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Extra-Curricular Reading in Taiwan

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Bioprofile:

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Abstract

Abundant exposure is one of the keys in language acquisition. Learners need large amount of exposure to the target language, and generally speaking the more the better. Among the many plausible ways to increase language input and exposure, extra-curricular reading is comparatively less researched but of paramount importance. Nonetheless, reading in a foreign language is complicated and difficult, and thus often causes reluctant readers, even for students at the tertiary level. To solve the problem, extensive reading approach and free voluntary reading are mostly mentioned and implemented for their theoretical and practical merits to independent reading outside the class. This study investigates the English extra-curricular reading of 143 undergraduate participants in the Taiwanese context. Through questionnaire and interview, this study attempts to answer two research questions: (1) students’ extra-curricular reading amount and habit, and (2) the relationship among students’ reading attitude, motivation and achievement. Results suggest that participants are generally lack of extra-curricular exposure, possess both integrative and instrumental motivations, value English and show low anxiety in reading. However, no sign of extra-curricular reading habit is observed. Correlations exist between learning achievement and several factors investigated, such as value, integrative orientation, and effort of learning. Interview results reveal that passive learning still dominates, learners have problem lasting interest in learning and learners stress the importance of input being ‘of interest’ and ‘with easy access’. Extra-curricular autonomous reading to foster the habit should be promoted for an input-rich environment through extensive reading. Pedagogical implications and limitations are also discussed.

Keywords: EFL, English learners, extensive reading, extra-curricular input, college English
Introduction

In the literature, most of the researchers study teacher development (Fu, 2004; Lin, 2002), materials and methodology (Dai, 1999), education policy and evaluation (Huang, 2002; Lin, 2004) or affective factors (Dörnyei, 2001, 2009; Hung, 2008). Only fewer studies focus on learning after class, which is of critical importance in language learning (e.g. Gong, 2010; Robb, 2002; Robb and Kano, 2013; Wang, 2009; Wang and Tinker Sachs, 2011), since one of the key factors to language acquisition is the target language (TL) exposure. Extra-curricular input is an area, which has been relatively ignored in the large body of literature, possibly because of the difficulty in controlling variables in an extra-curricular context. This accounts for the current trends of education to extend the foreign language education to the primary level (Chiang, 2009). We want learners to have more total exposure in the long run (Carroll, 1969). Although target language input in adequate amount and at the right structural level is believed to be a primary condition for successful language learning, this paper focuses on the exposure amount only, considering the broad and difficult nature of input quality, e.g. morpho-syntax, vocabulary, or genre. There are different ways to increase exposure, and this paper intends to promote extra-curricular English extensive reading through investigating and revealing the current situation of learners’ extra-curricular reading at the tertiary level in the context of Taiwan.

Literature Review

Key to success– maximum exposure

The paramount importance of exposure is indisputable. As Carroll (2001:2) notes,

Although second language (L2) acquisition researchers agree about very little when it comes to explaining the how and why of L2 acquisition, one point on which there is consensus is that L2 acquisition requires exposure to the second language. If you want to learn Ojibwan, you will have to listen to Ojibwa speech, read Ojibwa texts, and attempt to reproduce Ojibwa L2 sentences….Learners still have to work at learning, and learning requires exposure to the sounds or written forms of the L2. From these sounds and written symbols, learners must construct grammatical representations of the speech they are hearing or reading and infer a meaning. (Carroll, 2001:2)
More exposure means more time and sometimes it is very difficult to allocate time in busy schedules, especially in school settings. Therefore, many countries, e.g. Taiwan, Mainland China, Japan and Korea in Asia, lower down the initial exposure of official foreign language to the primary level in order to gain more exposure to the target language in the long run (Carroll, 1969), despite younger advantage is still under controversy (Chiang, 2009). Many immersion programs starting at different levels from the 1960s also aimed at increasing target language exposure for higher ultimate achievement (Burstall, 1968; 1970; Carroll, 1969; García Mayo, 2003; Genesee, 1987; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Lapkin, Hart & Swain, 1991). In many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) countries, language learning is limited within the classroom situation, as a subject, and in Taiwan, students often go to cram schools to learn more after school (Chai, 2001; Lan & Oxford, 2003). Unfortunately, this kind of instructional input does not equal what we call “primary linguistic data” (Lightbown & Spada, 1993) which initiates language acquisition, based on Chomsky (1965).

Extra-curricular input plays an important role in maximizing exposure. Spada (1986) reported that the learners who had access to both formal instruction and to naturalistic input outside the classroom showed the greatest gains in proficiency. Furthermore, instruction effects only seem to last if there is continuing access to the linguistic structure after class, in after-class naturalistic input (Lightbown, 1991). Mahadeo (2003) investigated the role that input plays in L2 achievement in an acquisition-poor environment, Mauritius. The results indicated that lower achievement among learners from the rural area studied was due to their limited opportunity to access input not only inside but more importantly outside the classroom. Learners are more likely to develop a higher level of proficiency if they come into contact with significant resources of the L2, through better classroom interaction or after-class resources, e.g. social interaction, L2 reading for pleasure, multi-media exposure or private tuition (2003:260). The study supported the assumption that higher ability learners seem to have benefited from exposure to more input in their social milieu. Where under-achievement exists, the reason is lack of exposure to English outside the classroom (2003:264-265). All of these studies show that learners seem to need continuing exposure outside the classroom (Chiang, 2009:23).
Importance of extra-curricular input

Carroll’s (1969) early study suggested one of the best ways to learn a language and to improve language skills is to study and travel in a country where the target language is spoken. However, few students can afford to live and study in a place where English is spoken daily; for most, studying in an EFL context will be confined to the classroom. Chiang (2009) proposed that the role of learning outside the classroom must be considered because, after all, students stay in the classroom only for a few hours a day and learning English there is often controlled by the curriculum and the time available. Students can take responsibility for their learning by being actively involved in learning beyond the classroom. That is, learning English should be an ongoing process so that students have to self-direct their learning by using all the skills and resources at their disposal, once the teacher is not around to give them input. They have to create opportunities where English is used as often as possible. This relates to the idea of ‘learner autonomy’ (see Holec, 1981), which refers to situations in which learners work under their own direction outside the conventional language-teaching classroom (Benson, 2001:13; Gong, 2010).

Mahadeo’s results (2003) already indicated that limited input outside the classroom could have a negative impact on the learner’s achievement in L2. More recently, Wang and Tinker Sachs (2011), after investigating primary higher grades and junior secondary lower grades from three schools in an inland capital city in China, reported that the great majority of students did not read English for entertainment or other pragmatic purposes. The problem presented from the study was existence of the input-poor environment after series of English language teaching (ELT) reform. In other words, the crucial role that input plays in language learning and the severe impact that poor input can make seem to be little recognized among teachers, schools administrators, or ELT reform authorities, and this situation could easily be applied in other EFL contexts, including Taiwan. Similar results were obtained in higher education too. Gong (2010) investigated 172 college students in China also reported students’ lack of extra-curricular TL contact and interest in reading. Using informal interviews with university learners, Sy (1995) found that those learners (aged 17–24) who ventured to use the target language beyond the classroom showed evidence of language improvement and became more able to actively use the target language.
As can be seen from the above studies, learning in an EFL context is mostly confined to the classroom, where input is usually more limited in amount and controlled in type, when compared to naturalistic contexts. Learners need to be directed to available extra-curricular resources in order to receive the input that will promote acquisition. As previously noted, in terms of quantity of input, it is generally considered the more the better. Lack of input means reduction in the availability of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982; 1985). This is likely to slow down the development of implicit knowledge and impact on learning achievement. Thus, extra-curricular input is one solution to this problem (Chiang, 2009).

**Extra-curricular input through reading and extensive reading**

Reading is a good way of receiving input because it is accessible and full of input (PLD and repeated, possibly formulaic, chunks). It may be easier for learner readers, compared to learners as listeners, to learn constructions from books. According to Rigy’s (1980) study of learners using five senses, there are significantly more visual learners (83%) than the other four. Input from reading may be clearer, and the learners can adjust the reading speed by themselves. Inflections are less likely to be missed and the learner can go back to any word as need be. The following section will introduce the rationale of providing extra-curricular input via reading, with specific focus on the benefits of extensive reading (ER) approach.

Reading is a difficult task, especially in a foreign language; in this case, it is English reading. Why must we overcome this difficulty? Because written English is everywhere in life (Krashen, 2003) and we derive benefit from it.

Many good things happen to learners who read a great deal in the new language. Research studies show that they become better and more confident readers, they write better, their listening and speaking abilities improve, and their vocabulary gets richer. In addition, they develop positive attitudes towards and increase motivation to studying the new language. (Bamford & Day, 2004:1)

We can only learn to read by reading (Smith, 1973:195) and only reading promotes reading. The more learners read, the more their vocabulary grows, the more words they can read, and the more reading they can do. There does not seem to be a
shortcut to becoming a fluent reader, according to a large amount of studies (e.g. Bamford & Day, 2004; Day & Bamford, 1998; Eskey, 1986; McQuillan, 2007).

Research has shown the impact of avoiding written input for young learners. For instance, VanPatten (1988) raised the issue through Harley and Swain (1984). It was documented that learners entering an immersion program in the later stages (i.e. at more advanced grades) did better at segmenting and processing the input they received compared to those learners with comparable amounts of classroom exposure who were at lower grade levels. One important difference between the two levels was the quantity and quality of written input. Early stage learners in immersion programs neither received instruction in literacy nor much written input used for communicative purposes. The more advanced learners did. He argued that written input might have made an impact on the learners’ performance and the effect of instruction. Therefore, avoiding it may be detrimental (Chiang, 2009:43). After reviewing eight surveys in Fiji (six of primary learners, one high school and one university level), Elley (1984) attributed Fijian learners’ weakness in English, which was the medium of instruction after the first three or four years or primary school, to their lack of opportunity to read at an early stage, and thus recommended early exposure to written materials.

The attention of extra-curricular input through reading has aroused an increasing interest in extensive reading programs for language learning. Extensive reading (ER) approach, also known as Free Voluntary Reading (FVR, Krashen, 2004c), is a very simple concept. Learners read lots of easy, interesting material in the target language, steadily move towards reading more challenging materials as their skills improve and then continue to read indefinitely. This approach could be implemented in any levels of educational context through different forms, e.g. replacement or additive ER (Robb & Kano, 2013). See Day and Bamford (1998:34), Krashen (2004c) and Iwahori (2008) for successful ER programs across different levels. The studies listed below are relevant to the current study at the tertiary level. Robb and Susser (1989) compared learner achievement between skills approach and ER approach and concluded that the ER group made significant gains in comprehension, vocabulary and reading speed compared to the skills approach. Masuhara, Kimura, Fukuda and Takeuchi (1996) used two intact classes that were of differing ability from the onset, with the ER group scoring lower on pretest assessments, compared to the skills training group. Despite the initial differences in
ability, the ER group had caught up to the skills group by the end of the 8-week study. Mol and Bus (2011) reported consistent and strong correlations between print exposure and aspects of literacy and language development. More recently, Robb and Kano (2013) reported a large-scale additive ER program in a Japanese university, with 5,383 participants from two cohorts in 2008 and 2009. The ER cohort in 2009 had to read five graded readers outside of class time and completed quizzes of the reading on the facilitating MoodleReader program. The results showed significant gains on reading and listening, and the improved overall proficiency of the reading cohort.

Extensive reading programs also result in affective influence, i.e. on attitude and motivation (Day & Bamford, 1998:21-31). Successful ER programs place great emphasis on ongoing reading experience because it is more private, less competitive, and nonjudgmental. There is less fear of evaluation and it is flexible in terms of individual variation. Learners have a choice of what to read, and they are not forced to read about topics in which they have no interest. In addition, they have the freedom to stop reading when they want to, with no questions asked. These elements of students choosing what, when, how, and where to read are hallmarks of autonomy in learning which will trigger the learner’s intrinsic motivation which is more related to the ‘integrative orientation’ as opposed to the ‘instrumental orientation’ (Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Vallerand, 1997). Gardner and Lambert’s early work (1959; 1972) suggested that because it was related to positive attitudes towards the L2 community, integrative orientation was a better predictor of eventual proficiency than the instrumental orientation, but counterevidence existed (e.g. Chilara & Oller, 1978; Oller, Hudson & Liu, 1977). It has also been argued (cf. Gardner, 1985) that these two orientations are not mutually exclusive, and that both orientations could sustain effort. On the other hand, Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011:4) defined motivation from three elements: the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it and the effort expended on it. These were the requirements to keep learners motivated. De Burgh-Hirabe (2011) after observed her nine participants’ motivation found that motivational intensity (reading amount and time) and enjoyment were closely connected, increasing and decreasing together.

In addition, Krashen also proposed that an ideal extra-curricular input should be provided in an environment of rich input with low anxiety, based on his Affective
Filter Hypothesis (1982). Similarly, Oxford and Nyikos (1989) argued that level of enjoyment is a factor in motivation. By motivating students with the kind of language activity they need and enjoy, students can have a pleasant experience; this helps acquisition, and students reap the rewards of increased language proficiency, which in turn motivates them further.

Although research on extensive reading has shown many benefits (Beglar, Hunt, & Kite, 2012; Day and Bamford, 1998; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Grabe, 2009; Karlin, & Romanko, 2008; Renandya, 2007; Robb & Susser, 1989; Tanaka & Stapleton, 2007; Yamashita, 2008), motivating learners to read large amounts still presents educators and teachers with many challenges. Kirchhoff (2013) listed three of the challenges. The first is the long time span inherent in extensive reading. Learners’ motivation to read fluctuates greatly over a long time (De Burgh-Hirabe, 2011; Judge, 2011; Nishino, 2007). Secondly, learners, particularly in Asian contexts, are often unfamiliar with the autonomous style of learning in ER, and are unsure if autonomous learning is valuable. Lastly, outside the classroom learners have other priorities than reading including study for other classes, work and social life (De Burgh-Hirabe, 2011; Robb, 2002). Shen (2008) emphasized the appropriateness of difficulty and interest, which many researchers concurred (e.g. Day & Bamford, 1998; Guo & Yang, 2012; Kirchhoff, 2013; Krashen, 2010; 2011a; 2011b; Ro, 2013; Wang, 2011). Krashen (2011a) suggested that input needs to be not just interesting but compelling. Compelling means that the input is so interesting the reader forgets that it is in another language. It means the reader is in a state of ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Kirchhoff, 2013). In flow, the concerns of everyday life and even the sense of self-disappear – our sense of time is altered and nothing but the activity itself seems to matter. Foreign language reading anxiety caused by incomprehensible texts and uninteresting materials was intensively researched recently. Satio, Horwitz, and Garza (1999) introduced the concept of foreign language ‘reading’ anxiety and established that foreign language reading anxiety is distinguishable from general foreign language anxiety. In the similar vein, Yamashita (2004), by analyzing questionnaires from 59 Japanese university students, reported that comfort and self-perception in reading influenced positive attitudes in the participants’ reading habits, while anxiety and the value one places on the reading had no impact at all. According to Yamashita, no matter how participants feel about reading, they read more if they feel comfortable...
reading in their first or second language and consider themselves good readers. Other problems included difficulty in self-selected books (Robb, 2002), lack of time (Shen, 2008), lack of materials (Wang & Tinker Sachs, 2011), teacher and teaching methods (Wang, 2011), students’ attitude (Wang, 2011), and reading strategy (Meng & Sun, 2011).

Some researchers, on the other hand, investigated what drives learners to read avidly. The concept of a ‘home-run book’ was first introduced by Trelease (2001) and propagated by Krashen (Von Sprecken, Kim & Krashen, 2002; Ujiie & Krashen, 2002). This refers to a reader’s first successful reading experience, and this experience not only builds his/her sense of achievement but leads to future continuous reading. It was later confirmed by Krashen and other researchers that most enthusiastic readers had had this experience. Judge (2011) explored the motivations for reading of nine participants through case study and found strong similarities among the participants such as love of literacy and a desire for autonomy. All of the participants indicated that the independence they felt was a key aspect of their enjoyment of the ER program in terms of self-selected books. Ro (2013:213) studied an unmotivated L2 reader and reported that “pleasure reading lowered the participant’s fear while increasing motivation towards L2 reading”. Through further analysis, he also found “the contributing factors for anxiety reduction (e.g. confidence, comfort or ease, and enjoyment) and motivation enhancement (convenience or accessibility, satisfaction, comfort or ease, enjoyment and usefulness)” (Ro, 2013:213).

Studies concerning the effectiveness of extensive reading in an EFL environment have been limited (Robb & Kano, 2013) and despite the findings from studies showing that extended exposure to books in general and to extensive reading programs in particular are critical for the overall improvement of learners’ target language proficiency and especially their literacy development (Krashen, 2004c), extensive reading in many cases is still excluded from the regular curricular or extra-curricular activities.
Research Question

In order to know learners’ extra-curricular reading habit and ways to encourage reading outside of class, this research asks two questions.

1. What are students’ extra-curricular reading amount and habit?

2. Is there any relationship among students’ attitude, motivation and achievement?

Method

Participants

This study was conducted at a national university in northern Taiwan. 143 students from four College English classes (two 50-minute sessions a week) joined the study. The sample consisted of 53 males (37.1%) and 90 females (62.9%), and the average of age was 18.97±1.42. Before distributing the questionnaire, the researcher spent ten minutes explaining about the research purpose, content of the questionnaire and asking for the permission to use the final grade as learning achievement. Then the questionnaire with a consent form, which guaranteed that all information provided would remain confidential, was administered and collected.

Measurement

(1) Questionnaire: The questionnaire had four parts, including Part I: the basic information (name, age, gender, school year, reading hour, reading methods and willingness), Part II: Yamashita (2004)'s attitude scale (comfort, anxiety, value and self-perception), Part III: Gardner’s (1985) attitude/motivational test battery (integrative vs. instrumental orientations) and Part IV: Gardner’s (1985) motivational intensity test to find out how much effort learners were willing to put into English learning. There were 44 questions in total. The 2nd and 3rd part used 5-point Likert scale (1: most disagreed, 5: most agreed) and the last part used the scoring key provided by the test battery. Generally speaking, the higher the score, the better the performance. Since the measurements had been tested from previous studies, the validity and reliability test (Table 1) also showed good validity and reliability (Chiang, 2011; 2012; Gardner, 1985; Yamashita, 2004).
Table 1 Reliability (Chiang, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>.760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>.783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-perception</td>
<td>.778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>.808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language orientation</td>
<td>Integrative orientation</td>
<td>.794</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instrumental orientation</td>
<td>.702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivational Intensity</td>
<td>Motivational Intensity</td>
<td>.662</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Interview: The purpose of interview was to know how to enhance learning autonomy and activeness. Twenty-one participants (from three sessions) were invited to attend one-hour group videotaped interviews, and the interviews were later transcribed. These participants were chosen because, at the time of the invitation, they appeared to outperform others regarding grades, level of effort and class participation.

(3) Achievement: Students’ final grades were used as their achievement under consent. Since it was the learning achievement that the current research investigated, the course was designed to integrate the four language skills. The following showed the grading criteria at the time.

- **5 Extra-curricular activities**: 25% (reading, listening, speaking)
- **4 Quizzes**: 20% (reading, writing)
- **Class participation**: 15% (reading, writing, speaking)
- **Mid-Term Exam**: 15% (reading, writing)
- **Oral Final Exam**: 15% (reading, speaking)
- **Attendance**: 10%

The five extra-curricular activities contained five activities (2 readings, 2 listenings and 1 speaking). When students finished their five activities, they earned themselves 25% (5% each) of the final grade. Based on the researcher’s observation and experience, high proficiency and effort, or both, are two proximal indicators for academic success. Therefore, this course design gave those who were less proficient but hardworking enough chances to ensure their learning and sense of achievement.
For statistical purposes, students’ final grades were transferred into five categories: 5 for students who scored over 90, 4 between 89-80, 3 between 79-70, 2 between 69-60, and 1 under 59.

Analysis

The data obtained from questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS 19.0 for Windows. Frequency, descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation test were used to examine the relationships among the factors. Interview data were transcribed and used to supplement quantitative analysis.

Results

A. Questionnaire

Part I. Background

First of all, over 123 participants (86.62%) did not take any elective English classes, in addition to the College English course they were taking at the time with the researcher (Figure 1). 139 (98%) participants did not go to cram schools and 136 (96%) did not have any English tutorials at the time of the current research.

16.8% of participants said they would not read English after class and the rest who said they would read between 1 and 3 hours a week. Among the readers, the two-hour readers had the higher percentage of 28.7%, followed by one-hour readers (17.4%) and three-hour readers (11.2%, the lowest percentage). On average, two hours a week means only 17 minutes a day and one hour means 8.57 minutes a day. In other words,
most readers in the study read less than 17 minutes a week after school. Additionally, most of the students thought that they should read English for 5 or 6 hours per week. Figure 2 shows a big difference between what the students thought and did.

Twenty-seven participants (19.6%) reported that they did not own any English books except the required textbook of their compulsory English course, and 56.5% had fewer than 5 English books (Figure 3). The participants were also asked to score between 1 and 10 about how interested they were in forming an after-class English reading group (Figure 4). Only 41.95% scored higher than 7, which represented positive attitude, and the general opinion was to read once to twice a week and about one hour each time (44%).

Figure 2 Reading hours vs. expectation hours

Figure 3 Numbers of books owned
The above results showed that at the time of the study, the students had limited TL contact since the College English course was the only English course most of them took. Few of them received instruction at cram schools or with a tutor. Moreover, most readers (44.8%) had extra-curricular reading for less than 17 minutes. Most of them owned few course-unrelated English books and they showed weak interest in extra-curricular reading group. This result answered the first research question and gave a general description of university students’ English extra-curricular reading. This confirmed the researcher’s suspicion that students have insufficient input after class and it is necessary to incorporate extra-curricular reading into the college English courses to help increase their reading motivation, enthusiasm and autonomy.

Part II. English reading attitude

Table 2 showed the students’ reading attitude, based on Yamashita (2004). A mean score above 3.5 showed a positive attitude. The higher the mean, the better the attitude. The means of the four aspects in the order from high to low were, value (3.80), comfort (3.19), self-perception (2.62) and anxiety (2.51). Therefore, the participants valued English, but not very highly. They did not feel comfort with English and their self-perception and anxiety towards English reading were less obvious. Overall, their attitude did not appear ‘positive’, but they did value more highly than the other three. Also, they had comparatively low anxiety level, which is good in learning a language because low affective filter is good for language acquisition (Krashen, 1982; 2003; 2009).
Table 2 English reading attitude

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.800</td>
<td>.747</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.191</td>
<td>.769</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-perception</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.622</td>
<td>.754</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.506</td>
<td>.852</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part III. Language orientation

Table 3 showed the results of language orientation based on Gardner’s (1985) motivation orientation. A mean score above 3.5 showed the possession of the orientation. The means of the integrative and instrumental orientations were 4.033 and 3.629 respectively. That is, the participants possessed both integrative and instrumental orientations, which meant they liked English and considered English a useful tool. Furthermore, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed between the extra-curricular reading hour and the two orientations and only the significant correlation was found between the reading hour and integrative orientation (r=.172, p=.040). The two orientations were significantly correlated with each other too (r=.498, p=.000).

Table 3 Descriptive statistics of language orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrative</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.033</td>
<td>.670</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.629</td>
<td>.725</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part IV. Motivational intensity

This measure showed the level of learners’ effort in learning English. The scoring is between 1 and 3 and therefore, as we can see, the participants put in a lot of effort to learn English, since the mean is 2.13. Further correlational analysis showed significant correlation between extra-curricular reading hour and motivational intensity (r=.261, p=.002).

Table 4 Descriptive statistics of motivational intensity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivational</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.131</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intensity</td>
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</table>
Table 5 showed that high correlations among the eight factors and tried to answer the second research question. The achievement significantly correlated with four factors: comfort, value, integrative orientation and motivational intensity. Moreover, motivational intensity significantly correlated with all other factors, except achievement unfortunately. Further analysis should pursue the complex nature among these factors.

Table 5 Pearson correlation among factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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B. Interview

More information elicited from the preliminary interview analysis was listed as follows:

1. Although various things that could initiate learners’ interest in English learning, e.g. songs, movies, novels, diary, magazines, foreigners, and peer pressure, the interest unfortunately had problem lasting.

2. Students were still passive learners. They liked being told what to do, like they were in the high school. They expected teachers to set up their goals for them and gave assignment, but when the term ‘assignment’ was used, their attitude became passive.

3. Most of the students mentioned that the key factors were ‘of their interest’, which varies among individuals, and ‘with easy access’. These two keys led back to why the researcher had desired to promote extensive reading for extracurricular reading in the first place.
Discussion

First of all, the participants possessed both integrative and instrumental orientations, with low anxiety and high value of English, in addition to an effort in learning. However, the findings also suggested that students had rather little language contact and input after class. Although their attitude was not negative, it did not mean the learners were active enough to get them to take up extra-curricular reading on their own, as discussed in Yamashita (2004). More evidence came from the inconsistency between the participants’ thoughts and behaviour; that is, the wide disparity between the actual reading hour and their ideal reading hour, and their high value and low reading hours. Motivation stimulates an action, which is seen in effort and time on task (Kirchhoff, 2013:203). In this case, motivation did not seem to stimulate action, unfortunately.

Furthermore, the participants of this study came from the researcher’s classes, and they were asked to read after class as assignments for their academic credit. A reasonable assumption is that course design would have influenced the reading hours of the participants because of the passively assigned readings, which was less likely to initiate interest, as the interview revealed. In addition, only 41.95% of students showed interest in joining a reading group. Although lack of motivation to read is not the single factor in this, they chose not to seize the chance of increasing reading time. This may have suggested that even university learners were rather passive, wanted to depend on the teacher’s guide and arrangement. Or, they might not have experienced their home-run book or flow experience and still could not enjoy reading on their own. Investigating the willingness of joining a reading group or not is an important task for future research.

Earlier in the paper, the researcher urged the need to incorporate extra-curricular reading into the school curriculum to help increase reading motivation, enthusiasm and autonomy, at least until the learners start taking up extra-curricular reading. Macalister (2010) acknowledged the problem of lacking extra-curricular input and time and suggested that “if students are not keen on doing work in their own time, …If this is seen as an issue, then it is reasonable to suggest that teachers should be considering solutions, with one solution being, clearly, the devotion of at least some in-class time to actually reading for pleasure” (p. 69). Nonetheless, we need to
avoid adding more accountability (Krashen, 2011b) and more complex monitoring mechanism while planning for this would increase learners’ loathing toward reading.

Secondly, ‘extra-curricular’ reading is about making decisions under the learner’s free will and therefore, there is no obligation for the readers. Often, learners will sacrifice this decision over other obligations (Ro, 2013; Robb, 2002). From the study results, we see how effort made to learning significantly correlated with all the other factors, which were attitude, motivational orientation and achievement. How do we intrigue learners not to sacrifice reading? A solution to this is providing appropriate materials. Based on the interview results and ER literature, the keys were ‘of interest’ and ‘at right level’. To ensure that language acquirers pay attention to input, it should not only be interesting and comprehensible, but compelling (Krashen 2011a), e.g. comic books, graphic novels, magazines, and/or novels that students that age really want to read (Krashen 2013). In the literature, appropriate level of difficulty (Krashen, 2011b; Ro, 2013; Shen, 2008) and interesting materials (Judge, 2011; Krashen 2011b; Ro, 2013; Shen, 2008) are two commonly mentioned issues. Krashen (2011b) listed six factors that influenced engagement in reading, and incomprehensible books and uninteresting books topped the others. Difficult books decreased motivation (De Burgh-Hirabe, 2011) and were found to be a source of de-motivation (Kanda, 2009); while easy books enable learners to read quickly, enjoy the content, and overcome the habit of translating into their first language (Takase, 2008). Satisfaction in the accomplishment of reading a foreign language book was found to be a significant positive influence on learners’ motivation (De Burgh-Hirabe, 2011; Nishino, 2007 in Kirchoff 2013: 195; Trelease, 2001).

Self-book selection could help foster reading habit. Participants’ desire for autonomy fosters a habit of English in EFL learners (Judge, 2011; Palmer, Codling & Grambrell, 1994), and ER provides the learners with the autonomy in book selection. Selecting books is difficult, even for an experienced teacher as shown in Shen (2008); however, it is more effective than assigned readings (Lee, 2007; Krashen, 2011a). Shen (2008) also stressed the importance of allowing students some degree of control over learning, i.e., self-selected reading. It takes a while for learners to find what they like (Krashen, 2004c) and create the ‘flow’ experience (Kirchhoff, 2013), even with a teacher’s help (Ro, 2013). Moreover, the current study result showed that most of the participants did not own many books. While more access to books results in more
reading (Krashen 2004c), participants in the current study were limited in access to books. Under this circumstance, it was even more unlikely for the participants to develop a reading habit. Moreover, since the participants in the current study were from one of the leading universities, they were assumed to have higher proficiency. In theory, it would be easier for them to choose appropriate books on their own because they would find more books they could read and thus were less limited in choice, which then leads to more reading or reading habit. Nevertheless, this did not seem to be the case.

Furthermore, Robb (2002) pointed out another importance issue of ER. ER relies heavily on the principle of learners being responsible for their own learning, but it is not extendable to the teaching/learning cultures of many non-Western societies. This was supported by the interview data: some participants wanted the teachers to tell them what to do, instead of thinking about what to do themselves. Shen (2008) suggested proficiency level might cause the dependence of teachers because the night school subjects, who were under the impression of low commitment to studying and thus lower proficiency, tended to rely on teachers’ assistance with less care with a chance to select their texts to read, compared with their counterparts at the day program.

The above issues, in fact, were no surprise at all. Chiang (2009) investigated the effect of extra-curricular English input for primary school learners in Taiwan. The participants were sixty-three pupils and their parents from three classes in a state school, with three subgroups: a family reading group, an independent reading group and a control group. Apart from the control group, pupils in the family reading group and the independent reading group were directed to read with or without their parents at home. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Major findings included the positive relationships between the learner attitude and proficiency, positive correlation between extra-curricular reading amount and proficiency, the difficulty of time arrangement for home reading between parents and children, and the insufficient exposure to English for Taiwanese young learners in their daily lives, which continued to contribute to their slow progress, despite their age advantage. It was extremely difficult for the participants to read 10-15 minutes twice a week, suggesting that the participants were not in the habit of reading, either. Furthermore, the children in the experimental groups generally had problems selecting the right
books. Most learners chose books randomly and ended up reading books that were far too difficult for them. Those who chose the right books did not read more than others.

The results of the current study and Chiang (2009) seem to suggest that neither primary nor tertiary learners in Taiwan have English extra-curricular reading habits. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that secondary learners are unlikely to have it either. In other words, the overall picture here is that Taiwanese learners seem not to have English reading habit outside of classroom. Dörnyei (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011:4) defined motivation from three elements: (1) the choice of a particular action, (2) the persistence with it and (3) the effort expended on it. In terms of the first element, only nearly 42% showed higher interest to extra-curricular reading group. In other words, 58% did not. Even though the data showed high comfort and low anxiety, the participants were still avoiding reading when they had the choice. Regarding the persistence, the participants claimed that they had problem lasting the interest after it was initiated. Despite the high effort participants made in learning, no extra-curricular reading took place. Although these participants possessed both the integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner and Lambert, 1972), they failed to satisfy the requirements of Dörnyei’s. De Burgh-Hirabe (2011) observed that motivational intensity (reading amount and time) and enjoyment were closely connected, increasing and decreasing together. She analysed positive and negative influences on her nine participants’ motivation, and found:

> When each individual is considered over time, it seems that when the student’s motivational intensity increased, the positive influences were operating and/or the negative influences were absent. When the students’ motivational intensity declined, the negative influences were operating strongly and cancelled out the positive influences. Therefore, it is suggested that the positive influences are fragile and easily overshadowed by the negative influences. (De Burgh-Hirabe, 2011, p. 186)

This finding suggests that even though a learner has positive reading experience, when negative motivational influences occur, such as demands in class, extra-curricular activities, and social life, the negative motivational influences will take precedence over reading. This could be a possible explanation of weak motivation. If this is the case, it would be really challenging to carry out a long-term extra-curricular extensive reading program to foster reading habits, based on Krashen’s claim that
learners of in-school self-selected reading programs typically outperform comparisons students, especially when the duration of treatment is longer than an academic year (Krashen, 2003; 2004c; 2005; 2009).

In addition, the results showed that the participants thought the reading group should read once to twice a week and about one hour each time (44%). Whether the wished frequency and length of time could be implemented under ‘extensive reading’ condition is still questionable. Correlation was shown to exist between reading frequency and achievement (Greenberg, Rodrigo, Berry, Brinck and Joseph, 2006), but how high the frequency should be to become a ‘habit’ is still unclear.

The last question is why aren’t Taiwanese learners pleasure readers? In order to help learners take up the habit of extra-curricular reading, the researcher gives the following suggestions from five aspects.

(1) Learners: Learners should value and make time for reading every day and get into the habit of reading. Similar to sports, we know it is important to exercise, but we seldom make it a habit. Learners need to ponder the importance of reading and how to get into the habit of saving time for reading, and they should do this with determination and without distraction.

(2) Books: Exploring a wide variety of reading texts is an important task for readers. Many imported foreign books for young readers or teenagers and graded readers are available now. These books are fun to read, close to life, and available in Taiwan. They are more likely to create flow experience than language learning magazines or textbooks for exams.

(3) Teachers: Teachers should research ER and establish a resource bank with other teachers to share information on various reading approaches and improvise their own implementation in class according to the class context. Although EPER (former Edinburgh Project on Extensive Reading and now Extensive Reading Foundation) was one of the most famous projects in the field, it was not suitable for learners in Taiwan. Therefore, teachers should develop programs that are tailor-made for Taiwanese students. Teachers could also learn to write materials or develop original materials for their learners. A highly recommended website is ‘Extensive Reading
Central’ (http://er-central.com). It introduces ER approach and ways of implementation, and gives storywriters opportunities to adapt and donate their texts.

(4) Family: Parents should be advised on how to read with their children at home (Chiang, 2009). They need to be taught that reading conversation should not limit to comprehension checks; talks on experiences, opinions and feedback, which are personalized to the children, have more fun and benefits, help learners memorize better (Chiang, 2009) and help build reading habit. Readers enjoy sharing stories and book talks (Greenberg et al, 2006; Shen, 2008). Parents should also be open to reading non-test-related materials, such as comic books or novels. Even light readings and bad literature will help us develop our taste in reading (Krashen 2004c). In Taiwan, many parents emphasize only what is to be tested, regardless of learners’ interest in light reading. One of the interviewees said (Chiang, 2012):

When I was little, I was very interested in reading short texts of English, for example, short novels, comics, jokes, books with pictures, and comics on newspapers, but I was told not to read them by my parents and teachers, simply because they were not in the entrance exams of high school or university. If I had had been encouraged to, I would have learned English better now.

(5) Schools and education system: Low extra-curricular reading amount is likely to reduce the amount of input that learners receive to trigger language development. Since learners are unable to get into the habit of reading, schools and our education bureaus should take actions, initiate and lead learners to reading habit. Although Taiwan has promoted reading for years, the study results showed that we still have a long way to go. In addition, Krashen has been promoting library services for years (Krashen, 2007; Krashen, Lee & McQuillan, 2012) because extensive reading programs suggest a need for book availability. If one wants to read extensively, it is a huge investment if one wants to buy books all the time, compared with using library books. Therefore, readers should make good use of libraries. Krashen has been encouraging reading through asking the government to improve U.S. libraries. He claims that when books are easily available, people read more (Krashen, 2004c). Children will benefit from extensive reading if they already have books at home because this means parents are already committed to English reading. Therefore, what teachers and parents can do or should be encouraged to do is start building up a home
library for children when they are young. An alternative to a home library would be to utilize the public libraries in order to have a good stack of borrowed books at home. One problem claimed by Richardson and Seward (1997) was that many adult learners found libraries anxiety-provoking places. The facility is full of that which is difficult for them, and so it can have negative associations. Many adult learners believe that libraries are only for expert readers. In this case, an extensive library in the classroom could be established to decrease the anxiety.

After understanding the participants’ reading habit and the relations among the factors, I would suggest that it is of critical importance to promote extra-curricular reading to help students take up habit of reading. Appropriate reading materials, easy access to the materials and regular reading time is worth serious consideration.

Limitations

Robb and Kano (2013) pointed out that it has been difficult to assess the effectiveness of ER because studies conducted with ER within the classroom have been small in scale, lacked control groups or have been confounded by additional English classes concurrently with other instructors. Studies of ER conducted outside the classroom are often confounded by their in-class study, making it difficult to attribute gains to the outside reading alone. Indeed, the current study unfortunately had all the problems they pointed out. Because of the small sample size, we need to interpret the results with caution regarding generalizability. Secondly, the interview data was analysed only preliminarily. It should be thoroughly reviewed and analysed through qualitative methods to find out more specific features of these outperformers’ characteristics. Additionally, after reading Judge (2011) and Ro (2913), the researcher sees the value of case studies and one-to-one interview for information collection, e.g. on their past experience, motivation towards reading or not, reasons to read, places, materials, distractions and so on. Interviews could be carried out in two groups: enthusiastic readers and reluctant readers in the hope to find different features for pedagogical implication. Thirdly, the correlations among the factors could be further explored through regression or path analysis. Finally, the definition of ‘reading habit’ is blurry in terms of frequency and length of time. Although this could vary individually, there must be a working definition to it. Clarifying this might help set up the goal of threshold level of frequency, amount and length of reading. In the same vein, what is
the threshold amount of reading/exposure for language acquisition to take place? The conditions of changing (or not changing) behaviour and the threshold amount of reading for non-engaged readers are also worth carefully examining in the future.

Conclusion

For Krashen, an ideal reading environment should have a great deal of interesting comprehensible reading materials, a time and comfortable place to read, minimum accountability and a program that lasts for more than a few months or a year (2004a; 2004b). He argues that although the reading conditions and environment for many English learners are not ideal, we should still encourage learners to keep on reading because research shows encouraging results even under non-ideal conditions (Chiang, 2009; Krashen, 2004a; 2004b; Lee, 2004). Acquiring reading habit takes time and it is better to start early. The more the students read, the greater the likelihood that they will become effective and efficient readers. As Schell states, ‘The amount of time spent in actual reading may be the most important factor in reading growth’ (Schell, 1991:115). Finding ways to encourage learners inside and outside the classroom to extend their reading is difficult. Therefore, allowing necessary time and providing opportunities to read is priority. Only when we can enjoy what we do, we are more likely to keep doing it.

References


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Activation method of learning a foreign language

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Abstract

One of the obstacles which discourage the language learners is the long time it takes to be able to communicate in the target language. They almost have to spend a year to be fluent in the target language and most of them give up during this long period of time. This article introduces a new method which helps the learners to speak and communicate in the target language just in 30 sessions. In this method, choosing the text book is of high importance. The source chosen has to be a vocabulary book focusing on everyday words and more importantly on verbs. Participants have to be adults and have to have basic knowledge of the target language. The method does not focus on teaching but on application of the new words by students. The teacher teaches the new words and expressions applying pictures, definitions, antonyms, translation, etc. The most important part of this method is the activation which consists of three stages: asking questions, storytelling and translation. Students are requested to ask questions using the new words, tell a story with the new words and at last translate some sentences containing the new words. The focus is not on grammar and it is taught in the context and in the format of fixed expressions. The post-test revealed that all the 40 participants made great progress in speaking after these 30 sessions. The researcher worked on English but it is projected that this method can be used for teaching any language besides English.

Keywords: Activation of knowledge, question asking, story-telling, translation
Introduction

How to learn a new language is one of the concerns a lot of people have especially when it is their foreign language. Another problem learners deal with, is the long time it takes to learn a foreign language. A lot of them get disappointed after some months and then speaking a foreign language remains a dream forever. These problems got the attention of the researcher and she tried to develop a method by which students could speak more fluently and accurately in a shorter period of time. The name of method is “activation method of learning” which comes from three different activation stages used in this method which are designed to help students learn better. By activation, we mean learning does not occur as long as students have not used the newly taught information by themselves. When they start to use the information by themselves and make different sentences then the new body of knowledge is activated in their mind and they acquire it.

The original idea of the method came from the work of John Medina (2008), the American neurologist, who devoted his life to find a way to connect neuroscience and education. He presents 12 different rules by which the human's brain learns namely exercise, survival, wiring, attention, memory, sleep, stress, sense, vision, gender, and exploration. A short definition of each has been given in the following.

Exercise
Rule 1: Exercise boosts brain power.

Survival
Rule 2: The human brain evolved, too.

Wiring
Rule 3: Every brain is wired differently.

Attention
Rule 4: We don’t pay attention to boring things.

Short-term memory
Rule 5: Repeat to remember.

Long-term memory
Rule 6: Remember to repeat.

Sleep
Rule 7: Sleep well, think well.
Stress
Rule 8: Stressed brains don’t learn the same way.

Sensory integration
Rule 9: Stimulate more of the senses.

Vision
Rule 10: Vision trumps all other senses.

Gender
Rule 11: Male and female brains are different.

Exploration
Rule 12: We are powerful and natural explorers.

He offers that if we follow these rules in our educational system the performance of students will be much better.

What Medina calls rule 4 of learning was the focus of the study in a similar research by Dr. Bruce Perry (2000). He mentions "Learning requires attention. And attention is mediated by specific parts of the brain. Yet, neural systems fatigue quickly, actually within minutes. With three to five minutes of sustained activity, neurons become "less responsive"; they need a rest (not unlike your muscles when you lift weights). They can recover within minutes too, but when they are stimulated in a sustained way, they just are not as efficient. Think about the piano and the organ; if you put your finger on the organ key and hold it down it will keep making noise, but the piano key makes one short note, and keeping your finger there produces no more sound. Neurons are like pianos, not organs. They respond to patterned and repetitive, rather than to sustained, continuous stimulation."

Like John Medina, he mentions that our neural system gets bored quickly and as a result we cannot learn efficiently. It leads us to the fact that it is better to have a schedule which is hectic and full of different activities, like activation method in which different stages are at work, this way before the neural system gets bored, attention is drawn to something new which gives neurons the chance to refresh quickly.

Another one who has worked on this issue is Dr. Tom Tuohy (2012). He elaborates on rule 9 of Medina's list in his own way: "Our memory system is integrated into our emotional and sensory systems. So, each memory has both an emotional component and a sensory (i.e., situational) component that influences its retention. Something that is meaningful to us is
more likely to be recalled later, especially if we are in the same sensory and situational context as when it was learned.”

He suggests that while learning, we have to use more than one sense. Based on this rule we can draw the conclusion that it is better to read aloud while studying because this way our vision and auditory are involved at the same time and when more than one sense is involved, we learn more efficiently, this rule is taught to students in the first session of the class.

Most of teachers are not aware of the way the brain functions and having the knowledge about it can help them teach better. At the same time, neurologists have focused on this subject more and it is a must for teachers to pay attention to this area of knowledge because they are the ones who deal with it in practice.

Methodology

Participants

Participants were all adults aged 19 to 46. All had high school diploma and as a result they had a basic knowledge of English. Unfortunately because of the method applied in Iranian educational system, all students who have high school diploma are in elementary level, though some were higher due to their own overseas trips or type of their business. All participants had a major problem: speaking. The pre-test was in the form of placement test and tested their vocabulary, fluency, accuracy and pronunciation. It proved that most of them were in elementary or pre-intermediate levels and showed that the majority of them had fluency, accuracy and vocabulary problems.

Material

The source is of high importance in this method. It has to cover everyday words and more especially verbs. The reason behind is that verbs are the most important part of a sentence and they carry the whole meaning, therefore learning the most common and necessary verbs helps students to be able to communicate more efficiently. The source chosen by the researcher was vocabulary in use, pre-intermediate and intermediate, British. It was selected because it covers a wide range of words, especially verbs, and they are categorized based on their topic like words related to sport, hobbies, etc. The British one was chosen because of its nice classification which is much better than the American book.
Pre-test and post-test were both in the form of a placement test. Because all the students had high school diploma, their knowledge of English was basic. Therefore, the average score they got was almost 13 out of 20 that shows they had basic knowledge of English, and their speaking performance was less than desired. All the students who get a score from 1 to 15 out of 20 have some English knowledge. Those who get a score more than 15 are able to communicate in the foreign language. The pre-test revealed that they had the average score of 12.95 which shows they were unable to communicate in the target language. After the course, they managed to get the average score of 16.75 which shows their ability to communicate well.

**Pre- and post-tests**

Both pre-test and post-test were in the form of a placement test. A speaking test like speaking test in IELTS exam was performed and students were evaluated based on four criteria: fluency, accuracy, pronunciation and vocabulary. The whole score for each criterion was 5 therefore the total score was 20 and students' scores are all out of 20.

**Procedure**

At the beginning of each session, the teacher reviews the words taught in the previous session. It is a kind of repetition and based on brain rules and Wong’s (2014) repetition helps the brain learn. In every session, the previous lesson is reviewed, but sometimes the review is randomly done from the beginning.

Then the teacher starts to teach. One of the students reads the new lesson aloud because according to brain rules and Passer and Smith (2001), we have to use more than one sense while learning and in this way students use vision and auditory at the same time. Whenever she gets to a new word- in this book the bold ones- the teacher explains that using pictures, definitions, antonyms, synonyms, etc. (Mayer, 2001).

Right after covering the new words, she gives some examples using the words and then gives students different examples in their mother tongue and asks them to translate them into English. Because the level of students is elementary, she gives them some easy examples. Again it is done because it is a kind of repetition and is not a boring task - students enjoy discovering how their mother tongue sentences can be translated into another language. This process almost takes about 10 minutes.
Then the teacher writes some questions on the board and after explaining the structure and how to answer them, she asks them to work in pairs asking and answering the questions. After some sessions, students can ask any kind of questions without the teacher's help. In different lessons, the teacher focuses on different question types and at the same time she teaches some grammar. This way she teaches the grammar in the context. This way, it will be more comprehensible and less boring. Questions were chosen because based on Forcato (2007) for communication, we ask and answer therefore questions are an important part of communication. Besides, since men and women's brain function differently, this stage was chosen in favor of men (Lewin, 2005) and at the same time because different brains act differently those who are analytical can benefit from this stage (Davis, 1983). Some grammar and vocabularies are taught through actions because of brain rule 1 and Green, D.J. et al. (2004). It is especially used to teach pronouns and possessive adjectives.

When students have finished the second stage, the teacher asks them to tell one another a story related to the topic of the lesson using the new words. For example if the lesson is about weather conditions, she asks them to tell or make up a story about a day they can remember well because of the weather.

In every session, 2 or 3 lessons are covered. Since the words are repeated over and over again, it is not a load for the students. From the session 6 on, students are asked to prepare a 2-minute speech about the related topic and the teacher checks them at the beginning of each session, when the number of students is more than 6, the teacher checks them randomly.

Fifteen minutes at the end of each class is assigned to watching a film. In this specific research, the teacher worked on Top Notch and English Results films. They were chosen because they were grabbing and could have students' attention.

The sessions should be held 2 or 3 times a week. Having more or fewer sessions is not efficient since having more does not let students have enough time to study and having fewer is not good in a language learning process.

Results and discussion

Major objective of this research was finding a faster and more efficient way to learn a foreign language. Activation method of learning facilitates learning and helps students speak more fluently in a shorter period of time. All the 40 participants showed a great progress in their speaking. The following charts give their detailed progress information.
Figure 1 Individual's Progress Chart
The reason is that the method follows the way their brain goes through while learning. Our brain learns better when something is repeated again and again and based on this method, new body of knowledge is repeated for students at least 3 times. It makes students not forget it easily. The questions which are asked from the students at the beginning of the class, as the review, are another kind of repetition and they all help students retain the information better. Three different stages were introduced because in this way students do not get bored. Based on the brain rules, learning happens just in the first 20 minutes of learning process; therefore, all stages were defined in 15 to 20 minutes and before students get bored, they were led to the next stage. At the same time, variety of activities helps students not to get bored. This way the maximum learning will be achieved. Grammar is taught to the students while working on different stages, in the form of questions, telling stories or working on translation. This way, they will learn the grammar in the context so what they learn is functional and at the same time not boring. Because different brains function differently, different students can benefit from different stages. The stage of story-telling is more efficient for women and question asking more efficient for men, because men learn better through formulas and fixed expressions. Students are taught brain rules so they know how sleeping enough and playing
sports can boost their learning. At the same time they are taught how to mix their different senses to learn more efficiently. They are told for learning the new vocabulary, they'd better write them and at the same time read them. This way their touch sense is involved, their auditory is involved and their vision is involved too. By doing this, they learn the words by heart because they have mixed their different senses. Applying all these things finally help the students speak more fluently and accurately in a shorter period of time.

**Limitations of the study**

The effect of the method is directly related to the amount of the time students spend on studying. Those who were present all the 30 sessions and were following the teacher's instruction showed much more progress. In one case, a girl's score improved by 10 points after this course. But at the same time, there were some students who did not make a lot of progress due to their own slack. It again reveals the effect of students' autonomy on learning.

**Conclusion**

Based on rule 12 and Lewin (2005), when students learn something by themselves, they learn better so a teacher should ask students to study the lesson before coming to the class and check them to make sure they have studied beforehand. Rule 5 and 6 and Wong (2014) focus on repetition, so the teacher should make students repeat the new body of the knowledge at least 5 times. Based on rule 11 we get bored easily and we cannot focus on one task more than 20 minutes, so the class is divided into 6 quarters and in each quarter the focus is on something different. Based on rule 11 and Davis (1983) men and women learn differently therefore the grammar is taught to men using formulas and to women in the context. Rule 10 says our vision is dominant therefore colorful books full of pictures are used to facilitate learning. Rules number 1 and 9 and Green, et al. (2004) focus on exercise and combining different senses (Passer & Smith, 2001), therefore some grammar and new words are taught using total physical response in which their different senses are applied (their touch, auditory and vision) and at the same time they do some physical exercise. Based on rule 3 and Davis (1983), students are asked to find their own way of learning. They are asked to write the new words and read them at the same time. This way their touch, vision and auditory are simultaneously involved in the process of learning. Using all these students can be better English speakers just after 30 sessions.
References


A Mirror and a Telescope:

Using Reader Responses in an International Literature Project

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Bioprofiles:

Dr. Paul Corrigan joined CityU as Lecturer in 1994 and has held many posts since then. His teaching has mostly been in the areas of English for Specific Purposes, English literature, and teacher education. He has also taught at universities in Japan and the United States and has published and presented on ESL, EMI, TESOL, CLIL, research ethics, and education.

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Abstract

Reader Response literary theory affords a useful paradigm for understanding how literature can be used in the ESL classroom. This paper discusses an international literature project in which university students in Iraq, Hong Kong, and the United States read the Hemingway short story, “Cat in the Rain” and exchanged reader responses with students in the other countries. It enabled students to articulate and mirror their own views to themselves, as well as enabling students in distant lands to read those reader responses through the telescope of email. From a student perspective, multiple benefits were thus realized while from an institutional perspective the project facilitated internationalization of a small patch of the university curriculum.

Keywords: ESL, Literature, Literary Criticism, Reader Response
Background and aims

Literature has long been associated with the learning of English as a Second Language (ESL). In tracing the development of English teaching from the first published grammar in 1586, Howatt (1984) writes that “the real breakthrough” in the late eighteenth century for ESL came from a strong German interest with Shakespeare. He writes that a century later, “the basic educational aim” in British colonial schools “was the assimilation of British culture through the medium of English literature” (p. 212). Around that time, English literature also began to form as an academic discipline, with, for example, the Department of English founded at Harvard in 1876 (Harvard, 2014) and the establishment of the Oxford English School in 1894 (Oxford, 2014). In the twentieth century, Reading Approach innovator Michael West mostly used “stories and other literary pieces” (Howatt, 1984; p.247) and West himself mentions “Treasure Island” as one such text (1936). Fifty years later, Fanselow (1986) discusses his adaptation of one of West’s pioneering techniques, Read and Look Up, which can be used with literature as a speaking activity.

Modern ESL pedagogy for literature can be found in a range of books and journal articles. Books on using literature in the ESL classroom by Collie and Slater (1987), Maley and Duff (1989), and Duff and Maley (1990), for example, cover a variety of reasons, methods, and techniques. These authors point to the importance of the text itself as authentic material which can stand on its own. They also add that the text has personal relevance for students since multiple interpretations are possible and they suggest ideas for speaking, listening and writing activities with literature in the ESL classroom in addition to reading. Journal articles also discuss an assortment of issues and techniques for literature and ESL including the use of literature circles (Hsu, 2004), lesson plans for teaching and learning language through literature (King and King,1972), literature as part of a whole-language approach in the language classroom (Lo, 2000), literature in the multicultural classroom and potential consequences of critically-unexamined pedagogy (Vandrick, 1996), variability of literature experiences of students (Belcher and Hirvela, 2000), and identification and “counter-identification” of young adult readers with characters in fiction (Govindarajoo & Mukundan, 2013).

In any literature classroom, it is reasonable to expect that language development would occur. But in this paper we aim to show that within the ESL classroom, literature can be treated as more than just a vehicle for facilitating second language skills. When the study
of literature in second language classrooms is situated within literary theory, the teaching and learning of literature in the ESL classroom achieves a parity of purpose with that of the first language literature classroom. Thus situated, the study of literature becomes not just a language teaching and learning activity but is also consistent with the other generally accepted aims of studying literature: appreciating language and enjoying aesthetic beauty, learning about the world, developing empathy with characters in the text, discovering one’s own beliefs, values, and world view, and so on. By situating the study of literature in the second language classroom within literary theory, it also enables literature to be seen as a dynamic, four-dimensional event rather than just decoding lexis printed on a surface. This dynamic dimension means students are responding to a literary text in a particular time and place in order to create understanding. Students in different classrooms who are studying literature - ELLs or not – construct individual responses to the same text. For a student to read a literary text and respond to it, and then to read the responses to the same text by peers in different cultures, would be an additional event in creating meaning. Students’ own implicit views could become more explicit to themselves, especially as those views come into sharper relief in contrast to those of other students in other cultures whose responses they read, providing further nourishment for reflection, discussion, and synthesis.

**Situating ESL pedagogy in literary theory**

As the curtain opens on the modern era, New Criticism appears as a challenger to historicism, the prevailing school of in literary theory (Bressler, 2011). Unlike the historicists who emphasized the role of historical context on the production of the text, New Critics like Richards built on Eliot’s notion of “‘the text and the text only’” (ibid). For New Critics, engaging in aesthetic experience leads to the discovery of a poetic truth which is just as valid as a scientific truth. By understanding the organic unity of the text, readers can discover the reality of what the text is about. To understand the organic unity of a text, New Critics emphasize a close reading of the text and then analyzing it along a series of steps. The steps include examining the title, discovering and trying to come to terms with the tensions within a text, understanding connotation and denotation, figurative language, symbolism, and so on within the text (ibid). Richards, while a pioneer in exploring reader responses to texts with his students at Cambridge, in the end rejected his students’ “pseudo statements” in favor of New Criticism (ibid) and its ability to deliver a “true interpretation” (Richards, 1929:182). New Criticism, at least in its most extreme form, assumes that the text holds independent ontological status. Richards (1929:8), for example, refers to a text as a standalone “building”,


implying the text’s independent status as well as a certain epistemology to know it. The consequence of this view is that training is needed to understand the truth of a text rather than merely producing ‘pseudo statements’ about it. Such a view implicitly includes a correspondence theory of reality and the truth of the text can be apprehended using the kinds of epistemological steps which Richards sets out in *Practical Criticism*.

While Richards saw the varying literature responses of his Oxford students as evidence that they needed an appropriate epistemology to understand the poetic truth of the text, Reader Response advocates saw variation in responses as central to the literature enterprise. While Reader Response pioneers like Rosenblatt insisted on close attention to texts, she “shifted the emphasis dramatically towards a close reading of the responses of close readers” (Booth, 1995, in Rosenblatt, 1995). Where New Critics see literature as a static structure, proponents of Reader Response see literature as a dynamic event. While the New Critic’s view implies an epistemology of discovery, Reader Response theory implied an epistemology of construction since in Reader Response theory meaning is constructed through a meeting of the text and the reader. While Richards saw gaps in his students’ comprehension of the text as a problem, a Reader Response theorist like Iser sought to understand them phenomenologically, explaining that “one must take into account not only the actual text but also, and in equal measure, the actions involved in responding to the text” (Iser, 1980; 50). These “actions” are like Smith’s notion of “reading behind the eyes” (2006): the knowledge, experience, feelings, etc. in our minds – our schemata - fills in the gaps we come to while reading a text. The interaction between the text and the reader as these gaps are encountered and filled in accounts for the variation in meaning which individuals may express while reading a text. When there is a perceived degree of similarity of knowledge or experience among a group of readers, the frontiers of a community may be distinguishable. Fish (1980; 3) calls such a group an “interpretive community”.

Situating Reader Response theory within literature in the ESL classroom creates opportunities. While the words of a text itself do not change, individual schemata, or what Rosenblatt calls “general life experience” (p. 77) will change; the composition of interpretive communities will also vary. The number of such interpretive communities in an ESL context must be great, as the number of ESL speakers in the world is at least 425 million (Bolton, 2008) and English is used as a second language or *lingua franca* around the world. If given the same text, variation in responses to that text would be attributable to characteristics of that interpretive community and schemata of individuals. Studying responses to the same text
would reveal a great deal about the world view and schemata of the individuals and their interpretive communities. This ‘shift’ to the responses of other close readers would challenge the student’s own view as he confronted what Rosenblatt calls “attitudes and judgments different from his own” (ibid). In reading responses to the same text by students in a different interpretive community in another culture far from their own, students may reach that moment when they see that their own responses to that text as the tip of an iceberg, the iceberg below the surface being what they do not know of themselves. They may perceive the edges of their own world view, which they somehow acquired or constructed but do not know how, not aware of what most of it is but understanding there is more to it than they thought, and becoming aware that it has been acting as a filter through which they have been viewing the world.

**Method**

The student-centered method that we adopted in this international literature project relied on Reader Response theory and email. Email makes it possible to easily send files quickly. Reader Response theory predicts that students would interact with a short story in different ways. The students would fill in the gaps according to what they already knew and valued. When they wrote a response, that filling-in might be noticeable to students in another country. In the process, students would be exposed to different perspectives on the story and learn something about the culture of students in another country and what they knew, valued, and believed. Consequently, they could see contrasting outlines of their own thinking. Reading a person’s reader response would be like looking at a reflection of the reader’s view of the world, background, etc. To read the reader response from a student in a country far away would also require, metaphorically-speaking, a telescope – a requirement fulfilled by email. Like a telescope, email brings distant objects closer.

Through conferences and email elicitations, three university teachers of literature in Iraq, Hong Kong, and USA made acquaintance with each other. We planned for our students to read the same short story, write a response to it, and exchange with others. Undergraduate students at universities in three countries (Iraq, the U.S.A., and Hong Kong) therefore read the same short story, Hemingway’s *Cat in the Rain*. We chose this short story as it is well-known, it is easily found in anthologies and, like other Hemingway fiction, it contains sentences of few words.

Students in all three universities received the same instructions, seen in Table 1:
Table 1 Instructions to students

- Read the story *Cat in the Rain*.
- Draft a 400 word reflective reader-response to it.
- The reader-response should be your personal response to the short story.
- It should be well-organized.
- Later, you will exchange with another person(s), but you will not know each other’s name.

The students were also requested to give their informed consent for their work to be used. The text in Table 2 was used for that purpose.

Table 2 Informed sent form

Dear TEACHER’S NAME

I give my consent for my scanned assignments for [course name] for the reader-response and response to the reader-response, without my name or student number, to be used for exchanging with other students and for research purposes with the aim of improving teaching and learning.

Signed,

FULL NAME OF STUDENT

After students read *Cat in the Rain*, wrote the reader response, and submitted the informed consent form, teachers collected their students’ reader responses. Responses were scanned and emailed to the teacher who was coordinating the project, who then collated, compiled, and forwarded a complete set to the other teachers by email. Those teachers distributed them to their students, who could then read reader responses from peers in two other countries. Due to time constraints and problems with email accounts, there was not enough time for students to write and email responses to the reader responses. Some verbal comments were made by students, however, especially the high and low language skills of students in other countries. In addition, students reported that they were interested in reading, then writing and comparing their response to literature with other international peers by connecting their writing to their environments. The number of reader responses by country is found in Table 3.
Table 3 Reader responses by country

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.A.</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results and discussion

Aside from their use in teaching and learning, we also treated the students’ reader responses as research data. Just as we were careful not to place many limits on how students could compose their reader responses, so too we were also careful not to place many limits on how we handled the data. Our thinking was two-fold. First, we thought it better to we read and re-read the students’ responses to see what categories might emerge from them. We also did not want, from the start, to filter things out by focusing on just a few things which we thought were important or should be important. In part, this was because we anticipated carrying out this kind of international literature project in the future. Our initial impulse was therefore to be holistic rather than reductionist. For comparison purposes, we eventually selected 10 students’ responses from each country. In those, we tried to identify text which best expressed best the central idea(s) that a student was trying to convey in his or her reader response. Those central ideas are found in Table 4.

Table 4 Central ideas in 10 reader responses from students in 3 countries (10/country)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Iraq</th>
<th>Hong Kong</th>
<th>U. S. A.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. We should always raise a flag (No to the oppression of women) because woman is half of society and the righteousness of society [comes] from the righteousness of woman.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. She will [have an] effect on her family easily, all of that if she want from her heart to take care of her family.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. To conclude, gender stereotyping and class inequality are being illustrated in this excerpt of Cat in the Rain.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The way the protagonists were portrayed reflects what it is was like in the 20th century American society. Selfishness occurs in the bygone days.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. …she may not want a cat offered by a man other than her husband. Hemingway’s refusal to give us answers to these questions forces readers to reflect on the meaning of the story, so they can more adequately conceive what occurs in the following g scenes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. This eerie parallel to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
3. …all these things stand for the world of the grownup, so she utters without really recognizing it herself, the immense wish to be adult as quickly as possible. And that is why she is now referred to as ‘wife’ again.

4. So [the] couple must understand the responsibility of marriage and life to be a stable life.

5. Finally, if there is not woman there is no society. [A] good wife should sacrifice in order to protect their family’s life and [a] good husband should be basis of warmth and love.

6. Finally any problem in life will [be] solved by calmness and understanding the partner of life.

7. Marriage is a relationship between ... a couple … both of them have to sacrifice…to carry on.

8. …but its easy to solve this problem by make the woman keep her role in the house and [the ] advice man give to her…

3. I think the writer may try to use this story to reflect the negative impact of selfishness that Individualism gives for people nowadays.

4. It is implied that the wife may not have the freedom to speak her mind and her thoughts.

5. George and his wife are both selfish. The wife is only talking about her desires while George is not willing to make sacrifices to please her.

6. All in all, the displacement of the couple in Cat in the Rain heightens the fact that problems exist in their marriage.

7. On the one hand I admire Hemingway’s playing with language. On the other hand I doubt his devaluation of female image.

8. The writer seems to imply that what the American wife wants, which will make her happy, would be something only to be modern day teens and their idols as well as how they use their money should be enough to make people realize what money can do to people. Don’t let it consume you or, as this story shows, the addiction can lead to many problems in your life.

3. Cat in the Rain can be received by many readers in different ways; to me it is a story of a secret potential secret between this married woman and a padrone. This story I see is one of desire.

4. The story…doesn’t have much of an absolute purpose, but it has a lot of feeling, as if it is a picture or even a song.

5. The end of the story left me with the sort of empty feeling of a dying relationship that material possessions cannot fix.

6. During this time I think Fitzgerald and
<p>| | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. In English society, the man considers the woman as a merchandise and he always thinks of her as a way to please his physical pleasure while in our society the woman has a high prestige and the husband knows her value and respects her because the Islam obligates him to take care of her whether she was his mother, his wife, or his daughter.</td>
<td>found outside her marriage.</td>
<td>Hemingway (and most of America) shared a common view on life – it seemed mundane and bleak.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. In this story the cat is just like the Lady - in many ways both of them lack care and might say (of love) because the woman feels of love in rainy night.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I am pleasantly surprised by how this short story can be so simple and complicated at the same time.</td>
<td>I viewed the cat in the rain as merely a metaphor for how [the wife] truly feels on the inside; stuck in a situation or life where she is uncomfortable, unhappy, and unable to be herself.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>…the writer leaves the cat and its future to the unknown. This is probably a connotation of the couple’s decision or a compromise that have not been reached, leading readers to think further and imagine what would follow the ambiguous end of story.</td>
<td>To me, if the story continued and went in that direction, where the main couple splits up and the wife stays with the hotel-keeper, then it would be the end of the story where you can find happiness out of tragedy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>But overall, when I read this story, it seems a fruitless search for something more profound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I believe this is the heart of the story, that change can be controlled as much as death which is none at all.</td>
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</table>
The reader responses seemed to draw out what the students have been ruminating over. They could be categorized into three main areas, Emotions, Virtues and Vices, and Topics, as seen in Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Virtues and Vices</th>
<th>Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fears, anxieties, loss, desire, existential angst, impotence, greed, unhappiness, uncertainty, mundaneness</td>
<td>love, inequality, selfishness, righteousness, dignity, infidelity, obligation, rationale thinking, hedonism, sacrifice</td>
<td>marriage, consumerism, growing up, society, cultural differences, freedom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students in the U.S.A. seem to have expressed the most diverse range of responses while students in Iraq were focused on fewer themes and Hong Kong students somewhere in the middle. This could be explained in part by the level of language competence and performance, age, and educational background. Students from all three countries appeared to develop an ability to comprehend what they read that went beyond the overt literary work, making inferences and criticisms that are essential for ongoing learning and success.

**Conclusion**

As a learning and teaching activity, this kind of project has much potential. Students can read, enjoy, and reflect on some great literature. They can express their response to it at a linguistic level at which they are comfortable. Simple sentences and simple vocabulary does not preclude linguistically lower level students from expressing profound responses. Hemingway himself might approve of such a style. Exchanging responses with students in other countries challenges their thinking, showing them what is sturdy in their own thinking as well as what is wobbly. Students develop their appreciation for literature, identification and counter-identification with characters, insights into the culture represented in the text and, in relief, insights into their own. Communicating with other university students on a common task also fosters affiliation and respect. Students who participated thus might be developing lifelong reading habits, but what about those students who did not take part in the project? It seems likely that they do not read for the same pleasure, which might create a problem for their future learning and academic success.
At an institutional level, the project also has merit. As universities around the world seek opportunities for their students to interact with their peers internationally in an increasingly globalized world, projects using the model established by this one would help to fulfill such institutional aspirations. The model presented here is feasible, although it does require initiating contacts with university peers in other cultures. It also requires a relatively high degree of coordination and adjusting to different time zones.

Acknowledgements

The students who participated and the project team in Iraq, Hong Kong, and the U.S.A.

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The implementation of a Master of Education in Teaching English: a case study of Shinawatra International University

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Bioprofiles:

Jane Scymgeour has been teaching English in New Zealand, Saudi Arabia and Thailand and completed her Masters of Education at Shinawatra International University in 2011.

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Abstract

This is a brief report about the implementing of the M.Ed. in Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) course at Shinawatra International University. The report details the beginning of the program including curriculum design, student recruitment, and teaching methods, and discusses the factors making for a successful program.

Keywords: Curriculum design, MATESOL, masters courses, Thailand education
Introduction

This report discusses the processes involved in implementing the M.Ed. in Teaching English as an International Language (TEIL) course at Shinawatra International University (SIU). We used a method of one writer, Jane Scrymgeour, interviewing the other, Robert Kirkpatrick which was then collated to make it more readable.

It should be noted that this report is limited in its scope and methodology AND conclusions, but as there is relatively little information available about the ‘behind the scenes’ development of masters courses in English teaching we believe it should be of some interest to the community of both faculty and students (and potential students) in this field.

At the time of the interview, Robert Kirkpatrick was a faculty member involved in both writing the curriculum and teaching on the program, and Jane Scrymgeour was a student studying on the course.

Methodology

The interview with Robert Kirkpatrick consisted of a relatively informal interview divided into four sections. The first section asks questions about the beginning stage which considers the fundamentals, the planning and setting up process. The second section asks questions about the middle stage which considers where the course is at the time of the interview, plus evaluation, alterations and additions, and the third section asks questions about the future, asking about where the course is expected to go as well as any possible projections or predictions for the future. The final section asks Dr. Kirkpatrick about his own philosophies regarding syllabus design.

Background information about the University

The decision to establish Shinawatra International University was initiated in 1996 by Thaksin Shinawatra, (a past Prime Minister of Thailand) and Professor Purachai Piumsombun with the aim of supporting private sector development in Thailand. The first meeting of the University Council was held in May 2000, and the first students were admitted in 2002.

Two campuses exist, with the main one for undergraduate students situated in Pathumthani, and the campus for graduate students being in Vipavadi-Rangsit Road, Bangkok. The main campus in Pathumthani is a sprawling, modern and impressive set of
structures set on about 10 hectares. It has the disadvantage of being quite far from any major shopping centers, although this was apparently part of the initial planning as it was thought that students would benefit from a degree of academic seclusion and a ‘boarding school’ environment. Over 90% of undergraduate students stay from Monday to Friday in the modern student dorms.

In 2011 it was ranked by the Thai Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQ) in the top 10% of universities in Thailand and this is partly due to a policy of attracting and rewarding faculty with strong research track records.

**Master of Education (TEIL)**

The impetus to establish a Master of Education degree at Shinawatra International University came from Dr. Kanittha Navarat who was the director of the English undergraduate program at the time. She decided on the name of M.Ed. in Teaching English as an International Language rather than in TESOL or TEFL because the name would serve to underline the international cast of the program.

The program for the master’s degree in teaching English as an international language was approved by the university council in 2008. The course is taught entirely in English and is for both native and non-native speakers of English and can be completed in three semesters (18 months). Most courses are Monday to Friday between the hours of 18.00-21.00, with some courses being offered over the weekend, depending on demand. Students may choose a thesis or a non-thesis option.

**Interview**

Robert Kirkpatrick, who had been an associate professor at a university for almost ten years in Japan at the time, was recruited in 2007 by Dr. Kanittha Navarat and a committee to come to Shinawatra University with the purpose to assist with writing and teaching the course. He would become one of the main faculty members on the new course.

*What guidelines were in place for writing the curriculum?*

There were not strict guidelines, other than Dr Kanittha’ expressing her desire for an outstanding course. Of course the Thai ministry of education has guidelines for all undergraduate and master’s courses and we were very careful in following those. Both Dr.
Kanittha and I discussed the names for each of the courses and I was given the task of writing the course outlines.

How did you go about deciding/selecting what to include/exclude in the course?

I looked at similar courses offered by other universities of note around the world (in USA, UK, Canada, NZ, and Australia) to see what they were currently offering at the M.Ed. TESOL/TEFL level. We decided on around 15 topics, and this long list was then sent for approval to the university council and president. Because there were too many topics, it was necessary to reduce the number and this was done by cutting out some topics completely, or by combining a couple of the topics to make one course.

How long did the planning take?

I was not given a date by when planning should be completed, but it went quickly and took about 6 months, from the time I joined the staff at SIU in 2007, until the first students (4 of them) arrived in 2008, and when a noted lecturer in linguistics (a Canadian national) also joined the program as a key instructor.

It had been dependent upon meetings taking place with the university council to get their approval, and this went smoothly. The president of the university at that time was keen that it should be primarily a thesis based course and initially all students had to submit a lengthy thesis.

What processes or stages did the planning involve?

There were four stages: first, short course outlines were written by me; then, these course outlines were approved by Dr. Kanittha and the president; they were then given approval at the university council meeting. Finally before each course was started, these course outlines were given to the various lecturers who were responsible for compiling and developing their own courses based on the outlines.

Once the planning had been completed and the university council was happy with what was on offer for a course, the next step was thinking about where the students were coming from, how to market the course and how to get students to enroll. This was a nervous time and I did not feel confident at all, nor clear about where the students would be coming from: although the president was quite confident based on some basic market research that students would appear (he was proven correct).
Is this course different/similar to other universities?

It is similar to other universities. However, it was decided to leave out some popular subjects such as Discourse Analysis as none of the lecturers at the time were experts in this field.

The program is one of the few university courses in Thailand to offer a practicum/teaching internship although most good Masters teaching courses at international universities do.

The course titled Principles and Philosophy of Language Teaching and Learning was added because it is in my own field of expertise and I believe that students need some grounding in the broad theories of education and their historical development. This philosophical element is not often offered at universities but that it has proven very popular with students here at Shinawatra.

Where did most of your ideas about teaching come from?

After almost 20 years of researching and teaching English at university level I have had so many influences on my ideas about what makes for a good teacher that giving proper credit would be almost impossible. One that is particularly apt is from an article by article Susan Ambrose and Cristina Amon (1997) where they discuss their goals: “to introduce undergraduate students to mechanical engineering, to excite students about the field of mechanical engineering early in their careers, to encourage active learning […] integrating lectures with classroom demonstrations, laboratory experiments, and hands-on projects”. Bearing in mind the differences between engineering and English teaching of course.

Who did you hope to attract as students, and what is your vision for them?

The course is for people who are teachers, preferably with at least one year’s experience. My vision for them is to be ‘masters’ in the field of teaching.

As Shinawatra University (SIU) is a research oriented university, any essays written by students are expected to be good enough to be published, which is why courses ED 501 and 521 have two 3000 word essays and many students combine the essays into a longer research essay. For the thesis option students must have one paper from their research published in a reputable journal as part of the graduation process. Some of the students have gone on trips, with our lecturers: for example to conferences in the Philippines, France, Vietnam and
Cambodia where they have presented papers. And we have offered internships at a Vietnamese university.

How are the faculty recruited and what is expected of them?

When it comes to the selection of the content/course materials/learning experiences, this is left up to individual lecturers. Instead of being given guidelines, staff members are told of their course title and given the short outline from which they then create their own course. Deciding who to teach what course depends upon strengths and expertise of the faculty members, but we employed lecturers based on the subject skill set we required at the time. At the time of this interview we have 4 full-time lecturers who have expertise in statistics, linguistics, teaching methodology, research, and educational philosophy. All have PhDs and total university level teaching experience adds up to almost 100 years.

Where is the course at the present time (late 2011), how is it evaluated and have there been any alterations or additions made to the course?

There are two evaluations per semester: a mid-term and a final exam. Emphasis is on writing academic essays in Kirkpatrick’s classes, actual classroom practice with the director, Kantatip Sinhaneti, reviewing relevant literature and in depth study of linguistics needed for teaching in Tim Cornwall’s classes, and statistics related to research methods in Steven Mckees.

Is the course attracting the type of students he had in mind when he was planning this course?

Without doubt the course is attracting high quality students, even beyond my expectations. And (at the time of the interview) we have 28 students from 6 countries enrolled and 1 student has graduated.

[Since then over 20 students have graduated and the program has students from China, Bhutan, Vietnam, New Zealand, Japan, USA, South Africa, Myanmar and Thailand, making for a very international group].

Have they had to make any alterations to the course?

This current semester (1 of 2011) has seen a couple of changes being made to the course. The first is by adding a new subject: Media & Culture. This was added as an elective that students from the MBA course could also take as a way to rationalize teaching resources.
The second was by changing the thesis option. Prior to 2010, writing a thesis had been the only option open to students, but with the arrival of a new university president, a new course stream has become available, that of students being able to choose either to write a thesis or undergo an independent research study. The latter still requires researching and writing about a chosen subject but it is worth 3 credits (not 12 credits as for the thesis) and is shorter in length and generally not as onerous for students as the thesis was proving to be.

The department’s policy of hiring teaching faculty with PhDs and lengthy experience has not been altered at all during the course.

*Will the course continue to go in the direction that you originally planned, or will you need/want/have to make some amendments?*

I am pleased with the way it is for now (2011), and will keep going like this for the time being although the course is only 3 years old, so it is still young. At this stage, it is difficult to predict or say what or where he thinks any changes are most likely to be in the future as it is linked to the success of the university overall. The political crisis in Thailand has meant that recruiting students to the undergraduate program is not going as well as it should which causes some uncertainties in the graduate program also.

*What are your theoretical preferences with regard to syllabus design and is this theory reflected in the course design for M.Ed. TEIL?*

When educating trainee teachers, my classes largely comprise what Jack Richards (2002, pp. 22-25) calls the art-craft conception of teaching where the program exposes teachers to the major educational theories which they can then, depending on interest, integrate into their own practice and gradually revise and improve as their experience with teaching develops. The program, while still outlining different methods, stresses broad understanding of educational theory, contemporary and ancient, (we have one or two classes looking as far back as Socrates, Aristotle and Confucius) and connection with students and motivation of students.

The novice instructors job is then to find what methods work with their students and what style of teaching melds with their own character and the student’s needs, but they are equipped to do this due to their exposure of the main principles of education, and ideally eventually develop personal approaches to teaching that are flexible and come with a high degree of confidence and understanding. While this approach might be considered at the
advanced end of teaching practice I think the quality of students (some of whom have already been teaching for over 10 years) we attract makes it a successful approach. Teachers who have done CELTA courses or similar are somewhat surprised to find other approaches (other than the CELTA) are available and suitable.

**Update (May 2013)**

Since the interview and writing the initial draft of the paper, several staff members, including Kirkpatrick have left the university, and it seems the university is currently finding it difficult to attract the level of international faculty it has in the past.

Although the M.ED. course and indeed most masters courses at SIU are well subscribed, the number of undergraduate students remains insufficient for the university to make a profit. The staff and buildings are world class but government policies in Thailand has recently greatly expanded the funding to public universities, while leaving private universities to rely on grants, alumni and sponsors and student admission fees (although private universities still account for 15% of graduates, Yilmaz, 2010). Although SIU has its famous billionaire founder – leaving it is a stronger financial position than most other private universities – the realities of the market place are evident in recent hiring practices. How this will affect the M.ED. program and current and future students is hard to predict. Also, the difficult political situation in Thailand has a detrimental effect on the university with regard to staff recruitment and more importantly on student recruitment. The Shinawatra name is a positive factor (two Shinawatras have been Thai Prime ministers) among legions of working class in Thai but the fees required for entry to it are only viable for the middle and upper classes who are less enthralled with the family.

A piece of good news is that three recently graduated students from the program have been offered instructor positions (in the undergraduate program) at the university, an indication of the quality of the program and the administration’s confidence in the graduates.

**Conclusions**

While in some respects the overall curriculum was based on practical considerations – which may appear ad hoc from this short report-- it should be remembered that all the faculty involved in the implementation had a wealth of experience that informed their decisions.
In reading over the interview notes of Robert Kirkpatrick, we see that a number of items needed to be considered in planning the M.Ed. TEIL course at Shinawatra International University. Course names and content are one. Deciding on how to best teach and to evaluate the course contents are another. Then there is obtaining approval from the president and university council in order to ensure that the course complies with what the vision and mission of the university wishes to achieve. Next, consideration needs to be given to students regarding their aims and their needs, and the criteria with which they are considered to be eligible for the course. Another consideration is given to recruiting the best staff to best fulfill the needs of the students and the course while at the same time preserving the image, vision and mission of the university. Finally, while the course has been successful there are still many challenges in preserving its high initial standard.

References


Abstract

Incorporating theories of language learning strategies and theories of speaking strategies, the present study posed three research objectives: (1) identifying the categories of strategies of learning speaking skill employed by EFL learners of Indonesian senior high schools, (2) measuring the intensity of use of each strategy category, and (3) comparing the use of the identified strategies by successful and less successful students. The subjects were 743 second year students, selected from eleven senior high schools in East Java, Indonesia. They were asked to complete a seventy item questionnaire assessing their strategies of learning English speaking skill and a ten item self-assessment measuring their speaking competence. The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) revealed eleven categories of strategies, including cognitive interaction maintenance, self-improvement, self-evaluation, fluency-oriented, metacognitive planning, time gaining, resources-based, compensation, interpersonal, affective, and memory strategies, which all together accounted for 54.50% of variance of English speaking skill learning strategies. Further analyses revealed that learners employed the overall learning strategies of speaking at the moderate level (M=3.17), with resources-
based strategies being the most intensively used (M=3.46) and self-improvement strategies (M= 2.83) being the least frequently employed. Finally, the present study found that successful learners reported using the eleven categories of strategies significantly more frequently than less successful learners did. The results of this study imply the need of explicit strategies-based instruction for developing students’ speaking skill, particularly for the less successful students.

**Keywords:** Learning strategies, speaking strategies, EFL learners

**Introduction**

In the last few decades, there has been a considerable body of studies highlighting the potential role of learning strategies, most of which confirmed that the use of learning strategies greatly brings positive effects on the students’ mastery of English (Cohen, 2000; Mistar, 2011; Oxford, 1990; Nunan, 1992). Thus, Brown (2007) points out that success in second or foreign language learning “will be due to a large extent to a learner’s own personal ‘investment’ of time, effort, and attention to the second language in the form of an individualized battery of strategies for comprehending and producing the language” (p. 69). In this regard, Oxford (1990) develops a questionnaire called Startegy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), which has been used in a large number of studies around the world. In general, she classifies learning strategies into memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social strategies.

In the area of communication strategies, Dewi (2007) investigated the strategies deployed by Indonesian senior high school students in overcoming speaking problems. The study revealed that high achievers prefer to use strategies of approximation, getting help, and switching to the mother tongue. Meanwhile, moderate achievers were reported to employ approximation and use synonym. Interestingly, no strategy was used by low achievers. Asuncion (2010), moreover, reported that among college students in Philippines switching to mother tongue was proven to be the most frequently used strategy and that there was a negative correlation between the use of compensatory strategies, mostly in the forms of switching to mother tongue and avoiding topic communication, and grade in English. Next, Nakatani (2006) revealed eight categories of strategies for overcoming problems in speaking activity and seven
strategy categories for dealing with listening problems. A more complex and comprehensive research on speaking strategies was done by Khan (2010), who used picture story, art description, and information gap tasks to determine the strategies profile of high and low proficiency EFL learners in Spain. The study found that the use of spoken production strategies can be predicted more from task characteristics than from the proficiency of the learners and that the use of oral communication strategies in the EFL classroom is low. The last study to review is by López (2011), who examined the speaking strategies used by English students in Mexico. The result indicated that to compensate problems in speaking English, the students frequently ask for repetition, use paraphrase or synonyms, and ask for clarification.

An interesting fact comes with this review is that the studies available so far has used either theories of learning strategies or theories of communication strategies as the theoretical bases. The present study was then attempted to incorporate the two modes of theories and research findings to reveal the learning strategies to improve speaking skill by EFL learners. It then posed three questions: 1) what categories of strategies do the EFL learners of Indonesian senior high schools employ in learning speaking skill?, 2) how do they apply the reported strategies?, and 3) do the successful learners employ the reported strategies differently from the less successful learners?

Method

Subjects of the Study

The subjects of the study were 743 second year students of eleven public senior high schools in East Java, Indonesia and they learned English as a compulsory school subject. However, in the analysis of the comparison in the learning strategies by successful and less successful learners (research question 3), only 348 subjects were included. When the data collection was carried out, they had been learning English formally for nearly five years of four hours a week. The formal target of the teaching of English they encounter is to train them to be able to use English as a means of communication.
Instruments

To elicit the required data, two sets of instruments were administered. The first one, a 70-item Likert-type questionnaire of strategies of learning speaking skills of English. The items of the questionnaire were compiled from questionnaires assessing language learning strategies as well as questionnaires assessing oral communication strategies. The Cronbach’s Alpha method showed a reliability index .928, suggesting that the data were highly reliable. The second one was a 10-item self-assessment of speaking skill, in which the subjects had to respond by circling 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 indicating how well they were able to perform a speaking act. Self-assessment data have been found to have high validity and reliability (Bachman & Palmer, 1989).

Data Analysis

Using SPSS 20, a factor analysis using Principle Component Analysis (PCA) was first carried out and the component matrix was rotated to categorize the strategies of learning speaking. The categories were then labelled on the basis of the strategy items clustered in each category. Next, to examine the strategy preference and the intensity of use, an analysis of mean score was performed and interpreted based on Oxford’s (1990) criteria. Finally, independent samples t-tests were performed to compare the use of strategies by successful and less successful learners. In this case, students scoring 36 or more in the self-assessment were grouped as successful learners (n=156), while those scoring 25 or less were considered less successful (n=192), leaving out those scoring between 26 and 35 (n=395), who are in the middle position (somewhat successful and somewhat less successful).

Results and Discussion

Results

Question 1: What categories of strategies do the EFL learners of Indonesian senior high schools employ in learning speaking skill?

The Principal Component Analysis (PCA) uncovered eleven categories of strategies of learning speaking with initial eigenvalue higher than 1.0 explaining a cumulative variance of 54.50% (See Table 1). In general the resulting factors may be classified into three broad groups, those explaining much more than 3%, around 3%, and less than 3%. Within the first group are factors 1, 2, and 3 that altogether accounted for 28.74% of variance. Factor 1
contains strategies that involve both the speaker and the interlocutor to maintain the conversation flow and they are cognitive in nature. It is then labeled as cognitive interaction maintenance strategies. Factor 2 contains strategies that are mainly deployed to improve speaking proficiency; thus, it is named self-improvement strategies. And, factor 3 is named self-evaluation strategies as they are mostly evaluative in nature such as learning from the previous mistakes, evaluating utterances after speaking, and correcting own mistakes.

Table 1 Reported strategy categories and their variance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Strategy Category (Factor)</th>
<th>Variance Explained (%)</th>
<th>Cumulative Variance (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Self-Improvement Strategies</td>
<td>9.28</td>
<td>23.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Self-Evaluation Strategies</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>28.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Fluency-Oriented Strategies</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>32.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Metacognitive Planning Strategies</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>36.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Time Gaining Strategies</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>39.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Resources-Based Strategies</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>43.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Compensation Strategies</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>46.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Interpersonal Strategies</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>49.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Affective Strategies</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>52.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Memory Strategies</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>54.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factors 4 to 9 belong to the second group explaining 20.54% of the strategies variance. Factor 4 obtains high loadings from such strategies as practicing sounds in isolation and in context and speaking loudly; thus this category is named fluency-oriented strategies. Meanwhile, such strategies as trying to be a better learner and finding ways to practice English are strategies that contribute high loadings to factor 5, which is labelled metacognitive planning strategies. Next, factor 6, named time gaining strategies, obtains high loading from strategies to gain time during conversation such as repeating the last word or phrase, using fillers, using known words or phrases, and mumbling. Moreover, factor 7, labelled resources-based strategies, contains such strategy items as watching English movies and TV broadcast, listening to English songs, learning from online games, and using computer. Factor 8 is broadly designated as compensation strategies as this factor comprises such strategies as using dictionary or idiom books to prepare for oral activities in class and asking classmate or teacher for unknown words. The last factor within this category is factor 9, named interpersonal strategies, containing strategies of asking interlocutor to repeat or explain unknown expression in different words and telling the speaking partner when not understanding what he or she says.
The third group consists of factors 10 and 11. Factor 10 obtains high loadings from strategies of trying not to worry about mistake, not thinking too much before speaking, and keeping calm when not understanding every single detail said by the interlocutor. Hence, this category is referred to as affective strategies. Finally, factor 11 is labeled as memory strategies. This factor contains strategies of using rhymes to remember new words, putting the new words into rules, and using circumlocution.

**Question 2: How do they apply the reported strategies?**

Table 2 shows that the overall use of strategies is at the moderate level (M=3.17). In terms of the use of each strategy category, only one – resources-based strategies - was reported to be used at the high level of intensity (M=3.46). This shows the high use of modern technology-based learning facilities to improve the learners’ speaking proficiency. The other ten strategies, moreover, were used at the moderate level of intensity. In this case, memory strategies and self-improvement strategies were used at the lowest intensity (M=2.83).

| Table 2 Intensity of use of strategies of learning speaking skill |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Strategy Category | Frequency of Use | Rank of Use |
| Resources-Based Strategies | 3.46 High | 1 |
| Self-Evaluation Strategies | 3.42 Moderate | 2 |
| Compensation Strategies | 3.34 Moderate | 3 |
| Interpersonal Strategies | 3.34 Moderate | 4 |
| Cognitive Interaction Maintenance Strategies | 3.32 Moderate | 5 |
| Time Gaining Strategies | 3.27 Moderate | 6 |
| Metacognitive Planning Strategies | 3.15 Moderate | 7 |
| Affective Strategies | 2.94 Moderate | 8 |
| Fluency-Oriented Strategies | 2.93 Moderate | 9 |
| Memory Strategies | 2.85 Moderate | 10 |
| Self-Improvement Strategies | 2.83 Moderate | 11 |
| Overall strategies | 3.17 Moderate | |

**Question 3: Do the successful learners employ the reported strategies differently from the less successful learners?**

Table 3 shows that the differences in the use of strategies by the successful learners and less successful learners range from .23 (the lowest difference) for self-improvement strategies to .52 (the highest difference) for interpersonal strategies. The independent t-test analyses
indicated that the use of those categories of strategies of learning speaking was significantly
different with the successful learners reporting higher intensity of use than the less
successful learners did. It implies that the successful learners are better at employing various
strategies to learn speaking skill than the less successful learners are.

Table 3 The difference in the use of strategies of learning speaking skill by successful learners (N=156)
and less successful learners (N=192)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Categories</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>t-value*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive Interaction Maintenance Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>6.890(p&lt;.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Improvement Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>6.227(p&lt;.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Evaluation Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>4.191(p&lt;.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency-Oriented Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>5.957(p&lt;.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Planning Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>5.418(p&lt;.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Gaining Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>3.724(p&lt;.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources-Based Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>5.455(p&lt;.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>5.204(p&lt;.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td>3.462(p&lt;.001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>4.859(p&lt;.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory Strategies</td>
<td>Successful</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>2.932 (p&lt;.004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less Successful</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*) two-tailed test

Discussion

The present study shows that the highest percentage of variance was explained by cognitive
interaction-maintenance strategies, implying that learners tend to deploy strategies that
involve not only the learners themselves but also the interlocutors. This also indicates that
making a two-way interaction with an interlocutor to maintain the conversation is crucial in
oral communication. Brown (2007) asserts that to communicate smoothly in English, learners
basically need to have speaking skill to convey messages and listening skill to receive the
messages. This current research also revealed that Indonesian learners deploy the strategies at
moderate level meaning that they sometimes use those strategies with resources-based
strategies being the most used strategies. This shows that sophisticated technology strongly
influences students’ learning of English speaking.
Surprisingly, self-improvement strategies were applied at the lowest frequency implying that the learners do not use English in communication very much. This seems to relate with the context of their learning of English as a foreign language so that very little opportunities for the use of English as a means of communication is available. As a matter of fact, the best way to speak English fluently is through practicing it in real life (Lightbown & Spada, 1999).

Despite the low use of self-improvement strategies suggesting that the learners rarely use English as a means of communication, once they have a chance to use it, they deploy their cognitive and metacognitive capacities to evaluate their English. Self-correction is then preferred when they notice mistakes in using English. Moreover, some strategies are acted out to compensate any problems in communicating. As such, self-evaluation strategies and compensation strategies are used at the intensity of use ranked two and three respectively. Rubin and Thompson (1982) propose some criteria of good language learners; one of them is that good language learners evaluate their own progress in learning.

The finding that some strategy categories are used with mean scores less than 3.00 implies the necessity of learning strategy trainings. Thus, the concept of strategies-based instruction (Brown, 2007) needs to be implemented to allow the students to maximize the use of resources-based strategies combined with self-improvement strategies and other strategies to successfully accomplish speaking tasks.

Finally, in terms of the comparison of the use of strategies by successful and less successful learners in their learning of speaking skill, the present study reveals that the two groups of learners reported using all of the eleven strategy categories at significantly different levels of intensity with the successful learners reporting higher intensity of use. This finding is consistent with findings of previous research in the area of foreign language learning strategies. Khan (2010), for example, reported that learners with high English proficiency tended to use English with more accuracy and structural complexity, as well as faster speech rate than learners with low English proficiency do. Moreover, the low proficiency learners self-repaired fewer errors than the high proficiency learners did in one of the speaking tasks called information gap.
Conclusion

This study revealed eleven speaking strategy categories with the cumulative variance of 54.50%, meaning that more than a half of speaking strategies variance were assessed. The eleven speaking strategy categories are cognitive interaction maintenance, self-improvement, self-evaluation, fluency-oriented, metacognitive planning, time gaining, resources-based, compensation, interpersonal, affective, and memory strategies. Another crucial finding is that resources-based strategies were found to be the most intensively deployed strategies, while self-improvement strategies were the strategies applied at the lowest frequency. Finally, the study also reveals that the successful learners tend to use the strategies more intensively than the less successful learners do in all of the eleven types of strategies.

These findings bring about a number of implications. For teaching purposes, for example, the lowest use of self-improvement strategies suggests that ample opportunities for the students to use English in and outside the classroom be provided. More importantly, further studies should be carried out particularly among the less successful learners to assess the effectiveness of learning strategies trainings to improve their English speaking skill.

References


