practice, they were requested to interact with the RCRI materials. While the participants were interacting with the RCRI materials during the process of their writing, they were requested to say aloud what they were thinking as they processed the RCRI materials. In the final phase, a one-on-one semi-structured interview between the researcher and the participant was conducted. The method of retrospection was utilized for the participants to reflect

how they interacted with the types of RCRI materials during the process of writing a research article.

Process of Data Collection

Data were collected from multi-dimensional resources. The first resource included the logging time calculations of the participants' visiting the types of RCRI materials on each RA section. The participants' oral reports of their interaction with the types of RCRI materials via the think-aloud protocol was the second resource. The semi-structured interview was the final resource.

Data analysis

Logging Time Calculations of the TMBEL System

Repeated measurement was utilized to analyze which type of RCRI materials was visited most in each RA section.

Think-Aloud Technique

Constant comparison method was consulted to analyze the qualitative data such as students' think aloud reports of their referring to the RCRI materials. Constant comparison method was developed by Claser and Strauss (1967) as a means of generating theories systematically by "using explicit coding and analytical procedures" (p.102). The basic strategy of the constant comparison method was to analyze data at the early stage as the study progressed. Researchers began with an incident from a field note, a document or a report and then compared one piece of the coded data with the others as the analysis progressed. During the process of constant comparison, themes, sub-categories and core categories emerged from the data.

Yang's (2005) suggestion of data coding procedure was adopted to explore how undergraduate L2 students make use of RCRI materials in writing their research articles. Three steps were proposed: (1) locating preliminary indicator, (2) sorting, comparing and categorizing, and (3) seeking relationships and explanation. The main goal of locating preliminary indicators lies in "identifying preliminary indicators of activeness that emerged from the data" (Yang, 2005, p.113). To do this step, first of all, I read the data word-by-word and line-by-line. I kept in mind that the research focus in the study was students' use of RCRI materials in writing their research articles. Therefore, students' role of *active agent* (Yang's term) in their learning processes, shift

of their learning focus, and their learning focus (i.e. what did they notice) were pinpointed. For example, the phrases such as "first of all, I'll enter . . .," "now, I'm going to . . . ," and "I want to . . ." were identified as students' active agent of initiating their learning. The phrases such as "later on . . .," "I continue to read . . . ," "I finished this part and I entered . . . ," and "and then. . ." were identified as the indicators of students' shift of learning focus. The phrases such as "I notice . . . ," "this part clearly demonstrates . . . ," and ". . . is used to emphasize" were identified as the indicators of students' learning focus. Moreover, students' personal exclamations while focusing on their learning were identified as "opinion indicators." Students' exclamations such as "useful," "like," and "confused" were identified as "opinion indicators."

After the indicators were identified, data analysis progressed with the goal of generating concepts, subcategories and categories. First of all, I revisited my data and compared the coded data. Instances with similar preliminary indicators were sorted out. Following Yang's (2005) advice, the portions of the data that directly address the characteristics of the indicators was highlighted. I revisited my data to identify the emerging concepts. I wrote down the main concepts and generated questions by using 'where', 'why', 'who' and 'how', the strategy of open coding. The indictors were compared and contrasted again. Then the indicators with similar characteristics were merged into tentative concepts. The tentative concepts were revisited, revised and refined by constant comparison. Tentative concepts were then sorted into subcategories and subcategories were sorted into categories. At the final step, I looked for intersections between concepts, subcategories and categories and found connections between them.

Interview

Content analysis was employed to analyze the interview transcription. Content analysis is a technique "for systematic quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" in which researchers "*quantify* how often specific themes were addressed in a text, and the *frequency* of themes could be *compared* and *correlated* with other measures" (Kvale, 2007, p.105; my italics for emphasis). Kvale (2007) suggested that coding and categorization were two key approaches in content analysis. During the process of data analysis, I followed Kvales' advice. First of all, I labeled segments of texts by using key words or phrases for statement

identification and made them into excerpted files. Second, I revisited the excerpted files. I labeled the occurrence of a phenomenon as "+;" and the nonoccurrence of a phenomenon as "－."For example, in the identified statement of "RCRI materials and writing anxiety," I marked "＋" to indicate "writing anxiety" and "－" to indicate "non-writing anxiety." Third, to measure the strength of the occurrence of a phenomenon, I used a scale ranging from 1 to 7 (1= the least intensified strength; 7= the most intensified strength). Fourth, I categorized coded data by looking for themes that best manifest the meaning of the interview. Finally, I compared and correlated one theme with another. Six tentative themes emerged from the data. After the process of comparison and association of one theme with another, three main themes were sorted out. For instance, I sorted students' opinions of the suitability of RCRI materials, students' preference for RCRI materials and students' suggestion about RCRI materials into the theme of students' opinions of RCRI materials.

Results

Students' Logging Time Calculations of the TMBEL System

<u>Texts was the type of RCRI materials that students visited most during their writing process; rich language features, the least</u>

Repeated measurement was used to calculate the frequency of students' interaction with the three types of RCRI materials during the whole process of writing; that is, the sections of introduction, method, result and discussion that students had undergone to finish their research paper. The mean scores of the frequency of students' interaction with the types of RCRI materials were: schematic structure (M=25.00), rich features (M=19.04) and text (M=37.57). Tests of within-subjects' effects suggested there was a significant difference in the frequency of students' interaction with the RCRI materials (F=25.949). The consequence of the pairwise comparison demonstrated that students visited the type of text material most frequently and visited the type of rich language features least during the process of their writing.

Students' Think-aloud Report

Results of students' think-aloud reports were divided into two main categories:

(1) Students' cognitive learning approach, and

(2) students' learning focus.

Students' Cognitive Learning Approach

Schematic structure was the first type of RCRI materials that most students referred to before they began to write. What follows were students' think-aloud reports: "I'll begin from schematic structure" (Flora). "I'm now on the homepage of the TMBEL system. I see the part of schematic structure. I decide to visit it first" (Yvette). "How to write the method section? Let me click the part of schematic structure" (Jessica). "How can I begin with the result section? Organization is very important. I need the concept so I'll begin with the part of schematic structure" (Brook), to name just a few. While they were visiting the materials of schematic structure, most students (n=16) built up their generic knowledge by learning how each move was established and how one move was connected with another. In-class extensive instruction on genre knowledge was often recalled to assist their learning. After referring to the schematic type of materials, most students referred to the text type of RCRI materials, where they analyzed the model texts by using the acquired knowledge from their interaction with the materials of schematic structure. At the moment of students' analyzing of the model texts, most students organized the structure of their own writing. That is, the model texts guided students to establish the structure of their articles. After consulting the text type materials, some students visited other types of RCRI materials such as rich language features; some chose to refer back to the type of schematic structure materials; while others composed their writing and referred to the RCRI materials. Diverse choices were made by students. No fixed learning patterns emerged.

Students' Learning Focus

Communicative purpose of each move, linguistic components signaling transitions between moves, mechanistic elements and rich language features were what students had noticed during their interaction with the three types of RCRI materials. Most students noticed the communicative purposes of each move. One example of what students had noticed in the discussion section is quoted as follows:

The first move is generally longer than the latter moves. In the first move, I need to report my major findings, interpret my result and then compare my result with previous studies. In the

second move, I need to mark out the limitation of my study and if possible in the third move, I need to suggest implications for further study (Nina).

Apart from the communicative purpose of each move, most students also noticed the linguistic components signaling transitions between moves. For example, "'However' is an important word. I need to notice it. It connects the first move and the second move" (Mark, in the Introduction section). "'However' points out the limitation of previous studies" (Jessica). "We can use however in the way such as 'however, little information. . . .' or 'however, little attention. . . .' It's so great! There are so many examples" (Flora).

Students also noticed mechanistic elements such as the use of citation and the correct forms of tables. As for the use of citation, students noticed the format of long citation and the proper use of word insertion to direct citation (Amanda, Candy, Sharon, to name just a few). Moreover, students also noticed how to draw a table and interpret the data properly:

Just follow the sample text. . . I don't need to make any explanation about the statistical result if no significant differences appear. My school sister (the sample text) didn't do that. . . Is drawing a table so difficult? Wait, here is the table. I'll just draw the table according to the sample text. See, it's easy. (Candy)

Linguistic features that students noticed mainly focused on the linguistic cues expressing writers' stances such as the use of knowledge claim. For example, "'might,' 'could' and 'seem' are the verbal hedges to interpret the logical deduction of my findings" (Flora).

Here are the example words of verbal hedges. . . I see the example sentence, 'Therefore strategy instruction seems not so affective.' I know that 'seem' is one example of verbal hedges. I can use *seem* on my paper (Ken).

Additionally, connective words or phrases were also noticed by most students. "In the text, the author used 'first,' 'in addition to' to connect ideas." (Lucy).

How can I connect the second move and the third move (Introduction) I see 'In response to these problems . ..' I can initiate my third move by using this phrase. Oh! How I love the part of rich language features (Gloria)!

Interviews

Three themes emerged from students' interview. They were listed as follows:

(1) Students' opinions of RCRI materials,

(2) students' cognitive learning approach, and

(3) RCRI materials and writing anxiety.

Students' Opinions of RCRI Materials

Most students had positive attitudes toward RCRI materials, especially toward the text type materials. Their strong preference for text materials was demonstrated as follows:

I like text. With the guidance of text, I feel it is easy to write my assignment. With only structural explanation, I can get lost (Yvette).

I like text. I can analyze and learn structure and rich language features from text (Mark).

Nevertheless, there were some students who showed their preference for the type of rich language features. Students reported:

I directly transplant some of the textual linguistic components into my assignment. These linguistic components make my assignment look professional (Amanda).

Rich language features show me the use of language to enrich my paper. . . . I see lots of examples on the part of rich language features. I have more possibilities for word choice concerning how to begin, how to transit and how to finish my paper (Flora).

Students' Cognitive Learning Approach

Most students chose schematic structure as their initial interaction with the RCRI materials when they wrote. "Schematic structure helps to sort out the outline of a paper" (Gloria); and "schematic structure gives me directions about how to construct my paper. Knowing how to construct a paper is very important during writing" (Ken). After their referring to the schematic structure, most students consulted the text type of RCRI materials. Most of them believed that consulting schematic structure and text in turns gave them clear ideas of how to approach their writing (Lucy, Gina, Ann, to name just a few).

RCRI Materials and Writing Anxiety

Most students expressed that RCRI materials greatly lowered their writing anxiety. Students' comments such as "with the assistance of RCRI materials, I am relaxed . . . and can write my research paper much better" (Candy), "RCRI materials give me confidence in writing" (Sharon), and " I like RCRI materials" (Brook) demonstrated that RCRI materials lowered their writing anxiety.

Discussion

The results obtained in this experiment suggest the following:

1. Text was the type of RCRI materials that students visited most during their writing process; rich language features, the least,
2. Schematic structure was the first type of RCRI materials that most students referred to before they began to write,
3. Communicative purpose of each move, the linguistic components signaling transitions between moves, mechanistic elements and rich language features were students' learning focus,
4. Students had affirmative opinions of RCRI materials, and
5. RCRI materials effectively lowered students' writing anxiety.

In what follows, we probe students' interaction with the three types of RCRI materials at different stages of their writing a research article and discuss how RCRI materials contribute to undergraduates' learning of academic writing.

Mapping Structural Concepts Are Most Students' Approach When Writing Research Articles

Results of students' think-aloud reports and interview demonstrated that most students consulted schematic structure material first before they began to write. Students' comments that "organization is very important," "schematic structure helps to sort out the outline of the paper," and "schematic structure [helps] to . . . construct . . . paper" reveal the importance of mapping structural concepts before writing. This finding is consistent with previous studies (White & Arndt, 1991; Brown, 2001). Previous studies noted that writing was a complex cognitive process during which generating ideas, structuring text and using discourse markers and conventions were fused. Since these students were not familiar with academic generic conventions, once their topics were determined, information pertaining to their topics was collected and sorted out;

students then focused much of their concern on how to construct their texts to meet the academic generic conventions.

Schematic Structure and Text Are Two Interweaving Types of RCRI Materials for Students to Rely on While Writing

Results of students' think-aloud reports and interview demonstrated that students consulted the type of schematic structure first. After that, they consulted the type of text materials and then they consulted the types of schematic structure and text materials in turns during the process of writing. It seems that schematic structure can benefit students to form a concept map, which, as Yang and Allison (2004) pointed out, was a holistic organization of a research article. Text, on the other hand, functions as a guideline for students to realize the established concepts in their minds (Gentil, 2005; Palmquist, 2005; Tardy, 2006). Students' consultation of both types of materials in turn may indicate students' ongoing clarifying and confirming their concepts while writing. Thus, a brief conclusion can be drawn: schematic structure and text are two interweaving types of RCRI materials for students to rely on while writing.

RCRI Materials Have a Potential for Building Genre Awareness

Students' think-aloud reports while writing and the oral interviews indicated that RCRI materials showed their potential to raise students' genre awareness. Students' think-aloud reports while writing demonstrate that students notice linguistic features while writing. For example, students notice that "this interview study indicates. . ." can be a linguistic cue to highlight their major finding, "the aim of the paper is to . . ." can be a purpose statement and "however, few investigations have been made to . . ." can be a cue to create a research niche. These linguistic features, as Hyon (2002) pointed out, were "cues for genre structure and style" (p.130). Students' comments on types of RCRI materials in the oral interview were listed: "schematic structure gives me an idea about how to initiate my writing." "Schematic structure gives me directions about how to construct my paper." "Sample texts are the best. The well-organized texts are easy to follow." These comments demonstrate that students draw a skeleton of an academic paper and construct the stages or moves of a RA section through the genre knowledge that they gained from the genre-based instructional materials

Conclusion

This study explored how L2 undergraduates referred to three types of genre-based instructional material in the process of writing a research paper. Two types of RCRI materials proved to be very helpful. They were schematic structure and text. Schematic structure assisted students to construct the concept of a research article when they began to practice their academic writing tasks. Texts served the function of a writing guideline and abstract concept clarification to clarify schematic structure when students wrote. Thus, schematic structure and text were two interweaving types of RCRI materials for students to rely on while writing. Rich language features provide students linguistic cues for genre structure and style.

The study of students' referring to RCRI materials at different stages of writing research articles is not exhaustive. It generates some issues for further study. Students' assignments, for instance, need to be investigated. Further study in view of students' assignments suggest the following: First, results of students' logging time calculations of the TMBEL system and students' cognitive learning approach demonstrated that students relied more heavily on the types of schematic structure and text materials than the materials of rich language features. Do students' writing assignments reflect students' better performance on the aspect of structure than that of language use? Second, results of students' think-aloud reports indicated that communicative purposes of each move, linguistic components signaling transitions between moves, and linguistic features were the linguistic cues that students noticed during their writing. These linguistic cues as Hyon (2002) suggested were cues for structure and genre. Do the linguistic cues that students noticed become part of their writing? That is, do they transfer genre-based instructional materials to their writings? Mechanisms such as use of citation and correct forms of tables were the mechanistic elements that students noticed. Can they exploit these mechanisms correctly in their assignments? Finally, some students relied heavily on the material of rich language features? How well do they perform their writing?

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Footnotes

[1]The content of the footnote: CSEPT is a standardized proficiency test developed and administered by the Language Training and Testing Center (LTTC) in Taiwan. The test comprises three sections: Listening, Usage, and Reading. It aims to measure students' comprehension of general spoken English, English language structure, and English written materials. The total possible score on this test is 360; each section has a total possible score of 120.

Appendix 1

The syllabus of research writing in the first semester

Week	Main Topics	Assignment	Key Sources of teaching materials
	Section 1: Introduction to Academic Genre		
7	General language feature: genre, text, rhetoric situation: sentence-level, discourse level		*AWG*
8	Continue general language features		*AWG*
	Section 2: Introduction Section		
9	RCRI in introduction (The CARS model) Schematic structure :Moves/steps		*AWG*
10	Rich language features Linguistic features: claim centrality, verb tenses		*AWG*
11	Literature review: summary, critique, plagiarism and work citation		*AWG*
12	Literature review continue		

13	Text : explanation of structure arrangement and use of linguistic features on model texts	1st draft on Introduction	1. researcher's previous students' writing arraignment graded "A" 2. published papers on journals 3. *AWG* samples
14	Individual discussion on the 1st draft		
	Section 3: Method Section		
15	Schematic structure Situation: participants, research site Problem: instruments Solution: process of data collection Evaluation: data analysis		*AWG*
16	Rich language features Linguistic features: passive voice, active voice in process description, linking phrases in extended method		*AWG*
17	Text Explanation of structure arrangement and use of linguistic features on model texts	1st draft of method	1. researcher's previous students' writing assignment graded "A" 2. published papers on journals 3. *AWG* samples
18	Individual discussion on the first draft		

The syllabus of research writing in the second semester

Week	Main Topics	Assignment	Key Sources of teaching materials
	Section 4: Result Section		
1	Schematic structure Structure of result section: moves/steps		*AWG*
2	Rich language features Linguistic features: indicative verb vs. informative verb/ claim making/ hedges		*AWG*
3	Text Explanation of structural arrangement and use of linguistic fetures on model texts	1st draft of result section	1. researcher's previous students' writing assignment graded "A" 2. published papers on journals 3. *AWG* samples
4 / 5	No class (spring break and sports day)		
6	Individual discussion on the first draft of result section		
	Section 5: Discussion Section		
7	Schematic structure Discussion moves/ steps		*AWG*
8	Rich language features Linguistic features: generalization/ expression of limitation		*AWG*
9	Text Explanation of structural arrangement and use of linguistic features on model texts	1st draft of discussion section	1. researcher's previous students' writing assignment graded "A" 2. published papers on journals 3. *AWG* samples
10	Individual discussion on the first draft of discussion section		

Section 6: Other Minor RA Sections	
11	Structure on abstract Model writing explanation
12	conclusion on research writing
13	Hand in a complete RA writing
	interview

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The strategic needs of Iranian students in reading literary and non-literary texts: A dialogic approach

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Abstract

The current study sets out 1) to investigate the strategic needs of participants in reading literary and non-literary texts; and 2) to shed light on the differences of reading literary and non-literary texts. To achieve this aim, thirty participants read three literary and two non-literary texts and wrote down the questions for which they could not find any answer.Next, these questions were categorized in five groups: Scripturally implicit, textually implicit, textually explicit, linguistic and miscomprehension. The findings suggest that the dominant problem of participants lies in textually implicit aspects of the text. Finally, a Kruskal-Wallis test was applied in order to compare the frequency of question types across literary and non-

literary texts. The difference of all question types proved to be statistically significant across both literary and non-literary texts.

Keywords: Reading strategies, discourse analysis, dialogic approach, reading literature, genre analysis.

Introduction

Reading comprehension appears to be one of the problematic skills for L2 learners (Bensoussan, 1990). Therefore, studies (Bensoussan, 1990; Dubravac and Dalle, 2002; Ling Lau, 2006) have been conducted to understand what specific problems students encounter during their reading process. In this respect, extensive misunderstanding and misinterpretation can arise during the reading of literary texts; hence the majority of students face frustration and disappointment while encountering them. Such inadequacies of learners may be ascribed to the significant local and global deviations of literary texts from non-literary ones (Miall & Kuiken, 1998).

In shedding some light on the differences between reading literary and non-literary texts, cognitive theory has played a dominant role since the 1970s (Dixon and Bortolussi, 1996). In this respect, psychological models of text comprehension have usually distinguished between two types of texts: narrative and expository. Narrative texts include poems, short stories, novels or those texts whose main purpose is to entertain (Dubravac and Dalle, 2002). Expository texts (such as newspapers, text books, instruction booklets and brochures) encompass texts whose main purpose is to inform (Dubravac & Dalle, 2002). There are, however, important differences between the two types of text in the sense that each text type poses its own particular problems specific to L2 readers (Bensoussan, 1990).

It is noteworthy that what is called a literary text is a controversial issue. Nevertheless, the current research adopts Widdowson's (1975) distinction between literary and non-literary texts. Widdowson (1975) asserts that in literary texts it is impossible to separate the content of the text–the what of the text–from the way that it has been written–the how of the text. It is for this reason that literary works cannot be satisfactorily explained. To explain them, they should be converted to "the definite shape of conventional statement." According to Widdowson, the major problem in the teaching of literature is to develop in the learner an awareness of the what/how of literary communication(i. e., both the content of the text and the way that it has been written).

At this juncture, it might be relevant to distinguish the notion of literary essay from that of expository essay. As Aldous Huxley (1959) points out, literary essays vary along a "three-poled frame of reference: 1) the pole of the personal and the autobiographical; 2) the

pole of the objective, the factual, the concrete-particular, and 3) the pole of the abstract-universal" (p. 1) Accordingly, essayists can be categorized into three groups: 1) 'personal essayists' who write their autobiographies using anecdote and description like *Darkness in Noon* by Harold Krents; 2) 'objective essayists' who focus on some literary, scientific or political theme like the text *Life and Death in Shanghai* by Nien Cheng which is about cultural revolution in China ; and 3) 'abstract essayists' who make use of a combination of personal, objective / factual and abstract / universal poles at the same time like the essay,*The Rewards of Living a Solitary Life*by May Sarton (Levine, 2007)in which the author employs personal, factual and universal views. Nevertheless, according to Grabe (2002, p.252):

> Expository texts provide ways of framing our knowledge of the world, synthesizing diverse sources of knowledge, classifying and categorizing our knowledge in various hierarchical (rather than strictly sequential) forms, and representing what we have come to know in conventionalized discourse structures.

Considering the aforementioned characteristics of literary essays, the ones employed in the study can be characterized as those in which, in Huxley's terms, a combination of personal, objective and abstract universal poles have been used simultaneously.

To address the reading problems of L2 readers in handling literary and non-literary texts, instructors have widely used post-reading questions. Unfortunately, this overused method has the potential to bore some students (Eliason, 2009; Gutt, 1998). To remove this problem, Eliason (2009) invites researchers to shift their focus from teacher-generated to student-generated questions. In this regard, it has been revealed that student-generated questions can increase comprehension and retention of texts, and thereby more accurately indicate the level of comprehension. Therefore, students should be trained how to ask appropriate questions (Brown, 1981; Cohen, 1983; Olson, 1985; Dwyer, 2000).

Appropriate questions in this research refer to what Janssen (2002, p.97) calls "authentic or genuine knowledge-seeking questions." According to Janssen authentic questions are questions in which the questioner is really interested in expanding his/her knowledge regarding the raised point; while reading, for example, storiesthe questioner is curious about discovering the incentives of characters' actions and reactions. Furthermore, the appropriateness of a question can also be assessed by the extent of discussion arisen from that question (Commeyras and Summer, 1998).

Accordingly, the present study intends to address the likely problems of Iranian students in asking appropriate questions while reading literary and non-literary texts. To this end, the student-generated question approach has been employed. Thus, to classify the types of question produced by students, various models have been proposed, one of which is that proposed by Dubravac and Dalle (2002). The reason for adopting the Dubravac / Dalle model is that itcovers both local and global coherence problems of inference-making.Bensoussan (1990) has mentioned that the comprehension difficulty of reading non-literary texts is usually related to the problems of linguistic or local features such as specific grammatical structures, expressions, and vocabulary items. However, the difficulty of reading literary texts is usually related to global comprehension problems since such texts accommodate meaning in elements such as irony and other rhetorical devices. Consequently, the type of questions asked while reading literary texts differ from asking questions while reading non-literary ones.

However, what distinguishes the present research from that of Dubravac and Dalle's is that in this research on the significance of question-generation strategy while reading texts, the authors have employed the student-generated question approach as a way to specify the Iranian college students' strategic needs in dealing with global and local aspects of the text. Furthermore, caution has been exercised to address some of the limitations of Dubravac and Dalle's study. For instance, only the authentic questions(i.e., questions for which students cannot find the answer in the text), have been analyzed. Moreover, prior to the data collection procedure, students underwent a series of instructions in order to grasp what asking appropriate questions means, hence avoid asking, in Janssen's (2002) term "inauthentic questions"(i.e., questions that the questioners already possessed the answers themselves). Last but not least, contrary to the Dubravac / Dallemodel, the discourse topic of non-literary texts used in this study was unfamiliar to the participants, since the goal of reading expository texts is to gain information, this selection could approximate the goal of reading to real-life situations, and consequently reveal participants reading inadequacies better.

Research Questions

Espousing the view that student-generated questions can increase comprehension and retention of the text, and thereby more accurately indicate the level of comprehension (Brown, 1981; Cohen, 1983), the current study intends to address the following questions:

1) Are the respondents capable of asking appropriate questions while reading literary and non-literary texts?

2) What is the frequency of each question type produced by the participants across literary and non-literary texts?

3) What are the specific problems faced by students in asking questions for each text type (i.e., literary and non-literary texts)?

4) What is the difference between students' problems in reading literary and non-literary texts?

Background

Reading literary texts has attracted the attention of scholars of literature for nearly three quarters of a century. However, among empirical researchers, attention to literature is quite recent, since most of the studies have been carried out over the last twenty years (Miall, 2002).

The idea that the perspective from which a text is read influences the processing of that text is widely held both in cognitive psychology and in the empirical study of literature (Zwaan, 1991). According to Kintsch (1980), when stories, news reports or scientific texts are being read, the same comprehension operations occur. However, these comprehension operations are applied in different ways and for different purposes and, as a result, they have different effects. Accordingly, various empirical studies investigating the processes of literary reading have emerged. For instance, as Steen (1999) asserts, the study of literary genres and literature is also connected to that of non-literary genres and other discourse classes. Therefore, many researchers have usually compared literary and non-literary texts in their studies. As an example, Halasz (1996) examined the frequency with which personal meanings were stimulated while reading a literary, as opposed to a nonliterary, text. For this purpose, the participants were asked to read three short stories. Next, they were asked to generate both the accepted meanings and the personal meanings of the text. In counting the frequency of accepted and personal meaning units, Halasz found that the literary text enabled readers to generate a remarkably higher proportion of personal meanings.

Generally speaking, the studies dealing with the differences between reading literary and non-literary texts can be said to fall into five categories. The first category relates to the differences regarding the emotional effect and the degree of the involvement of personal meaning. In this respect, Miall (2002) categorized feelings during reading literary texts at four levels: First, feelings like enjoyment and pleasure arise when readers reads an already interpreted text. Second, feelings such as empathy and sympathy with an author or narrator,

according to Miall, do not derive from the literary aspects of reading. Third, feelings of interest is considered an initial moment in readers' response to the formal components of a literary text. Miall also elaborate that all these feelings serve to attract the attention of readers. Furthermore, these aesthetic reactions anticipate a further level of feeling called "modifying feelings" by Miall (2002, p.221). They propose that while reading literary texts aesthetic and narrative feelings interact to modify self-understanding. It was also revealed that a literary text imposes a strong influence on the reader's self because it often has multiple meanings.

In a similar study Halasz (1996) examined the frequency with which personal meanings were stimulated by a literary, as opposed to a non-literary, text. After reading three short stories, the participants were asked to generate the texts' accepted meaning and personal meaning. In counting the frequency of accepted and personal meaning units, Halasz found that the specific literary text enabled readers to generate a remarkably higher proportion of personal meanings.

The second category is concerned with the genre of poetry as a representative of literary texts. Hanauer (1998), in his empirical studies of literary reading, compared reading poetry as a representative of literary text and encyclopedic texts as the representative of nonliterary texts. He found that reading poetry (1) requires "higher levels of surface information recall" than encyclopedic texts; (2) takes more time to be read; and (3) involves more difficulty to understand than encyclopedic items.

The third category of studying the differences between reading literary and non-literary texts has been related to the differences between the speeds with which these two text types are read. Zwaan (1999), in his study found that, compared with a news perspective, a literary perspective imposes a slower reading speed.

The fourth way to consider variance in reading literary texts is to pay attention to readers' proximity to or familiarity with the culture and to the setting and the themes of a particular literary text. Dixon and Bortolussi (1996) found that the degree of personal meaning in reading literary texts may depend on the extent of the reader's familiarity with the culture shown in the text. In this respect, another form of proximity was proposed by Dixon and Bortolussi (2001). They suggested that readers of a literary text are likely to process it as if it were a communication of the narrator; thus, readers form a model of the narrator and his or her stance toward the narrative. Dixon and Bortolussi contended that some aspects of the narrator's stance are computed automatically because they are with a partner in a conversation. Other aspects, such as the narrator's view of the characters or the theme of the

story, require more deliberate processing. Thus, the reader's relation to the narrator may form an important component of literary reading (Miall, 2002).

The fifth technique used for comparing literary and non-literary text is to analyze reader-generated questions. Dubravac and Dalle (2002) asked 47 undergraduate students, who were studying French as their L2, to perform a comprehension task using two narratives and two expository texts. The participants generated questions at specific points throughout each text. The responses were then categorized under five question types: scripturally implicit, textually implicit, textually explicit (which had been borrowed from Pearson and Johnson (1978) linguistic (lexical and syntactic), and miscomprehension questions.The results showed that the participants generated more inferences for narrative texts whereas they exhibited more miscomprehension for expository texts.

Considering the above-mentioned issues, the present study intends to compare the kind and the difference of communication that occurs between the readers and literary and non-literary texts using the student-generated question technique. Accordingly, the present research follows two objectives:

1) It intends to pinpoint the kinds of questions students ask for each text type(literary and non-literary texts). To determine the type of the questions involved, the Dubravac / Dalle model was employed. This can reveal the students' problems with asking appropriate questions for each text type.

2) The research aims to investigate the differences between the questions asked by students for each text type.

According to Dubravac and Dalle (2002), many of the differences in student-generated questions seem to be related to the quality and quantity of online (thinking of inferences during the process of reading) inferences. An inference is generated when a reader uses both his or her background and linguistic knowledge. In view of the fact that the answer to the questions asked by the students require background knowledge or linguistic knowledge, Dubravac and Dalle have classified questions into five categories. Table One below displays the question types introduced by them:

Table 1 Dubravac and Dalle's (2002) classification of question types

Scripturallyimplicit	These questions require the greatest amount of available background knowledge in order to be answered. In other words, these questions require an answer that is not in the text. Consequently, in order to answer these questions, the reader should be cognizant of textual clues that show the relationships between characters, as well as those which show the relationship between the text and otherworld situations.
Textually implicit	While relying on less background knowledge than scripturally implicit questions, textually implicit questions still presuppose a certain amount of inference. In other words, these questions require readers to link two parts of a given paragraph using their background knowledge.
Textually explicit	Textually explicit questions demand little, if any, background knowledge and the answer can be easily found in the text.
Linguistic	Linguistic questions typically include questions pertaining to the syntactic or semantic traits of the text
Miscomprehension	This type can be observed when participants obviously do not grasp the coherence of the text.

An example of scripturally implicit question can be observed in the textentitled *The Cask of Amontillado*, there is no clue to show the reason why the author has chosen this particular title for his story. In order to understand this, the reader should be able to find the relationship of textual clues and the way in which they link up with world situations. Additionally, the questions "why didn't the narrator experience his joyful solitude earlier?"-and "why does the author mention the example of the astronaut?" are examples of scripturally implicit questions. Furthermore, in the text "Epistemology", the questions "What does innate idea refer to?" and "what does pre-established harmony refer to?" can be considered as scripturally implicit, since the reader should go through the above-mentioned processes to answer these questions.

For textually implicit questions, it can be said that in the story *The Cask of Amontillado* there is a sentence *"The gait of my friend was unsteady*". If readers ask*"Why was Fortunato(who is the friend of the narrator) unsteady?",*they can find the answer by referring back to the previous paragraph where it is mentioned that Fortunato was drunk. Furthermore, the question "why does writer use the combination solitary bliss?" in the text *The rewards of living a solitary life* can be a type oftextually implicit question. Moreover, in the text *Epistemology*, the questions; "What is the relationship between epistemology and skepticism?" and "Why has John Locke compared the mind with a black table?" can be categorized as textually implicit questions.

The third question type is "textually explicit," such as the questions:*When did the story happen*in *The Cask of Amontillado?,*and the answer is *about dusk one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season.The other examples can be "who was Montresor?" and " where did they go with each other?"*The example of this question type in the text "Epistemology" can be the question "what is epistemology?".

The fourth type of question is “the linguistic question”, such as “*what does x mean*?”, “*what does x have to do with anything?”* or *“Does itmean what I think it does?”* These questions often seem to show failure to comprehend the text and the subject himself/herself understands that s/he has a problem in understanding it. For instance, in the text entitled *The Cask of Amontillado* , the question *“What does the word ‘catacomb’ mean?”* can be categorized asthis type of question since asking this question can be ascribed to the subject’s inadequate lexical repertoire. Furthermore, the question “what does innate mean?” in the text *Epistemology* can be considered linguistic question.

The fifth type of question is the “miscomprehension question.” Examples of miscomprehension questions include mistakes such as confusing complex persons and places. For instance, Amontillado is a kind of alcoholic drink. If someone asks *“Who isAmontillado?”* this can be considered a kind of miscomprehension question. Inability to comprehend idiomatic expressions is also another type of miscomprehension question.Or in the text “The rewards of living a solitary life,” the question “To what extent loneliness is frightening?”is also a case of a miscomprehension question. Moreover, the questions “Why has the author mentioned skepticism as a subtitle for epistemology?” and “Which favorite idea has Hume applied?” can be consideredmiscomprehension questions in the text “*Epistemology”*.

Once the type of questions asked by the students has been determined, the questions were classified and analyzed statistically. In this research, the independent variable is text type (i.e., narrative and expository) and the dependent variables are question types at five levels: scripturally implicit, textually implicit, textually explicit inferences, linguistic, and miscomprehension. To investigate the difficulty the students experienced in creating specific question types, the frequency of each question type was counted for each text type.To ensure that the differences between the questions asked for literary and nonliterary text types are statistically significant, a Kruskal-Wallis measurement test was applied. Kruskal-Wallis is an appropriate non-parametric alternative to the one-way independent-samples ANOVA. Since SPSS revealed that our samples are non-parametric, Kruskal-Wallis was applied to analyze the data. Furthermore, Kruskal-Wallis is used when there are more than two independent variables and each variable has five or less levels. In the case of this research, there were five texts as our independent variables, which were compared on the basis of the frequency of five question types as our dependent variables.

Significance of the Study

The major emphasis of the present study is on the interaction between the reader and the text, which is a relatively new area of research. In recent studies of literary reading, for example in the work by Dubravac and Dalle (2002), the focus of inquiry has changed from the writer/the text to the reader, or to the interaction between the reader and the text (Schooten & Glopper, 2003).

Iser (1989) has argued that in all fields students need to think and reason more fully about what they are reading; therefore, studying literary processes help them in the reading process (Langer, 1989). With this important point in mind, the present study intends to investigate the problems students are likely to encounter in the process of asking appropriate questions while reading literary and non-literary texts.

It has been emphasized that to know how to teach literature, we should learn more about the distinction between literary and nonliterary understanding, as well as about the nature of the meaning-making processes (Dixon & Bortolussi, 2001). Klemenz-Belgardt (1981) suggests the need to use theories of text understanding to study the ways by which readers comprehend texts.

As Hanauer (1999) and Hwang and Embi (2007)state, the discipline of literature has not produced a coherent method for teaching or enabling students to acquire systematic literary knowledge. This may well stem from the fact that very few researchers within the discipline of literature have investigated cognitive aspects of literary education. By spotting the deficiency of the learners in asking appropriate questions, the present research can help students overcome some of the difficulties in reading literary and nonliterary texts.

Method

Materials

Initially, in order to conduct the intended research, a total of five English texts - threeliterary and two non-literary were used for the purpose. The texts varied in difficulty such that one literary text and one non-literary text were judged, both by the present researchers and the participants, to be more difficult than the other texts. In determining the difficulty of the texts, as mentioned by Graves and Graves (2003) factors such as vocabulary, sentence structure, length, elaboration, coherence and unity, text structure and familiarity with content and background knowledge were taken into consideration. The rationale behind such a selection was to strike a balance between the text types so that the difficulty of the text types might not

prevent some participants from showing their real abilities. The first paragraph and the last two paragraphs of one of the non-literary texts (Business, ethics and intercultural communication) were suppressed in order to keep the balance of text length. The first paragraph was the abstract of the whole text and the last two paragraphs actually summarized the contents of the whole text and did not add anything new to the text. In this way, the length of non-literary texts reached 3559 words,which became very close to the length of literary texts which was 3547 words.

One of the literary texts was selected from short story genre entitled "*The Cask of Amontillado*" by Edgar Allan Poe (Womack, 2009) whereas the others werechosen from the genre of literary essaysentitled "*The Effects of Sympathy in theDistress of Others*" by Edmund Burke and "*The Rewards of Living a SolitaryLife*" by May Sarton. Furthermore, the two non-literary texts entitled *"Business, Ethics and Intercultural Communication"* by Johannes Brinkmann and *"Epistemology"* were adapted from http://www.philosophyclass.com/epistemology.

The short story*"The Cask of Amontillado"* is a classic example of the use of an unreliable narrator. Montresor, the narrator of the story, tells his tale of revenge with pleasure, as he invites the reader to appreciate his cleverness. By telling the story from Montresor's point of view, Poe forces the reader to penetrate into a murderer's mind.

The incentive behind the selection of this story stems from the circumstance that, the reader, on reading this story, is supposed to become quickly aware of the fact that Montresor is not a reliable narrator but tries to convince him/her that his intentions are honorable. In order to grasp this point, the reader should find the link between textual clues of relationship between characters and world knowledge. Accordingly, comprehending the text at issue involves great deal of "scripturally implicit" information, which drastically challenges the reading comprehension skill of the participants involved in the present study.

Another justification for such a selection is that *The Cask of Amontillado* is a carefully crafted story so that every detail contributes to a certain unique effect (Womack, 2009). The story is replete with ironies, both verbal and dramatic. It is now widely acknowledged that in dramatic irony the reader perceives something that a character in the story does not. Therefore, distinguishing this type of irony requires the reader to link two or more parts of a given paragraph using his/her background knowledge. This causes the text to be full of "textually implicit" information, which makes the text under discussion a good candidate for the current research since this may stimulate the participants to ask this kind of question.Another important factor in selecting this text is its structural complexity, which

paves the way for asking “textually explicit”, “linguistic” and “miscomprehension” questions, which are the types to be investigated in the present research.

In summary, all the selected texts had the above-mentioned advantages. However, in the selection of the expository texts care was taken to choose texts whose topics were less likely to be familiar to the participants. The two expository texts chosen were *Epistemology* and *Business, Ethics and Intercultural Communication*. The rationale behind this choice is to assess respondents’ ability to ask questions that involves their background knowledge. In other words, this choice can help the researchers to assess whether or not the respondents have acquired the skill of using their background knowledge while reading.

Participants

The investigation occurred in the context of a third-year undergraduate course in *Reading Short Stories* at an Iranian University, and was conducted over a whole semester. The participants involved in this research were 30 undergraduate students (24 females and 6 males) who were all Persian native speakers and were selected from a population of senior students majoring in English literature, on the bases of their GPAs.The participants had already been enrolled for a course entitled *“Reading Short Stories.”*

The reason for such a selection stemmed from the fact that these participants had passed all the relevant and required courses (i.e.,*Introduction to Literature I*, *Reading SimpleProse Texts* and *Reading Advanced Prose Texts).* It was assumed that students passing their required courses can better serve the purpose of this research. This idea originated in the fact that the students had undergone all the required instructions in both literary and non-literary reading courses; hence, these studentscould be more helpful in revealing the drawbacks of the reading instructional system. In other words, involving the students who had passed all literary courses in the curriculum could shed more light on the reading problems of both students and the teaching system.

Procedure

To specify the strategic needs of students in reading literary and non-literary texts and to compare the processes of reading literary and non-literary texts, two prose works (i.e., one short story and two literary essays plus two expository texts) were assigned to the participants. Before reading the texts, the participants were provided with instructions as follows:

> “While reading the texts, you are actually communicating with the author; however, the author is not present to answer your likely questions. Please

> write down in English the questions that occur to you while reading each text and for which you cannot find the answer in the text even after finishing the story".

To help the students maintain their interest and enthusiasm, each text was given to them in five different sessions. In the first session, the text "*The Cask of Amontillado*" was given to them, then the texts "*The Effects of Sympathy in the Distress of Others*";"*The Rewards of Living a Solitary Life*";"*Business, Ethics and InterculturalCommunication"* and "*Epistemology*" were given to them consecutively.

The original estimation was that the students had no idea what it meant to ask questions. Therefore, to ensure the experiment would be helpful to students in asking appropriate questions, a pilot study was arranged. Ten students participated in this pilot study. They were asked to read a short story *'Rope'* by Katherine Anne Porter and to formulate the questions occurring to them. The researchers' presuppositions proved to be true. The questions that the participants had formulated in the pilot study were of the type usually set by their teachers in students' final exams to test their comprehension.This pointed to the fact that some instructions were required for them to grasp the purpose of asking questions.

To this end, the mainparticipants were assigned to read *"Rope"*, a short story by Katherine Anne Porter, which was to be discussed in class. While discussing the story, the instructor tried to clarify what asking appropriate questions meant by citing exemplary questions.For instance, after reading the introductory paragraph which was as follows:

> On the third day after they moved to the country he came walking back from the village carrying a basket of groceries and a twenty-four-yard coil of rope. She came out to meet him, wiping her hands on her green smock. Her hair was tumbled, her nose was scarlet with sunburn; he told her that already she looked like a born country woman. His gray flannel shirt stuck to him, his heavy shoes were dusty. She assured him he looked like a rural character in a play (Perrine, 1974, p.453).

The instructor elaborated that two appropriate questions here might be: (a) Why has the author avoided mentioning the proper names of the characters and [instead] has used pronouns to refer to them?; and (b) what can be inferred about the man and the woman's relationship from the following sentence: *he told her that already she looked like a born country woman*? (See Appendix).At the next stage, the participants were supposed to be able to formulate the questions that occurred to them.

In subsequent weeks (12 weeks), the following texts were the focus of investigation: *A Clean Well-lighted Place* and *Cat in the Rain* by Ernest Hemingway*, I'm a Fool* by Sherwood Anderson, *That Evening Sun* by William Faulknerand *The DemonLover* by Elizabeth Bowen.For non-literary reading the following texts were taught and discussed:

*Create Opportunities, Not Fear, Through Change*by Dennis Parker, *Elevated Depressive Symptoms Among Caregiving Grandparents*by Jan Blustein, Sewin Chan and Frederico Guanais, *Promote Your Personal Growth and Motivation*by Susan Heathfield, *Youth, ethnicity and crime in Australia* by Jock Collins (Adapted from Levine, Levine & Levine, 2007).

When it was clear that the participants had grasped what asking appropriate questions meant, the researchers arranged to conduct the main investigation. For this next phase, the participants were presented with each text in a different session. In addition to the above-mentioned tasks, prior to the main phase of the investigation, the researchers provided the participants with a series of instructions. It was explained to them that they should ask a question as if they were communicating with the author.The questions produced by the participants for each of the texts were compiled and categorized on the basis of the type of answer required.

Data Analysis

To address the first three research questions, the frequency of each question typewas counted for each of the literary and non-literary texts.Table One displays thefrequency of question types in literary texts and Table Two displays the same data for non-literary texts.

Table 1 Observed Frequency and Percentage of Question Types in Literary Texts

Literary texts	Scripturally implicit	Textually implicit	Textually explicit	Linguistic	Miscomprehension
The Cask of Amontillado	291	73	242	189	87
The Effects of Sympathy …	89	22	159	117	36
The Rewards Of Living …	166	68	136	60	47
Total	546	163	537	366	170
%	30.6%	9.1%	30.1%	20.5%	9.5%

Table 2 Observed Frequency of Question Types in Non-literary Texts

Non-literary texts	Scripturally implicit	Textually implicit	Textually explicit	Linguistic	Miscomprehension
Epistemology	140	233	100	29	39
Business, Ethics, …	82	372	27	81	41

Total	222	605	537	366	170
%	19.4%	52.8%	11.1%	9.6%	6.9%

As was mentioned above, to compare the frequency of each question type across literary and non-literary texts, the researchers applied the Kruskal-Wallis test. To this end, the Statistical Package of Social Sciences(SPSS) was used. Table 3 displays the results of Kruskal-Wallis test at $P \leq 0.05$. As the results indicate, at $p \leq 0.05$, the frequency differences of all question types across both literary and non-literary texts proved to be significant.

Table 3 The results of the Kruskal Wallis Test

	Scripturaly implicit	Textually implicit	Textually explicit	Linguistic	Miscomprehension
Chi-square	48.243	94.001	60.766	42.176	12.634
Df	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp.Sig	.000	.000	.000	.000	.013

Discussion and Conclusion

As the data reveals, the students' difficulty in reading both literary and non-literary texts can arise from several deficits ranging from understanding textually implicit information to miscomprehendingfacts presented by the texts. In this connection, the percentage of textually implicit questions in both literary and non-literary texts(9.1% and 52.8% respectively) asked by the participants hints at the fact that the students were unable to construct a situation model, which is an indispensable prerequisite for comprehending a text,whether literary or non-literary. As Zwaan,Magliano, &Graesser (1995) argue construction of a situation model includes both the processing of propositions, as well as detecting their relations to address different components of situational continuity, such as temporality, spatiality and causality.

In this sense, as far as Kamalski, Sanders, and Lentz (2008,p.323) are concerned, understanding discourse means that readers are able to construct a coherent mental representation of the contents of the text, where representations of the segments in the discourse are linked to one another. These coherence relations are generally viewed as "the cornerstones of comprehension" (Graesser, McNamara and Louwerse, 2003, p.82). They are meaning relations that connect discourse segments. Relations such as "cause-consequence", "list", and "problem-solution." Basically, coherence relations are conceptual, but they can be made explicit by linguistic markers. These markers encompass connectives *(because, so, however, although*) and lexical cue phrases *(for that reason, as a result and on the other hand* (Kamalski, et al., 2008).

Seen in this light, the frequency of textually implicit questions asked by the students suggests that they are unable to apply the strategy of "analysis of textual organization" which Riley (1993) considers as a strategy of good L2 learners. This strategy has been mentioned as a prerequisite strategy when reading a story with a lot of flashbacks as in the story *The Cask ofAmontillado* used in this experiment. The abundance of textually implicit questions also suggests that students are unable to use the terms "anaphoric and cataphoric"(Trench,2006, p. 75). The use of a linguistic unit, such as a pronoun to refer ahead to another unit analysis as a way to solve their readingproblems. Accordingly, this inadequacy of the participants is salient and should be taken into consideration.

Moreover, the analysis of the data points to the statistically significant difference of textually implicit questions across literary and non-literary texts(30.1%vs. 52.8%). The outstanding number of textually implicit questions asked while reading non-literary texts may stem from the fact that the formal style of the non-literary texts used in thisinvestigation may have been unfamiliar to the participantstaking part in the experiment, thus, triggering them to ask questions whose answer is implicit in the text. Nevertheless, people are exposed to stories from early stages of their life. They hear stories from pre-school age; therefore, stories are familiar communication across all cultures,and this familiarity has created the condition for asking less textually implicit questions (Stromqvist and Verhoeven, 2004). In contrast to this situation, expository discourse depends on extensive education in a particular field, and this characteristic provides scope forasking greater numbers of textually implicit questions while reading expository texts (Berman and Nir-Sagiv, 2007).

A second perspective to explain the statistically significant difference of textually implicit questions across literary and non-literary texts is that this result may be an upshot of the existence of inherent difference across narratives (literary) and expository (non-literary) texts. As Berman and Nir-Sagiv (2007) state,"in narratives –events constitute the fundamental component of text structure, whereas in expositorytexts, the discourse topic is the focus of attention." This assertion may account for the inconsistency of the findings of the present study with that of Dubravac and Dalle (2002). In their study, although narratives produced more textually implicit questions than the expository texts, the difference among the frequency of questions did not prove to be statistically significant. The fewer number of textually implicit questions in their study may be ascribed to the degree of familiarity of participants with the discourse topic. In their method section, Dubravac and Dalleelaborate that they have selected their expository texts from French daily newspapers. One article concerned dropping tourism rates to France and the other discussed Paleolithic paintings

found in a cave in Southern France. Dubravac and Dalle (2002, p. 223) assert that "both topics had been studied extensively during class." This familiarity with the discourse topic may have prevented the participants in their study from asking textually implicit questions. However, the topic of the selected texts of the current research were totally unfamiliar to the participants and this may have caused them to ask more textually implicit questions while reading them.Weaver and Kintsch (1991) also proposed that the function of expository texts is to inform the readership of something for which they lack background knowledge which is prerequisite to making inferences. In contemplating this view, it might seem reasonable that reading non-literary texts in the present study, which involved philosophical knowledge, trigger participants to produce more textually implicit questions.In relation to this finding, Sanders (1997) demonstrated a clear link between text type and type of coherence. His research indicated that the text structure of expository texts was dominated by semantic (objective) relations, meaning, in expository texts, discourse segments were mainly related through their propositional content. In reference to the findings of that research, students' asking textually implicit questions while reading expository (non-literary) texts seems to be plausible.

Another crucial distinction was observed in the frequency of scripturally implicit questions across literary and non-literary texts (literary 30.6% and non-literary 19.4%) which was consistent with the findings of Dubravac and Dalle. In this respect Miall (2002, p.334) embraces Kintsch's (1980) view and argues that the reader of a story, in contrast to that of an expository text, "sets up his own control schema" based on his/her interests, which may be different from the "event-based" model of the conventional story schema. Adopting this view, Zwaan (1993, p. 31) proposed the term "literary control system." It means that when a literary work such as a novel is read, the control system activates a particular form of processing that manipulates the basic comprehension processes. Kintsch (1980, p.4) suggested that "stylistic variations …. serve as cues for invited inferences" and these and other semantic features in literary texts tend to make the reader draw inferences about the points not mentioned in the text (i.e., points that are scripturally implicit). Particularly, the presence of interesting items in the story that fall outside the existing schemata of the reader triggers him/her to construct an appropriate schema to account for the story (Miall, 2002). As a result, the number of scripturally implicit questions asked by the participants while reading literary texts exceeded those asked while reading non-literary ones.

The third reading inadequacy of participants falls under the category of textually explicit facts of the text. As Roe, Smith and Burns (2005) hold, both literal and interpretive

comprehension play important roles in the reading comprehension task. In this connection, literal comprehension of a message–that is, being able to comprehend what is explicitly stated–is the foundation of reading comprehension (Dwyer, 2000). Therefore, this aspect of students' problems also deserves particular attention.

It might seem that the statistically significant frequency of textually explicit questions across literary (30.1%) and non-literary (11.1%) texts may also be ascribed to the cohesion (the degree to which concepts, ideas and relations within a text are explicit) of the text since characteristics of the text also influence comprehension (O'Reilly and McNamara, 2007).The story *The Cask of Amontillado* used in thepresent study can be characterized as having disjointed text structure, containing too much information with too little detail, containing loosely connected statements and having poor integration with previous sections.Researchers such as Beck,Mckeown, & Gromoll (1989) revealed that such texts, having disjointed text structure, containing too much information with too little detail, containing loosely connected statements and having poor integrations with previous sections impede comprehension by forcing the reader to form a disconnected and superficial mental representation of the material. Some of the characteristics of the texts employed in the present study may account for the marked number of textually explicit and miscomprehension questions (literary 9.5% and non-literary 6.9%) asked by students while reading literary texts. In fact, improving the cohesion of the texts by increasing causal and referential cohesion has proved to be successful in enhancing students' comprehension (O'Reilly and McNamara, 2007).

However, in the Dubravac and Dalle (2002) study, although the participants formulated a greater number of textually explicit questions while reading expository texts, the difference among the frequency of these two question types did not prove to be statistically significant. The differences of the findings of the present study with that of Dubravac and Dalle again may be traced back to the selected texts they have employed in their study. As Dubravac and Dalle claim, they have excerpted one of their short stories from a Petit Nicolas short story who is a fictional character appearing in a number of short stories aimed at children ages 10-14. Presumably, as Nodelman (2000,p.1)proposed,children's books are a distinct kind of a genre and "in comparison to many adult literary texts, they are short, simple, often didactic in intention, and clearly positive in their outlook on life-optimistic with happy endings."Consequently, a text with such characteristics should have produced less textually explicit questions.

The frequency of linguistic and miscomprehension questions across literary and non-literary texts also proved to be significant. Literary texts produced (20.5%) and non-literary

produced (9.6%) linguistic questions. On the other hand, the percentage of miscomprehension questions in literary texts was 9.5% and in non-literary was 6.6% which both of these differences proved to be statistically significant. This may have stemmed from the fact that characteristically in literary texts, the linguistic manifestation of language (including the selection of vocabulary, shifts of diction, shuffling the syntax, repetition and metaphorical substitution) deviate from non-literary ones and naturally these deviations mayresult in asking more linguistic questions (Alter, 1988).

Nevertheless, these findings again are different from the findings of Dubravac and Dalle's study. In their study, although narratives produced more linguistic questions, the difference of the frequency of linguistic questions asked across narrative and expository texts did not prove to be statistically significant. The less frequent number of linguistic questions asked while reading expository texts in Dubravac and Dalle's study may stem from the fact that the participants in theirstudy, as they themselves claim, had familiarity with the discourse topic of the expository texts employed. Since it has been demonstrated that content schema plays an integral role in reading comprehension,this familiarity with the content may have caused the readers to rely less on their vocabulary and syntactic complexity of the text (Huang, 2009), hence produce less frequent numbers of linguistic questions while reading expository texts.

Another conflict observed between the findings of the current research and Dubravac and Dalle lies in the realm of miscomprehension questions. While in the current research narratives produced more miscomprehension questions, in Dubravac and Dalle's study, despite the fact that subjects were familiar with discourse topic, expository texts produced more miscomprehension ones. This may be attributed to the proficiency level of the subjects who had only passed four semesters of French and had not acquired sufficient reading skills yet.

In summary, as the data suggests, some students are capable of asking appropriate questions. However, as the frequency of textually implicit questions suggest, the most glaring inadequacy of students' reading seems to lie in applying the cognitive strategy of relating parts of the text which, as Trench (2006) claims, is the characteristic of more proficient readers, who pay less attentionto linguistic details and this, in turn, results in a more global approach to the text.

The findings of the current research also elucidate the point that training students in asking appropriate questions while reading can be helpful. This finding is also consistent with that of Newmann (1990) who uncovered that when students adopt the role of questioners, it is

more likely for them to develop the necessary understanding to criticize, analyze and interpret information. Their initial questions often lead to additional questions and deeper understanding (McTighe and Wiggins, 2006).In this respect, Wiggins (1993) also contends that it is through the students' questions, and not just answers, that teachers are able to assess student understanding of the text.

Avenues for Further Research

In conclusion, this study points to certain directions of further research. The current research stresses the significance of students' asking questions while reading literary and non-literary texts.To analyze the questions asked by students, the questions were divided into five categories. In order to gain a more precise picture of students' reading inadequacies, as well as differences across reading literary and non-literary texts, a future research project can divide scripturally implicit questions into more subdivisions, including questions about literary devices, typographic questions, and questions involving imagination and emotions to investigate whether students pay attention to these aspects of texts or not.This suggestion has affinities with the idea that in addition to the story structure and discourse structure, there are other factors that play important roles in comprehension on the part of both reader and the text. In the text, these factors are metaphors, metonyms and other figures the writer employs. On the part of the readers it is the set of associations including emotions, memories and reflective thoughts triggered by these textual figures (Oatley, 1999). In this connection, Vygotsky holds that "alongside the casual line of development of any plot there is awavy and circuitous line like a kind of melody that accompanies the reading" (Oateley, 1999, p.447).

A prospective study can address the students' textually implicit problems in detail. It can pinpoint whether their problem lies in lack of background knowledge or problems in recognizing anaphoric and cataphoric references. Other studies could investigate the differences of asking questions across other literary genres like poetry, prose and drama using larger groups, different contexts and different cultural groups.

In the long run, as Verhoeven and Graesser (2008) point out, an important problem is how learning environments can be designed to optimally facilitate students' knowledge construction. Therefore, more research is required to develop particular models of cognitive discourse and linguistic processes underlying constructive learning which can make an opening for an environment that fosters meaningful, social and strategic learning processes and interactive knowledge construction (Verhoeven and Graesser, 2008). A future study can

trace back the reasons for student's inadequacy in classroom interactions by investigating the types of questions asked by teachers in reading classrooms.

Implications of the study

The results of the research indicate a number of recommendations for practice. As the findings of the research indicate, the major inadequacy of the participants lies in relating different parts of the text in order to gain a mental representation of the whole text. This finding suggests that language teachers should concentrate on this problem. Since substantial research has demonstrated that teachers ask a disproportionate number of questions requiring only literal comprehension of the material read (Dwyer, 2007).

The percentage of scripturally implicit questions asked by students while reading literary texts constituted only 2.9% of all questions, which is considerably insufficient for a text like *"The Cask of Amontillado"* with so many literary elements. Characteristically, comprehending such a text involves asking more scripturally implicit questions. This finding suggests that teachers incorporate more scripturally implicit questions in their classrooms to direct the students' attention towards scripturally implicit aspects of the text. In other words, in Janssen's (2002, p.105) term, the teacher should shift from asking "closed, factual" questions to "abstract questions".

In this respect, Elkad-Lehman's (2005) study brings out the concept of"intertextuality" as a way to involve students actively in reading classrooms. She deploys the argument that to interpret a text and to discover its meaning involves moving between texts(i.e., using background knowledge acquired through reading other texts, which is the same as the term scripturally implicit information used in this study). Elkad-Lehman (2005, p.40) deems intertextuality as a central component in the understanding of literature and of culture in general. She argues that our lives are constructed through various relations with texts. To her, intertextuality is a pivotal issue in education, especially in the training of literature teachers and in literature instruction. This issue can have "macro-curricular" effects, which affect curriculum development for all levels of instruction, from early childhood to higher education. It can also have "micro-curricular" aspects pertaining to curriculum planning and pedagogy of the literature teacher in the classroom (Elkad-Lehman, 2005).

The results of the study can also have contributions to fostering critical thinking in the reading comprehension classroom. Considering the problem of students in relating textually implicit aspect of the readings, teachers can include more interpretive questions in their interactions in reading classrooms. Interpretive questions require students to delve beyond what is explicitly stated and read between the lines to develop a richer understanding of the

written message. This is often referred to as “critical thinking” or “higher order thinking”, which is quite a nascent phenomenon in language teaching (Harris and Hodges, 1995; Dwyer, 2007, p.10).

The findings of the current research can also have implications for assessing reading comprehension. As Wiggins (1993) expresses, it is through the students’ questions and not just their answers that teachers are able to meaningfully assess understanding of subject matter. Because the type of questions asked by the students can reveal whether they have paid attention to important features of text (linguistic, textual and background information) or not. Eliason (2009) also acknowledges that when students are not motivated to ask and inquire, teachers do not acquire a clear picture of students’ understanding.

The results of the study also suggest a drastic shift in classroom interaction from teacher-generated questions to student-generated ones.It has been observed that there is the scarcity of learner queries. Pupils are experts at answering questions, but not at posing them. Newmann (1990) found that when students assume the role of questioners, they are more likely to develop the understanding required to criticize, analyze and interpret information. Students’initial questions often lead to additional questions and deepen understanding (McTighe & Wiggins, 2006; Eliason, 2009). In addition, when students question and wonder, teachers are provided with the opportunity to evaluate learner comprehension (Wiggins, 1993).

To sum up, three common suggestions proposed by Janssen (2002, p.106) underlie the findings of this research: “transfer of responsibility,” “authenticity of questions” and “engagement in reading.” Transfer of responsibility suggests that by asking their own questions, students become independent readers, capable of directing their own reading and learning process. Authenticity of questions focuses on the questioners’ quest to know, and prompts questioners to exercise curiosity, and express confusion, interest or discovery in reading. Alternatively, authentic questions reflect real-world interactions. Ultimately, generating authentic questioning may promote students’ personal engagement in reading. When students pose questions that address what they need to understand, they become intrinsically motivated. This seems to be enhanced through collaborative discussion with students sharing and challenging each others’ ideas. In other words, the teacher’s role may be better to shift from providing knowledge to coaching students’ individual reading processes (Janssen, 2002).

Limitations of the study

There are several changes that could make replication of this study more precise and informative. One of these changes concerns the limited number of subjects participating in the study. The study could be improved by employing a larger number of participants.

Another significant limitation of the study is the lack of investigation as to the role of emotions in determining the reading processes of literary and non-literary texts. Recent research in reading literary texts attest to the selective role of emotions in reading literary texts. It has been argued that emotions may override cognitive processes by focusing the readers' attention on certain types of information at the expense of other types of information that are more relevant to the readers' original goal. Therefore, there appears to be a relation between the type of attention and interest. It has been shown that attention given to interesting information requires fewer resources than attention given to uninteresting information. It has also been argued that emotions may back-up cognitive processes when cognitive processes fail to create a coherent mental representation of the text and the situation described by the text (Kneepkans and Zwaan, 1994). Nevertheless, the current study set out to investigate the strategic needs of the subjects in reading literary and non-literary texts neglecting the participant's interest in the text types.

While a person is reading a literary text, there may be an interaction between the literary response of an individual and his or her preferences for certain kinds of literature. It may well be that in the long run the literary response of an individual can be influenced by the sort of literature one reads (van Schooten and de Glopper, 2003). In this vein, Miesen (2003) asserts that that attitude toward a certain object (e.g., a fiction title) or behavior (e.g., reading fiction) plays an important role in models that predict and explain human behavior. Taking this fact into consideration, a future study can compare the strategic needs of subjects while reading texts in which they are interested and texts about which they do not have any options.

The next overarching limitation of the study was the confusion over critical terminology used in the study. Analyzing the questions asked by students revealed that sometimes it was difficult to decide to which category the questions belonged. In the categorization of questions proposed by Dubravac and Dalle (2002), they have subsumed all lexical and grammatical questions under the rubric linguistic questions. Nevertheless, the analysis of the data in the current study pointed to the fact that all lexical questions cannot be considered linguistic. As an example, in the text "epistemology," a number of students had asked "what does epistemology mean? In order to understand the meaning of this word, the

whole text should be read and related to each other. Thus, this question could predominantly be considered a textually implicit question rather than a linguistic question. Hence, a prospective study could consider this confusion of terminology and develop a more exact taxonomy of question types.

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Appendix

Examples of questions asked while teaching the short story Rope

Questions	Question type	Explanation
Why has the author avoided mentioning the proper names of characters and instead has used pronouns referring to them?	Scripturally implicit	Answering this question involves the use of back-ground knowledge, and there is no explicit information in this respect in the text.
What can be inferred about the man's and the woman's relationship from the following sentence: " ... *he told her that already she looked like a born country woman".*	Textually implicit	To answer this question, students should relate diff-erent paragraphs to each other.
What is the advantage of third-party narrative point of view used in this story?	Scripturally implicit	There is no explicit answer to this question in the text.
Why has the author chosen the title 'Rope' for this story? What is the significance of 'Rope' for the title?	Scripturally implicit	General information is necessary in order to explain the significance of rope in this story.
What does this sentence mean? *"What was the use of her having eyes, if that was the best they could do for her?"*	Textually explicit and textually implicit	The answer can easily be found in the text; moreover, to understand this part students should also take the situational context of the utterance into consideration.
What does this sentence mean? "*No ice, meat wouldn't keep".*	Textually explicit and textually implicit	The answer to this question can also be found easily in the text; however, in order to answer this question students should take the whole dialogue in their mind and try to infer the meaning considering the situation.
What does the following sentence mean? " *second best and scraps and makeshifts, even to the meat?"*	Textually explicit and textually implicit	As above
What does the word "*Claw*" mean?	Linguistic	Answering this question requires lexical knowledge.
Explain about the following	Textually explicit and	Answering this question

utterance: *"He swallowed the words red hot, his face burned".*	textually implicit	requires both using explicit as well as implicit(situational) information in the text.
What does the following sentence reflect about the man's character? *"...the whole trouble with her was she needed somethingweaker than she was to heckle and tyrannize over".*	Textually implicit	To answer this question, the students should resort to their textual information gained from previous paragraphs about the man's character.
'*She looked so forlorn, so lost and despairing he couldn't believe it was <u>onlya piece of rope</u> that was causing all the racket.*" What does the above sentence show about the couple's past relationship? Does the man know what the woman'sproblem is?	Textually implicit	Again, answering this question involves considering the information provided to the respondents throughout the whole text.
What does *'racket'*mean?	Linguistic	It involves lexical knowledge.
'*So, she was going to bring all that up again, was she?'... He was tired of explaining.* Does this sentence show that she is harboring a deep-seated resentment? What can that resentment be?	Textually implicit	To answer this question, respondents should put the bits of information gained from various parts of the story (i.e., textual information together).
What does the following utterance reveal about the woman's resentment? '*She hadn't meant she was happy because she was away from him, she meant she was happy getting the devilish house nice and ready for him'*	Textually implicit	One more time, solving this puzzle involves putting various jigsaw parts of information together to gain a whole picture of the story.
Why has the word 'rope' been repeated? What does it reveal about the man's and woman's relationship?	Scripturally implicit	Respondents should employ world knowledge as well as textual knowledge to find the answer.
What does the following	Textually implicit	Once more the answer to this

utterance signal about the woman's resentment? *' ... and reminded him thathousekeeping was no more her work than it was his'.*		question is possible just by considering the relationship between this part with the previous ones.
What does the following utterance reveal about the man's attitude towards the woman? *'... She knew as well as he did that his work brought in the regular money, hers was only occasional'.*	Textually implicit	As mentioned above.
What is the role of "*whippoorwill"?* What does its appearance at the end of the story predict about the resolution of the couple's marriage?	Scripturally implicit and textually implicit	At this stage, the respondents are supposed to consider the whole events of the story and compare it to the situation of "Whippoorwill" in the story.
Do you agree with this final utterance of the man? '*He knew how she was, didn't he?'* What literary element can be spotted here? Justify your answer.	Scripturally implicit and textually implicit	From the words exchanged between the man and woman in previous paragraphs respondents should have inferred that the man in essence didn't know how she was, and this can lead them to the dramatic irony element employed by the author.
What literary element can be detected in the final words of this story *"Sure, he knew how she was".*	Scripturally implicit	Consequently, this question can lead the respondents to realize the verbal irony at the end of the story which can, in turn, lead them to the theme of the story.

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Do teachers reap what they sow? – A study of young ESL learners' perception of what is learned in an English lesson

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Bio data

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Abstract

When teachers plan their lessons, they usually have certain objectives in mind. The objectives may state what they intend to teach or what they hope their learners will learn at the end of the lesson. Research in English as a second language (ESL) classrooms has shown conflicting perceptions of teachers and learners on what has happened or what is considered prominent in their shared classrooms (Allwright, 1988; Allwright and Bailey, 1991; Nunan, 1989; 1995; Breen, 2001; Benson 2001). As learners in most of these studies have been university or secondary students, this paper will instead discuss a case study of six young learners in a primary ESL classroom. The focus will be on the perceptions of their learning, the purpose of the main task, and their conception of difficulties in the lesson. These perceptions will then be compared to the teacher's. This study was accomplished through an analysis of the qualitative data collected through pre- and post-lesson interviews with the teacher and post-lesson interviews with six individual learners. It was found that similar to the older learners, the young learners also seemed to have their own agenda of learning different from that of the teacher and there are some variations in the concerns of learners of different abilities. The paper concludes with recommendations on pedagogical implications for teachers to reap better from what they sow.

Keywords: ESL classroom, learner perception

Introduction

This paper is a result of my participation in a project which investigated how English language teachers addressed the need to promote learners' knowledge of language (which refers to the grammatical and phonological systems, the vocabulary and the discourse elements) and their ability to use it within the ESL classroom (ESL includes English as a foreign language in this paper as well). The main subjects of the study were five ESL teachers in two different Hong Kong schools. Data were collected through documentation of

the lessons and interviews at different stages with the teachers to gain understanding of how they integrated their focus on language knowledge and language use (Lam, 2007). Learner interviews about the lessons were also included at the end of the lessons that were observed to enhance the methodology, though learners' views were not the focus of the main study. As I went through the learners' interview notes, I was intrigued by the interesting remarks they made and the different views they expressed when compared to those of the teachers and their peers. Much insight can be gained from the match and mismatch of learners' and teachers' perceptions of the same lessons they experienced. It is, therefore, the aim of this paper to sidetrack from the main study and explore the perceptions on teaching and learning in an English lesson between the teacher and the learners.

To introduce this comparison, I will first present a brief overview of research on learner perceptions of classroom language learning as compared to teacher perceptions. I will then report on a case study from the project mentioned earlier and illustrate how six learners of three different ability groups perceived what they had learned as compared to the teacher's perceptions of what was taught. Finally, pedagogic implications of the findings for ESL teachers will be discussed.

Learner and Teacher Perceptions of Language Learning in Foreign Language Classes

"Why don't learners learn what teachers teach?" Allwright's classic article (1984a) has raised the question long asked by many teachers. A number of research studies have pointed out that learners and teachers undergoing the same lesson may have different perceptions of the lesson's purpose, classroom activities and learning outcomes (Allwright, 1988; Allwright and Bailey, 1991; Nunan, 1989; 1995; Breen, 2001; Benson 2001). The mismatches between instruction and learning were also discussed in earlier studies under the concept of "inbuilt syllabus" (Corder, 1967; Dakin, 1973) which argued that learners have their internally preordained learning sequence and they select what to take in from what is exposed to them. The main causes leading to the difference in teacher-learner perceptions of the same classroom events is explained by Nunan (1995) as different "agendas" held by teacher and learners, while Allwright (1984b) sees this as the specificity of the teachers' learning management plans versus the non-specific (not to say commonly agreed) position of the learners in a language classroom. Block regards the difference as teachers' and learners' operation of "different systems for describing and attributing purpose to tasks" (Block, 1994:473). Tomlin & Villa (1994), Bialystok (1994)and Benson (2001) further develop from the research on learner agendas the notion of "learner control" over the cognitive processes

which govern what they attend to. Studies on learner autonomy have shown a great deal of evidence to support the notion that learners are active participants in their own learning processes (Benson and Lor, 1999).

Empirical research studies into different types of learners' perceptions conducted in foreign language classroom contexts (Allwright, 1984b; Slimani, 1989; Breen, 1991; Block, 1996;Huang, 2006; Mackey, Al-Khalil, Atanassova, Hama, Logan-Terry and Nakatsukasa, 2007) have yielded evidence that learners have idiosyncratic views about the same classroom events. For instance, Breen's study (1991) shows that learners who were linguistics graduates differed much in their reports on the teacher's classroom techniques. While this could be explained by the fact that the subjects were sophisticated learners, Slimani's study (1992) with less sophisticated undergraduate students on learners' uptake (what they recall to have learned at the end of a lesson), finds that as many as 74.59% of the total number of linguistic items claimed to have been learned during the observed sessions were reported by no more than three learners at a time. She also reports that topics initiated by learners themselves attracted more claims of uptake than the ones initiated by the teacher. Mackey et al.'s study(2007) about corrective feedback in Arabic foreign language classrooms confirms that the linguistic targets of teachers' feedback were perceived more accurately when feedback was directed at the learners themselves rather than at their classmates, and it is only when teacher feedback was provided explicitly that learners' perceptions of the corrective feedback tended to overlap with teachers' intention. Block's study (1996) also shows learner difference among six MBA student reports of what they had learned in their ESL classes as well as gaps in the responses between the teacher and the learners on the purpose of class activities.The results of these studies show that it is not uncommon for learners to differ from one another and from their teachers in their perceptions of teaching techniques, lesson content and purpose of activities in the classroom. It is when teachers make their intention more explicit and provide more individual attention, the result is a stronger impact on the individual learners.

A number of other studies in the context of ESL lessons point out that learners tend to perceive what they consider prominent in their learning differently fromtheir teacher's perception. Hawkey (2006), Nunan (1989) and Peacock (1998) think ESL learners tend to concentrate on formal language points rather than the communicative purpose of a lesson. For instance, Hawkey (2006) finds in his study that students perceived grammar exercises as more prominent in their English lessons than teachers did. On the contrary, teachers perceived communicative activities such as pair work as more prominent in their language

lessons. Nunan finds learners prefer pronunciation practice and error correction to more communicatively-intended activities such as pair work and the self-discovery of errors (Nunan, 1987, 1989), which teachers think of more highly. Huang (2006) also reports of learners' resistance to a teacher's goals and expectations in enhancing reflection and autonomy in an ESL reading course as they preferred more conventional approaches to the teaching of reading with focuses on tangible skills like vocabulary memorization and reading speed. Such conflicting views between the learners and their teachers show mismatches in the learners' priorities with those of the teachers' on the lesson focus. What these studies testify is that learners tend to regard the learning of grammar or specific language skills as more important in an ESL lesson, thus influencing their perception of the significance of the activities which focus more on language form.

However, the learners in the studies cited above are mainly undergraduates or adults who are sophisticated learners and may have a personal opinion of what language learning should be because of past experience. Research studies on younger learners in this area are few. Interestingly, Barkhuizen's (1998) study with grade 8 – 10 students echoes the findings of the above research. He finds thatstudents judged the usefulness of language activities differently from their teachers as they ranked the 15 activities selected for the study. They were more resistant to participating in communicative type activities. Rather they preferred more 'traditional' classroom work. The more mechanical aspects of language study like learning grammar and spelling were rated highly on the variables of enjoyment, learning English and usefulness after school. This is contrary to what teachers have thought in their attempt to be more communicatively minded.A study on Chinese adolescent learners by Wong (2009) maintains that lesson objectives based on language-knowledge or that are form-focused are more easily understood and identified by learners than those involving the application of language knowledge. The study also claims there is no correlation between learners' English proficiency and their ability to identify learning objectives of the lesson.

The two studies on adolescent ESL learners reveal that these students are similar to older learners in the way they regard 'traditional' activities on language form as more useful to their English learning and that language knowledge and form focused objectives are better recalled by learners despite their levels of language proficiency. It is unclear, however, whether these apply to younger learners at the level of primary school. Studies on primary pupils' views of their pedagogical experiences are limited and they tend to focus on student perspectives and experiences of the primary curriculum as a whole (see Pollard, 1996; Rudduck, Chaplain & Wallace, 1996; McCallum, Hargreaves & Gipps, 2000). The

significance of exploring young learners' perceptions on their ESL learning is that with a growing trend of ESL lessons being extended to earlier age in primary classrooms in many global contexts (Graddol, 2006), an understanding in this area will help shed light on the pedagogy employed in the classroom. Block also calls for more exploration of young learner voices as his research experience with a ten-year-old foreign language learner indicates that children at this age can have a fairly sophisticated sense of "meta-pedagogical awareness" (Block, 2000:101), meaning the ability to report about one's past language teaching/learning experiences.

Unlike Barkhuizen's study, the present study does not set out to analyse the perception of the learners in terms of their judgment of the usefulness of language activitiessince it may be premature to ask young learners in ESL education settings to make evaluative comments on the usefulness of different language activities. Rather, the study sets out to explore young learner' perception of what they have learned as compared to the teacher's intention. In addition, while Wong's study (2009) finds no correlation between the adolescent learners' language proficiency with their ability to identify learning objectives, this study will compare how young learners of different levels of academic performance differ in their perceptions of learning. This also differs from other studies in that it explores whether the learners' reported difficulties in learning were the same difficulties anticipated by the teacher.

As the scope of the present study does not allow an investigation into the different variables in the young ESL learners' learning process, it aims to make an initial attempt to explore the following questions through matching the young learners' report of what happens in the lesson with that of the teacher:

i. Do young ESL learners remember best what the teacher considers to be most prominent in the lesson?
ii. Do young ESL learners perceive the purpose of the main task in the same way as their teacher?
iii. Do young ESL learners and their teacher share the same perception of what is difficult in the lesson?
iv. Is there a relationship between learners' academic performance and their perception of learning with regard to questions (i) to (iii)?

Background of the Study

The following study presents a case study within a bigger classroom-based collaborative project with five English teachers from two different schools in Hong Kong. To serve the purpose of an initial exploration into the research questions stated above, the present study narrows its scope through a focussed investigation into a primary two level English lesson with seven-year-old pupils. The primary school is a relatively new government subsidized school in Hong Kong and it is often visited by researchers and overseas visitors.

The English teacher of the primary two level class in this study was chosen by the school principal. She was young and had experience teaching primary 1-3 pupils in the school for three years after getting her bachelor of education degree. The class she taught consisted of 20 mixed ability primary pupils who had just started their ESL learning since primary one, although most of them could have been exposed to English songs and letters of the alphabet if they had attended local kindergartens at the pre-school stage.According to the teacher, they were accustomed to group work in the English lesson.

Methodology

Information about the lesson and the teacher's intention with respect to the pedagogical design of the lesson was captured by a cycle of teacher-researcher pre-lesson interview, lesson observation, and post-lesson stimulated recall interview (SRI) and reflections. The pre-lesson interview was conducted a day before the lesson. It was unstructured so as to give the teacher more space to explain to the researcher the lesson objectives and procedures. The researcher would respond spontaneously, clarifying meaning and trying to understand the purposes of the various activities. The post-lesson SRI was done immediately after the lesson, during which the videoed lesson was replayed and the teacher (or the researcher) would pause the tape at "critical episodes" and report (or invite report) on what the teacher was thinking about or intended to do during that episode. The purpose was to elicit data about thought processes involved during the implementation of the lesson (see Gass & Mackey, 2000, for a comprehensive review of SRI).

Six pupils were interviewed after the lesson. The teacher was asked to identify these pupils with two coming from each of the high, mid and low achieving groups in terms of the teacher's impression of their overall academic performance in school. The six pupils consisting of three girls and three boys were interviewed by the researcher individually in

Cantonese, the pupils' mother tongue, at the lunch break after the lesson was observed. Each interview lasted for about 5 minutes.

The aim of the interviews was to find out about the pupils'perception of the teaching and learning in the observed lesson through a semi-structured framework with questions asked in the following areas:

i) what was best remembered in the lesson;

ii) what the teacher wanted you to learn in various activities; and

iii) what was considered difficult.

The semi-structured format was chosen for the interview as it is considered suitable for children having reached the age of seven (Scott, 2008). The format provides openness to changes so that probing and appropriate follow-up to answers was possible (Kvale, 1996). In addition, the questions were framed slightly indirectly for the pupils to respond to in the context of them telling a family member about a lesson they had in school (see interview protocol in Appendix A). This is to help minimise the possibility of providing "socially undesirable" responses to an unfamiliar interviewer (Kagan, 1990;Snow et al, 1996).

The pre-lesson teacher interview, the lesson observed, the teacher stimulated recall interview and the student interviews were all transcribed in full for detailed analysis. A thematic approach, which involves "careful reading and re-reading of the data" (Rice & Ezzy, 1999: 258)in order to identify patterns and emerging themes was adopted in the process of data analysis and categorisation.

Lesson Procedure

The lesson observed was 40 minutes and the first in the morning. There were 20 pupils in the class. The pupils sat in groups of four. The lesson was the last one in a series of five lessons based on a story about a child's activities with Grandpa. The lesson procedure is summarised as follows:

i) Story reading aloud – Pupils read aloud the story with the teacher.

ii) Teacher input – The teacher drew pupils' attention to the repeated line "Let's go fishing in the sea" from the story. She reminded them of the use of the infinitive verb form after "Let's". She then showed the class four different situations through PowerPoint slides, namely a sunny day, a rainy day, summer holiday and recess, and elicited from pupils what they could do in these situations using the sentence structure "Let's do something".

iii) Group writing task – Pupils worked in groups. Each group was given one of the four situations shown earlier, and each pupil in the group had to write on a big poster paper a

sentence using the given language pattern about what they could do in the given situation using "Let's".

iv) Peer review – Groups swapped their sentences for peer marking. Finally, one group was invited to report on their peer review of another group's work.

Findings

In this section, findings to the research questions will be presented by comparing the teacher's views expressed in the pre-lesson interview and/or the post-lesson SRI with the pupils' responses in the post-lesson interview. Since research question four is related to all the other research questions, the findings to this question will be presented together with those of the other questions. A pseudonym, Miss K, will be used to refer to the teacher whenever appropriate. The two pupils from the high achieving group will be referred to as H1 and H2, the two from the average achieving group will be A1 and A2, and the two from the low achieving group will be L1 and L2 respectively.

Research question one: Do young ESL learners remember best what the teacher considers to be most prominent in the lesson?

The term "most prominent" in the context of the lesson is taken to refer to the teacher's stated objective of the lesson and the main task which helps pupils achieve the objective. In the pre-lesson interview, Miss K pointed out that the lesson was the last one in a series of lessons on the chosen text, so what she intended to do was to lead pupils from the story to a writing task to achieve the objective of the lesson, which is "(to) focus on teaching the structure "let's" and make the pupils apply it to real life situations". The main task she designed to help pupils achieve the objective is the "writing task" through which pupils "will write about a few scenarios other than the one on fishing". In other words, what Miss K considered to be most prominent in the lesson was applying the language pupils learned from their reading to other contexts through writing.

When asked what thepupils remembered best about their learning in the lesson, the responses of the pupils show that they varied in the specificity of what they remembered best about the lesson as presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Pupil Responses on What is Best Remembered About the Lesson

Pupils	**Responses** (with key words highlighted by the researcher)
H1	I read a **story** and learned some **new words**. … I learned the names of one kind of fish and a sea creature, which looked like a lobster … crayfish and snapper.
H2	I can remember very little about the lesson. ... I **used "let's" tomake sentences** and the **title of the book** was 'Grandpa, Grandpa'.
A1	We **used "let's" tomake sentences** in groups. Miss K wanted to teach us to **use "let's" tomake sentences in different situations**.
A2	The teacher told me a **story** …I learned **the kind of sea creatures** that we can fish for our meals. …I learned to use **the words"eat" and "go to"**. I learned to tell the **story** and **use "let's" to make sentences**. I also learned to **correct other students' mistakes**.
L1	I learned about the **places that I can go to at recess** because our Caterpillar Group wrote sentences about things we could do at recess.
L2	I learned some **new words**(but could not give examples of these when probed further by the researcher).

The table shows three out of the six of the pupils, namely H2, A1 and A2, remembered the task of using 'let's' to make sentences. However, among them, only A1 captured the gist of the lesson best by stating both what the class did and what the teacher's objective was. In other words, only one of them could comprehend the teacher's objective not just at the level of language learning but also at the level of language application.

There were two other rather common responses among the pupils. The first one was the reference to the story read in class by H1, H2 and A2 as what was best remembered, and the other was the reference to "new words" learned by H1, A2, and L2. However, only H1 and A2 were able to cite examples of words and expressions actually learned in the lesson. L2 could not provide any examples when asked to.

A comparison of the responses from the pupils of different achieving groups show that the average achieving pupils' responses seem most compatible with what the teacher perceived as prominent. Apart from A1's very clear conception of what the teacher considered most prominent, A2 also demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the development of the whole lesson. The high achieving pupils', however, seem to remember best itemised details like words learned (e.g., H1) or title of the book (e.g., H2). In fact, the answer of H2 suggests that he was rather cautious and would not like to commit to responses which he was not sure. The low achieving pupils' responses tend to be less explicit (e.g., L2) or on a rather narrow scope confined to the group experience (e.g., L1).

Research question two: Do young ESL learners perceive the purpose of the main task in the same way as their teacher?

The purpose of the main task – group writing – can be understood at three levels from Miss K's views expressed in the pre- and post-lesson interviews. At the overall task level, she stated that the design was to teach pupils to apply "let's" to make suggestions about what they could do in different scenarios. At the language level, she aimed to help the class "review the form of verbs used in this sentence structure" (i.e., the form of verbs should not be changed). At the task organisation level, Miss K stated that the purpose of letting pupils work in groups was to enable them "to think of more ideas" together as a group than as individuals and to promote peer help.

The pupils' responses to this question as presented in Table 2 below show that there are both matches and mismatches of the perceived purpose of their group writing task with the teacher's:

Table 2 Pupils' Responses on the Purpose of the Main Task

Pupils	**Responses**(with key words highlighted by the researcher)
H1	Miss K wanted to teach us **present tense.**
H2	She wanted to teach us to **make sentences in English.**
A1	She wanted us to **understand the different situations** so we can **make sentences using "Let's"**.
A2	She wanted us to learn to **do appropriate things for different situations**….. to use "let's"**to make sentences on different weather and situations**.
L1	The teacher wanted us to **describe things that we did at recess.**
L2	**To make a sentence to describe things that I could do on a rainy day** with "let's".

It is not surprising that none of the pupils were able to perceive the purpose of the main task at all three different levels as this is too demanding for them. Nevertheless, the responses of the three groups of achievers seem to fall into three different perspectives. The high achieving pupils tended to understand the task purpose at the language level. For instance, H1 cited teaching "present tense" as the purpose behind the task, probably confusing the use of the infinitive verb form after "Let's" with the use of present tense, and H2 thought the task was simply about teaching them "sentence making". The low achievers, L1 and L2, on the other hand, took a rather narrow perspective and confined the purpose of the task to "describing things" they could do in the specific scenario given to their own group (i.e. a rainy day / at recess), without generalising it to the overall purpose of the task. Comparatively, the average achievers A1 and A2 were better at demonstrating an understanding of the overall

purpose of the task compatible with that of the teacher, which was to apply the language structure appropriately to other situations. However, the organisational purpose of the task was not mentioned at all by anyone, probably reflecting that pupils did not seem to realise the significance of the classroom organisation on their learning.

Research question three: Do young ESL learners and their teacher share the same perception of what is difficult in the lesson?

The pupils' learning difficulties anticipated by Miss K before the lesson included the use of the infinitive verb form after "Let's" and the spelling of words needed for expressing ideas in writing. During the post-lesson SRI, she pointed out that pupils did ask her for spelling support in the group writing task. Other mistakes she noticed during the lesson included confusion about the use of singular and plural noun form (e.g., "Let's play game" instead of "Let's play games" and the omission of the article 'the' in sentences like "Let's go to park to play" and "Let's go to supermarket"). In addition, she found that some groups had difficulty with the appropriateness/meaning of the sentences such as "Let's go to the park on a rainy day" and "Let's learn at home on a rainy day". These two sentences were considered wrong by pupils during the peer review. After the group writing and peer review, Miss K made use of the reporting back time to discuss with the class the meaning and the appropriateness of these two sentences and give corrective feedback to some language errors. In other words, instead of finding problems in the pupils' use of the target language form "Let's do something", Miss K realised in the lesson that pupils needed language support on other grammatical points and guidance on their reasoning and expression of meaning in their language application.

Problems perceived by pupils in their learning were identified either directly through their own explicit comments on the problems encountered or indirectly through their responses to the question of whether they needed help with revision of the lesson. The indirect question was asked so as to lessen the intimidation that pupils might feel in admitting their problems in learning to a stranger. Their responses are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3 Pupils' Responses on What is Difficult in the Lesson

Pupils	**Responses**(with key words highlighted by the researcher)
H1	I need help with learning **grammar** …. I need my mother to help me revise the use of **present tense** …. I always forget to add's' to the verbs after the subject 'he', 'she', and 'it'.
H2	I **don't need** my mother's **help**.
A1	I will revise the sentences that I learned today …. I need my mother to help me with **dictations**. I can **revise the part of grammar on my own**."
A2	I need her (mother's) help with the **spelling of words**. …. I prefer the teacher to explain grammar clearly …. I can have a clear idea of the **rules of grammar** in this way.
L1	We had to do a lot of dictations... but I could not **remember all the words**. ... I did not know **what I could do at recess**. I also need the tutor (referring to the tutor who gave him private tuition) to teach me the method of **making sentences.**
L2	I am not able to **make sentences** ….. (because) I could not think of **anything to do on a rainy day for I would not be able to go outside**.

The responses show that apart from H2 who did not think he needed any help in revision nor did he have any intention to elaborate further on the question, all other pupils stated their problems in learning or areas that they needed help in revision. The responses also reflect a difference among the learners in their perceived difficulties. H1 thought she needed help with grammar, but the details of her problems did not reflect what was taught in the lesson. The two average achievers shared the same concern and stated that they needed help in spelling/dictation. To them, even though grammar might not pose difficulty to them in learning, it was something they would revise and/or pay attention to. The low achieving pupils, however, tended to have a shared difficulty figuring out what to do in the given scenarios (which was 'at recess' and 'on a rainy day') on top of their problem in sentence making. In addition, L1 also found it a daunting experience to remember the words for dictation. In fact, before the researcher started the interview with L1, he began the conversation by revealing his difficulty in understanding the meaning of English words by saying: "Miss K should explain the Chinese meaning of the words for us. I have problem in remembering the meaning of words." This suggests that L1 probably had difficulty understanding the lesson in English as well.

The learning difficulties cited by the pupils were indeed quite diverse. The findings above show that they include problems in grammar, spelling, ideas and understanding the lesson in English. None of the pupils, however, mentioned the difficulty they had in using the infinitive verb after "Let's", the problem anticipated by the teacher. It is unclear whether the non-mention of difficulties in using "Let's" reflects a good understanding of the use of the

language structure, but what is apparent is pupils finished the class with other language learning concerns emerging, ranging from general to specific, immediate to upcoming.

Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

Similar to the studies with older learners on learner uptake, prominence of activities and purposes of class activities (e.g., Slimani, 1992;Hawkey, 2006; Block, 1996), young learners in this study vary among themselves and differ from their teacher in their understanding of teaching and learning. This shows that learner difference and learner-teacher difference in terms of their perception of teaching and learning is not an exception for young ESL learners. These differences in perception will be analysed and their pedagogical implications discussed below.

In general, the findings to the first three research questions comparing learner and teacher perceptions on what is most prominent in the lesson, the purpose of the main task and the difficulty of learning indicate an inclination of young learners to consider English learning as a matter of learning language items. This is most evident in terms of what was best remembered about the lesson and the difficulties they perceived in learning. Most of the learners remembered their learning in terms of language structure, words, sentences and the story read. Only one pupil out of six in this study made reference to the application of the new structure to different situations. Similarly, the areas where they needed help with or would revise after class were predominantly concrete language forms like spelling and grammar. While it is said that Chinese students generally hold the view that language learning is basically about learning grammar rules and vocabulary (Horwitz, 1985), this also appears to be a universal view shared in one way or another by other ESL students such as the Italian students in Hawkey's study (2006) and the South African students in Barkhuizen's study (1998) stated in the literature review earlier.

In the case of the young learners in this study, the phenomenon could be explained on one hand by the fact that young learners may find grammar, vocabulary, and spelling more tangible and substantial to cite as examples of what is learned than more abstract notions of language application or communicative purposes. Pollard's study with primary pupils also confirms that they favour learning with low ambiguity (Pollard, 1996). On the other hand, a review of the lesson transcript shows that there was no attempt by the teacher to make her teaching point or lesson focus explicit to the pupils. In the lesson, she proceeded from one activity to the other without telling pupils why they were doing certain activities nor

summarizing her teaching points at the end of the lesson. It is, therefore, useful if the teacher could signpost the purpose of the activities to the learners so as to help them steer their learning towards the same direction and enable them to understand that language learning often involves something more than grammar and vocabulary learning. It is also useful to make the connections of language activities explicit and meaningful to learners so that they can recognise them. Block's interview with the informants of his study concludes that learners are constantly trying to make sense out of classroom instruction, and when they perceive a firm sense of coherence, they have the motivation to commit to what they do in class (Block, 1996). Tsui (2004) also stresses that the possibilities for learning must be jointly constituted by both the teacher and the learner so that there is a "shared space of learning",meaning that the teacher and the learners need to establish a common ground in order to open up possibilities in learning.

With regard to the third research question, the findings reveal a significant gap between the teacher's own pre-lesson and post-lesson perception of the pupils' difficulties in learning and also between the perception of the teacher and the learners. The gap indicates that in carrying out a task or a less controlled language activity with a mixed ability class,the teacher cannot possibly predict all the possible errors or difficulties that may emerge. There are two implications of this for an ESL teacher. First, apart from providing language support to learners by moving around the class during the task time, the teacher should ensure that sufficient time is scheduled to provide explicit corrective feedback on the learners' work. This can be accomplished through discussion and negotiation immediately after the task with the whole class while learners still have a fresh memory of their work. Although learners in this study were not asked their perception of the teacher's corrective feedback on their work, the study of Mackey et al. (2007) shows that learner's perceptions of the target of the corrective feedback tend to overlap more accurately with the teacher's intention when the feedback is provided explicitly. Studies on noticing (Schmidt, 1990; Roberts, 1995) also confirm that effective correction is both noticed and understood by learners. Teacher's explicit corrective feedback at the right time is therefore essential for learning to take place.

Second, with the many different errors identified, the teacher should make a judicious decision of which ones to focus on as excessive error correction is counter-productive (Roberts & Griffith, 2008). According to the post-lesson interview with the teacher of this study, she intentionally chose to draw learners' attention to the work of two groups where she noticed a common error in the use of singular/plural noun form and in the appropriateness of the meaning of the sentences produced. The teacher's strategy of providing feedback mainly

on errors linked to the focus of the task (i.e., applying the language to different contexts) is commendable given the time she had and the diversified types of mistakes identified in the group writing.

As for the difficulties of learning raised by the learners at the post-lesson interview, the findings show no overlap of their difficulties with those anticipated before or identified during the lesson by the teacher. A relatively shared concern among the learners as shown in their responses to research questions one and three is the importance they gave to the learning of new words and the help they needed in spelling to cope with the weekly dictations. The learners' overt concern over spelling reflects the backwash of having regular and frequent dictations as a means of assessment in the language curriculum of typical primary schools in Hong Kong. Although Miss K did not mention anything about dictation at all in class, pupils knew there was going to be one. In the post lesson interview, Miss K admitted that the class used to have dictation at the beginning of regular English lessons twice a week. No wonder there was a tendency for some pupils to equate the learning of English to revising the spelling of vocabulary. While dictation may help learners remember the new words better, the over-emphasis on the accuracy of spelling at the beginner stage of ESL learning may demotivate them, especially the average and weaker achievers as seen in this study, from learning English. At the micro-level of the curriculum, it is essential for the teacher to play down the role of dictation in assessment of learning and develop other creative means of helping learners understand the meaning and usage of new words (see Davis & Rinvolucri, 1988 and Nation, 2003 for some pedagogical ideas on dictation and vocabulary teaching). At the meso-level of the curriculum, it is the "right and duties of a profession(al)" as Hamp-Lyons (2000, p. 587) puts it, to take into consideration the effect of assessment on learners and review the curriculum for responsible decisions on more coherent practices of teaching and assessment conducive to learning.

A comparison of the responses of learners of the three academic achieving groups in this study shows no evidence that the higher the academic achievement, the more compatible their responses are with the teacher's. But unlike the findings of Wong (2009), there is some correlation between the perceptions of the average achieving pupils with the teacher's for research questions one and two,suggesting that the average achievers can better discern what the teacher considers most prominent in the lesson as well as comprehend the teacher's overall teaching purpose for the main task. The high achievers and the low achievers, on the other hand, seem to have their different concerns or agendas in learning. The former are either very cautious in their responses or tend tofocus more on language form or even

grammar items unrelated to the what was taught in lesson as reflected in their responses to research questions two and three. The latter, however, seem to be overwhelmed by their own learning difficulties in understanding the lesson and/or in solving the problem posed by the group task that their responses are comparatively vague or narrow in focus.

Owing to the limitation in the sample size of the study, it is unclear how representative these findings are across a larger group.However, the implication of this is that even with young learners, teachers have to be prepared for them coming to class with different perceptions, goals and concerns. It is important to design learning activities that will enable learners to enrich one another's learning through their differences. The group writing task and the peer review adopted by the teacher in the case study were meant to develop more ideas among pupils and encourage peer help. However, the instruction that each member of the group was supposed to contribute one sentence appropriate to the given scenario might result in the stronger learners starting off by writing their ideas down first while leaving the weaker learners behind running out of ideas. To improve the task design, the teacher could ask the group members to brainstorm ideas first before writing and give more positive verbal encouragement of peer help during the task.

The post-lesson interview with learners in this study has discovered what different learners claimed to have learned or found difficult in the lesson, which if not conducted, might not be known to the teacher. It is therefore useful to understand more about the learners' perception of their learning at times through various means (see ideas such as learners' journals, letters, action logging, written or oral feedback in Barkhuizen, 1998 and Murphy, 1993). It is through ongoing review of learners' feedback and teacher's own reflection that could lead to better understanding of the class and more learner-centred lesson planning.

Conclusion

This study shows that teachers do not always reap what they sow – what the teacher perceives as prominent in the lesson may not be best remembered by the learners, learners may also perceive purposes in the learning activities different from their teacher's and encounter difficulties not anticipated by the teacher. Nevertheless, this should not be interpreted as a failure of the teacher to get things right because the process of learning is full of complexities. While it is true that learning may still take place in the lesson even if what is gained by the learners does not converge, the teacher's more explicit communication of the purpose and relevance of the different activities of the lesson to the learners would surely help the learners

better achieve the teacher's intended objectives. More time spent on understanding the views of the learners and reflecting on the compatibility of teaching and assessment, the employment of different teaching approaches and the organisation of co-operative group work may also help the teacher to plan and shape lessons to address the concerns and needs of a mixed ability class.

Although the learner interview was not the key focus of the original main study, much light was shed by what the pupils said in this initial exploration on young ESL learners' perception of learning. The findings of this study show that young learners are quite capable of verbalising their thoughts about what is learned. To echo what Block (2000) says, the young learners in this study have demonstrated a fair degree of "meta-pedagogical awareness" in their interview responses. Their ability to understand their own learning should not be underestimated. There are, nevertheless, two major limitations to this case study. First, the number of pupils in the study is small thus the findings should not be generalised. Second, owing to the young age of the learners and the limited time they had after class, their responses were taken verbatim without too much probing into their thinking process. Even if there had been time, research involving children has indicated that it is not always easy to get the true picture of children's perception because of the "power imbalance between adult researchers and child" (Gu et al., 2005). The methodology for getting responses from children is therefore an area worth further exploring. The findings of the study should, therefore, be regarded as a preliminary attempt to understand the perception of young ESL learners on what they have learned in an English lesson as compared to that of their teacher.

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Appendix A

Pupil Interview Protocol

The following is the interview protocol translated from Chinese:

"Thank you for coming to talk to me. I'm (name of researcher). I work at the Institute over there. I was in your class this morning. Did you see me? I'd like to collect some pupils' views about their English learning. Since I'll be talking to a few of you, to help me remember what you say, I'll audio-tape the conversation, but this will not be disclosed to your school or teachers. Do you mind?

Okay. Can you tell me who cares most about your school work at home? (Listen for the Ss' answer and use it for the next question.) If you go home this evening, and your ____(name of the person provided by the pupil earlier)__ asks what you have learned in the English lesson today, what will you say? What can you best remember about your learning? Why do you remember this/these so well? When Miss K did (an activity, e.g. read the story aloud) with you, what do you think Miss K wanted you to learn? If _(name of the person provided by the pupil earlier)__ asks you to revise your work, which part of today's lesson is difficult and that you would need help with your revision? Why?

Thank you very much for talking to me. I have no further questions. Do you have anything more you want to bring up or ask about before you go?"

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Contrastive Rhetoric: Inflation, Verbal Voices and Polyphonic Visibility in Learners and Native Speakers' Academic Writing

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore the use of inflation and over-assertion devices, verbal voices and polyphonic visibility in L2 learners' and native speakers' academic writing. For specific contrastive goals, special attention has been paid to hedges and downtoners. Deliberate attempts have been made throughout the paper to uncover the reasons underlying the deviation in L2 learners' use of the target language features. The database for the study consists of two equal-sized corpora, namely, the Interlanguage Corpus of Arab Students of English and a similar size from the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays.Findings show that learners' L2 writing is characterized by numerous rhetorical features primarily attributed to L1 influence and learners' general tendencies. Chief among these features are learners' overuse of intensifiers, underuse of passive voice, and a clear visibility in the text.

Keywords: Rhetoric, intensifiers, hedges, verbal voices, personal pronouns.

Introduction

It is a half century or so since researchers pointed to rhetorical deviations that characterize learners' performance in L2. In a series of studies conducted on learners' writing, Kaplan (1966, 1972, 1987, 1988) argues persuasively that learners' L2 writing is deeply influenced by numerous rhetorical and cultural patterns of their L1. Variations in writing across cultures, according to Grabe and Kaplan (1996), reflect "cultural preferences, which make greater use of certain options among the linguistic possibilities" (p. 184). Kaplan's arguments, according

to Connor (2008), are based on two assumptions. First, rhetorical patterns of language are unique to each language and culture. Second, the differences in rhetorical patterns may cause difficulties for second language learners. It should be made obvious that rhetorical and linguistic variations resulted from cultural variations that are referred to here are not restricted to grammatical and spelling errors. Land and Whitely (1989) state that even with errors removed from all essays, native speaker readers give higher scores to native speakers than to those written by ESL students. Studies on the seemingly persistent foreignness in L2 writing are classified under one scholarly field, namely, contrastive rhetoric.

Contrastive rhetoric, which has become an increasingly attractive area of research ever since the inception of this field by Kaplan in 1960s, seems to heavily rest on the very basic notion of cultural differences and variations, which is, in turn, reflected in learners' writing. In a more recent account of the term, Connor (1996) defines contrastive rhetoric as "an area of research in second language acquisition that identifies problems in composition encountered by second language writers, and, by referring to the rhetorical strategies of the first language, attempts to explain them." (p. 5)

In spite of the consensus among rhetoricians on what contrastive rhetoric is, there is still some controversy on the work that had the most substantial influence on Kaplan's arguments which led to the emergence of contrastive rhetoric.Connor (1996) argues that the origins of contrastive rhetoric lie in the weak version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativity, which states that language and culture interact and shape one another. Ying (2000), on the other hand, argues that Hymes' (1962, p. 964) ethnography of communication approach is considered an important historical antecedent for contrastive rhetoric. According to Ying, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, which views language ascasual determination, is not compatible with Kaplan's notion which emphasizes the influential role of culture rather than language. It appears from Ying's arguments that he purposely ignores the basic tenet of the weak version of Sapir-Whorf hypothesis so as to prove his arguments concerning the genesis of contrastive rhetoric.

Apart from all controversy over the genesis of contrastive rhetoric, it appears that Kaplan's thoughts were the forerunners of all today's divergent thematic areas classified under this domain. In her attempt to review research on contrastive rhetoric over the last three decades, Connor (2002) distinguishes between four major areas of contrastive rhetoric.

(i) Contrastive text linguistic studies

(ii) Studies of writing as cultural and educational activity

(iii) Classroom-based contrastive studies

(iv) Genre-specific investigations.

So far, much of the research conducted on contrastive rhetoric over the past few decades has focused on the divergence in the rhetorical features and structures of different languages (Tankó, 2004; Connor, 2008; Adel, 2008; Woodfield, 2008, to name but a few). This study, which applies a corpus-based methodology, aims at exploring the use of a number of certain rhetorical, lexical and grammatical features in the writing of Arab students of English. More precisely, this study focuses on the use and misuse of overstatement, understatement, verbal voices and polyphonic visibility. The study hypothesizes possible rhetorical variations between learners and native speakers' writings as a factor of language culture and general learners' strategies.

Review of Literature

Contrastive rhetoric

A close look at literature shows that the unprecedented concern with L2 writing since 1960s is attributed to two primary factors. First, the collapse of the audiolingual methodology, which put undue focus on teaching spoken language at the expense of writing, pushed to the fore the need to reconsider the pedagogical approach to L2 learning. Second, the increasing number of foreign students enrolled at the United States universities, together with the gap in their writing proficiency in comparison with L1 students made writing a main focus of interest to applied linguists at most American universities (Connor, 1996).

Much of the research on contrastive rhetoric basically revolves around quantitative analysis of discourse markers and organization. Adel (2008) illustrates that "Swedish learners of English heavily overuse metadiscourse by comparison with the native speakers." (p. 51). Similar findings concerning the overuse of metadiscourse features in the learners' performance are also reported by Adel (2006). In a study conducted on the production of requests in the writings of graduate learners of English and British English native speaker graduate students, Woodfield (2008) examines three dimensions of speech acts: directness levels of speech act strategy, internal modification of the head act and request perspective. The results show that in spite of the similarities between L1 and L2 students in terms of the overall preference for conventional indirect strategies, there are quantitative and qualitative differences in terms of the internal modification patterns.

In an attempt to compare the cross-cultural use of cohesion devices used as signals to the reader, Hinds (1987) illustrates that the limited number or even the lack of such devices in Japanese makes it a reader-responsible language in comparison with English which is a

merely writer-responsible language. In this sense, the responsibility of interpretation relies on the part of the writer in the case of English while it shifts to the reader in Japanese. In a study conducted on the percentage of three grammatical features in L1 and L2 students' writing, Reid (1992) illustrates that English texts written by native speakers of English exhibit a lower percentage of conjunctions and pronouns and a higher percentage of prepositions and subordinate conjunction openers in comparison with similar texts written by native speakers of Arabic, Spanish and Chinese. First person pronouns were also a subject of investigation in recent literature. Vassileva (1998) presents a number of cross-cultural variations among English, French, German, Russian and Bulgarian in the employment of the first person singular and plural pronouns "I" vs. "we" in research articles.

What is particularly noteworthy about research on contrastive rhetoric is the special concern devoted to writer-reader interaction or metadiscourse devices. However, the attention paid to metadiscourse features should not be surprising since these features whether related to interpersonal devices (e.g., hedges, emphatics, attitude markers, etc.) or textual markers (i.e., logical connectives) are textually significant due to their facilitating effect of comprehension (Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh 2007). Vande Kopple (1997) defines metadiscourse as "discourse that people use not to expand referential material, but to help their readers connect, organize, interpret, evaluate and develop attitudes towards that material." (p. 2)

Research on English-Arabic contrastive rhetoric, in general, and rhetoric of interlanguage of Arab students of English, particularly, has pushed to the fore a number of contradictory views concerning some rhetorical features of Arabic. Al-Qahtani (2006), for instance, illustrates that certain Arabic rhetorical features such as repetition and parallelism have been misinterpreted by western rhetoricians, who examined them from the rhetorical angle of western languages apart from their functions in Arabic discourse. Several pieces of evidence in support of the notion of misinterpretation of Arabic rhetorical features raised by Al-Qahtani (2006) are also reported in previous literature (Al-Jubouri 1984; Sa'adeddin 1989, among others). In the context of misinterpretation of Arabic rhetorical features, Hatim (1991 & 1997), for instance, criticizes the idea of cognitive characterization of language specific rhetorical strategies adopted by western rhetoricians. Also, he criticizes Koch's failure to distinguish non-functional repetition from functional repetition in Arabic. For him, some Arabic rhetorical features are attributed to text type and audience constraints.

As far as learners' interlanguage of Arab students of English is concerned, it appears that rhetorical deviations characterizing the writing of Arab students of English have been

oftentimes used by numerous non-native rhetoricians as a platform for making overgeneralizations about Arabic rhetorical features (Koch, 1983; Shoubi, 1951, among others). While L1 rhetoric may account for a considerable portion of the rhetorical differences between texts written by Arab students of English and those written by native speakers of English, mode of text development utilized in Arabic still remains a feasible alternative, however.

Sa'adeddin (1989) argues that the difference between texts written by native speakers of English and texts written by native speakers of Arabic is attributed to the mode of text development and the functions underlying the aural mode utilized by native speakers of Arabic to the different norms for different mediums.

> For a native English text-user, an ideal written text is a surface orthographic representation of a linearly-developed, logically coherent, and syntactically cohesive unit of sense. It is an encoded message which he prefers to appreciate in isolation, in a noise-free setting, and in an environment which respects his conventions regarding social distance. For a native Arabic text-user, the concept of a written text is not the same. It differs by its aural mode of text development, which native Arabic producers utilize to establish a relationship of informality and solidarity with the receivers of the text. This is typically achieved by perceiving the artifacts of speech (while ensuring that they are grammatically well-formed) in their written text on the assumption that these are universally accepted markers of truthfulness, self-confidence, and linguistic competence (in the popular sense), as well as intimacy and solidarity (p. 39).

As such, the rhetorical differences between English and Arabic texts (or even English texts written by Arab students of English) are attributed to the underlying competence of the 'written text' concept in both varieties. For native speakers of Arabic, a *written text* is developed to be aurally delivered. However, for native speakers of English, a *written text* is developed to be read silently in a noise-free setting. Since metadiscourse features used in spoken discourses are different from those used in written ones, then, it is the mode of text development that might account for a considerable degree of variance between English texts written by NSs and those written by Arab students of English, as shown below.

Learner corpora

In spite of the numerous serious attempts previously devoted to examine the interlanguage of Arab students of English over the past few decades (El-Seidi, 2000; Hinkel, 2005, among others), it is still premature to posit generalizations concerning the rhetorical or textual

features of learners' language due to the lack of representative databases that might be used for this purpose. Perhaps, it is possible to attribute the lack of such representative databases to the difficulties of carrying this job out via the traditional approaches. However, the job has become much easier with the advent of the digital revolution, particularly the corpus-based approach. Generally speaking, corpus-based and corpus-driven approaches have enabled researchers to investigate numerous research areas that would be otherwise impossible or at least hard to investigate via the tools of the traditional approaches.

Kennedy (1998) argues that "with a corpus stored in a computer, it is easy to find, sort and count items, either as a basis for linguistic description or for addressing language-related issues and problems" (p. 11). These unmatchable abilities, according to Kennedy, have activated several research areas within the scope of corpus linguistics. Biber, Conrad, & Reppen (1998) illustrates that "comprehensive studies of use cannot rely on intuition, anecdotal evidence, or small samples; they rather require empirical analysis of large databases of reference texts, as in corpus-based approach" (p. 9). For Aijmer and Altenberg (1991), corpora are preferred over other sources of information for two reasons. First, language corpora have provided a more realistic foundation for the study of language than earlier types of material, a fact which has given new impetus to descriptive studies of English lexis, syntax, discourse and prosody. Second, language corpora have become a particularly fruitful basis for comparing different varieties of English, and for exploring the quantitative and probabilistic aspects of the language.

Due to the rapid advancement in the artificial intelligence revolution, research on contrastive rhetoric and contrastive interlanguage rhetoric has witnessed giant strides over the past few decades. Much of the corpus-based research devoted to this field has also focused on discourse markers and organization. By focusing on the linguistic aspects of quantification in the performance of French and Dutch learners of English in comparison with American and British university students, Meunier (1998) illustrates that the non-nativeness of French and Dutch learners of English is revealed by automatic and quantitative analyses of linguistic aspects of their performance. In spite of the essential role of quantitative measures in linguistics analysis, Meunier stresses that these measures must be accompanied by qualitative analysis. In a study conducted on the use of adverbial connectors in a corpus consisting of argumentative essays written by Hungarian students, Tankó (2004) argues that although Hungarian writers use nearly as many adverbial connector types as the natives, Hungarian writers' texts have been shown to feature more adverbial connector tokens than the native students'.

A close look at the literature shows that very little in-depth corpus-based research has been devoted to explore rhetorical features of interlanguage of Arab students of English (Btoosh, 2004, 2007). As such, this study aims to fill in the gap by utilizing digital tools to examine the deviation in the use of rhetorical features in learners' compositions. More specifically, this study addresses four rhetorical features, namely:

(a) Inflation Devices (universal and negative pronouns, amplifiers &emphatics): *certain(ly), completely, definitely, exactly, extremely, indeed, for sure, surely, really, totally, a lot (+ noun/adjective), nobody can deny, it is taken for granted that, in fact, as absolutely, altogether, enormously, entirely, fully, greatly, highly, intensely, perfectly, strongly, thoroughly, awfully, by all means, ever, hugely, severely, sharply, strongly, too (+adjective), terribly, purely, no wayall. Each, everybody, everyone, everything, none, no one, nothing, foreverutterly, -est* and *very;*

(b) Hedgesand downtoners*: a bit, may, maybe, broadly, likely, nearly, perhaps, possible, potential(ly), kind of, more or less, sort of, several, something like, probably, essentially, sort of, somewhat, unlikely, (a) few, sometimes, somehow, relatively, think, believe, roughly, and occasionally;*

(c) Verbal Voices: passive voice vs. active voice, excluding get passive;

(d) PolyphonicVisibility:personal pronouns *(1st, 2nd& 3rd persons)*.

The selection of these features is based on two reasons. First, the special concern with overstatement and understatement devices (out of all other interpersonal features) is attributed to their contradictive rhetorical functions in Arabic and English, and to the potential influence of such devices on learners' interlanguage. Furthermore, previous generalizations on the use of such rhetorical features in Arabic and interlanguage of Arab students of English were either based on non-representative data or used just a limited number of such devices (Hinkel, 2004, 2005; El-Seidi, 2000, among others). Second, in spite of the growing literature on verbal voices and personal pronouns in the world literature, these domains have remained largely understudied or even ignored in previous literature devoted to Arabic and interlanguage of Arab students of English.

Methodology

Given the goals and targets presented above, this study is guided by two major aims. First, it seeks to delineate the differences between corpus of L1 Arabic English language learners

(E2A1 corpus, henceforth) and native speaker corpus (E1 corpus, henceforth) in terms of three types of intensifiers associated with inflation (universal and negative pronouns, amplifiers and emphatics), verbal voices and polyphonic visibility. Second, it explicates possible reasons underlying the differences between the two corpora in question in the all areas mentioned above. Towards these ends and in order to ensure comparability, two equal-sized corpora have been used as the basis of analysis in this study.

The E2A1 corpus comes from Interlanguage Corpus of Arab Students of English (ICASE), 100,229 token corpus compiled by the researcher. This corpus consists of 608 argumentative, evaluation and narrative timed and untimed essays written by second through fourth-year university students of English at six public and private universities in Jordan. None of the volunteer participants had, up to then, lived in an English speaking country.

The native data, on the other hand, come from the native corpus ofLouvain Corpus of Native English Essays(LOCNESS), a 300,000-word corpus of argumentative essays written by American and British university students. E1 corpus consists of only 119 timed and untimed essays (100,545 tokens) extracted from LOCNESS. The gap between the two corpora in terms of the number of essays (608 vs. 119) is attributed to the essay length, which is much shorter in the E2A1 corpus. However, the two corpora are almost even in terms of the total number of tokens or words (100,229 vs. 100,545). Priority in the choice of the representative sample of LOCNESS used in this study was given first to similarity in topics between the native and learner corpora, and then to diversity in source (American 53.27 % vs. British 46.73%). The chosen articles cover an assorted range of topics. Since most of these topics cover common issues, it was presumed that most, if not all participants, would have sufficient knowledge about the topics. Some of such topics, particularly argumentative essays, which compose 81.61% of the E2A1 corpus and 100% of the E1 corpus, are similar in both corpora such as: capital punishment, mercy killing, nuclear power, school integration, among others). However, since E2A1 corpus is composed of almost five times more in terms of the number of essays, then, diversity in terms of topics is expected. In spite of the differences in the total number of essays used in each corpus, it is important to reiterate that the two corpora are almost even in size.

For the purpose of grammatical investigation, a complete Part-of-Speech (POS) tagging for the two corpora has been provided. For lexical, grammatical and statistical analyses, the data were processed with the aid of the following tools:

- Platform: Windows

- Part-of-Speech Tagger: C7 Tagset (in CLAWS)
- Concordancer and Wordlist: *WordSmith* suite of Tools

The Constituent Likelihood Automatic Word-tagging System (CLAWS) used in this study is one of the best and widely used, part-of-speech tagging software programs ever developed for corpus annotation. This tagger was developed by the University Centre for Computer Corpus Research on Language (UCREL) at Lancaster University. Several versions of CLAWS have been continuously developed since the early 1980s. This software has achieved high precision (and a low error rate of less than 4%). UCREL offers access to this software by four different means, including a free, but limited trial service. *WordSmith*, on the other hand, is a suit of lexical analysis tools. It offers concordancing, word listing, key words analysis and a number of other utilities. This software, which was published by Oxford University Press (OUP), can be obtained by downloading any of its versions from the OUP homepage and purchasing the registration code.

Results

In conformity with the previously stated goals and in order to provide an in-depth account for all target areas, this section is divided into three subsections. Prior to carrying out the analysis and in order to ensure a valid comparison and document the areas of similarities and differences between the two corpora in more detail, a frequency count has been used as the starting point in each of the following subsections.

Inflation and hedging

An illustration of the range of occurrences of the three types of intensifiers associated with inflation (universal and negative pronouns, amplifiers and emphatics), and hedges in both corpora is presented in Table One.

Table 1 Frequency count of categories of inflation devices and hedges in E2A1 and E1 corpora

Devices	**E2A1 Corpus**		**E1 Corpus**	
	Freq.	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**
Inflation Devices	2130	78.68	73.34	73.25
Hedges	577	21.32	26.66	26.75
Total	**2707**	**100%**	**2561**	**100%**

The figures presented in Table One reveal notable variations between the two corpora in the two areas under investigation. Essential for understanding these features and the range of variance between the two corpora is to account for possible factors underlying these

variations. Such factors and other relevant points are tackled in detail in the following two subsections.

Inflation

On the basis of the figures presented in Table One, inflation devices or intensifiers in the E2A1 corpus outnumber their counterparts in the E1 corpus. However, these figures sometimes become quite misleading if left unexplained. At first glance, the significant disparity between the two corpora in terms of inflation or overstatement devices, which comes in favor of the E2A1 corpus, might indicate that all such devices are always used more frequently in the E2A1 corpus than in the E1 corpus. In order to ascertain that such a preliminary conclusion is not well-grounded, a between-corpora comparison has been conducted. Table Two presents the findings:

Table 2 Frequency count of intensifiers associated with inflation in E2A1 and E1 corpora

Inflation Devices (Universal & Negative Pronouns, Emphatics & Amplifiers)	**E2A1 Corpus**		**E1 Corpus**	
	Freq.	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**
a lot	81	3.80	21	1.12
Absolutely	1	0.05	5	0.27
All	413	19.39	307	16.36
Altogether	0	0.00	4	0.21
Always	80	3.76	37	1.97
Awfully	0	0.00	0	0.00
certain(ly)	10	0.47	92	4.90
complete(ly)	34	1.60	36	1.92
Deeply	5	0.23	4	0.21
Definitely	2	0.09	2	0.11
enormous(ly)	2	0.09	7	0.37
Entirely	0	0.00	1	0.05
Everybody	0	0.00	2	0.11
Everyone	30	1.41	47	2.51
exact(ly)	6	0.28	8	0.43
Extremely	1	0.05	23	1.23
Forever	5	0.23	7	0.37
for sure	1	0.05	2	0.11
full(y)	36	1.69	47	2.51
great(ly)	85	3.99	76	4.05
high(ly)	58	2.72	45	2.40
Hugely	16	0.75	23	1.23
in fact	15	0.70	40	2.13
Indeed	8	0.38	27	1.44
intense(ly)	0	0.00	4	0.21
Lots	3	0.14	0	0.00
Most	167	7.84	137	7.30
Much	81	3.80	125	6.66
Never	41	1.92	56	2.99
Nobody	3	0.14	1	0.05
None	18	0.85	7	0.37
no one	18	0.85	37	1.97
Nothing	28	1.31	55	2.93
perfect(ly)	19	0.89	12	0.64
Purely	4	0.19	8	0.43
real(ly)	75	3.52	89	4.74
Sharply	5	0.23	4	0.21

so ((+adjective/adverb)	69	3.24	72	3.84
strong(ly)	60	2.82	98	5.22
superlative *est	142	6.67	80	4.26
Terribly	1	0.05	18	0.96
Thoroughly	0	0.00	1	0.05
too (+adjective)	32	1.50	36	1.92
total(ly)	3	0.14	23	1.23
Utterly	1	0.05	2	0.11
Very	471	22.11	148	7.89
Total	**2130**	**100.00**	**1876**	**100.00**

For inflation devices to be (11.92%) more in the E2A1 corpus, as shown in Table Two, is not surprising. Rather, this seems quite natural for two major factors. First, it is a general tendency for L2 learners to use more intensifiers than native speakers. Hinkel (2003), for instance, illustrates that Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Indonesian learners of English use more amplifiers and emphatics in their L2 than the native speakers of English. Lorenz (1998) also states that the most prominent difference between German learners of English and native spears' usage solely lies in learners' overuse of the intensifier counts.

Second, in addition to the learners' general tendency to use more inflation devices, the excessive overuse of such devices in the writing of Arab students makes L1 influence a great potential due to the manifested persuasive rhetorical functions that such devices play in Arabic discourse. For them, inflation devices are effective and creative means to express certainty and power. Hinkel (2005) asserts that Arabic considers amplification and exaggeration to be an appropriate means of persuasion. Put it differently, these devices, which are used to heighten the factuality of the discourse by means of certainty, clarity, and precision, are seen eloquent means of conviction and persuasion in learners' L1 performance. Research on Arabic-English contrastive rhetoric furnishes another piece of evidence in support of L1 influence. In her investigation of the metadiscourse in English and Arabic argumentative writing, El-Seidi (2000) clarifies that "emphatics score higher in the Arabic L1 essays" (p. 115). Sa'adeddin (1989), Connor (1996) and Hinkel (2005) point out that Arab students of English use more exaggerative and overassertive statements and fewer hedges than native speakers. In other words, the heavy reliance of learners on the overstatement devices mirrors the rhetoric of their L1. Previous research lends further support concerning the role of L1 in shaping learners' interlanguage (Gass and Selinker 1983; Ellis 1986; Koosha &Jafarpour, 2006; Nation 2003, to name but a few).

However, Table Two presents some inconsistencies in terms of the use of inflation devices. That is, the sizable gap between the corpora in terms of the number of overstatement devices comes mainly from few devices, including *all*, *very* and *most*.

The findings presented in Table Three suggest that learners favour intensification. The adjective *important*, which is used 185 times in the E2A1 corpus, is heightened 93 times (50.27% of the total instances) by *most*, *very* and *so*. The same lexicon, which is used 50 times in the E1 corpus, is heightened only 11 times (22% of the total instances), however. A look at all the figures below reveals learners' preference of and heavy reliance on inflation devices.

Table 3 Exaggeration devices collocated with three adjectives in both corpora.

Adjective	**E2A1 Corpus**		**E1 Corpus**	
	Freq.	**Collocations with *very*, *most* and *so***	**Freq.**	**Collocations with *very*, *most* and *so***
important	185	93	50	11
interesting	43	15	5	0
beautiful	114	34	5	0
dangerous	56	15	15	4
happy	89	42	22	1
Total	**487**	**199**	**97**	**16**

In light of the above figures and the previous literature and discussion, learners' favor and overuse of inflation devices, in general, may be attributed to learners' general tendency and L1 influence. However, figures presented above concerning learners' heavy reliance on certain inflation devices (e.g.,*all* and *very*), and the wrong use of such devices in numerous instances (e.g.,*She was very happy, but not completely,* instead of *She was fairly/relatively happy*.) are likely to incorporate learners' limited word stock as an influential factor for divergence between the two corpora.

Hedging

As seen in Table One, the two corpora sharply oppose each other not only in the number of intensifiers but also in the number of hedges and downtoners. In order to document the differences between the two corpora in more detail, it is important to pinpoint whether learners favor certain hedges and downtoners over others as seen in the case of inflation devices.Findings are presented in Table Four:

Table 4 Hedges & downtoners in E2A1 and E1 corpora.

Hedges and Downtoners	**E2A1 Corpus**		**E1 Corpus**	
	Freq.	**%**	**Freq.**	**%**
a bit	5	0.87	2	0.29
a few	28	4.85	28	4.11
appears	16	2.77	18	2.64
believe	56	9.71	112	16.42
broadly	0	0.00	0	0.00
essentially	0	0.00	4	0.59
kind of	41	7.11	51	7.48
likely	2	0.35	21	3.08
may	82	14.21	117	17.16
may be	14	2.43	10	1.47
more or less		0.00	1	0.15
nearly	12	2.08	8	1.17
occasionally	3	0.52	0	0.00
perhaps	3	0.52	46	6.74
possible	15	2.60	45	6.60
possibly	2	0.35	16	2.35
potential(ly)	1	0.17	15	2.20
probable-y	3	0.52	39	5.72
relatively	0	0.00	0	0.00
roughly	1	0.17	3	0.44
several	71	12.31	51	7.48
slightly	1	0.17	3	0.44
somehow	1	0.17	5	0.73
something how	1	0.17	2	0.29
sometimes	39	6.76	11	1.61
somewhat	0	0.00	7	1.03
sort of	5	0.87	10	1.47
think	175	30.33	53	7.77
unlikely	0	0.00	4	0.59
Total	**577**	**100%**	**682**	**100%**

Table Four shows that native speakers do employ more hedges and downtoners than L2 learners. It is likely to attribute the disparity in terms of the used hedges and downtoners in the two corpora to three different reasons. First, a detailed look at the literature shows that it is a general tendency for learners to use fewer hedges and downtoners than native speakers (Hinkel 2003; Hinkel, 2005; Neff-van Aertselaer and Dafouz-Milne, 2008; Dafouz-Milne 2008, among others).

Second, the gap between the two corpora in terms of the number of understatement devices, which comes 15.40% more in the E1 corpus, is likely to hint again to the involvement of learners' L1 influence. This conclusion is consistent with the existing literature (Btoosh, 2004; Hinkel, 2005). In her comparison on the use of metadiscourse features in native and nonnative texts, El-Seidi (2000) illustrates that Arab students of English use fewer hedges in their L1 and L2 as compared with native speakers of English. This indicates that learners' use of hedges and downtoners matches the use of such devices in

their L1, which does not place a high value on hedges as a means of persuasion (Hinkel, 2005).

Third, the attribution of the disparity between the two corpora in terms of the total number of understatement devices to only L1 influence and/or learners' general tendency does not sound plausible, particularly when learners use some hedges and downtoners more frequently than native speakers. It is rather learners' limited word-stock resulting from oversimplification of their input that makes them rely on certain linguistic items more than others. This, therefore, may explain L2 learners' overuse of *think* and *sometimes*, as shown above.

On a general level, the findings shown above concerning the sizable gap between the two corpora in terms of inflation devices and hedges and downtoners seem to be quite plausible. That is, a language which favors overstatement is unlikely to simultaneously favor understatement due to the sharp contradiction between the semantic and pragmatic functions of the two metadiscourse categories. While the exaggeration devices aim to heighten the proposition, hedges and downtoners, on the other hand, are often tied with four pragmatic functions (Btoosh, 1999):

1. To express uncertainty and imprecision when the precise information is not available or purposely avoided
2. To mitigate direct criticism and incitement
3. To avoid sender's commitment to the truth of the proposition
4. To express/show politeness and modesty.

Drawing on the preceding findings, the pragmatic functions underlying the use of hedges and downtoners in English mentioned above sharply contradict with the linguistic and cultural background of learners, who firmly believe that the strength of their discourse requires certainty, full commitment to the discourse factuality, and precision. This, therefore, may account for learners' favor of inflation devices over hedges and downtoners.

Verbal voices

In spite of much literature devoted to certain verb phrase features such as aspects and tenses over the past decades, passive and active voices have been largely understudied. It is possible to attribute the semi-lack of literature on verbal voices to the difficulty to deduce how widespread the passive or active might be under the umbrella of the previous approaches,

particularly when it comes to the investigation of huge bodies of texts or corpora. However, the situation has dramatically changed with the advent of the corpus-based approach, which has made the investigation of huge and representative body of texts quite accessible. Figure One gives the frequency of passive verbs in the two corpora.

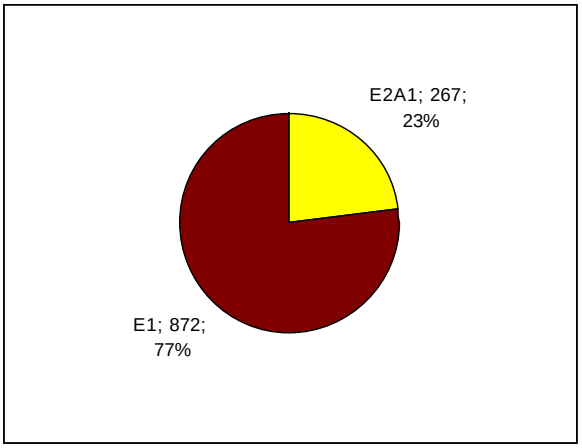

Figure 1 Number of passive verbs in E2A1 and E1 corpora

As can be obviously seen in Figure One, there are remarkable differences in the total frequency of the use of the passive voice in the two corpora. The gap, which comes almost three times more in favor of the E1 corpus, deserves special attention. Having known that the two corpora are a bit similar in terms of essay types, test conditions, many topics and age of the subjects, then, it is unlikely to attribute such disparity to genre, time constraints or topics.

In a study conducted on the performance of speakers of seven languages (English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Arabic), Hinkel (2004) illustrates that the median frequency rate for passive voice in academic essays comes in favor of the native speakers of English. Kleinmann (1977) states that Arab students of English use fewer examples of passive voice in comparison with native speakers as a result of the learners' avoidance of the difficult forms. However, neither learners' general tendencies, nor avoidance may account for the sizable gap shown in Figure One. Rather, evidence in literature explicitly indicates that passive voice is used far less in Arabic than in English "The passive voice is used far less frequently in Arabic writing than in English, and hardly at all in everyday speech." (World Languages Encyclopaedia, 2009). Marzouk (1995) argues that although passive voice is expressed via numerous distinct devices, its use in Arabic is still far less than English. Further support for the underuse of passive voice in Arabic comes from Cowan (1964): "If the agent is mentioned in the sentence, one cannot use the passive" (p.

59).Building on the previous literature findings, Saidat (2006) states that the use of passive voice in Arabic is governed by two constraints:

> Arabic poses some restrictions on the use of passives. Two main general rules, according to Al-Hashemi (1935) and Al-Afghani (1971), must be taken into consideration by the speaker concerning passives. The first involves not using the passive if it is not necessary, and the second involves not mentioning agent at all if you use the passive. (p. 37)

These constraints may likely explain the restricted use of passive voice in Arabic discourse. Drawing on the preceding discussion, it seems that learners' general tendencies, avoidance and language transfer make potential sources of disparity here. However, due to the very little research devoted to verbal voices in the literature, further research is expected to reveal more about this area in native speakers and 2L learners' performance.

Polyphonic visibility

Fueled by the rapid advances in artificial intelligence, researchers' interests in writers' visibility and point of view, in general, have witnessed giant strides in the recent literature (McCrostic, 2008; Petch-Tyson, 1998, Tannen, 1982, among others). Perhaps the importance of this area stems from the profound insights it offers into rhetorical differences among languages, particularly those related to the degree of discourse objectivity. Before launching into the discussion of the personal pronouns in the E2A1 and E1 corpora, it should be made clear that the essay type (argumentative, narrative, descriptive, cause and effect, evaluation, literary analysis, etc.) is likely to affect the use of the personal pronoun or writer's point of view. For instance, narrative essays are more commonly written from the standpoint of the author (I). In an attempt to examine whether there are differences in the way the participation of writer and reader are explicitly coded in the argumentative essays written by English language learners from four different language and cultural backgrounds, Petch-Tyson's (1998) argues that "the presence of the participants will be encoded more or less overtly, depending on the discourse type" (p. 107). However, the disparity between the E2A1 and E1 corpora in terms of the types of essays used is not expected to be extremely influential since 81.61% of the E2A1 corpus is composed of argumentative essays. Table Five presents the findings of the use of personal pronouns in the two corpora.

Table 5 Polyphonic visibility in E2A1 and E1 corpora

Polyphonic Visibility	E2A1 Corpus		E1 Corpus	
	Freq.	**%***	**Freq.**	**%***
First person singular pronouns (I, I'x, me, my, mine)	3798	40.98	440	9.91
First person plural pronouns (we, we'x, us, our, ours)	1214	13.10	496	11.17
Second person (you, your, yours)	840	9.06	659	14.83
Third person singular (s/he, him, her, his, hers)	2174	23.46	1635	36.82
Third person plural (they, them, their, theirs)	1242	13.40	1211	27.27
Total	**9268**	**100**	**4441**	**100**

*Percentage of each personal pronouns category relative to the total number of personal pronouns in the same corpus.

It appears from the percentages presented in Table Five that the writer's visibility (*I* with all its forms) in the E2A1 corpus heavily outweighs that in the E1 corpus. However, in order to avoid any kind of prejudgment about any possible factors to such discrepancy, it may be helpful to resort to previous literature to gain a better insight whether the gap here is attributed to learners' general tendency, L1 influence or some other potential reasons. Petch-Tyson (1998) presents an example in support of the learners' consistent overuse of personal pronouns, including the first person singular pronouns. Table Six presents the findings.

Table 6 Writer/reader visibility

Feature	Dutch (55,314)	Finnish (56,910)	French (58,068)	Swedish (50,872)	US (53,990)
First person singular pronouns (I, I'x, me, my, mine)	391	599	364	448	167
First person plural pronouns (we, we'x, us, our, ours)	484	763	775	358	242
Second person (you, your, yours)	447	381	257	227	76
Third person singular (s/he, him, her, his, hers)	1,322	1,743	1,396	2,033	485
Third person plural (they, them, their, theirs)	1,195	1,531	1,202	1,998	449

In comparison with Petch-Tyson's (1998) findings concerning the overuse of the first and second person pronouns in four learner corpora, it is interesting to note that the use of the first person pronouns by Arab students of English(as shown in Table Five), largely outnumbers the use of similar pronouns in any of the five learner corpora examined in Petch-Tyson's study.

By taking the number of tokens in each corpus into consideration, none of the learner corpora shown in Table Six above outnumbers the present E2A1 corpus in terms of the frequency of the first person pronouns. This appears to indicate that ascribing the overuse of the first person pronouns solely to the general tendency or developmental stages is ungrounded.

Irrespective of the sizable gap between the two corpora in terms of the total number of personal pronouns (9628 in the E2A1 corpus vs. 4441 in the E1 corpus), it could be noticed that the first person pronouns in the E2A1 corpus occupy more than 50% of the total number of personal pronouns in the E2A1 corpus. However, the same category occupies less than 25% in the E1 corpus. In this context, it is quite interesting to note also that first person pronouns in the E2A1 corpus outnumber all personal pronouns in the E1 corpus. Again, on the basis of evidence given in Table Five, it may be obvious that E1 students favor the third person pronouns (over 50% of the total number of personal pronouns used in the corpus) over the first and the second person pronouns together. Put simply, the E1 students' discourse is much more objective than the E2 students' discourse, which proves to be purely subjective. The figures shown in Tables Five and Six may indicate that a learner's language and cultural background are partially responsible here. Petch-Tyson (1998) argues that "there is cultural variability in levels of (acceptability of) interpersonal involvement in discourse and this variability may result in quite different realizations of particular discourse types" (p. 107). In a study conducted on storytelling by American and Greek women, Tannen (1982) illustrates that Greek women have a greater tendency to get involved in their texts. This provides another piece of evidence in support of the relationship between culture and interpersonal involvement. Similar findings concerning the gap in the personal pronouns between native speakers and learners and the possibility of cultural involvement in this regard are also reported in McCrostic (2008).

Limitations of the Study

As a result of the limitations of this study, the findings reported above should be regarded as indicative rather than definitive. The first limitation has to do with the extent to which the findings can be generalized beyond the examined writing samples. In spite of being larger than the corpora used in previous studies, the number of essays and tokens of the E2A1 corpus used here is too limited for broad generalizations. Thus, a larger sample may make the findings stronger.

The second limitation applies to the subjects who belong to one country. Therefore, in order to avoid possible affective or sociolinguistic factors, this study should be replicated in other Arabic-speaking countries. A final limitation is related to the difficulty of attributing certain deviations in learners' overuse, underuse or wrong use of certain features to a single

factor. Thus, further investigation is needed to uncover the effect and responsibility of each factor in this case.

Implications for Further Research

Drawing on the findings presented above, there are two interesting suggestions for future research which, if carried out, will have the potential to (i) raise learners' awareness of their errors, (ii) uncover the underlying cultural as well as linguistic reasons for the marked deviations in their writings, and (iii) increase the accuracy and generalizibility of the obtained results. First, the study presents an implication for L2 teachers concerning the importance of corpora in linguistic analysis, and how differences between L2 and L1 students, in terms of the overuse, underuse or incorrect use of lexical items or grammatical features should be approached in L2 teaching. Second, future research should utilize larger representative corpora in order to provide more precise information about the target features and pave the road for further comprehensive and specialized studies.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to shed light on inflation devices, verbal voices and polyphonic visibility in learners and native speakers' academic writing. Four rhetorical, textual and grammatical features have undergone an extensive analysis so as to explore the areas of similarities and differences between the two equal-sized corpora.

It is hopefully apparent from the figures obtained in this paper that a combination of factors negatively affect learners' interlanguage, which is easily distinguished from the native speakers' writing in several aspects. To be more specific, the deviation in the learners' use of the target language is mainly attributed to three influential factors, namely, L1 rhetorical influence, the strong presence of patterns reflecting general tendencies, and learners limited word-stock. In order to avoid all possible forms of overgeneralization, each of the findings presented above has been discussed relative to previous research and analyzed in light of the limitations of the current study. This technique has made it possible to tackle all possible factors that might be responsible for the deviations in the E2A1 corpus.

The findings presented above may suggest the importance of using corpora in L2 teaching, particularly the use of what is known as 'exploiting to teach' method. That is teachers may use a corpus to illustrate certain aspects of language or linguistics which a learner is not aware of.In this sense, it appears that the natural exposure to L2 is not sufficient for learners to either discover the norms implicitly known by native speakers, or notice their

deviant use of L2. As such, teachers, with the aid of computer tools such as concordancing lines and wordlists, may bring to learners' attention certain facts about L2 norms and uses so as to make them aware of what and where to use the lexicon or structure in question and whether or not they overuse or underuse such items. Likewise, these results might also be useful for prospective authors of academic books to rely on corpora (the actual evidence of language use) rather than on their intuitions about how language is used. By doing this, authors are likely to bring to light certain features or devices that have remained unaccounted for based on intuition-based materials.

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The Effect of Paraphrasing Strategy Training on the Reading Comprehension of College Students at the Undergraduate Level

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Abstract

Metacognitive strategy instruction is currently garnering much attention as an effective means of enhancing reading comprehension. This study examined the effect of Paraphrasing Strategy Intervention, based on the model proposed by Schumaker, Denton, and Deshler (1984). A sample of 63 students majoring in English was selected from three colleges in India.The effect of this instruction was measured by the students' performance in reading comprehension. Based on a proficiency test, students were grouped into high and low levels, considered to be another independent variable in addition to gender. Findings indicate that intervention or explicit instruction was effective in improving Indian ESL students' reading comprehension. There was no statistically significant difference between low and high groups after instruction. The results of this study indicate that there was no interaction between gender and learners' performance in reading comprehension but suggest that college students can be instructed to improve their reading through the development of their paraphrasing skills.

Key words: Reading Strategies, Paraphrasing Strategies, Reading Comprehension, Reading Strategies Training, ESL.

Introduction

Reading has been the focus of extensive research; however much of the research has focused on foundational reading skills, such as development of the alphabetic principle and phonological awareness (Boulineau, Fore, Hagan-Burke, and Burke, 2004). According to the National Reading Panel (2000), this amount of focus on foundational skills is comprehensible because decoding skills are fundamental to successful reading. This approach supposes that when students reacha reasonable level of proficiency in decoding skills, comprehension of

text will follow automatically. Although this may be true for the great majority of students, there is evidence that there are sources of comprehension problems which are independent of decoding (Williams, 2005). Some researchers have identified students who are not able to comprehend text effectively in spite of successful decoding (e.g., Caccamise and Snyder, 2005; Duke, Pressley and Hilden, 2004; Underwood and Pearson, 2004). There is good evidence indicating that reading comprehension is a challenging concept for most students, especially at college levels. In addition, as students step into higher level in education, reading comprehension plays a more important role as a primary source of knowledge.

The ability to comprehend written text is one of the most complex but critical activities people perform every day. From the time we wake up in the morning until the time we rest at night, we are bombarded with thousands of written messages. Although successful comprehension is often an easy job for skilled readers, the processes underlying the chain of activities which are mandatory for comprehension to take place are complicated. In other words, successful comprehension entails a highly integrated set of activities that involves both lower level decoding abilities (e.g., Perfetti, 1985; Shankweiler et al., 1999) and higher level integration abilities (Long, Oppy, and Seely, 1994; Magliano, Wiemer-Hastings, Millis, Muñoz, and McNamara,2002).

Comprehension can be viewed differently by different people. Moreover, comprehension is not a unitary phenomenon but rather a family of skills and activities (Kintsch and Kintsch, 2005; Rapp and van den Broek, 2005). There is a common set of processes in the different types of comprehension including the interpretation of the information in the text, the use of prior knowledge to interpret this information, and, consequently, the construction of a coherent representation or picture in the reader's mind of what the text is about (e.g., Applebee, 1978; Graesser and Clark, 1985; Kintsch and van Dijk, 1978; Trabasso, Secco, and van den Broek, 1984). According to Kendeou, Lynch, van den Broek, and White (2007), this representation is the foundation from which the reader can retell the story, apply knowledge that has been acquired from the text, identify the theme, and so on.

According to Kendeou (2007), there are basically three arguments to bolster this claim that reading strategies are important for many adults including students at the college level. First, many readers do not know whether they are adequately comprehending textor not. Second, many readers have an illusion of comprehension when they read text because they settle for shallow levels of analysis as a criterion for adequate comprehension (Baker, 1985;

Otero and Kintsch, 1992). Third, nearly all adults have trouble comprehending technical expository text at deep levels even though they are skilled readers.

Taking the above-mentioned factors into account, most researchers agree that it is worthwhile to teach reading comprehension strategies as an explicit reading objective. Several studies have revealed that the level of understanding of the students and recollection of text can be promoted to a higher level through explicit instruction in comprehension skills (Brown and Palincsar, 1989; Pressley, 2000). In spite of the effect of this instruction in enhancing reading comprehension, very little time, if any, is being dedicated to teaching reading comprehension skills. As Pressley (1998) contends, there appears to be a gap between the research and what is being practiced in the classroom.

As far as it is concerned with students' instruction for the purpose of reading comprehension improvement, while there has been a variety of interventions to improve comprehension at the lower levels (Fuchs and Fuchs, 2005; Kuhn, 2005), my focus has been on improving higher level comprehension skills; that is, I have garnered my attention as an instructor on students who can adequately decode but who are poor comprehenders (Cain, 1996; Cornoldi, DeBeni, and Pazzaglia, 1996; Stothard and Hulme, 1996).

Strategy instruction is a promising method for the purpose of enhancing comprehension skills. In other words, supplying students with explicit instruction in comprehension strategies can be an effective way to help students cope with difficulties in text comprehension (Graham and Bellert, 2004; Pressley and McCormick, 1995). There are several sources behind this claim, including: First, recent research indicates that students are not very good at comprehending text, especially in EFL and ESL context. Second, other research has confirmed the assumption that students rarely use reading strategies to help them comprehend the existing text (Garner, 1990; Pressley and Ghatala, 1990;Rothkopf, 1988) and when they do use strategies, students often apply rudimentary and ineffective methods, such as repetition (Garner, 1990). Third, even when students read a text at a basic level, the level of comprehension is typically shallow and lacks the necessary depth for adequate understanding (Best, Rowe, Ozuru, and McNamara, 2005; Langer, 1989). In short, as pointed out by Trabasso and Bouchard (2002), there has been a great deal of research on how to promote reading comprehension but not much on how well this knowledge has filtered into the classroom. Therefore, there is a strong need for enhancing reading comprehension among EFL and ESL students. Fortunately, interventions designed to improve comprehension proved to be successful (e.g., Johnson-Glenberg, 2000; McNamara, 2004; Palincsar and Brown, 1984; Singhal, 1998). Though there are many studies on the reading strategies of

native speakers of English and the second language learners, one hardly comes across any study involving Indian ESL students.

In response to a growing need for reading strategy training, McNamara and her colleagues (McNamara, 2004; McNamara and Scott, 1999) developed a reading strategy training program called SERT (Self-Explanation Reading Training) which is based on almost 30 years of research and theory on memory, learning, and reading comprehension. According to this program, students should be taught to become more active in constructing meaning through an integrative process of building a coherent model of the text in relation to the learner's prior knowledge. In other words, special attention should be focused on the active production of knowledge as opposed to the passive reception of concepts within the text. One of the strategies utilized in this program is *paraphrasing*. It is used as a catalyst for self-explanation. According to McNamara (2004), describing the text in one's own words serves two functions. First, it allows the reader to transform the material into a representation that is more familiar and consequently more memorable. Second, the ability to paraphrase roughly translates into the most basic level of comprehension because, to paraphrase successfully, one must be able to process the basic structure and grammatical relations of the sentence to transform the verbatim text into more familiar words. In addition, this strategy helps the reader to better understand the basic meaning of the text and thus fortify the reader's text base situation model level of understanding. This strategy is also called 'RAP' strategy (Schumaker,Denton and Deshler,1984). It is a three-step strategy: (1) Read a paragraph, (2) ask myself, 'what was the main idea and two details?' and,(3) put it into my own words. The RAP strategy which, once mastered, enhances poor readers' understanding of textual materials, is anchored in the theory of utilizing paraphrasing to help improve memory of main ideas and details in text. Students who were instructed to use the RAP strategy developed their recall of text from 48% to 84% (Schumaker et al., 1984). In spite of the importance the results indicate, there is relatively little published research on the RAP strategy. Of the few studies done, one example is Ellis and Graves (1990),who used the RAP strategy with 47 middle school students with learning disabilities (LD) to assess its effects on students' ability to find the main idea of stories. Results indicated that compared to control students, students given treatment in RAP could identify significantly more main ideas from passages. In another example, Katims and Harris (1997) investigated the use of this strategy on a group of 207 middle school students. A ten item multiple-test choice testwas used to assess comprehension. The study reported mixed results. Nondisabled students showed significant improvement in reading comprehension; however, students with LD did not

improve their comprehension. However, there has been no study of the effect of the use of RAP strategy on college students,making the present study unique.

Strategy intervention

Strategy intervention deals with students' difficulties in social skills, communication, behavior, study skills, writing, and reading comprehension by teaching them to use strategies (Palincsar and Brown, 1987; Deshler, Schumaker, Lenz, and Ellis, 1984).Lenz, Ellis, and Scanlon (1996) define strategies as follows: "It is an individual's approach to a task when it includes how a person thinks and acts when planning, exercising, and evaluating performance on a task and its outcomes" (p.5). Therefore, we cansurmisethat a strategy approach involves both cognitive and metacognitive elements.

The Strategies Intervention Model (SIM), developed by researchers at the University of Kansas (Alley and Deshler, 1979; Bender, 1995; Clark, 1993; Deshler et al., 1984; Ellis, Deshler, and Schumaker, 1989; Shaw, Cullen, McGuire, and Brinckerhoff, 1995; Palincsar and Brown, 1987; Torgesen, 1988a, 1988b), is based on the theory that some students, especially weak readers, have information processing difficulties, are strategy deficient, and are inactive learners. In other words, they are not able to create or use appropriate cognitive and metacognitive strategies spontaneously to process information, to cope with problems they encounter, or to learn new material. Reynolds (2000) attributed the lower reading comprehension of poor readers to insufficient automatization of both basic and higher level strategic comprehension processes, which in turn, is linked to having limited attentional resources and allocating those attentional resources inefficiently.

In contrast to tutorial, remedial, and compensatory approaches, the main focus of strategy intervention is not increasing content knowledge, but rather, knowing how to learn. Through instruction in the Paraphrasing Strategy, a SIM strategy designed to improve reading comprehension, the researchers in University of Kansas found that students learn to acquire, retrieve, manipulate, store, remember, and express academic content information in an organized and a systematic manner (Alley and Deshler, 1979; Deshler, Alley, Warner, and Schumaker, 1981; Deshler, Schumaker, Lenz, and Ellis, 1984; Shaw et al., 1995). In using the strategy, students engage and interact with information using inner language, or executive functioning (Bender, 1995). They develop metacognitively in that they learn how to think about problems and ways to solve them. The SIM focuses on teaching students how to learn as opposed to what to learn.

Given the paucity of evidence with regard to paraphrasing strategy training at the college level, this study was done to investigate the effect of paraphrasing intervention onthe reading comprehension performance of undergraduate learners. In light of this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Paraphrasing strategy training has a significant impact on the reading comprehension of college students.

H2: Students with high and low proficiency differ significantly afterparaphrasing strategy intervention.

H3: Gender does not have any impact on the reading comprehension of students who were taught the paraphrasing strategy.

Method

Participants

Based onthe consensus among researchers regarding the larger the size of the sample, the greater its precision or reliability, the researcher invited a total of 120 students from four intact classes in three colleges in Mysore, India, to participate in this study.All were enrolled in the first or second year of an undergraduate degree program. Demographic information about the subjects was collected through a background questionnaire. Their ages ranged from 18 to 28, with a mean of 19.88, and there were 65 males and 55 females students in the sample. All the participating students had completed 12 years of schooling and had graduated from high school prior to their enrollment in college. Slightly over 55 percent of the students in the sample reported that English was not the medium of instruction in the secondary schools they had attended because they were living in rural areas of India. In order to determine the level of proficiency of the subjects, a TOEFL proficiency test including 40 multiple-choice items was given to allparticipants. After determining the scores, subjects who placed between +/- 1 standard deviation above and below the mean (M=17, SD=5.60) were selected as the main subjects of this study. There were 63 subjects (32 males and 31 females) in total. It is to be noted that some subjects dropped out of the study due to either their absence in some treatment sessions or because of providing incomplete data.

Materials

The following instruments were used for the purpose of this study:

*Language proficiency test (TOFEL):*This test comprised of a multiple-choice reading passage, vocabulary, and a grammar section. In order to test the reliability of the proficiency test, a pilot study was carried out on 20 students. Its reliability through the K-R21 formula turned out to be .75, which was supportive of the next step to be taken.

*Test of reading comprehension in English:*The test of reading comprehension in English was from the*Kit of Reading Comprehension*(Rajinder, 2008.). The time allowed was 20 minutes as determined at the piloting stage. The reading passages used in this study contained a general content, which were of interest to the students.

Going through K-R21 formula, it was indicated that the reading comprehension test was reliable enough (.72) for the respective goal in the present study. Then after calculating the correlation coefficient (.70) between the TOEFL proficiency test and the test of reading in English in the piloting stage for the purpose of having a valid test, the test of reading turned out to be suitable for this study.

*Background questionnaire:*In order to elicit information about participants, a background questionnaire was developed by the investigators. It covered issues such as the subjects' age, gender, place of living, years of studying English, name of college, and medium of instruction (see Appendix 1).

Procedure

After getting the consent of the authorities, the comprehension pre-test and TOEFL proficiency test were piloted by 20 students who were randomly selected among the subjects in the three colleges. During this pilot phase, test sections were revised and prepared for the main subjects. Then, the proficiency of the participants was determined by TOEFL proficiency test. Based on the result of this test, subjects whose scores were one standard deviation above the mean were considered as high and those who got one standard deviation below the mean were considered as low. There were no control groups in this study because this project was implemented to compare the performance of the present subjects after and before the below-mentioned treatment. In addition, all the variables including proficiency, gender and age were controlled by the researcher for the experiment as the teacher of the selected classes. In other words, the researcher set the lower and upper limits of these variables and randomly selected some subjects who fit the criterion. This extreme group design resulted in 33 high-ability students and 30 low-ability students. Data for the students whose scores fell between +/- 1 standard deviation were considered for analysis. Then, all

subjects were given two reading comprehension tests including 9 multiple-choice questions but only the scores of high- and low-ability students were considered for analysis.

The treatment sessions were held in the next procedure within a few days interval. In these sessions, the paraphrasing strategy was demonstrated and modeled using the Schumaker, Denton, and Deshler (1984) model (see Appendix 2).This model included 8 instructional phases. In addition, a self-designed pamphlet was given to the subjects for the purpose of practicing this strategy. After the treatment sessions, which lasted about 2 months were brought to an end, the same pre-test reading comprehension texts were given to the participants for a post-test. Directions were printed for the students to read silently while the instructor read them out loud. All subjects were instructed to paraphrase the passage while reading these texts and write them on their answer sheets. When the reading and paraphrasing were completed, the passages and paraphrasing notes were collected and comprehension tests distributed. Then, the results of both pre-test and post-test were compared for data analysis.

Results and Discussion

On the basis of their scores from proficiency or prior knowledge tests, subjects were first divided into two groups:

a) High: those subjects who scored 1 Standard deviation above the Mean (M+1SD), and

b) Low: those subjects who scored 1 Standard deviation below the Mean (M-1SD).

After data were collected, a paired T-test and an independent sample test were used to find the significant different variables as shown in the following tables.

Table 1 Paired sample statistics for all subjects

	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig
Pretest	63	1.49	1.030		
Posttest	63	3.08	.789		
Total	63	1.587	1.145	11.004	.000

Note * p< .01, ** p< .005

Results of the data analyses (T-test) in the above table indicate that there is a statistically significant difference between students in reading comprehension performance before treatment (pre-test) and after the instruction (post-test) (t=11.004; p< 001). In other words, subjects scored higher in the post-test (M=3.08, SD= .789) than pre-test (M=1.49, SD= 1.030). Based on this result, the hypothesis H1 is accepted.

Table 2 Paraphrasing Strategy Training and Ability Level Effects

	Group	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig
Pretest	Low	30	1.27	.907	1.681	.098
	High	33	1.70	1.104		
	Total	63	.032	1.047	.241	.811
	Male	32	1.28	1.085	1.675	.099
	Female	31	1.71	.938		
	Total	63	.000	1.047	.000	1.000
Posttest	Low	30	2.90	.803	1.749	.085
	High	33	3.24	.751		
	Total	63	1.556	.838	14.731	.000
	Male	32	2.94	.840	1.463	.149
	Female	31	3.23	.717		
	Total	63	1.587	.854	14.744	.000

Note * p< .01, ** p< .005

It was expected that high-prior knowledge students would score significantly higher than low-prior knowledge students on the pre-test but the above table appears to reject this hypothesis. In other words, high-prior knowledge students (M=1.70, SD=1.104) performed almost the same as low-prior knowledge ones in the reading comprehension test (M=1.27, SD=0.907). Interestingly, there was not a significant difference between this ability and the presence of paraphrasing strategy training (post-test) (t=1.681; p > .005). That is, high-prior knowledge students did not show significantly more or less of an increase in test scores than low-prior knowledge students. In other words, both groups performed almost equally after they were instructed. By taking all these results into account, the second hypothesis formulated was rejected.

Regarding the gender variable as another independent variable in this research, no significant difference was reported between males and females after the paraphrasing strategy was taught (post-test) as it was the case before treatment (t=1.675, p > 005). Therefore, the third hypothesis presented in this research was accepted.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusions

The principal thesis of this study was that the students at undergraduate level in college who participated in the Paraphrasing Strategy Instruction (SIM) would show greater gains in

reading comprehension in comparison to their performance before the instruction. I believe that such improvements in reading, whether for higher prior knowledge students or lower ones, may begin to redress the cumulative deficit experiment by these students and I amoptimistic about the role of strategy instruction as a factor in improving the students' reading.

The fact that both groups demonstrated significant improvement over time on the reading comprehension tests may be attributed to some factors including practice effects, incidental exposure to tasks focusing on the appropriate utilization of paraphrasing strategy, characteristics of the nature of instruction itself, and also to the regular classroom reading programs. Regarding the features of the strategy intervention, SIM students were taught a flexible strategy for extracting meaning from text while reading. The students began to learn the strategy by using some written texts as a model, and were given scaffolding by the teacher to apply the strategy in other texts. Also, they were provided with many opportunities to practice the strategy. Therefore, students devoted much more time to engage in reading and in successfully comprehending what they read than they would have without this intervention. Finally, I contend that creating a positive climate, along with a level of behavioral support and achievement expectation which motivates the students to try hard necessitates more involvement on the part of the students. In addition, a number of variables related to instruction, classroom, and college can pave the way for an effective learning environment, and may be important in the successful implementation of strategy instruction (Mothus, Lapadat, Struthers, Fisher, and Paterson, 2002).

Recommendation

The ability to glean meaning from expository passages is arguably one of the most important skills for success in our colleges. The findings from the instructional intervention study described in this article lend support for teaching a metacognitively based paraphrasing strategy to improve reading comprehension of the students in general education classrooms. The study is unique in that students at the college level were given the same intensity of instructional intervention as in the general education classroom.

A challenge for teachers who try to use the metacognitive strategy of paraphrasing in their own classrooms is the selection of expository reading materials for teaching the RAP procedure. Due to the lack of time available for the researcher in this article, two expository texts were selected for evaluating the reading performance of the students. Therefore, future researchers interested in the same area of study are recommended to utilize more expository

texts for teaching their students the RAP procedure so that they would verify advantages of utilizing the strategy have been touched on in this article.Another important point which should be mentioned here is that the findings on paraphrasing and reading comprehension must be interpreted cautiously, however, due to the variability and overlap in scores (Tawney and Gast, 1984). While the results of this study should be interpreted with caution, the study shows positive and practical effects for a reading comprehension intervention that can be implemented by teachers and practitioners who always criticize that reading research is impractical and rarely suggests useful classroom techniques (Niemi, 1990). Further research is needed for students at higher or lower levels in different contexts such as EFL or native languages to increase the generalization of the Paraphrasing Strategy.

This study suggests that undergraduate college students including students with low or high prior knowledge can make significant improvements in reading comprehension with a classroom-based strategy instruction approach to intervention. Contrary to most other empirical studies reported in the literature, this study focused on all students in an intact classroom in different colleges, not just on students with language disabilities. Thus, the results of this study support and extend earlier work documenting strategy intervention that was of limited scope or duration.

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Appendix 1

Students Performa

Attention: Please answer the questions honestly. We will keep them strictly confidential.

1. Name of the student:……

2. Age:……..

3. Gender……
4. Name of college……
5. Class studying: :……..
6. Medium of instruction.....…….

7. I have ……..familiarity with English language.

a. complete b. average c. a little

8. How many years have you been studying English except the usual classes in guidance school and high school? …….years …….months

9. What is your purpose of learning English?

a. continue education b. travelling c. finding a good job

d. competing with other students e. job promotion d. others (please write)

10. My attitude toward English is……..

a. positive b. negative c. no comment

11. My attitude toward European people, especially English-speaking ones is……

a. positive b. negative c. no comment

Appendix 2

Sequence of Stages for Learning the Paraphrasing Strategy (Schumaker, Denton and Deshler, 1984)

Each stage begins with a review of previous stages and an advance organizer for the upcoming steps and skills to be learned. In Stages 2 and 3, a post-organizer is used to

summarize the content of learning. In all stages, a " Management Chart" is completed to check for stages completion.

Step 1: Pretest and Make Commitment – Pretest for paraphrasing skills. Obtain commitment from students to learn the strategy. Instructor commits to helping students to learn the strategy.

Step 2: Describe– Situations in which the strategy could be used are discussed. Learning goals are set. Steps of the paraphrasing are taught/described and include; 1) read a paragraph; 2) identify the main ideas and details of each paragraph and how to locate them; 3) paraphrase the main idea and details; 4) use the RAP mnemonic to remember the strategy steps and, 5) identify the parts of a good paraphrase.

Stage 3: Model – The strategy is demonstrated for the student and questions are encouraged.

Stage 4: Verbal Practice – Students are required to learn the strategy steps at an "automatic level" by verbalizing them out loud maximizing self-instruction in acquisition of the strategy.

Stage 5: Controlled Practice and Feedback – After the students have demonstrated mastery of the steps in stage 4, practice opportunities with specific performance and corrective feedback are provided by practicing the strategy using easier materials. The emphasis here is on learning to use the strategy fluently.

Stage 6: Advanced Practice and Feedback – Plenty of practice in grade materials is provided in this stage. Fading of instructional prompts is emphasized to increase generalization and independent use of the strategy.

Stage 7: Posttest and Make Commitments – A commitment for use of the strategy in multiple settings is the focus here. The teacher also commits to the student to maintain a continuing role to helping the student learn the strategy. Progress made by the student is examined along with a plan for continuous progress monitoring.

Strategy 8: Generalization – This stage focuses on helping the student to understand the many settings in which the strategy may be used and give them practice in these settings. Finally, students are taught how to adopt the strategy to novel situations.

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Second Language Learners and Their Self-confidence in Using English: A Social Constructive Perspective

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Abstract

This paper examines how self-confidence is socially and discursively constructed through the qualitative analyses of the lived experiences of two Chinese advanced learners/users of English in Australia with data obtained from in-depth interviews. Built on sociocultural views on L2 learning and Norton's (2000) conception of self-confidence as being socially constructed, the learners' senses of confidence are shown to be strongly influenced by external factors such as power relations in specific contexts of interaction. Besides, they appear to be internally related to the learners' previously established L2 identities shaped along the paths of investment in learning English in China. Through a micro-analyses at the sites of interaction and a description of the learners' earlier language development, this paper sheds light on the dynamic process of confidence construction. It also provides useful insights into the nature of the complex relationships the learners have developed with English and the significance of the interwoven relations between language, investment and identity.

Keywords: Self-confidence; L2 learning; Identity; Investment; Sociocultural perspectives; Lived experiences

Introduction

The issue of self-confidence in second language (L2) learning has been primarily studied as an affective variable with a social psychological approach in the broad context of research on attitudes and motivation for L2 use and achievement (e.g., Clément, 1980; 1985; Gardner, Tremblay, & Masgoret, 1997). Clément (1980, 1986), in particular, proposed the social context model in which self-confidence was conceptualized as a key construct determining the motivation to learn an L2 in multicultural settings and developed essentially as a result of frequent and pleasant contacts with the L2 community. Consequently, the more confident the learners are, the greater communicative competence they will achieve and the better

psychological adjustment and cross-cultural adaptation they experience (Clément, 1986; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985; Noels, Pon, & Clément, 1996; Yang, Noels, & Saumure, 2005).

Although these results are useful in pointing out the significant interrelations among interethnic contact, self-confidence and communicative competence in acquiring an L2, these studies appear to be limited in a number of ways. First, they have not dealt with the actual L2 use of learners, nor have they described how the learners became more or less confident when interacting with members of different ethnolinguistic communities. Secondly, the social context has been discussed merely with respect to its influence on determining L2 learners' belief and attitude towards the L2 community as a group by using statistical instruments, meaning that little is known concerning the nature of interactions between individual learners and social contexts of learning and the effects of those on shaping their confidence. Thirdly, while the extensive use of quantitative measures in these studies allowed for generalization to characterize a homogeneous group, a potential disadvantage of this way of investigation is that individual learners and their unique cultural, linguistic, psychological, social and cognitive characteristics may have been overlooked.

In this paper, I examine self-confidence from a social constructive perspective following Norton (1995; 1997; 2000) who argues that self-confidence should be seen as socially constructed within and by the lived experiences of language learners and that the meaning of this construct may change over time and space subject to inequitable relations of power. Norton's construal of self-confidence is fundamentally embedded within the emerging theoretical representation of social context in second language acquisition (SLA) regarding its direct involvement in creating positive and negative conditions for L2 learning and in shaping multiple identities of the learners (e.g., Firth & Wagner, 1997; Hall, 1997; Norton, 1997; Pavlenko, 2002; Pennycook, 1999; Rampton, 1997; Zhu, Seedhouse, Li, & Cook, 2007). It also reflects the recent attempt to shift the focus of L2 learning from mastering the intricacies of language specifics to emphasizing language use in context and the dialogic interactions that arise between socially constituted individuals engaged in activities which are co-constructed with other individuals (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995).

Thus, guided by the sociocultural perspectives of L2 learning (I follow Zuengler and Miller (2006) in the use of sociocultural perspectives as a cover term for varied approaches that foreground the social and cultural contexts of learning), I employ the case study approach and investigate the social contextual factors underpinning the dynamic process in which self-confidence of two Chinese advanced learners/ users of English is individually shaped in Australia. In this paper, I make no distinction between L2 learner and user, a

difference originally suggested by Cook (1999). I maintain that they are qualified as both L2 users and learners, judged by the level of their success and past as well as the then on-going learning activities. In examining how the two women perceive their confidence within specific contexts of interaction, I will demonstrate the way in which external factors such as power relations condition the development of L2 learners' senses of confidence. As the learners seem to partially resort to their historically established L2 identities in interpreting the interactive situations, I will also analyze the learners' earlier language development in order to explicate the sociohistorical cues accounting for the particular learning paths the individuals carved out and their consequent learning outcomes. In doing so, this paper will not only provide important empirical evidence to support Norton's view on self-confidence as a social phenomenon, but will also shed light on the nature of the complex relationships the learners have developed with English and the impact of these relationships on their overall language development.

Conceptualization of Self-confidence in L2 Learning

The notion of self-confidence pertaining to L2 learning was initially introduced by Clément (1980, 1986) through the social context model as an innovative unitary construct conceptually related to language anxiety as an affective aspect and perceived communicative competence as a cognitive component in learning an L2. Clément (1980) posited that in cases where L2 learning took place in a multicultural setting, the qualitative and quantitative aspects of contact with the L2 community would heighten the learners' self-confidence which then became the most immediate motivating influence to learn an L2. In another social psychological model of L2 learning, the model of willingness to communicate (WTC) proposed by MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1998), self-confidence was also represented as a central term. The WTC model was concerned with the functions of L2 use and attempted to integrate a range of linguistic, communicative and social psychological variables according to how closely they affect one's willingness to communicate, leading to more spontaneous, sustained and effective use of the L2. Unlike Clément who considered self-confidence as a higher order construct comprising anxiety and self-evaluation of proficiency, MacIntyre et al. (1998) focused on the way perceived competence and anxiety affect WTC separately. Consequently, contending that some communicative situations might entail more confidence than others, MacIntyre et al. (1998) distinguished trait-like self-

confidence from state self-confidence, alluding to variations in L2 self-confidence across time and situations.

Going beyond the social psychological scope, I notice that in some literature concerning L2 learning, the term self-efficacy has been used instead of self-confidence, similarly seen as an affective variable linked to motivation and language achievement (e.g., Chularut & DeBacker, 2004; Cotterall, 1999; Ehrman, 1996; Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003; Oliver, Purdie& Rochecouste, 2005). This is presumably because these studies opted for highlighting the role of individuals' belief in their capacities to achieve a desired outcome from a social cognitive angle (Bandura, 1997). To clear the confusion, Tremblay and Gardner(1995, p.507) stated that "self-confidence differs from self-efficacy mainly in terms of the inclusion of an anxiety component". Elsewhere in the field of SLA, due to the wide influence of the work of Clément and his associates, self-confidence has often been seen as a part of motivation construct, contributing to the explanation of the role of individual differences in L2 learning (e.g., Ellis, 1994). Furthermore, perhaps due to its strong social psychological connotation, self-confidence or self-efficacy has been more commonly mentioned with regard to the cognitive beliefs and psychological gains the learners have and experience in L2 learning (e.g., Ellis, 2008; Freeman & Freeman, 2007; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). As a result, until the arrival of Norton's work, there has been very little information in SLA literature about the nature of the process in which L2 learners develop senses of confidence.

Norton (1995; 1997; 2000) came to form a different understanding of self-confidence, upon noting how inequitable relations of power could limit the opportunities the L2 learners had to practise English outside the classroom. Drawing on the lived experiences of a few immigrant women in the Anglophone Canadian society and using diary study and in-depth interview approaches, she found that while all of the women had a strong drive to communicate and therefore were highly motivated to learn the language of the new community, they, however, all experienced difficulty speaking under conditions of marginalisation. They reported that they constantly felt inferior to their native English speaking Canadian interlocutors and consequently felt uncomfortable speaking and their self-confidence remained low. For Norton, the data clearly suggested that self-confidence or anxiety could not be an inherent trait of the language learners, nor could the researchers arbitrarily map the motivational factors as dominantly responsible for low language achievement with little rigorous justification. Consequently, Norton (2000) established a

social constructive view of self-confidence, maintaining that both self-confidence and anxiety are socially constructed within and by the lived experiences of language learners.

Theoretical Framework

In taking up Norton's theoretical stance on self-confidence, I have situated this study within a broad sociocultural framework of L2 learning. The sociocultural approaches generally assume that L2 learning is a situated, co-constructed process involving active engagement of the learner in culturally, socially and politically shaped communicative contexts (Young, 2007; Zhu, et al., 2007; Zuengler & Miller, 2006). In this process, language is seen as a symbolic resource and a site of identity construction (Bourdieu, 1991; Norton, 1997; Pavlenko, 2002). In recent SLA literature, the ways L2 learners actively engage in learning are strongly indicated in Norton's (1995) notion of investment. Rooted in neoclassical economics, investment was used by Norton (1995, p.17) in place of motivation, referring to "the socially and historically constructed relationship of the learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to learn and practice it". "If learners invest in a second language, they do so with the understanding that they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources". Thus, they themselves are constitutive of the contexts of learning and reflexively construct and organize a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world (Barkhuizen, 2004). Consequently, "an investment in the target language is an investment in a learner's own identity, an identity which is constantly changing across time and space" (Norton, 2000, p.11).

Norton's attempt to highlight the dynamic and complex relationships between the learners, their social surroundings and their social identity through the concept of investment is believed to have pioneered "shifts in thinking about how and why second and foreign language takes place, and especially the nature and effects of interactions between the learner and contexts of learning" (Ricento, 2005, p.896). The concept itself has also been applied to a number of studies, particularly in the contexts where language learners are seen as agents in creating opportunities to achieve desired identity and overcome constraints in various discourses of learning (Arkoudis & Davison, 2008; Kanno, 2003; Xu, 2005; Lin, Wang, Akamatsu, & Riazi, 2002; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton & Gao, 2008; Trent, 2008).

Given that engaging investment is also a process of providing learners with access to power (Pittaway, 2004), the issues of linguistic legitimacy and power raised by Bourdieu (1991) have particular relevance. Bourdieu(1991, p.69) postulated that "linguistic competence is not a simple technical capacity but a statutory capacity" and "legitimate

competence is the statutorily recognized capacity of an authorized person". He went on to assert that "the use of the legitimate language involves the claim to be heard, believed, and obeyed", and the exercise of its specific efficacy depends on the fact that the user can count on the effectiveness of all the mechanisms which "secure the reproduction of the dominant language and the recognition of its legitimacy". Bourdieu's(1991)interpretation of linguistic competence in relation to the social status that an individual has in a society has set the foundation for understanding ownership of English in L2 learning. Norton (1997), for example, maintained that if learners of English cannot claim ownership of the language, they might not consider themselves as legitimate speakers. Miller (1999) also stated that the second language learners' being heard by native English speakers led to access to further legitimacy as L2 learners. Similarly, Lin et al. (2002) recounted how a non-native English teacher initially felt denied the competence due to non-nativeness but reclaimed ownership of English and gained linguistic as well as symbolic capital through her success in acquiring linguistic and cultural resources to qualify herself for an English teaching job.

Bourdieu's (1991) conception of linguistic legitimacy also points out that in learning English as an L2 in mainstream society, some linguistic minority speakers may encounter denial of access to particular linguistic markets with their voice not being heard, and lack the power to impose reception. As a result, their identities are at a site of struggle (e.g., Miller, 2004; Norton, 2000). According to poststructuralist thinking, the lack of linguistic legitimacy and potential identity crisis are closely tied to language ideologies (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2001; Pavlenko, 2002). Blackledge and Pavlenko(2002)argued that language ideologies are rarely about language alone, but are socially situated in the context of power relations in a diverse range of contexts such as academic discourse, postcolonial language planning, immigrant memoirs, education debates and the mass media. Following Blackledge and Pavlenko(2002), language ideologies relate not so much to individual speakers' attitudes to their languages, or speakers using language in particular ways, but to the more profound underlying values, practices and beliefs associated with language use by speakers and the discourse which constructs values and beliefs at state, institutional, national and global levels.

One other concept that is important in the sociocultural framework of learning in relevance to this paper is the situated and co-constructed view of L2 learning developed from the work of Lave and Wenger(1991). According to this view, acquisition of new L2 knowledge and skills is seen as resulting from the growing sense of belonging to and participation in particular communities of practice and increasing identification with members of those communities (Toohey, Day, & Manyak, 2007). Among various ways to

engage, participate and seek membership in the target community, the means of 'imagination' based on the work of Wenger (1998) has attracted increasing attention (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Pavlenko, 2003; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Pavlenko and Norton (2007) argued that English learners' imagining of their memberships to imagined communities affects their learning trajectories, influencing their agency, motivation, investment and resistence in the learning of English.

The Research

The research reported in this paper is a part of a larger study conducted in 2004, which examined how three Chinese advanced learners of English came to shape dynamic and evolving language identities across Chinese and Australian contexts of learning. The focus of this paper is on the ways in which the learners perceived senses of confidence in interaction with culturally different ones in Australia. Here I include data from only two learners in that the third learner's interactive experiences did not exclusively involve native English speaking Australians and the inclusion of those would not do justice to a fair comparison with the two other learners. In this paper, as the two selected learners were highly proficient in English, their self-confidence was examined in view of its affective aspect – anxiety and discomfort,rather than self evaluation of L2 skills (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The contexts of interaction referred to the specific interactive events or occasions remembered by them as important for the construction of their confidence. The aim of the study was to understand the specific learning experiences that were real and significant to them and the processes in which they made sense of the experiences for their perception of confidence and general language development. The research was guided by two questions:

1. How do the two Chinese advanced learners of English perceive their self-confidence in interactions with native English speaking Australians?

2. How and why is their self-confidence challenged or reinforced within self nominated interactive events?

Participants

The data was drawn from two informants with the pseudonyms of Yolanda and Fiona. Both Yolanda and Fiona used to be professional teachers of English in two universities located in southwestern and central China. At the time of the study, they were both pursuing their doctoral studies in two different universities in Melbourne, Australia. At the time of the

interview, Fiona was 27 years old and had studied in Australia for less than a year, whereas Yolanda aged 35 and had stayed there for nearly three years.

Method

Information about how the learners' perception of self-confidence in specific events was elicited through in-depth interviews consisting of two parts. For part one, the participants were invited to first, estimate their sense of confidence as a Chinese speaker of English following their transition from China to Australia, and second, to recollect a few occasions where they felt most confident and least confident in the communication with native English-speaking Australians. For both tasks, the informants were provided with visual charts (Appendix A) so that they could more easily map out the estimation and compare the experiences. As the completion of the charts required some time for reflection, I mailed the charts electronically to the participants in advance with the intention that they could have the information ready prior to our talk. In our interviews, I began with a discussion about the completed information with them, focusing on what precisely happened in the events. It should be noted that even though the charts entailed some scales and numbers, they were not meant to provide any statistical reference. They were instead approximate indexes to indicate whether there was a perceived change of confidence and meanwhile, to lend a scale to compare the significance of and degree of reactions to particular interactive situations. This part of data collection was thus intended for capturing the stories of interaction created through linking certain events together in a particular sequence across a time period.

The second part of the interview involved a more extended talk guided by a list of semi-structured questions about the general background of the participants, in particular, their life experiences at different stages that have been interlocked with English language within both Chinese and Australian linguistic and sociocultural contexts. The topics included previous English learning experiences particularly in relation to memorable events or persons, place or importance of English in the occupation in the home country, preparations for coming to Australia, language and life challenges, and processes of appropriation as speakers of English in Australia (see Appendix B for the complete list of interview questions[1]). These aspects of information were important in that they complemented the micro-analyses at the level of interaction exchange, assisting in constructing a more complete version of the communicative events. This way of thinking in study design accords with opinions expressed by researchers such as Block (2007) that extra-interactional factors(e.g., the biography of the

individual language learner, her or his membership in different communities of practice) were accountable for more profound understanding of any potential language acquisition activities.

The interviews were audio taped with a mini tape recorder and transcribed to a computer for data analysis. The interview with each participant lasted approximately two and a half hours. As to the coding and analysis of the data, I relied on a manual approach, focusing initially on the identification of common themes. As my research questions asked how the learners perceived their self-confidence through both positive and negative events, I first constructed a table file that contained all the interactive events horizontally and the themes of feelings and potential causes of the feelings vertically. However, in this process of analysis, an emergent theme arose relating to the great individual variations in the ways in which they selected and interpreted the events. In order not to run the risk of missing the idiosyncratic characteristics of each learner through the identification of common themes, I constructed separate individual files in which I brought together the historically different beliefs and attitudes of the learners about learning English and the consequent learning behaviours and outcomes. This step shaped the final way in which the data was presented in different cases.

Findings

Specific to the focus of this paper, in exploring the explanation that accounts for increased or decreased confidence of the learners, both external factors such as power relations in specific contexts of interaction and internal factors(i.e., the learners' previously established L2 identities shaped along their paths of investment in learning English) arise as relevant. Regarding internal factors, it was found that the learners would seem to perceive more confidence if their previously established L2 identities were confirmed. To understand what their previously established L2 identities are, a description of the learners' earlier language development was necessary. In consideration of the great amount of individual characteristics manifested in the overall language development processes of the two learners including their new learning experiences in Australia, the findings are organized into two separate stories. In each story, I begin with a description of the nature of the learner's investment in learning English and forming a relationship to English, using a narrative approach. After that, I show how the relationship prepared her for the transition to Australia and played an important part in her adjustments to the new learning environment. I also cast analyses on the roles of context and power relations in specific interactions.

Yolanda's story

English and a 'success identity' in China

Upon reflection of past experiences of engagement with English, Yolanda delineated a learning trajectory on which English was associated with consistent success in learning, and accordingly mediated an identity central to Yolanda's sense of self in a Chinese sociocultural context. At all stages of learning as a student Yolanda excelled at English. She ascribed this outcome to being in a good school where she had received continuing support from good teachers and also being inspired by a wise and encouraging friend who made her see the importance of English for creating a brighter future. Despite this claim of external influences, Yolanda was highly motivated mainly because she came to appreciate what she had become through English in the eyes of others in relation to the larger Chinese society. By doing well at English, she felt she was establishing both a public and a personal image of being smart, capable and successful. On a personal level, she also discovered that English opened a door to new and wonderful things that used to exist only in books or movies, and that through English she felt more culturally enriched and spiritually liberated. When she became a professional teacher of English, English was affiliated with a symbol of authority and a sign of control. When asked about how confident she felt about her work, she responded:

> *When I was in China, I felt fairly confident about myself because firstly as a university lecturer I had received years of formal language training. Secondly English was used mostly within the classroom context and even when I was invited to be an interpreter occasionally, English was all under my control and I felt like I was using English in an authoritative way.*

On the whole, as a result of strong investment, English seemed to have created for Yolanda access to multiple symbolic resources such as a broad social recognition, a good profession and undoubted legitimacy in using English in China. It validated her sense of being to the extent that she came to develop a strong 'success identity' in relation to English which inherently pertained to her social identity in the Chinese sociocultural context. She was therefore technically, economically and socio-politically empowered by English.

Identity issue in Australia

However, in moving to Australia, Yolanda perceived tremendous challenges in her sojourn mainly as a result of the change in her social status from a professional teacher of English to an international student and also the uprooting from the familiar Chinese sociocultural

context. Yolanda summarized the consequences of such changes for her feeling of self as a non-native speaker of English as follows:

> *After coming to Australia, a few changes took place for us non-native speakers of English. First linguistically speaking, people with whom we communicate, have a much higher natural advantage over us as native speakers of English. Second, their knowledge base and culture gave them the unquestionable authority that, we, as students, would certainly not dare to challenge. From every aspect of the language issue, they [English native-speaker] are the authority, and we are students. It is definite that we would feel lacking in confidence in communication with them. Thirdly, from the psychological perspective, we would feel nervous and anxious when we could not understand what the native speaker said. The sense of anxiety would further prevent us from reacting appropriately. Then we would worry that the English speaking interlocutor might have perceived us as stupid.*

In this extract, Yolanda pronounced the potential linguistic, cultural and socio-political disadvantages L2 learners were bound to encounter. Embedded in her pronouncement was perception of severely reduced competence and a strong sense of powerlessness of not being a legitimate speaker of English because of her non-native speaking status and a peripheral role as a minority student. She also revealed substantial emotional vulnerability and lack of confidence. The expression of various challenges projected a strikingly altered way of positioning herself under the influence of a different social cultural context, indicating that her identity, which was developed against the Chinese sociocultural context, was under serious threat in Australia.

Self-confidence at specific sites of interaction

Turning to the context of more specific interactions between Yolanda and her native English-speaking interlocutors in Australia, I was mindful that interactions as such were also in nature interpersonal contacts at the site of intercultural encounters. Broadly speaking, a diverse range of variables from an intercultural communication perspective could be inferred as accounting for communicative effectiveness, which consequently will impact on the L2 speaker's senses of confidence and comfort in the communication (e.g., Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, & Nishida, 1996; Kim, 2001; Ting-Toomey, 1999).Yet, as much enlightened by the postulation that individuals bring their 'self-image' to any type of cross cultural

communicative encounter (Ting-Toomey, 1999), my intention was to expound on how a 'self image' shaped through previous English learning experiences relate to the individual's perception of language competence and sense of confidence from the perspective of L2 learning.

Yolanda recalled two interactive situations in which she felt most confident when her competence in using English was asserted and her self-image of being a competent speaker of English, a capable and useful person seemed to be reinforced. Both events were contextualized in an informal and non-academic setting. In the first situation described by Yolanda, she was asked to act as a language mediator by the chair of Chinese student association.

> *Since my speciality is language, it feels as if I were always the head of a team [the Chinese student association]. I could always fix up problems for him[the chair of the association] and settle the matters appropriately by making the Australian communicator happy as well. This made me feel confident and good about myself.*

This reflection does not reveal information about the very interactive moment when Yolanda used English to negotiate a desired communicative result. Nor is the role and attitude of her interlocutor indicated. However, the fact that this particular interactive situation was selected as memorable revealed the very reasons that explain the sources of her self-confidence in her terms. Here a close tie is seen between language application and Yolanda's general social image as a 'head' or 'leader'. In resemblance to her learning experiences in China, in this context English appeared to have opened up chances for her to be in a position where she could claim her images of self as a smart and capable person, thus maintaining a high level of self-confidence. The second event involves the supportive role of her interlocutor, contributing to perception of being a competent L2 user in the interaction. Again, the following description of gaining control in the conversation indicates the importance of statutory legitimacy with which she was familiar in China:

> *I remember speaking most fluently with a truck driver who was also a friend of ours when he took us out for a picnic. My friend and I were even amazed at our own language fluency. He is a local and spoke quite fast. In our communication, I could be in control of the topics and there was nothing that blocked me psychologically. We felt extremely relaxed as we knew, even if we made mistakes in our talk, there wouldn't be any bad consequences.*

As to the negative experiences of social interaction in Australia, Yolanda first recalled a very short encounter with a receptionist at the faculty where she was studying:

> *I was searching for the pigeon hole of a lecturer to drop in a letter. When I couldn't find it immediately by myself, the receptionist reached out from her door asking 'what are you doing here' in an apparently reproaching tone. Hearing that, I was speechless as I expected her to say 'can I help you' instead. The stiffness in her attitude and her unfriendly facial expression made me feel as if I were messing around like I had nothing else to do. I felt very disturbed and did not want to communicate with her except telling her what I was doing. An interaction like this felt rather unpleasant.*

As shown in this excerpt, due to the bad manners of the interlocutor, Yolanda felt wrongly treated and overpowered, and was unable to respond in the way she had wanted in the context where she was an unimportant student. Although it is difficult to predict what might have happened had Yolanda adopted another social role, it is apparent that being conscious of her lower status as a student and a non-native speaker of English, Yolanda was overshadowed by her interlocutor's exercise of power at this given moment in the given setting. Remaining in Yolanda's memory as a highly uncomfortable experience, this incident reminds us of the notion of an implicit social power and the influence of such power on second language learners' feelings of being in the right place to use the right language to let their voice and claims be heard.

In drawing a link between lack of confidence, the attitude of the interlocutors and an implicit power, Yolanda's description of the next event lends even stronger evidence for understanding "how relations of power affect social interaction between second language learners and target language speakers" and additionally the self-confidence of L2 learners (Norton Peirce, 1995, p.12):

> *I heard that some books were on sale at the bookshop, $10 a box but when I picked up my books in a little larger box and went to pay at the cashier, the shop assistant looked very unhappy and asked for $15. As I was unaware of the price difference depending on the size of the box, I asked her why. She was kind of a difficult person to approach – she spoke very fast with a strong Australian accent. What made me feel most uncomfortable was her attitude, she looked askance at me implying a racial discrimination towards Chinese. Of course I cannot accuse her of being a' racist' because she did not abuse me verbally. This encounter with her totally discouraged me and I ended up stumbling over my words when I*

spoke with her. When I got back home I felt regretful, thinking I should have said this and that to argue with her, but I was unable to do so as it felt quite tense in the situation.

This short conversation exerted a direct negative influence on Yolanda's feelings about her language competence and fluency. 'Stumbling over her words' and leaving the interactive scene with anger and frustration denote her struggles related not only to actual language performance but also a sense of defencelessness. Clearly, with the strong perception that her being Chinese was an issue for her interlocutor in the exchange of conversation, Yolanda failed to employ English appropriately to respond to the challenge.

Apart from the presence of an alleged abuse of power relations, this event also reflects the negative influences of Yolanda's role change on her sense of self as a non-native speaker of English. In China she was a mainstream member having English as a plus. Years of investment in learning English as well as her social status as a professional teacher of English forged for her a 'success identity' which foregrounded her sense of self in the Chinese EFL sociocultural context. In moving to Australia, she became a minority member and an international student. Although her non-native speaking status remained unchanged, her senses of ownership and legitimacy were heavily reduced because of the perception of disadvantages triggered by her marginal role in Australia. The nature of the above two interactive experiences indicates that second language development is a process in which, learners like Yolanda exchange utterances through a 'voice'. According to Bakhtin (1986, p.71), the voice implies "a socially situated speaking person and encompasses such factors as a speaking person's perspective, world view, values and relationship to the voices of others". Hall (1997, p. 218) summarizes this as follows:

> "Acquiring a language or 'becoming competent' is not a matter of learning to speak. It is a matter of developing a range of voices, of learning to (re)construct utterances for our own purposes within and through our social identities, in the many and varied interactive practices through which we live our lives."

Fiona's *story*

English and self identity in China

Fiona was a few years younger than Yolanda but had very similar background to that of Yolanda and was also sojourning in Australia for her doctorate. They were both recipients of a full research scholarship. Prior to the then sojourn in Australia, they had both been to Australia on a short exchange program. However, in spite of the broad similarities Fiona

shared with Yolanda under the umbrellas of academic success and path of career development, Fiona's experiences of engagement with English in China revealed a different conceptualization of what she was looking for in and through English.

During Fiona's learning in China when she was a student, what emerged as salient was an insistent recognition of her sense of connection with three English teachers. Through those stories of connection, Fiona unveiled a learning path in which English was associated with increasing consciousness of bonding and connecting to an English-speaking community in search of an enriched sense of self as a bilingual. From the first teacher, Fiona learnt to be motivated in order to live up to the expectation of the teacher. The second teacher whom she met at the university was a young woman from Britain. Because of small age difference and Fiona's particularly good performance in her class, they interacted tremendously well and it was through those interactions that Fiona's horizon of English learning was substantially expanded, as indicated in the following excerpts from her interview:

> *I was attracted to native English speakers after my contact with that foreign teacher, for they offered me a whole new different perspective on life. Sometimes their words really cracked me up. They had a different way to look at the world and their worldview differed from ours too. I think I personally became more open-minded, more talkative and had a better sense of humour as a result of the communication with them.*

Thus, her close affiliation with that teacher seemed to have generated an entirely new perspective for Fiona to look beyond the basic functional role of English and led to the discovery of a new sense of self for her. Unlike Yolanda whose investment was kept high because English was essential to the construction of her social identity, Fiona seemed to emphasize her personal enjoyment of being able to use English to enter into the unknown world of native English speaking people. She added:

> *They [native speakers of English] brought a variety of new things. I longed to understand them – why are they like this; why are we different from them; and what are the best ways to promote better communication with them and better understanding of each other? I was very much intrigued by these questions.*

At this point Fiona had developed an eagerness for and curiosity about seeking her relations to English-speaking people for the purposes of cultivating and embracing a more open-minded and interesting personality of her own. These interests indicate that Fiona's goal of learning was no longer restricted to improving language competence, but expanded to involve a cultural sensitivity and awareness. She also hinted at looking for ways through which she

could foster a level of flexibility and find the 'fit' in communication with people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. As Fiona went on with her study at the postgraduate level, this goal of learning was further strengthened when she met a professor who represented an ideal model of a Chinese/English bilingual in Fiona's eyes. What the professor demonstrated regarding his ability in striking a balance in himself between the two languages and cultures had a profound effect on Fiona who then set out to find her own "third place"(Kramsch, 1993). When it came to her professional practice in China, Fiona commented:

> *In my teaching, I felt very comfortable with my English. I successfully organized an Australian International Conference in my university. I evenreceived a letter of appreciation from the Consul in charge* of *China-Australia cultural exchanges who commented that it was the most successful event he had ever seen*.

In short, through Fiona's reflection of significant experiences of learning in China, we see that for Fiona, being as equally a successful learner of English as Yolanda, the core of her English language development centred around her interest in finding and building up a connection to English and the English-speaking world after her being inspired by people to whom she felt connected. This seems to have contributed to a heightened understanding of who she wanted to become through English. In contrast to Yolanda whose sense of ownership was located in her competence in English with which she constructed a highly regarded social image, Fiona seemed to have internalised English as a vital part of herself on her journey for more deepened self exploration. English was thus transformed from a foreign language to the language of her inner self, opening up opportunities to imagined communities (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Because of this positioning, the other social embodiments English might carry, as it did for Yolanda, became deconstructed. Consequently, her self-confidence in using English remained high and was not as context dependent as it was for Yolanda.

Continuity in transition to Australia

In coming to Australia, contrary to Yolanda, Fiona came across few surprises and little challenge to her sense of confidence. Whereas Yolanda seemed to suffer from identity disequilibrium triggered by the loss of social identity which was a prominent part of her sense of self in moving from China to Australia, Fiona demonstrated a sense of continuity in Australia in that she could continue relating to native speakers of English as she did in China.

The reasons why Fiona did not feel significantly challenged were largely related to her sense of inner connectedness to English and the development of an intercultural mindset, as illustrated in the following:

> *I am inclined to think of culture shock as an interesting intercultural incident. I view it as an interesting contrast rather than a blow to myself. I would ponder these incidents in my mind making interesting comparison between our perspective and their perspective and find out where misunderstandings lie*.

This excerpt displays Fiona's attitudes of curiosity and openness towards what are usually regarded as stressful experiences by people who move from one culture to another within a short period of time. In contrast to feelings of loss, tension and identity disorientation potentially brought about by culture shock, a sense of gain emerged for Fiona as a result of her willingness to analyze conflicting intercultural encounters from the viewpoint of the others with whom she was engaging (Byram, 1997).

Self-confidence at specific sites of interaction

In view of memories of any significant interactive events in which she felt confident, Fiona said:

> *It is when I chat with friends whom I feel close to. It feels very natural especially when we talk about some very interesting things. I feel very good talking in English when I don't think there is barrier between us*.

As discussed earlier, Fiona's goal in learning English was not just to master language skills. Rather, English seemed to bear much more personal meanings for her and she desired to learn English as effectively as possible so that she could relate to other people meaningfully and build up a more open-minded and interesting personality. In an interactive event as this, Fiona was evidently able to relate to the person she talked to in a comfortable, communicative setting, which resulted in her feeling of confidence about her English.

Regarding the negative experiences, Fiona did not remember any extreme examples in the way that Yolanda did. However in her interaction with her supervisor, she noticed the presence of power relations, as in:

> *I can never converse fluently with my supervisor especially when I talk about my research. I could have expressed myself more fluently, but she was not a kind of encouraging and smiling person and we did not have an open atmosphere for our talk. It's her style and I am not saying that her style is not good but this style*

did not suit me. I knew from her other research students that they felt the same. Every time after the meeting, girls needed to go shopping and boys went out for drinks to release pressure and tension.

Even though she was able to draw a line between her feeling of anxiety and unsatisfactory language performance at that moment and her general self-confidence, the consequence of that power relation was far less than constructive. However, being aware that she was not the only one who felt that way, incident like this did not make her question her language competence and proficiency.

Conclusion

In this paper I have explored the meaning-making processes of two advanced learners of English in appropriating senses of confidence within discursive interactive contexts that involved native English speaking Australian interlocutors. The findings have shown that first, the learners perceived both heightened and decreased confidence in the self-nominated interactive events. Second, those perceptions were shaped under the influences of a number of factors such as the attitude of interlocutors in specific interactive situations and the internal images of self held by the learners. Through the analyses of the factors determining the learners' perception of self-confidence, I have demonstrated, in support of Norton (2000), that self-confidence is a dynamic, socially constructed conception grounded within the lived experiences of language learners, subject to power relations in specific contexts of interaction. Moreover, by drawing an emergent link between self-confidence reported at specific sites of interaction and the learners' past learning experiences, which led to the discussion about the learning biographies of the learners, I have shown the diverse and complex ways in which the learners invested in learning and consequently developed distinct L2 identities significant to their language development from China to Australia. From the ways English hastouched their identities, cultures, emotions and personalities, we hear voices about their innermost aspirations, awareness and newly expanded identities, but we also see signs of ambivalence, constraints and conflicts. These aspects point to the very interwoven relationship between language, investment and identity mediated through the dialectic relations between learners and various worlds and experiences they inhabit (Ricento, 2005).

In general, the findings have highlighted the theoretical advantage and value of the notion of investment for understanding how L2 learning has created and engaged the identities of learners in a dynamic manner. Morgan(2007, p.1041) commented that "the

multiplicity and complexity of Norton's construct of investment foregrounds heterogeneity and it reminds us that while culture is important, it is not necessarily primary, separable, or more salient than other experiences and desires". As shown from the two case studies, although Yolanda and Fiona learned English under the same educational conditions within same sociocultural contexts, there exist tremendous differences in the way they engaged with English with their own individual goals and desires. It is precisely through their "socially and historically constructed relationships" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p.17) to English that we are able to see "how they *experienced* learning, used someone else's language" and ultimately learned to appropriate the language to expand their horizons and identities (Kramsch, 2006, p.99, orginal italics).

Yolanda's case presents a classic example of how investment in learning English in China created for her a symbolic capital, an identity intimately tied to her social position in the Chinese sociocultural context. An interesting phenomenon in her case is that English appeared to be the vehicle through which she both gained access and was denied access across two different sociocultural contexts. This confirms that language is a complex social practice closely bound to power relations and the definition of learner identities. For Fiona, her investment produced a more flexible identity linked to "an imagined community"(Pavlenko & Norton, 2007), the community of native speakers of English beyond her immediate social network in China. Her imagined positive connection with and orientation towards such an imagined community not only helped her to appropriate meanings of English language, but created an identity that allowed her to transcend the immediate environment and engage with the desired community. Consequently, when she moved into the actual target community of practice, she experienced a strong sense of continuity. In conclusion, while I acknowledge that further investigation is needed before these patterns can be generalized, this study has enhanced our understanding of self-confidence as a social phenomenon and of L2 learning as an individually dynamic, continuing as well as accumulative process of investment.

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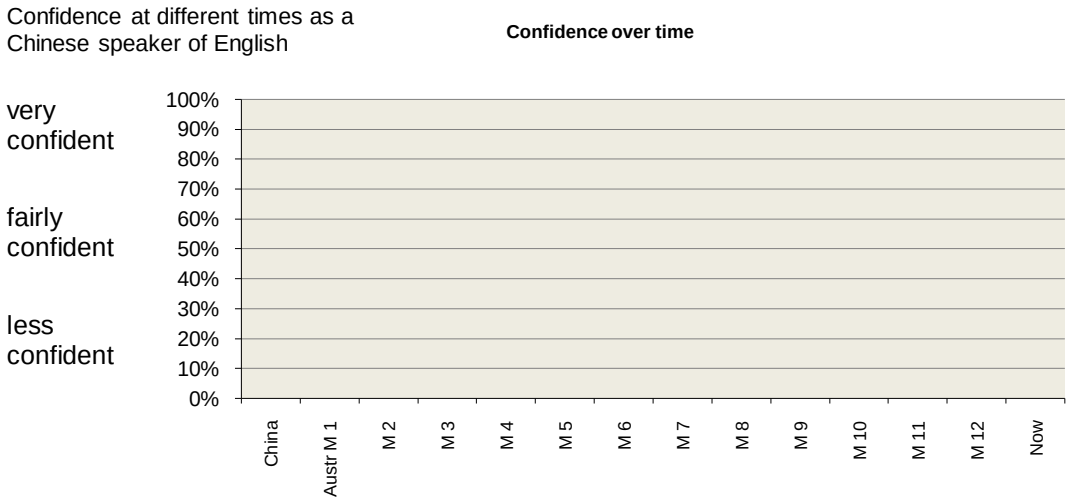
Appendix A: Visual Chart for Interviews

The following visual chartwas used in the interviews to assist in evaluating confidence change and recalling challenging as well as positive experiences of interaction.



Appendix B: The Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. How long have you been in Australia? And what are you staying in Australia for?
2. Can you tell me about your profession in China before you came to Melbourne?

3. May I know your age and how long you have been in your previous occupation in China?
4. How important was English to you in your previous occupation?
5. How did you feel about using English for your work?
6. Did you feel good and confident about your English at work? What has made you feel so? What made you feel good about yourself when speaking English? (Or what made you doubt that you could speak English appropriately?)
7. What is the reason for you to choose to work in the area of English language teaching? Were there any experiences or influential persons who helped you to make the choice of your career? What do you remember of those experiences? How do you define your own learning of English? What did you keep learning English for? Why do you think so? Do you still have the same idea now?
8. Was it your own decision to come to study in Australia? If so, why did you want to study in Australia? What preparations did you make for your journey to Australia?
9. Do you remember how it was like when you first came to Australia to study? (Had you ever been to Australia or another English speaking country before?) How did you feel about your coming to a new country like Australia? Before arriving in Australia, what did you think it would be like in an English-speaking country? Did you have expectations? What were you looking forward to? What were you afraid of?
10. When you first talked to Australians in English, what do you remember about the experiences, what feeling did you have about the experiences, happy, funny, surprised, shocked or any other particular feelings? Why do you think you had such kinds of feeling?
11. Do you remember whether your feeling were related to English, or other things, and if so, what things?
12. What have those experiences led to in your feeling about yourself as a speaker of English as a second language?
13. What is your general impression about speaking English in Australia compared with your experience of speaking English in China?
14. Have the expectations that you had before coming to Australia been met so far in Australia?
15. Are there moments when people don't understand you when you talk with them in English? Or when you are not 'heard' or accepted? What situations were they like? Why do you think such things happened? And how did you feel about that?

16. Do you remember particular experiences when you felt happy talking in English in conversation, when you feel good and confident about yourself in communicating with Australians?

17. What do you think matters to you in communicating with Australians? When do you feel comfortable to talk and when don't you?

18. How do you position yourself as a non-native speaker of English in the conversation with a native Australian? Do you sometimes feel inferior to your interlocutors? What role(s) are you seeking for yourself? What matters to you to achieve such role(s)?

19. Do you like talking to English speaking Australians? Under what circumstances do you like to converse with them? What do you enjoy most from the conversation?

20. Do you seek the opportunities to talk actively, or are there regular times when you need to speak English?

21. Do you reflect on your own English learning? How do you do that? What do your reflections tell you?

(Inquiry as to how the interview questions were developed can be directed to the author at jianweixu@ymail.com)

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Secondary EFL Students' Perceptions of Native and Nonnative English-Speaking Teachers in Japan and Korea

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Abstract

This survey study explores Japanese and Korean secondary school students' perceptions about their native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) and nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), concerning their competence in the target language and in language teaching, cultural and personal traits, teaching styles, and the classroom atmosphere the teachers establish. The purpose of the study was to examine and extend previous studies' findings concerning the characteristics of NESTs and NNESTs. Our study only partially supported the previous studies. While it corroborated the studies that reported language competence and cultural aspects as NESTs' strengths over NNESTs, anomalies were found when it came to personal aspects and competence in teaching language skills. Our findings suggest that students' perceptions about NESTs and NNESTs are situational, and contextual particularities and strengths and/or weaknesses of all teachers need to be understood on an individual basis rather than assumed as characteristics of any group of teachers.

Keywords: nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNESTs), native English-speaking teachers (NESTs), teaching competence

Introduction

With the global spread of English, East Asian countries, including Japan and Korea, have gone through radical changes in their public English education. In both countries, traditional grammar translation methods and written-English-oriented teaching have been largely discarded in favor of communication-oriented teaching, emphasizing oral communicative abilities (Fujikane, 2005; Gorsuch, 1999; Kwon, 2000; Nunan, 2003).

One common policy in accordance with such an emphasis on communicative abilities was hiring native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) to teach in their public schools. In Korea, this has been through the English Program in Korea (EPIK, http://www.epik.go.kr) and in Japan, the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme (http://www.jetprogramme.org/). Approximately 5,100 NESTs were teaching in Japanese public schools as of 2007 (The JET Programme, n.d.), and 1,909 NESTs in Korean public schools as of 2006 (Korean Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2006).

Even though the number of NESTs in public schools in the two countries has been increasing for the last decade, little research has been conducted on NESTs and NNESTs in these settings, particularly from the student perspective. Accordingly, the present study explored Japanese and Korean secondary students' perceptions of their NESTs and NNESTs, with respect to the comparisons between the two groups reported in previous studies. By doing so, we hoped to examine whether Korean and Japanese secondary school students' perceptions about the two groups of teachers would confirm (or refute) and extend previous research findings on NESTs and NNESTs.

Studies on NESTs and NNESTs

Inquiry on NESTs and NNESTs has centered on examining the perceived differences between the two groups in several domains, including their language skills, self-esteem as English as a foreign language/English as a second language (EFL/ESL) teachers, and teaching practices. More specifically, previous studies have examined perceptions about or preferences for each group from teachers' and students' perspectives (see Appendix 1 for more detailed information concerning the previous studies).

Teachers' Perspectives

Many of the studies on NESTs and NNESTs have examined how NESTs and NNESTs perceived themselves as EFL/ESL teachers (e.g., Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Llurda & Huguet, 2003 in the EFL context, and Kamhi-Stein, Aagard, Ching, Paik, &

Sasser, 2004; Moussu, 2006 in the ESL context). Medgyes (1994) and his colleagues (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Reves & Medgyes, 1994) reported EFL teachers perceived that NESTs and NNESTs were different in terms of language competence and teaching behavior. The teachers listed language proficiency as the most important difference between the groups, which led to different teaching practices and styles and influenced their self-esteem as teachers. It was found that EFL teachers perceived NNESTs as more competent in teaching grammar while NESTs were more competent in teaching conversation. Also, NNESTs' teaching styles were perceived as more strict and realistic, while NESTs' teaching styles were more flexible and innovative. Finally, NNESTs were perceived as more responsive to student needs and difficulties due to their prior experiences as English learners and their knowledge of the students' first language. It was pointed out that such strengths, unique to each group, made both groups equally successful teachers.

Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999) also found that their NNES graduate students in a United States-based TESOL program perceived that NESTs and NNESTs were different in language proficiency and teaching practices. While they perceived NESTs as more competent in language skills than NNESTs, they perceived NNESTs as more responsive to the learners' needs. In addition, they did not think that the differences "suggest that native speaker teachers are necessarily better than the non-native counterparts" (p. 141). Similarly, Moussu (2006), in her study of teachers working in college-level, intensive language programs in the US, found that NESTs' self perception about their language skills was higher than NNESTs'. NESTs felt more competent than NNESTs in teaching areas except for grammar and testing. While NNESTs perceived their prior language learning experiences and responsiveness to students' needs as their strengths, they perceived foreign accents, low self-image, and lack of cultural knowledge as their weaknesses.

Unlike the studies mentioned so far, Kamhi-Stein et al. (2004), in their study of NES and NNES ESL teachers in elementary and secondary settings, found that the two groups shared more similarities than differences in their self-perceptions of their language abilities and teaching preferences. For instance, both groups were positive in their language skills, including pronunciation, speaking, and teaching of oral skills, while neither group rated grammar as their preferred teaching area. Based on these findings, they rejected that NESTs and NNESTs are "two different species" (Medgyes, 1994, p. 27). However, it should be noted that as Kamhi-Stein et al. (2004) acknowledged, those rather unexpected findings might have resulted from the fact that their NNEST participants were different from those in Medgyes' studies. The NNESTs in Kamhi-Stein, et al. (2004) had more than 10 years of

residency in the United States, while those in Medgyes' studies had spent only limited time in English-speaking countries.

In summary, the studies on NESTs and NNESTs from teachers' perspectives, including self-perception studies, have pointed to different characteristics of the two groups of teachers although some recent research does not support the previous studies. The two groups of teachers were perceived as different in terms of language competence and teaching behavior and having different strengths and weaknesses.

Students' Perspectives

Compared to the amount of NEST/NNEST studies conducted from teachers' perspectives, fewer studies have focused on students' views of the two groups of teachers (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Mahboob, 2004; Moussu, 2006). Mahboob (2004) investigated how students enrolled in an intensive English program in the United States perceived their NESTs and NNESTs in terms of their strengths and weaknesses. The students perceived that NNESTs could be their role models, were better grammar teachers, and were more "effective" and "emotionally supportive" (p. 142), while the NESTs were better teachers of oral communication skills and cultural resources. Pointing out that his findings supported teachers' self-perceptions reported in previous studies (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Medgyes, 1994; Reves & Medgyes, 1994), Mahboob further argued that the students did not "have a clear preference for either NESTs or NNESTs; rather, they feel that both types of teachers have unique attributes" (p. 142), and thus called for collaboration between the two groups for more effective teaching. This was a very similar conclusion and recommendation to the one Reves and Medgyes (1994) reached from their findings from teachers' perspectives.

Lasagabaster and Sierra (2002) examined whether EFL university students in Spain preferred NESTs over NNESTs or vice versa, with respect to teaching of different language aspects (e.g., language skills, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, learning strategies, culture, and attitudes). They found that the students preferred NESTs in most areas, except for the teaching of grammar and learning strategies. These findings were in accordance with NNESTs' self-reported concerns over pronunciation, speaking, vocabulary, and cultural information, and strengths, in terms of grammar and learning strategies in the previous studies (Medgyes, 1994; Reves & Medgyes, 1994).

Moussu (2006), in her study of students enrolled in college-level intensive English programs in the United States, also found that the student respondents' initial perceptions were more positive toward NESTs than NNESTs. Unlike those in Lasagabaster and Sierra

(2002) and Mahboob (2004), however, Moussu's respondents preferred grammar classes taught by NESTs and did not present negative perceptions toward their NNESTs' teaching of listening and speaking. These unexpected findings corroborated those of the study by Kamhi-Stein et al. (2004), in that the NNESTs enjoyed teaching listening and speaking skills.

As with the teachers' self-perception studies, it seems that the studies on student perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs have produced inconsistent findings. However, it should be noted that students' perspectives on NESTs and NNESTs have been investigated much less than teachers' perspectives, making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for one to make a general statement on this matter, other than that we need more inquiry on this topic. For example, the studies discussed above are limited to tertiary-level students, and to our knowledge, none of the studies examined primary- and secondary-level students' perspectives on NESTs and NNESTs. This is a serious gap in the literature, as many EFL countries (e.g., Korea, Japan, and China) have increasingly hired NESTs to teach in primary and secondary schools.

Research Question

By documenting Japanese and Korean secondary school students' perceptions, we aimed to examine and extend previous findings concerning the strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs. To this end, the following overarching research question guided our study:

> *How do Japanese and Korean secondary school students perceive their NESTs and NNESTs with regard to their competence in the target language, competence in teaching language skills, cultural aspects, personal aspects, teaching styles, and classroom atmosphere?*

Methodology

Setting

The study examined 268 eighth and ninth graders in two middle schools, one in Japan and the other in Korea, regarding their perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs. The school in Japan (School J, hereafter), located in a mid-size city in southern Japan, had nine classes (three classes per grade), and three English teachers in total (one NEST and two NNESTs). The NEST visited the school three times a week and taught each class once a week. Students had four English lessons a week, with three lessons being taught by one NNEST and the other

lesson being team-taught by the NEST and the NNESTs. The school in Korea (School K, hereafter), located in a large city in southern Korea, had 15 classes (five in each grade) and five English teachers in total. Like School J, School K had only one NEST, who visited the school three times a week. The students also had four English lessons per week, and the NEST taught one lesson, while the NNESTs taught the other three lessons.

The NESTs in the two schools were similar in that both teachers were women in their twenties who came from North America (School J: Canada, School K: the US) and had less than two years of teaching experience. While School J's NEST was Caucasian, School K's NEST was Korean-American. Compared with the NESTs, the NNESTs in the two schools were more experienced teachers who had 9 to 21 years of teaching experience. In terms of teaching loads and teaching areas, the division of the duties between the NEST and the NNEST was relatively straightforward in School J (NEST: conversation, listening, and grammar; NNEST: reading, writing, and grammar). Meanwhile, the NEST and four NNESTs in School K reported that they had more shared teaching duties, with both teaching the same areas: conversation, listening, and reading. The teachers in School K remarked that they rarely taught grammar.

Survey Instrument Development

For the present study, we developed a student questionnaire to examine their perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs, concerning each group's strengths and weaknesses, with multiple choices consisting of: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*. We created the questionnaire's statements to reflect the findings of the previous studies about self-perceptions of NESTs/NNESTs and student perceptions of NESTs/NNESTs, which were reviewed earlier. This was done because we were interested in exploring if those characteristics attributed to NESTs/NNESTs (by teachers themselves or students) in the previous studies would be consistent with Korean and Japanese secondary school students' perceptions of their NESTs and NNESTs.

The 20 items fell into the following six categories: (a) competence in the target language, (b) competence in teaching language skills, (c) cultural aspects, (d) personal aspects, (e) teaching styles, and (f) classroom atmosphere (refer to Appendix 2). In developing these items based on our literature review, we first wrote them in English, and then two of us (native speakers of Korean and Japanese) translated them into Korean and Japanese respectively. The Korean version was cross-examined by the other Korean among us, and the Japanese version was cross-examined by another Japanese person outside of the

research team for accuracy of the translation. The alpha coefficient (Cronbach alpha) was used in order to measure the internal consistency of the instrument. The reliabilities for the instrument concerning NESTs and NNESTs were .88 and .85, respectively.

Survey Administration

The questionnaire was distributed to the students in School J and School K. The reason we chose the particular research sites was that the two schools were accessible to us because of personal connections with NNESTs working in the schools. We mailed the questionnaire to the two NNESTs (one at each school), and they administered the survey for us, because we were residing in the United States at the time data collection. Each student was asked to respond to the same two sets of 20 items: one about their NESTs and the other about their NNESTs (refer to Appendix 2). A total of 268 students responded to the questionnaire (90 in School J, 178 in School K).

Data Analysis

The data was first analyzed with descriptive statistical methods (e.g., frequency, mean, and standard deviation), using a statistic software program, to examine students' perceptions of their NEST and NNEST on each item in the six categories. The descriptive degrees (*Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Somewhat Agree*, *Somewhat Disagree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree*) were converted into 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

Next, we conducted independent group t-tests on each of the 40 items on NESTs and NNESTs to see whether the Korean and Japanese groups could be treated as the same group. For the items whose differences between the groups were not statistically significant , the two groups were treated as one group in the paired t-tests conducted later in order to determine whether or not the students' perceptions of NESTs were statistically different from their perceptions of NNESTs. Meanwhile, for the items whose differences were statistically significant, the paired t-tests were conducted on each group of students separately. We consulted with a statistical consultant throughout the process of statistical analysis and interpretation, and three of the co-researchers conducted cross-checks in order to confirm our findings.

Results and Discussions

A total of 268 eighth and ninth grade students in the two middle schools in Japan and Korea completed the questionnaire asking about their perceptions of the NESTs and NNESTs. This

section presents and discusses research findings according to the following six categories: (a) competence in the target language, (b) competence in teaching language skills, (c) cultural aspects, (d) personal aspects, (e) teaching styles, and (f) classroom atmosphere.

Competence in the Target Language

Students in School J and School K were asked to respond to two items regarding their perceptions about their NESTs' and NNESTs' English proficiency/fluency and pronunciation skills. More specifically, they were asked to what degree they thought *their respective teacher was a fluent English speaker* (Item 1) and *their respective teacher was their ideal model for English pronunciation* (Item 2).

At School J, as shown in Table 1, a majority of the respondents presented positive perceptions of their NEST and NNEST concerning both items (96% and 90% for the NEST on Items 1 and 2; 83% and 66% for the NNEST on each respective item). On the other hand, students in School K showed less positive perceptions than those in School J on the two items. Only 82% and 66% of the respondents were positive toward the NEST on the respective items. When it comes to NNESTs, 68% of the respondents agreed that their NNEST was a fluent English speaker, but only 26% perceived that the NNESTs were the ideal model for pronunciation.

One notable finding was that School K students presented a much lower degree of agreement in terms of their NEST as a fluent English speaker (M = 4.51) and their ideal pronunciation model (M = 4.04) than the School J students (M = 5.53 and M = 5.19, respectively). While the high marks of School J are not surprising, the case of School K, whose NEST was a Korean American, calls for further attention. Given that EPIK mandated a minimum of at least secondary schooling in an English-speaking country, the NEST in School K must have attended secondary schools in the United States. When this is the case, Korean students' unfavorable responses regarding her English fluency and pronunciation might have been influenced by her race and ethnic background (i.e., Korean American) rather than her actual language skills (Amin, 1999; Rubin, 1992).

Table 1

Students' Perceptions of Teachers' English Competence

		School J (n = 90)					School K (n = 178)				
		Negative (%)[1)]	Positive (%)[2)]	MO	M	SD	Negative (%)	Positive (%)	MO	M	SD
On **NESTs**	1	4	96	6	5.53	0.89	18	82	6	4.51	1.43
	2	10	90	6	5.19	1.15	34	66	4	4.04	1.55
On **NNESTs**	1	17	83	4	4.25	0.91	32	68	5	3.83	1.56
	2	34	66	4	3.97	1.13	64	26	3	2.98	1.42

(1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = agree; 6 = strongly agree)
Negative (%)[1)] : the total percentage of the respondents who chose Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and Somewhat Disagree
Positive (%)[2)]: the total percentage of the respondents who chose Somewhat Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree

Since School J and School K demonstrated statistically significant differences[i] on the items, each group was separately subjected to the paired t-test on each item in order to determine whether or not the students' perceptions of their NEST and NNEST, in terms of their competence in English, would be significantly different. It was found that respondents in both schools showed statistically significant differences in their perceptions of their NEST's and NNEST's English language fluency and pronunciation, demonstrating preferences toward NESTs (see Table 2). This result was in accordance with previous studies of teachers' self-perception of NESTs/NNESTs that reported English language competence as NESTs' asset as opposed to NNESTs' (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Medgyes, 1994; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Moussu, 2006).

Table 2

Differences in Perceptions of NEST and NNEST: Language Competence

Pairs	School J (n = 90)			School K (n = 178)		
	df	t	p	df	t	p
NNEST1 – NEST1	86	-10.03**	.000	164	-5.03**	.000
NNEST2 – NEST2	87	-7.52**	.000	168	-6.50**	.000

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Competence in Teaching Language Skills

This category examined the students' perceptions of their teachers' competence in teaching different language skills. They were asked to what extent they thought their respective NEST and NNEST *could confidently answer grammar questions* (Item 3), *teaches oral skills (e.g.,*

speaking, listening) well (Item 4), *teaches reading well* (Item 5), and *explains vocabulary effectively and without difficulty* (Item 6).

As shown in Table 3, students in both schools demonstrated positive perceptions toward both groups of teachers in their teaching of grammar, oral skills, reading, and vocabulary. In both schools, students who gave positive responses outnumbered those who gave negative responses.

Table 3

Students' Perceptions of Their Teachers' Competency in Teaching Language Skills

	Item	School J (n = 90)					School K (n = 178)				
		Negative (%)[1)]	Positive (%)[2)]	MO	M	SD	Negative (%)	Positive (%)	MO	M	SD
On **NESTs**	3	11	89	4	4.92	1.43	33	67	4	4.00	1.26
	4	24	76	4	4.20	1.43	32	68	4	4.04	1.22
	5	22	78	4, 6	4.42	1.41	42	58	4	3.70	1.40
	6	35	65	4	3.90	1.35	33	67	4	3.86	1.35
On **NNESTs**	3	18	82	4	4.22	0.96	22	78	4	4.19	1.27
	4	42	58	4	3.64	1.18	31	69	4	3.80	1.32
	5	29	71	4	3.90	1.14	33	67	4	3.82	1.26
	6	43	57	4	3.63	1.21	35	65	4	3.76	1.22

(1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = agree; 6 = strongly agree)
Negative (%)[1)] : the total percentage of the respondents who chose Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and Somewhat Disagree
Positive (%)[2)]: the total percentage of the respondents who chose Somewhat Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree

According to our independent t-test, the Japanese and Korean groups demonstrated significant differences on NEST Item 3 ($t[256] = 5.35$, $p<.01$) and NEST Item 5 ($t[256] = 3.91$, $p<.01$), while they showed no significant differences on the other items in this category. Therefore, the two groups were treated as one group for Items 4 and 6 but as separate groups for Items 3 and 5 in the paired t-tests in order to determine whether or not the students' perceptions of their NEST and NNEST, in terms of different teaching areas, would be significantly different (Table 4).

It was found that students' perceptions of their NEST and NNEST on oral skills (NNEST4 – NEST4) and vocabulary (NNEST6 – NEST6), as shown in Table 4, were significantly different ($p < .01$ and $p <.05$ respectively). In other words, students tended to think that their NESTs were more competent in teaching oral skills and vocabulary than their NNESTs. This was consistent with Lasagabaster and Sierra's (2002) study with university EFL students and Mahboob's (2004) study with students in an intensive language program in an American university. It also supported previous studies documenting that NNESTs

referred to these areas as the ones that they have difficulties in teaching (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Medgyes, 1994; Reves & Medgyes, 1994).

As for students' perceptions of their teachers' ability to teach grammar (NNEST3 – NEST3) and reading (NNEST5 – NEST5), it was found that the Japanese group of students perceived that their NEST was more competent in teaching the two areas than their NNEST ($p < .01$). In the case of School K, the respondents demonstrated preference for their NNESTs, but the differences were not statistically significant, failing to support the previous studies. These results did not corroborate the previous studies that documented grammar and literacy skills teaching as NNESTs' preferred and strong areas (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Maboob, 2004). However, these results echoed Moussu's work (2006) in that the students preferred grammar classes taught by the NESTs. The findings also had an anomaly with previous studies on teachers' perception (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Medgyes, 1994; Reves & Medgyes, 1994) that documented NNESTs as stronger in grammar teaching.

Table 4

Differences in Perceptions of NEST and NNEST: Language Skills Teaching

Pairs	School J (n = 90)			School K (n = 178)			School J + K (n = 268)		
	df	t	p	df	t	p	df	t	p
NNEST3 – NEST3	87	-4.54**	.000	166	1.14	.26			
NNEST4 – NEST4							255	-3.65**	.000
NNEST5 – NEST5	89	-3.54**	.001	162	.90	.37			
NNEST6 – NEST6							251	-1.94*	.050

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Cultural Aspects

In this category, we asked about students' perceptions of their teachers' knowledge of the target culture and competence in teaching it. Specifically, the students responded to what extent they thought their NESTs and NNESTs were *knowledgeable about the cultures of English-speaking countries* (Item 8) and *often provided cultural information on English-speaking countries* (Item 9).

As shown in Table 5, students in both schools had rather neutral perceptions of both groups of teachers, with the exception of the School K students' perception about their NNEST's competence in teaching culture (Item 9) ($M = 2.97$).

As for the NNESTs, School J respondents presented neutral/leaning positive perceptions in terms of both their NNEST's knowledge of the target culture (Item 8: *M* = 3.85) and her competence in teaching the target culture (Item 9: *M* = 3.92). School K students, on the other hand, demonstrated more neutral and negative perceptions of their NNESTs on Item 8 (*M* = 3.50) and Item 9 (*M* = 2.97). Only half of the respondents (50%) agreed that their NNESTs were knowledgeable about the target culture, and the other half either disagreed (45%) with the statement or chose *Not Applicable* (5%). Concerning their NNESTs' competence in teaching the target culture, more than half of the respondents (63%) demonstrated a negative perception toward their NNESTs.

When it came to their perceptions of NESTs, School J and School K students provided very different responses for both items. While students in School J had quite positive perceptions of their NEST regarding cultural aspects (*M* = 5.10 for Item 8, knowledge of target culture; *M* = 4.50 for Item 9, teaching target culture), students in School K demonstrated less positive perceptions (*M* = 4.01 for Item 8; *M* = 3.27 for Item 9). Among the School J respondents, 94% and 83% were positive on the respective items, while only 59% and 42% of the School K respondents were positive. In the case of the NEST's competence in teaching the target culture, more than half of the respondents (58%) gave a negative response, and the greatest number of the respondents chose the *Somewhat Disagree* level *(MO* = 3*)*.

Table 5

Students' Perceptions of Cultural Aspects Demonstrated by Their Teachers

	Item	School J (n = 90)						School K (n = 178)					
		Negative (%)[1]	Positive (%)[2]	NA (%)[3]	MO	M	SD	Negative (%)	Positive (%)	NA (%)	MO	M	SD
On **NESTs**	8	6	94		6	5.10	0.94	30	59	11	4	4.01	1.36
	9	17	83		4, 6	4.50	1.14	58	42		3	3.27	1.37
On **NNESTs**	8	31	58	11	4	3.85	1.14	45	50	5	4	3.50	1.34
	9	34	66		4	3.92	1.22	63	37		4	2.97	1.37

(1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = agree; 6 = strongly agree)
Negative (%)[1] : the total percentage of the respondents who chose Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and Somewhat Disagree
Positive (%)[2]: the total percentage of the respondents who chose Somewhat Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree
NA (%)[3] : Note that Item 8 had NA choice in the questionnaire.

Table 6 shows that the School J respondents perceived their NEST as more knowledgeable about the target culture ($t[79] = -9.56$, $p < .01$) and more competent in teaching the culture ($t[89] = -4.20$, $p < .001$) than their NNEST. School K students also perceived their NEST

more knowledgeable and more competent. However, unlike their perceived difference in cultural knowledge (t[148] = -3.01, p < .01), the difference in culture teaching competence was found not statistically significant (p < .05).

With the exception of School K students' perception of their NEST on her competence in teaching culture, overall, the findings supported previous college students' and teachers' perception studies by reporting NESTs more positively than NNESTs in terms of cultural aspects (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Llurda & Huguet, 2003).

However, School K students' responses on their NEST were interesting, as they may offer counter-evidence against a common belief that NESTs are better equipped in terms of target culture knowledge and teaching (Arva & Medgyes, 2000). However, it should be noted that such findings ought not to be generalized, since the study had only one NEST per school and, more importantly, the fact that the NEST in School K was a Korean-American might have affected students' perceptions of her ability to teach the target culture. Regarding this, previous studies (e.g., Amin, 1999; Rubin, 1992; Rubin & Smith, 1990) have documented impacts of the teacher's race and ethnicity on students' understanding and evaluations of the lecture more than the teacher's actual language competence and accent or lack thereof. However, further discussion on this topic would go beyond the scope of our paper.

Table 6

Differences in Perceptions of NEST and NNEST: Cultural Aspects

Pairs	School J (n = 90)			School K (n = 178)		
	df	t	p	df	t	p
NNEST8 – NEST8	79	-9.56**	.000	148	-3.01**	.003
NNEST9 – NEST9	89	-4.20**	.000	164	-1.82	.071

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Personal Aspects

Regarding personal aspects of the teachers, the students were asked to what extent they thought they *feel comfortable talking with the respective teachers* (Item 10), the respective teachers *often used Japanese/Korean in class* (Item 11), the respective teachers' *English learning experience was helpful for their English learning* (Item 12), and *they want to be as good as their respective teachers in English* (Item 13). We intended to see if students'

perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs would be any different on these items since they have been pointed out as NNESTs' strengths in much research literature (e.g., Arva & Medyes, 2000; Llurda & Huguet, 2003; Mahboob, 2004; Medgyes, 1992).

In terms of comfort level (Item 10), the students' responses indicated that they did not perceive a high degree of comfort level as one of the strongest qualities of their NNESTs over their NEST. As shown in Table 7, School J respondents demonstrated neutral degrees of comfort level toward both groups of teachers (M = 3.41 for NEST, M = 3.37 for NNEST). While 48% of the respondents felt at ease with their NNEST, 51% did so with their NEST as well. Furthermore, School J students' perception of the NEST was not significantly different from their perceptions of the NNEST, as shown in Table 7.

While School K students also demonstrated a neutral degree of comfort level toward their NNESTs (M = 3.49), they demonstrated a negative perception of the NEST (M = 2.51). Only 21% of the respondents answered that they felt at ease with the NEST. The paired t-test result showed that School K students felt more relaxed with their NNESTs over their NEST ($t[164] = 6.10$, $p < .001$). However, it should be noted that School K students also showed only a moderate level of comfort with their NNESTs (M = 3.49). This observation, despite the statistical significance found in the paired t-test, seems to make it difficult to reach the conclusion that the students in our study value high comfort level as one of the strongest qualities of their NNESTs.

As for sharing English learning experience (Item 12), students in both schools presented neutral stances, showing mean scores between 3.49 and 3.72 (see Table 7). Their perception of their NESTs on this item was found to have no significant difference from that of their NNESTs at $p < .05$ level. In other words, the students did not seem to highly value their NNESTs' English language learning experiences as their strength. This result was an anomaly compared with the previous studies (e.g., Maboob, 2004; Medgyes, 1992) that documented the sharing of language learning experience as an NNEST's strength over the NEST.

As for their perceptions of NESTs/NNESTs as their role models (Item 13), as shown in Table 8, students in both schools demonstrated positive attitudes toward both groups of teachers (School J: M = 4.58 for NEST, M = 4.09 for NNEST; School K: M = 4.46 for NEST, M = 4.38 for NNEST). This indicated that our respondents agreed that both groups of teachers could equally be their role models in their language learning. Meanwhile, our paired t-test result showed their perceptions of NESTs were more positive than those of the NNESTs ($t[250] = -2.16$, $p < .05$). In other words, students perceived their NESTs as better role models.

Our results in this category did not support NNESTs' strengths as emphasized in previous studies. Rather, our respondents seemed to indicate that both NESTs and NNESTs can be equally equipped in terms of the personal factors discussed in this section.

Table 7

Students' Perceptions of Personal Aspects Demonstrated by Their Teachers

	Item	School J (n = 90)						School K (n = 178)					
		Negative (%)[1]	Positive (%)[2]	NA (%)[3]	MO	M	SD	Negative (%)	Positive (%)	NA (%)	MO	M	SD
On **NESTs**	10	49	51		4	3.41	1.50	79	21		1, 3	2.51	1.31
	11	80	20		3	2.53	1.27	82	18		1	2.28	1.35
	12	40	59	1	4	3.66	1.33	46	52	2	4	3.49	1.42
	13	24	76		6	4.58	1.54	24	76		6	4.46	1.61
On **NNESTs**	10	52	48		4	3.37	1.34	47	53		4	3.49	1.68
	11	11	89		5	4.66	1.10	19	81		6	4.58	1.32
	12	40	60		4	3.57	1.30	36	64		4, 5	3.72	1.25
	13	31	69		4	4.09	1.48	25	75		6	4.38	1.49

(1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = agree; 6 = strongly agree)
Negative (%)[1] : the total percentage of the respondents who chose Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and Somewhat Disagree
Positive (%)[2]: the total percentage of the respondents who chose Somewhat Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree
NA (%)[3] : Note that only Item 12 on the NESTs had NA choice in the questionnaire.

Table 8

Differences in Perceptions of NEST and NNEST: Personal Aspects

Pairs	School J (n = 90)			School K (n = 178)			School J + K (n = 268)		
	df	t	p	df	t	p	df	t	p
NNEST10 – NEST10	88	-.19	.849	164	6.10**	.000			
NNEST11 – NEST11							256	18.76**	.000
NNEST12 – NEST12							255	1.10	.273
NNEST13 – NEST13							250	-2.16*	.032

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Teaching Styles

Students' perceptions of their NESTs' and NNESTs' teaching styles were investigated by asking to what extent they thought their respective group of teachers *were able to answer their questions* (Item 7), *gave homework most times* (Item 16), *often gave quizzes/exams in class* (Item 17), *used various materials other than textbooks in class* (Item 18), *had many*

group/pair activities in class (Item 19), and *often taught vocabulary and grammar in isolation* (Item 20).

Concerning the ability to answer questions (Item 7), as shown in Table 9, School J respondents showed positive attitudes toward both groups of teachers (M = 4.28, M = 4.31). More than two thirds of the students (73% and 74%) chose a positive response for the respective NEST and NNEST on this item. On the other hand, School K respondents demonstrated positive attitudes toward their NNEST (M = 4.27) but neutral/leaning positive attitudes toward their NEST (M = 3.74). While 77% of the respondents chose a positive response for their NNEST, only 55% of them did so for their NEST. Our paired t-tests on the same item showed that School J students demonstrated no significant difference between their perceptions of their NEST and of their NNEST (Table 10). However, it was found that School K students thought that their NNESTs were better equipped for answering their questions than their NEST ($t[151] = 3.68$, $p<.001$). While School K's case corroborated the results of Mahboob (2004), whose students highly valued the ability to answer as one of the NNEST's strengths, School J did not. School J students tended to think that their NEST and NNEST had an equal ability to answer their questions.

As for homework load (Item 16), in-class quizzes (Item 17), and material use other than textbooks (Item 18), as shown in Table 9, the students in the two schools were not given a heavy homework load or many in-class quizzes and did not use many other materials except for the textbooks (see mean scores for each). Having said this, our paired t-test results on these three items indicated that there were significant differences in the students' perceptions of their NEST and NNEST (see Table 10). In the case of School J, they felt that their NNEST gave them more homework ($t[89] = 8.79$, $p<.001$) and quizzes ($t[89] = 9.42$, $p<.001$) and used more various materials ($t[88] = 2.81$, $p<.001$). While the results on the first two items corroborated Reves and Medgyes (1994), the result on material use did not. In the case of School K, students perceived that their NNEST gave them more homework ($t[165] = 7.70$, $p<.001$), but their NEST gave them more quizzes ($t[107] = -2.66$, $p<.01$) and used more various materials ($t[106] = -3.52$, $p<.005$). Their perceptions of their NEST and NNESTs on homework load and material use corroborated Reves and Mdegyes (1994), but their perceptions of in-class quizzes did not.

Concerning group/pair activities (Item 19) and decontextualized vocabulary/grammar instruction (Item 20), school K students demonstrated neutral stances on both the NEST and NNEST, showing mean scores between 3.00 and 4.00 (see Table 9). More specifically, 64% of the respondents agreed that the NEST used many group/pair activities while only 38%

agreed that their NNEST did so. On the other hand, 55% of them agreed that they learned vocabulary and grammar in isolation from their NNEST, while 46% agreed that they did so from their NEST. Our paired t-test results (Table 10) showed that School K respondents thought that their NEST used more group/pair activities than their NNEST (t[104] = -4.21, p<.001), which corroborated the previous studies (Arva & Medgyes, 2000; Reves & Mdegyes, 1994). However, they perceived that the two groups of teachers were not significantly different in terms of decontexualized teaching of vocabulary and grammar, which did not corroborate the previous studies. In the case of School J, the students were neutral on their NEST (*M* = 3.43 for Item 19, *M* = 3.82 for Item 20) and positive on their NNEST (*M* = 4.58 for Item 19, *M* = 4.51 for Item 20). More than three quarters of the respondents agreed that their NNEST had many group/pair activities (78%) and often taught vocabulary and grammar in isolation (86%). More than half of them also agreed that their NEST demonstrated the same teaching behaviors (53%, 60% respectively). The paired t-tests showed that School J respondents thought that their NNEST used more group/pair activities (t[89] = 6.74, p<.001) and taught vocabulary and grammar in isolation more often than their NEST (t[87] = 4.82, p<.001). The latter supported the previous studies, but the former failed to do so.

In the literature (Mahboob, 2004; Reves & Medgyes, 1994), NNESTs were found to be more able to answer questions, give more homework and in-class quizzes, and tended to teach vocabulary and grammar in isolation, while NESTs were found to use more various materials and have more group/pair activities in class. Our study only partially supported these findings, while producing inconsistent findings between the two schools on the aforementioned teaching styles. This may imply that the culture of English learning in the two schools might have been quite different from each other. Or, given that each school has only one NEST, it may imply that the idiosyncratic characteristics of the two NESTs might have been mainly revealed in their teaching styles.

Table 9

Students' Perceptions of Their Teachers' Teaching Styles

		School J (n = 90)						School K (n = 178)					
	Item	Negative (%)[1)]	Positive (%)[2)]	NA (%)[3)]	MO	M	SD	Negative (%)	Positive (%)	NA (%)	MO	M	SD
On **NESTs**	7	18	73	9	4	4.28	1.11	38	55	7	4	3.74	1.45
	16	96	4		1	1.44	.97	76	28		1	2.47	1.32
	17	93	7		1	1.70	1.10	40	60		4	3.75	1.67

	18	76	24		1	2.34	1.39	35	55		4	3.93	1.62
	19	47	53		4	3.43	1.68	36	64		4	3.82	1.64
	20	40	60		4	3.82	1.43	54	46		4	3.19	1.44
On **NNESTs**	7	20	74	6	5	4.31	1.02	20	77	3	5	4.27	1.26
	16	67	33		3	2.92	1.43	48	52		3	3.66	1.60
	17	68	32		3	3.01	1.10	55	45		3	3.28	1.49
	18	67	33		2	2.82	1.49	58	42		3	3.13	1.49
	19	22	78		5	4.58	1.30	62	38		1	3.05	1.55
	20	14	86		5	4.51	1.11	45	55		4	3.44	1.30

(1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = agree; 6 = strongly agree)
Negative (%)1) : the total percentage of the respondents who chose Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and Somewhat Disagree
Positive (%)2): the total percentage of the respondents who chose Somewhat Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree
NA(%)3) : Note that only Item 7 on both NEST and NNEST had NA choices in the questionnaire.

Table 10

Differences in Perceptions of NEST and NNEST: Teaching Styles

Pairs	School J (n = 90)			School K (n = 178)		
	df	t	p	df	t	p
NNEST7 – NEST7	78	.197	.844	151	3.68**	.000
NNEST16 – NEST16	89	8.79**	.000	165	7.70**	.000
NNEST17 – NEST17	89	9.42**	.000	107	-2.66**	.009
NNEST18 – NEST18	88	2.81**	.006	106	-3.52**	.001
NNEST19 – NEST19	89	6.74**	.000	104	-4.21**	.000
NNEST20 – NEST20	87	4.82**	.000	103	1.06	.293

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Classroom Atmosphere

Students were asked to what extent they thought that *they were expected to be attentive* (Item 14) and *the class atmosphere tended to be quite flexible* (Item 15) in their respective teacher's class.

As shown Table 11, in both schools, more than half of the respondents, ranging from 54% to 80%, agreed that they were expected to be attentive but that the atmosphere was quite flexible. When it comes to the mean scores, it seems that School J respondents felt that their NEST required their attention more (M = 4.23), but School K respondents thought that their NNEST required their attention more (M = 4.40). Both groups of respondents demonstrated neutral stances on the other item, showing the mean scores between 3.49 and 3.94.

In the literature, while flexibility has been recognized as one of the NEST's strengths, the ability to get attention from students has been considered one of the NNEST's strengths (Reves & Medgyes, 1994). Our data partially supported these findings. The paired t-test results (Table 12) indicated that the respondents in both schools perceived that the classroom atmosphere was more flexible in their NEST's class than in that of their NNEST (t[257] = -3.09, p<.01), a finding which corroborated the previous studies. On Item 14, School K respondents indicated that their NNESTs expected more attention from them than their NEST (t[165] = 3.50, p<.01). However, School J respondents thought that their NEST expected more than their NNEST (t[87] = -2.28, p<.05). As for the student attention factor, School J did not support the previous studies, while School K did.

Table 11

Students' Perceptions of the Atmosphere in Their Teacher's Class

	Item	School J (n = 90)					School K (n = 178)				
		Negative (%)[1)]	Positive (%)[2)]	MO	M	SD	Negative (%)	Positive (%)	MO	M	SD
On **NESTs**	14	25	75	4	4.23	1.26	31	69	4	3.94	1.33
	15	37	63	4	3.74	1.08	31	69	4	3.93	1.37
On **NNESTs**	14	37	63	4	3.90	1.25	20	80	4	4.40	1.29
	15	46	54	4	3.49	1.34	42	58	4	3.57	1.47

(1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = somewhat disagree; 4 = somewhat agree; 5 = agree; 6 = strongly agree)
Negative (%)[1)] : the total percentage of the respondents who chose Strongly Disagree, Disagree, and Somewhat Disagree
Positive (%)[2)]: the total percentage of the respondents who chose Somewhat Agree, Agree, and Strongly Agree

Table 12

Differences in Perceptions of NEST and NNEST: Classroom Atmosphere

Pairs	School J (n = 90)			School K (n = 178)			School J + K (n = 268)		
	df	t	p	df	t	p	df	t	p
NNEST14 – NEST14	87	-2.28*	.025	165	3.50**	.001			
NNEST15 – NEST15							257	-3.09**	.002

*p < .05. **p < .01.

Conclusion

The present survey study examined how secondary school students in two schools in Japan and Korea perceived their NESTs and NNESTs concerning the following six aspects: (a)

language competence, (b) different language skills teaching, (c) cultural aspects, (d) personal aspects, (e) teaching styles, and (f) classroom atmosphere.

Overall, the study only partially supported previous studies that documented the strengths and weaknesses of the respective groups of teachers from teachers' or students' perspectives. In terms of language competence and cultural aspects, our study corroborated the studies that reported these aspects as NESTs' strengths over NNESTs. Meanwhile, though our respondents felt their NESTs were more fluent English speakers and better models for their pronunciation, they also agreed that their NNESTs were fluent as well. Furthermore, the responses of the students in the Korean school, concerning their NEST's pronunciation and competence in teaching culture, did not support the previous studies' findings: They did not think that the NEST was well equipped for teaching culture and pronunciation. However, this anomaly could possibly be attributed to the fact that the NEST was a Korean-American; her race and ethnicity might have impacted the students' perceptions rather than her actual capabilities (Rubin 1992). Thus, it would be hard to conclude that this result provides counter-evidence against a common belief that NESTs are better equipped in terms of target culture knowledge and the teaching of it.

As for language skills teaching, our respondents perceived that their NESTs were more competent in teaching oral skills and vocabulary than the NNESTs. These findings supported the previous student perception studies (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002; Mahboob, 2004). However, concerning grammar and reading teaching, which has been recognized as NNESTs' strong areas, our respondents in the Japanese school preferred their NEST over the NNEST, and those in the Korean school demonstrated no significant differences in their perceptions of the respective teachers.

Anomalies between our study and the previous student perception studies were also found in personal aspects. Most research has reported that students have valued NNESTs more than NESTs in terms of high comfort level, language learning experience, and being their role models (Mahboob, 2004). However, our respondents did not seem to select these factors as strengths of their NNESTs over their NESTs, indicating that both NESTs and NNESTs can be equally equipped in terms of these personal factors.

A possible reason for this contradiction may be due to the different contexts of the studies. For example, Mahboob's (2004) students, college ESL learners in the United States, might have felt more appreciative of the value of NNESTs as their role models and more appreciative of their shared experiences as language learners in the American college setting because they were required to improve and use English outside the English class, whereas

secondary school students in EFL settings, such as in Korea and Japan, learn English as a school subject but are not mandated to use it outside the English class.

Concerning teaching styles and classroom atmosphere, our study only partially supported the findings from the previous studies by yielding inconsistent findings between the two schools on several items falling into the two categories. These inconsistencies between the two schools seem to indicate that the culture of English teaching and learning in the two schools might have been quite different from each other. Another possible reason could be that each school had only one NEST, which opens up the possibility that the idiosyncratic characteristics of the two NESTs might have been mainly revealed in their teaching styles and classroom atmosphere.

Implications

Our findings suggest that the factors recognized in the existing literature are not fixed attributes from the students' perspective. They also suggest that students' perceptions of their NESTs' and NNESTs' instructional practices may be different from teachers' self-perceptions and that students' perceptions of the teachers' instruction may be highly situational. In other words, students' perceptions may depend on the contextual and personal particularities of both the environment and the teacher, such as types of instruction, curriculum goals, relationships between teacher and student, and idiosyncrasies or quirks and other individual characteristics of the teacher in a particular school context. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on evaluation on a case by case basis, concerning individual strengths and weaknesses of NESTs and NNESTs, rather than on generalized, assumed strengths and weaknesses of each group of teachers.

Limitations and Future Studies

It should be taken into consideration that the present study was conducted with students from only two schools, which was a critical factor that limited the range of student perception responses to a small number of teachers (two NESTs in the present study). Therefore, it would be too hasty to make a broad generalization based on the findings of the present study. Our study rather seems to suggest the need for larger-scale studies involving more secondary schools in Japan and Korea and more research participants (secondary students, NESTs, and NNESTs) in order to have a more comprehensive picture of EFL secondary students' perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs. Furthermore, our research also suggests that qualitative case studies that employ interviews with secondary students and observations of NESTs' and

NNESTs' lessons would be both valuable and desirable. Lastly, an investigation of how characteristics of students (e.g., age, gender, English proficiency, English learning experiences, etc.) affect their perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs would also be beneficial.

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Footnotes

[1] t [259] = 2.74, p < .01 for NNEST Item 1; t[263] = 6.10, p < .01 for NNEST Item 2; t[257] = 7.05, p<.01 for NEST Item 1; t[257] = 6.75, p<.01 for NEST Item 2

Appendix 1

S*tudies on NESTs and NNETs*

Teachers' perceptions of NESTs/NNESTs			
Study	Purpose	Participants & Setting	Data Collection Methods
Reves & Medgyes (1994)	To confirm whether NESTs and NNESTs are different in terms of their teaching practice and how it affects NNESTs	216 English teachers working in 10 non-English speaking countries: 18 NESTs and 198 NNESTs working at various levels:	Questionnaire - 18 items addressed both to NESTs and NNESTs; 5 items to NNESTs only - close-ended items in combinations with limited

		38 college, 93 secondary, 66 elementary, and 19 private school teachers	number of open-ended ones)
Samimy & Brutt-Griffler (1999)	To examine whether NNES graduate students perceive differences between NESTs and NNESTs in terms of teaching practice and why	17 NNES graduate students (with English teaching experience in their home countries) in a U.S. TESOL program	Mixed method - Quantitative data through a questionnaire - Qualitative data including classroom discussions, interviews, and autobiographical accounts
Arva & Medyes (2000)	To examine differences between NESTs and NNESTs	10 secondary school teachers (5 British NESTs and 5 Hungarian NNESTs) in 5 schools in Budapest, Hungary	Interview and Observation - Video recorded lessons of the participants (one lesson per each) - Interview with each participants after the lesson observation (a 30 to 45 min guided interview)
Llurda & Huguet (2003)	To explore teachers self-perceptions as NNESTs	101 NNESTs working in Lleida, Catalonia: 38 primary and 63 secondary school teachers	Questionnaire (in the form of interview) - close-ended items - questionnaire completed while the researchers were conducting an interview with each participant based on the questionnaire items
Kamhi-Stein, Aagard, Ching, Paik, & Sasser (2004)	To examine whether NESTs and NNESTs are different in the perceptions of their professional preparation, job satisfaction, and English language competence and teaching preference	87 K-12 ESL teachers working in California, US: 55 NESTs and 32 NNESTs	Questionnaire - close- and open-ended items
Moussu (2006)	To examine teachers' self-perceptions about their strengths and weaknesses as NESTs or NNESTs, and their perceptions about NNETS' strengths/weaknesses	96 teachers working in 21 college-level intensive language programs in the US : 78 NESTs and 18 NNESTs	Questionnaire - Close-ended items (Likert scales)
Students' perceptions of NESTs/NNESTs			
Study	Purpose	Participants & Setting	Data collection methods

Lasagabaster & Sierra (2002)	To explore students' preferences for NESTs and NNESTs	76 college students in a university at Basque Autonomous Community, Spain	Questionnaire - close-ended (5-point Likert scales used) - asked about students' preferences for NESTs or NNESTs in relation to language skills, learning strategies and culture teaching
Mahboob (2004)	To explore students' perceptions about the NESTs' and NNESTs' strengths and weaknesses	32 students enrolled in an intensive English program of a U.S. university	Questionnaire - Open-ended questions
Moussu (2006)	To examine students' initial perceptions about their NESTs and NNESTs and whether the perceptions change with time	866 students enrolled in 16 college-level intensive language programs in the US	Questionnaire - Close-ended items (Likert scale) - Same questionnaire administered twice, at the beginning and at the end of the course

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

Questionnaire

PART I

Read each statement concerning how you feel about English and English learning. Please circle the number that best describes the degree of your agreement with each statement. Please refer to the below box in order to know the level of agreement that each number represents.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)	2 = Disagree (D)
3 = Somewhat Disagree (SWD)	4 = Somewhat Agree (SWA)
5 = Agree (A)	6 = Strongly Agree (SA)

I think:	SD	D	SWD	SWA	A	SA
1. Learning English is important for my future	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. I have to study English hard in order to go to better high schools and universities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. I tend to spend more time in studying English than other subjects.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. English is one of my favorite school subjects.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Most times, I pay attention in my English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6

PART II

Read each statement concerning how you feel about the class(es) with your Korean/Japanese teacher of English. Please circle the number that best describes the degree of your agreement with each statement. Please refer to the below box in order to know the level of agreement that each number represents.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)	2 = Disagree (D)
3 = Somewhat Disagree (SWD)	4 = Somewhat Agree (SWA)
5 = Agree (A)	6 = Strongly Agree (SA)
NA = Not applicable	

I think:	**SD**	**D**	**SWD**	**SWA**	**A**	**SA**	**NA**
1. My Korean/Japanese teacher of English is a fluent speaker of English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2. My Korean/Japanese teacher of English is my ideal model for pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
I think:	**SD**	**D**	**SWD**	**SWA**	**A**	**SA**	**NA**
3. My Korean/Japanese teacher of English, most times, can confidently answer grammar questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4. My Korean/Japanese teacher of English teaches oral skills (e.g, speaking, listening) well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
5. My Korean/Japanese teacher of English teaches reading well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
6. My Korean/Japanese teacher of English explains vocabulary effectively and without difficulty.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7. Most times, my Korean/Japanese teacher is able to answer the students' questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
8. My Korean/Japanese teacher is knowledgeable about the cultures of English speaking countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
9. My Korean/Japanese teacher often provides cultural information of English speaking countries in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
10. I feel comfortable talking with my Korean/Japanese teacher of English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
11. My Korean/Japanese teacher of English often uses Korean/Japanese in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

12. My Korean/Japanese teacher's English learning experience/know-how is helpful for my English learning.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. I want to be as good as my Korean/Japanese teacher in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. I am expected to be attentive in my Korean/Japanese teacher's English class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. The class atmosphere tends to be quite flexible in my Korean/Japanese teacher of English's class.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Most times, my Korean/Japanese teacher of English gives homework.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17. I often have quizzes or exams in the class with my Korean/Japanese teacher of English.	1	2	3	4	5	6

I think:	**SD**	**D**	**SWD**	**SWA**	**A**	**SA**	**NA**
18. My Korean/Japanese teacher uses various materials other than textbooks in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
19. I have many group/pair activities in class with my Japanese/Korean teacher of English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
20. I often learn vocabulary and grammar in isolation in my Japanese/Korean teacher of English's class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

PART III

Read each statement concerning how you feel about the class(es) with your native English-speaking teacher. Please circle the number that best describes the degree of your agreement with each statement. Please refer to the below box in order to know the level of agreement that each number represents.

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD)	2 = Disagree (D)
3 = Somewhat Disagree (SWD)	4 = Somewhat Agree (SWA)
5 = Agree (A)	6 = Strongly Agree (SA)
NA = Not applicable	

I think:	SD	D	SWD	SWA	A	SA	NA
1. My native English-speaking teacher is a fluent speaker of English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2. My native English-speaking is my ideal model for pronunciation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3. My native English-speaking teacher, most times, can confidently answer grammar questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4. My native English-speaking teacher teaches oral skills (e.g, speaking, listening) well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
5. My native English-speaking teacher teaches reading well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
6. My native English-speaking teacher explains vocabulary effectively and without difficulty.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

I think:	SD	D	SWD	SWA	A	SA	NA
7. Most times, my native English-speaking teacher is able to answer the students' questions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
8. My native English-speaking teacher is knowledgeable about the cultures of English speaking countries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
9. My native English-speaking teacher often provides cultural information of English speaking countries in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
10. I feel comfortable talking with my native English-speaking teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
11. My native English-speaking teacher often uses Korean/Japanese in class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
12. My native English-speaking teacher's English learning experience/know-how is helpful for my English learning.	1	2	3	4	5	6	NA
13. I want to be as good as my native English-speaking teacher in English.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
14. I am expected to be attentive in my native English-speaking teacher's class.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

15. The class atmosphere tends to be quite flexible in my native English-speaking teacher's class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
16. Most times, my native English-speaking teacher gives homework.	1 2 3 4 5 6
17. I often have quizzes or exams in the class with my native English-speaking teacher.	1 2 3 4 5 6
18. My native English-speaking teacher uses various materials other than textbooks in class.	1 2 3 4 5 6
19. I have many group/pair activities in class with my native English-speaking teacher.	1 2 3 4 5 6
20. I often learn vocabulary and grammar in isolation in my native English-speaking teacher's class.	1 2 3 4 5 6

PART IV

Please answer the following questions.

1. How old are you? _____
2. Which grade are you in? _____
3. How many English lessons do you have a week at school? _____
4. How many lessons do you take with your Korean/Japanese teacher of English a week? _____
5. How many lessons do you take with your native English-speaking teacher a week? _____

Thank you so much.

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Taking an Ecological View to Research Taiwanese EFL Students' English Literacy Learning

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Abstract

This study aims to illustrate in what ways an ecological view of literacy, espoused in the New Literacy Studies, can be applied in the field of English Language Teaching in EFL learning contexts. We weave research areas of literacy as social practice, student learning in higher education, and L1 and L2 student writing. Following a qualitative multiple case study approach, we combine in-depth interviews with supplementary methods including questionnaires, reading tasks, students' written assignments in English, and observation notes to investigate the two particular Taiwanese EFL undergraduates' literacy learning. Data analysis illustrates the importance of adopting an ecological view of literacy to examine how the students' English literacy learning is culturally embedded and socially constructed in the context of higher education in Taiwan. The research findings suggest that EFL teachers adopt a reflective curriculum, encouraging EFL students to take an ethnographic stance towards their English literacy learning. In short, this study offers a new perspective for EFL teachers, researchers and students from which to rethink how an ecological view of literacy can be implemented in an EFL literacy class, creating more opportunities for students to work together with their peers as well as to become more engaged in learning.

Keywords: An ecological view, literacy, learning, pedagogy, social practice

Introduction

This study attempts to explore the relations between English literacy learning and the social situations in which it occurs, aiming to illustrate in what ways an ecological view of literacy

espoused in the New Literacy Studies (NLS) can be applied to the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). Key concepts often utilized in the NLS—practices, events, domains and networks—are discussed (Barton, 1991, 2007; Barton & Hamilton, 1998, 2000; Barton & Padmore, 1991; Baynham, 1995; Heath, 1983, 1999; Street, 1984, 1994). Given that these concepts can be useful when they are applied to data with respect to English literacy learning socially constructed in EFL contexts, in this paper we propose an ecological view as the interpretative lens to examine the learning context of a particular group of EFL undergraduates who majored in English at a university in Taiwan. Drawing upon the examples of two students who participated in our research project as case studies, this paper seeks to exemplify the importance of an ecological view of literacy to better understand English literacy learning in higher education settings in Taiwan. It is hoped that the research findings can throw new light on adopting an ethnographic stance towards English literacy teaching and learning, which in turn contributes to a contextualized, reflective approach to EFL literacy curriculum design.

Theoretical Background

Different from the traditional focus of ESL/EFL writing on the textual or discourse analysis of written texts, the aim of this study is to illustrate to what extent an ecological view of literacy is useful in researching the Taiwanese EFL students' English literacy learning as contextualized social practices. This study is significant and relevant to those concerns about EFL literacy education because it will demonstrate an ecological view of literacy can generate new insights in the field of ELT, especially EFL reading and writing instruction.

Two specific questions this paper seeks to address are as follows:

1. What literacy practices do the Taiwanese EFL students utilize to assist them in English writing?
2. What approaches do the Taiwanese EFL students utilize when they learn English literacy?

Briefly, in the present study, we connect the theoretical concept of literacy as social practice with the work of Marton and his colleagues who address problems of student learning in educational settings in Sweden and Britain with theoretical positions informed by modern cognitive psychology (see e.g., Marton,Hounsell,& Entwistle 1984, 1997). We also juxtapose this with research on L1 and L2 student writing (e.g., Belcher & Braine, 1995; Jones,Turner & Street, 1999; Kroll, 1990, 2003; Lea & Stierer, 2000).

An Ecological View of Literacy: Literacy as Social Practice

Developments in the NLS have moved away from models, which focus on the cognitive psychological aspects of reading and writing, and are concerned instead with the social practices, which surround the use of their particular writing systems (Barton, 2007; Street, 1984). Barton (2007) utilizes the metaphor of 'the ecology of literacy' to convey the idea that particular acts of reading and writing have their own 'ecological niche'. This 'ecological' metaphor is deemed beneficial in drawing together the psychological and the social concepts. In Barton's view, "the idea of ecology has often been used to situate psychological activity, placing it in a more complete and dynamic social context where different aspects interact" (2007, p.30), and "an ecological approach aims to understand how literacy is embedded in other human activity" (*ibid.*, p.32). To examine this view of literacy, it is important to consider the concept of literacy as social practice.

The view of literacy in terms of 'practices' may vary according to context and purpose and these practices are local to the activities and communities with which people are involved. The word 'practices' here is an abstract concept, which implies units of human behaviour, or in other words, 'cultural ways of utilising literacy' (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). The notion of 'practices' in this sense involves values, attitudes, feelings and social relationships, and specifically, includes people's awareness of literacy, constructions of literacy and discourses of literacy, how people talk about and make sense of literacy (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). The concept of literacy practices focuses on "the particularity of cultural practices with which uses of reading and/or writing are associated in given contexts" (Street, 1999, p.38). A good example here is a collection of research articles in the book edited by Hamilton, Barton and Ivanič (1994), *Worlds of Literacy*, where the researchers use 'ecology' as a powerful metaphor for literacy. In the preface, Barton argues that "[l]iteracy events are the particular activities where reading and writing have a role; literacy practices are the general cultural ways of using reading and writing which people draw upon in a literacy event" (*ibid.*, p.viii). Briefly, the notions of 'literacy events' and 'literacy practices' focus on the real activities involved in reading and writing.

Another key concept often utilized in an ecological view of literacy is the term 'domains' (Barton, 1991). In principle, domains of reading and writing can be used as a way of (re)constructing the social space in which literacy practices are embedded. To apply this concept in the field of ELT, ESL/EFL students are required to read English texts and write English reports, which are closely related to the academic subjects they study (e.g., business

English, medical English, English literature, etc.) in schools, and each of these can be seen as a specific domain. In addition, the students may read English texts (e.g., magazines, newspapers, grammar books, novels, etc.) and write English notes, diaries and/or e-mail messages at home. What these students read and write in the home settings may, to a varying extent, differ from what they read and write in other settings. In order to understand how language as well as literacy is embedded in a particular human activity, the utilization of an 'ecological' approach is needed.

Yet another important concept central to an ecological view of literacy is that of 'networks'. Barton and Padmore's study reveal that social networks of support exist for people. "These networks are part of everyday life whether or not people have problems. Sometimes there was support for people who identified problems" (1991, p. 69). Networks may exist in both academic and social communities. More specifically, networks are involved not only in how students are taught in the classroom, but also in how the students make use of the practices in the academic milieu or social context to help and support their learning. A salient example here is the work of Heath (1983), which is an ethnographic study of how people in the South-east United States made use of literacy in the home and in the community. Health's study has been influential in the field for it provides an understanding of the relationship between literacy and community and generates insights into how activities, values, and patterns of time and space shaped responses to written texts across societies and institutions. In EFL learning contexts, social networks, which include the support from family members, teachers and friends/classmates, have not been researched very much (e.g., Belcher and Braine, 1995; Kroll, 1990), but they are likely to be important factors affecting students' English literacy learning.

Despite the trend of the communicative approach to English language teaching, considerably more time in L2 writing classroom is allocated to the training of skills, rather than the development of the awareness of purpose, participants and creativity involved in an act of writing. It is reflected in a substantial amount of tasks on grammar, spelling, sentence construction, and other skills in EFL writing classes (Dvorak, 1986; Mohan & Lo, 1985). However, in recent years, for the increasing importance of English in the world, learners need a capacity to write in English to enter a global community and attitudes towards ESL/EFL teaching and learning of writing are changing. Atkinson (2003), Kern (2001), Leki (2003), Paltridge (2004) and several other researchers claim that L2 writing researchers should not too single-minded in focusing on such functional and practical issues as peer

response or rhetorical strategies, but should explore the context in which texts and genres are constructed.

To summarize, the utilization of a practice-based approach to literacy is of importance because people's values, attitudes, feelings, social relationships and awareness of literacy, as well as the context in which they situate can be taken into consideration. More specifically, an 'ecological' view of literacy should be taken to help "understand how literacy is embedded in other human activity, its embeddedness in social life and in thought, and its position in history, in language and in learning" (Barton, 2007, p.32).

Research into L1 and L2 Student Learning and Writing in Higher Education

In addition to an ecological view of literacy, we draw upon research on student learning in higher education and research on L1 as well as L2 academic writing. Research on student learning in higher education has been flourishing since the 1970s. With the work of Marton and Saljo (1976) and others (e.g., Entwistle, Hanley & Hounsell, 1979; Ramsden, 1979), the differences between the deep approach and the surface approach (which they at first called 'deep-level and surface-level processing') to student learning have been subsequently reported. Since then studies have consistently shown that deep approaches are related to higher quality learning outcomes (see e.g., Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983; Marton *et al.*, 1984, 1997; Richardson, Eysenck & Warren, 1987).

In 1984, Marton and Saljo investigated students' self-reports on learning processes after carrying out a specific learning task. The terms 'surface' and 'deep' are used initially to distinguish two levels of processing which involve contrasting focuses of attention, and then use the term 'approach' to include both intention (what the learner was looking out for) and process (how that intention was carried out). In their view, the surface approach consists of a restatement of the question or denial of the point whereas the deep approach encompasses an elaboration of a key, relating concept in the passage to be learned. Besides the deep and surface approaches, the term, strategic approach, is used to refer to the way of learning by identifying assessment demands in an attempt to fulfill teachers' expectations.

At this stage, we consider the surface approach and the deep approach as respectively parallel to the reformulation approach and the challenge approach, identified by Lea (1998, 1999) in her research on academic literacies and learning. Those who commonly adopt the reformulation approach tend to comply with academic conventions to cope with literacy

demands whilst those who adopt the challenge approach tend to take a critical stance to make more complex meanings from course materials.

In connection with research on L2 student writing, both teacher feedback and peer feedback have been receiving increasing attention over the last two decades with progressively more attention in the area of academic work (see e.g., Belcher & Braine,1995; Kroll, 1990, 2003). A number of empirical investigations have demonstrated the benefits and drawbacks of peer review (see e.g., Carson & Nelson, 1994; Hyland, 2000; Leki, 1990b; Liu & Sadler, 2003; Nelson & Murphy, 1992; Stanley, 1992; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Zhang, 1995). Peer review assists students to develop the abilities of social relationship, negotiating meaning to achieve collaborative learning, cultivating the competence of interpersonal communication, and raising a sense of writing ownership (Hyland, 2000; Nelson & Murphy, 1992; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Zhang 1995). On the contrary, it is worth noting that due to cultural factors and the deficiency of L2 proficiency, the comments given by peers may not be helpful (Leki, 1990a), as focusing mostly on 'surface level' corrections only, misguiding writers to step towards the wrong direction to revise (Liu & Sadler, 2003), or even leading learners to experience an unpleasant, uncomfortable and uneasy learning climate (Nelson & Murphy, 1992). Despite no unified consensus about the effectiveness of peer review found in relevant literature, the concept of collaborative learning through social interaction in a peer review activity corresponds to the highlight of 'networks' amongst researchers who hold in the view of literacy as social practice.

Nevertheless, this paper focuses primarily on teacher's responses to L2 student writing. Zamel (1985) observes that most responses written by the teachers were inconsistent, arbitrary, and often contradictory (see also Leki, 1999a). Nevertheless, Fathman and Whalley (1990) in their research identify that "general comments giving encouragement and suggesting revisions helped improve the content of composition rewrites" (p.186). In Ferris' study (1995) of measuring ESL students' reactions to teacher feedback in multiple-draft composition classrooms, the results suggest that ESL writing teachers should give both positive comments and constructive criticism. Later, Ferris (1997) points out marginal and end comments written on ESL students' first drafts and revised drafts of papers, assessing whether the changes made in response to the teachers' comments actually improved the papers. Having considered the pragmatic goals for and the linguistic features of the teachers' responses, she identifies that a significant proportion of the comments had led to substantive student revisions. And in a more recent paper, Ferris (2001) points out that "teacher commentary and students' ability or willingness to utilize it in revision will vary depending

upon the abilities of the students and the nature of the writing task" (p.314). Despite the wealth of research on this topic, Leki (1990a) suggests that, in order to discover what forms teachers' responses can most profitably take, research on second-language writing should "look not only at teachers' written responses but at combinations of classroom settings, course goals, and grading procedures" (p.66).

The Theoretical Framing of this Study

So far, it is obvious that language as well as literacy "has a role in the ecology of the mind" (Barton, 2007, p.44), and that learning is not just an individual act but a social practice. For this reason, our intention in doing this research was to integrate both psychological and social conceptions, using a qualitatively practice-based methodological approach to literacy studies. Although the two conceptions "differ from each other in various ways, the most significant of them are linked by an emphasis on the context-specific character of both literacy and its cognitive implications" (Nicolopoulou & Cole, 1999, p.83).

At this point, it is important to note that a cognitive psychology-based approach has traditionally been the basis of work on reading and writing (see e.g., Moll, 1990; Rogoff & Lave, 1984). Despite the fact that the use of a social approach to literacy helps understand how people make use of literacy embedded in socio-cultural contexts, such an approach seems unlikely to be used to examine some important psychological concepts which include thinking and learning (see Barton, 2007; Cumming, 1998). In combining the two approaches, researchers or practitioners can "bring potentially complementary strengths to the study of literacy and cognition" (Nicolopoulou & Cole, 1999, p.84). Besides, they can also offer "correctives to the more excessive claims of the 'autonomous' approach" and broaden "the field of investigation beyond a narrow focus on seeking the uniform effects of literacy in general" (*ibid.*, pp.84-85).

Accordingly, in the present study, we combine a psychological approach with a social approach to examine English literacy learning as an aspect of social practice. The use of a psychological approach provides us with an understanding of the mental states of the student-writers, including their decisions about language use and their composing processes—planning, drafting, revising, and the like. This can assist us in finding out what have been involved in the acts of their writing and what writing skills are required. The use of a social approach, on the other hand, allows us to develop a better understanding of the processes of the Taiwanese EFL undergraduate students' English literacy learning. This approach can help

us look at the development of the students' learning from a broader view and analyze their written assignments with a closer consideration of the particular context, situation and purpose of the writing tasks. As a result, the merits of integrating these two approaches explicate why we adopted an ecological perspective of literacy to examine EFL students' English literacy learning at a university in Taiwan.

Overall, in the present study, we weave different research areas—literacy as social practice, student learning in higher education, and L1 and L2 student writing—together to reveal the significance of adopting an ecological view of literacy in the field of ELT.

Research Methodology: Context and Participants

In this study, we utilize a qualitative multiple case study approach to gain an in-depth and holistic understanding of Taiwanese EFL students' English literacy learning experiences (McDonough & McDonough, 1997; Silverman, 2000; Stake, 1998). The research is undertaken at a research-oriented university in northern Taiwan. The participants are two Taiwanese EFL undergraduates majoring in English and undertaking an English writing course as a compulsory subject at the university, and speaking Mandarin Chinese as their first language.

In terms of sampling, we assume that the individuals' previous experiences in either school or workplace settings would to a varying extent affect the values and attitudes, as well as the approaches they adopt to their English literacy learning. Our concern in this study is to uncover how the individuals who have different educational backgrounds and work experiences engage in different roles, values and attitudes of their learning. And this will help us identify the ways in which the Taiwanese students make use of their literacy practices and the approaches they use to assist them in learning English. With such an assumption, the two Taiwanese EFL undergraduates—one female and one male—who have different backgrounds and experiences were selected. For the purpose of this research, we use pseudonyms, Mary and John, for the female and male participants.

In terms of methodology, we combine in-depth interviews with supplementary methods, including questionnaires, reading tasks, students' written assignments in English, and observation notes. Regarding the use of reading tasks (see Appendix), our intention is to stimulate the two Taiwanese participants to be aware of the approaches they use in their reading. By this we mean enabling the participants to reflect upon the process of their reading and completing the two provided tasks, which require both schematic knowledge and

language knowledge (see Bransford, Stein & Shelton, 1984; Nuttall, 1996). The former refers to knowledge of the general world, including sociocultural, topic, and genre knowledge, where a reader needs it to work with the language of the text in order to interpret its meaning, namely top-down processing. The latter refers to knowledge of language structure where a reader needs it in order to recognize and decode accurately words, grammatical structures and other linguistic features, that is, bottom-up processing. In other words, schematic knowledge focuses on the content or non-linguistic subject-matter of the text, and language knowledge focuses on the use of language.

This exercise is in fact drawn on the work of Marton (1981) and his colleagues who research student learning higher educational settings in Sweden and Britain—thephenomenographic method—exploring"how did the students arrive at those qualitatively different ways of understanding the text they read?" (Marton & Saljo, 1997, p. 41). Such an exercise has been regarded as 'an experimental test' (e.g., Marton & Saljo, 1984, 1997). However, in this study, we name it as 'a reading exercise', because this exercise is not aimed at testing the English proficiency of the participants or comparing the scores they gain from the tasks. Instead, the exercise is designed to identify how the individual participants may have approached their reading. After the participants complete the tasks, we also carry out interviews with them to uncover how they tackle the reading tasks.

As a whole, with the use of alternatively multiple methods—triangulatingdata collected from different sources—weconstantly evaluate the reliability and the validity of the analysis. Besides this, we also checkthe interview transcripts that we translate from Chinese to English with the participants—whetherour interpretations fitted with the reality of participants' perspectives (see Birbili, 2001). This also helps evaluate the validity of our data and thus the outcomes of our research. Such a constantly comparative analysis provides us with a better understanding of EFL students' English literacy learning.

Adopting an Ecological View to Understand English Literacy Learning as Social Practice

This section focuses on a discussion of our research data with respect to the two participants' English literacy learning. In this paper, the way we present, analyze and interpretour data is under the following themes on our two research questions: (1) English literacy practices, (2) approaches to English literacy learning, which consists of approaches to reading and writing, (3) bringing the EFL students' English literacy practices and approaches together. Prior to the discussion, brief profiles of two research participants, Mary and John, are presented below:

Vignette 1: Mary

A Brief Profile of Mary

Mary is now 27 years old. She started to learn English as a compulsory subject when she was in the first year of junior high school. At that time, she was not interested in English but in Chinese Literature. Her personal interest is writing, especially writing in Chinese. After graduating from high school, she entered a vocational institute of technology. She majored in nursing; the core courses she took include biology, chemistry, physics, clinical therapy and other subjects relevant to medical science. During her five-year study there, she worked during the weekends and vacations.

After graduating, she worked in a private clinic in Taichung where she was able to apply what she learned from the school to real, actual situations. Nevertheless, she realized that the university degree is crucially important to her and to anyone who expects to work in the community in Taiwan. She therefore started to prepare for the Joint College Entrance Examination (JCEE) while she continued working during the day.

Because English is one of the main academic subjects required in the entrance examination program and because her English, at that time, was relatively poor, she then decided to study English both in a cram school and in a language institution. Thecram school employs a 'cram-based' style of teaching whereby she was intensively taught a huge amount of new, difficult English vocabulary and grammar. At the language institution, the course is more concerned with everyday English conversation and writing, enabling her to apply the input knowledge she obtained from the cram school to real-life situations.There is no examination required at the institution, as opposed to the cram school where there are a number of exams the students have to take. She tended to prefer the style of teaching at the language institution because she could make use of the facilities such as borrowing books and tapes from the institution and self-studying at home. Most importantly, at the language institution, she met two native English teachers, who have strongly influenced her and inspired her to further her interests to do a BA degree in English.

She seems to have rarely used English with her first job in the private clinic. Occasionally, she reads a wide range of prescriptions which involve the names of medicine and the instruction of medical use. It was the three-year intensive study at thecram school and at the language institution where she really learned English. In the end, she successfully passed the JCEE and entered the university where she majors in English.

Vignette 2: John

A Brief Profile of John

John is now 26 years old.He started to learn English when he was in the sixth year of primary school. At that time, his parents arranged for him to learn English at home with a private teacher, desiring one-to-one teaching and learning. This assisted him in building up a basic knowledge of English, and thereby prepared him to study English as a compulsory subject at junior high school. After graduating from high school, he studied in a five-year junior collegewhere the main subjects focused primarily on business, comprising computer studies, English and other foreign languages, international trade, and other 'practical' academic disciplines.

During his five-year study at the junior college, he took an English composition course run by a native English teacher. The teacher did not teach the students how to approach writing in English; rather, the teacher asked the students to do so-called 'free-writing'. Such guidelines did not seem helpful, as he did not know 'what' and 'how' the composition should have been written in English. Personally, he would consider such an approach to teaching as less effective because after taking the course, he still did not know any writing strategies or even the framework of a composition in English. However, he found that his listening had gradually improved since the spoken language used in the class was mainly English. Such kind of training, to some extent, prepared him to study in the Department of English where the teachers use mostly English in their teaching. After graduating from the junior college, he failed to pass the JCEE. Then, he was called up for military service which lasted about two years. When he was in the military service, he had to endure many hardships. Despite this, he also prepared for the examination again, as he still expected to study at university after completing his military duty. Three years later, he successfully passed the JCEE and entered the university where he majors in English.

To begin with, we summarize what Mary and John wrote in the questionnaire with respect to the English materials they read and write in both social and academic contexts as shown in Table One below:

Table 1 English Literacy Practices of the Two Participants

Students	Reading		Writing	
	In social contexts	In academic contexts	In social contexts	In academic contexts
Mary	novels magazines	textbooks commentaries	diary letters	compositions
John	Chinese chivalry novels (English version) prose	textbooks	letters e-mail	compositions essays notes

From Table One it is seen that both Mary and John usually read textbooks and wrote compositions, assigned by individual teachers in the department. Compositions here may include paragraph writing, journal writing, and writing of different types of essays such as

process, cause-effect, illustration and argumentative essays. In the social contexts, on the other hand, the two participants tended to read English novels and write letters in English. Interestingly, John wrote down the types of reading and writing he usually did in his day-to-day life on the questionnaire: an English version of Chinese chivalry novels and prose.

In the interview, John indicated that he tended to find data and information (e.g., English articles closely related to the topics he decided to write) on the web-sites. This seems to be quite different from the circumstance of Mary who stated that she would first read the things which were taught previously such as textbooks at school. In the interview, Mary pointed out that "Actually, reading and writing are my interests; more generally, I have spent most of my savings on literacy events such as attending book fairs and buying some books from the fairs." Besides, she appeared to have made good use of some facilities such as the library at the university, as she put it:

> Researcher: Do you often borrow books from the library?
> Mary: Yes, I do crazily borrow! Well, I just feel that it is great because it's free! And Ifound that it is difficult and even unlikely to buy or to find some books easily. Some books are very old and some seem to be funded by the Ministry of Education, as you can see the seal pressed on the last page of the book. The prices of thosebooks are undoubtedly very expensive! I feel that those books are worth being I intensively read.

At this stage, it is also worth pointing out what Mary said in the interview with respect to the circumstances of her English learning in the social context in Taiwan:

> "In actual fact, I would have liked to set up a 'reading group', but I feel disappointed by failing to do so! Franking speaking, setting up a 'reading group' had been the thing I desired to do. The objective was to communicate with my classmates or friends in English, since creating an English-like context of learning is considered important to improve one's English proficiency. If we develop the habit of thinking and talking in English, we will not need to spend extra money in 'learning' English at a private language institution. Even though my classmates may acknowledge the need of practicing English more, whenever I took the initiative in conversing them in English, they would complain and tease me by arguing with me that why I should talk in English as it is easier to communicate in Chinese instead. While feeling disappointed about my classmate's reaction, I came up with my way to cope with it. I continue to seize each opportunity to practice my English, as I do not want to become like them. I heard many of them think they could not make any substantial progress in English so that go to private language institutions to remedy such kind of problem. However, they feel ashamed by having others know they major English at the university, as others would have looked down them. That is a vicious circle, in my view."

What Mary said here has spelled out the values, attitudes and social relationships which are culturally embedded and socially constructed in the learning context in Taiwan. The interview extract of Mary implied that the role of social networks (i.e., peers), which might, to a varying extent, have a strong influence on her value and attitude towards her English literacy learning. It also leads us to note both the social factors (i.e., social relationships with peers) and the individual affective factors (i.e., her personal value, attitude and feeling towards the learning context) which had affected her EFL literacy leaning.

The significance of social networks can also be traced from students' attitudes towards teachers' responses to their written assignments. In the interviews, the two participants brought the first and second drafts of composition assignments. Mary said that the teacher's evaluative comments on her written assignments were very helpful and useful. The comments were written on a separate sheet of paper and in the margins of the composition, including an outline of what should have been written and how it should have been written. She usually read the comments cautiously several times, used color pens to emphasize the main points, carefully thought about the process of writing, and then discussed with the teacher whenever possible.

Like Mary, John found the teacher's evaluative comments on his assignments very helpful and useful. As he said:

> **Researcher:Did you find the teacher's comments helpful?**
> John:Yes! I've laid great stress on the teacher's comments. Each time I got my assignment back, I could not wait going through the teacher's comments. After a quick glimpse, I tried to find out the grammatical errors I had made or the things that I could revise immediately. As for other mistakes, which were concerned with theoretical concepts or ideas of the connection between paragraphs, I read the mistakes a few times and tried to link the ideas together. It's because sometimes when I myself wrote, I did not notice those sorts of thing. I just concentrated on the thing I wanted to write, and as a result, the thing I wrote lack of connections – broken away from one paragraph to another – without knowing it. What is even worse, I still was not aware of such problems because I would think that it's already been written coherently. But for a 'reader' who first read the paper, if s/he found that the paragraphs were not closely linked up, it would mean that there were problems in the paper. In view of that, I was so happy when the teacher pointed out the mistakes I made although sometimes I was overwhelmed by the number of errors the teacher specifically pointed out. What I usually do is to leave the composition for a couple of days, and then I can have a clearer mind to revise ungrammatical or ambiguous expressions effectively, and in the end to make the paper read coherently. And because of this, I have always spent time reading the teacher's comments very carefully.

From the aforementioned interview extract, teacher's comments on John's written compositions appear to impact much in the processes of his acquiring English literacy knowledge and skills. The interplay between social and individual affective factors can be seen in John's approach to making maximum use of teachers' comments as support and to adjust his attitude towards his English literacy learning. In the interview, John continued pointing out that when recalling the time he studied at junior college, the English Writing teacher only indicated that his writing was not good but did not explicitly point out the weaknesses of his writing. From the comments, he still did not know 'what' and 'how' it should have been written, and thus was not able to make progress in his writing. As he put it: "At that time, I really didn't know what I should write in a composition. The teacher asked his students to decide the topics by themselves and write whatever they would like to or could think of. So, I knew nothing about 'what' and 'how' to write, as well as how to analyze! Because of this, I feel that I could not gain any benefit from the writing. I didn't know 'what' and 'how' it should have been written in a composition in English!"

Overall, both John and Mary placed a special emphasis on the teacher's comments. More generally, John usually read and re-read the comments very carefully so that he could revise the errors he made in terms of grammar and linguistic features according to the comments. Yet, it appears not easy for John to understand what the teacher pointed out in terms of content, including the connection from one paragraph to another. In this circumstance, he would again read and think about the comments, and then ask and discuss with the teacher whenever possible. Likewise, Mary identified that the teacher normally pointed out the strengths of her work first and highlighted the weaknesses afterwards. In her view, this was a good way of giving feedback on students' work because it would not discourage students when reading the comments. Both Mary and John acknowledge that they did learn from the teacher's comments, and at the same time, from the mistakes they made in the process of writing.

Approaches to English literacy learning

When interviewing, Mary and John were asked to bring their written assignments in English and we encouraged them to talk about themselves, reflecting on their learning and writing experiences. In addition to this, we asked the two participants to read a short passage in English, entitled 'Capital Plan for Self-improvement' (see Appendix A), and to answer questions on it(see Appendix B), followed by further interview questions with them in order to uncover the approaches they used to undertake the reading activity.

Approaches to reading

After Mary and John completed the reading tasks, they were invited to participate in the interviews. Following are what they said in the interviews

Mary's Approaches to Reading

The process of doing the reading tasks is that she first read the whole text from beginning to end, particularly the last paragraph. That way, she would be able to get a general idea in terms of the wholemeaning of the content. Then, she read the provided questions and looked at the title, and at the same time read the paragraphs relevant to the questions again.

There are some vocabulary and key words that she could not understand the exact meanings of, and yet, she would refer to her common sense or background knowledge of the topic of the reading to guess the meaning of the word from the previous and/or latter sentences. She especially read and tried to understand the words written in bold print (e.g., integrity, innovation, etc.) because, in her view, those are the key words as well as the main points. However, the text itself did not attract her at all, as she indicated that she was not interested in reading such a particular type of article.

Generally speaking, she employs different approaches to reading in Chinese and in English. From her point of view, reading the two different versions of the text will lead to different ways of thinking. The way of thinking in Chinese tends to be based on 'the overall meaning of content' itself. In English, however, it is based on 'the specificways of expressions'. Since Chinese is her mother tongue, she can read a Chinese version much faster than an English version.

John's Approaches to Reading

The process of doing the reading tasks is that he first looked at the provided questions and then read the content of the article. While reading, he marked the main points relevant to the questions so that he could read them again in reply to the questions.

The reading passage as a whole was not too difficult for him to understand. Although there were some words he could not understand their exact meanings, those, in his view, were not the key words functioning as 'adjectives' or 'adverbs'. He guessed the meaning of each particular word from its prefix or suffix, and he paid more attention to the words written in bold print such as innovation, integrity, and others. In his view, the definitions of these words were the main points of this article.

In effect, he employs a very similar approach to reading in Chinese. As he notes that, it is his usual practice that he has already made a habit of using such an approach to his reading either in Chinese or in English.

From the above interview summaries despite the fact Mary and John as EFL learners may adopt distinct approaches to reading Chinese and English texts, the bottom-up approach is the one John chose to process the reading tasks whereas Mary subscribed to the top-down approach. While John firstly looked at the provided questions, secondly read the content of the article, and thirdly replied to the questions, Mary firstly read the whole text, in particular the last paragraph in order to get a general idea of text, secondly read the provided questions and looked at the title, and meanwhile read the paragraphs relevant to the questions to find out the right answers.

Despite the differences, both Mary and John in the interview showed that the given text was not too difficult to understand. Even though there were some words they did not really understand, they guessed the meaning of each particular word from the previous and later sentences containing that word. In addition to this, they seemed likely to pay closer attention to the words written in bold print, such as **innovation**, **integrity**, **involvement**, and the like, and to the diagram as well as the title of the article (see Appendix A). These, in their views, were likely the key issues the author of the assigned reading passage wanted to raise in the text. Interestingly, John said that the words 'involvement' and 'inspiration' attracted him because it was, in his view, very crucial to have such a similar concept of 'participation' when learning.

Although Mary and John employed different approaches to process the assigned reading text, both adopted a 'strategic approach' to reading and completing the given tasks to ensure their answers were accurate. This finding echoes the argument made in the research on student learning in higher education, a 'strategic approach' is often selected when students desire to meet assessment demands (Marton & Saljo, 1984, 1997).

Approaches to writing

The linguistic feature is often considered one important element of L2 writing. Contrastive rhetoric has developed to pin down the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 and their influences on L2 writing (see e.g., Connor, 1996; Kaplan, 1966). Nonetheless, to have a thorough understanding of how L1 affects EFL students' learning to write, it is crucially important to not only analyze linguistically the final product of a written text, but also scrutinize the processes in which an individual writer is involved to accomplish the writing task. This focus of analysis captures the use of an ecological view of literacy in exploring the two research participants' approaches to writing.

Having brought her written assignments, Mary in the interview conceded that it was

really very difficult for her to write in English. She observed that a number of outstanding authors and poets had their own styles of writing. More recently, she noticed that the contemporary style of writing in Chinese had been gradually affected by the style of writing in English, having a clear organizational structure – introduction, main body, and conclusion. Accordingly, she identified that it was essentially important to learn how to write in English step by step, starting from the very basis of organizational structure.

Besides, in order to better understand the comments written on her assignments by the teacher more thoroughly, Mary asked the teacher to give her a detailed explanation. She then realized that one of the drawbacks she needed to place special emphasis on was the organizational structure of the composition. Here, it is also worth pointing out the perspective on 'readers' that Mary assumed when she wrote in Chinese and in English: "When I wrote in English, the 'readers' were supposed to be the same as those when I wrote in Chinese. I thought that I wanted to write for the 'readers' who were almost the same age as me, enabling them to understand what I wrote and letting them know how I thought. I like such kind of style, more like 'creative writing'! This also means that I indeed wanted to step out of line – not to follow the conventional style of writing in English."

Our observation notes can also trace clues concerning Mary's attempt to capture the notion of 'audience' and to position herself as a writer in relation to her readers. The following notes record Mary's contributions to the discussion on Martin Luther King's speech: 'I Have a Dream' in the class session focused on tips for persuasive essay writing.

> When the instructor asked the students to articulate their reflections on King's famous speech: 'I Have a Dream', Mary volunteered to talk about her ideas. She said she was deeply impressed by King's saying: "I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all mean are created equal.'" Mary admitted that King's language use is powerful, stirring her urge to fight with him for their dreams if she was an African American. The success of King's speech, in Mary's view, mainly resulted from King's awareness of his audience's background, skillfully linking the 'collective' dream which they had with the proposal, a provocative call for action. Later when the instructor led the discussion about how to organize a persuasive essay, Mary affirmed the value of following conventions, but she also indicated her intention to be creative by not being restricted by these conventions. Mary argued that the 'writer' should be responsible for conveying intended meanings to the reader and passionate in communicating with them. The instructor was pleased to hear Mary's explanation by commenting that it was an"insightful response".
>
> –Observation Notes: December 16, 2008

It would seem that Mary had been aware of the writer-reader relationship when she wrote either in Chinese or in English (Raimes, 1983, 1991; Clark & Ivanič, 1991). In accordance with our observation notes shown above, we assumed that it was partly because, in the English writing class, the teacher had kept reminding her students to bear in mind the 'purpose' of writing. Nevertheless, in Mary's view, the 'creative' style of writing was the prerequisite requirement of a 'good' paper. Taking Lea's influential findings in L1 research on academic literacy (Lea, 1998, 1999) as the reference, we can note that the writing approach Mary adopted corresponded to the 'challenge approach'. As Mary tried to draw upon her personal perspectives and interpretations of the key elements of English writing, she challenged academic conventions. This further reveals some of the struggles over her literacy practices, which may have led to the construction of her academic knowledge – what counts as effective or deficient writing in English.

In terms of sentence structure, we found that Mary had unconsciously made simple grammatical errors such as subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and so on. Here is an example adapted from the first draft of her illustration essay: "When you do the massage, the movement on your skin <u>can imparts</u> a warmth and glow to the skin, and is revitalizing and rejuvenating to the whole body". In her view, the grammatical errors were apparently affected by her first language and by the way of her thinking in Chinese. Even though she repeatedly read the assignment before formally submitting it, she still made such fundamental mistakes. Mary conceded that she was sometimes frustrated with the mark she gained, and yet, from her point of view, this was part of the 'processes' of writing that everyone would inevitably encounter and have to cope with.

A similar situation is also found in the case of John. In the interview, John indicated that he had gradually been able to handle the way of organizing the structure of composition, and due to this, he had a clear idea of what he wanted to write in terms of content. Nevertheless, using appropriate 'technical terms' in English seemed to be one of the greatest difficulties that he had been confronted with when writing. Even though he knew the particular word in Chinese, John said, it seemed impossible to translate it directly from Chinese to English in terms of meaning and sense making. In the interview, he pointed out the word '傻瓜相機' which means 'automatic camera' in Chinese but means 'stupid camera' in English. He continued explaining that in order to write the first draft of his illustration composition, he had to check the word '傻瓜相機', which is actually used to refer to the so-called 'point and shoot camera' in English, in the encyclopedia. The example of John seems

to demonstrate the difference between Chinese and English in terms of lexical and grammatical realizations.

Normally, John would try to use some technical terms or phrases, which he had been unsure of, in his assignments. By doing this, he said, he could then learn from the teacher's comments and the mistakes he made because if the teacher could not understand what he wrote, she would normally correct it on his assignments. In the examination, however, he would rather use the words and sentence structures he definitely knew because the outcomes of the exam would in the end affect the overall grades of his studies. As he put it:

> "I intentionally used the words which I had not been familiar with in my assignments because the teacher would correct them and I could then learn from the mistakes, knowing that I could not use the English thing in the way I did and then learn how to use it. And I will know how to use it in the following assignments. But in a formal examination, I would try to avoid using the words in terms of grammar and vocabulary, which I was unsure of. This is because it could have an influence on the 'scores' of my academic study. However, I usually try to use some new words or phrases and to adopt different styles of writing. It's because the teacher will know the thing I wrote is right or wrong but I will not. Once the teacher has corrected it and I could then learn from it – I will know the thing I wrote is right or wrong, or even how it should or should not have been written in terms of grammar. After all, I can learn from it – with different purposes of writing!"

From what he said in the interview and our observation notes (see below), it would seem that John had been aware of the process of his writing to grasp practical benefits for his learning, which indicates the approach John tended to adopt is 'reformulation approach' to his writing (Lea, 1998, 1999).

John is another active learner in the class. In a class session on discussing how to write a cause-effect essay, John mentioned the importance of incorporating his experiences of being a part-time tutor, teaching elementary children the computing skills in his essay on the influence of the Internet technology. To John, he seemed to seize each opportunity of learning, such as when the instructor asked students to contribute their ideas regarding the topic or organization of the essay. As the discussion on the techniques of cause-effect essay writing ended, the whole class engaged in peer review activity. John raised his hand, which surprised the instructor to some extent: she thought John should not have any difficulty in completing the peer review worksheets because John did quite well last time. Actually, John simply wanted to underline his satisfaction from doing and learning in the peer review task. He emphasized that he can 'visualize' the writing task better when given the chance to write and receive peer reviews: it enabled him to imagine who his audience might be, what the audience might be interested, and how he generated or negotiated new knowledge or social relations with the audience. To quote from John's words: "I felt I have grown up and better understood my life goals through writing, a process of discovering my own potentials".

–Observation Notes: December 23, 2008

Bringing the EFL Students' English Literacy Practices and Approaches Together

From the case studies of Mary and John, the results indicate the influence of Chinese on lexico-syntactic forms used in English. This reflects some linguistic problems the Taiwanese participants have encountered when they study English at the university in Taiwan. Despite the linguistic problems, the two participants appeared to have found some effective ways to assist them in studying English at the university. For instance, they recognized that a certain amount of reading helped them deal with the academic writing demands, and simultaneously, develop their writing abilities in English. In the light of research into L1 and L2 student learning and academic writing in higher education, both Mary and John appeared to adopt a 'strategic approach' to reading. And regarding the approaches to writing, Mary adopted a 'challenge approach' whereas John used a 'reformulation approach'.

With regard to the EFL students' English literacy practices, the results reveal that 'social networks' are essential factors, determining the approaches they utilized to their English literacy learning. Here, teacher response served one central part of social networks in Mary's and John's cases. Their English writing teacher appeared to place emphasis on both 'content' and 'form' (Ferris, 1995, 1997). The comments were written on a separate sheet of paper and in the margins of every student's composition, including an outline of what should have been written and how it should have been written. These comments consisted of the balance between praise and criticism whereby the teacher normally pointed out good points first and drawbacks later on. For the Taiwanese EFL students, especially for Mary, this type of feedback entailed a kind of inspiration, motivating them to learn. They took their teachers' feedback into deep consideration and paid a lot of attention to it. They usually revised the first drafts of their compositions in accordance with the teacher's evaluative comments.

Overall, the findings derived from the case studies have illustrated the usefulness of drawing upon an ecological view of literacy, integrating social and psychological perspectives, to examine the Taiwanese EFL undergraduate students' English literacy learning as culturally embedded and socially constructed in the particular context.

Implications for English Literacy Pedagogy

Based on the research findings, in order to successfully implement an ecological view of literacy teaching in EFL learning contexts, EFL teachers are suggested to construct a reflective curriculum and, at the same time, encourage EFL students to take an ethnographic stance towards their English literacy learning (see Bartlett, 1990; Hamilton, 1999; Roberts, Byram, Barro, Jordan & Street, 2001). This is because "developing an ethnographic stance

amongst teachers and learners of literacy can promote a critical and reflective (as opposed to a prescriptive) literacy curriculum, which makes effective use of the full range of available methods and content" (Hamilton, 1999, p. 429). Such a reflective curriculum will facilitate students to become critically aware of not only their learning per se but also the context of their learning.

One possible way to encourage students to take an ethnographic stance in their English literacy learning is to include the project work as one of classroom activities. This pedagogical recommendation has been mentioned in related work. For example, Barton in his study (2000) described that Literacy Studies course taught by him can be considered as an example of a reflective curriculum. In the course, undergraduate and postgraduate students, who study at a British university, are assigned to conduct a mini project of researching literacy practices in any area of everyday life and write up a report afterwards (see Barton, 2000). In conducting the similar research project, students in Taiwan may decide a 'topic' in accordance with their interests, and then select the appropriate use of research methods (e.g., observation, interview, questionnaire, documenting, photographs, etc.) under the guidance of their teachers. Students may work individually, in pairs or in small groups, examining how English is situated in particular locations (e.g., libraries, post offices, cafeterias, sport center, etc.) and how people in Taiwan make use of their language and literacy practices in the specific situations. In analyzing the data they have collected, students are required to write a short report in English, reflecting upon the process of carrying out their research projects.

Another project work introduced by Lai (2006) is an instance of implementing areflective curriculum. The course is aimed at providing EFL students with opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers and learn from each other. In the course, EFL students are given more control to define their own learning goals, and simultaneously the teacher can involve the students in this process by helping them create their project assignment to undertake cooperative learning with peers. Such a project work can help connect the world of school with the students' experiences, making learning more relevant to their daily lives and enjoyable. Briefly, the procedure for implementing this project work in the EFL literacy curriculum is shown in the following table:

Table 2 Moving towards the Curriculum Grounded on an Ethnographic Stance (Developed from Lai, 2006, p.9)

Project Stages	Project Activities	Foci of Learning
Teacher's introduction	Specifying the task	Discussion
Planning	Dividing into groups Distributing the assigned readings on each topic Selecting one topic Making a proposed reading list	Discussion Speed reading
Data collection	Finding readings relevant to the selected topic Selecting interesting texts	Scanning Skimming
Consultation	Reporting the progress of implementing group project to the teacher Discussing the selected readings with the teacher	Discussion Consultation skills
Preparation	Reading on the selected topic Drafting a group project report Preparing for oral presentation	Careful reading Note making
Writing-up	Composing a final version of the project report	Writing skills
Presentation	Making oral presentation	Presentation skills

Table Two presents, in chart form, the processes which a teacher takes to be involved in group project work. The first column shows the 'Stages' in the production. The second column shows the 'Activities' EFL students engage in at each stage. And the third column lists the 'Foci of Learning' that the teacher expects the students to learn. Initially, the teacher outlines to the class the five Stages of the group project – Planning, Data collection, Preparation, Writing-up and Presentation, and sets the deadlines. The responsibility for all the 'Activities', listed in the second column, lies on the students. Each group of students has control over the process, which individualizes the rate and nature of their learning, under the teacher's guidance. The responsibility of the teacher is to provide input and instruction related to the 'Foci of Learning', listed in the third column of Table Two. In the processes of conducting the group project, the third stage of 'data collection' provides the students with opportunities to learn English both in and out of the EFL classroom, whereby the students are encouraged to take an ethnographic stance towards their English literacy learning.

Taken together, these two reflective curricular projects require an integration of both process and product approaches to the teaching of academic writing for EFL students (see Dudley-Evans, 1995; Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998; Jordan, 1997). This pedagogical practice, in our view, "is directly relevant to target needs and yet provides the opportunity for process-oriented language learning" (Bloor & St John, 1988, p. 85), and thereby will help not only EFL students but also EFL teachers to adopt reflective practices. As a consequence, students will become critically aware of their learning as well as language use, and the teachers will be able to adapt teaching materials and modify classroom activities to suit learners' needs and interests (see also McDonough & Shaw, 1993). Crucially, constructing a reflective English literacy curriculum will provide both the teachers with a profound

understanding of the learning contexts of students and the students with opportunities to work together with their peers, and thus become more engaged in learning. As Hounsell (1997, p. 257) puts it, "reflective teaching and the quality of learning go hand in hand."

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Appendix A: Reading Passage

Capital Plan for Self-improvement

Geraldine Abrahams, who is a journalist specializing in human resources and career development issues, illustrates ten factors intrinsic to improving personal career development. And they all have something in common…

While stability within an organisation's culture is essential, there is also a need for openness to new ideas.

One month into a new year, and it is highly likely that most people will already have discarded those carefully-planned resolutions that were designed to bring changes on a dramatic level.For the majority, a few realistic and achievable aims are more the order of the day, part of a long-term strategy rather than an expansive one-off statement of intent. Plans designed to be executed over a more sustained period are more likely to be effective.

Finding it difficult to get started? Why not revert to that age-old learning method and make a list, an easily-remembered "top ten" of those characteristics that underpin successful career and business management. Such a streamlined focus is immensely helpful when issues become confused, or when instantaneous solutions are demanded for problems that can appear insurmountable.

Authors Walter Goldsmith and David Clutterbuck used the same initial "I" to identify what they consider to be the three pre-requisites to successful management: innovation, integrity and involvement, in their book, *the Winning Streak.*Using the information gathered from a sample of top companies operating successful and forward-looking cultures, they were able to argue that while stability within an organisation's culture is essential, there is also a need for openness to new ideas.Natural curiosity should be extended beyond those limiting geographical boundaries that inhibit so many companies and thwart performance in the international marketplace. That is **innovation**.**Integrity**, the second "I", is considered to be a major force behind the more successful business cultures, manifesting itself in relationships with customers, clients, fellow employees and suppliers, and providing a sound basis for trust.The last of the three I's, **involvement**, is based around personal commitment and hard work. A sense of pride in individual but team focused achievements that result in positive affirmation of the company's value and status in the marketplace.

For the authors, the three "I"s provided a basic recipe for successful business management, but while they serve that corporate model well, they fall short of providing the ready reckoner for personal career development.

Intelligence is an obvious characteristic, although not so much in terms of aptitude as knowledge, as the ability to assimilate information and understand the need for continuous learning.That, of course, is only effective where the **interpretation** of information is accurate, true and unmistakable, and where any possibility of misconstruing the facts has been eliminated.And is it possible to consider operating on a team-basis without building in **interaction**? Communicating clearly and constructively with other members of staff and with clients is vital to the forming of successful business relationships.

For those with leadership leanings, **inspiration** is the key: the ability to be inspired and at the same time, inspire and motivate the other team members.Most managements operate on a team basis but that does not preclude the need for individual input. **Independence** of thought brings new ideas and concepts to which a forward-looking team should always be receptive.The same is true of **inquisitiveness**. Enterprising teams or individuals are expected to be curious about different and new directions. They thrive on it.

The final "I" is exactly that: I, me, the individual. Those people who fail to understand that they are masters and mistresses of their own destinies are doomed to fail. The best teams are those that know how to exploit the individuality of their members for the good of the whole, and the most productive individuals are those who work innovatively within the team rules.

(Adapted from *CA: Leading Figures in Business*, February 2000, p.63)

Task 1

Read the passage of *Capital Plan for Self-improvement* and answer the following questions:

Appendix B: Reading Exercise

Please read the passage, entitled *Capital Plan for Self-improvement*, and answer the questions in the following Tasks 1 and 2.

Task 1

1. For Walter Goldsmith and David Clutterbuck, what are the *three* pre-requisites to successful management?
2. In Geraldine Abrahams' view, what are the *ten* factors required to improving personal career development?
3. In addition to the stability within an organization's culture, what is another essential thing that is needed to lead a company to success?

Task 2

Read the passage again and match the terms with the definitions provided below:

1. Innovation	a) making changes; something new that is introduced
2 Integrity	b) not relying on others; not dependent or controlled by other people or things
3. Involvement	c) mental ability; the power of perceiving, learning, understanding and knowing
4. Intelligence	d) explanation; making clear the meaning of words or information
5. Interpretation	e) personage; human being (contrasted with *society*)
6. Interaction	f) thorough search or investigation
7. Inspiration	g) participation; taking part
8. Independence	h) stimulation; motivation

9. Inquisition	i) communicating or acting on each other
10. Individual	j) being honest and uprig

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Book Review

ICE-Ireland: A User's Guide

Jeffrey L. Kallen, & John M. Kirk. Belfast: Cló Ollscoil na Banríona, 2008. Pp. 1-106.

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Here is a book which may be of great interest to those interested in working with the Irish data of the International Corpus of English (ICE). Indeed, in *ICE-Ireland: A User's Guide*, Kallen and Kirk offer a comprehensive description of the Ireland component of ICE, a joint venture which aims at collecting comparable samples of English language texts across countries where English is spoken either as a first or second language.

To achieve their purpose, the authors divide the volume into three parts, plus a list of references. Part A introduces the background information in relation to the corpus. For the most part, readers will find specificities such as the team involved in corpus compilation, the terms and conditions for using the corpus, copyright issues and publications which have been made on the corpus. There is also a section on the development of ICE-Ireland detailing how the corpus came to life, which readers might find informative.

Part B is probably the most relevant one to ICE-Ireland users as it offers a clear report on how the corpus was transcribed, structured, and formatted. Additionally, extensive word lists are provided to allow readers insight into how corpus data were treated as regards (non-) hyphenated words, single words and specific spellings. The lengthiest section in this second part concerns a thorough account of texts and speakers/writers. As regards the spoken component of the corpus, there is information on the geographical background of the speaker, the time period in which the text was produced as well as personal data such as sex, age, place of residence and provenance, educational level, occupation, religion, mother tongue and other languages s/he might speak. On the other hand, the written part is documented (where possible) in terms of the author, title of the text, title of the volume where it was originally published, and date of publication. A general description of the writers per group (North and South) is also provided, following the categories established for the spoken component of the corpus.

Part C offers an account of Englishes and how Irish English fits into this major panorama. It is here that readers are informed about the principles which have guided the authors in compiling the corpus, together with its possible future uses.

The volume is a much needed publication for those who want to explore ICE-Ireland for two main reasons. First, it provides users with minute details about the corpus, which is more than welcome. Second, it brings an inventory of participants, making it possible to trace back several specificities about most of the contributors. This second feature is of special interest to those who want to conduct contrastive studies on the English spoken in both parts of the border (Northern Ireland vs. the Republic of Ireland), for instance.

The only issue which should be taken into account in a future edition is that, for the novice ICE user, some description of text types might come in handy.

Additionally, given that all the publications related to ICE-Ireland are authored by the corpus directors, it would be a fitting add-on if they had been annotated, giving readers a glimpse of what they might find in them.

At a time when more and more corpora are being compiled, it is of utmost importance that they be accompanied by documentation. As Sinclair (2005) puts it, "[a] corpus that sets out to represent a language or a variety of a language cannot predict what queries will be made of it, so users must be able to refer to its make-up in order to interpret results accurately" (p. 7). This is exactly where the contribution of the publication lies – namely, indicating all decisions which have been taken in the course of compiling this specific

Reference

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Book Review

Global English Teaching and Teacher Education: Praxis and Possibility

Dogancay-Aktuna, S. & Hardman, J. (Eds.)

Alexandria, VA: TESOL, Inc. 2008. Pp. xxi +198.

Reviewed by Gregory Paul Glasgow

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In the volume *Global English teaching and teacher education*, the contributors critically examine "current practices in teacher education [in order] to explore ways to better meet the needs of pre-service and in-service teachers of English" (p. vii).

There are nine chapters altogether in the three sections of this book: "Resistance to Inner Circle and Local Standards of Language Teaching" (Section 1); "Changing Attitudes towards English" (Section 2); and "Situated English Language Teaching Pedagogy" (Section 3).

The first section begins with an overview in chapter 1 of the state of English teaching in Pakistan. Authors Mahboob and Talaat report the overall educational qualifications of Pakistani teachers need improvement and suggest that teachers meet minimum teaching criteria and attend yearly training sessions to reach these standards. Gunesekera follows with an analysis of Sri Lankan teachers' perceptions of the English varieties they use. He reports that Sri Lankan perceptions

vary in terms of whether or not they recognize Standard Sri Lankan English as a variety. This issue has serious implications for conducting listening components for national examinations. Wu and Vanderbroek's article then discusses English in Ghana and describes it as a "much valued standard" (p. 50) where indigenous language education is emphasized in primary school years. The authors also suggest more recognition of the diversification of English and a critical look at the role of all languages in teacher training curricula as well as the role of schools in Ghana.

Section 2 describes changing attitudes towards English in Turkey and Spain. In chapter 4, Dogancay-Aktuna finds that Turkish teacher educators view themselves as proficient and confident in their language skills, valuing their "intimate knowledge of their students' needs and backgrounds" (p. 81). This self evaluation suggests that trainees' language skill development should receive more focus in teacher education. Atay, in a study in chapter 5 on the beliefs of prospective teachers in English in Turkey, finds conflicts in their perceptions of themselves and native speaking teachers, as well as some concern about the spread of English. Finally, Llurda discovers in the final chapter of this section that length of time abroad may positively affect Catalonian English teachers' self-perceptions of language proficiency and teaching performance. He recommends "stays abroad" (p. 111) for teacher training programs.

The objective of section 3 is to offer examples of situated responses to language pedagogy. Vaish's documentation of classroom code switching illustrates that through this language practice Indian primary English teachers empower themselves to carry out their moral responsibilities. Kang, in the next chapter, also shows that elementary school teacher discourse in a South Korean classroom employs strategic use of code switching; Kang additionally calls for specific guidelines for use of the first and second languages. Finally, Erling examines German students' learning experiences and attitudes with English, and determines there are clusters of students who favor

United States English, British English, and English as a Lingua Franca. This broadly suggests that a situated pedagogical approach "can account for various identities and world views being expressed through language" (p. 164). The editors conclude the book with recommendations method and practicum courses, language study, and teacher education.

Global English teaching and teacher education has many thought-provoking chapters, but at times the chapter organization can seem confusing. Section 1, for example, which is titled Resistance to Inner Circle and Local Standards of Language Teaching, seems not to emphasize resistance to inner circle English as much it did local standards. Additionally, another chapter in section 3 on situated pedagogical practices would have been beneficial to understand how practitioners function in their own environments. This volume, nevertheless, is worthwhile in how it encourages teacher education programs to "step outside their own local boxes" (p. 172) and improve their practices and thus is a practical book for those who work (or intend to work) in international contexts.

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Book Review

Telling a Research Story: Writing a Literature Review

John. M. Swales & Christine. B. Feak. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2009. Pp. xiv + 98.

Reviewed by Raquel M.T. Lothringer and Diana M. Waigandt

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This hundred-page book (including illustrations and references), a reworking and expansion of a part of Feak and Swales's *English in today's research world* (2000) and the second volume in a series: *The Michigan series in English for academic & professional purposes*, aims to offer assistance to tutors and researchers during the later stages of the writing up of a literature review.

The text is organized with an introduction and seven chapters. The introduction clarifies the purpose of the book, its underlying organization, and its intended audience. After the introduction, each chapter presents key topics associated with the genre.

I. The first, *Orientations*, begins with an epigraph which illuminates the section by enhancing the crucial functions fulfilled by the literature review in academic and research writing. The chapter then illustrates what makes referencing "prior literature

a defining feature of nearly all academic and research writing" (p. 2), characterizes different types of reviews, and points out the difference between being a scholar and a researcher. The section also deals with a presentation of the most frequent weaknesses detected by professors in literature reviews. To help overcome them, the authors offer some examples and practical advice on imposing order on the literature as well as on choosing areas for inclusion in the review.

II. The second, *Getting Started on the Literature Review,* focuses on two challenging issues the author feels the writer should consider in order to reduce the reader's cognitive load: securing information flow and using metadiscourse adequately. The section also includes a thorough and well-referenced presentation of citation patterns, which elaborates on the topic earlier presented in *Genre Analysis* (Swales, 1990, p. 148-51).

III. The third, *Drafting, Redrafting and Redrafting Again,* offers a case study, that of a doctoral candidate's vicissitudes with her literature review. Underlying this essentially practical section lies the authors' view on the enormous value of drafting and redrafting in the writing process. Instructors and tutors may find interesting ideas on how to coach candidates while those reading the book for self-development will get information about different types of dissertations and may develop a critical attitude towards strong and weak points in literature reviews by completing the tasks provided throughout the book.

IV. The fourth, *Taking a Stance toward the Literature,* sets out to clarify the importance of the reviewer's perspective on the literature being reviewed. Moreover, this chapter highlights how the reviewer's stance may assume an organizing

function in some literature reviews and considers how it is inherent to the genre. Reference to stance markers and an activity demanding reading of previous sections and engagement in discourse analysis are also included in this section.

V. The next, *Constructing an Original Discussion of Previous Work: Using Your Own Words,* is a particularly thoughtful section where the authors encourage reflection on a burning issue in academic circles today--plagiarism--and help readers understand problems posed by paraphrasing and summarising academic texts. In keeping with the practical rather than ethical approach to the topic, strategies to overcome difficulties and avoid *patchwriting* are also provided.

VI. In the following one, C*riteria for Evaluating Literature Reviews,* the authors highlight the importance of having "a fairly comprehensive understanding of the previous work in their field before undertaking research" (p. 93). It also includes a scoring rubric designed by Boote and Beile (2005) for the field of education which Feak and Swales consider may be adapted for other disciplines as they believe it may be relevant for self-evaluation and may lead to students' "greater methodological sophistication in their own research." (p. 93).

VII. The last section, *Some Final Thoughts to Consider*, is aimed at pulling all the threads together and consists of a questionnaire to evaluate one's own literature review.

Examining each chapter, readers will see one of the outstanding strengths of this book to be the authors' ability to stand at the crossroads where theory, practice, and invaluable professional experience interact dialectically. In this respect, the

importance of the tasks presented at the end of each chapter (along with the online feedback provided for them on the publisher's website) must be also emphasized. Apart from contributing to the activation of prior knowledge, reflection on key issues, and to raising awareness about one's own practice, they bring to the fore the authors' constructivist stance, their concern about students' needs and their extensive knowledge about the field of academic writing.

Reading each part of this remarkable book will indeed help tutors, instructors, and independent researchers appreciate the retrospective view involved in writing literature reviews as well as the backward glance over roads travelled the authors provide to offer a renewed proposal towards them, for, as the title indicates, the authors have focused on the literature review as a genre, providing both insights into its rationale and a reservoir of activities that can be adapted both for classroom use and self development.

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Book Review

Learning Languages through Technology

Elizabeth, Hanson-Smith and Sarah, Rilling (Ed.). Virginia: TESOL, Inc. 2006. Pp. iv + 332.

Reviewed by Lisa Cheung

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Written for both academic and general readership, *Learning languages through technology* will enlighten any reader who is fond of integrating technology into language learning classrooms. With contributors being experienced computer-assisted language learning (CALL) practitioners from many regions of the world, this is an excellent all-in-one reader for pre- and in-service teachers to explore the role of technology in language learning.

The text contains 19 chapters separated into an introductory chapter and four sections which cover *Language Development Online: Skill Building through Technology*, *Content-Based and Task-Based Learning: Collaborative CALL*, *Authentic Audience in a Web-Based World*, and *Constructivism in Professional Development*.

Each section begins with a preview of the three to five chapters it contains, offers the chapters themselves, and concludes with follow-up questions and activities. Each

chapter is also organized in a similar way: Each begins with ideas to think about before reading and then offers material that will help readers understand its foci.

The introductory chapter, "Using technology in teaching languages," opens with a preview on fundamental technological tools in educational contexts and CALL research over the last two decades. Followed by this is the first section, "Language Development Online: Skill Building through Technology." This section comprises five chapters that examine how technology can be creatively used to enhance learners' four skill areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Various "technology-enhanced approaches" (p. 9) are considered in this section: namely, off-time communication (Chapter 2, "Using synchronous communication collaboratively in ESP"), web concordance (Chapter 3, "Problems of time and exposure in vocabulary acquisition"), online writing (Chapter 4, "Using online academic writing modules in an IEP environment"), and web-based listening course (Chapter 5, "Developing a web-based listening course"). The section then concludes with a chapter that discusses the issue of student autonomy with some recommendations to encourage autonomous learning (Chapter 6, "CALL and the nonautonomous learner").

The second section, *Content-based and Task-based Learning: Collaborative CALL*, explores diverse applications of the Internet in promoting collaborative learning. The section falls into five chapters, each of which proposes "interesting technologies as a means to invent new ways of using resources" (p.81), including group-based project (Chapter 7, "Making content connections online via the GLOBE program"), learning writing through the Internet (Chapter 8, "CALL and content-area teaching"), digital video and editing (Chapter 9, "Meaningful tasks with video in the ESOL classroom"), and online writing laboratory (Chapter 10, "An ESL OWL takes flight"). The last chapter, "Mismatch or missed opportunity", addresses the issue of

student expectations about technology and offers pedagogical suggestions for instructor practice.

The third section, Authentic audience in a web-based world, starts with three chapters that investigate the use of conventional computers (Chapter 12, “First steps in experimenting with computers”), Weblogs (Chapter 13, “Real-world contexts, skills and service learning”), and Web pages in blended (on- and off- campus) courses (Chapter 14, “Redefining the blog: From composition class to flexible learning”). The section then concludes with a chapter on “The teacher’s critical role in effective online courses”, which discusses the issue of teacher role with tips and suggestions to guide teachers to develop online courses.

The last four chapters in section four, together, address the issues related to the title of the section C*onstructivism in Professional development*. Self-reflection as one of the important aspects of constructivist learning is explored in Chapter 16, “Virtual basegroup: E-mentoring in a reflective electronic support network.” How technology can enhance such reflective practices in teacher education is also discussed in the chapter. The other two chapters deal with the issues of moving towards collaboration in an online Teacher Education Course (Chapter 17, “Reinvention of an online teacher education course”) and implementing a fully online degree program for teachers (Chapter 18, “Implementing an online ESL teacher education program”). The final chapter, “Tools for online teacher communities of practice,” discusses how educators keep in touch with the changing world of technology through computer-supported communities of practice.

Learning languages through technology is a fascinating and comprehensive contribution to our current knowledge of technology use in language teaching. Reading this volume, any reader, particularly the teacher educator, will be impressed by its portrait of language learning in a technology-rich environment to develop a

renowned passion for integrating technology into language pedagogy. All in all, this volume is a compelling read and practical resource for any teacher educator who wishes to “captivate the imagination of learners” through technology (p. 2).