

# **Applied Linguistics, Global and Local**

Proceedings of the 43rd Annual Meeting  
of the British Association for Applied Linguistics  
9-11 September 2010  
University of Aberdeen



**Edited by Robert McColl Millar  
& Mercedes Durham**



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# 1 **Twitter a new global genre: a contrastive study of the use of language in English and Spanish**

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## **Introduction**

A new information and collaboration revolution has occurred in the last decade supported by computing and telecommunication technologies. The Web 2.0 concept was first presented in 2004 by O'Reilly to refer to a second generation web based on communities of users and a special range of services such as social networks, blogs or wikis that promote collaboration and the exchange of information among users in an easy and rapid way.

A social network is seen by Boyd and Ellison (2007) as a well defined set of actors, individuals, groups, organizations, societies, etc., that are linked by a number of social relations, simplified in the case of IT by the use of new communications technologies.

Other studies reflect a social reality centred on the relations between individuals. A social network can be described based on its efficiency to integrate three concepts (the 3Cs): Communication (to share knowledge and make it public), community (to find and to link communities) and cooperation (to make things together) (Misanchuk & Anderson 2001)

There are hundreds of social networks which have very different objectives. Their most positive quality is probably the facility through which information can be exchanged or distributed in a flexible and collaborative way. Some of the most popular social networks worldwide are: Myspace, Facebook, Orkut, Friendster, Bebo or Twitter.

## **Twitter: A social network under the spotlight**

The study presented here introduces a preliminary analysis of the language used in a specific micro-blogging social network site. 'Twitter' has a number of specific characteristics that makes it different from others. The network Twitter allows the user to send text based messages, called "tweets", with a maximum length of 140 characters. These messages are

published and available to Twitter users. Every Twitter user can have a certain number of “followers”, people who read the author of a tweet. The number of followers a person has defines to a certain extent his or her popularity in the network (O'Reilly & Milstein 2009). Reading messages other people have written is known as “following”.

### **The study**

Twitter was selected as it is based on brief text communications, and therefore, it could possess specific characteristics which define it as a genre.

The objective of this preliminary study was to analyse the use of Spanish and English in Twitter to identify the nature of communication and to compare the results between the languages.

To be able to analyse the language used in this social network, it was decided to construct two corpora, one in Spanish and another with similar characteristics in English, using language data from Twitter.

### **The two parallel corpora**

The construction of the corpora is based on the messages published by 206 users (103 in Spanish and 103 in English). The messages were compiled by means of a crawler programmed in Java. This program automatically converted the web page format into plain text (.txt files), facilitating analysis at a later date. The selection of messages was established to be firstly, from users with a minimum number of 1,000 followers. Individuals with around this number of followers are the ‘most popular’ Twitter users. Secondly, users with approximately 3,200 tweets, which is the maximum a user can write, were also chosen. Hence the language that was analyzed is not the argot of a limited set of users but messages that a large number of users wanted to read.

The subject matter and the homogeneity of the corpora were difficult to establish as a user can write about any subject in each tweet, which may be unrelated to the previous message. Despite this, it was identified that there were messages about technology, which were common to both languages.

The corpus created in Spanish consists of 319,381 Twitter messages and a total of 4,027,746 words. In English there are 330,696 Twitter messages and a total number of 4,655,992 words. For the tagging of these corpora a program implemented in JAVA language that uses the tagger TreeTagger

(Schmid 2009) was applied. Although for some linguistic measurements in this corpora the limitations or imprecision of this tagger must be taken into account, it can be considered to be reliable enough for an initial analysis of the quantitative data from where to observe linguistic, discursive and pragmatic aspects in this social network.

## Quantitative analysis in Twitter conversations

	Corpus in Spanish	Corpus in English
Number of words	4,027,746	4,655,992
Number of sentences	319,381	330,696
Number of characters	21,519,161	25,010,795
Number of words/sentence	12.61	14.0793
Number of characters/Word	5.34	5.3717
Number of characters/sentence	67.37	75.6307

**Table 1:** Average values of words and characters per sentence in the corpora

We were interested in these measures of sentence and word length because, as we will explain subsequently, the medium restricts the number of characters per sentence. In addition, the aim was to set an initial quantitative approximation of the language used by Twitter users. Table 2 and 3 measures different linguistic categories and other information of interest.

Corpus in Spanish			Corpus in English		
Nº total palabras	4,027,746		Total number of words	4,655,992	
Nombres	1,284,509	31.89%	Nouns	1,888,343	40.55%
NC	863,141	21.42%	NC	1,126,624	24.19%
NMEA	2,697	0.06%	NMEA		
NP	417,859	10.37%	NP	761,719	16.35%
NMON	812	0.02%	NMON		
Adj	246,313	6.11%	Adj	322,857	6.93%
Adv	142,92	3.53%	Adverbs	242,902	5.21%
lugar	12,411	0.30%	place	11,624	0.24%
tiempo	36,713	0.91%	time	35,839	0.76%
modo	10,747	0.26%	manner	19,001	0.40%
cantidad	42,687	1.05%	quantity	45,688	0.98%
Verbos <sup>1</sup>	800,093	19.86%	Verbs	17,3427	3.72%
infinitivos	137,575		infinitives	21,164	
gerundios	12,078		gerunds	2,743	

<sup>1</sup> In Section 4 description of the results extra information regarding the number and percentage of verbs in the texts will be added to these results.

Corpus in Spanish			Corpus in English		
participios	136,249		participles	5,489	
Emoticones	24,370	0.61%	Emoticons	17,428	0.37%
Direcciones					
http	94,600	2.34%	http addresses	104,729	2.24%
Palabra inicio@	199,691	4.95%	@+Word	288,161	6.18%

**Table 2:** Linguistic categories and other outstanding data.

In Table 2 the tags NC, NMEA, NP and NMON (tags from treetagger) mean respectively: common nouns, measurement nouns (such as *metres* or *litres*) proper nouns and names of the months.

	English		Spanish	
Total number of sentences	330,696		319,381	
<i>Sentences starting with:</i>				
capital letter	167,435	50.63%	154,972	48.52%
@	127,756	38.63%	123,186	38.57%
number	3,840	1.16%	2,397	0.75%
RT	36,631	11.07%	20,205	6.32%
lower case letter	33,798	10.22%	33,432	10.46%
<i>Sentences finishing with:</i>				
full stop	74,860	22.63%	58,297	18.25%
dots	6,157	1.86%	29,596	9.26%
emoticon	13,547	4.09%	19,841	6.21%
http address	69,733	21.08%	74,204	23.23%

**Table 3:** Sentence beginnings and endings in Twitter

## Description of the results

First of all, it is important to mention that due to the surprising results obtained with regard to the number of verbs in both corpora, it was decided to verify the amounts given by the software which were the same a second time. As these results did not match our expectations or either with previous research (Elliot 2003) the second step was to cut at random a part of the corpus (up to 10000 words), to tag and count the verbs manually. The following data was obtained from this manual counting: 2,155 verbs were counted out of 10,000 words, which would proportionally represent 1,003,366 verbs in the corpus in English or 21.54% of the total of words.

Verbos	800,093	19.86%	Verbs	1,003,366	21.54%
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**Table 4:** Extract from table 2 amended.

As these manual results are much more in accordance with the initial

hypothesis, we provisionally *accept the results from the second set of manual measurements*. The following objective features of the corpora can be presented based on the data obtained:

With regard to the number of words and length of the sentences, the first analysis indicated that on average, users of Twitter use only a 51.07% of the total maximum capacity allowed by the medium (67.37 characters in Spanish and 75.63 in English are used from the 140 characters maximum per sentence allowed). This fact confirms the first impression of the medium, which is one of its immediacy and its ability to communicate very specific actions, news or events that take place at a specific moment in time. Although tweets of the maximum length are scarce, here are some examples of messages that can give us an idea of the amount of information and structure that a tweet of this length has:

- (1) @luiscesarmaza exacto, Twitter es la demostración de que cualquier pequeño microcambio puede generar grandes cambios...  
<http://bit.ly/NtSgm>
- (2) RT @jayrosen\_nyu: what I said to MSNBC: “Twitter now is a more effective system than any single news organization at serving breaking news.”

From the data it is also confirmed the general impression that the tweets in English are usually longer. English uses more words per tweet.

Connected with the length of the sentence is probably the use of verbs as it has been found to be more difficult to find examples in English of sentences with no verbs, examples that are quite usual in Spanish:

- (3) En vivo en los Encuentros Digitales de El Economista:  
<http://j.mp/6QI2D3>
- (4) The scene here from inside the #nasatweetup tent <http://bit.ly/1NVcZk>
- (5) Algunas fotos del #bymc <http://bit.ly/gAdwq>
- (6) A few photos from the #nasatweetup at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida for @nasa Space Shuttle launch of STS-129  
<http://bit.ly/41JmXU>

The total number of words (Table 1) and the number of verbs and nouns in English and Spanish (Table 2 and Table 4) reinforce the same idea that tweets in English are in general longer.

Returning to the idea of immediacy in this media, it is interesting to find that in both languages time is an important factor and nouns related to time predominate:

time	5,430	tiempo /hora	3,933
day	4,011	día	5,282
morning	1,670	mañana (N o Adv)	3,355
night	1,610	noche	1,317
week	2,069	(fin de) semana	2,210
year	1,275	año	1,535
weekend	(693)		
hour	590	hora	(1,526)
evening	741	tarde	1,670
afternoon	(338)		
minute	269	minuto	172

Table 5: Nouns related to time

To understand the results, “time” in English can be both *tiempo* or *hora* in Spanish so the final amount for Spanish is the result of adding the results for *tiempo* and for *hora*. *Mañana* can in Spanish be a noun or an adverb which explains that the word appears almost double in Spanish. *Semana* (week) and *fin de semana* (weekend) are counted together in Spanish. “Evening” and “afternoon” are only *tarde* in Spanish.

Returning to Table 2 it is also remarkable in this sense that adverbs of time are used with a high frequency in both languages:

now	5,365	ahora	4,619
today	2,474	hoy	4,037
tomorrow	1,026	mañana (N o Adv)	3,355
before	2,025	antes	2,084
after	2,260	después	1,355

Table 6: Adverbs of time

As previously stated, it is difficult to identify the most frequently treated topics in a medium such as Twitter, which permits any comment about any subject matter. But from this quantitative approximation it can also be seen that two other important factors apart from time are common to both languages and these are: routines (common places, work or leisure and the parts of the day: house, school, office, work, fun, book, game, news, music, TV, morning, night) and technology (social networks and devices, past news, events and actuality / what is going on: Twitter, video, blog, Google, Facebook, ipad, e-mail, site, Apple, internet, phone).

Now, coming back to the use of verbs, hypothesis about a possible overuse of the gerund in comparison with other tenses were not confirmed for any of the languages. The initial hypothesis derived from the possible tendency to write about what one is doing at the time of writing or around that time (Table 2). Here are some examples of the expected structure:

- (7) *Probando* twitterphone. Me gusta.
- (8) *Testing* my htc I love it so far!
- (9) Saliendo del hotel rumbo al #BYMC:D
- (10) Ok, *checking out* of Ellington Hotel, heading to airport, and back to Eastern Time. Man, it's been a long trip.
- (11) *Descansando* en el hotel en Dublín
- (12) #next10 is over; back at hotel *resting* before dinner.

Regarding the use of symbols and special characters in this medium, it is quite evident that this is one of the features that more clearly characterizes the genre. In table 3 (beginning and endings of tweets) some of the typical abbreviations which help the organization of discourse with a maximum economy of words have been included. Some of the most well-known are: RT (re tweet) usually followed by @users name to indicate who was the original writer; @users name to answer to a comment made by that user or http address which links the user with more information about the topic. From the data, it is understood that the frequency of use of the symbols and abbreviations is very similar in both languages.

A final comment with respect to symbols which leads us to more pragmatic aspects of the language is related to the use of emoticons and dots in the languages studied. Spanish uses more emoticons and final dots in comparison with English (Table 3). There are more pragmatic aspects because emoticons make the “real” meaning of the utterance more obvious by adding to the phrase a feeling about what has been said as for example: ☺ meaning “I say it happily”- :), ☹ “I say it sadly”- :(, “I am joking”- ;) . The use of emoticons is related to feelings or evaluation about what is said. From a discursive point of view, some of these attitudes towards what is said are explicitly expressed in English by means of evaluation adverbs. From the data in Table 2, it can be seen that English uses more adverbs and in particular adverbs of manner, which could replace the meaning of the emoticon, although this has not been confirmed yet.

- (13) Amigos, fútbol, cerveza y palomitas ☺

- (14) Beer, sunshine and chocolate enough *to make anyone smile*.
- (15) Cogiendo setas - en esta época, esto solo pasa en Galicia ☺
- (16) Picking up lots of New Friends & Followers on Facebook & Twitter -  
*Great Event!*
- (17) @josempelaez pues parece que éste lo consigue... ☹
- (18) @netspencer Ugh, sadly no.

As far as statistics are concerned, it seems that the hypothesis is sustained with the numbers:

Tristemente (2) / Sadly (43)  
Felizmente (4) / Happily (44)

In addition, regarding the dots our perspective is to understand them as more than mere punctuation marks. Data analysis reveals that the difference in their use between both languages relates to the use of emoticons. In both languages the dots could be interpreted to signal attitude towards the idea stated and, sometimes, their usage does not fit exactly with the strict grammatical definition<sup>2</sup>.

- (19) Atocha. Coche y a casita...
- (20) Alpine, Texas. Nice to be home again...
- (21) Cuanto más juego con la storm 2 más me gusta...
- (22) Started using Google Chrome instead of Firefox. liking it...

This pragmatic use of the dots can explain why they are used more extensively in Spanish than in English, as is the case with emoticons.

## Conclusion

There are a number of very general discourse and organizational characteristics common to the two corpora under study in Spanish and English that would permit us to define Twitter as a genre with its own characteristics and different to other social networking sites.

First, the immediacy of the communications in the medium and the restriction of characters per tweet have led Twitter users to create a number

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<sup>2</sup> According to the *Cambridge International Dictionary of English* (1995: 413) "Dots are not used very often. They might be used to show that:

- The writer has omitted some of another person's words [...]
- A list or an idea has not been completed [...]
- Some time passes between a speaker's words [...]
- A speaker stopped or was interrupted [...]."



of specific codes that permit them to organize their discourse with maximum economy. We have presented the most common and have seen how these codes (markers) help to organize discourse pointing to parts of discourse said by someone before (RT), addressing to someone else (@e-mail) or referring the audience to web-pages where to find more information (http addresses).

Second, although it is difficult to establish at this stage core topics that are most frequently treated in this medium, recursive factors and general frameworks can be detected as demonstrated by the use of a number of words related to certain topics such as: time, routines, news / events and IT. Although we expected to find tweets telling what people “are actually doing” at or around the moment of speaking / writing, the quantitative analysis does not show in fact an overuse of the gerund in comparison with other verb forms.

Third, there are a number of abbreviations and other symbols or sentence types that characterise this particular genre and that typically open or close the tweets. From the examples in the corpora, it is suggested that some of these are used differently in each language and further research is required to identify more detailed aspects of these characteristics, as well as to identify other pragmatic aspects of the communication in Twitter.

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## 2 Language Learning: Collaboration in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Problem-Based Learning (PBL) Classroom

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### Introduction

This paper derives from my PhD research. Problem-Based Learning (PBL) represents a shift from the traditional perspective, focusing the teaching methods to a perspective that puts the students' learning in focus. PBL creates a student-centred environment in which the curriculum is organised around problems or triggers (real-life problems given to students in PBL), rather than by subjects or topics. Students work in small groups under the guidance of a lecturer who facilitates the learning process. It is based on an idea that engaging in heuristic problem-solving promotes learning as conceptual understanding. It encourages the development of life-long learning skills, such as enquiry, analysis and synthesis. Rather than focusing on facts, PBL encourages active learning and self-directed learning as students take responsibility for their own learning as they identify what they already know about the problem and then ascertain what they need to find out, what questions are relevant to their inquiry and what actions they need to take.

The PBL approach has been advocated by many higher education specialists like Biggs (2003) and Ramsden (2003), since it encourages students to take a deeper approach to learning. A deep approach is one that in which students learn for understanding and seeking meaning, in contrast to the surface approach in which students rote learn, often with little understanding (Biggs 2003). McMaster University adopted PBL for medical education in the 1960s, the first school to do so. As PBL gained recognition and credibility in medical education, allied health fields namely dental education, environmental health, nursing education and occupational therapy have begun to use PBL in their educational programs as an entire curriculum or as an instructional strategy within a conventional curriculum. In education, Bridges & Hallinger (1995) have applied a modified PBL approach to the preparation of school administrators whereas Casey & Howson (1993) have investigated the use of PBL approach in the education of pre-service teachers.

A central, organising premise of PBL is linking theoretical knowledge to practical application through the use of collaborative groups in which students are responsible for deciding what is to be learned. Collaborative learning is the basis of Vygotskian concepts that define learning as the social construction of knowledge. Acquiring new knowledge and restructuring existing knowledge emerge as individuals with differing viewpoints, experiences, and levels of knowledge about a particular topic engage in investigating, resolving, and ultimately creating a new, shared understanding of the topic through interaction with one another. A fundamental rationale for instructional approaches that promote the cooperation between learners is that such approaches more closely approximate the 'real world' than traditional didactic strategies. That is, activities requiring cooperation among individuals reflect how tasks are usually accomplished in practice (Vygotsky 1978) and as such language plays a key role in Vygotsky's theory.

Despite the fact that there is abundance of articles and books on PBL, relatively little research focuses on the student experience of PBL. Savin-Baden & Wilkie (2004) note a lack of studies that comment on the learning that takes place in a PBL setting. Much research and evaluation has been conducted on PBL as a curricular and instructional innovation. For the most part, the research has investigated outcomes (e.g., comparisons of achievement outcome measures of students in PBL versus conventional curricula), the organizational and administrative tasks involved in implementing an innovative curriculum, and students' information-gathering and study patterns. However, little research has been conducted on the underlying learning processes of PBL, specifically on students' perspectives of the process in relation to their English for Specific Purpose (ESP) language learning in PBL collaborative groups.

## **Rationale**

As such this paper aims to contribute to the growing body of research looking into collaborative activity from a sociocultural approach to second language learning. The paper reports on an investigation of co-construction of language and language learning in an ESP classroom as students worked in groups across various triggers in a PBL context. It examines the nature of students' interaction while they work together in a PBL class on a number of different triggers that function as language tasks.

The main aim in analysing the interaction is to show that although the conversation is carried out by students who may have divergent interests

and proficiency, they share a common goal which is finding solutions to given problem also known as trigger in this study context and thus, they direct themselves towards it. The trigger forms the platform for the students' learning as it is used as a vehicle for learning. The triggers used in this study are open-ended, real life scenario pertaining to communication.

## **Methods**

This paper is drawn from a larger study with a primarily interpretive approach. By interpretive, I refer to qualitative studies that take a semiotic approach, that is, one that focuses on the co-construction of meaning within a particular social setting (Holliday 2002; Mason 2002). I adopted the qualitative ethnographic case study approach to obtain detailed pictures of the PBL phenomenon and language learning to investigate the process of PBL; how students learn and construct knowledge together. As Merriam (1998) indicated, case study is used in order to understand context-related phenomenon that are anchored in real-life situations. It was an appropriate method of inquiry as I aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon in its natural setting. In particular, the major concern was to identify factors in PBL classroom interaction that enabled (or constrained) English language use and development. The data for this article is from the classroom observation video recordings, audio taped student interviews and student reflective journal entries.

### ***Participants and setting***

The participants of the study comprised students and lecturers from University Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM). The students were a class of 25 (five groups of five students each) second semester undergraduates from the Faculty of Technical and Vocational Education enrolled in an ESP course; UMB 1052 Effective Communication, and who were involved in a PBL environment in its natural settings. After the second week, a group of five students comprising two moderate and three limited users of English was identified and they then became the focus of the study, whereas the lecturers comprise a course lecturer and six other ESP lecturers.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Since an essential procedure in ensuring rich description, as well as research credibility in qualitative research is to triangulate data, multiple sources and techniques of data collection methods were used. As I am particularly interested in the ways in which these social phenomenon occur or are performed in the context of a PBL setting, I used classroom observations which is an established method for data collection in case

study research (Miles & Huberman 1994; Stake 1995; Yin 2003). Twelve of the fourteen weeks of lessons were observed and video recorded and this provided me an emic perspective to excavate knowledge and data. Besides that, unstructured interviews with open-ended questions (Clough & Nutbrown 2002; Holiday 2002) conducted with the students, course lecturer and other ESP lecturers as another option of data collection allowed freedom of expression and spontaneous reflections from them. All eleven interviews were audio recorded with permission. In addition, field notes, reflective journal entry data gathered from learners and my own reflective diary was used to provide additional depth and verification for the data gathered from the classroom observations and interviews with the participants (learners and lecturers).

The videos were examined and summarised via video mapping. Identified episodes of the classroom interaction and all interviews were transcribed in full and verbatim using the Transana program for video analysis (Fassnacht & Woods 2006). In doing so, anonymity was upheld to comply with both data protection regulations and participants' identity on ethical grounds. Though the data are presented as objectively as possible, the findings of the investigation, like those of most qualitative studies, are open to multiple interpretations (Wolcott 1994). Furthermore, the resulting conclusions are clearly limited to this particular 'sending context' (Lincoln & Guba 1985); in turn, the reader is invited to evaluate their 'transferability' to his/her own 'receiving context'.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The initial findings illustrate that the PBL approach cum environment offered both linguistic and affective benefits in the ESP class (Anthony 2008a; 2008b). It stimulated communication and generated substantial discussion on a variety of natural learning issues, resulting in constant use of English for academic and social interaction. In reference to that, this paper presents the key issue of what and how ESP students learn via PBL beginning with the learning process and key elements of language learning; team-working which includes elements of collaboration in order to accomplish their common goal taking into consideration the students' existing learning culture where the teacher is the authority and one normally does not ask questions.

### ***The learning process***

The PBL learning cycle is performed through the process that begins with the presentation of a problem and ends with student reflection. From the

beginning, students question the facilitator to obtain additional problem information and they also gather facts by doing research (Torp and Sage 2002). In this study, when the students were required to carry out a community project, they performed searches to determine what encompasses a community project. The students also identify concepts they need to understand better in order to solve the learning issues problem.

After cracking the problem with their existing knowledge, the students then set out independently to research the learning issues they have chosen. They then get together again after a couple of days to share what they have learned, reconsider their assumptions and/or generate new assumptions in light of their new learning. As proven from the current study data (Anthony 2010), when completing the task, the students deliberately reflect on the problem to abstract the lessons learned about the problem and about their self-directed learning and collaborative problem-solving process. While working through the problems, it was evident that students use whiteboards/ flipcharts to record their budding ideas. These ideas were simultaneously recorded on a word document as evidence of the progressive learning process for future reference and discussion.

In the process of analysing the trigger, the FILA table (a grid used in the process of analysing the trigger to facilitate understanding and learning) and whiteboard serve as a focus for negotiation of the problem and as a forum for students to co-construct knowledge. Actually the whiteboard helps students to externalise their problem solving and allows them to focus on more difficult aspects of the problem-solving process. It further provides a model of a systematic approach to problem solving and supports student planning and monitoring as they identify what needs to be recorded on or later removed from the board.

In addition, the analysing process helps support knowledge constructions as students are guided through their learning and problem-solving process. As students begin to discuss a problem with a raw understanding, they in fact activate their prior knowledge, which helps prepare them for learning. It also facilitates the social construction of knowledge as students work in small group using their inquiry skills to solve given real-world problems. For example, these ESP students learn in the context of authentic work related communication problems, using the inquiry and discourse skills of communication. As students generate assumptions and defend them to others in their group, they publicly articulate their current state of understanding, enhance knowledge construction and set the stage for future

learning. In doing so, it is found that students became engaged in the learning process based on their initial understanding and maximised the ample opportunity created to use the English language, unlike the lecture-based lessons.

Triggers used in the course inspired and allowed students to visit key concepts in a number of problems across the entire course and thus this strengthen the understanding and mastery of the concepts which tend to be the fundamental gist of the curriculum. For example, each student in this study was obliged to explain and justify her solution/assumption to the other members and to listen to as opposed to hear the others' reasoning. Thus, they had opportunities to clarify or revise their own understanding, both when they give justifications and also when they listen to the other members' clarifications and attempt to develop a structure in which both their own constructions and the others' rationalisations make sense. Besides strengthening knowledge and understanding, it is likely that these raised their confidence level for future tasks as well which involved the concepts either in theory or practice. The students became more confident as time went by as, by now, they knew what meeting was all about, and how to prepare for, engage in and chair one. In addition, they knew how to write the minutes, agenda, and other relevant documents.

Another notable observation that leads to an assumption was that the small group structure in this student-centred approach helped distribute the cognitive load among members of the group, taking advantage of group members' distributed expertise and level of language proficiency in this mixed ability context by allowing the entire group to tackle the trigger/problem which otherwise under normal circumstances in a teacher-centred class, be too difficult and challenging for each student to handle alone as homework at the end of lesson. The notion of distributed expertise in this PBL course is particularly relevant because as the students divide up the learning issues, and engage in self-directed independent learning, they become 'experts' in the particular topics they are assigned or responsible for: they researched and sourced topics particularly well. They feel proud and to certain extend, honoured too to be in that position; providers of knowledge and not the receiver as of in a regular teacher-centred class.

In the course of this study, it was evident that the students had analysed the problems, found solutions, organised visits and arranged appointments and conducted interviews involving people at different level of social status using appropriate communication protocols to obtain information in order



to solve given trigger leading to completion of mission or rather assignment undertaken. It is also apparent that the students managed their own learning which includes planning, monitoring, problem-solving and finding solutions to the problem. In so doing, they had learnt from shared knowledge and accumulated expertise by their own study and research just as real practitioners do.

Furthermore, research also suggests that the small group discussions and debate in PBL sessions enhances problem solving and higher order thinking and promotes shared knowledge construction. On the whole, the PBL learning process which evolved around small-group problem solving, gave rise to opportunities for learning that did not typically occur in the traditional lecturer-centred classrooms. It further incorporated both independent learning as well as team working as its key supporting features. The construct team working in this paper predominantly refers to collaboration.

### ***Collaboration***

As Barnes and Todd (1977) make clear, the cognitive value of collaboration goes beyond that of resolving cognitive conflicts that may come to pass when group members work to achieve consensus. My study indicated that students valued and utilised the opportunity to work collaboratively. I found that most students were positive that PBL contributed to both personal learning and team-working skills. The students said they needed to take time to listen to each other's experiences and perspectives. However, they expressed and confirmed greater enjoyment in taking responsibility for their own learning. They too reported that they had learned to respect each other's opinions. In addition, they claimed to have learnt a lot from each other besides learning about teamwork.

*"... we all were divided into group and every group discuss about the issues that for day ... in the group, everyone can be leader and for that day I become a group leader. We all make discussion to solve the problem ... from here I learn how to organise the group". (AM's Reflective Journal, 20 January)*

*"With discussion group, I get more information and knowledge from our group members ... I very happy with members of group ... they respect each other and we doing this in team ... group ..." (NA's Reflective Journal, 21 January)*

*“... what we have learn were very interesting because I need to cooperate with my friend especially in my group”. (UA’s Reflective Journal, 21 January)*

*“Before this I think that it hard for us (men) to work under a woman but our leader Laura was excellent leader that she organise our team quite well ...”. (MZ’s Reflective Journal, 28 January)*

*“What I learned ... is co-operation is very important in the group. Via co-operation, we can divide our duty and complete it well without any complain ...”. (NJ’s Reflective Journal, 28 January)*

Furthermore, the findings overall suggests that PBL has made a positive, well-received contribution to learning during this ESP course. In the PBL classroom under study, the use of small groups facilitated students’ learning of ESP content and English language through collaboration. From my perspective, problem-solving, consensus seeking and genuine attempts to communicate are all part of collaborating to learn. As mentioned earlier, opportunities for learning not present in lecturer-centred classrooms prevailed when students were engaged in the PBL collaborative activity. Rather than passively receiving units of knowledge from some external source of expertise, they actively derived and constructed knowledge from multiple sources. These sources included the knowledge of experts discovered during their independent investigations of learning issues, and communication and negotiations among group members in elaborating and attempting to understand the knowledge in the context of the case, as professed for example by students:

*“I learnt how to ask people and get information from the public... I interviewed people and asked them about ...” (NM’s Reflective Journal, 28 January).*

*“Besides that, I also learn we should not judge something only base on our opinion ... we should consider other people’s opinion. Sometimes our opinion might be right and sometimes definitely wrong ... so, to get the best opinion we need to ask ...” (NN’s Reflective Journal, 28 January).*

*“What I’ve learned? Hmmm ... so many things ... how to take actions, to make decision in a short time and etc ...” (SA’s Reflective Journal, 28 January).*

*“I have learnt lot of lesson. For the first, I learn how to do interview ... Second, I learnt about how to be a good presenter...” (MA’s Reflective Journal, 28 January).*

As the students worked together and strove to communicate, opportunities naturally came up for them to verbalise their thinking, explain or justify their assumptions, solutions and ask for clarifications. These students began to realise the value of the knowledge they brought to the course, the value of collaboration, and accepting that peers also had important, and often previously disregarded forms of knowledge, to share and support learning. For Vygotsky (1978), social interaction is a mechanism for individual development, since, in the presence of a more capable participant, the novice is drawn into, and operates within, the space of the expert's strategic processes for problem solving. More specifically, the dialogically constituted inter-psychological event between individuals of unequal abilities (the moderate user and limited user) is a way for the novice to extend current competence. During the analyzing of trigger or rather the problem-solving stage, the more experienced individual (the moderate user) is often observed to guide, support, and shape actions of the novice (the limited user) who, in turn, takes on board and internalizes the expert's strategic processes. It was noted that the collaboration between students during the PBL resulted in increase use of English as students opted to use English instead of their L1.

These were probably due to issues related to the MACE (motivation, attitude, confidence and engagement) factors disclosed and discussed in my main study (Anthony 2010). Here the dominant participant (moderate user) actively encourages the novice (limited user) to participate in the task. Subsequently, class transcripts and learner reflective journals also indicate that students frequently used their group as a tool for English learning as they taught and asked questions to each other. They helped each other pronounce, spell and write English words. They discussed rather vaguely English vocabulary, grammar and how to look up words in the dictionary in the process of analysing given triggers. Not only did limited user students learn from moderate users, but moderate users learned too as they were assisting the limited users. The success of student groups in enabling learning and increasing learner confidence combined with overwhelmingly positive attitudes students had towards PBL group work all suggest that students developed effective team working skills in PBL after all. They learned to work together, to organize them and tend to have developed the strategy of using team roles. They successfully found ways of working together despite having to adapt to the differed and challenging teaching and learning approach.

## Conclusion

So, what students learn through PBL is that ESP students learn English and content knowledge via the process of problem-solving, and this is consolidated by team-working and independent self-directed learning to a certain extent. This was what seemed to be lacking in the lecturer-centred classes where students, particularly in this study context, waited passively for direction. This effective engagement of the students has fostered the learning of language through use manifested via the active engagement and use of language in the PBL classroom.

However, by its very nature, a case study cannot provide generalisations. Thus, the present paper does not claim that what occurred in this classroom is necessarily typical, although it does bear similarities with other studies of classroom discourse (Leung 1993; Mercer 1995; Cazden 1992; McNaughton 1995; Nuthall 1997). However, it is hoped that what has been illustrated here might serve to illuminate similar contexts, and thus resonate with other educators. Readers may well of course have different interpretations of these interactions. Those which have been presented here are, as noted, merely a fraction of the data which were collected and analysed.

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# 3 **Composition and revision in computer-based written assessment**

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## **Background**

With the advent of computer-based (CB) assessment, innovative ways of recording and analysing data have emerged. At Cambridge ESOL, snapshots/backups of a candidate's CB writing output are taken at regular time intervals throughout the test as part of the Cambridge Connect test delivery system (see Seddon 2005); these can be used in a research context to build up a picture of exactly how the writing text was developed. This can give information on time taken for planning, revising and writing, and at what stages different activities occurred. Its use has the added advantage of not affecting or altering the behaviour of the candidate.

When composing on computer it is easier to make revisions to the text, such as replacing, inserting, editing and deleting characters, than when writing on paper. These changes can also be made without impinging on the appearance of the text. In addition, composition on computer does not need to occur in a linear, start-to-finish, fashion; writers can build text up from notes or write the body of the text and then come back to the introduction/conclusion. Thus one issue that arises is whether or not the candidates composing on computer are able to optimise the advantages of the mode and thus produce more polished and perhaps better composition.

This paper will describe an exploratory study looking at composition and revision in a small sample of candidates who took Cambridge ESOL's Business English Certificate (BEC) Vantage in the CB mode. Using the snapshot technology described above, the author built a picture of text development during a live examination in an attempt to establish whether candidates had optimised the mode of administration in writing their assessment response. In particular, attention focused on the time spent on different composition/revision activities and explored the relationship between these and the scores in the Writing test. Results can provide information for teachers, learners and candidates on successful revision activities.

Revision involves analysing what has been written and evaluating its success in conveying the intended message (Crawford, Lloyd & Knoth

2008: 109), essentially identifying a mistake/weakness and then rectifying it. Successful revision 'results not from the number of changes a writer makes but from the degree to which revision changes bring the text closer to fitting the demands of the text' (Faigley & Witte 1981: 411). Changes to a text can involve surface-level editing (e.g. spelling, punctuation, formatting, changing a word) or deeper-level changes where the message itself is changed (e.g. focusing on organisation and coherence). Much of the research literature has classed both of these changes as revision; although as Worden (2009:160) noted, this could be seen as too inclusive as it would consist of features traditionally seen as editing.

Revision can be affected by a number of factors such as writing experience, first language (L1), composing in a second language (L2), knowledge of revision strategies and when to apply them, context of composition (e.g. classroom, assessed, timed, importance, mode etc.) and familiarity with the task, topic, audience etc. First language studies have found that inexperienced writers focus on surface changes, mainly single-word, often lexical, revisions (Somers 1980:382), with few revisions resulting in a change of meaning (Faigley & Witte 1981: 407), whereas expert writers tend to revise at all levels (Somers 1980:386). Studies comparing revision by administration mode have found a number of differences. In a study on non-native speakers in which participants wrote two comparable writing tasks in non-timed conditions, Li (2006: 5) found that participants revised more at both higher- (at or above the phrase level) and lower-(word or character) levels when composing CB texts and did less pre-planning. Van Waes & Schellens (2003: 848) found that CB composers tended to revise more extensively at the beginning of the writing process, did not normally undertake any systematic revision of their work before finishing and focused on lower level linguistic features. When writing in a foreign language, language proficiency is likely to have an effect on revising processes, which may be reflected in the kinds of revisions writers make to their foreign language texts (Stevenson, Schoonen & de Glopper 2006: 202). Plakans (2008: 113) argues that writing expertise in L1 has a strong impact on the L2 writing process and that this impact is separate from second language (L2) proficiency and perhaps more central.

For studies examining the composition and revision processes, results have been inconsistent; this is due to different research contexts: L1 or L2 based, timed or untimed, assessed or not assessed and single or multiple drafts. In addition, authors have used a number of different taxonomies, making comparison across different studies quite problematic. Inconsistent findings



may also result from the rapid changes in exposure to technology both by the participants and by tools available to the researchers.

Various models of the writing process have been put forward, which stem from the Hayes & Flower model (1980). This model viewed writing as a recursive and not a linear process (Weigle 2002: 25). Van Waes & Schellens (2003: 830) posit that it is implausible that one single writing process exists and suggest that cognitive processes are dependent on social and physical conditions and the writer's conception of the task. Their research showed that both individual characteristics and the mode of composition (physical environment) influenced writing processes. Burke & Cizek (2006: 153) stress that writing is a thinking process that is guided by goals set by the writer; these goals are developed and modified throughout the writing process. Goals can be high-level, to do with meaning and direction or low-level, detail oriented such as spelling, capitalisation, punctuation and formatting. The authors hypothesise that a number of differences may be evident in compositions between administration modes due to high- and low-level goal setting and development. For example in paper-based (PB) composition, planning of text structure and order (setting high-level goals) is a critical step necessary before writing can commence due to the difficulty in making changes once the text has been generated. This initial goal making step is not necessary in CB composition due to the ease of revision and reordering.

## **Methodology**

The following research questions guided the study:

- 1) To what extent do candidates utilise the CB medium when writing a BEC Vantage Part 2 assessment task in terms of composition and revision strategies?
- 2) How do composition and revision strategies relate to writing score achieved?

The focus of the study is Part 2 of the BEC Vantage Writing paper. BEC Vantage assesses English language ability used in a business context at Council of Europe 'Vantage' level (B2 on the Common European Framework of Reference - CEFR). It is available in a computer-based (CB) and paper-based format and consists of four papers: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. In Part 2 of the Writing paper candidates are required to write either a piece of business correspondence, a report or a proposal. The composition is based on a rubric and input text(s) and should be between 120–140 words in length. The range of functions in the task

may include explaining, apologising, reassuring, complaining, describing, summarising, recommending or persuading. The nature of the Part 2 task necessitates the need for an organised formal piece of text which should provide opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their composition and revision style.

This study is an exploratory case study and as such is limited to ten samples. Candidates from a single CB BEC Vantage session (December 2008) were sampled on the basis of exam grade (A-E) and, thus, their overall English language ability. A mix of passing (grades A-C) and failing (grades D&E) candidates was randomly selected. There were 10 candidates in total: 3 at grade C, 2 at grades A, B and D and one at grade E. All candidates answered the same questions. Eight of the sample came from the UK, and therefore represent a mix of L1s and two from a Mexican centre. Precise L1 data was not available for the sample. Five of the candidates sampled were male and five female. Ages ranged from 25-50, with a mean age of 31.

The data comprised of the response output obtained from the Connect test software which is referred to as a 'response history report'. The report contains a series of snapshots taken as the candidates compose their response. A snapshot is taken every 30-40 seconds and also each time a candidate moves between test parts. Thus from the response history report we are able to establish in which order candidates have completed the two writing parts, whether they have switched back and forth between parts and how long they have spent on each part.

The data were manually classified into four categories: unchanged, new text, low-level revisions and high-level revisions. Revisions were grouped into low- and high-level changes following Li (2006); low-level revisions being at or below the word level and high-level revisions being at or above the phrase level. When composing on paper it is more difficult for candidates to make high-level changes within existing text so it was considered important to assess the extent and frequency of different kinds of revision. Low- and high-level were also split into sub-categories so as to ascertain more detail about the types of revision made (see below).

#### Low-level Revisions:

- insert word
- delete word
- correct a spelling

- punctuation (insert/delete/change)
- word edit (e.g. *played* to *play*)
- word change/lexical substitution (e.g. *aim* to *purpose*)

#### High-level Revisions:

- insert phrase
- insert sentence
- delete phrase
- delete sentence
- re-write phrase
- re-write sentence
- cut and paste at or above the phrase level

Using the coding output, the author mapped activity (unchanged, new text, low-level revisions and high-level revisions) across the time duration of each composition. This was in order to investigate the stage at which revision and composition activities occur within the writing process and the duration of the activities. These findings were then related to test score. In addition, frequencies of each activity and sub-category were counted so that comparisons could be made about prevalence of each activity.

### Findings and discussion

Candidates used a variety of composition/revision strategies, which appear to depend very much on the individual and their interaction with the administration mode, with some candidates having distinct periods of composition and revision and some switching repeatedly back and forth. There were few time periods where no change occurred to the composition. This shows that virtually all the time was spent actively engaging in either composing or revising text. The fact that this composition was timed would probably account for this. Returning to the initial research questions:

#### **To what extent do candidates utilise the CB medium when writing a BEC Vantage Part 2 assessment task in terms of composition and revision strategies?**

As far as overall composition strategy is concerned, nine of the ten candidates essentially composed from beginning to end, although they did return to earlier portions of the text to make revisions. One candidate wrote key words and a skeleton structure and then used this to build up the composition. It is evident that candidates did not fully utilise the CB medium in terms of the flexibility of composition approach that word processing allows and composed in a similar way to one would in a PB test

(i.e. from beginning to end). This could well be an effect of it being a timed assessment, in that candidates want to get their ideas/text written down quickly. Also, it could be a result of the scaffolding structure and the level of cognitive challenge required by the task. There was little evidence of on-screen planning, a finding supported by Li (2006) who noted that writers engaged in less planning when composing with a word processor. It is recommended that teachers/candidates heed the advice for planning their composition in either PB or CB mode and to teach CB candidates how the mode could be used to aid planning.

All the candidates in this study did engage extensively in modifying the last few words of text as they typed new text, which may suggest that composition was 'type then monitor' rather than 'plan then type'. This fits with the hypothesis of Burke & Cizek (2006), discussed above, who assert that goal setting is not necessary in CB composition due to the ease of revision and reordering. Lee (2002: 152) also notes that planning and text production on the computer appear to be more interwoven than they are on paper.

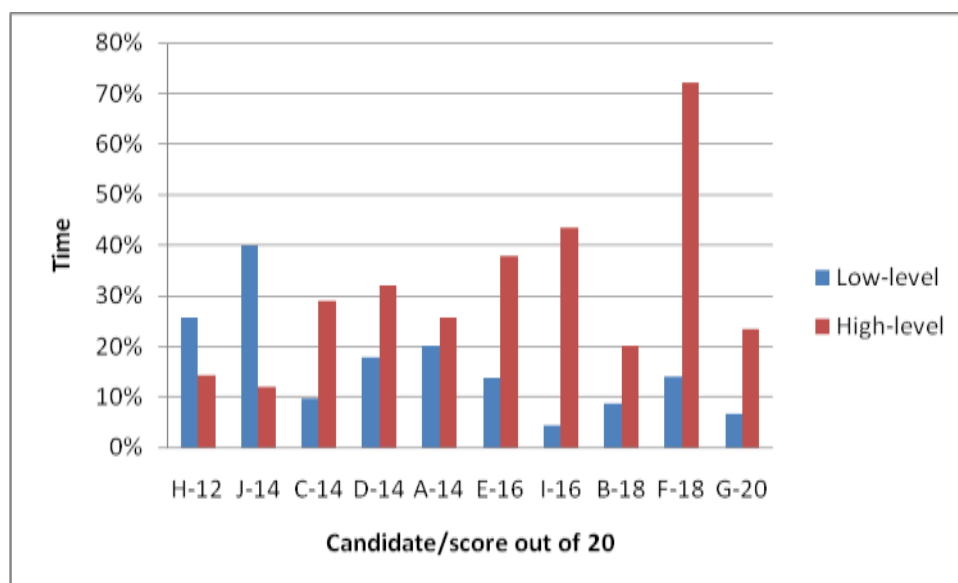
Candidates engaged in both low- and high-level revision activities, with the proportion varying between candidates. Low-level changes mostly involved inserting/deleting/replacing a word and the high-level changes were mostly at the phrase rather than sentence level and usually involved inserting a phrase. This supports the findings from the previous literature which suggests that CB revisions tend to focus on lower-level linguistic features (Crawford et al. 2008: 112, Van Waes & Schellens 2003: 348). There were limited proofing changes, such as spelling and punctuation, although all compositions could have benefited from them. This may reflect an over-reliance on the auto-correct features and spellcheckers that accompany word processing packages; users may pay less attention to proofing activities as the software does it for them. It is recommended that the importance of proofing is emphasised in writing classrooms.

The study shows that candidates utilise the administration mode when revising. The majority of the revisions made could have been made in PB mode; however, it could be argued that the frequency at which they occur would be unlikely in a PB script due to the resulting untidy appearance of insertions, crossings out, etc. The frequency of activities that are only easily achievable in CB mode (e.g. re-writing a phrase/sentence and cutting and pasting) is not high. For these candidates it appears to be the opportunity to make frequent revisions rather than the nature of the

revisions per se that candidates have utilised in the CB mode. This could be a facet of the task itself in terms of scaffolding, time and length. These limited findings add strength to the comparability of PB and CB timed written assessments as CB candidates do not appear to exhibit different behaviour to PB candidates.

### **How do composition and revision strategies relate to writing score achieved?**

From this limited sample, no relationship was found between composition strategy and score. Time spent on revision activities themselves changed with candidate; in general candidates who attained lower scores spent more time on low-level revisions and less on high-level ones, while the opposite is true for high scorers (see Figure 1). In one sense, this supports the literature on experienced/inexperienced writers revising differently (Faigley & Witte 1981, Somers 1980); however it must be remembered that in this context scores will also reflect L2 proficiency in addition to writing expertise (Plakans 2008).



**Figure 1:** Proportion of time spent on different revision activities  
(candidates in score order)

The revision activities carried out did not necessarily lead to better scores. This highlights the importance of quality of revision. It is recommended that teachers should advise students about using revision appropriately, i.e. tailoring the revision strategy to the type of composition and its constraints and not focussing too much on revising because one feels one should or because the mode allows it.

One of the limitations of this kind of analysis is the fact that composition/revision is examined only from the perspective of the compositions. An improvement would be to couple this analysis with candidate interviews, using the response history report as a basis for collecting candidate perceptions on how they were composing and more importantly why they were composing in this manner.

The task used in the study was not overly challenging and scaffolding was provided, which further decreased the challenge. It would be interesting to conduct a similar study on higher proficiency levels to investigate whether a more cognitively and linguistically challenging task would produce similar findings. In addition, investigating which specific revision behaviours result in improvements to text quality would aid the understanding of which revisions to attend to in timed writing.

It could be argued that the timed, assessment focus of this study is too narrow and that it does not fully capture the writing process. However, time-constrained writing is a facet of real life, especially in the business world. It is important that students learn how to compose and revise effectively in such conditions, if they are to use their L2 successfully at their work or place of study. This study suggests some aspects for teachers and candidates to focus on. Ultimately, it is important that students learn how to revise in a way suitable for a given context. Worden (2009:176) is undoubtedly right in arguing that ‘those students that have at their disposal a variety of composing strategies and are able to critically reflect on the requirements of the specific writing context to choose among them will be the best prepared’.

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## 4 Some methodological issues in conducting qualitative research multilingually

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Qualitative researchers conducting international or cross-cultural research projects may choose a multilingual approach (e.g. Marschan-Piekkari & Welch 2004). However, methodological issues arising from conducting ethnographic research in more than one language have not been fully explored. This essay aims at discussing some of these issues.

In Chen (2009) I adopted Spradley's (1979) approach to ethnographic interviews by collecting interview data either in English (my L2) from the English-speaking teachers or in Chinese (L1) from the Taiwanese teachers, depending on their choices of language for the interviews. The purpose of that study was to examine how these two groups of teachers conceptualised their team teaching experiences. All the audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim in English or in Chinese and became the data corpus for the case study. During the process of fieldwork, data transcription and data analysis, no translation was performed. Yet the data was due to be translated into one language at some point during the research process. Guided by the principle of "trustworthiness" for qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), I analysed the data in their original languages. After the analysis was completed, I translated the Chinese data into English only because English was the reporting language. Yet, as I analysed the data, several methodological challenges arose that called for further examination. Here I will discuss three of them.

First, with the English data and the Chinese data at hand, how should one perform the analysis? Conducting research multilingually is a subject that has not been fully explored fully. I adopted Thomas' (2006) inductive approach of coding a set of data in one language at a time. Then I left some break time before delving into the other set of data and analysis, which means that I analysed the data in Chinese or in English separately before comparing and integrating their generated categories together. The advantage was that I was able to keep my brain fresh during the coding period since possible "conceptual contamination" from the last coding experience was minimised (Chen 2009: 88-89).

Second, there is the issue of translation. Berreman (2004: 184-185) believes that language and culture shape people's experiences; hence, it is not possible to literally translate words between languages. In my case, using my participants' original languages in coding enabled me to minimise possible loss of meaning during the analysis process and to increase the credibility of data interpretation. Besides, sometimes some words that are found in one language cannot be found in the other. For instance, my Taiwanese participants used the phrase *moci* (meaning "silent understanding") several times as they conceptualised their ideal team qualities, while the English data contained nothing that carries a similar meaning. Such conceptual "lacunas" (Chen 2009: 85-86) reveal that the two groups of teachers may have conceptualised their common experiences differently, which can only be revealed by keeping and analysing the data in the participants' original languages.

Third, there is the issue of power relations between the researcher and the researched (Chen, in press). This issue arose from a further examination of my own questioning behaviours (Briggs 1986) during my interviews in English and in Chinese. In a recent study of mine (Chen, in press), I adopted Schiffrin's (1994) model of sociolinguistic interview questions to examine my own probing questions. Part of the result shows patterned differences in the way I formed questions in English, my L2, and in Chinese, my L1. My analysis also shows that, as I used an L2 to interview my participants, I seemed to be able to probe more often and to elicit richer data from them. This suggests that the language my participants and I used for the interview might have influenced how I questioned, probed and negotiated power (Fairclough 1989) with my participants in that language. This finding not only reveals the potential advantage of being a non-native language interviewer in cross-cultural research but also extends our knowledge of how ethnographic data is produced.

In sum, this essay has discussed some of the methodological issues that may arise from conducting research multilingually. The findings suggest that ethnographers in multilingual research should be aware of similar issues that may arise from data collection and data analysis. Multilingual researchers may also have to be not only linguistically equipped and methodologically competent but also interculturally and cross-culturally competent.

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## 5 The dominant language picture naming performance of native Chinese speakers with low and intermediate English proficiency

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Abundant evidence suggests cognitive advantages associated with speaking two languages (e.g. Bialystok 1999, 2001; Bialystok, Craik & Ruocco 2006; Bialystok & Martin 2004; Costa, Hernandez, Costa-Faidella & Sebastian-Galles 2009). However, recent research has also reported a disadvantage for bilinguals when accessing their dominant language during speech production. For example, Gollan, Montoya, Cera & Sandoval (2008) showed that their Spanish-English bilinguals were slower and less accurate when naming pictures in their dominant language (English) than English monolinguals. Similarly, Pyers, Gollan & Emmorey (2009) also showed that bilinguals experienced more TOT states in their dominant language compared to monolinguals.

Gollan et al. (2008) proposed that this disadvantage was due to divided frequency of use between the two languages. The basic idea is that as speakers' L2 proficiency increases, they are assumed to know roughly twice as many words as monolinguals (or more accurately speakers with a low L2 proficiency because a true monolingual is almost impossible to find). However, as at any given time only one of the two representations (e.g. either 'gracias' or 'thanks') is spoken, speakers with a higher L2 proficiency necessarily speak words using their dominant language less frequently than those with a lower L2 proficiency. Lexical representations of the dominant language will have accumulated less practice overall for speakers with a higher L2 proficiency. This reduction in dominant language use weakens the connection between a lexical node and its phonological node and therefore either slows down the process of word retrieval or results in further word retrieval difficulties.

An alternative hypothesis for the disadvantage is that as speakers' L2 proficiency increases, they face fiercer cross-language interference. The idea is that in a given communicative act, phonological (e.g. Pallier, Colome & Sebastian-Galles 2001) and orthographic representations (e.g. Bowers, Minouni & Arguin 2000; De Groot & Nas 1991; Dijkstra & Van

Heuven 1998; Van Heuven, Dijkstra & Grainger 1998) of the translation equivalents from the language not-in-use (i.e. L2) are also activated to compete with the L1 targets for selection. The co-activation may result in slower target word retrieval. This is because the L2 translation equivalents need to be inhibited or suppressed in some way for the L1 targets to surface (e.g. Green 1986, 1998; Meuter & Allport 1999).

Some researchers (Ivanova & Costa 2008; Ransdell & Fischler 1987) have pointed out that one should put on hold the conclusion that increased L2 proficiency will result in slower and less accurate dominant language naming, until appropriate speakers are tested and compared. The appropriate speakers, perhaps, should include those with a similar dominant language proficiency, among whom some have a higher L2 proficiency and some a lower L2 proficiency. In evaluating speakers' dominant language proficiency, in addition to self-ratings, a researcher needs to consider the following: (1) 'How' and 'where' did the speakers acquire their dominant language? Was it through formal education, or at home? If it was through formal education, did the learning take place in the dominant language speaking country, or abroad at an overseas school?, and (2) 'Where' are they now? Are they still living in their dominant language speaking country, or are they now living in another country? These questions will help the researcher to determine the speakers' dominant language proficiency more accurately.

Last but not least, one should not jump to any conclusions too quickly should the result show a disadvantage. To illustrate this point, let me take 'concluding one's finding by the divided frequency of use hypothesis' as an example. The divided frequency of use hypothesis is established on the assumption that speakers have an equal number of total speaking opportunities per day. On this assumption, the researcher normally asks the speakers to estimate their daily use of their dominant language (e.g. Thai) in percentage. The typical finding is that those with a lower L2 proficiency (e.g. English) report a higher percentage of daily use of Thai (e.g. 92%) than those with a higher L2 proficiency (e.g. daily use of Thai: 75%). Should the results show that those with a higher English proficiency were slower and less accurate to name pictures in Thai than those with a lower English proficiency, one is tempted to equate 'reduced percentage of daily use' to a 'reduction in the actual dominant language use'. However, it is possible that people with different language abilities can have very different amounts of speaking opportunities per day. With the increase of proficiency in L2, the speaker is in theory able to have more opportunities

to associate with other bilinguals who share his languages and/or monolinguals of his dominant language or L2. Providing the speaker takes advantage of the increased language opportunities, there is no reason to assume his dominant language will suffer due to reduced percentage of dominant language use.

Only when the above issues have been addressed, and a disadvantage for speakers with a higher L2 proficiency to access their dominant language during speech production is replicated, can one consider hypotheses to account for the phenomenon. However, to date, not a single study has addressed all of these issues. For example, in Gollan et al.'s study (2008), their selected Spanish-English but English-dominant speakers, were exposed to English at a much later age than their English monolinguals (who self-rated their knowledge of another language as very low). The ages to which the groups were exposed to English are 2.3 for their Spanish-English speakers, and 0.2 for their English monolinguals. However, the age at which their Spanish-English speakers were exposed to Spanish is 0.5. Although the Spanish-English speakers rated 'English' as their dominant language and their English speaking to be 6.8/7, their English speaking ability, according to Gollan et al., was significantly lower than that of their English monolinguals. These two facts clearly indicate that their Spanish-English speakers' English was not really as good as that of their English monolinguals. The authors reported that the Spanish-English speakers used English (their dominant language) significantly less than the English monolinguals (88.1% vs. 99.4%), and suggested that this was responsible for their slower naming in English. The potential problem of this interpretation has been discussed previously in the latter half of the previous paragraph.

The issues of (1) whether a dominant language naming difference exists between speakers who have a similar dominant language proficiency but different L2 proficiency levels and that (2) if so, which account best explains the difference, await more conclusive evidence. In the current study, I compared the Chinese picture naming performance of Chinese speakers who have a similar Chinese proficiency but different English (L2) proficiency levels.

## **Participants**

Forty participants meeting the following criteria were recruited from the same university. The criteria included that they: (1) were born to Chinese-speaking parents, (2) grew up and were living in Taiwan, (3) received

education in Chinese, (4) had never studied or lived abroad, and (5) identified themselves as native Chinese speakers. Although a slight variation between native speakers in the ability to use a language is expected (e.g. accent, size of vocabulary, quick verbal wit), it is generally assumed that under normal circumstances people do not need to have their L1 tested to prove that they are native speakers (Valdes & Figueroa 1995). In view of this, the participants were regarded as native Chinese speakers.

The participants were then sorted into low or intermediate proficiency groups based on their English levels, determined by their scores on a standardised English Proficiency Test. The intermediate proficiency group consisted of twenty participants who had a score of TOEIC 780 or equivalent. The remaining twenty did not meet the above requirement and were thus assigned to the low proficiency group. To ensure that participants did not fall into the low proficiency group by a narrow distance from the benchmark, they were asked to comment on the following: (1) Experience in, and score on, a standardised English Proficiency test; (2) Self-rating of their English proficiency. None in the low proficiency group had taken a standardised English Proficiency test, and all self-rated their English to be very low. At the end of the recruiting interview, all participants were asked to self-rate their daily use of English and Chinese as a percentage. This is summarised in Table 1.

	LPG (n = 20)		HPG (n = 20)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Age	20.2	(0.9)	20.3	(0.7)
Age of exposure to Chinese	0	-	0	-
Age of exposure to English	12	-	12	-
Years of Formal Education in Chinese	14.2	(0.9)	14.3	(0.7)
English Proficiency based on				
(1) TOEIC scores or equivalents	-	-	780+	-
(2) Self-rating	very low	-	-	-
% Daily use of Chinese now	97.5	(1.2)	69.2	(4.8)
% Daily use of English now	0.8	(0.6)	28.5	(4.5)
% Daily use of other languages now	1.7	(1.2)	1.6	(1.0)
% Daily Chinese-English switching	0	-	0.7	(0.3)

**Table 1**

*LPG: low proficiency group. HPG: high proficiency group.*

## Material Selection and Independent Raters

Ninety pictures were initially chosen from the International Picture Naming Project database (<http://crl.ucsd.edu/~aszekely/ipnp>) by the author (born to Chinese-speaking parents; received formal education in Chinese, grew up



and works in Taiwan). The Chinese names of these pictures were then typed into a word list and given to forty independent raters.

Twenty of the independent raters were Chinese-English speakers who matching the selection criteria of the intermediate proficiency group on all fronts. The other twenty independent raters were Chinese-English speakers matching the selection criteria of the low proficiency group on all fronts. The raters were asked to increment one point for each word ‘familiar’ to them. A familiar word is defined as one that the raters see ‘frequently written’, or are exposed to ‘frequently in conversation’. The stimulus set was then reduced to contain a total of eighty picture names: forty words (with a familiarity rating of a minimum of 23) were selected and included under the ‘familiar Chinese word’ category, and another forty words (with a familiarity rating of a maximum of 15) were selected and included under the ‘unfamiliar Chinese word’ category. The independent raters were each paid a token fee, and were no longer required for the study.

Familiarity ratings (FRs) of the eighty words given by the forty independent raters were then tested for correlation with the Chinese word frequency values on the IPNP Database (IPNPCFreqs). The lowest FR was 2, and the highest 40. The lowest IPNPCFreqs was 0.000, and the highest 7.317. The mean IPNPCFreq of the eighty words was 2.868. Words with an IPNPCFreq of a maximum of 2.800 were treated as low frequency words. Those with an IPNPCFreq of a minimum of 2.868 were treated as high frequency words. Analysis of FRs and IPNPCFreqs showed a significant correlation ( $r = .657$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In other words, a Chinese word regarded as ‘familiar’ by the independent raters was also one with a high frequency value on the IPNP Database.

### **Design, Instrument, and Procedure**

To avoid any priming effect, as utilised in Ivanova & Costa’s study (2008), the pictures were randomised, with the restriction that no pictures whose names start with the same phoneme could immediately follow each other. The experimental trial had the following structure: A fixation point (‘+’) was presented on a PC screen for 400 milliseconds and was immediately followed by a target picture. The participant had 5000 milliseconds to make a response, and the test automatically advanced onto the next trial. The experiment was carried out in a quiet study room at the University Library. The participants were individually tested, and were instructed to name the pictures in Chinese as fast and as accurately as possible. The instructions were given orally (by the author) in Chinese, and written instructions were

subsequently presented on the computer screen. Participants were unaware of the test purpose.

DMDX (Forster & Forster 2003) was used to display stimuli and record participants' oral responses and reaction times. Reaction time collection followed the convention that timing was from the 'display of the picture' to the 'first sound' of an oral response. An oral response, on the other hand, was recorded from the 'first' to the 'last' sound. During the experiment, in addition to DMDX, the author and an additional coder manually coded each participant's oral responses. Responses were coded using the following categories: (a) CA for correct answers, (b) WA for semantic substitutions or utterance repairs, (c) TOT for delayed semantic substitutions or missing answers.

Examples of WA are:

(1) Semantic substitution

Target: 'Crown'

Response: "Cake"

(中文： 蛋糕)

(2) Utterance repair

Target: 'Pizza'

Response: "A slice of lemon! Ah, no! Pizza!"

(中文： 檸檬片！啊，不對！pisa！)

Examples of TOT are:

(3) Delayed semantic substitution

Target: 'Slingshot'

Response: "Ummm... You can pull it... ummm. Can't think of it."

(中文： 嗯...那個彈的...嗯...想不起來。)

(4) Missing answer

Target: 'Igloo'

Response: "Ummm..."

(中文： 嗯...)

When the test was completed, each participant was asked whether he knew the names of the pictures he failed to provide. All participants confirmed that they knew all of the target words.

Four weeks after the test, the intermediate group were individually contacted and told they were to take part in a 'new' study. When the participants turned up, they were told that the task was to give an oral

answer, translating any Chinese word the author said into English within fifteen seconds. What the participants did not know is that the Chinese words they were to translate into English were in fact the Chinese names of the picture items they named on the online test four weeks ago. The purpose of the follow-up Chinese-English translation test was to identify words that the intermediate proficiency speakers knew in both Chinese and English. When the participants could not provide a correct English translation, they were asked to indicate whether it was due to either ‘never learnt it’ or ‘cannot think of it on the spot’. During the Chinese-English translation test, the author and an additional coder manually coded each participant’s answers. Answers were coded using the following categories: (a) CT for correct translations, (b) NL for words that they have not learnt before, and (c) TOT for words they said they knew and had learnt but simply could not recall on the spot. When the oral translation test was completed, each participant was given the English translations to words that they said ‘they knew and had learnt but simply could not retrieve on the spot’. The participants confirmed that they knew the TOT targets.

### **Data Cropping and Analyses**

First, words that the intermediate proficiency speakers knew in Chinese but ‘did not’ know in English (the NLs) were excluded from their individual reaction time analysis. This was necessary because, for these speakers, retrieval attempts of the Chinese words (on the online naming test) could not have been affected by their English equivalents. Such English equivalents simply did not exist in their lexicon. The percentage of the total words excluded in this procedure was 5% (i.e. about 4 NLs per speaker).

To assess whether performance difference exists between the two groups, separate 2 x 2 ANOVAs were carried out, with ‘familiarity category’ (familiar, unfamiliar) as a within-subject independent variable, ‘participant type’ (low proficiency, intermediate proficiency) as a between-subject independent variable, and naming latencies and error rates as dependent variables.

### **Results**

For the intermediate proficiency group, reaction times to words that the participants ‘knew in both languages and answered correctly’ were analysed. Words the speakers ‘knew in both languages but were responded to incorrectly on the online Chinese naming test’ were coded as errors. The errors consisted of WA and TOT. Error rates were analysed.

For the low proficiency group, reaction times to correct answers in Chinese were analysed. Words that the speakers ‘knew but were incorrectly responded to on the online test’ were coded as errors. The errors consisted of WA and TOT. Error rates were analysed.

	LPG (n = 20)		IPG (n = 20)	
	M	SD	M	SD
FCW (HFCW)	1105.00	(297.28)	1105.19	(205.15)
UFCW (LFCW)	1538.03	(382.79)	1338.07	(251.31)

**Table 2**

*FCW: familiar Chinese words. HFCW: high frequency Chinese words.  
UFCW: unfamiliar Chinese words. LFCW: low frequency Chinese words.*

Error %		LPBG (n = 20)		HPBG (n = 20)	
		FCW (HFCW)	UFCW (LFCW)	FCW (HFCW)	UFCW (LFCW)
(1)	WA	3.8	11.2	0.16	13.7
(2)	TOT	1.1	7.6	2.3	1.5
Total		5	19	3	15

**Table 3**

In the naming latency analysis, the main effect of “Familiarity” was significant

[ $F(1, 38) = 85.67, p < .001$ ;  $F(1, 78) = 104.64, p < .001$ ].

The main effect of “Group” was *not* significant

[ $F(1, 38) = 1.38, p = .25$ ;  $F(1, 78) = 0.01, p = .98$ ].

The interaction between “Familiarity” and “Group” was *not* significant

[ $F(1, 38) = 0.74, p = .49$ ;  $F(1, 78) = 0.98, p = .33$ ].

That is, regardless of their English proficiency, participants named familiar Chinese words ‘faster’ than unfamiliar ones. More importantly, low and intermediate proficiency groups named pictures in Chinese at a similar speed.

In the error rate analysis, the main effect of “Familiarity” was significant

[ $F(1, 38) = 52.56, p < .001$ ;  $F(1, 78) = 45.36, p < .001$ ].

The main effect of “Group” was *not* significant

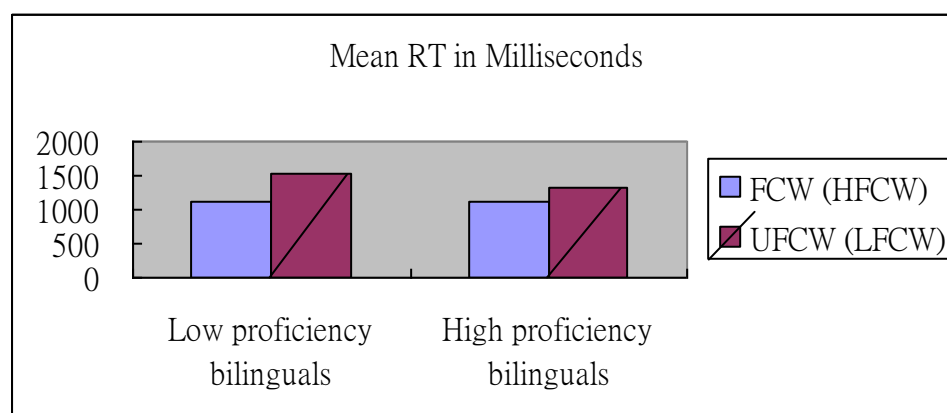
[ $F(1, 38) = 2.26, p = .10$ ;  $F(1, 78) = 0.04, p = .84$ ].

The interaction between “Familiarity” and “Group” was also *not* significant.

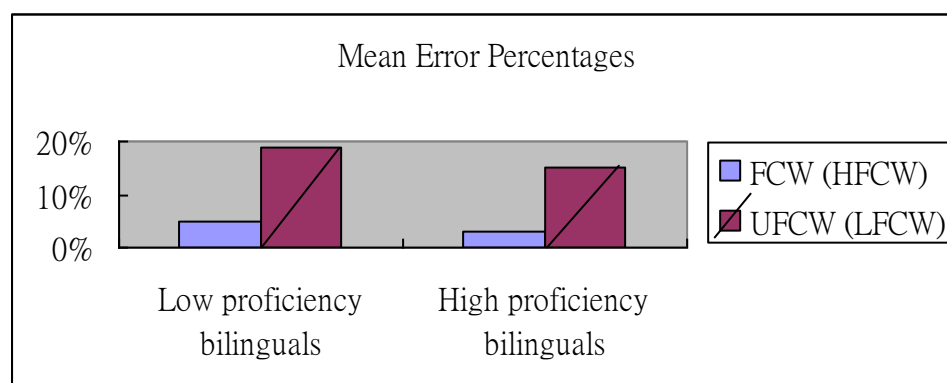
[ $F(1, 38) = 0.10, p = .76$ ;  $F(1, 78) = 0.16, p = .69$ ].

That is, regardless of their English proficiency, participants named familiar Chinese words ‘more accurately’ than unfamiliar ones. More importantly,

low and intermediate proficiency groups named pictures in Chinese with similar accuracy.



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

## Discussion

Studies have shown that in a given communicative act, phonological and orthographic representations of the translation equivalents from the language not-in-use (e.g. L2) are also activated to compete with the L1 targets for selection. Models of mechanisms allowing bilinguals to select the target word in the response language have been proposed. For example, Poulishse (1997) and Poulishse & Bongaerts (1994) argued that conceptual information and the language cue work together in activating lemmas of the appropriate meaning and language. The language cue added to the preverbal message ensures that words in the response (or intended) language reach a *higher* activation level than words in the non-response (or unintended) language. For other competing models for selection processes in bilingual lexical access, see Costa et al. (1999), Green (1998), and Meuter & Allport (1999). All models of bilingual lexical access leave open the question of whether a dominant language naming difference exists

between speakers with different L2 proficiency levels. As reviewed earlier in the current paper, a difference in the dominant language performance between speakers with different L2 proficiency levels has been reported, and divided frequency of use hypothesis and the cross-language interference hypothesis have been proposed to account for the difference.

The divided frequency of use hypothesis suggests that increased bilingualism will lead to 'reduced in the actual dominant language use', causing slower and less accurate dominant language naming. In the current study, although a discrepancy in self-rated percentage of daily use of their dominant language exists between the groups, but not their dominant language naming performance. The divided frequency of use effect may have taken effect *if* the compared groups had had different *dominant* language proficiency levels. The cross-language interference hypothesis suggests that interference becomes fiercer as one's L2 proficiency increases, causing slower and less accurate dominant language naming. In the current study, there was no difference in the groups' dominant language naming. An attempt to explain the null result is that the Chinese linguistic context (i.e. task instruction to name pictures in Chinese as fast and accurately as possible, the author spoke Chinese) could have already set off the intermediate proficiency speakers' inhibition on English while maximally activating Chinese. Linguistic context resulting in one language being more active than the other has been suggested to be possible (e.g. Cheng & Howard 2008; Grosjean 1998).

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## 6 Revisiting English in Bangladesh: Oscillation of the colonized mind in the decolonized world

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### Introduction

In my early childhood my parents put me in a Christian missionary school with the aim of ‘improving my English’. I was then too young to realize that they were probably bearing the colonial legacy that many before them did in the postcolonial context of Bangladesh. Little did I realize this legacy when I saw curiosity among people at my newly learnt ‘missionary English’ and my cursive handwriting of English in a style which was traditional in that school. In later days, my decision to take a major in English and later to become a teacher of English, while from one part inspired by my own academic and professional interest, but also driven by the awe in people’s eyes that the ‘missionary kid’ used to ‘enjoy’ in his early schooling days.

As a teacher of English, I have carried this legacy in my teaching practices by fostering a sense of ‘reverence’ towards British Standard English. However, I have also been divided with the applied linguistics debates on issues like ownership of English, norm of Standard English (SE) and also the spread of English. In the postcolonial present, when the normative height of SE and the legitimacy of its ownership by the native speakers are in contestation with the spread of English in the fluid margins of nation state boundaries, I am interested to see in this paper, how much the practices and philosophies of the English language teachers of a former British colony namely, Bangladesh, have been influenced by such problematizations. While doing so, I will look into the global diffusion of English, the different perspectives underlying this diffusion, and the SE debate. I will then outline the context of Bangladesh and present my small scale research study.

### English: ‘conqueror’, ‘useful’ or ‘killer’?

In today’s world, English is truly the global language of trade, commerce, sports, culture, knowledge and research with greater dominance in the world stage than ever (Reagan & Schreffler 2005). However, reaction to the global spread of English is different among scholars. Crystal (1997:

viii) holds a laissez-faire liberalism as he perceives the spread of English as 'beneficial' which 'presents us with unprecedented possibilities for mutual understanding'. However, Crystal also supports sustaining local language, culture and heritage. Crystal's view has been rightly critiqued by Pennycook (2002) as Crystal, while uncritically celebrating the spread of English as the language of wider communication, ignores the political dimension of 'inequitable relation between English and local languages' (Pennycook 2002: 57).

The issue of English to be settled on uneven compromise with the local languages has been voiced in Phillipson (1992, 2009) and Skuttnab-Kangas (1999, 2000), albeit from different angles. Phillipson (1992) points out that the 'dominance of English' is not naïve as it is 'asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages' (1992: 47). Phillipson (2009) also views the global spread of English as a 'project' which makes English the 'default' language and thus, homogenizes the language choice for international and intranational communications. Phillipson (2009: 338) also perceives the global circulation of English as a 'process' which is facilitated by the scholarly endeavour of legitimising the 'product' – 'Anglo-U.S. linguistic norms'. Skuttnab-Kangas (1999), on the other hand, refers to this spread as 'linguicide' in talking about how English is 'killing' other less dominant languages. She thinks that English homogenizes the linguistic diversity of the world as English is often not learnt as an additional language, rather at the expense of mother tongue (Skuttnab-Kangas 1999).

Pennycook (2002) convincingly proposes the view that the global spread of English under a 'postcolonial performativity' framework. Pennycook (2002) argues for adopting a critical, historical and non-essentialist perspective that would contextually link the global and social inequalities with different forms of local appropriations and resistances. One manifestation of such performativity during the postcolonial period is 'language hybridity' as a means of questioning the legitimacy of inner circle English as the norm while also proposing alternatives (e.g., World Englishes, English as *Lingua Franca*) (Kachru 1986; Jenkins 2006).

Overall, scholarly responses to the spread of English have been manifested with uncritical celebration, especially on the grounds of its instrumental value; and also shown how they have problematized this spread from

different viewpoints. I will now focus on how in postcolonial time, SE norm has been problematized.

### **Standard English: conservatism and liberalism**

Selecting a variety of a language as a ‘norm’ or ‘standard’ is an endeavour that is not only linguistic in nature but also includes factors which are social, cultural, political and economic. In the case of English, it is even harder to identify a ‘standard’ as there is no regulating body to define the standards of the English language like the Académie Française of the French language. Moreover, the non-native varieties of the language are in wide circulation in outer circle countries and the speakers of the language outside the inner circle are using it for intra- and international purposes. It is therefore not difficult to anticipate that determining one variety as the ‘Standard’ entails considerable controversies and debates.

One scholarly manifestation of the ‘Standard English controversy’ is the ‘liberation linguistics’ vs. ‘deficit linguistics’ debate between Kachru (1991) and Quirk (1990). Quirk (1990) articulates his concern that use of varieties other than the Standard English in international context has debilitating effects on the educational development of learners. Quirk (1985: 6) therefore advocates for the employment of ‘a single monochrome standard’ that can also cater for ‘the relatively narrow range of purposes for which the non-natives requires to use English’. Quirk (1990: 7) describes the exercise of nurturing the institutionalization of different varieties other than SE as ‘grossly undervaluing the baby’ while ‘overvaluing the undoubtedly important bathwater of regional, social and ethnic varieties’. Quirk’s endeavour to explore the scope of SE during the diffusion of ‘Englishes’ in the world is a concern that probably everyone shares but the monolithic custodian stance that he holds, undermines the sociolinguistic reality of English outside the inner circle and the agency of the many millions of non-native speakers of the language. Kachru (1985: 30), on the other hand, in his reply to Quirk, calls for a paradigm shift towards pluralisation in standardization to keep pace with the changing perspectives of the world by saying that ‘the native speakers [of English] seem to have lost the exclusive prerogative to control its standardisation’.

Having discussed the different aspects of the global diffusion of English and the SE debate, I will now see how much Bangladeshi English language teachers’ thoughts, considerations and practices are influenced by these discourses of paradigm shift and how they view the spread of English in

their country. Before I present my study, I will give a historical overview of English in Bangladesh as a means of orienting the readers with the context.

### **English in Bangladesh: colonial history and present context**

The history of English in Bangladesh goes back to the time when English East India Company arrived in the Indian subcontinent in 1600. Lord Macaulay in his (in)famous Minute of 1835 gave the indication of creating an educated middle class who would mediate between the mass of the people and the British. Macaulay's Minute stratified society in terms of people's attitudes to English. The Hindus were mostly welcoming to the inclusion of English considering its utilitarian value while the Muslims mostly took it as a threat to Islamic religious education (Hossain & Tollefson 2007). In 1947, when British colonial rule came to an end and the Indian subcontinent was divided into India and Pakistan on the basis of religion; the Muslim dominated part of Bengal became part of Pakistan (later renamed East Pakistan, and still later as Bangladesh).

Though the contestation of English with the regional languages of Pakistan continued on religious grounds, the greater tension was between Urdu and Bangla speakers. Bangla was the native language of 57% of the total population of Pakistan while Urdu was spoken as native language by only 3.5% of the total population of Pakistan (Thompson 2007). When the decision of which national language to choose went to Urdu, there was agitation and strikes in East Pakistan demanding that Bangla also become a national language. The unrest resulted in police firing into a student procession in East Pakistan, killing three students and two passer-bys on 21 February 1952. This incident of people losing their lives for the cause of mother tongue had a tremendous role in building secular Bangla-mediated nationalism and it also sowed the seeds for the subsequent successful fight for independence in the early 1970's (Thompson 2007).

The language policy of Bangladesh, inspired by the nation-binding role of Bangla in the pre-independence era, established Bangla as the state language and medium of instruction in the educational institutes. The government's nationalistic zeal regarding language policy caused English language education in Bangladesh to be neglected for a long period (Rahman 2005). It was much later (1989) that realizing the exigency of gaining access to globalization processes and technological developments, government made English education compulsory in primary and secondary education and in some cases, also in higher education.

Looking back at the history of English in Bangladesh, one can see that English was contested with Islamic religious values during the colonial period and with Bangla-mediated nationalism after independence. However it was never distanced because of its high utilitarian value. Taking this historical overview of English in Bangladesh on board, I will now present my study.

## **Methodology**

### ***Participants***

For the study, I collected data from teachers at different public and private universities in Bangladesh. I emailed my questionnaire to thirty-eight teachers, briefly explaining the purpose of collecting data and requesting their participations. Twenty-six teachers responded with the filled-out questionnaire. Fifteen of them teach at private universities and seven teachers are teaching at public universities. Four of them teach at both public and private universities. From the responses to the question about their most recent educational qualifications, I found that 21 teachers are in the profession with an MA degree and one with an MPhil degree. Two of the teachers have completed their PhD degrees and two of them are currently PhD students. Two teachers have been teaching for more than twenty years, one for more than fifteen years, two for more than ten years and two for more than five years. The rest of the teachers have been teaching for less than five years.

### ***Questionnaire***

The questionnaire that I used was divided into two sections. The first section was based on multiple choice questions where the teachers provided the background information that I have just described. The rest of the questionnaire was open-ended where the teachers responded with no word limit constraints. As for the study, I used questionnaire as my only data collecting instrument, I preferred to make it open-ended to ensure that participants could express their opinions freely.

## **Result and discussion**

### ***Spread of English in the context of Bangladesh***

Reactions of the participants to the spread of English in Bangladesh mostly reveal their welcoming attitudes. However, the reactions also manifest their critical stance in some cases. In many cases, the spread of English has been associated with national progress and development. Many participants were interested in spreading English for ‘inclusive and comprehensive

participation in the global level communication' to ensure 'constructive progress towards the overall development of the country'.

The responses of many participants indicate their laissez-faire liberalism to the spread of English as they think that competence in English can widen more job opportunities in the globalized world. The spread of English therefore is embraced by them on the ground of English being a potential instrument for gaining employment and studying abroad.

Though English in regard to its functional use has been celebrated to a great extent (Crystal 1997), participants, in some cases, also struck a cautionary note on the imperialistic role that English can play by marginalizing the local language and culture (Phillipson 1992). One participant, for example, says:

[...] I quite like it when I see people trying to learn and use English!  
However, problem is when they neglect Bangla, my mother tongue and the local national official language. using English at the expense of Bengali is what bothers me.

(R.No-17)

The spread of English in the social sphere has been interpreted through the prism of globalization and social stratification. One participant expressed the concern that English was creating a powerful elite class in society who, using the language, 'always tend to take an upper hand over the others'. Other participants mentioned about the increased use of English as a "status symbol" among the younger generation by means of the forces of globalization (i.e., cable TV, internet). This indicates the concern of the participants towards the English-mediated digital divide which has developed between the urban youth and the local youth.

Government policy regarding the spread of English has been questioned by many teachers, ironically both for causing and welcoming this spread and for not taking enough measures to sustain it. One participant in the study stressed on using English in all spheres of life. Another participant, probably more concerned about language rights (Skuttnab-Kangas 1999) and postcolonial resistance (Canagarajah 1999; Pennycook 2002), argues for English to be learned by only those who are interested in it, instead of it being imposed simply for its global value. Finally, one participant perceives this spread in connection with the colonial history of Bangladesh and the 'gate keeping role' that English plays:

Our relation with English language is little different as we have colonial experience and exposure. As this language has the gate keeping role, there is no way we can escape from it. So it is better to welcome this spread.

(R No-15)

***WEs vs. SE: preference for classroom usage***

Seventeen, out of the twenty-six teachers in the study clearly expressed their preferences for using Standard (native) English in the classroom with their students. Among the seventeen, nine teachers prefer to use British English while two participants prefer to use American English. Two teachers like to use both British English and American English and four teachers prefer to use SE without particularizing any specific variety. One participant is more inclined to use 'less corrupt English' as s/he says: "I don't support the variations too much."

Three teachers prefer to use Bangladeshi English on the grounds that 'students are Bangladeshi and they understand it better.' One participant, however, cautions that 'it's not yet standard Bangladeshi English'. One participant is eager to nurture a more pluralistic practice as s/he thinks 'it is absolutely unnecessary for students to grow a fixation on using a specific variety of English'. One participant likes to use 'assorted English [...] drawing on from all sources.' One participant foregrounds his/her preference for using a variety that is 'spontaneous' to him/her without referring to any specific variety. Finally, one participant likes to use EIL (English as an International Language) because he/she 'strongly' believes 'this variety is coming up very strongly and to a great extent [and] it has become recognisable.'

***Is it necessary for the students to learn Standard (native) English?***

Though most of the participants use Standard (native) English, a good number of them allow their students to speak non-native Englishes. One participant says:

Personally, I prefer to use the standard variety, but accept the use of non-native local variety by students as long as it is intelligible and poses no comprehension difficulties. Our attitude toward non-native local variety should change. Given the lack of exposure, it is often difficult, if not impossible, for many students to acquire the standard variety. What students need above all is to be able to communicate successfully in English which is in itself, a challenging task.

(R. No-20)

The responses of the teachers inform us that sixteen teachers want their students to learn Standard (native) English. The urge felt by the teachers for

their students to learn a standard variety is stimulated by their concerns for their students to be able to communicate in international contexts which in result, would maximise their opportunities in the global job market. One teacher for example thinks that the ‘acceptability’ of a ‘non-standard’ English speaker to ‘foreigners’ will be ‘less’ while another teacher thinks that it would be ‘chaotic’ to teach ‘any non-native variety’.

Five teachers in the study think that learning Standard (native) English is not necessary for their students. Three teachers think that their students should learn ‘Bangladeshi English’. Learning a standard variety while according to one of them is ‘ridiculous’, for another, ‘[not] at all important’ and for another, ‘not possible’ and ‘[not] necessary’. One teacher in the study thinks that the issue of learning SE should depend on the purpose of the students, for example, ‘if someone wants to work in the media probably s/he must have knowledge of Standard English’. While one teacher states that his/her ‘mind is split’ on this issue, another teacher does not see the need of SE for his/her students by questioning the legitimacy of the ownership of English by the natives only.

Nowadays everybody owns the global language English. So, I don’t think my students need to learn the standard variety particularly.

(R. No-14)

### ***Teachers’ knowledge about different non-native varieties of English***

Eighteen teachers think that knowing about different varieties of English will enrich their teaching practices. Eleven of them think that such knowledge would provide ‘a kind of linguistic tolerance amongst the students, increasing the flexibility of their level of communication’. They also think that such knowledge would help them holding ‘less conservative views’ of the ‘changing English of the world’ which would ‘help to sensitize them to the nativized features which are increasingly becoming new conventions for English usage in many socio-cultural settings’. Two of them, on the contrary, think that such knowledge would help them ‘clearly understand the paradigms of the standard variety’ and to ‘correct the students and to help them in learning a single standard language’. Five teachers think that knowing about the non-native varieties would be ‘wastage of time’ and an ‘imposed burden’ for teachers when with ‘the knowledge of Standard English’, one can ‘communicate with everyone in the world.’ Three teachers think that a ‘working knowledge’ is required rather than ‘expertise’ in the non-native varieties.



***Native like accuracy or intelligible pronunciation in local accent?***

Ten teachers seem to be guided by the ‘native speaker paradigm’ as the target for their students’ pronunciation. Fourteen teachers, on the other hand, want their students to have an ‘intelligible local accent’. One teacher expects his/her students to aspire to native like accuracy though at the same time h/she ‘would increase’ his/her ‘amount of tolerance to their [local Bangladeshi] pronunciation too’. Finally, one teacher thinks that ‘a kind of standard, which is easily accessible to a majority of the native and non-native speakers’, can be the goal of pronunciation learning.

Overall, the responses of the participants reflect triumphalism and laissez-faire liberalism on the spread of English. Most of the participants welcome English because of its highly instrumental value and they also want the local language Bangla to coexist along with English. The responses of the participants albeit subtly, reflect their perceived symbolic and cultural capital associated with English. However, a number of participants (though moderately small) problematize the spread of English from the angle of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson 1992) and language rights (Skuttnab-Kangas 2000). Though postcolonial resistance on the spread of English has been voiced in very small number of participants, relatively more participants by supporting language hybridity manifest postcolonial performativity. However, a good number of participants still express conservatism on this issue.

**Conclusion**

Looking at the responses of the participants and the context of Bangladesh what I believe is that we should not distance us from English considering English is ‘instrumentally useful’. Especially during the present time when English is in every sense the global language of the world, distancing from it on nationalistic grounds would make us lag behind in many ways. However, uncritical acceptance of English based on laissez-faire liberal perspective disguises the fact that English is increasingly being used in more and more domains by replacing Bangla.

As far as conservatism regarding SE is concerned, I think that much depends on individual needs, purposes and motivations. While a SE accuracy is necessary for someone willing to study, work or live in an inner circle country, such a model is irrelevant for someone who learns English purely for international and intranational communications. A trace of mother tongue in someone’s English is alright for me as long as that does not obstruct communication. Moreover, I believe that acknowledging such

traces encourages diversity and individual identity. Moreover, it relieves some tension that is currently going on regarding this issue.

With the wide circulation English in the age of globalization, whether we are currently observing a paradigm shift in SE norms can probably only be answered by the time to come. Uncritical naivety on the spread of English can endanger local language and culture while distancing from it can also obstruct the doors of opportunities. What is probably required is individual appropriation and resistance even within the circumference of macro constraints.

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## 7 Issues in Bilingual Multi-Word-Combination Dictionary Building: An English-Spanish Lexicographic Experience

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### Introduction

Through a focus on multi-word combination analysis in bilingual dictionaries, this contribution describes a research and editorial project in process aiming to produce an English-Spanish dictionary of multi-word combinations for intermediate-to-advanced Spanish-speaking students of EFL. By and large, the project is consistent with the basic principles of contemporary lexicographic practices, thereby comprising all four stages of successful lexicographic work as echoed by Hartmann (2001: 14-20), namely planning, fieldwork, description and presentation. With a special focus on the use of the British National Corpus (BNC) and CREA (Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual [Reference Corpus of Contemporary Spanish]) corpora for such fundamental issues as word-combination frequency, idiomaticity of equivalents, or selection of usage examples, an account is accordingly made of the principles determining the inclusion of entries and their presentation within the dictionary.

In addition to the term ‘word combination’, the lexicographic literature on phraseology recurrently draws upon the terms ‘word-combination’ (e.g. Howarth 1996), ‘multi-word combination’ (e.g. Ilson 2002) or ‘multi-word expression’ (e.g. Hartmann and James 1998) to refer to “a phrase consisting of two or more words functioning as a single lexeme. The constituents are relatively stable (fixed expression), and, if used idiomatically, their combined meaning is more or other than the sum of the parts, e.g. *fly-by-night*, *face the music*” (Hartmann and James 1998: 97). Conceiving of word combinations as taking shape when “certain words regularly combine with certain other words or grammatical constructions” (1997: ix), the present contribution is thus to be contextualized within a dictionary project focusing on *collocations* and *idioms* as major categories of multi-word expressions (Gries 2008), whose meaning is more than the sum of the meanings of their components (Ilson 2002: 333). Collocations and idioms are indeed often taken to belong to the same stock of prefabricated units which – following the Russian tradition of phraseology – various authors have labelled as ‘word combinations’ – as well as ‘phraseological units’ or

‘phrasal lexemes’ – to refer to the “ready-made memorized combinations in written and spoken language” (Cowie 1998: 1), which include both “‘word-like’ units, which function syntactically at or below the level of the simple sentence, and ‘sentence-like’ units, which function pragmatically as sayings, catchphrases, and conversational formulae” (Cowie 1998: 4)<sup>3</sup>.

### Pre-lexicographic considerations

After a detailed exploration of the existing market of English-Spanish dictionaries (cf. de Gregorio-Godeo 2010), a significant lack of specific dictionaries dealing with multi-word expressions was noticed. We accordingly undertook a project involving a bilingual (English-Spanish) dictionary of collocations and idioms primarily aimed at intermediate-to-advanced Spanish-speaking learners of EFL – primarily in Spain – as potential users.

The macrostructure of lexical entries has been elaborated on the basis of existing English monolingual dictionaries of multi-word expressions, especially, *The BBI Dictionary of English Word Combinations* (Benson, Benson and Ilson 1997), the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* (2004), as well as various other contemporary English-Spanish dictionaries and dictionaries of English idioms.

Considering the fundamental role of corpus linguistics for lexicographic analyses (McEnery and Wilson 2001; Hunston 2002; Leech 2002), the British National Corpus (BNC) has been employed as the most important source for usage examples for the dictionary. As stressed by Leech, “the BNC has been used for the dictionaries of Oxford University Press, Longman and Chambers, the three publishers who contributed to its compilation” (2002: 91). Nonetheless, the *Collins COBUILD English Collocations on CD-ROM* (1995), and the Internet have also been drawn upon as resources for usage examples.

Equivalents in Spanish for the word combinations that the dictionary consists of have been provided taking into account bilingual English-Spanish general-use dictionaries currently existing on the market. Peninsular Spanish has been mainly considered to this end. The CREA corpus has been used to test the appropriateness and idiomaticity of the equivalents in Spanish.

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<sup>3</sup> Cowie (1998) and Mel’čuk (1998) provide thorough and elaborated terminological discussions in this respect.

## Selecting multi-word expressions

For the purposes of this dictionary, we have followed Benson, Benson and Ilson's (1986: 252-254) overall taxonomy of *lexical combinations*, namely: (i) *free combinations of words*, which are those whose "components are the freest in regard to combining with other lexical items"; (ii) *idioms*, which are "relatively frozen expressions whose meanings do not reflect the meanings of their component parts"; and (iii) *collocations*, which are "fixed"/"recurrent" word combinations, that is, "loosely fixed combinations" between free word combinations and idioms. Nevertheless, free combinations of words have not been considered in the dictionary on the whole, since their meaning may be found by examining the meaning of their individual constituent words in general dictionaries.<sup>4</sup>

Benson, Benson and Ilson (1997) make a fundamental distinction between *grammatical collocations* and *lexical collocations*. On the one hand, a grammatical collocation is "a phrase consisting of a dominant word (noun, adjective, verb) and a preposition or grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause" (Benson, Benson and Ilson 1997: xv); for instance, *decide on* (*decidirse por*) in *decide on a boat*. On the other hand, lexical collocations "do not contain prepositions, infinitives or clauses. Typical lexical collocations consist of nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs" (1997: xxx); for example, *warmest regards* (*saludos afectuosos*) in *send warmest regards*. The dictionary is chiefly concerned with lexical collocations, which Spanish-speaking users of English might convert into wrong collocations very easily (e.g. \**deserted children/abandoned children* [*niños abandonados*]). Moreover, although there are a large number of English collocations following the Verb + Noun structure (e.g. *abandon hope*), this lexicographic repertoire does not include all possible free word combinations in the English language. In accordance with Benson, Benson and Ilson's (1997: xxx-xxxiii) taxonomy of collocations, the main types of lexical collocations included in the dictionary are as follows:

- Verb + Noun / Pronoun / Prepositional Phrase (e.g. *reach an agreement*).

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<sup>4</sup> A *free combination of words* (Cowie 1981: 226) is a combination of words following only the general rules of syntax: the elements are not bound specifically to each other and so they occur with other lexical items freely; that is, the meanings of the words combine compositionally and may be substituted by synonyms (e.g. *run a business*, where *run* may be substituted by *manage*, in the same way as *a business* may be substituted by *a bank*).

- Adjective + Noun (e.g. *dark/light blue*). If a number of adjectives may possibly collocate with a single noun, only the most frequent lexical collocations are included. As in English many nouns have an adjectival function when they are placed before another noun (e.g. *application form*), such collocations appear in the dictionary entry of the second.
- Noun + Verb (e.g. *wars break out*). Combinations which are easily predictable are not included (e.g. *painters paint*).
- Lexical collocations indicating the ‘unit’ commonly associated to a noun, that is, *noun<sub>1</sub> of noun<sub>2</sub>* (e.g. *a bunch of flowers, a piece of news*).
- Adverb + Adjective (e.g. *utterly different*).
- Verb + Adverb (e.g. *to appreciate deeply, greatly, keenly, sincerely*).

The dictionary also incorporates a wide range of *idiomatic expressions* of contemporary British and American English: (i) traditional idioms (e.g. *Spill the beans*); (ii) new phrases (e.g. *it's all gone pear-shaped*); (iii) metaphorical phrases (e.g. *face the music*); (iv) two-word phrases (e.g. *wild card*); and (v) various other similes (e.g. *like two peas in a pod*). However, this dictionary does not incorporate phrasal verbs as a characteristic type of multi-word combination, as there are different bilingual dictionaries of this type on the market.

### Principles guiding the organisation of entries

- (a) Determiners, prepositions and pronouns are not often headwords. Key headwords, compounds included, are alphabetically ordered in the dictionary. Single-word compounds precede those written as two words. Homographs follow this order: adjective, adverb, noun, verb. Here is an example:

CEMENT I n.

**1. to mix; pour cement** *mezclar; verter cemento*. I haven't yet no, but I think he's outside mixing cement, we said we'd go and give him a hand to put his posts in  
[...]

CEMENT II v.

**1. to cement smt. into place** *consolidar, fortalecer, cementar algo*. When nest building, he will return to his nest with bits of weed to cement it into place, even when the diver is only a few inches away.



- (b) Entries contain at least one context of usage. The key headword is written in small capital letters. English collocations are written in bold and Spanish equivalents appear in italics. Regular font face has been adopted for usage examples, the word combination in question being underlined, as in the following entry:

**CORTEX** n.

**the cerebral cortex** *corteza cerebral*. This deficiency is linked in some way to the death of nerve cells that arise in the forebrain and connect to many regions of the cerebral cortex.

- (c) As the following example shows, cross-references within the dictionary are highlighted in yellow:

**CAT** n.

**1. to neuter a ; to spay a (female) cat** *castrar, capar; esterilizar un gato*.

[...]

**6. there's more than one way to skin a cat** *cada maestrillo tiene su librillo*. There is a saying about there being more than one way to skin a cat: in the case of toxic wastes they could be contained in an indefinitely leakproof box.

- (d) When a word collocates with others, the dictionary identifies series of collocations alphabetically (e.g. **COST**: to cut, reduce). So, in the series for *cost* below, *cut costs* and *reduce costs* are treated as synonyms. However, collocations which are not synonyms are separated by semicolon (;) (e.g. to defray; drive up; to pay; spare no **COST**). Synonyms are thus grouped together and separated by commas within the series of collocations:

**COST** n.

**1. to defray; drive up; to pay; spare no; cut, reduce costs** *sufragar; hacer subir; pagar; no ahorrar; recortar costes*. During 1983 the Inland Revenue received £27,000 million from wage-earners and small businesses, much of which was used to defray the cost of the nation's social welfare responsibilities.

- (e) Collocations whose meaning may be difficult to understand by the student are often defined between brackets on the left of the collocation:

**COUNTER II n.**

1. [surface, table over which business is conducted] **a bargain; notions (IAm); check-in; check-out; ticket; lunch counter** *mostrador de artículos de mercería; de facturación de equipajes; de caja; de control de billetes; donde se sirven comidas*. Its members occupied seats reserved for whites in a lunch counter at a Woolworth store in Greensboro, North Carolina, after they had been refused service.

- (f) Information about register, dialects and other social factors is also indicated between brackets, e.g. *formal* (form.), *American English* (IAm), *British English* (IBr); etc:

**CURD n.**

**soybean** (IAm), **soya bean** (IBr) **curd** *tofu/ queso de soja*. Widely used in Eastern cookery and in strict vegetarian diets in other parts of the world, tofu is bean curd and can be eaten cold or cooked in a number of ways.

- (g) Idiomatic expressions are written in blue at the end of entries:

**CURIOSITY n.**

1. **to arouse, excite, pique, whet; satisfy one's curiosity** *producir, despertar, excitar, avivar; satisfacer la curiosidad de uno*. He claimed he had taken the measurements of Eclipse during life, and wished to satisfy his curiosity by trying them on the dead subject.

[...]

3. **curiosity killed the cat** *la curiosidad mató al gato*. The townspeople had learned the hard way that curiosity killed the cat - you stayed indoors if there was trouble.

- (h) Alternative translations of a collocation or idiom are separated by a slash (/):

**CALAMITY n.**

[...]

3. **a calamity befalls smb; occurs** *acaecerle a alguien un desastre / una catástrofe; suceder un desastre*. An even worse calamity occurred when the bore hole pump packed up.

- (i) Usage notes are highlighted in light blue, and range from pragmatic information to differences between British and American English, through other grammatical questions. They are also used to make reference to so-called ‘false friends’:

CAN n.

1. (IAm) **an ash, garbage, trash can** *cubo de la basura*. Then he seized the bag of cookies, and on his way back indoors, threw them where he considered they belonged, in the trash can with the rest of the garbage.

*Nota de uso:* El inglés británico prefiere *dustbin*.

- (j) The use of a long underscore (\_\_\_\_) in an idiomatic phrase indicates that various nouns, adjectives or verbs may be inserted in the gap:

capital n.

[...]

13.      **with a capital**      (**trouble with a capital T, fast with a capital F**)  
*en mayúsculas, se usa con cualquier letra para enfatizar que se habla de algo en sentido extremo*. But it doesn't have to be exercise with a capital E.  
Think of it more as activity.

## Getting close to completion

At this stage, the dictionary is close to completion, yet the final stage of the project still needs to be undertaken. This will include formatting, printing and proofreading the whole dictionary several times. A detailed revision of the dictionary will have to be conducted before publishing. It is to be underlined that, although the present dictionary project involves an English-Spanish word-combination repertoire, the subsequent elaboration of an Spanish-English repertoire of multi-word expressions will be considered once the present stage of the project is accomplished and marketed.

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# 8

## Are Complex Tenses Really Real?

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### Introduction

The future perfect indicative tense, represented in English by the composite form *will have been going to [verb]*, expresses a complex temporal relationship. It is formed from two sub-tenses: the future perfect (*will have been*), which places the point from which the action is viewed into the future, and the action itself in the past relative to that future; and a variant of the future simple tense (*be going to [verb]*) which places the action into the future from a viewpoint of the present.

Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) list the tenses generated by *will have been going to* as: 24 (future of future in past, *will have been going to take*); 27 (future of past in future in past, *will have been going to have taken*); 33 (future of present in future in past, *will have been going to be taking*); and 36 (future of present in past in future in past, *will have been going to have been taking*). Clearly, *will have been going to* is a construct with complex semanticity, and therefore limited application; but is it a tense (or group of tenses) that is actually used?

This question is addressed here in three studies, using the Internet as a corpus. Halliday & Matthiessen's other complex tenses are also reviewed. The results show that actual use is rare or nonexistent, and the range of usages of these complex forms is extremely limited.

### Describing Tenses

English, because of its analytic nature, can be highly expressive; and this is visible in the way verb tenses are constructed. For instance, a complex form like *I will have been going to have been about to begin having done it* only scratches the surface of what is possible. However, being able to build a baroque language structure does not imply that there is a use for it; and complexity of possibility does not, in the case of tenses, convert to semanticity. For instance, do we really understand what *I will have been going to have been about to begin having done it* is expressing?

If we look at the expression of time in language from different theoretical positions, we can see that there is some dispute as to how the grammar or

grammars of language divide up time. Hornstein (1990) takes a formalist approach, using Reichenbach's (2005 [1947]) three-component description of tense. In this model, tense is a relationship between the constant present (S), the time at which the event being described happens (E), and the relative point in time adopted as a viewpoint for the event, (R). Thus the simple present is a product of all three times (S, R and E) co-occurring in the present; simple future and past are produced by moving the event point (E) out of the present; and the four complex tenses (past in past, future in past, past in future and future in future) are produced by also moving the viewpoint of the event (R) out of the present. The Reichenbachian analysis does not go beyond this, although it does suggest that multiple (S) viewpoints are possible. If a second viewpoint were to be included then it would generate a further eight tenses, as the system is based on a binary progression (1+2+4+8 ...).

This analysis has been extended in Edwardes (2010) to include tense effects such as continuity (the extension of the event point through time), imminence (the closeness of the Reichenbachian points to each other), and completion (whether an event is being viewed as completed or ongoing). Comrie (1985) also raises the issue of relative tense, in which the present tense is used to represent events that are actually in the past or future (as in *Daddy's taking us to the zoo tomorrow*). In the Edwardes model these are treated as proximate tenses, with a viewpoint and event point located together in the past or future (see table 1).

Tense	Point of Speech (S)	Point of Reference (R)	Point of Event (E)
Simple Present	Present		
Simple Past	Present		Past
Simple Future	Present		Future
Past of Past	Present	Past	Past of (R)
Future of Past	Present	Past	Future of (R)
Past of Future	Present	Future	Past of (R)
Future of Future	Present	Future	Future of (R)
Proximate Past	Present	Past	
Proximate Future	Present	Future	

**Table 1:** The extended Reichenbach tense set

In contrast, the Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) model allows for much more complex tense structures to accommodate the possibilities of English; it therefore consists of a much larger set than the formalist model – 36

tenses are listed, compared to the seven of the Reichenbach model (or nine of the Edwardes model). The functionalist range of tenses may not have the language-nonspecific logical structure of the formalist range, but it is based on the real possibilities that a specific language offers.

If we look at some of the simpler tenses, we can see how the two models differ in their analysis. To aid comparison the sample verb of *take* will be used in the illustrations below. This is not necessarily the best verb to use as it varies in meaning and therefore usage (*take umbrage, take a train, take possession, take time, take a cake*, etc), and it can be grammatically idiomatic (*I take it you already know, he takes and never gives*). It is, though, the sample verb used by Halliday and Matthiessen.

The basic tenses offered by the formalist and functionalist models differ mainly in their hierarchy. The formalist model offers a single base tense where the S, E and R timepoints are all in the present (*I take*), and two generated simple tenses of past and future where the E timepoint has been moved out of the present (*I took* and *I will take*). In the functionalist model, these form the three base tenses. At the next level, the formalist model offers four tenses, where the R timepoint has also been moved out of the present (*I had taken, I have been going to take, I will have taken, I will be going to take*). In contrast, the functionalist model offers nine tenses, as table 2 shows.

<b>Tense</b>	<b>Tense no</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Reichenbachian equiv.</b>
Past of past	4	I had taken	Past in past
Present of past	5	I have taken	Past (imminent)
Future of past	6	I will have taken	Past in future
Past of present	7	I was taking	Past (continuous)
Present of present	8	I am taking	Present (continuous)
Future of present	9	I will be taking	Future (continuous)
Past of future	10	I was going to take	Future in past (imminent)
Present of future	11	I am going to take	Future (imminent)
Future of future	12	I will be going to take	Future in future

**Table 2:** A comparison of Functionalist and Formalist tenses

As can be seen, there is considerable difference between the formalist and functionalist analyses about what some of the tenses signify in terms of temporality; and the formalist future in past tense (*I have been going to take*) seems to be missing from the list. This is given in the functionalist model as the present of future in past.

More fundamental differences occur with the remaining 24 functionalist English tenses. The formalist analysis takes the view that they express continuity, imminence or completion effects; or that they reflect an English-specific capacity; or that they are not tenses with a real life, just waxworks created by overzealous linguists.

In an attempt to review the usage question, I undertook three separate investigations, in 2005, 2008 and 2010. The search engine used for the first investigation was Alta Vista, so this was used for the other investigations, too. This was intended to give continuity to the studies; but, as both the search engine and the Internet have changed considerably over the period, this is unlikely by itself to have provided real continuity. Fortunately this does not cause serious problems in the diachronic aspect of this study.

### The First Study

The first data-mining exercise took place on 30 July 2005 (it is important to complete any one study within days – or, preferably, hours – to ensure that the constantly-changing Internet corpus has not changed too much). This exercise looked only at usages of the *will have been going to* form, which, being uninflected, was selected for ease of handling. A total of 73 cases were found. In 43 cases, *will have been* was the tense marker, with *going to* as the verb form; in 26 cases *will have been going to* was the whole tense marker; and there was one case each of *will have been going to be* and *will have been going to have*, and two cases of *will have been going to have been* as tense markers. Even on the Internet, it would have been difficult at this time to produce a good statistical study of usage of these forms.

Form	Count	Korean website	Grammar related	Time trope	Legit. usage
Will have been [going to] [N]	43	11	15		17
Will have been going to [V]	26		18	5	3
Will have been going to be [V-ing]	1			1	0
Will have been going to have [V-ed]	1			1	0
Will have been going to have been [V-ing]	2			2	0

**Table 3:** Usages of *will have been going to*, 30 July 2005

However, some key features of usage did emerge. Of the 43 *will have been* cases, 11 occurred on a single Korean financial website (now gone). They seemed to be the product of a mistaken preference of a single ESL writer – the usages should all have been simple past, simple present or *have been X-ing*). 15 of the 43 cases occurred as grammatical examples on language



learning websites, leaving only 17 legitimate (unselfconscious and semantically correct) usages. Of the 26 *will have been going to* cases, five were time tropes (using the tense to demonstrate temporal confusion rather than to place an event in time); and 18 of the remaining 21 cases were used as examples on language learning websites (one of which was for Quenya Elven and one for “Timelord”, presumably Gallifreyan). All of the four extended tenses were also time tropes. What was notable was the lack of unmarked legitimate usages, especially as the tenses became more complex.

## The Second Study

The second data mining exercise occurred over five days, from 26 to 30 December 2008. Once again, the exercise looked only at usages of *will have been going to*. A total of 207 cases were found, of which 147 were *will have been* cases, and 60 were *will have been going to* cases. Of the 60 *will have been going to* cases, three were *will have been going to be*, seven were *will have been going to have*, five were *will have been going to have been*, and one was *will have been going to be being*. This last was used on a grammar website and is a form not recognised by Halliday & Matthiessen. The writer of the web page clearly had problems explaining the meaning of this form, not recognising that he was probably describing a passive form.

Form	Count	Grammar related	Time trope	Legit. usage
Will have been [going to] [N]	147	38		109
Will have been going to [V]	44	17	7	20
Will have been going to be [V-ing]	3	1	2	0
Will have been going to have [V-ed]	7	2	5	0
Will have been going to have been [V-ing]	5	2	5	0
Will have been going to be being [V-ing]	1	1		0

**Table 4:** Usages of *will have been going to*, 26 to 30 December 2008

Table 4 gives a breakdown comparable to table 3. The Internet had grown over the three-and-a-half years, and the more complex forms had become more frequent. Unmarked legitimate usage had also increased, but had not yet invaded the complex forms. However, the presence of complex forms remained vanishingly small.

## The Third Study

The third data mining exercise, undertaken on 26/27 July 2010, was somewhat different to the others, in that it extended the study to include other complex tense forms from the Halliday & Matthiessen list: all the

tense forms from 25 to 36 were reviewed. This became possible because the Internet had more than doubled in size in the 18 months between the second and third studies, finally creating a corpus in which rare forms can begin to be explored. Table 5 shows the estimated size of the Internet based on the relative frequency of some core words in the British National Corpus.

Word	Size of BNC	BNC Count	Alta Vista Count	Estimated A-V Corpus size
Against	100 million	55,164	2,940 million	5,330 billion
Because		100,509	4,740 million	4,716 billion
Between		90,638	4,350 million	4,799 billion
However		59,690	2,780 million	4,657 billion

**Table 5:** Estimates of the size of the Internet as at 27 July 2010  
([www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/))

Roughly, Alta Vista has a corpus size of 4.8 trillion English words. In 12pt Arial, this is a line of text stretching from here to the moon 125 times. More importantly, it is nearly 50,000 times the size of the BNC, indicating that the grammar forms reviewed here are unlikely to be statistically visible in the BNC.

The first exercise on the data from the third study was to produce an analysis which could be compared with the previous studies (see table 6). The much larger datasets have required some estimation – it was impossible to track every usage where counts exceeded 100. Instead, the first 100 occurrences of a form were sampled and used to estimate figures, based on the total count given for that form by Alta Vista (estimated figures are indicated by an entry in the *Est* column). This should not significantly affect the data for two reasons: first, most of the total counts are below 500, making 100 a strong sample; second, counts above 500 indicate forms which are less rare, so of less interest here.

Table 6 is largely comparable with table 4, although four effects should be commented on. The first is the rise of legitimate usages, which now include some of the complex forms; the second is the explosion in grammar-related usages of *will have been going to*, which is clearly the level at which most English tense complexity is taught; and the third is the unexpected relative reduction in time tropes. The fourth effect, not obvious from the table, is that my abstract for this paper is now on the Internet, so the last four forms all include that abstract in the “grammar related” counts. This is an

unanticipated consequence of the study which, because of the low counts, could be viewed as having a marked effect on the figures.

Form	Est	Count	Grammar related	Time trope	Legit. usage
Will have been [going to] [N]	Est	375	40	0	335
Will have been going to [V]	Est	225	130	25	70
Will have been going to be [V-ing]		18	9	7	2
Will have been going to have [V-ed]		18	9	2	7
Will have been going to have been [V-ing]		20	15	5	0

**Table 6:** Usages of *will have been going to*, 26 to 27 July 2010

The third study also looked at all the complex tenses in the functional model – all the tenses which include four or more time points in their definition. These twelve tenses can be viewed as the “difficult” tenses, so their frequency and usages should have significance both for our understanding of tense as a meaning-sharing mechanism, and for our approach to teaching tenses to first- and second-language learners.

However, where *will have been going to* has a single inflection, five of the twelve complex tenses have more than one inflection, which complicates data collection. Interestingly, in two of the cases, *was/were going to have been* and *has/have been going to have*, the different inflections have significantly different distributions of usage. It seems that grammar sites have definite preferences for *was going to have been* and *have been going to have*; this is a little strange in that they share person only in first person singular, but the most commonly-used forms on the grammar websites are third person singular and second person respectively. In one of the other cases (*Has/have been going to have been*) the numbers are too low to determine significance, and in the final two cases (*has/have been going to be* and *am/is/are going to have been*) there seem to be no significant differences between the inflections.

	FORM	Est	Count	Grammar related	Time trope	Porn Site	Legit. usage
24	Will have been going to [V]	Est	225	130	25		70
25	Had been going to have [V-ed]		12				12
26	Has been going to have [V-ed]	Est	130				130
26	Have been going to have [V-ed]		16	7			9
27	Will have been going to have [V-ed]		18	9	2		7
28	Was going to have been [V-ing]	Est	920	620			300
28	Were going to have been [V-ing]	Est	295				295

	FORM	Est	Count	Grammar related	Time trope	Porn Site	Legit. usage
29	Am/is/are going to have been [V-ing]	Est	6,980	2,440			4,540
30	Will be going to have been [V-ing]		20	12	3		5
31	Had been going to be [V-ing]	Est	345				345
32	Has/have been going to be [V-ing]	Est	950	30	20		900
33	Will have been going to be [V-ing]		18	9	7		2
34	Had been going to have been [V-ing]		16	9	2	5	0
35	Has/have been going to have been [V-ing]		11	7	4		0
36	Will have been going to have been [V-ing]		20	15	5		0

**Table 7:** Usages of complex tenses, 26 to 27 July 2010

There is a large variation in frequency counts in table 7, a variation which does not correlate with either complexity of construct or length of form. Simply, some time relationships just seem to be more frequently expressed than others, which probably reflects their functional utility. The three most complex forms (34, 35, 36) have no legitimate usages, so they are clearly linguistic toys rather than actual grammatical/semantic units; but even the less complex forms are relatively rare. If we conservatively say that the Internet 4.8 trillion word corpus includes 10 billion verb forms, then the approximately 10,000 cases above still constitutes a vanishingly small proportion of the corpus.

One final feature of table 7 should be remarked on. Since starting this exercise in 2005, the Internet has become a darker and less friendly place. One consequence of this is that “temptation” keywords are placed in site headers on porn and security scam web pages to encourage unsuspecting visitors to click on links. It appears that one phrase used on some of these sites is *had been going to have been*, which is why this form has generated an extra column, “Porn site”. Quite why this form is favoured for this purpose is unclear, but it does illustrate the point that using the Internet as a corpus needs to carry a health warning: don’t do it unless you have good virus protection and an effective firewall; understand the risks; and have a healthy mistrust of other Internet users.

## The Issues

The three studies discussed here raise important issues for pedagogy, especially in teaching English as a foreign language. The complex verb forms are seldom taught in British first-language English lessons at secondary level – not least because, at this level, English as an academic subject is mainly about encouraging reading comprehension and writing

style; explicitly teaching grammar is a marginal activity. In Britain, secondary English is part of a long-established tradition of literature-qualified teachers teaching literature. It works as a self-generating system, with literature-qualified teachers generating the next generation of literature-qualified teachers. Skill in teaching grammatical complexity is not a standard part of the literature-qualified teacher's toolkit, nor is it part of the curriculum.

English as a foreign language is another matter, however. Explicit grammar teaching constitutes an important component of most courses; and, if the Internet grammar-related websites are representative, complex tenses are taught as a matter of routine. This raises the difficult question of how much of a language is needed to be a proficient user of that language. If first language users are not using a particular construct, no matter how valid it may appear, should we be bothering to teach it to second language users? An argument in favour of teaching complexity is that any form which is a logical possibility in a language represents something particular about the language; and knowing how that complex form works could unlock deeper knowledge of how the language works. An argument against is that teaching forms not actually used by native speakers does not help a student trying to achieve native-like proficiency. At the very least, therefore, we should make sure that we are not teaching these rare forms as active constructs.

At a simpler level, the question of what forms should be taught has to be matched to the level of language that the learner wants to achieve. If the learner wants to become competent in conversational English then the functionalist tenses 25 to 36 are irrelevant – if their use in writing is vanishingly small, they are likely to be even rarer in speech. Indeed, this argument can be extended to first-language learners as well, and it seems likely that failure or unwillingness to learn these tense outliers could be indicative of other personal choices over first-language grammatical knowledge. People do not learn the totality of their language's grammar, either implicitly or explicitly; and often they rely on personal rule variants in their day-to-day language transactions. To be mutually comprehensible it is not necessary for two people to have the same grammar, even if they have the same official first language – just as it is unnecessary for them to have the same phonology or lexis. Negotiation to meaning is more important than pre-existing shared meaning.

Learning a language, whether a first or a second language, is a matter of becoming communication-competent; and this raises important issues in pedagogy about the difference between I-language (an individual's language system), E-language (the negotiation to common meaning in a linguistic exchange), and what could be called T-language (the totality of acceptable language forms existing within a community of minds). As long as the participants in a dialogue share a useful common subset of the T-language they can be viewed as mutually communication-competent. Their shared E-language works and their individual I-languages are irrelevant.

Perhaps we need to be more aware of the incredibly compressed semantic shorthand that any single-word name for a language constitutes; and, remembering that even first-language users do not necessarily fully share a common grammar, perhaps we should limit our teaching, whether for first or second languages, to forms which are statistically frequent in actual use. This paper does not address what those statistically frequent forms should be, and there remains much work to be done to generate a pedagogical grammar that reflects actual usage rather than what is possible; but, hopefully, this paper shows that, in the case of English tenses, we need to teach less than we can teach.

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## 9 Struggle between learning English for self and nation: imagination of 'global community' of Chinese students as a remedy

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### Introduction

In China, the English language was once associated with military aggressors and anti-communists (Adamson 2002). Marked by the entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001 and the 2008 Beijing Olympics, English in China in the 21st century has transformed from being a political tool, to a general communication tool (Orton 2007) and a universal modern skill necessary for modernisation and integration into the global community (Fong 2009). In China, a number of ideologies about English can be found, one of which is examined in this paper with reference to students' perceptions of learning English in current China. The ideology is that English is learnt for national benefits, and individual benefits English can bring should complement national interests.

The idea of 'collectivism' has been fundamental in Chinese culture and is still very much emphasised especially in the form of patriotism. After China being admitted into the WTO in 2001, [公民道德建设实施纲要] (*the Implementation Guidelines to construct Civic virtues of citizens* translation by Feng 2006:91) was published and emphasised in tertiary education, stating that patriotism is the lawful and moral obligation of every citizen, who needs to take pride in loving the country. The main purpose of patriotism education is to enhance ethnic pride and confidence, to educate citizens about the importance of national interest and to advocate for self-strengthening and readiness to contribute and dedicate (Feng 2006). According to Wu (2007), the connection of profiting oneself and the group provides proof of moral legality for the appearance of personal profits in modern Chinese society. This view might be shaping the current underlying views of people learning English in China in that studying English for oneself naturally becomes an act of contributing to the country. However, nationalism in China is attacked by Western ideas and thoughts, marketed economy and globalisation (Song 2009), which has contributed to a more western and individualistic culture. Notably, children born under the One Child Policy in the 1990s are a generation that is most influenced by the

Opening up of China. They are said to be spoiled and egocentric because their parents provide the best possible resources for them (Tang 2001) including investing in extra English classes outside of school. Based on the results of interviews, this paper examines Chinese university and high school students' perceptions of learning English in China, especially exploring the significance of their group and individually oriented motivation of learning English. It also discusses the issues associated with English that concern the two groups of students including the negative and positive impacts of English and the relative status of Chinese and English in China. Results show that the younger generation is more influenced by their perceptions and imaginations of 'global community' which has transcended local ideologies about English.

### **Methodology and data**

In fieldwork in Beijing in 2009, interviews were conducted with high school and university students within the framework of a method called Q Methodology. The interviews consisted of two phases: rating of statements about English taken from a Chinese national newspaper and government's mouthpiece, *Ren min ri bao* (hereafter *People's Daily*), and face-to-face interviews. The purpose of using statements from *People's Daily* was partly to compare the official and learners' perspectives of English which however is not the scope of the current paper.

### **Q Methodology**

Q Methodology is both a qualitative and quantitative method used widely in Psychology and Political Science. It was invented by a psychologist named William Stephenson in the 1950s to investigate subjectivity. Unlike many other rating surveys, the major concern of Q Methodology is not how many people believe such-and-such, but why and how they believe what they do (Brown 1980; Stephenson 1953). In other words, the method is not interested in generalisations of research findings, but rather it is interested in the different variety of viewpoints on an issue, and in revealing the reasons why these viewpoints exist.

Using Q methodology for the interviews, I first collected statements about English from *People's Daily* between 2000 and 2008, then in the interviews which consisted of 2 phases, the participants rated how strongly the statements represented their viewpoints on a scale of -4 to +4 (-4 = strongly disagree and +4 = strongly agree) with '0' as neutral, and they were then asked a few more questions such as what the role of English was for themselves and the country. After the ratings and interviews, the data were



then analysed using software called PQMethod, which was designed particularly for the analysis of Q method data by some researchers in Kent University.

The statements were chosen according to Table 1 below. There are three categories, a-c, which are called factors and three kinds of attitudes, 1-3, which are called levels. It is important to note that these factors and levels were not pre-set but were derived from my reading of the news articles and reports. The ideas in the study were initially generated from a close analysis of the statements about English in the newspaper. When I first read the articles, I paid close attention to what categorised the statements. The table below, which is also called matrix in Q Methodology, was used to create the final sample for the interviews. I ended up having 9 groups in my statements sample, and for each group, I then randomly chose 6 statements making up a sample of 54 statements.

In the interviews, the original Chinese versions of the statements were presented to the students. For the purpose of presentation, only the English translations are used in this paper. The statements were translated as close as possible to the Chinese versions.

	<b>1. Positive</b>	<b>2. Negative</b>	<b>3. Neutral</b>
<b>a. Roles of English</b>	Positive roles (1a)	Negative roles (2a)	Neutral roles (3a)
<b>b. Impacts of English</b>	Positive impacts (1b)	Negative impacts (2b)	Neutral impacts (3b)
<b>c. Chinese vs. English</b>	Chinese dominates (1c)	English dominates (2c)	Chinese and English are not contradictory (3c)

**Table 1:** Groupings of statements

I used the following six statements, which belonged to the group named 'positive impacts of English' (1b), to investigate whether self or collective benefits were more significant for the students. They were classified further into 'self' and 'collective' benefits.

***Statements about 'self' benefits and 'collective' benefits (Group 1b)***

- Children lack competitiveness without English certificate (Self)
- For a long time, English education has taken up a lot of human, material and financial resources which is facilitative of the economic and social development (Collective)

- I feel more confident when my English improves (Self)
- More people learning English is good for the country (Collective)
- Learning English well can contribute to the hometown (Collective)
- For me, English can help find a better job and improve living conditions and enjoyment (Self)

The final sample included one made-up statement: "For me, learning English can help find a better job and improve living conditions and enjoyment", which is the last one in the list above. The readings of People's Daily articles did not locate any statements about English pertaining to individual benefits. However, as a statement about individual benefits of learning English was needed for the study, the above 'self-benefit' statement was made up by the researcher.

### **Interviewees**

In Beijing, 20 high school students were interviewed. They came from three different Grade 8 classes in a renowned high school and were all considered as top students by their teachers. They were aged between 12 and 13, born in Beijing, living with their parents and were all the only children of their parents. As they themselves reported, they were all enrolled in extra English tuition classes outside of school.

To compare high school students with older students, 25 university students from 3 different universities were also interviewed in Beijing. Aged between 18 and 25, 14 were English majors and 11 were non-English majors. The families of these university students lived in other Chinese cities or towns, and they only moved to Beijing to study. Some of them had siblings.

### **Results and Discussion**

As discussed previously, Q methodology does not intend to look for generalisation, but the different variety of viewpoints, and the relative significance of the viewpoints for interviewees. Therefore, in the interviews, each statement was rated in comparison with the others, which means that the statement that receives a higher score is more significant than the other statements for the participants. Statements scored +4, for example, are those with which the interviewees have strongest positive feelings. The interviewees' ratings constitute the raw data for statistical analysis using PQMethod which generates reports to aid interpretation including correlations among the ratings of statements which are factor-analysed, factor loadings, statement factor scores, factor arrays,

distinguishing statements for each factor and consensus statements across factors. Factor analysis groups individuals by viewpoints based on their correlations to particular factors. Through factor analysis, opinions are aggregated and categorised by reducing opinions to a limited number of types and lumping together same types. Persons significantly associated with a given factor are thus assumed to share a common perspective. An individual's positive loading on a factor indicates his or her shared subjectivity with others on that factor; negative loadings, on the other hand, are signs of rejection of the factor's perspective.

The aim of the study was twofold: (1) to examine the significance of group and individually-oriented motivations of learning English among younger Chinese generation; and (2) to compare Chinese university and high school students' perceptions of English, and reveal the issues related to English that are significant for them.

### University students

Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Children lack competitiveness without English certificates (Self)	0	-1	-4	-4
English education is facilitative of economic and social development (Collective)	0	0	0	0
I feel more confident when my English improves (Self)	1	1	-1	0
More people learning English is good for the country (Collective)	0	-1	-3	-2
Learning English well can contribute to the hometown (Collective)	0	-1	-1	0
For me, English can help find a better job and improve living conditions and enjoyment (Self)	0	-1	0	1

**Table 2:** University students: values for each statement

The 25 university students are broken into four factors concerning self and collective benefits of English, as shown in Table 2 above. In three of the factors (F1, F2, F4), ratings for the statements about self benefits are, to different extents and in different aspects, neutral or relatively higher than those about collective benefits. In F1 and F2, the statement: "I feel more confident when my English improves" receives a higher rating, while F4 scores higher on "For me, English can help find a better job and improve living conditions and enjoyment". Different aspects of the self benefits English brings are significant for different university students. Some

students are more concerned about self confidence while the materialistic benefits of English are more significant for other students. Some students (F3) do not feel strongly about the benefits English can bring.

Interestingly, there are students who strongly disagree with the statement: “children lack competitiveness without English certificates” which is a ‘self-benefit’ statement, as represented by F3 and F4. When F3 and F4 students were asked to explain their rating of the statement, most of them stated that for children, they could still be competitive even without English knowledge, while some asserted that children should not be forced to learn English at a young age.

From the results of the six statements above, university students do not seem to be most concerned with the positive impacts of English, as the ratings are all within the range of -1 to 1, except for statement 19. Across the four factors, statements that receive the highest ratings belong to the ‘neutral role of English’ which portray the communicative function of English, and ‘Chinese dominates’ which describe the more superior status of Chinese to English. These statements include: “In addition to foreign language which is a key to western civilisation, Chinese people also need to be open-minded in this 21st century”, “English education should focus on improving the quality of teachers and involve more cultural learning”, and “although it is important to learn English to ‘contact the world’, the native language should be more dominant”.

The university students also tend to agree with the statement “The importance of foreign language is unquestionable. However, it does not mean that it is important to everyone and anytime”, and disagree rather strongly with the idea of language learning course as a competition venue of different cultures: “<<College English>> is not only a language course, but it is also a “venue” for the transmission and competition of different cultures and thoughts. It is especially important to incorporate nationalism into the course to enhance traditional and national morality and socialism”. Also rated highly negatively was “If one does not want to be left behind, one can only use English to communicate with the world”

## High school students

Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
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Statement	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Children lack competitiveness without English certificates (Self)	-4	-3	-1	-4	-3
English education is facilitative of economic and social development (Collective)	-1	1	0	1	0
I feel more confident when my English improves (Self)	0	2	2	0	3
More people learning English is good for the country (Collective)	-1	0	-1	1	0
Learning English well can contribute to the hometown (Collective)	1	1	0	2	-3
For me, English can help find a better job and improve living conditions and enjoyment (Self)	-3	0	1	0	2

**Table 3:** High school students: values for each statement

For the 20 high school students, these attitudes are grouped into five factors. Students represented by F3 and F5 are more concerned with the self benefits of English, while collective benefits are more significant for F4 students. F1 students disagree rather strongly with the idea of English as a means for better job and life prospects, but neither do the statements about the collective benefits of English receive positive ratings. On the contrary, for F2 students, English can bring both collective and personal benefits. Like the results of university students' ratings, statement 19 about children's competitiveness receives very negative ratings across the 5 factors for similar reasons.

The high school students rate most highly on statements that describe the neutral role of English, including "In addition to foreign language which is a key to western civilisation, Chinese people also need to be open-minded in this 21st century". They also agree in general that speaking English has become a demand after the entry into the WTO and the Beijing Olympics. Statements about Chinese dominating are also rated highly such as "As China is rising as a world power, we should be proud of our long tradition and determined to make our mother tongue as dominant as English in the world".

Highly negatively loaded statements among the high school students in general are the statements about the dominance of English in China, for example, "English is more valued than Mandarin in China" receives a rather negative rating, indicating the students' disagreement with English

as a 'threat' to Chinese. The five groups of students also disagree with the statement: "There is no use of learning English for many people", "the burden of learning English has deprived of the time and efforts to learn Chinese", and "mother tongue has been polluted by English which has monopolised the study and career markets". Across the 5 factors, "non-English speakers have become a minority group whose language is disadvantaged" and "the number of people speaking English in China will exceed the total number of English speakers in the whole world" are also rated most negatively. Also rated highly negatively is "If one does not want to be left behind, one can only use English to communicate with the world", meaning that English is not a 'vital' language.

### **Comparisons between university and high school students' discourses about English**

Although both groups of students agree with English as a key to western civilisation and with the need of Chinese people to be open-minded, there are more differences between the two groups. As compared to the high school students, the university students in general have no strong opinions on the benefits of English. While the positive impacts English can bring are more significant for some high school students, the students tend to disagree more strongly with the negative impacts of English on the Chinese language than the university students who have more diverse views on the issue. For instance, "English is more valued than Chinese in China" is disagreed by the high school students, but more different opinions are found among the older students. High school students also disagree with non-English speakers having become a minority group whose language is disadvantaged, a statement which some university students are neutral about. Both groups disagree with the statement: "the burden of learning English has deprived of the time and efforts to learn Chinese", and "mother tongue has been polluted by English which has monopolised the study and career markets", but the views among the university students are more diverse in that some agree with the latter statement. This is likely due to their own experience as a student and their knowledge of the job markets as they are near graduation.

Younger students agree in general that speaking English has become a demand after the entry into the WTO and the Beijing Olympics while more neutral and diverse views are found among the older students. Although it is important to learn English to 'contact the world', from the university students' perspectives, the native language should be the priority. This is a viewpoint some high school students disagree or are neutral about. While

university students care about learning the culture associated with English, being determined to make Chinese as dominant as English in the world is a popular view shared among the younger students.

### **National benefits, individual development and 'global mindset'**

As the comparisons above have shown, the high school students have had the following viewpoints:

- Although it is not 'vital', English is a beneficial general communication tool and skill of the 21st century that belongs to all.
- English has not influenced the Chinese language or deprived of our time to study the language. English is important but Chinese should be made as dominant as English in the world.

The following views are more significant for the university students:

- The self or collective benefits English brings are less significant. Although English is an important tool, it has not become a demand after the entry into the WTO and winning the bid to host the Beijing Olympics, and it is not essential for everyone. The Chinese language is still the most important for Chinese people.
- English education has somehow impacted negatively on the Chinese language.
- Chinese people should be more open-minded and English education should focus on the culture embedded within the language.

The high school students' responses can be attributed to their more 'global mindset/frame'. As Essary (2007: 512) remarks, "a global frame establishes the world as the point of orientation by incorporating supranational discourse into the interpretation of an event or issue". It also "locate[s] an event in terms of world instead of national history. While they seem to be more oriented towards the individual benefits of learning English and are less concerned with the issues related to the status of Chinese and English within China, the high school students consider the languages from a more global perspective than the older students who emphasise the importance of mother tongue for Chinese people. The evolving role of English as a channel to communicate as facilitated by global events such as China's entry into the WTO and the Olympics is more significant for them. Although English is important, from the students' perspectives, attempts should be made to make Chinese as dominant as English in the world. In a sense, the equal share of Chinese and English also concerns them. Their responses also point to the less cultural and historical burden they bear, as

they grow up in an environment that has much more global outreach and less constrained by previous ideologies about learning English.

For the university students, their stronger feeling about the impacts of English on Chinese and emphasis on the importance of Chinese within China are indicative of the higher saliency of the national and cultural boundaries for them. They are more aware of the cultural differences between China and 'the world', and therefore have stronger feelings about learning culture in English class, and disagree with the idea of the competing relations between Chinese and Western cultures in the classroom. They tend to focus more on national issues than global concerns.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has presented an overview of Chinese university and high school students' perceptions of learning English in China, especially exploring their group and individually oriented motivation of learning English. While the official discourse seems to expect English to bring complementary individual and national benefits, and perceives English as a universal skill and tool for modernisation, learners' intention to learn English, especially those of the younger learners, is driven more by individual benefits

Younger students are comparatively more 'self-conscious', and more influenced by their perceptions and imaginations of China being a part of the 'global community'. The 'global mindset', in this case, can be seen as a remedy that has led the students to focus more on world/global issues and contexts within which English is used as a universal skill not associated with particular cultures/nations. Their awareness of the 'global-ness' of English has transcended their local concerns and ideologies about English. The Chinese identity involved in learning/using English in the official and users' discourse is different in a sense. For the younger Chinese students, the 'individual self' (+global perspective) is more salient than the traditional 'collective self'. As Chinese identity and culture seem to be changing especially among younger generation, the present study also sheds light on the understanding of Chinese identity in this globalising era for research on the sociolinguistics and language and identity in China.

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# 10

## **Interactional competence across proficiency levels: How do learners manage interaction in paired speaking tests?**

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### **Introduction**

Paired oral tests have become increasingly common in the last two decades, partly as a response to theoretical developments in our understanding of ‘communicative competence’ and ‘communicative language ability’ (Bachman & Palmer 1996; Canale & Swain 1980), and partly as a reaction to the interactional imbalance of the more traditional language proficiency interviews (Johnson 2001). Paired speaking tests have also gained popularity as a result of their potential for positive impact in the classroom, where the benefits of peer-peer interaction have been well documented as fundamental to learning (Tsui 2001). As this speaking test format has become more prevalent, assessment scales focusing on Interactional Competence have come into use (e.g., the CEFR *Interaction* and *Turn-taking* scales or the Cambridge ESOL *Interactive communication* scale). At the same time, a growing body of literature has focused both empirically and theoretically on different aspects of paired speaking tests, such as features of the interaction they generate, and the raters perspective in assessing speaking tests (e.g., Brookes 2009; Galaczi 2008; Lazaraton 2002; Ducasse & Brown 2009; May 2009). Such research into paired speaking tests has pushed the field to define the construct of Interactional Competence (first introduced as a term by Kramsch 1986 and further developed by Young 2008) in paired tests more comprehensively and precisely. A precise delineation of Interactional Competence (IC) as a construct is fundamental for paired speaking assessment, as a definition of this construct underlies test design and scale construction, and ultimately the validity of the test scores.

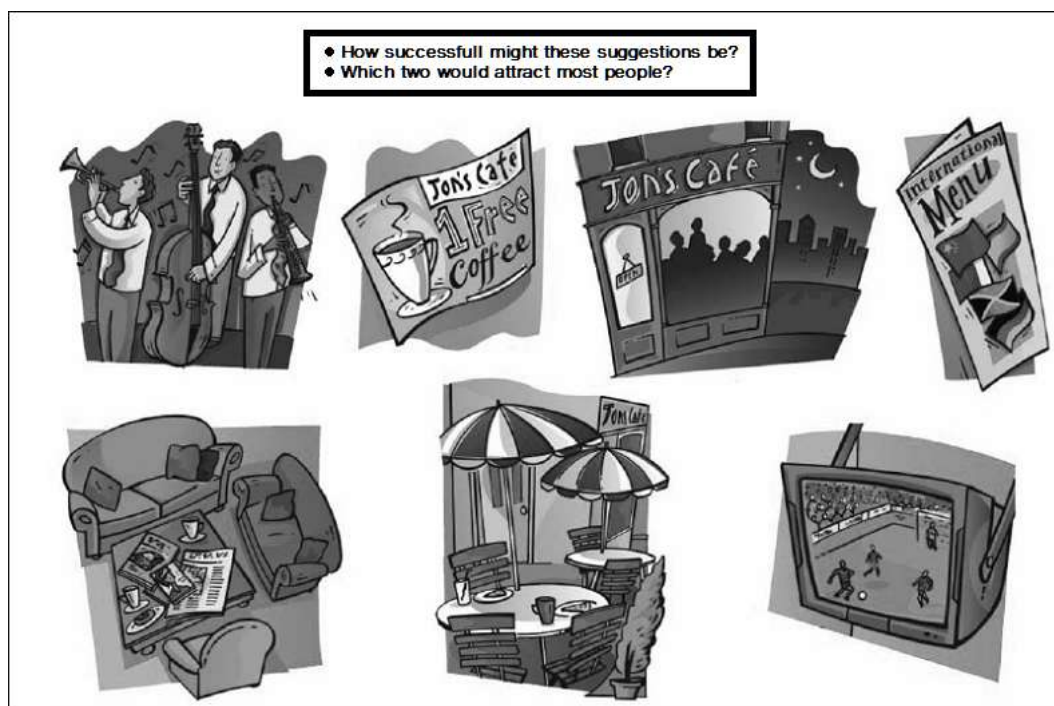
Despite the great strides made in better understanding the IC construct and the dynamics of interaction in paired test discourse, little empirical work has been carried out on interactional competence in paired tests within the context of varying proficiency levels. Exceptions are Galaczi (2008), Ducasse (2009), and May (2009), who have focused their research on learners at different proficiency levels, but have nevertheless used a restricted range of the language proficiency spectrum. The present study

aims to address the need for a more precise definition of IC across different proficiency levels by investigating the co-constructed interaction in paired speaking test tasks at CEFR levels B1 to C2. The issues are explored through a micro-level Conversation Analysis angle and the following research question guided the study: What features of interactional competence in paired test discourse are salient at different oral proficiency levels?

### The study context: The Cambridge ESOL paired speaking tests

This study focuses on Cambridge ESOL's General English speaking tests, which have a 'direct' paired face-to-face format, where two test takers engage in multiple tasks. The specific focus is on one of the tasks – the candidate/candidate interaction task, which typically asks the test takers to exchange opinions about a specific situation or topic and provides opportunities for them to manage the interaction on their own. This task is accompanied by a visual which provides scaffolding for the test takers; an illustration can be seen in Figure 1. The prompt (orally delivered by the examiner) is as follows:

*Now, I'd like you to talk about something together for about three minutes. I'd like you to imagine that a local café wants to attract more people. Here are some of the suggestions they are considering. First, talk to each other about how successful these suggestions might be. Then decide which two would attract most people.*



**Figure 1:** Example of a visual used to accompany the candidate/candidate interaction task at Cambridge English: First (FCE Handbook for Teachers 2007).

The assessment criteria and scales underlying the Cambridge ESOL speaking tests include the following four traits: *Grammar and Vocabulary*, *Discourse Management*, *Pronunciation*, and *Interactive Communication*. The scale of direct relevance to this study is the *Interactive Communication* scale.

## Method

### *Study participants*

As noted earlier, test-taker performances on the candidate/candidate interaction task at CEFR levels B1 to C2 were used in this study. The sample was selected from a pool of 40 paired performances which were video-taped and used for examiner training/ standardisation in 2010. Only ‘average’ pairs for the respective level were selected. The notion of ‘average’ was defined as candidates who had IC marks in the 2.5 – 4 band range (from a 1-5 Band scale) on the Cambridge ESOL *Interactive Communication* scale. This selection process ensured that the analysis focused on pairs who are clearly distinct and represent an average performance at that level. Test takers with marks at the extreme top or bottom of the scale would have shown interactional features typical of the adjacent proficiency levels and were deemed unsuitable for the analysis (although, naturally, they are indispensable for rater standardisation purposes).

The selection process resulted in 26 pairs (7 at B1, 7 at B2, 7 and C1, and 5 at C2). The test takers displayed a range of L1s, and were both male and female.

### *Data transcription*

CA transcriptions were made of the interaction generated by the selected pairs following Atkinson & Heritage (1984). The choice of CA transcription conventions allowed the investigation of micro-level interactional features.

### *Data analysis*

The analysis focused on common interactional features across pairs at the same level, and differences in interactional features across proficiency levels. One of the fundamental CA premises holds that analysis should not be driven by prior theoretical assumptions but should provide descriptions of conversational organisation through taking an *emic*, i.e. insider’s, perspective (Hutchby & Wooffitt 1998; Lazaraton 2002; Gan, Davidson & Hamp-Lyons 2009). In the present case, even though the analysis focused

on categories which past research had highlighted as playing a role in interaction, such as topic development, turn-taking management or listener support, these were analytical features of interest, and not predetermined categories imposed on the data. The analytical ‘units’ were, therefore known, but conclusions about their use in the interactions of interest emerged from the data.

## Findings

The analysis revealed a host of interactional features which played a role in distinguishing between proficiency levels, namely:

- Topic development organisation
  - initiation and response moves
  - development of ‘self-initiated’ vs. ‘other-initiated’ topics
  - types of topic development moves (e.g. repetition, recycling, expansion)
  - multi-turn topics vs. single-turn topics
- Listener support
  - backchannelling
  - confirmation of comprehension
- Turn taking
  - following an overlap/latch
  - following an interruption
  - following a gap/pause

Gaze and body language were also features of interest, but were not captured in the transcripts in a systematic way, and will not be reported on in this study.

The discussion will now move to a brief illustration of these interactional features across levels B1 to C2. The IC behaviour at each level will be illustrated with short excerpts. Even though the excerpts only present a small part of the interactions from the data set, they were chosen because they are representative of typical interactional features at each level.

## Interactional Competence at B1

Topic development at B1 was characterised by low mutuality, seen in expansions of self-initiated topics and rare development of other-initiated topics. Topics were usually developed over single turns only. One of the roles of conversationalists is to act in both a speaker and listener mode. At this level it seemed that test takers had difficulty keeping both the speaker and listener role active. Instead, the speaker role was stronger, as seen both

in the minimal linkage with the previous turn and in the weak listener support observed in the B1 pairs.

A typical B1 interaction can be seen in Excerpt 1 which shows four turns from the interaction between Veronica and Melissa, who are discussing different things to take to help them pass the time while waiting on a long queue for concert tickets. (In a break from the conventional way of presenting transcribed speech, the transcripts are aligned in a left and a right pane, to more clearly illustrate the individual contributions. Newly-initiated topics are underlined and bolded.)

**Excerpt 1:** Veronica and Melissa, Cambridge English: Preliminary (B1)  
 Prompt – Concert queue

Veronica	Melissa
1	If you have to be (.) in a:: (.) place for many hours, is good if you take with you <u>som:e (.) food a:nd water or another drink.</u>
	(.5)
2	Yeah, and it's good I think that a:h for our friends it's important that ah they have a: <u>mobile phone</u> , a:nd maybe <u>umbrella</u> , because maybe (.) raining, of course a <u>guitar</u> , because has important concert.
	(.5)
3	Yeah, if you don't be:: worry, ah worry, in in in the:, in with the people, you ca:n use your <u>walkman</u> (.5) and listen the: music that you prefer (.) or play in a little Nintendo.
4	Yes, sure, er, (.) a:nd ah it's important the <u>food</u> I think that he need to eat some (what), and the cola or chocolate, eat an apple is very good.

What we see here is an exchange in which the speakers develop five topics in the space of four turns. Each new turn initiates a new topic (or several new topics in the case of turn 2), with minimal development of these topics. Links with prior turns and extensions of 'other-initiated' topics are rare, as can be seen in turns 2, 3 and 4, where the speakers react minimally to the prior turn and provide only a minimal acknowledgement and a 'pro-forma' link with the prior turn ('yeah' or 'yes, sure').

Excerpt 1 illustrates another distinguishing feature of B1 interactions: rare listener support. In the excerpts given here, there are no instances of listener support, although softly spoken backchannels were occasionally found in other B1 transcripts. The excerpt also shows that at this level speaker changes typically occurred after a gap/pause, or in a no gap/no overlap manner, with practically no instances of latches, overlaps and interruptions. This is a result largely of the longer processing time learners at this level need to process what has been said in the previous turn and to construct their own response, and has been observed in previous research on low-level paired and group tests (Galaczi 2008; Gan 2010).

## Interactional Competence at B2

Learners at this level display the majority of B1 features, such as limited mutuality in topic development, but more collaborative features have started to emerge in their repertoire. They are capable of developing self-initiated and some other-initiated topics, leading to occasional multi-turn topics. They are also able to provide some listener support in the form of backchannelling. Speaker change is usually accomplished in a no gap/no overlap manner, with rare instances of overlaps or latches, signalling that the speakers need more time to process what had been said in the previous interactional turn.

An illustration of a typical interactional profile can be seen in Excerpt 2, in which Rino and Gabriela are exchanging ideas on what makes living in a city enjoyable.

### Excerpt 2: Rino and Gabriella, Cambridge English: First (B2)

Prompt: Things that make living in a city enjoyable

Rino	Gabriela
1	Well, (.) I think that (.5) <u>a park</u> is essential, (.) you know, maybe: (.5) in summer days, when you're (1) getting bored stay at home, (.5) hot, and you just go (.5) to a park, enjoy yourself with your family(.) and friends. What do you think about this, [Rino?]
2	Yeah hm yeah
[Yeah], also the big cities has a lot of parks. They are very nice (.5) and you see there some birds (.5) and other people (.5) who are walking through the park and relaxing. And here you can see, I think it's a: <u>football</u> (.5)	



Rino	Gabriela
3	<u>Stadium</u> =
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	

3  
 4 =stadium. (.5) Yeah, it's very big. (.0 ahm at the weekends there are a lot of (.) matches there, to enjoy it, to watch it, (.) and to support the team.  
 (1)  
 5 %Yeah%. Sports are essential.  
 6 Yeah.  
 (1)  
 7 And um there are lots of (1) coffee bar here. (1) This is more for the old people who wants a seat, (.5) and (.5) relax (.) reading their newspaper and (.5) chatting with friends. (.5) This is very good, too.  
 8 Yeah, but there are also young people=  
 9 =Yeah, there are also young people  
 10 Who are talking to each other=  
 11 =But they look a little bored here, (.) in the picture, don't you think?  
 12 Yeah, they like to prefer to go to a disco

The two interlocutors develop three topics in the stretch of twelve turns, and their topic development strategies display some collaborative features and higher levels of mutuality. For example, in turn 1 Gabriela initiates the topic 'parks', which is further developed by her partner into turn 2. The same is seen with the two subsequent topics ('stadium' and 'coffee bars'), which extend over several turns and also provide an illustration of a 'jointly constructed turn' (Coates 1994), where Gabriela provides support for Rino after he has signalled trouble in the conversation.

The frequent instances of backchannelling are a further distinguishing feature between B1 and B2. At this level learners' better developed linguistic resources allow them to be both focused on constructing their own response, on monitoring their partner's contributions and on showing some listener support through backchannels. They are better at keeping active the roles of speaker and listener. The active listener role is, however, still relatively weak and shown primarily through the use of backchannels.

## Interactional Competence at C1

The level of mutuality and reciprocity at this level is noticeably higher than at B2. Learners at this level show confidence in developing both self-initiated and other-initiated topics, with substantive topic expansions and multi-turn topics. C1 learners show active listener support both through backchannelling (a feature at B2), but also through confirmations of comprehension, which is generally a new feature at this level. In addition to the no gap/no overlap manner of speaker change, their turns start with a latch or overlap, giving a flow to their interaction.

An example illustrative of the interactional behaviour at C1 can be seen in Excerpt 3, in which Christian and Laurent are discussing different ways in which we use the world around us.

### Excerpt 3: Christian and Laurent, Cambridge English: Advanced (C1)

Prompt: Different ways in which we use the world around us

Christian	Laurent
	(.5)
1	A:h, what about the <u>mountains</u> ?
2	
Ahm, I think this is showing like the: ah affection of like tourist in like a beautiful area, like for example, this would have been a beach in like (.5) I don't know, for example Hawaii an it's like (.5) before humanity started to co- come there it's like (.5) maybe: very peaceful and like sea and now you can see there's a lot of (.) hote:ls [a:nd]	
3	[And] and maybe it could be also (.5) be a problem for (.5) ahm (.5) for the water and, and, how can I [say, ahm] not only water but [General]
[Yeah, exactly]	
4	
The environment in gen[eral, I] mean=	
5	=Yes, indeed=
6	
=cars are starting to come and like exhaust fumes and stuff like that=	
7	
yeah	=Yes, and everything in, in, (.5) maybe it was a wood before or something like that. (1) they had to ahm burn down ahm (.5) and where are ah the animals who who lived there in the past. (.5) It's also the same with <u>the last picture</u> , [isn't it?]
yeah	

	Christian	Laurent
8	[Yeah], I think it's l:ike, (.5) I'm not sure but there's like a specific word for this, that the trees and there's like a mudstream a:nd, it's,	
		(1)
9		Oh yes, [I see]
10	[I think] it's cause by, (.5) I'm not sure, do you know?= 11	=Yes, It's because they cut the trees down and then a:h it's like hm yes=
12	=Exactly, when it starts to rain, [there's like] a mudstream, uh, hm, I don't know	[Yes, indeed]

As this excerpt illustrates, the speakers co-construct a collaborative interaction, seen in the development of both self-initiated and other-initiated topics which extend over several turns. For example, the topic of 'mountain tourism' is developed over 6 turns (turns 1 – 7) and the idea of 'mudslides' is developed over 6 turns (turns 7 – 12). Their speech is also characterised by more natural turn-taking including frequent speaker changes, overlaps and latches.

Christian and Laurent's interaction also shows their ability to keep both the speaker and listener role active, as seen in the frequent use of listener support and confirmations of comprehension, evidence of their ability to monitor what the other person is saying. It is worth remembering Ducasse & Brown's (2009) distinction between backchannelling and confirmations of comprehension. The former can be used even when no comprehension has occurred, whereas the latter is evidence of the ability of the listener to monitor what is being said. At C1, in contrast to the level below, learners use more confirmations of comprehension, thus providing evidence that they are actively monitoring the content of their partner's talk.

### Interactional Competence at C2

At this level, learners have fully mastered the ability to develop interactions in a mutual fashion and display the ability to develop both self-initiated and other-initiated topics in a substantive manner by pushing the discussion forward with relevant contributions. Learners at C2 can shift in their interactional roles between listener and speaker effortlessly and show their interactional engagement through short turns, rapid speaker changes and supportive overlaps and latches.

A typical C2 interaction can be seen in Excerpt 4, which gives part of the interaction between Sabine and Jelmer as they are discussing different pictures which could be used in a class project on dressing up.

**Excerpt 4:** Sabine and Jelmer, Cambridge English: Proficiency (C2)

Prompt – Class project: Dressing up

Sabine	Jelmer
	(1)
1 Another picture, I was thinking about <b>the carnival</b> , in uh, (.5) South America, or something. Cause I always enjoy er, (.) looking at these pictures, and they're so colourful, and all the people wearing hats, and [masks and uhh, ]	yeah
2	yeah
3 it's amazing, yeah.	[It's absolutely huge.]
4	Also, in China, the, the carniv- is it the carnival? (1) It's some sort of religious thing anyway, and it's really big, and a lot of people dress up for it. (.5) I was thinking of <b>Halloween</b> as well.
OK	
5 yeah right!	
6 yeah	For people in the United States, I think, (.) it's the biggest there=
7 =kids love it=	
8	=yeah, yeah, because there's no kids in these pictures.
9 true (.5) yeah	
10 [definitely]	so for, if it's a class project, [umm], it might be a good idea to put some [kids in,]
11 [Yeah] cause we have all generations, like young people go to soccer, (.) and uh older, yeah.	yeah
12 [%That would be interesting%.]	yeah, exactly. So [it might be that it's more] balanced out, of the sort of people that [dress up.]
13 [True, yeah.] (.5) All the generations.	
14 yeah	Yeah. (1) Umm, and just for fun, I mean, they obviously all have reasons to, to do it. But I mean when you were young, you could just, just (.5) take stuff from your mother's- or father's drawer
yeah!	

Sabine	Jelmer
15 YEAH! If you look at little girls, and they love to walk around in their, in their mother's high heel shoes	
16	Exactly!

This example abounds in instances of collaborative topic development, as seen in the mutual development across speakers and turns. For example, the topic 'Halloween' is developed over 13 turns (turns 4-16), with a lot of instances of speaker changes, short turns, strong listener support and 'high involvement' speech (Tannen 1981) as seen in the use of overlap/latched utterances and interactionally smooth and appropriate transitions between them. This is clearly in contrast to the interactional behaviour at the lower levels, where long gaps between turns (at B1 and B2) often indicated a reluctance to take the floor.

The interactional behaviour at C2 is very similar to that observed at C1. A subtle difference does emerge, however, which is captured in the CEFR: At C1, the CEFR tells us, learners are characterised by "relating contributions to those of other speakers" (2001: 28), whereas at C2 they are "interweaving contributions into joint discourse" (2001: 28). Even though not easily quantifiable or measurable, the idea of creating a joint discourse is fundamental in distinguishing between C1 and C2. At C2 learners engage critically with each other and develop a joint discourse, as opposed to contributing to each other's discourse at C1. McCarthy (2010) refers to this interactional behaviour as "confluence", borrowing a geography metaphor which refers to the way two rivers flow into one another, and basically captures the ability of conversationalists not just to support each other in interaction, but to develop one common co-constructed discourse.

## Summary and conclusion

As the brief illustrations given in this paper have shown, learners at different proficiency levels display varying degrees of Interactional Competence. The key distinguishing features across adjacent levels are captured by the notions of topic organisation, listener support, and turn-taking management.

The main implication of this study lies in its contribution to the conceptualisation of Interactional Competence. The findings have shown that key aspects of the IC construct lie in the development of topics across turns, in listener support, and in the management of turn-taking. These

findings have supported recent research by Ducasse and Brown (2009) and May (2009), who have argued for the importance of broadening definitions of IC. This study has, in addition, provided findings of direct relevance for the CEFR *Interaction* scale and Cambridge ESOL's *Interactive Communication* scale, in supporting some of the categories used in these scales and in suggesting potential expansion of the scale in future revisions.

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# 11

## Academic Values in Context

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### Introduction

Since Hunston & Thompson's (2000) widely-cited volume on the subject, a number of studies have investigated the significance of evaluative speech acts in academic communication. While the focus of such work is largely on the function and construction of evaluation, far less is known about the axiological variables (or 'values') inherent in such acts. In other words, what desirable/undesirable aspects of research are made explicit in the discourse of academics. Most evaluations acts operate within a dyadic framework, as "construals of experiences in context on binary scales between positive and negative" (Downes 2000: 104). This means they encode values whose realisation varies in polarity as well as intensity.

Understanding what constitutes 'worthiness' (cf. Thetela 1997) among academic communities provides interesting evidence of the epistemology and cultural assumptions that underpin scientific enquiry. The crucial link between disciplinary cultures and values is highlighted in Becher's (1981: 109) well-known description of disciplines as "cultural phenomena [...] embodied in collections of like-minded people, each with their own codes of conduct, sets of values and distinctive intellectual tasks". What is more, values exist within specialised ecological systems supported by a biunivocal relationship with their linguistic realisation; accordingly, "every act of evaluation expresses a communal value-system, and every act of evaluation goes towards building up that value-system" (Thompson & Hunston 2000: 6).

To shed some light on this complex topic, a multidisciplinary corpus of English research articles was assembled and investigated for explicit lexical evidence of axiological variation. While readers are referred to Giannoni (2010) for a complete account of the study, the present paper outlines its methodology and illustrates how such texts draw on lexis signalling the core value of 'goodness' to commend/condemn a given referent through its association with qualities perceived as (un)desirable within the discipline. Its findings may be of interest both to the discourse analyst and to graduate students, who "need to learn to work within the value-systems of their target communities" (Swales 1990: 218) in order to become fully proficient writers.

## Material and methods

Because of its prestige and pervasiveness in modern-day journals, the research article (RA) is by far the most widely-investigated academic genre. Mastering its use, especially in English-medium publications, is increasingly crucial for success in academia and the sciences. For this reason the texts chosen for inclusion in our corpus consist entirely of RAs, whose various instantiations usually combine empirical data and content of a more speculative nature. The genre's importance as a source of axiological evidence was first pointed out by Hyland (1997: 22): "What counts as relevant issues, convincing evidence, valid inference and appropriate interpersonal conduct is grounded in *disciplinary values* transmitted via socialisation and secured through a system of peer judgement. The principal realisation of this schema is the research article" (added italics).

To collect a representative sample of RAs across the academic spectrum, ten texts were extracted from the latest volume of the top-rated journal in each of the following disciplines, whose pairings in turn cover five different scientific areas.

- Natural sciences: biology (BIO) and physics (PHY)
- Applied sciences: engineering (ENG) and medicine (MED)
- Human sciences: history (HIST) and anthropology (ANTH)
- Social sciences: sociology (SOC) and economics (ECO)
- Mathematical sciences: mathematics (MATH) and computer science (CS)

For each discipline the journal with the highest impact factor was chosen, based on rankings published in the ISI's Journal Citation Reports, 2005 edition. After digital extraction, the 100 texts were standardised by removing such ancillary content as page headings, figures, tables, footnotes, author details and references. Whether identified as 'research article' or as 'original article', 'article', 'paper' or 'original paper', the RAs invariably accounted for most (if not all) of the material printed in the host journal. Once uploaded to a concordancer (Scott 2008) for electronic processing, the resulting corpus was found to contain almost one million (986,185) tokens.

A methodology was needed that would allow the analyst to (a) identify explicit value-markers in the RA corpus; (b) compare their distribution across disciplines; (c) inspect the qualified entities associated with such

markers. For this purpose ‘value’ was conceptualised as any aspect of research to which the parent disciplinary community assigns an interpretation whose polarity reflects its practices, standards and beliefs.

All words with 100+ occurrences in the global wordlist were inspected and potential value-marking items (candidates) were grouped into semantic categories. Preliminary results, in order of frequency, produced the following categories: Goodness, Size, Novelty, Relevance, Value, Timing, Impact, Complexity, Generality, Completeness, Appeal. Taken together, these account potentially for no less than 20,000 tokens (i.e. one word in 50) in our corpus.

The next stage was manual identification of which candidate items actually functioned as value markers. Albeit time consuming, this was essential to weed out occurrences whose meaning is clearly non-evaluative (i.e. *well* and *good* used as nouns). Finally, the lexical groups in each category were completed by adding, where present in the corpus, additional items related either formally (common word-stem) or semantically (synonyms, antonyms) to those identified in the wordlist. For goodness, which totalled the highest number of candidate items among all values, there were five groups of markers covering different parts of speech and both polarities.

## Results

After checking all candidates within their concordances, only 49% of items were found to be relevant (i.e. goodness markers). This confirms the importance of integrating computer tools with manual investigation when dealing with potentially ambivalent realisations. Broken down by group, the results in Table 1 show a clear preference for non-specific evaluations, with the most generic markers (Group A) accounting for no less than 64% of all occurrences (1,094/1,708).

Group A	<i>well, best, good, better, improve*, improvement*</i>	933
	<i>poor, poorly, bad, worst, badly, worse, worsen*</i>	161
Group B	<i>positive, positively</i>	57
	<i>negative, negatively</i>	77
Group C	<i>right, rightly</i>	17
	<i>wrong, wrongly</i>	15
Group D	<i>problem*, problematic, problematically, unproblematic</i>	364
Group E	<i>error*, erroneous, erroneously</i>	84
	Total	1,708

**Table 1:** Goodness markers by group

Another interesting result is the prevalence of positive lexicalisations of goodness, with 59% of items (1,007/1,708) communicating the value's positive polarity. It is also worth noting that within Group 1, goodness is expressed more often comparatively (*better/best*) or as a procedural quality (*well*) than by the qualifier *good* – with 380, 227 and 154 occurrences respectively.

The distribution by part of speech and polarity summarised below highlights an overall preference for positive markers (59%) throughout the lexical repertoire, with the notable exception of nouns. The latter are negative in 89% of cases, due largely to the high frequency of *problem* and *error*. On the other hand, the verbs forms (all in Group A) are almost exclusively positive.

	POS (59%)	NEG (41%)	All
<b>Adjectives</b>	539	220	759
<b>Nouns</b>	51	417	468
<b>Adverbs</b>	307	62	369
<b>Verbs</b>	110	2	112
<b>Total</b>	1,007	701	1,708

**Table 2:** Parts of speech and polarity

### Interdisciplinary variation

The picture becomes more complex as we move from the general data described above to the extent of interdisciplinary variation across. Details for each group of markers (normalised by 10,000 words to make them comparable across different sections of the corpus) are given in Table 3. The disciplines are listed according by goodness-marking intensity, with shaded cells identifying the figures above average.

	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E	All
<b>CS</b>	14.6	5.9	0.9	12.1	1.9	35.4
<b>ECO</b>	19.9	1.3	0.3	2.0	3.2	26.7
<b>ENG</b>	23.3	-	-	1.7	0.8	25.7
<b>HIST</b>	13.9	1.0	1.0	4.4	0.2	20.5
<b>ANTH</b>	12.3	0.1	0.2	2.4	1.2	16.3
<b>SOC</b>	9.2	2.4	0.3	2.9	0.2	15.0
<b>MED</b>	10.8	-	-	3.0	-	13.8
<b>PHY</b>	7.1	0.2	0.2	4.4	0.2	12.0
<b>BIO</b>	8.6	-	-	0.5	0.7	9.8
<b>MATH</b>	2.3	-	-	1.8	0.1	4.2
<b>Ave.</b>	12.2	1.1	0.3	3.5	0.8	17.9

**Table 3:** Interdisciplinary variation (normalised data)

The last column shows the overall goodness-marking intensity of each discipline, which varies almost ninefold between the top (CS) and bottom (MATH) value. Their distribution does not directly reflect the pairings into scientific areas used when constructing the corpus, with the exception of the natural sciences (BIO and PHY) at the bottom of the list. The marking of specific values appears to be essentially a discipline-specific phenomenon, as the examples below will confirm.

Thanks to these markers the reader is not merely offered information but constantly reminded of its value along the good-bad axis, especially in CS, ECO and ENG. As mentioned earlier, the negative polarity (i.e. what is wrong or bad) is far less frequent than its opposite (what is good or right). Closer scrutiny shows that, proportionally speaking, adjectives are most salient in ENG (60% markers, esp. *best*), adverbs in BIO (54%, esp. *well*), nouns in MATH (45%, esp. *problem/s*) and verbs in MED (24%, esp. *improve\**).

## Type of marker

### Group A

The adverbial marker *well* usually (73% cases) co-occurs with a past participle, thus qualifying a physical or intellectual task subsequent to its performance: the top collocations were *well defined/established/developed/understood*.

- (1) For any adjacent points  $a, b$  in (3.19), there is a *well-defined* element  $g(a,b)$  of  $G$  that acts as a transposition in at least one of our two symmetric groups  $Sp+2$ . MATH

*Best* peaks in ENG, where it collocates almost exclusively with *model*, while elsewhere it tends to describe procedural aspects of research (e.g. *alignments, fit, outcomes, predictors*), with the exception of HIST.

- (2) The following are the *best* four models which were developed from the four methods to forecast the stream flow in the Rideau River for 2 days lead-time. ENG

*Good* qualifies data, statistical tools or modelling, as shown by its top R1 collocates *example\**, *agreement*, *approximation* and *fit* (*management* in ECO). It is used only occasionally for intellectual activity or in its moral, non-utilitarian sense.

- (3) Usually it is considered *good* if the number of generators can be reduced or the total length of the relators can be made smaller. MATH

*Better* collocates especially with *understanding*, *performance* and *practice*\*, thus qualifying scientific enquiry and its methodology.

- (4) Representing this epistemic uncertainty in transmissivity and storage coefficient values will allow for a *better* understanding of the heterogeneous subsurface. ENG

Items in the negative field were relatively scant and mostly consisted of the adjectives *bad* and *poor*. Economists are altogether the most likely to signal what is *bad/poor*, followed by computer scientists and historians. In terms of collocates, *bad* tends to qualify *practices*, *managers* and *performance* in ECO, human attributes (*behaviour*, *intentions*, *health*) in HIST and experimental features in PHY.

- (5) One of the interesting features of the raw data is the substantial fraction of firms that appear to have surprisingly *bad* management practices, with scores of two or less. ECO

*Worst* peaks unusually in HIST, where it underscores (always attributively) the tension inherent in certain facets of human experience:

- (6) If others threw themselves into the carefree and relaxed atmosphere of the place, he could find only a sink full of the *worst* possible vices. HIST

### **Group B**

This group consists above all of evaluative attributive adjectives encoding the conventional POSITIVE IS GOOD - NEGATIVE IS BAD metaphor (drawn from accounting). *Positive* almost always qualifies human behaviour, thus making 'positivity' a particularly subjective/emotive variable. It is absent in BIO, ENG, MATH and MED.

- (7) Individuals high on PA experience stronger *positive* emotions in a videoconference than individuals low on this disposition. CS

*Negative* is also strongly associated with human experience (again *emotions* in CS and *publicity* in SOC) but is more frequent than its

antonym.

- (8) As demonstrations, boycotts, and general disorder continued from April through May, graphic incidents of police repression drew enormous *negative* publicity. SOC

### **Group C**

Signalling what is *right* vs. *wrong* is particularly relevant in CS and HIST. *Right* invariably qualifies the behaviour of computer users in the former, while in the latter it is introduced as a dialectic or moral category.

- (9) The Hanafi legal tradition, which had become the preeminent legal school within the Ottoman Empire, had long looked upon them with misgiving. People had to be careful about using them with the *right* intentions. HIST

*Wrong* (unlike its antonym) is more often used predicatively than attributively, especially in conjunction with reported knowledge claims, whether integral or non-integral to the text.

- (10) They pursue a strategy of blurring by emphasizing universal moral qualities that make the division of the world into ethnonational groups appear *wrong* and unjustifiable. SOC

### **Group D**

This group signals various kinds of difficulty that deserve special attention. *Problem/s* peaks in CS, followed at a distance by HIST and PHY. It is often used anaphorically in *this problem/these problems*, with *the problem/s of* as the main choice among 3-word clusters.

- (11) The participants did not make a single mention of erroneous inferences being a *problem*, even when asked what annoyed them or what should be changed. CS

*Problematic*, albeit infrequent, is more frequent than *problem/s* in SOC and ANTH; over 70% of occurrences are used predicatively. It tends to qualify methodological options, data interpretation and theory building.

- (12) The last point is, however, not *problematic* from a cosmology point of view since for realistic value of the power-law exponent  $n$  it is always true that [EXPRESSION]. PHY

Among goodness markers, the only qualifiers that favour the predicative position (syntactic foregrounding) are *problematic* and *worse*.

### **Group E**

When scanning this group, occurrences encoding statistical error (as opposed to ‘human/technical’ errors due to misjudgement or bad design) were excluded. Only the latter are of interest because they are marked negatively for goodness. *Error/s* peaks in ECO, followed by CS and ANTH, while in the other disciplines its presence is negligible.

(13) We define  $\alpha$  as the probability that a physician makes an *error* that results in a potential tort liability. ECO

(14) Direct radiocarbon dates, however, proved them to be only 5000 years old, thus demonstrating that serious excavation *errors* obviously occurred during the fieldwork in 1931. ANTH

### **Discussion and conclusions**

This investigation of lexical items that make explicit the value of ‘goodness’ in English RAs shows a considerable degree of variation across domains. If approached using the labels adopted in other corpus-based work, there is very little difference between the social sciences (20.8 markers / 10,000 words), the mathematical sciences (19.8), the applied sciences (19.8) and the human sciences (18.4). Only the natural sciences (10.9) stand out for their dearth of explicit markers. The prominence of ECO and HIST appears in line with Becher & Trowler’s (2001) argument that the social sciences and humanities comprise more ‘value-laden’ disciplines.

The approach adopted here attempts to balance the often-opposing demands of systematicity and workability by combining quantitative tools and manual inspection of concordances. It focuses on the most frequent lexemes identified in the corpus because the range of lexemes/phrases capable of encoding meanings related to the value system is potentially unlimited and includes indirect realisations whose recognition is highly subjective and notoriously elusive in corpus-based work. Concentrating on explicit items allows the analyst to process a relatively small number of realisations close to the semantic core of the target value.

The results admittedly gauge the level of ‘explicitness’ appropriate to each



disciplinary culture, which in turn may be linked to the degree of reticence or textual silence adopted by its members. At the same time, it is important to recognise that no text *per se* is a clear mirror of the community in which it is embedded. As Hyland (1997: 21) aptly argues, RAs themselves do not tell the whole story, they are only the ‘public face’ of science. The linguistic resources employed for this purpose are closely related to evaluation, that is to the lexis of judgement and subjectivity (Thompson & Hunston 2000).

The markers described in this paper illustrate how researchers draw on a common lexical repertoire to assert goodness, qualifying their target in ways that would be meaningless outside an axiological framework available to all members of the discipline. The fact that most value claims bear not immediate justification reinforces this insight. As a component of ideology, values are so well embedded in academic discourse as to appear merely a part of its lexis.

Mention of what is good or bad occurs in almost every sphere of human interaction, and may thus appear too mundane for investigation. But the discursive-argumentative power of axiological variables originates largely from their apparent insignificance. The fact that scholars reproduce normative meanings whose authority cannot be challenged “is exactly why values are so precious for the maintenance of social cohesion” (Miceli & Castelfranchi 1989) also within the disciplines. The presence of such values also outside academia merely adds to their argumentative force.

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# 12

## **A Local Response to the Global Reality of Increased Migration: Teacher Education**

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There is increasing urgency for societies to ensure that all their citizens have access to wealth, status and the symbols of power. Education is charged with ensuring that the next generation possesses the skills and dispositions that ensure not only economic and social participation, but also habits of mind for life-long learning. Such a learning stance is required if citizens are to be able to choose their responses to the demands and opportunities of a rapidly globalized world. However, never before, at least in the Western world, has the citizenry to be educated been so diverse linguistically and culturally. Migration has been seen as the key for revitalization and economic prosperity in the face of aging populations. If the education system is not responsive to the linguistic needs of migrants' children, the potential social and economic benefits of migration could be lost both for the new arrivals and the host society. All teachers throughout the compulsory education sector play a pivotal role in welcoming these learners and their families, not only into the curriculum and school, but also into the wider society. If teachers and schools see their settings as societal microcosms where all students and their families' "funds of knowledge" (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez 1992) are valued, there is a greater chance of migration revitalizing the society with associated global links to many countries. Applied linguistics has a significant role to play in assisting in the design of policy and pedagogy bringing that needed language focus to teaching.

Although a linguistically diverse population demands a language focus, there has always been a recognition that language is at the heart of all learning (Halliday 1993). However, for this understanding to become practice rather than remain rhetoric, an alignment of activity settings that support teachers in developing a language focus in their teaching is required. Ministries/Departments of Education, universities and schools need to collaborate to ensure the conditions and resources for this vital development are in place (EU Consortium for Mainstreamed Second Language – Teacher Education 2010). Ministries and Departments of Education need to provide language-focussed policies, curricula and resources for planning and assessment. Universities, in their pre-service

and in-service work in language teacher education, need to provide sustained opportunities for teachers to critique and engage with the theory and practice behind a language focus in these policies, curriculum and resources. Schools need to develop school-wide plans and systems to prepare all students for full participation in society and the wider world. Such a co-ordinated school approach rests on Principals understanding the need to establish collegial settings in which teachers can work, individually and collectively, developing their own theories in practice to bring an academic language focus to their teaching and assessment of the curriculum. Such an alignment of Ministry, schools and universities can revitalize all these institutions as they collaborate in administration, research and practice to meet the needs of the students they serve and the world that they envision. In times of shrinking financial resources, the imperative to work together even more closely is heightened.

New Zealand, unlike many other Western countries (Mohan, Leung & Davison 2001) was late to welcome migrants who did not speak English as a first language. Other than migrants from the Pacific, many of whom had constitutional rights to live in New Zealand, an essentially White Immigration Policy meant the United Kingdom was the preferred provider of migrants for 150 years (Gray 2009). This policy was not relaxed until the passing of *The Immigration Act 1987* when the realities of finding new trading partners, pressure from within New Zealand for a more multicultural society and a global demand for young skilled New Zealanders forced change. With an influx of new migrants from countries as diverse as Korea, India, Fiji, China, South Africa and Croatia, a co-ordinated approach across activity settings in the education sector was needed to meet the needs of these new citizens. However, at precisely the same time as these significant changes in migration, education itself was undergoing significant reorganization. Schools were released from the financial control of a Department of Education to become self-managing. The Principals of “Tomorrow’s Schools”, in consultation with their school communities and with their elected Boards of Trustees, were to devise school charters and vision statements to ensure the needs of all students were met (Smelt 1998). In addition, National Education Guidelines and National Administration Guidelines held schools accountable in their strategic planning and implementation for priorities established by a new Ministry of Education (MOE). A justification for this radical change in school administration – devolution from a centralized department to local communities – was so schools would be more responsive to the needs of their specific communities. However, schools and the Ministry were

unprepared for the changing demographic – the influx of students needing to learn English as an Additional Language (EAL) through mainstream immersion. Although important language initiatives both across the curriculum and in bilingualism had begun in response to Pacific migration in the 60s (Lewis 2004), these were still marginal. Marshalling a co-ordinated response across educational activity settings to the needs and possibilities of a diverse citizenry has taken time.

The year 2010 saw the beginning of a co-ordinated language-focussed approach in the curriculum for all students (MOE 2007), a range of resources for diagnostic EAL assessment (MOE 2008) and for planning (MOE 2003, 2009). In addition, there are policies and procedures for applying for additional EAL support funding (MOE 2004). Another recent initiative that alerts schools and Principals to the specific needs of EAL students are New Zealand Curriculum National Standards (MOE 2010). The Ministry also instituted the Teaching English in Schools to Speakers of Other Languages (TESSOL) Fees Scholarship for teachers' programme in 2001. The programme provided an incentive for teachers to undertake part-time study while still teaching full-time in their multi-cultural schools (MOE 2001).

The Scholarship programme was designed to tie together three different activity settings: the Ministry, schools and university providers of TESSOL programmes. Their shared goal was to create conditions for teacher development in the inclusive teaching of academic language across the curriculum to meet the needs of growing numbers of EAL school students. Teachers were selected for the Scholarship programme on the understanding that they would share their TESSOL knowledge and practice with their Principals and the rest of the school community. Each activity setting played a key role in this goal: 1) The MOE incentivized the teachers' study by providing financial support for fees and books, organizing the advertising and the annual selection process for Scholarship holders and monitoring their progress through their programme of study; 2) The schools, through the Principal, prioritized which teachers' applications would be sent to the MOE for consideration by the National Selection Committee. The Scholarship programme recognized that if teachers were to be successful in managing part-time study and full-time teaching they would need the ongoing support of the Principal and school. To ensure that this support was given the Principal undertook to meet with the Scholarship holder at the end of each MOE-funded paper and complete an MOE course evaluation form. The forms provided the Ministry with a record of

teachers' intentions to complete further papers, an informal measure of the value of the study for teachers and schools and an indication as to whether the courses provided were relevant. Once analysed, these forms were archived by the MOE; 3) The university, selected as one of the providers needed to ensure that the courses and activities met not only international disciplinary standards of scholarship but also, more specifically, met the needs of the teachers and schools. Course material needed to address the specific planning and assessment demands of the local curriculum.

A key to such cross-institutional work is the commitment and responsiveness of the MOE, the schools and university LTE programmes to the shared goal of developing teachers' agency in sharing their TESSOL knowledge to effect change first in their own practice and, subsequently, in their schools. The collaboration between the Scholarship holders and their Principals was a key factor in determining the extent to which their knowledge became a resource beyond their own classrooms for developing school-wide inclusive academic language pedagogy that built on the L1 resources of EAL students and their families. One way for the Scholarship programme to facilitate this collaboration is the course evaluation form that each Scholarship holder and Principal jointly completed at the end of each funded course. This obligation gives the Principal, as the school's curriculum leader, the opportunity to discuss with the teacher: 1) support for the Scholarship holder in managing study commitments; and 2) ways in which the school could provide opportunities for Scholarship holders to utilise their TESSOL knowledge beyond their classrooms whether in responding to national imperatives in curriculum or assessment or to local needs in the school community.

### **This study**

Thus the purpose of this study was to investigate the specific ways Principals reported that they used teachers' TESSOL knowledge. The Principal's role as curriculum leader in New Zealand schools is of critical importance and we wanted to see how they were able to draw on this knowledge in meeting both local needs and national imperatives. We realized that the Principals were submitting this report to the MOE and could thus colour their reports favourably but our prime interest was to identify ways in which the knowledge was used within the schools so we could: 1) identify patterns of reported use; 2) as a university provider, identify any significant gaps that needed attention in our programme; and 3) share our findings as a resource for other teachers and principals to maximize possibilities for that collaboration. For this initial study, the two

latest years of available course evaluation collected by the MOE were selected. These cohorts had begun their study in 2007 (56) and 2008 (46). The particular sections that were coded for analysis were the responses to the question “How has the school been able to use the TESSOL Scholarship Holder’s TESSOL knowledge?” This question was asked in the course evaluation for the third funded paper in the second year of teachers’ study, *Language Learning in the New Zealand Context*.

## Data Analysis

For the purposes of this study, data analysis was kept at a low level of inference. Each of the 102 responses was coded only once – according to the central purpose that the Principal reported teachers’ TESSOL knowledge had been put to use. From this coding, three purposes were identified. The main two were reported with equal frequency, *influencing the culture of the school* (44), and *influencing colleagues through substantive conversations about pedagogy* (44) and a third, much less frequent category, *influencing Principal thinking* (12). This category was characterized by responses outlining how Principals’ interactions with the teachers and their TESSOL knowledge had challenged their thinking in planning and policy development and helped them synthesize national demands and local needs in the provision of an inclusive curriculum and additional EAL provision.

## Findings

### *Influencing the culture of the school*

One of the most frequent uses of TESSOL knowledge was *influencing the culture of the school*. Of the 44 responses that fell into this category, Principals noted two predominant ways it had changed the school’s culture. The first was *enhanced collegiality focused on EAL learning*. Many general comments were made such as, “Her TESSOL knowledge has been of benefit to the whole school” or “we have appreciated the awareness of EAL issues throughout the school”. Other comments were made regarding sharing enthusiasm with colleagues for a language-focused approach and the Principal’s promotion of this.

The second way the culture of the school was influenced was more focused. The teachers had raised the visibility of migrant students and their families, alerting their colleagues and the school in general to the need to incorporate the “funds of knowledge” that the EAL students and their families brought, not only into the curriculum but also the life of the school. Principals noted that the schools had become *more culturally*

*inclusive and responsive*. Thirteen of 44 responses related to very specific aspects of enhancing *community development*. Teachers had taken practical steps to ensure school/family collaboration through the establishment of a range of activities such as EAL parent afternoons, EAL homework programmes, establishing volunteer-in-school programmes and parental networks, as well as home-school partnerships. One Principal linked this collaboration with the community to guidance from the new curriculum: *Judith offers informed assistance to new migrant families with a clear understanding of the New Zealand Curriculum guidelines* (08M23).

### ***Influencing colleagues' professional development and pedagogy***

The other most frequent response has been identified broadly as *influencing colleagues' professional development and pedagogy*. In this category, Principals noted substantive collegial conversations around pedagogy which focused on inclusive academic language (44). Three types of conversations were noted – from informal and teacher-initiated in *teacher development* (18) to more formal situations when teachers shared their knowledge in conversations in more established formats such as *contribution to meetings* (8) and *structured professional development* (18). In the substantive conversations related to informal teacher development, Principals (6) remarked on overhearing TESSOL teachers engage in frequent lively debates focused on topics like students' academic language development in the curriculum and the value of L1 in providing a foundation for learning an additional language. These conversations involved a much wider group of colleagues than Principals had previously seen engaged – EAL teachers, teacher aides across different subject departments in secondary schools and across syndicates in primary schools. This collegial sharing of knowledge and practice also extended to informal invitations welcoming colleagues into their classroom to observe their teaching. In primary schools there was particular interest in sharing different oral tasks that led to writing and in secondary schools *that they differentiated learning in practice* (07P5) also through the provision of a range of different tasks. One Principal ensured that this informal advice was readily available for staff by ensuring all knew who to call on for assistance: *Promote Scholarship Holders as the "go to" people on staff for advice and guidance* (08M22).

The two more formal settings for substantive conversations were *contribution to meetings* (8) and more structured *school-wide professional development initiatives* (18). In the more formal meeting format of the school, Principals noted that the teachers made significant contributions



from a language and language-learning point of view. Key topics here were “promoting student interaction in content areas” and the value of the first language and culture as a resource for all. Eighteen Principals noted the use of TESSOL knowledge bringing an EAL perspective to school-wide professional development such as Pasifika Initiatives, Literacy development, Professional Learning Communities, and Assessment for learning.

***Influencing principal curriculum decision making***

The final category related to specific mention of teachers’ TESSOL knowledge, *influencing principal curriculum decision making*. These decisions related specifically to leadership in school-wide or department curriculum development, planning and assessment (5) and in EAL policy and programme development (9). Although not the focus of this paper, it is interesting that many of the Scholarship holders noted on the course evaluation form, how the use of tasks within their classroom had provided a sound basis for student interaction and for inclusive academic language teaching and assessment of students’ language and content needs. They recorded how all students had benefited from such an approach. They mentioned how recently released MOE documents (with which they had become familiar during their TESSOL studies) helped them in planning for and assessing student learning. Principals made many brief general references to such teaching and learning in the category of *influencing the culture of the school* and *influencing colleagues’ professional development and pedagogy*. There were, however, only four Principals out of the 102, who reported seeing the potential for using this knowledge and experience on a more systematic basis for school and department planning: *Leads whole school planning – supporting growth of teachers and students* (08M07). These Principals could envision how the specific needs of all students, including EAL students, could be met by synthesizing national imperatives and available MOE resources: *Increased impact of English language learning assessment throughout - more focused teaching using ELLP* (07M34). Significantly, these Principals not only gave these teachers the authority to lead these school-wide or department changes but also ensured that they had the resources to accomplish them successfully: *Assistant HOD given time to incorporate TESSOL knowledge into units for new curriculum* (08I07).

The second way Principals recorded that teachers’ TESSOL knowledge had influenced their curriculum decision-making was in the field of EAL policy and programme development. Although the New Zealand curriculum

expects EAL students' needs to be met within an inclusive curriculum through the integrated teaching of language and content, each school is also required to have policies that ensure these students' specific English language learning needs are met and that any additional programmes reflect informed spending of discretionary funding. The four who reported on teachers' TESSOL knowledge influencing their decision-making in policy development appreciated the opportunity to have research-informed and challenging conversations with teachers. This had given one the confidence to note, "*TESSOL is in our school charter, vision and strategic plan*". Another Principal reflects an openness and disposition to learn and a desire to have this knowledge shared systematically throughout the whole school community through acknowledging the work of this particular Scholarship holder:

*Contributed enormously to the learning culture of the school. Reviewed many policy areas 2009–2010. Beth used her theoretical studies to support and challenge my understanding of the needs of English language learners. She has shared her findings with staff and BOT throughout the year.*  
(08M08)

Similarly, in the area of ensuring that discretionary funding is wisely allocated, six Principals noted how teachers' TESSOL knowledge and familiarity with such procedures helped funding applications, setting up, reviewing and critiquing EAL programmes and assisting in the oversight of EAL budgets: *Helped me conduct a review of EAL resources, programmes and student outcomes. I learnt a lot* (07P12).

## Discussion

This analysis has highlighted the importance of the alignment of different agencies within the education sector working towards ensuring the needs of new English language learners are met within New Zealand schools. Alignment, however, is insufficient. Research needs to maximize opportunities and pinpoint gaps in collaboration across the network of interest and to highlight the productive policies, procedures and resources being used. The analysis potentially opens up the collaboration for the scrutiny of all partners focused on creating conditions for teacher development in the inclusive teaching of academic language across the curriculum. Teachers too, at the heart of the endeavour, can use this analysis to consider different possibilities for using their knowledge beyond the classroom to influence the culture of their school community, their colleagues' professional development and teaching and/or their Principals' thinking.

These insights are key to self-managing New Zealand schools developing inclusive academic language pedagogy. Such schools require leadership in policy and programme development, not just from the Principal. A significant skill for the Principal is to mobilize knowledge within the school to meet students' needs whilst drawing on national Ministry directives and resources. Developing leadership capacity within schools is a particular skill that many of these Principals have accomplished. Principals have recognized the knowledge and enthusiasm that teachers bring and deepened that commitment to learning, acknowledging teachers' contribution, and maximizing their TESSOL knowledge by linking it to the demands within the school. Significantly, it was only a very few (12) who reported being challenged in their thinking about policy, programmes and planning.

For the MOE, which collected this data, this analysis ensures that schools' different developmental paths in utilizing TESSOL knowledge are recorded. The data also provides traces of how national requirements, regulations and resources were being used within specific contexts. Such findings could also be disseminated widely showing ways in which the Principal/Scholarship Holder collaboration could be maximized.

As one of the university providers, we identified the primary uses of TESSOL knowledge that Principals reported. Such patterns of use reinforced the importance of using, not only international literature but also local MOE resources. As language teacher educators we need to be conversant with all requirements, regulations, and resources of the local context, in particular, for curriculum planning and assessment. Teachers who have had opportunities to explore and critique the implications of these documents for their own practice and the international literature, for example in the area of planning and assessment for EAL students, can then lead such initiatives on a school-wide basis.

In this era of accountability there are many measures in place to maximize performance of students, teachers, Principals and schools. Alongside this preoccupation, it is also important to reiterate the role of teachers and Principals as scholars and schools as learning communities for all. Such a perspective deepens the commitment of the scholar teaching profession to student achievement and collaboration. Helping teachers and schools find ways to address the practical needs of students and their families strengthens the curricular vision for Aotearoa/ New Zealand as a small democracy – a multicultural society resting on its bicultural heritage where

all are engaged in participating and contributing. The school, after all, is a microcosm of society (White & Gray 1999).

What has not been explored in this paper and would be of further interest would be exploring the factors and dispositions that led the 12 principals to being open to reporting that their curriculum decision-making had been influenced and challenged by their teachers' study. In addition, we are intrigued to know how these particular teachers had been able to engage their Principals in such productive collaborations. In summary, this paper has endeavoured to illuminate a small corner of collaboration from a little-reported group in applied linguistics – school Principals. The paper has explored the use of applied linguistics in a specific context as Aotearoa/New Zealand maximizes the potential of migration to bring new life, not just to the economy and society, but also to our schools and education system. In sharing these illustrative examples of ways Principals have made use of teachers' TESSOL knowledge in schools, we wanted to open up the work to scrutiny from other potential collaborators.

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# 13

## The use, relevance and visibility of Welsh vis-à-vis English in the private sector

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### Introduction

The aim of this paper, which is part of a larger project<sup>5</sup>, is to illuminate the current discussion on the use of Welsh and English in the private sector in Wales. The Welsh language calls for special attention since Wales exemplifies a realistic model of bilingualism (Williams 2008: 245), successful language revitalisation and thriving government intervention with the aim to secure, maintain and advance the use of Welsh in a variety of domains. So far revitalisation activities have mainly focused on the fields of education and the public sector, within which substantial opportunities have been created to use the language. Yet, in recent years there has been an increase in companies adopting Welsh for their business activities. In addition, there is a current debate about a new legislative competence order which would give the Welsh Assembly Government more power to make laws to promote Welsh (Welsh Assembly Government 2010). This competence order would also include a legal requirement for some private companies to provide bilingual language services.

The recent developments have heightened the need for research into the issue of minority language use in the private sector from a policy perspective as well as a discourse-analytical and attitudinal perspective. I will begin this paper by briefly establishing a contextual framework for the sociolinguistic, political and economic contexts in which Welsh and English are employed, thereby providing theoretical underpinnings to minority language policy and planning. Then I will sketch pivotal legislative actions affecting language policy in Wales before focusing on the current debate surrounding the use of Welsh in the private sector. Finally I will illustrate some findings from my empirical pilot study on the use of Welsh and English in businesses in Wales, conducted as part of my

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<sup>5</sup> In my ongoing PhD project, I investigate the use, relevance and visibility of Welsh vis-à-vis English in the private sector in Wales from a discursive as well as an attitudinal angle. The former focuses on a critical-discursive analysis of language policy documents in the context of promoting Welsh in the private sector. The latter seeks to gauge actual language use and existing ideologies and beliefs surrounding Welsh medium provision in the business domain by online questionnaires and qualitative face-to-face interviews.

larger research project.

The data for the pilot study were collected from June to August 2010 by means of a web-based survey completed by managerial and front-line staff of small, medium-sized and large businesses of various sectors throughout Wales.

## **Contextual Framework**

### ***Minority Language Policy and Planning***

The complexity of the field language policy and planning is demonstrated by the vast variety of definitions available. Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: x-xi) differentiate between language policy and planning, with the former denoting “a body of ideas, laws and regulations (language policy), change rules, beliefs, and practices intended to achieve a planned change (or to stop change from happening) in the language use in one or more communities”, and the latter meaning “an attempt by someone to modify the linguistic behaviour of some community for some reason”. Over the time the definition of language policy and planning has been revisited and expanded, since the debates about language policy comprise more than just the language in question but often occur in the context of power relations between different groups (Blackledge 2005: 44). It is therefore mainly the political, economic, social, ideological and cultural contexts that nurture the discussion and determine the need for policies as well as their practical implications (Ricento 2006).

According to Spolsky (2004: 9) “language policy may refer to all the language practices, beliefs and management decisions of a community or polity”. In addition, language policy is concomitant to choice. These language choices between the minority and the majority language are affected by a number of top-down as well as bottom-up pressures, both vital to secure and preserve linguistic diversity. McColl Millar (forthcoming) reinforces the idea that both bottom-up and top-down approaches must integrate successfully for policies to be effective:

Without a strong top-down approach any major policy initiative of this type would be highly unlikely to be effective; without support from below, any chance of effectiveness would be nonexistent”. (McColl Millar forthcoming: 8)

Following Spolsky’s (2004: 5) language policy model, the three principle components that make up language policy are language practices, language beliefs or ideologies and language intervention or management. These three interrelated components provide the framework for my investigation as to



how policies, ideologies and language practices correlate, based on the underlying assumption that language policies and practices are mutually influential (Shohamy 2006: 165).

The complex correlation between policies, ideologies and practices is further demonstrated by Shohamy's (2006: 50) seminal work and specifically her expansion of Spolsky's framework and her contribution to the relationship of overt and covert language policies, i.e. *de iure* policies (e.g. official documents, laws, curricula, tests) and *de facto* practices (e.g. implicit, no officially formulated policies).

Thus the numerous non-linguistic factors, which, following (Spolsky 2004: 6), "regularly account for any attempt by persons or groups to intervene in the language practices and the beliefs of other persons or groups", shape language policy, together with existing as well as constructed language ideologies about language and language use. These ideologies are "produced in discourses" (Blackledge 2005: 44) in a variety of contexts, with language ideologies denoting

more than individual speakers' attitudes to their languages, or speakers using languages in particular ways. Rather, they include the values, practices and beliefs associated with language use by speakers, and the discourse which constructs values and beliefs at state, institutional, national and global levels. (Blackledge 2005: 32)

### ***Minority Language Policy in Wales***

Apart from the Welsh Language Act (HMSO 1993), which has to date been the most vital language policy explicitly placing Welsh and English on an equal basis in public life, the Welsh Assembly Government's 'Iaith Pawb' (Welsh Assembly Government 2003) has to be mentioned. This document, meaning 'Everyone's Language', was one of the first major enterprises of the Welsh Assembly Government in terms of Welsh language policy. The text sets out a number of actions and strategic aims to create a bilingual Wales and to strengthen and revitalise the Welsh language *per se* (cf. Huws 2006).

Among the five key targets formulated in the document to be achieved by 2011 are that "more services, by public, private and voluntary organisations are able to be delivered through the medium of Welsh" (Welsh Assembly Government 2003: 11). Expanding language policy to private organisations is considered a novel as well as challenging field for the future process of language policy and planning by policy makers, language activists and especially the Welsh Language Board.

As Williams (1999: 281) stipulated already 11 years ago, the challenges in Wales are to “strengthen sympathetic attitudes by creating new opportunities for language choice”. Over the years, myriad opportunities have been created for using Welsh in the public sector, mostly welcomed by favourable attitudes. Now Wales is committed to strategically prioritise the private sector in order to “create a truly bilingual country” (Welsh Language Board 2006: 5).

## **The use of Welsh in the private sector**

### ***Current debates***

The private sector lies outside direct government legislation but is increasingly becoming a germane issue, which is, for example, illustrated by the present language debate surrounding the Proposed Welsh Language Measure 2010 on extending Welsh language services to new contexts, such as the private sector. Indeed, over the last decade more and more companies have adopted Welsh for their internal and external business activities, which has resulted in a number of voluntary Language Schemes agreed with the Welsh Language Board. The alleged stance by the Board is that goodwill, persuasion and voluntary cooperation is more adequate for the private sector than any statutory enforcement (Welsh Language Board 2006: 5). The only exception seems to be private sector companies that provide services of a public nature, as is laid down explicitly by the Board:

Persuasion, rather than enforcement has been the Board’s mission with the sector. On the other hand, the Board has regularly called for extending the current legislation to include services of a public nature provided by the Private Sector. (Welsh Language Board 2006: 5)

Following Schedule 7 of the Proposed Welsh Language Measure 2010 (Welsh Assembly Government 2010) companies providing services of a public nature, for example, private utilities such as gas, water and electricity providers, as well as postal and railway services providers or telecommunication companies, would be obliged to treat Welsh and English equally. One can already see from the stance taken by powerful advocacy groups such as the Welsh Language Board and governmental bodies that major discrepancies exist in deciding whether to include or exclude certain areas from language legislation. Questions range from whether the entire private sector should be included or only parts of it or where the dividing line is between companies providing and not providing ‘services of a public nature’? The Welsh Language Society even takes the issue further by tentatively suggesting a legal extension of the use of Welsh in the whole of the private sector (Welsh Language Society 2010: 10).

These ideologically shaped processes are inextricably linked to the field of politics and the extension of the devolvement of legislative power in Wales over the years, as is expressed so adequately by Baker (2003: 97):

Competing ideologies that variously prioritise voluntary or centralist infrastructures, public or private organisations, community or individual user focuses, broad-brush approaches or specific target setting [...] reveal that language planning is not divorced from politics, competing disciplinary approaches and personal preferences among those with leadership responsibilities and power.

One such example of a body with leadership responsibilities and influence is the Welsh Language Board whose function and discourse adopted renders closer examination.

### ***The Role of the Welsh Language Board***

The statutory establishment of the Welsh Language Board in 1993 has contributed effectively to the revitalisation of the Welsh language both with a view to its status and its use in a variety of domains, particularly the public sector and the sphere of education. As has been stated already, the domain of economic life has been targeted recently by the Board. This development is certainly tied to current political endeavours to establish a new Welsh language law. The Board has continuously focused on creating further opportunities to use the Welsh language in the business context and on stimulating the provision of bilingual services, which has become a “mark of quality service in Wales” (Baker 2003: 108).

The Welsh Language Board has adopted a deliberate approach of persuasion and promotion by marketing the language in fields such as the private sector. This approach may be based on the dilemma that the public sector can be “influenced directly by ideological, legislative and political processes” (Williams 2007: 93), whereas the private sector needs to be addressed by tangible and economically sound reasons for using minority languages for internal and external communication (Williams 2007: *ibid*).

The Board attempts to persuade businesses of the (economic) advantages of bilingualism, and of the need to offer bilingual services to customers if Wales is to develop into a truly bilingual country. The overall aim is to develop a long-term campaign and marketing strategy to promote and facilitate the use of Welsh in economic life. The Private Sector Strategy, developed by the Board in 2006, is just one example that clearly sketches the prioritisation of the private sector, as is shown in the following extract:

The Private Sector certainly touches the daily lives of the majority of

ordinary people more often than any other sector. This in itself makes it a strategic priority if we are to see Wales developing into a truly bilingual country". (Welsh Language Board 2006: 5)

According to the Strategy (Welsh Language Board 2006: 7) the aims laid out in the document are to expand the use of the language in small and medium-sized as well as large companies and to normalise the use of it at management, staff and customer level. In this context, the key messages put forward by the Board are that "Welsh and bilingualism are assets to any business in Wales" (Welsh Language Board 2006: 4), and that Welsh is the language of the customer and a viable medium for business.

However, approaches of this kind carry with them various limitations too. The arguments put forward by the Welsh Language Board in the private sector strategy rely too heavily on overgeneralization and also lack empirical evidence, so the strategy has to be treated and interpreted with caution. It may not necessarily be true that the Welsh language and bilingualism is an asset to *any* business operating in Wales, for a multitude of reasons ranging from cost implications to the business sector, type, size, or ownership of business. Therefore, the statement that Welsh and bilingualism is an asset cannot be extrapolated to all businesses in Wales. Nevertheless, it must also be acknowledged that most of the documents produced by the Welsh Language Board are discursively constructed to persuade companies of the advantages of adopting Welsh, though with oversimplified strategies it seems.

### ***The Proposed Welsh Language Measure***

The Welsh Language Measure introduced on 4 March 2010 is another step towards "devolution of further powers from Parliament to the Assembly" (Williams 2010: 54) by giving legislative competence to the National Assembly for Wales. The Measure, which was passed unanimously on 7 December 2010, proposes a new and improved legal framework and, for the first time, makes Welsh an official language in Wales.

The Proposed Measure includes provisions concerning the official status of Welsh, the establishment of the post of Welsh Language Commissioner, who is supposed to dissolve and replace the Welsh Language Board, the replacement of Welsh language schemes, which were established by the Language Act 1993, by standards, and the establishment of a Welsh Language Tribunal. The private sector is affected in so far as the Measure proposes to place duties on private sector businesses that provide public services (Welsh Assembly Government 2010: 114-115).

The Measure does not affect Welsh language services in shops, except for over-the-counter activities in post offices or at railway stations. What is more, if a business fails to meet the language service delivery standards, then it would have to face fines and sanctions.

Williams (2010: 54) argues that this new demand for legislation in extended areas such as the private sector is linked to the marked transformation of the public sector since 1993, with many former public sector utility companies having become privatized over the time. Ostensibly, such a political push as the Language Measure is exposed to much criticism by numerous stakeholders.

On the one hand, many private businesses, especially utility companies, see themselves threatened by the proposed enforcement of Welsh medium provision, which could lead to increased costs as well as resentment within the company. Many businesses would rather maintain the previous system based on voluntary schemes. On the other hand, many language activists, such as the Welsh Language Society, despite welcoming this step towards further language use in the private sector, argue that the Proposed Measure would have considerable flaws and weaknesses and is characterized by general vagueness. One of the most critical points put forward by the Language Society is that the proposed law does not include a statement on linguistic rights.

Other defects of the Proposed Measure mentioned concern the role of the Language Commissioner, which would still be accountable to the government and thus not fully independent in its decision-making process. A reasonable approach to tackle the issue of language legislation with the aim to increase language use is taken by Williams (2010: 59), who ascertains that

legislation can create new opportunities, but it is the socialisation processes, chiefly the education system in a strong civil society, which develops an ability and desire to make the most of the opportunities available.

Top-down legislation is indeed vital for the preservation and revitalisation of the Welsh language. Yet, ever more crucial is the explicit awareness raising process of existing opportunities to use the language and the development of desires and incentives to communicate in Welsh in the first place.

### ***Pilot Study: Data and methodological framework***

My web-based quantitative pilot study included 13 companies of different sectors based in Wales (10 small and medium-sized firms and 3 large companies in South, West and North Wales), with managerial staff and front-line staff as the core sample of respondents (n=13). The companies were selected on the basis of lists of private sector firms published by the Welsh Language Board and a listing of the top 300 headquartered businesses in Wales published by Deloitte. The questionnaire aimed to elicit the use of Welsh and English in private sector businesses by addressing three major sections: internal and external language use, language policy and legislation issues (including attitudes towards the Proposed Welsh Language Measure), and language ideologies, beliefs and perceptions about the Welsh language and its use or non-use as well as its perceived relevance in businesses. Due to the size of the pilot study, no definitive conclusions can be drawn from so small a sample of respondents.

### **Preliminary Findings**

As far as the questionnaire section on the Proposed Welsh Language Measure 2010 is concerned, I attempted to elicit whether the respondents agreed or disagreed that using Welsh could become a legal requirement for some private sector businesses (such as utility companies and telecommunication firms) in the future.

Those respondents that had given Welsh as their main language of communication and interaction agreed with a considerable 86% that using the Welsh language should indeed become statutorily enforced for private sector businesses, while 14% indicated that they had no opinion on that issue. Not surprisingly though, no respondent disagreed on enforcing Welsh in some private sector businesses.

Significantly more than the majority of the respondents with English as their main language disagreed on obliging private sector companies to use Welsh in the future (66%). Yet 17% of the informants were in favour and agreed on the issue, while quite a considerable number of 17% remained undecided. Comparing the two results, and even though the pilot study merely revealed some perspectives with so small a number of informants, one could still tentatively suggest that some of the companies currently operating with English as the main language could probably be convinced to adopt bilingualism for their internal and external business activities. Although 17% agreeing on the issue is not an overwhelmingly large number, there is still the opportunity to tackle or work with these

businesses, which seem to have a more favourable attitude towards the issue.

The questionnaire also attempted to elicit the reasons for and against bilingual services in businesses by using open-ended categories<sup>6</sup>. The most decisive positively connoted factors determining the use of Welsh in businesses mentioned by the respondents were the maintenance and establishment of customer loyalty and corporate image, the likely access to government funding if a business chooses to operate bilingually and feelings and expressions of national identity. By contrast, the most prominently and recurrently stated factors for the non-use of Welsh in businesses were cost implications, the ownership of the business (e.g. monolingual English owners), the difficult process of recruiting Welsh-speaking, bilingual staff, and the greater workload caused by operating bilingually.

## Conclusions

This paper has attempted to give an account of the use of Welsh and English in the private sector in Wales. What the current debates demonstrate is an existing mismatch between aspirations of policy makers and capacities of language use, especially at economically unstable times. This apparent gap turns the trend towards systematic bilingualism in Wales into a difficult and daunting enterprise, especially if it happens at a macro, i.e. collective level and involves legal obligations.

I offer the proposal that it will be vital to cater for minority language use and provisions at the micro, i.e. individual level in particular, if the business sector is to prosper as a new and successful domain of minority language use. It must be acknowledged that the use of Welsh may not be an option for all operating businesses in Wales. Hence a collective statutory enforcement may prove to be counterproductive and lead to contracting rather than expanding linguistic practices. What is thus needed is research that explores micro-level linguistic scenarios at the local level in order to identify the actual reasons and experiences that shape the use or non-use of Welsh in businesses.

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<sup>6</sup> In my pilot questionnaire, I included a number of unstructured open-ended questions in order to elicit possible answer categories which may lend themselves to be used in the final questionnaire. The aim was also to keep the first draft of the questionnaire rather flexible, without preselecting certain answer categories and forcing “the respondents in the frame of reference of the researcher” (Saris and Gallhofer 2007: 103) and thus influencing the respondent in their choices. However, it turned out that quite a few respondents skipped the question, obviously one of the major flaws of using open requests for an answer.

One of the most significant issues to be tackled is what constitutes true bilingualism and how language policy and planning can provide opportunities at the societal but especially at the individual level to manoeuvre one's life in a bilingual manner, without being forced to make 'either-or' decisions that would eventually lead to monolingualism again. These, among other issues, fall within the scope of my larger research project and will thus be addressed in more detail in my future investigations.

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# 14

## Do New Technologies Facilitate the Acquisition of Reading Skills? A Systematic Review of the Research Evidence for Primary and Secondary Learners

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### Introduction

In 2009, Spain launched its *Escuela2.0* initiative, which aims to digitalise over 14,000 classrooms in primary and secondary schools (Presidencia del Gobierno 2009). Similarly, China is planning to provide 90 per cent of schools with Internet connectivity by 2010 (UNESCO 2009). Following similar initiatives in the UK, the National Curriculum now requires the use of technology in modern foreign languages. Countries such as Spain and China may, therefore, soon require the same in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes. Consequently, there is a need to assess the state of the art of new technologies<sup>7</sup> in language learning (henceforth Computer-Assisted Language Learning; CALL)<sup>8</sup> in primary and secondary education, sectors not traditionally associated with CALL (Jung 2005). The results of a systematic review (as defined by the EPPI-Centre 2007) conducted in response to this need are presented here.

### Method

Systematic reviews aim to reduce the subjective bias characteristic of traditional literature reviews, through the use of transparent and explicit protocols, exhaustive database searches, explicit inclusion/exclusion criteria, and quality assurance measures (hand searches and double blind reviews of individual studies; EPPI-Centre 2007). There are two phases to a systematic review: (1) production of a keyword map of the research, and (2) in-depth review of a more focused selection of studies.

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<sup>7</sup> New technologies refers here to technologies not commonplace in homes or schools prior to 1990, the start of this review. The following technologies used in language classrooms are therefore not considered: audio cassettes, CDs, video, and satellite television.

<sup>8</sup> While the term Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) may be more appropriate given the scope of the uses of the computer (e.g. social media including blogs and wikis) and related technologies (e.g. mobile phones) included in this review, the term CALL is used because it is more prevalent in the literature and is intended to cover the full range of uses of technology in language learning (Levy and Hubbard 2005).

The research question which guided the **keyword mapping** process of this review was:

- *What empirical research has been undertaken on the use of CALL with primary and secondary school students between 1990 and 1999?*

The *Language and Linguistics Behavior Abstracts*, *Education Resources Information Center*, *PsycINFO*, and *INSPEC* electronic databases were exhaustively searched using the following search strategy: LANGUAGE AND LEARNING AND (COMPUTER OR TECHNOLOGY OR [*SPECIFIC TECHNOLOGIES*]). The articles identified through these searches were then screened against our inclusion criteria: only studies published between 1990 and 2009 in peer-reviewed English language journals which reported original empirical studies on CALL use in foreign or second language learning with primary and secondary school students were included. The included studies were then keyworded according to: the country where the study was conducted, the age and sex of the students, the methodology adopted (quantitative/qualitative/mixed), the students' first language and the target language (TL), the area of linguistic knowledge or skill that was the focus of instruction, the technology employed, and the theoretical and pedagogical underpinnings of the research. Hand searches of the four main CALL journals (*Computer-Assisted Language Learning*, *ReCALL*, *Language Learning & Technology*, *CALICO Journal*) were also conducted. The included studies were keyworded in the same way as those located through the electronic searches. The same process was also applied to the reference lists of three recent CALL reviews (Jung 2005; Stockwell 2007; Levy 2009).

The **in-depth reviews** were restricted to research published from 2000 onwards, and each focused on a particular area of linguistic knowledge or skill. The research questions for the review presented here were:

- (1) *What evidence is there that new technologies facilitate the acquisition of reading in EFL?*
- (2) *What (pedagogical) insights can be gleaned from these studies regarding the use of new technologies in the teaching of reading in EFL?*

To answer these questions, studies of reading were identified from the keyword map. These studies were then double blind reviewed. In order to avoid reviewer bias, each reviewer first completed an evaluation grid for each study. Having completed the grid to assess each part of the study (literature review, method, results, conclusions and implications), the

reviewer then rated the *weight of evidence* of the study for each in-depth review question. The *weight of evidence* of a study, i.e. its contribution to answering the review questions, was determined by (1) the relevance of its focus, (2) the appropriateness of its design, and (3) its trustworthiness; and was rated on a three-point scale (high, medium, low). Having completed the grids and rating scales independently, the reviewers met and agreed an appropriate assessment for the study. The findings of the studies which received an overall *weight of evidence* rating of medium or high were then synthesised to produce the current report.

## Results: Keyword Map

461 studies were identified through the database searches, 90 of which met the inclusion criteria for the keyword map. Six more studies were identified through the hand searches of journals and another from the literature reviews. The keyword map therefore comprises 97 studies. Mapping these studies showed that most studies had been conducted in the US (32); next came Taiwan (9), China (7) and the UK (4). As expected, given its status as the global language of communication, English was the TL in over 70 per cent of the studies (71). European languages were the TL in the majority of the remainder of the studies (27). Also as expected, given that the CALL movement began in universities (Jung 2005), more studies focused on secondary education (58) than on primary education (39). Few studies focused on pronunciation (3, not mutually exclusive), speaking (7), listening (7) or grammar (8). In contrast, vocabulary (25), writing (24) and reading (23) studies dominated. These results can be attributed to the availability of relevant technologies: for example, the speech technologies necessary for activities focusing on pronunciation and speaking have only recently become viable. The research also appears to have followed developments in technology. Consistent with Jung's (2005) bibliometric study and the investments that a number of countries including the UK (Ofsted 2002), USA (Goolsbee & Guryan 2006), Singapore (Ministry of Education, Singapore 2008) made in technology in schools, particularly the provision of Internet access, in the late 1990s, much research post-2000 focuses on using the web (18), and there has been a recent rise in interest in Web2.0 (5) and mobile learning (3).

For the 23 studies investigating reading, similar trends were observed with respect to the country in which the studies were conducted – ten were conducted in the US and six in Taiwan – and the language of instruction – 19 focused on English and four on European languages. The number of studies which focused on primary (12) and secondary (11) education was,

however, evenly balanced. In contrast with previous literature reviews which have identified multimedia annotations and electronic dictionaries as the most popular technologies for reading (Stockwell 2007; Levy 2009), this review found the most popular technologies to be text reconstruction (4), web publishing (4), e-mail (4), hypermedia (3), and text-to-speech synthesis (3). Looking more closely, one of the hypermedia studies involved annotation/glossing (Proctor, Dalton & Grisham 2007). Electronic dictionaries (2) were the sixth most popular technology in this review.

### **Results: In-Depth Review**

Thirteen studies met the criteria for inclusion in the in-depth review. They are now examined with respect to the two in-depth review questions in turn.

#### ***(1) What evidence is there that new technologies facilitate the acquisition of reading in EFL?***

Only three of the studies were rated as making a medium or high contribution to this question. These studies investigated the acquisition of a range of reading skills, from low-level skills involved in bottom-up processing to high-level skills involved in top-down processing and to fluency.

The first, Troia (2004), investigated the effects of *FastForWord*<sup>TM</sup> software on a range of areas of linguistic knowledge and skills, two of which are involved in reading: phonological awareness and word decoding. *FastForWord*<sup>TM</sup> employs waveform manipulation, the acoustic modification of speech signals, to help students better perceive non-native phonemic contrasts in a variety of exercises focusing on sound discrimination, sequencing and identification, by enhancing the acoustic cues which native speakers (NSs) rely on to distinguish between phonemes such as formant values (the frequency or pitch of the various resonant cavities of the oral tract). This large-scale study involved 191 primary school English Language Learners (ELLs) from seven US schools and had a pre-test / post-test format with a between-participants design. The Independent Variable (IV) was training (*FastForWord*<sup>TM</sup> sessions vs. regular classes). The Dependent Variables (DVs) were phonological awareness and word decoding. Phonological awareness was measured using the *Lindamood Auditory Conceptualization Test* (Lindamood & Lindamood 1979) and equivalents including the *Sound Blending* subtest of the *Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised* (WJ-R; Woodcock & Johnson 1990) depending on the school. Word decoding was

measured using the *Letter-Word Identification* and *Word Attack* subtests of WJ-R. Depending on the school, individual students or intact classes were randomly assigned to experimental and control conditions. While the experimental group (N=99) participated in five twenty-minute pull-out sessions per day, five days per week, for a minimum of four weeks, the control group (N = 92) participated in normal classes. No significant differences were observed between the experimental and control groups on any of the measures, with the exception of the measures of phonological awareness, where the control group performed better than the *FastForWord*<sup>TM</sup> group. This lack of any positive effect is an important finding, given the degree to which *FastForWord*<sup>TM</sup> has been promoted in the US.

The second study (Lan, Sung & Chang 2009) investigated the effects of the *Computer-Assisted Reciprocal Early Reading (CAREER)* system on the oral reading fluency and retell fluency of two classes of Grade 4 Taiwanese students of English. *CAREER* is based on (1) a balance between decoding, comprehension and fluency training; (2) immediate provision of feedback and (3) reciprocal learning. This quasi-experiment had a between-participants design with a pre-test / post-test format. The IV was training (*CAREER*-supported reading vs. pen-and-paper reading). The DVs were oral reading fluency and retell fluency, measured using the *DIBELS* standardised tests (<http://dibels.uoregon.edu>). Oral reading fluency is measured by counting the number of words read correctly in one minute from a passage. Retell fluency is based on the number of words in a student's retelling of a passage; minor repetitions and redundancies are counted, but repetitions of whole phrases are not. Intact classes were randomly assigned to the experimental (N =26) and control (N = 26) conditions. Both groups participated in two 40-minute lessons per week for ten weeks. The *CAREER* system used by students in the experimental group comprises a sight word, a phonetic word and a peer-assessment module. Instruction is individualised in the first two modules: in each lesson each student receives a personalised list of sight words and a phonetic rule to learn. Once these tasks are completed, students move on to the peer-assessment module, where groups of students work together. Each student is given one paragraph of a text to read individually. Students then share what they have read, and work together to reconstruct the original text. They then take it in turns to read a paragraph of the text aloud to each other, in preparation for an inter-group competition. Whilst a student is reading, their peers highlight any misread words using the *CAREER* system, which generates a reading accuracy score. The students then work

together to answer some reading comprehension questions. Finally, the teacher selects a student at random from each group to read a paragraph of the text aloud. The rest of the class highlight any misread words using the *CAREER* system and the system generates a reading accuracy score. The students in the control group used the same materials and completed the same activities as the students working with the *CAREER* system; the only difference was that everything was paper-based. However, no significant difference was found between the experimental and control conditions on either measure.

In the third study, Proctor *et al.* (2007) evaluated the *Universal Literacy Environment (ULE)*, a multimedia hypertext reading environment which gives students a range supports from low-level decoding to high-level strategy supports in pre-reading, within-reading and post-reading activities presented by a bilingual coach avatar. Pre-reading activities focus on “power words”, words students must know to understand the text, and on building a personal glossary. Within-reading activities consist in expert models, strategy prompts, think-alouds and hints. In the post-reading activities, the students retell the story they have just read with the help of a sequence of images. Further support in decoding is provided through text-to-speech synthesis upon which students can call to read aloud any word, sentence or passage in the reading activities. 30 Grade 4 students from a US primary school, 14 English NSs and 16 Spanish ELLs, participated in this study. The IV was L1 (English vs. Spanish) and the DVs were vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension, both measured using the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (1999), and digital feature use. All students received three 45-minute sessions of training with the *ULE* per week for four weeks. However, analysis of the pre- and post-test results revealed no significant gains, nor any significant difference between the English and the Spanish students.

In summary, these three well-designed studies provide no evidence to support the claim that technology facilitates the acquisition of reading skills.

***(2) What (pedagogical) insights can be gleaned regarding the use of new technologies in the teaching of reading in EFL?***

Five of the reading studies made a medium or high contribution to this review question. These studies also focused on a range of reading skills. They can be divided into two classes, those which focused on behaviour and those which focused on attitudes and motivation.



The first to investigate the effects of new technologies on students' behaviour was Troia (2004), described earlier. In this study, the effects of using the *FastForWord*™ software on students' behaviour were investigated using the *Social Skills Rating System* (Gresham & Elliott 1990). Analysis of the data revealed no effect of time or training.

In contrast, the other two studies which investigated the effect of technology on students' behaviour (Lan, Sung & Chang 2007; Lan *et al.* 2009), found an advantage for technology. These studies compared use of the *CAREER* system (Lan *et al.* 2009) and a similar piece of collaborative software, the *Mobile-Peer-Assisted Learning* system (Lan *et al.* 2007), with traditional group work. Both found that students who used the technology systems engaged in more learning-related (e.g. helping low-ability students) and fewer learning-unrelated behaviours (e.g. teasing other students) than students who participated in traditional group work.

Two studies addressed the effects of technology on students' attitudes. The first (Kramsch, A'Ness, & Lam 2000) studied a struggling Chinese senior high school EFL student in the US whose English writing proficiency dramatically improved as a result of his autonomous engagement in online activities, including creation of a personal web page and participation in e-mail and chat exchanges. Kramsch *et al.* (2000) observed that through engaging in the on-line activities the student, felt empowered, displayed authenticity of feelings, experiences and memories he felt unable to in other media, became a valued member of an online community and became conscious of developing an online identity that differed from his face-to-face identity in the US. These results led the authors to challenge contemporary concepts of *authenticity* and *authorship* and to propose *identity* and *agency* instead.

The second study (Greenfield 2003) investigated the effects of participating in a collaborative e-mail exchange on the attitudes and confidence of a group of 15-16 year-old Cantonese-speaking learners of English in Hong Kong. The goal of the exchange was to produce a writing anthology with English students of World Literature in the US. Prior to the exchange, students were provided training in the following skills: cooperative learning, process writing, discussion, negotiation and computing. The intervention had six phases: (1) ice breakers, when students exchanged introductory e-mails about themselves, (2) project negotiation, when students exchanged and critiqued each others' imaginative essays, (3)

culture exchange, when students exchanged boxes of cultural items from their respective countries by post, (4) continued correspondence, when students exchanged further drafts of their imaginative essays, (5) anthology production, when students jointly published a magazine, and (6) closure and evaluation, when students exchanged goodbye and thank-you e-mails. Students' attitudes and confidence were assessed through pre- and post-test questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Analysis of this data revealed more positive than negative statements related to the technology and to collaborative learning. Regarding the themes which underpinned these positive and negative attitudes, students particularly appreciated the freedom to write what they wanted and the opportunity to communicate and share with others. However, they noted that some of the activities were too difficult and they did not have the skills necessary to complete them, while others were too easy. Further, some felt that they had done many similar activities before, were not learning English through the activities or that their US partners' comments were negative. Importantly, the attitudes of participants with stronger computer skills grew less positive as the study progressed. In terms of students' confidence, while overall there was an increase in confidence from pre-test to post-test, confidence in reading and writing, the focus of the study, decreased. It should, however, be noted that not all the students had access to computers all the time; even working in pairs there were not enough computers for all the Hong Kong students, and only one of the Hong Kong computers was connected to the Internet.

## Conclusions

While the studies reviewed here provide no evidence that technology improves reading outcomes, there is some evidence to suggest that it can improve the learning experience, and in particular that it can foster more supportive collaborative behaviours (Lan *et al.* 2007; 2009). There is also evidence that it can engage struggling language learners by allowing them to explore and develop their identities in the TL community (Kramsch *et al.* 2000). However, there is also some evidence to suggest that the increased motivation for learning that is often reported by teachers and in research studies when new technologies are introduced into classrooms may wear off (Greenfield 2003).

What does the failure of these well-designed studies to find a CALL effect on L2 reading mean for practice and further research in the area? Should CALL for L2 reading be discouraged? Perhaps not: the studies may have failed to find differences between technology-supported reading activities and traditional reading activities because they were not sufficiently

focused. Troia (2004) compared a piece of software offering training in two different decoding skills with normal classroom teaching; in both Lan et al. (2007) and Proctor et al. (2007) the interventions addressed ranges of lower- and higher-level reading skills. To produce meaningful findings which other researchers can build on and use to design CALL software and materials, studies need to focus on the differential effects of the different attributes of technologies (Salomon 1979; Pederson 1988).

A further limitation of the studies reviewed is that, like much CALL research (see Hubbard 2008), they do not build on SLA theory. It is, therefore, difficult to draw implications which are generalisable to the design of other CALL applications or to the wider SLA debate. This neglect of theory is surprising, given that CALL permits the operationalisation of SLA theory in ways that some other methodologies cannot (Doughty 1987). Studies will be most convincing if they implement a pre-test / post-test / delayed post-test format (Chapelle 2001), building up to large-scale studies. They will be even more convincing if supported by qualitative data, as were the Troia (2004) and Lan *et al.* (2007) studies here. Qualitative data will control whether the technology is being used as intended (Chapelle 2001) and lead to further hypothesis formation (Levy & Stockwell 2006).

What contribution might this review make to the abundant literature on attitudes and motivation towards CALL? This review did not consider studies which only investigated motivation and attitudes towards technology, because its primary concern was with the effects of technology on language learning. However, one finding merits mention, and sounds a note of caution. Greenfield's (2003) study, unlike most of the previous research on motivation, attitudes and the use of computers in language learning, involves a relatively long intervention. Many previous studies of motivation and attitudes towards CALL, and many of the studies in the current review, have only involved one session with students. Greenfield's finding that the enthusiasm of skilled technology users diminished as the intervention progressed suggests that results of other studies may have been affected by the novelty of the technology. Given how commonplace technology is now, there is a need to conduct more longitudinal studies.

This last point about the ubiquity of technology re-evokes the issue of the design of CALL studies. Given the limitations of broad comparisons of CALL and traditional language learning, surely it is time to focus on optimising CALL through studies which examine the differential effects of

the various attributes of the technologies used. Many of these attributes are common across different technologies. For example, chat facilities may be found not only in stand-alone applications, but also within Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs), as a part of collaboration tools such as *Google Wave* and *Microsoft Silverlight*, and as a part of collaborative writing tools such as Wikis. Such an approach would allow research on the latest technologies to build on research which has investigated older technologies and would put researchers in a better position to keep up with technological innovations.

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# 15

## Discrete and Complete Inputs on Phrasal Verbs Learning

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### Introduction

Learning phrasal verbs (PVs) has been usually considered a particular problem in terms of L2 teaching and learning (Moon 1997: 46; Verstraten 1992: 37). The constituent consisting of verb and at least more than one particle or preposition seems less complicated; however, it is still unclear about how the meanings are produced with the association of verbs with particles or prepositions (Verstraten 1992: 27). Schmidt (2000: 99) demonstrated that the particular problem PVs pose is closely related to idiomaticity. In other words, they are not only grammatical but also native-speaker-like in use (Richards & R. Schmidt 2002). For example, PVs can be literally interpreted (e.g. give away) but they are not always capable of being decoded (give up) (Schmidt 2000: 99).

Apart from the problem mentioned above, PVs frequent and commonly occur in L1. There is no escaping the fact that they play a crucial role in language learning. This also indicates the necessity of incorporating PVs in an S/FL curriculum to reinforce learner's knowledge in the target language.

Introducing authentic texts to learners is likely to be the step for instructors to guide students to initiate their training. A corpus, a compiled collection of spoken or written discourse in a natural context, can be an alternative resource to learn how words or other linguistic items are used. Since reading has been considered as a useful method to stretch vocabulary; this is the method for language teachers to guide learners in pursuit of the L2 (Schmidt 2000: 150-155). How can the two distinct materials representing discrete and complete inputs respectively work in an EFL classroom, such as those in Taiwan, raises the major question for the researchers to explore in this study.

The constituents of PVs, verbs and preposition or adverbs, play a different role regardless of the fact that they should be used simultaneously as a whole unit. Prepositions are one type of function words whose major job is to show the grammatical and structural relations between linguistic units. They are, as a result, elements, normally not seen as essential as the content

words such as verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbials (Kao 2004). Learners spend more time on content words in order to build up the major sentence fragment and to stretch vocabulary size. When prepositions become part of fixed phrases in PVs or collocations, EFL students routinely misinterpret the phrase due to unfamiliarity. Overall, such a misunderstanding and incorrect use of prepositions might lead one to reduce, omit or apply incorrect grammar in the production.

Doubtless a combination of explicit instruction and incidental learning can result in a potentially positive effect for S/FL learners (Schmidt 2000: 137). Yet the present study excludes explicit teaching but concentrates on how learners benefit from incidental learning with the concern that college students should be trained to learn and grasp meanings by themselves instead of through a teacher-led learning method.

In order to raise EFL learners' awareness in multiword units, in particular, PVs, with the purpose to enhance their accuracy and fluency in English, the researchers asked the research question: Which is the more effective method in learning PVs or collocations? A corpus/concordance data-driven learning printout, or reading in context?

## **Literature review**

PV is a common category of MWUs yet EFL learners normally have difficulty mastering it. The prepositional or adverbial collocates of PVs frequently bewildered learners or led them to confusion (Wyss 2002). This is closely related to the following fundamental concept of the experiment.

### ***Multiword Units***

A multiword unit (MWU) is a vocabulary item consisting of a sequence of two or more words, and the word sequence semantically and/or syntactically constitutes a meaningful and inseparable unit (Moon 1997: 43). It also can be one single unit with a string of words to express a single meaning (Schmitt 2000: 97). A skillful speaker who can encode a whole unit at a time also achieves fluency in language knowledge (Pawley & Syder 1983). What's more, this is exactly the language learner's job to learn these word sequences in order to speak idiomatically as native speakers do (Ellis 1997: 129)

Moon (1997: 44) suggests that three criteria help define MWUs more precisely: institutionalization, fixedness, and non-compositionality. When a MWU is conventionalized in a speech community, people can recognize it



as one that occurs regularly with the same meaning and a unique definition. When it is used by language speakers consistently in a similar way, then that is *institutionalization* (Schmidt 2000: 97). The extent to which a MWU is frozen as a word sequence is *fixedness* (Moon 1997: 44). With regard to *non-compositionality*, it refers to the degree to which a multiword unit cannot be interpreted on a word-by-word basis, for example, it is hard to extract the meaning by looking at the literal meaning from the three individual words “kick-the-bucket” (op. cit.).

Based on the characteristics, we would easily accept that multiword units are the result of lexical and semantic processes of fossilization and word-formation, rather than the operation of grammatical rules.

### ***Phrasal Verbs***

Phrasal verbs consisting of a string of words can correspond to a single semantic unit. Such a semantically meaningful and syntactically inseparable idiosyncrasy contributes to PVs being identified as one category of MWUs (Saeed 2000; Moon 1997: 44-47). Multiword verbs are termed to describe the large number of English verbs comprising two, or sometimes three parts: (1) a base verb and preposition such as “look into”, (2) a base verb and adverbial particle, that is a phrasal verb such as “break down” and (3) the combination of a base verb, adverbial particle and preposition such as “put up with” (Gairns & Redman 1986). Therefore, multiword verbs can be interpreted as another terminology for PVs.

Under current teaching conditions, learning PVs has been acknowledged as a formidable barrier to EFL students’ efforts in achieving fluency. Therefore, seldom are they mastered. A number of researchers have given a variety of evidence and reasons on how ESL or EFL learners avoid PVs. Firstly, differences as well as similarities between L1 and L2 possibly cause the avoidance (Dagut and Lafer 1985, cited in Liao & Fukuya 2002: 74; Hulstijn and Marchena 1989, cited in Liao & Fukuya 2002: 75). Secondly, learners might come to the phase of non-avoidance as soon as they developed and established interlanguage. This corresponds to the assumption that the higher learners’ proficiency is, the less avoidance they make (Liao & Fukuya 2002)

### ***Prepositions and Collocations***

To prevent EFL learners from avoiding using PVs based on the experimental findings, it is important to include them in EFL curricula for learners to achieve a native-speaker-like fluency. Applying lexical chunks,

the same as those we recognize in the MWUs allow not only native speakers to be fluent (Schmidt 2000) but also for S/FL learners.

If a PV can be learned and recognized in a holistic context, predictability would assist people in finding the appropriate collocates, even if part of the unit is missing. The three prepositional/adverbial particles mainly discussed and investigated in the current research are *bound* prepositions as they are mainly used with verbs (Kao 2004). In addition, PVs are one type of *grammatical* collocations as they consist of a content word (verb) and a grammatical word such as a preposition (Biskup 2000: 85-86). Based on the bond existing between PVs and collocations, the researchers seek to test EFL learners to judge and find a correct prepositional collocate to complete a phrasal verb within a complete sentence.

### ***Language Input with Context***

How can EFL learners best acquire the knowledge to better understand PVs in context? Input is definitely the main source of collocation knowledge for learners (Wible 2005: 207)

Increasing learners' exposure to written language has been proved to enhance their language proficiency. Even though learning from contexts is more difficult in a SL, readers have been shown to gain significant word knowledge from reading (Nagy 1997). The written reading passages provide us with abundant contexts in learning a foreign language, yet is it the uniquely effective approach to learn and recognize PVs?

The rise of corpora which contain authentic texts collected from different resources of the target language draws SL/FL learners' attention to concordance tools. Users are required to key in the keyword to conduct a corpus research, and all the relative authentic texts will be retrieved and listed in order based on their occurring frequency in the corpus. Thus data-driven Learning (DDL) becomes a trend in second language learning because it increases learners' independence and awareness by combining corpus data and concordance tools (Wible 2005).

Researchers have provided different insights from their empirical studies. Rod Ellis (1992) successfully promoted learners to derive grammatical rules in an inductive learning approach. Johns (1994) claimed that DDL should be suitable for intermediate and advanced learners whereas Hadley proved the question remained unanswered that DDL can be adapted for EFL beginners or near-beginners.

It is worthwhile comparing the learning effect between the discrete context offered by the challenging technology – the corpus with the abundant contexts from reading in EFL learning; therefore this forms the fundamental skeleton of the present study.

## **Method**

This experiment aims at testing whether complete input, that is, reading materials or discrete input such as what could be found from corpora or concordances can effectively enhance the learning effect for EFL learners.

### ***Subjects***

Thirty-nine non-English-majored freshmen enrolled in a class of freshman English at a national university in southern Taiwan. The level of students' English proficiency was examined and rated as pre-intermediate according to their scores in English in the Joint Entrance Exam of the College. Subjects were divided into two groups: the experimental group consisted of nineteen students; twenty students as the control group.

All the subjects were exposed to two different reading materials respectively. The experimental group (CCP) was provided with corpora or concordance printout. With regard to the control group (RG), students were arranged and provided with a reading printout consisting of on-line stories and news.

### ***Procedure***

One pre-test and one immediate post-test were given for every ten PVs; therefore, there were totally four pre-tests and post-tests respectively. Each pre-test was conducted one week earlier before the reading activity in order to distract learners from focusing on the target verbs of the research. The subjects each week had to finish five PVs within thirty minutes in class and take an immediate post-test after ten verbs every two weeks. During the mid-term (week nine) and the final week (week eighteen), a delayed post-test for twenty and forty PVs was given respectively to gauge the learning efficacy in terms of long-term memory.

The researcher infers the applicability of grouping multiword verbs to EFL learning in the experiment with the suggestion inspired by Gairns & Redman (1986, cited from Schmidt 2000: 110); therefore, the verbs are all introduced by grouping them with three prepositions. The subjects received the treatment containing forty target PVs according to the order below: fifteen verbs associated with *on*, fifteen with *at*, and ten verbs with *in*. On

the tests concerned in the study, the subjects were requested to find an appropriate word to fill in the blanks. Without any resources or answers for learners to choose from, subjects had to give an answer retrieved from what they had read previously instead of quickly picking one randomly. Moreover, the researcher did not drop any hints about the blanks. The purpose was to minimize the possibility of learners giving answers by guessing and hence increasing the reliability of the data collected.

## Result and discussion

Since the study comprises three prepositions/particles of PVs, the result of the experiment is accordingly manifested and discussed by the division. In addition, learners' prior knowledge about the target PVs and a questionnaire about their affective domain were further examined in order to demonstrate a full picture of learning effect.

### *Verbs with on*

Apparently the experimental group did a better job with the help of discrete information from the corpora/concordance materials rather than the group with complete stories at the first phase of learning PVs collocating with *on* (Table 1). When the first delayed post-test was given during the mid-term week, both groups showed a positive learning effect by comparing with the pre-test. It is the first significant improvement RG did with reading materials. Moreover, this group did not present such a positive result as CCP did on the first post-test three weeks ago. Consequently, this leads us to propose that *the learning effect of reading can't be simply found immediately as how corpora or concordance did, but it takes time and patience for learners to become used to the learning style and the schema they can process through reading*. Learning through reading corpus or concordance printouts not only demonstrated an outstanding result on both post-tests, but it also provided evidence that the learning effect can be extended longer than six weeks.

Nevertheless, such an encouraging outcome did not appear on the second delayed post-test, held on week eighteen, for the whole reading activity; neither CCP nor RG showed an outstanding result as the previous two post-tests. The distraction from introducing more verbs might cause the disturbance of giving more significant learning effect, but we could attribute the reason why learners failed to store what they improved within nine weeks to a lack of keeping having contact with these target PVs. As a matter of fact, there was no significant regression existing; in other words,

the learning effect found on the first post-test remained on the first and even the second delayed post-tests.

On (15)	Week	Group	M.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Posttest1-Pretest	(W3+W6)-(W1+W4)	CCP	12.35294	2.235	0.040*
		RG	5.00000	0.953	0.355
Delayed 1-Pretest	W9-(W1+W4)	CCP	16.31579	2.773	0.013*
		RG	15.29412	3.197	0.006*
Delayed 2-Pretest	W18-(W1+W4)	CCP	10.00000	1.563	0.135
		RG	8.23529	1.115	0.281
Delayed 1-Posttest1	W9-(W3+W6)	CCP	2.35294	0.402	0.693
		RG	8.33333	1.469	0.160.
Delayed 2-Posttest1	W18-(W3+W6)	CCP	-2.94118	-0.507	0.619
		RG	-2.22222	-0.353	0.728
Delayed 2-Delayed 1	W18-W9	CCP	-6.31579	-1.122	0.277
		RG	-6.50000	-1.362	0.728

**Table 1:** Independent Sample T-Test of 15 PVs with *on* Between the Experimental Group (CCP) and Control Group (RG)

\*P<0.05, P=Sig. (2-tailed)/2

### *Verbs with at*

On the second phase of the study, fifteen PVs associated with *at* were introduced in three weeks. Either the first post-test or the second post-test receives an incredibly significant result on improvement (Table 2). Yet the CCP group did worse on the second post-test than the first one and even reached a significant regression whereas the control group kept improving until the last test. Thus, we might interpret it as evidence that *plain reading can never be replaced by the latest technology for learning*. In spite of the fact that reading might not be as efficient as the discrete information such as corpora can provide learners in acquiring the fixed expression of PVs due to time constraint, reading still plays an important role in stably promoting improvement.

At (15)	Week	Group	M.	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Posttest1-Pretest	(W6+W11)-(W4+W7)	CCP	36.66667	4.942	.045*
		RG	8.88889	1.955	.086*
Delayed 2-Pretest	W18-(W4+W7)	CCP	17.77778	2.435	.040*
		RG	12.66667	1.864	.083*
Delayed2-Posttest1	W18-(W6+W11)	CCP	-16.66667	-1.968	.041*
		RG	3.84615	1.806	.096*

**Table 2:** Independent Sample T-Test of PVs with *at* Between CCP Group and RG Group

\*P<0.05, P=Sig. (2-tailed)/2

### ***Verbs with In***

In contrast to the case of *at*, the last ten verbs with *in* showed a sharp decline on the post-test, though no significant regression occurred. It was so marked that it became the worst learning result in the whole (Table 3). Especially the first post-test was conducted only four weeks after the pre-test. Both the two groups did not demonstrate a positive result compared to learning the other two groups of PVs earlier. It might all be due to the fact that six out of the ten verbs were presented with an object inserted between the main verb and the preposition/particle *in*. The subjects were more likely to be distracted by this combination and therefore showed an unfavorable learning effect. What's more, the post-test was given not only to test the ten PVs with the third preposition/particle *in*, but also the other thirty verbs. Subjects were not able to guess by focusing on what they had read recently, but they had to give answers based on what they could remember from memory.

In (10)	Week	Group	M.	N.	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Posttest1-Pretest (Delayed 2)	W18-W14	CCP	-3.88889	18	-0.716	0.484
		RG	-3.68421	19	-1.161	0.261

**Table 3:** Independent Sample T-Test of PVs with *in* Between CCP Group and RG Group

\*P<0.05, P=Sig. (2-tailed)/2

### ***Did the Statistical Discrepancy Result from the Difference Between Subjects?***

It seems the group with corpora or concordance materials presented a better learning result than reading group. In order to demonstrate whether the discrepancy of language proficiency prior to the treatment, a statistical finding (Table 4) on the pre-test provides an answer to the question.

Comparison of Pretests		t-test for Equality of Means	
		t	Sig. (2-tailed)
On (15)	Equal variances assumed	1.241	0.223
	Equal variances not assumed	1.249	0.220
At (15)	Equal variances assumed	1.357	0.185
	Equal variances not assumed	1.320	0.199
In (10)	Equal variances assumed	0.754	0.456
	Equal variances not assumed	0.746	0.462

**Table 4:** Independent Sample T-Test of Pre-tests Between CCP Group and RG Group

\*P<0.05 P=Sig. (2-tailed)/2

The P values ( $P > 0.05$ ) explained that no significant distinction existed between subjects on the pre-test. In other words, it indicated subjects' knowledge was simply based on what they had previously learned and what they still remembered. Thus, we might assume that the learning effect in the study is more likely to be related to distinct treatments of materials.

### ***Result of the Questionnaire***

Individual differences could also be potential factors in influencing the initial assumption we stated above. Therefore, we requested subjects to fill in a questionnaire to identify their affective domain, including their intention of learning English, participation and attitude in the study, self-confidence, and previous knowledge about the target PVs.

It statistically conveyed no significant differences except previous knowledge prior to the study influenced learning in the study (Table 5). Interestingly, a less percentage of CCP subjects rather thought that they did have the experience about the contents compared to RG; nevertheless, the pre-test (Table 4) manifested that their understanding was equal in variation. In sum, the possible influence from individual differences we were concerned about had not been a potential variable to result in the learning discrepancy.

Questionnaire		t-test for Equality of Means	
		t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Learn previously	Equal variances assumed	-2.099	0.043*
	Equal variances not assumed	-2.088	0.044

**Table 5:** Independent Sample T-Test of Subject's Previous Learning Experience  
Between CCP Group and RG Group

\* $P < 0.05$   $P = \text{Sig. (2-tailed)}/2$

### **Pedagogical implication**

It would not be correct to suggest that a language solely consists of those items which are found in a corpus or concordance instead of reading. As any corpus would be a limited collection of texts, a large corpus would doubtlessly provide those items that learners prefer to encounter (Moon 1997). The result of research demonstrates that corpora/concordance could be an alternative tool for EFL learners to recognize phrasal verbs effectively, without meaning to ignore the fact that reading can definitely be considered a positive input.

A number of researchers have given an insightful statement applying multiword expressions. Schmidt (2000) demonstrated that the best way to

demonstrate the way language actually works would be to draw learners' attention to the variable expressions, or at least to teach lexical items in a broader context. Chan & Liu (2005) stressed that the combination of inductive and deductive teaching of collocations positively improved EFL learners' motivation in learning rather than by using inductive or deductive teaching exclusively. Moreover, noticing the input of language chunks is crucial in expanding learners' mental lexicon (Lewis 2000).

Therefore, teachers would need not only to use the concordance data extensively as ideal inductive approaches but also point out the variable expressions as deductive technique. In addition to stimulating learners' motivation and noticing, how to help learners receive input and make it become intake is certainly also another important issue for ESL/EFL instructors. Online corpora/concordance and traditional reading should be recommended to explore language awareness and learning autonomy for EFL learners. Both the two approaches in learning have been tested and proved effective, at least, in terms of supporting EFL college learners to notice PVs as a whole unit instead of a combination of separate words.

## **Conclusion**

This study discusses the distinction in learning effect of PVs and collocations between two types of different inputs in an EFL classroom. The findings of this study support corpora and concordance as offering SL/FL learners an alternative tool. Furthermore, PVs can be learned through context and learners' autonomy can be trained with the arrangement of in-class reading.

Yet, the limitations need to be noticed in order to place its significance in context. First and foremost, there was no teacher-fronted instruction in the study but a comparative research on how learners acquired target PVs from two reading materials. In order to train and observe learners' autonomy in learning chunks, such a deductive approach might attribute the study to a limited result and significance without an inductive approach

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# 16

## Historical Intercultural Politeness - A Case from the Ryūkyū Kingdom

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### Introduction

The aim of this brief essay is to discuss the ways in which intercultural data can be used in the exploration of (im)polite communicative norms and practices in a certain culture.

### Background

The research presented here is part of a project that aims to reconstruct historical changes of Chinese communication with special interest in politeness issues (see also Pan and Kádár [2011] and Kádár and Pan [2011]). In this project, among other things we are engaged in the reconstruction of the diachronic development of Chinese polite communication and the transition of the historical system of politeness to a modern one.

Studying the development of Chinese politeness is an important topic for applied linguists who are involved in the research of Chinese language use and discursive behaviour. There is an unprecedented large gap between the historical and contemporary Chinese norms and practices of politeness. Sources suggest that historical Chinese politeness existed in a kind of ‘intact’ form until the late 19th century when due to sudden social and sociolinguistic changes it underwent major changes. A large inventory of honorific expressions, which made Chinese somewhat similar to Japanese and Korean, disappeared. At least, this is the result that researchers reach if they analyse historical Chinese data by means of quantitative analysis (Peng 2000): the majority of traditional Chinese honorifics – that were still in use in 19th century Classical Chinese data – disappeared from early 20th century vernacular sources, and also the discursive norms of politeness behaviour significantly changed during this period. This seems to indicate that Chinese politeness existed in an intact form until it disappeared.

In spite of this phenomenon, in some respects contemporary Chinese politeness follows archaic norms of communication (Pan 2000). Therefore, the exploration of the development of Chinese politeness is a key to

understand contemporary Chinese discursive behaviour. The exploration of this topic is also relevant to those who are involved in general applied linguistic issues. On the one hand, from a theoretical perspective, mapping the diachronic formation of politeness in Chinese is an important asset to inquiries that aim to model the historical development of linguistic politeness (cf. Culpeper and Kádár 2010). On the other hand, from a methodological perspective, such a comparative diachronic approach is unique because while intercultural politeness research is a thoroughly studied area (see, for example, different studies in Spencer-Oatey [2000] 2008), intracultural comparative politeness research is regrettably neglected.

Studying this topic is a most challenging task, due to the lack of reliable intracultural historical pragmatic data that can inform one on the way in which historical forms of politeness disappeared from colloquial Chinese. As noted in Pan and Kádár (2011), the disappearance of historical forms of politeness in Chinese communication is sudden, and to some extent it can be attributed to stylistic changes that took place as a result of a major ideological and language ideological movement in 1919. This movement, the so-called ‘May Fourth Movement’ (Wu-Si yundong 五四運動), made Classical Chinese lose its role as the major medium of writing in a very short time; this change meant to serve 1) decreasing illiteracy and 2) modernising China. Classical Chinese (*wenyan-wen* 文言文) was replaced with works written in the vernacular, that is, works that imitate spoken language, and sources written in this new literary style are completely void in terms of traditional politeness. The seeming disappearance of traditional forms of politeness draws the question of reliability. As The following section will also argue in more detail, while every kind of historical pragmatic data is unreliable to some extent, it seems to be unusual that a large inventory of linguistic politeness forms disappears in a short period and without any antecedent. Arguably, this picture is just too perfect to be true: historical pragmatic studies indicate that honorifics and other forms of politeness do not disappear into the blue. Thus, it seems that this phenomenon is due to stylistic-ideological changes caused by the replacement of Classical Chinese with the vernacular. If this is the case, it can be argued that historical sources, both Classical and vernacular, dating from this period reflect various language ideologies rather than actual language use.

## The present research

In order to be able to reconstruct the development of Chinese politeness and communication, we need to analyse historical intercultural data – in the case of the present paper data from the Ryūkyū Kingdom (Ryūkyū Ōoku 琉球王国), or Okinawa in its Japanese name. Such data provides information exempt (at least, to some extent) from ideological ‘reshaping’ of politeness behaviour (Mills 2003 and Mills & Kádár 2011), and also it may represent language in a way that cannot be found in intracultural sources, as it will be argued below.

As the present research relies on ‘foreign’ rather than Chinese data, it is an intercultural one and as such is a *pilot study*. This is because so far few studies have been engaged in the intercultural exploration of historical data; in fact, intercultural research has been neglected even in contemporary research in the sense that intercultural data is rarely approached with the goal of intracultural research such as the diachronic comparison of linguistic politeness in a language. Furthermore, while in applied linguistics Chinese is a ‘key’ language, research on the so-called sinoxenic cultural data – that is Chinese data drawn from cultures that were influenced by Chinese literacy – has been regrettably neglected.

This paper aims to demonstrate that the disappearance of historical Chinese forms of politeness is more complex than it seems to be. The historical Chinese system of deference began to decline well before the 20th century disappearance of Classical Chinese from common usage, even though this process was boosted by the May Fourth Movement and other language reforms during the 20th century. In other words, while the influence of language political and social events cannot, of course, be underestimated when discussing the development of Chinese politeness, they only accelerated an ongoing process: historical Chinese politeness began to decline well before 20th century events took place, even though Classical sources, following traditional ideologies, did not reflect this change. This claim explains why historical and contemporary Chinese representations of politeness practices are different while they nevertheless share some features: with the disappearance of the seeming ‘gap’ between ‘historical’ and ‘modern’ it becomes evident that Chinese politeness developed gradually from an ‘honorific-rich’ into an ‘honorific-poor’ language, while many of its concepts such as hierarchy did not fundamentally change.

In what follows, in Section 2, the paper revisits the question as to why it is problematic to rely on intracultural data when one examines historical

Chinese politeness, and an argument is made that examining intercultural data is a most feasible way to reconstruct historical Chinese communicative features. At this stage the source studied in this study is also introduced. In the following section some examples will be drawn in order to demonstrate that historical Chinese politeness began to disappear from colloquial language before the late 19th and 20th centuries. Finally, in the section following that, a general argument will be made for the potential need of intercultural politeness research in the applied linguistic exploration of intracultural politeness issues.

### **Data, methodology, case study**

Let us begin the analysis by a brief overview of what is defined as Chinese ‘data problem’.

In general, studying historical communication is inherently problematic:

One of the main obstacles that must be overcome is what has been called “the Data Problem”—the need to draw conclusions about language behaviour and conventions on the basis of written artifacts rather than direct observation [...]. Generally speaking, the only observables in premodern texts are the *forms* [my emphasis] themselves.

Collins (2001: 16–7)

Indeed, it is quite difficult to say too much about historical communication without becoming speculative, since we cannot peep into historical interactants’ minds, nor can we get access to the complex interactional tools such as pragmalinguistic devices.

With this problem in mind, we have to limit historical inquiries to the formal aspects of politeness such as honorifics and speech acts. This problem of data also defines the methodological stance by means of which historical politeness can be studied: we have to limit historical pragmatic analyses to formal manifestations of politeness, hence delimiting the notion of ‘politeness’ (see more, e.g., in Watts 2003), which would be improper in politeness research focusing on contemporary data.

In a nutshell, historical pragmaticians have to work with ‘handicapped’ data. Yet, studying historical Chinese data, more precisely the disappearance of historical Chinese forms of politeness from colloquial, is particularly problematic, which gives the ‘data problem’ a unique significance from the perspective of the linguist. In the exploration of Chinese data we have to cope with the aforementioned major ‘gap’, that is, the replacement of traditional literature with a modern one. In terms of

politeness, both Classical and historical vernacular (*baihua* 白話 or *jindai-hanyu* 近代漢語) Chinese data written before the 20th century language reforms are rich in deferential forms, while vernacular data dating after these events are honorific poor.

This phenomenon raises the question whether historical Chinese data is completely *reliable* if we want to analyse politeness. While it would be nonsensical to deny the role of language politics and other major social events, such language reforms alone could not result in such major changes. It is quite probable that the relative lack of reliability of historical Chinese data is due to the fact that works written before the 20th century language reforms were honorific rich because of generic requirements. Thus, it can be supposed that they did not reflect the actual use of forms of deference, but represented it in a somewhat idealised way, in accordance with historical Chinese literary style.

For example, one may refer to the case of North Korea where language reforms and harsh language policies could not result in the disappearance of historical forms of politeness from colloquial, even though the research of this issue is beyond the scope of this paper (but see more in Pan & Kádár 2011): in North Korea honorifics and deferential language are still in use (cf. Lee 1990, and Kumatani 1990), despite the fact that Korea has been ruled by an extremist Communist government for the past almost 70 years. It is enough here to note that in North Korean the traditional honorific system was not really influenced by ideological and linguistic changes.

In sum, historical Chinese intracultural data is considerably ‘unreliable’, at least from the perspective of the politeness researcher – this does not mean that one should not use intracultural data, but it has to be compared with intercultural one. Due to this background, we need to find some other data source to study historical Chinese communication, and the choice fell on a unique source, a textbook written for Ryūkyūan students of Chinese.

The Kingdom of Ryūkyū used to maintain close political and economic ties with China, in particular during the Ming and Qing Dynasties (see more in Nitta et al. 1994). Due to these connections, Okinawan students often visited China – in particular its Fujian (or Hokkien 福建) Province – to be educated there; learning at a prestigious Chinese school (*shuyuan* 書院) meant a good career upon returning to the Ryūkyūs. Since the Ryūkyūan languages belong to the Japonic language family (Nohara 2005), the visiting students needed to learn Mandarin Chinese (then designated as

*Guanhua* 官話, that is, ‘the language of officials’) as a second language. Therefore, several textbooks were compiled for Ryūkyūan students, in order to help them to brush up their Mandarin Chinese, and also to teach them some Hokkienese (*Minnan-hua* 閩南話, especially the dialect of Fuzhou City or *Fuzhou-hua* 福州話), before departing to China (Setoguchi 2003: 3). Among these works the supposedly most recent and influential one is *Gaku-kanwa* 學官話, compiled by an unknown author with native Chinese proficiency, during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

*Gaku-kanwa* is a unique source for three reasons (see more in Kádár 2011):

- It is a ‘pragmatic’ textbook, which teaches Chinese oral communication in a situational way – for example, how to behave when invited to a Chinese family and how to talk with neighbours. Consequently, it represents Chinese polite language use in various interactional situations and speech acts.
- Since it is written for foreign students it represents Chinese politeness in a somewhat standardized form, that is, in a way in which one was *expected* to behave. In this sense it demonstrates the *norms* of communication in a considerably better way than many ‘native’ sources such as novels that imitate real-life (and thus less-perfect) interactions.
- From the perspective of the historical pragmatician, a unique source value of such intercultural works is that they provide direct evidence for (a) the ‘proper’ use of honorifics in Chinese discourse, and (b) the fact that honorifics and other tools of deference began to decline well before the twentieth century. Because in various late imperial works, such as letters, honorifics and other deferential strategies occur in different quantity in different genres (cf. Kádár 2010), it would be difficult to define their real importance in spoken language.

In what follows, let us introduce the way in which politeness is represented in *Gaku-kanwa*.

### Politeness in practice

The following interaction, which is quite representative in terms of style to the source studied, taking place between a Ryūkyūan speaker and a Chinese official. This excerpt seems to demonstrate that historical expressions of politeness began to decline already during the imperial period:



1. 告訴我們的船，灣泊這怡山院地方。恐怕夜間有賊船來，不便得很。求老爺天恩，准放我的船，進去里面灣泊，沒有干係。

[The Ryūkyūan] says: Our ship is anchored at Yishan Temple [a stop for Ryūkyūan ships near Fuzhou City, translator's note]. We are afraid that in the night a pirate ship may come, which makes us greatly worried. We humbly beg for Your Honour's mercy to allow us to enter the internal harbour, hence avoiding evils.

2. 問「你們老爺，是什麼前程？」

Question: What is the rank of your leader?

3. 答「是大夫。」

Reply: Senior official.

4. 問「你到中國做什麼？」

Question: What do you intend to do in China?

5. 答「是國王差來上京進貢的。」

Reply: We are sent by the king [of the Ryūkyūs] to proceed to the capital in order to pay tribute.

6. 問「你到中國，有幾遭了？」

Question: How many times have you visited China?

7. 答「我從來不曾到過，這一遭是初來的。」

Answer: I have not previously visited. This is my first time here.

8. 說「你才來就會說官話，是聰明的人了。」

[The official] says: You just arrived and can already speak Mandarin. You are a clever person.

9. 答「豈敢！我不會講，說的話不明白。求老兄替我轉言，不然，不曉得詳細。」

Answer: How dare I [accept your praise]! I cannot speak and what I say is unclear. I humbly beg you, respected elder brother, to communicate on my behalf, otherwise I will not be able to understand the details [of what is said]. (Kádár 2011, Interaction no. 19)

This exemplary formal interaction takes place between an imagined Ryūkyūan interpreter—probably the escort of a Ryūkyūan group that reached Fuzhou City first on their route to the capital—and a Chinese local official.

There is an obvious inequality in the interaction.

The Ryūkyūan interpreter speaks in a deferential tone and the Chinese official responds by using a ‘plain’ style devoid of forms of deference: the only manifestation of formal politeness is in Turn 8 in which the official appraises the interpreter’s fluency in Chinese, which is a conventional Chinese complimenting. This is understandable, considering that it is the official who can decide whether or not the Ryūkyūan ship may enter the harbour, and also up to Turn 6 the official asks routine (impersonal) administrative questions only.

The interpreter’s style is more unusual, however: he uses noticeably few honorifics and conventional tools of deference, in a rather formularized manner. Deferential forms – occurring in Turn 1 and 9 only – are used in a quite mechanical way. *Qiu laoye tian’en* 求老爺天恩 (lit. ‘to beg a revered person’s heavenly kindness’) is a standard form to facilitate requests addressed to officials or members of the imperial court, and *qigan* 豈敢 (lit. ‘how dare [I]’) is also a routine form to decline requests. The only expression used creatively is *laoxiong* 老兄 (‘revered elder brother’): by applying a quasi-familial form of address the speaker presumably attempts to personalize the tone of the interaction. Apart from these honorific forms the Ryūkyūan speaker’s utterances are without honorifics, and it seems that he applies formularized tools of deference at strategic points of the interaction, i.e. to facilitate the ‘face-threatening’ speech act (Brown & Levinson 1987) of request (Turn 1) and to strengthen personal ties (Turn 9).

The facts that honorifics and deferential forms scarcely occur and are used quite conventionally in strategic points of the interaction reveal that in late imperial Chinese politeness began to decline and became corrupted, well before 20th century events and socio-ideological changes took place.

Although the present description has to be finished here due to limitation on space, it is pertinent to note that such a decline of historical Chinese politeness could not have started in a language with grammaticalized deference such as Japanese or Korean, simply because in certain interpersonal relationships honorific style would be necessary (cf. the aforementioned case of North Korean).

## Conclusion

This short paper has made an argument for the necessity of intercultural research in intracultural applied linguistic inquiries, in particular linguistic politeness research, by referring to the results of a recent research project.

The idea of making use of politeness data drawn from a culture influenced by Chinese literacy, in order to study Chinese politeness, is considerably unexplored, in spite of its obvious value. And, the same approach could be followed in the intracultural applied linguistic research on the historical linguistic (im)politeness in any language which was taken by other cultures as a way communication, most typically, English, considering its role as a world language (cf. Mair 2003).

It is hoped that this paper has made a two-fold contribution to applied linguistics by proposing a research methodology and providing some new insights into Chinese linguistic politeness.

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# 17

## National or general tolerance for variation? Attitudes to dialect and foreign accent in the media

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### **‘An enormous tolerance for diversity’**

In Norway there is high tolerance for the use of dialect in public contexts. Peter Trudgill speaks of "an enormous social tolerance for linguistic diversity" (Trudgill 2002: 31). In schools Norwegian dialect speaking teachers seldom switch to standard language when they teach even if they have moved to another part of the country. Dialect speaking members of parliament and government ministers are commonplace, and you can hear judges use dialect in court rooms. Church ministers – even bishops – often deliver sermons in dialect, and news anchors on national TV channels may read news in their local dialect.

In 2006 I did a questionnaire based study of language attitudes among student teachers (Kulbrandstad 2007). One of the statements I presented to the respondents was – here translated into English – “There is too much dialect use in our society”. 65 % disagreed totally with this statement, 27 % partly. 5 % agreed completely or in part and 4 % did not express any opinion. On the basis of responses to eight items about dialect use, I calculated an index of dialect friendliness. In addition to the statement quoted above, these were statements like “It is undesirable that members of the Storting [= Parliament] speak dialect from the rostrum”, “Teachers should not speak dialect when they teach”, and “It is OK that program hosts on national radio and TV channels speak dialect”. On a scale running from 1 to 5 with 1 marking “very little dialect friendly” and 5 “highly dialect friendly”, the average score among the 316 student teachers who had responded to all the eight items, was 4.4. So this study can be taken to corroborate Peter Trudgill’s claim about the extensive tolerance for linguistic diversity in Norway.

Over the past two or three decades, the demographic landscape of the country has changed considerably with an increasingly numerous immigrant population. Today, 11.4% of the inhabitants are immigrants or children of immigrants (Statistics Norway 2010). In this situation, one can wonder whether people with a foreign background experience the same

acceptance for the way they speak Norwegian as dialect speakers do. The present article reports relevant results from a survey study that was conducted in 2009 on demand from the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) and the Norwegian State Language Board.

### Research question and hypotheses

The main research question in the study was to what extent persons who speak Norwegian with a foreign or second language accent are included in the Norwegian tolerance for language variation. The question is of course of scientific interest and – arguably – socially and politically important.

Assumptions about the answer to the question can be stated in the form of two hypotheses. The first is

- **Hypothesis 1:** People who speak Norwegian with a foreign accent are shown significantly less tolerance for the way they speak in public than people who speak a traditional Norwegian dialect.

If the research results support this hypothesis, the explanation can be that the Norwegian tolerance for language variation is national, perhaps even nationalistic. Diversity is acceptable only as long as it concerns people born and raised in a Norwegian language environment.

The alternative hypothesis is

- **Hypothesis 2:** People who speak Norwegian with a foreign accent are shown a similar tolerance for the way they speak in public as people who speak a traditional Norwegian dialect.

Research findings pointing in this direction may indicate that the Norwegian variation tolerance is of a general kind.

There may be arguments for both hypotheses. In support of the first of them, one might e.g. point to the fact that Norway is a rather young sovereign state as the country gained full self-government as late as in 1905. Prior to independence and up to the mid twentieth century, an intense monocultural and monolingual nation building program was implemented (Engen, Syversen & Kulbrandsta 2006). Recent surveys have shown that Norwegians are more patriotic than the populations of many other countries (Smith & Jarkoo 1998), and that a fairly large part of them are sceptical if not outright negative to immigration (Innvandrings- og

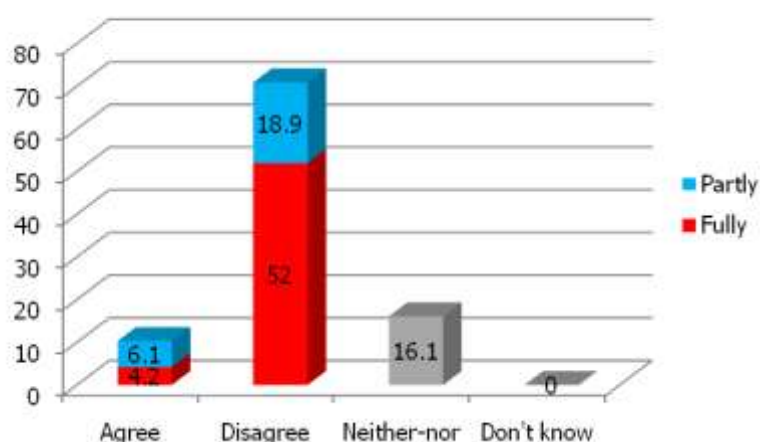
manfoldsdirektoratet 2010). It could well be that this leads to little tolerance for Norwegian spoken with a foreign accent. On the other hand, Norway has strong democratic traditions, and diversity in language and culture is cherished. It is possible that acceptance even for foreign-rooted linguistic variation could be a corollary to these facts.

## The study

Data in the survey were collected through an analysis institute. The Institute's permanent Internet panel answered an online questionnaire where respondents were to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement with statements about the language form of program hosts on radio and television both on national channels and in local broadcasts, primarily concerning the use of dialect and Norwegian with a foreign accent. There were also some statements about immigration. Furthermore, the respondents had to listen to sound clips of news readers who spoke more or less accented Norwegian, and they should specify how easy it was to understand what was said, how well they thought the persons on the clips spoke Norwegian, and to what extent they would find them suitable as news anchors on television. In addition, the respondents were asked questions about their own oral language. The analysis institute held in advance information about the respondents' sex, age, education, income, and place of residence.

The data provided by the institute came from a selection of approximately 1000 persons, representative of the nation's population over age 15 with Internet access.

## Some key findings

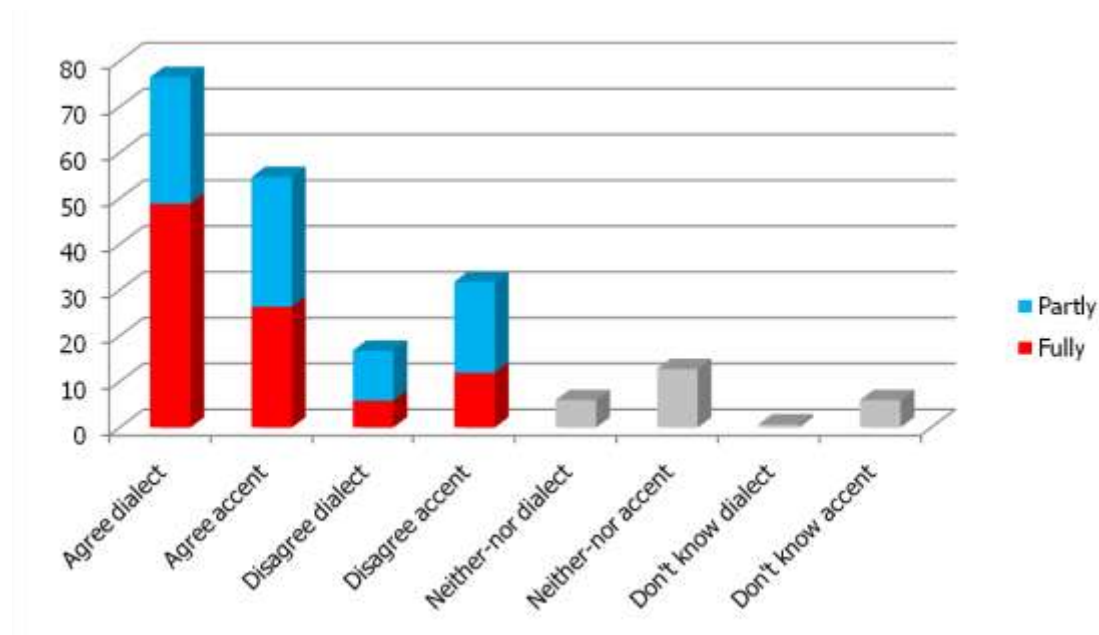


**Figure 1:** Responses to the statement "There is too much dialect use in our society" (percentages, N = approx. 1000)

The respondents are generally speaking very dialect friendly, at least that is the attitude they express in the survey. As can be seen in figure 1, only approximately 10% fully agree or partly agree with the statement “There is too much dialect use in our society”.

16% neither agree nor disagree, the rest – a total of more that 70% – fully disagree or partly disagree. So even if these respondents are a little less dialect friendly than the student teachers in the 2007 study, their attitude is clearly positive.

But what about their attitude to dialect and accented Norwegian in the media? Confronted with the statement “It is OK that program hosts on national radio and TV stations speak dialect”, three out of four, actually more than 75%, strongly or somewhat agree, while only 17% indicate disagreement. The distribution of responses to the corresponding statement about foreign accent – “It is OK that hosts on national radio and television stations speak Norwegian with a foreign accent” – was the following: agree 55%, disagree 32%, neither agree nor disagree 13 %. In figure 2, the results for dialect and for foreign accent are shown together for ease of comparison.



**Figure 2:** Responses to the statements “It is OK that program hosts on national radio and TV stations speak dialect” and “It is OK that hosts on national radio and television stations speak Norwegian with a foreign accent”  
(percentages, N = approx. 1000)



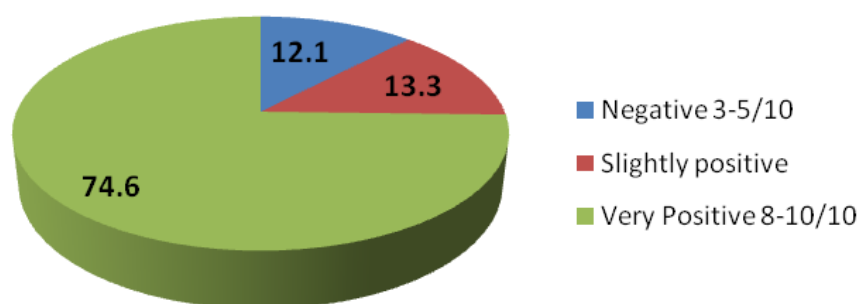
The attitude to dialect use is noticeably more positive than the attitude to foreign accented Norwegian. Nonetheless, a clear majority think that it is acceptable with accent, but here there are more that partly agree than fully agree. People are somewhat uncertain. This is also indicated by the relatively high percentage who either neither agree nor disagree with the statement or tick for the "do not know"-option. This uncertainty is easy to understand because the expression "speak Norwegian with a foreign accent" is admittedly not very precise. I did state explicitly at the beginning of questionnaire that it is required of all program hosts on radio and TV that they talk clearly, but it might be that the respondents did not keep this in mind all through the questionnaire.

The respondents were also asked to express their opinion on dialect use and foreign accented Norwegian in local broadcasts, and the results indicate even greater sympathy with dialect use locally, while the attitude towards Norwegian with a foreign accent seems to be fairly similar to the one we saw for nationwide programs.

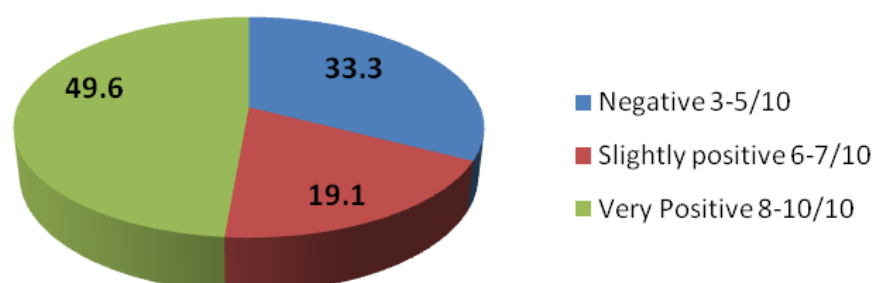
### **Further processing of results**

There is a strong correlation between the attitude to dialect in national broadcasts and the attitude to dialect in local broadcasts. A measure for this is Cronbach's Alpha, which here is .801. The correlation is even stronger between the attitude to accented Norwegian in the national broadcasts and the attitude to accented Norwegian in local broadcasts. Here the Cronbach's alpha is .922. Thus there are grounds for merging the variables at national and local level, so that we get one variable for attitude to dialect and one for attitude to foreign accent.

On the basis of these combined variables, the respondents have been grouped into three categories according to attitude to dialect and to Norwegian with a foreign accent: negative, slightly positive and very positive. The ones with a negative attitude have 3-5 points on a scale that goes to 10, the slightly positive ones have 5-7 points and the very positive ones 8-10. I have grouped the respondent in the same way for their attitude to the Norwegian with a foreign accent. The results are shown in figure 3 and 4 respectively.



**Figure 3:** Three categories of attitude towards use of dialect by program hosts on radio and television stations (percentages, N = approx. 1000)



**Figure 4:** Three categories of attitude towards use of foreign accented Norwegian by program hosts on radio and television stations (percentages, N = approx. 1000)

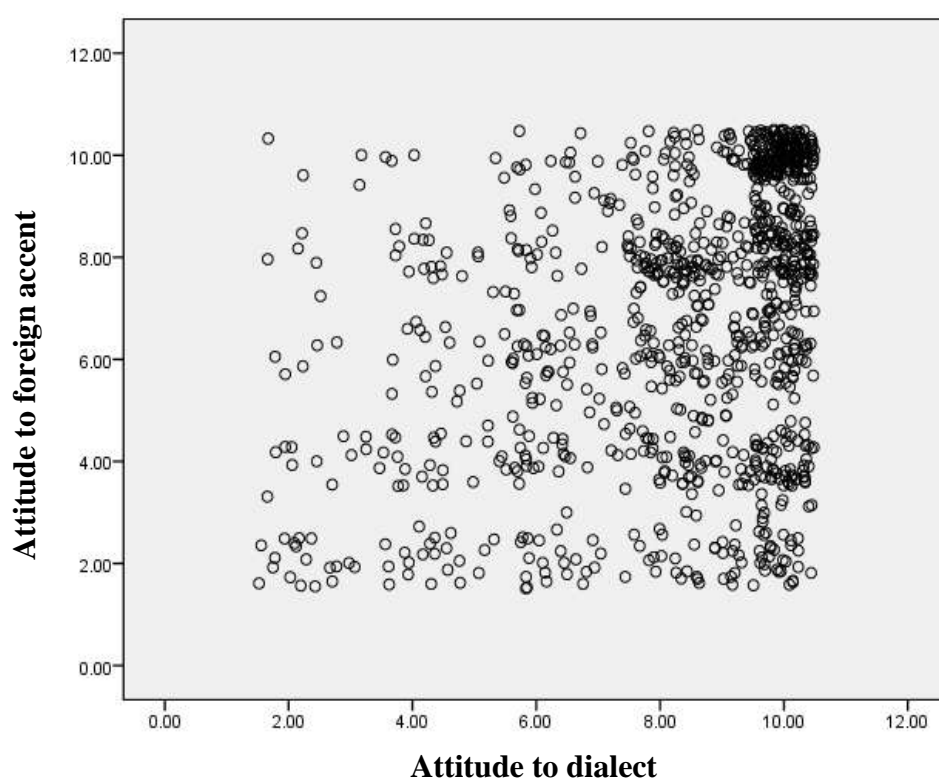
Then we will look at the correlation between the combined variable for dialect attitude and the combined variable for accent attitude. A measure of this relationship is the Pearson  $r$ , and here it is .354. This indicates a strong correlation. In other words, the respondents tend to have the same attitude towards Norwegian with a foreign accent in the media as they have towards dialect.

The relationship can also be demonstrated through a cross-table for the three categories of attitude to dialect and the three categories of accent position (table 1). The table is to be read with dialect attitude as starting point. For instance, we see that 60% of those who are negative to dialect use also are negative to Norwegian with a foreign accent. On the other hand 57% of those who are very positive to the use of dialect are very positive to Norwegian with a foreign accent.

		Attitude to foreign accent		
		Negative	Slightly positive	Very positive
Attitude to dialect	Negative	60	16	24
	Slightly positive	44	27	29
	Very positive	25	18	57

**Table 1:** Relationship between attitude towards use dialect and attitude towards use of foreign accented Norwegian by program hosts on radio and television stations (percentages, N = approx. 1000)

The plot graph in figure 5 gives us a more detailed picture of the relationship between the two attitudes.



**Figure 5:** Attitude towards use dialect and attitude towards use of foreign accented Norwegian by program hosts on radio and television stations (N = approx. 1000)

Here the small circles represent the dialect attitude and the accent attitude of all the approximately 1000 respondents. Thus, there are some 2000 circles altogether. If the two attitudes had coincided completely, the circles would have formed a dense, black cluster at the top right. As we can see, this is not the case: Some persons have a positive attitude to dialect and a negative attitude to foreign accent and vice versa. But the main picture is clear enough: The two attitudes definitely tend to follow each other.

## Summary

First of all, this study seems to confirm that a relatively large majority of Norwegians are sympathetic to dialect use in public contexts, even by program host in broadcast media. This is perhaps not so surprising, but still a useful documentation of something that most people who know the language situation in Norway have noticed.

Secondly, the attitude to dialect use by program hosts in national broadcasts does not seem to differ significantly from the attitude of dialect use in local broadcasts. This is an interesting finding, though perhaps still not very surprising for those who are familiar with Norway

The third finding is that Norwegians appear to have a less positive attitude to program hosts' speaking foreign accented Norwegian, but even here a majority express a positive attitude.

As already said, it is not difficult to understand that people are more reserved towards the statement that it is OK that program hosts speak Norwegian with a foreign accent. The expression "Norwegian with a foreign accent" could cover varying commands of Norwegian, and some respondents might have been annoyed by being forced to take a position on the statement without being able to make a proviso that the accent be intelligible. Certainly, they *had* read in the introduction to the survey that "It is essential that all the hosts on radio and television talk distinctly and clearly", but it is likely that some still worried about the intelligibility. All the same, the majority seem to have a positive attitude.

Finally, the study indicates that there is a relatively strong positive correlation between Norwegians' attitude to the use of dialect by program hosts and their attitude to foreign accented Norwegian. This I consider to be the most interesting of all the results. It could be expected that there was a correlation, but it was uncertain how strong it would prove to be. As we have seen, it is quite strong.

## Conclusion

If we now return to the two hypotheses formulated at the beginning of the article, findings in the survey seem to give most support to the hypothesis number 2: People who speak Norwegian with a foreign accent meet a similar tolerance for the way they speak in public as people who speak a Norwegian dialect. And the explanation I propose is that the Norwegian

tolerance for language variation is not national or nationalistic, but of a general nature. This in turn, however, has to be accounted for.

Several factors can be invoked. The Norwegian nation building from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards had a special character because it valued variation: One could be Norwegian in many different ways: There were many ways to speak Norwegian, one could even write the language in different ways. Still today, we have two written standards and many optional forms within each standard (Vikør & Nordisk språkråd 2001).

Another factor that may explain hypothesis number 2 is the strongly democratic, anti-authoritarian and anti-centralistic traditions of the country. This is so because the central power long was perceived as alien and remote – and thus failed to uniform the people culturally and linguistically. One effect of this is the lack of an official oral standard (Vikør & Nordisk språkråd 2001).

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# 18

## Going, Going, Gone. A Study of Language Memory

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### Introduction

Many trainee teachers who embark on their training programmes find that not only do they need to learn the craft of the classroom but they also need to consolidate linguistic skills that are not equal to the demands and needs of a languages teacher. Students who have taken career breaks between their degree and teacher training programme are likely to experience a lack of confidence in their subject knowledge and this is equally true of students who have chosen different career paths before deciding to become teachers. A further group are the students who realise that the language of their degree has limits in the job market and therefore decide to reactivate previously learned languages. Students from each of these categories welcome the opportunity to strengthen their linguistic competence, though this is usually a challenge within the demanding framework of teacher training programmes.

The following research questions were developed over the three-year study as a means of meeting the demands of trainee language teachers who have concerns about their confidence and competence:

1. How best can students reactivate lapsed language skills?
2. Which type of language seems most resistant to change?
3. Which learning methods have allowed students to maximise their language memory over a significant period of time and how can these methods be adapted for future use?
4. What impact does a clear understanding of this process have on student learning?

### Background

At the heart of the project was the intention to study how we acquire language, how we lose it and methods by which we can reactivate it. The two-year case study phase actively involved two cohorts of a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (PGCE) MFL programme. During this initial period, data were gathered by means of a focus group, questionnaires, interviews and electronic logs. Findings gave a sound basis to the action research phase which lasted one year and involved one PGCE MFL cohort.

Second Language Attrition is a developing field of research and there is still much uncertainty about how languages decline and ways in which they can be reactivated. Much research indicates that language, once learned, is not completely lost. The difficulty for learners lies in the fact that the time required to retrieve it increases and the cues needed to access it become more difficult to find (De Bot & Stoessel 2000). However, a positive research finding is that the initial learning plateau resists attrition and the more proficient the learners, the lower the rate of attrition (Hansen 2000). Researching in this field is extremely problematic as it is impossible to replicate the natural environment and “get inside people’s heads” (Meara 2004:138).

### **Research Design**

It is not the intention to deal with the case study phase of this study (Llewellyn-Williams 2008) but to present in more detail the action research stage. During the year-long phase, the action was characterised by the following activities:

- Language Audit to establish a broad understanding of the level of existing skills;
- Language Awareness sessions, where students were tutored in reactivation activities;
- Language testing of grammatical knowledge, receptive and productive vocabularies at the beginning and end of the action research phase;
- Language Logs where participants recorded a weekly language task of their choice;
- Language partners with whom they practised regular target language activities.

Managing the activities during an intense training programme was challenging but the majority of the students recognised that effective consolidation and reactivation of language skills would enhance their employability and increase their levels of competence and confidence.

### **Results and Analysis**

The main factors affecting the reactivation of lapsed language skills are complex and inter-dependant. They are summarised by the model below.





**Figure 1:** Model for Reactivation of Languages

Students were allowed a free choice in the weekly language task that they were required to undertake and the range of selected activities fell into two broad categories: structural activities (grammar tasks, learning vocabulary etc.) and immersion activities (such as reading, watching films). Interestingly, the predominant choice of activity generally reflected age and initial learning experience. The older students tended to return to the structural activities that characterised their own school days whereas the younger students who had learned languages in school at a time when the communicative language teaching approach had become more prevalent tended to opt for immersion activities. All students recognised however, that **active learning** was more effective than more passive approaches, though activities that relied upon exposure to language were useful in certain contexts. Managing a heavy training workload meant that effective ways of **combining learning with leisure** was a significant way of coping with the challenge of this initiative and students provided many useful ideas for meeting the demands of the project. Apart from watching films and listening to music in the target language, other inventive ideas included changing mobile phone and Internet settings, following recipes and playing computer games, all in the target language. The language partner was also a useful source of practice and of contact with the target country and provided many opportunities for weekly tasks. **Managing motivation** was, however, demanding and students sought to improve their skills by firstly recognising the stage they were at and then identifying the level to which they wanted to progress. In order to do this, the language audit became an effective tool. In reactivating the lapsed languages, students' choice of activities had a wide range of **social and affective implications**. Many relied upon their love of the target language country and its culture as a means of supporting and managing their motivation. At the same time, they were obliged to recognise shortcomings in their subject knowledge and this required them to develop a robust attitude towards error correction.

Participants recognised that **professional practice** provided them with a significant opportunity to reactivate their language skills and that thorough preparation of lesson plans would not only benefit their pupils but would also have a considerable positive impact on their own language skills.

Specific findings that relate to the research questions are as follows.

***1. How best can students reactivate lapsed language skills?***

As already highlighted above, students recognised the value of both **exposure to the target language** in the form of the development of receptive skills and target language contact and a **structural input**, such as grammar review, learning vocabulary and preparation for teaching tasks. Given the heavy workload of the PGCE programme, they tended to favour activities that required less effort and consequently performed better in the tests of receptive and productive vocabulary than they did in the grammar testing. However, they recognised that effective reactivation could only be achieved by a combination of both exposure to the target language and a structural input, preferably in a programme that regularly interspersed both kinds of activities.

***2. Which type of language seems most resistant to change?***

Owing to the diverse learning experiences of the participants, findings to this research question were of a significant range. However, students found that if basic structures had been well learnt, they resisted attrition for many years, thus supporting the findings of Hansen (2000). However, the regression hypothesis, which suggests that language is lost in the reverse order of its acquisition (Hansen 2001) was sometimes contradicted, though this sample is small and it is difficult to generalise from students whose learning experiences are very different. One interesting finding that requires further research is that where students had previously achieved a level of oral proficiency that gave them a regional accent in the target language, on reactivation, this was replaced by a standardised accent. It was also interesting to note that where students had learned the rules of pronunciation of the target language, they had become very effectively internalised and therefore resisted attrition.

***3. Which learning methods have allowed students to maximise their language memory over a significant period of time and how can these methods be adapted for future use?***

Students were strongly in favour of learning methods that had helped them to become independent learners and had found language manipulation

activities to be particularly effective. Although they recognised that rote learning and chunk memorisation could be useful in the initial stages of learning a language, they felt that if overused, they could be a brake on progress to a higher level of language learning. Methods that were useful for future use included language activities that related to daily activities as they allowed language to become strongly embedded in their memories and were easy to use in the reactivation of their subject knowledge.

**4. *What impact does a clear understanding of this process have on student learning?***

Self-awareness and an understanding of one's own linguistic competence were recognised as being essential to pre-service and existing language teachers. Students felt that seeing themselves as both learners and as teachers would predispose them to have a clear understanding of learners' needs. One student, who attended evening classes, recounted the experience of having marked work handed back to her, commenting that she felt it had increased her feeling of empathy towards her own pupils, especially as her performance had not been as good as she had hoped. At the end of the year, the process of reactivation increased motivation among students as it had given them the opportunity not just to recognise what they needed to learn but to celebrate the progress they had made during the initiative. Finally, by placing them firmly in the position of learners, it had given them first-hand insight into the learning process and provided them with an opportunity to develop skills and strategies that they could pass onto the learners in their classrooms in the future.

## **Conclusion**

In the initial training of language teachers, there is much emphasis on the development of teaching techniques and strategies that will allow the effective delivery of knowledge and the consequent development of learners' skills and improved performance levels. During this complex process, students frequently lose sight of the main objective, helping learners to learn, because they have become excessively focussed on teaching themselves how to teach. As they develop as professionals, they usually gain this insight by means of learning the skills of critical reflection and self-analysis. By continually monitoring pupils' learning, they become more able to assess the impact that their delivery of lessons can have on pupil progress. They begin to recognise that teaching and learning are two halves of the same whole and that their focus needs to be concentrated on pupil learning in order to assess the impact of their teaching. This study helped the trainee teachers to see themselves in the dual role of teacher and

learner. It therefore contributed toward the consolidation of the language skills that they would need to demonstrate in the classroom while at the same time helping them to develop their mastery of teaching and recognition of their learners' needs.

Although the subject knowledge required for Qualifying Teacher Status (QTS) is defined in the standards, exactly what this means in practice is not always easy to determine and can be interpreted considerably differently by individual teachers and within disparate contexts. It is consequently important that teachers should be encouraged to develop their own awareness of the level of skills required by their pupils and, indeed, by themselves. In developing this aspect of their professionalism, they will be able to recognise that learning is essentially a dynamic process and that every step that they make in the progression of their skills needs to be recognised, nurtured and supported.

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# 19

## The effects of L1 use on vocabulary acquisition

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### Background and previous research

The last 15 years of L2 acquisition and language education research and literature have seen the emergence of the issue of whether teachers should use the learners' first language (L1) in foreign or second language (L2) classroom. The interpretation of the debate by teachers and policy makers has impacted on L2 teaching practices (Liu et al. 2004). There has been considerable research into teachers' beliefs about the use of L1 (Levine 2003; Macaro 2000), and observing the use of L1 in order to describe its functions in the classroom (Macaro 2001; Macaro & Mutton 2002; Rolin-Ianziti & Brownlie 2002). Further studies have examined teachers' and learners' codeswitching patterns (alternating between the two languages), in order to measure the quantity of L1 use (e.g. Macaro 2001). However, empirical evidence as to the *effectiveness*, or otherwise, of L1 use is surprisingly lacking in the debate. This study therefore aimed to provide some initial evidence, in order to inform pedagogy, by focusing narrowly on *vocabulary learning during teacher-student oral interaction*.

In introducing the England and Wales National Curriculum in 1993, the government of the time strongly recommended that, "*the natural use of the target language for virtually all communication is a sure sign of a good modern languages course*" (DES 1990:58). Consequently, the target language became the overarching 'pedagogical tool' of the 1990s and the debate on L1 use in L2 classrooms has become a familiar one in England (G. Chambers 1992). Unfortunately, this pedagogical tool did not result in improved language learning or increased motivation, (Macaro 2008) and in recent years the pendulum has swung the other way to the point where (anecdotally) many lessons are now conducted almost entirely in English.

The question of L1 usage finds its theoretical origins in the development of Input and Interaction theory as an amalgamation of Krashen's (1985) comprehensible input, Long's (1981) negotiation of meaning and Swain's (1985) notion of forced output. These frameworks propose that vocabulary and grammar acquisition takes place through implicit processes that are

stimulated by L2 interaction, thus making a case for the exclusion of the L1. On the other hand theory of memory suggests that the brain does not have separate language-specific lexicons (Ellis 2005) and that therefore, both interacting in the L2 and making mental comparisons between the two (or more) languages will lead to acquisition. The balance of theories, therefore, suggests that the L1 may have a part to play in language learning. However, as a number of authors have argued (e.g. Turnbull 2001, Guo 2007), admitting the L1 in the classroom can easily lead to its misuse (i.e. extensively used) by practitioners to the point where the lesson is no longer a communicative one. Thus there is an urgent need for research to establish principled use of the L1.

### **Vocabulary acquisition**

Previous research in vocabulary acquisition has focused on the use of written glosses in learners' examination of written texts (Knight 1994; Hulstijn, Hollander & Greidanus 1996). However, these studies did not consider the relative effectiveness of L1 and L2 glosses. This aspect was examined by Laufer & Shmueli (1997) who discovered that better learning took place when L1 glosses were used. Their study also examined different ways of presenting new vocabulary in terms of language the item was glossed in and the type of context the item was presented in. However, none of these studies have been conducted in the context of teacher-whole class L2 interaction.

'Communicative' classroom activities commonly serve a dual purpose, in the case of the present study, text comprehension and vocabulary acquisition which involve both incidental and intentional vocabulary learning. An important consideration in such contexts is the extent to which explicitly drawing the learners' attention to specific items in the input can impact on vocabulary acquisition while the main focus of the activity remains on general comprehension. Following on from this it is interesting to explore the relative merits of different approaches in making unfamiliar lexical items more salient for the learner and drawing more attention to it.

Research into dictionary use (e.g. Knight 1994) is relevant to the issue of teacher codeswitching in that teachers frequently act as 'dictionaries' to their learners during oral interaction (Macaro 2005). Teachers who speak the L1 of the learners have a choice of acting either as monolingual dictionaries or bilingual dictionaries. By examining the relationship between lexical items in two non-cognate languages (Chinese and English) and the way that learners process that relationship, Macaro *et al.* (2009)

additionally attempted to demonstrate that teachers can act as ‘dictionary designers’. That is, their knowledge of both the learners’ L1 and L2 level may enable them to make judgements about what lexical information to provide when learners are being encouraged to make form-meaning connections.

### **The present study**

The aim of the study was to:

Provide evidence of the beneficial (or otherwise) effect of teacher use of L1 (or codeswitching) on vocabulary acquisition in broadly communicative L2 classrooms.

Specifically the study sought to address the following questions:

1. Do students who are taught post-listening task vocabulary benefit?
2. Do students who are taught by L1 translation benefit more than those taught by L2 paraphrase?
3. Is proficiency a variable?

### **Methodology**

The study used a mixed-methods design. The dependent variable was vocabulary acquisition and the independent variable was mode of instruction. The study controlled for general proficiency, teacher effect and school Socio-economic status through reference to the free school meals index.

#### ***The sample***

The target population was year 9 English-speaking learners of French. Schools were selected through links with the two university Education departments of the authors and were all state comprehensives.

There were four experimental schools and two control schools. Intact classes were used. In each school two year 9 classes were selected except in one school where only one class participated. Each class had a different teacher. There were 216 participants in the experimental group and 106 in the control group.

#### ***Procedures***

The study was conducted in two phases, A and B.

Prior to phase A students completed a cloze-test, a listening comprehension and a vocabulary knowledge test as a measure of general proficiency.

Classes were assigned to the control group, an L1 treatment group or an L2 treatment group. Students were then exposed to four listening activities, modelled according to activities they would ordinarily undertake in class, wherein the target words were introduced. The listening activities were spaced one week apart. Across the four listening comprehension exercises, students were exposed to 20 target items once (non-recycled), and 10 target items twice (recycled). Immediately after each activity, students in the experimental conditions were taught the meaning of the target words in the L1 or the L2 according to their group. Detailed scripts were provided for the teachers to ensure consistency. Students were asked not to make notes. A post-test was administered one week after the four listening activities.

### ***The listening tasks***

The listening comprehensions covered eight topics. For the purposes of recycling vocabulary items, the topics were paired as follows:

- Holidays & Free time
- Restaurant & Family
- Home & Town
- School & Daily Routine

As an example the listening comprehension on Free Time exposed students to a total of 10 target words and 5 distractors. Of the 10 target words, 5 would have already been presented in a listening on Holidays and the other 5 would not be revisited.

One of the target words in this text was *peindre*. Students in the L1 condition were given the following definition by the teacher:

*'Peindre. To paint, as in to paint a picture'*

Students in the L2 paraphrase condition would have heard the following:

*'Faire une image avec des couleurs. Les artistes, par exemple Monet ou Picasso, aiment peindre'*

[Translation: To make a picture/image with colours. Artists, like Monet or Picasso, like to paint]

Phase B followed the same procedures but the treatments were switched so that students who had been exposed to the L1 translations were now given the L2 paraphrase and vice versa.

A delayed test was administered at the end of the two phases, three to four weeks after the phase B post-test. The design of the project is represented in figure 1:





**Figure 1:** Project design

The researchers were present for the administration of pre-, post- and delayed-tests and intermittently visited each class at least once during each phase for the listening activities in order to ensure that the procedures were being adhered to consistently across the classes.

Two individual stimulated recall sessions with (at least three) students from each school were conducted following the post-test in phase B, to establish the strategies they employed and their reactions to each treatment. Participants reflected high, medium and low proficiency scores. The stimulus was a video recording of an L1 translation or an L2 paraphrase teaching session. Students were asked about their strategies and reactions to the explanations in the video clips. Interview data was thematically coded according to high- and low-inference depending on the transparency of the code and inter-rater reliability was established.

## Findings

### 1. *Do students who are taught post-listening task vocabulary benefit?*

ANCOVA tests showed that there was no overall effect for intervention versus control although two of the four experimental schools did significantly outperform the controls. In other words there was no overall benefit in teaching the meaning of the vocabulary but there was a possible school effect.

### 2. *Do students who are taught by L1 translation benefit more than those taught by L2 paraphrase?*

When the two treatments were compared with each other, the L1 translation group significantly outperformed the L2 paraphrase group at post-test phase A ( $p=.004$ ), at post-test phase B ( $p=.000$ ) and on the words in the delayed post-test that had been taught in phase B ( $p=.034$ ). The L1 translation group also outperformed the control group at post-test phase B ( $p=.002$ ). The L2 paraphrase group significantly outperformed the L1

translation group on lexical items in the delayed post-test that had been presented in phase A ( $p=.033$ ), but there was no significant difference in performance on words from phase B presented in the delayed post-test.

The findings therefore suggest that, while at post-test students were more likely to remember words taught through the English translation, there is no clear advantage of one condition over the other in the long term.

### ***3. Is proficiency a variable?***

Pearson's correlation tests were run to examine for associations between proficiency and vocabulary gains scores at each time point. A significant correlation was found between the proficiency score and the gains on items from phase A tested at the delayed post-test ( $r=.144$ ,  $p<.05$ ). There was also a correlation found between participants' proficiency scores on items from phase B and the post-test phase B gains for all the target items ( $r=.425$   $p<.01$ ). However, no clear pattern could be identified since there was no significant correlation between proficiency at time A and the post-test phase A gains score and no significant correlation between proficiency and the gains on items from phase B tested at the delayed-test.

### ***Strategic and Attitudinal reactions***

The study explored students' strategic reactions to the two treatments.

Stimulated recall data represented a range of strategies being used for deciphering meaning. These included making associations with similar French words, listening for key words, sounding out the word to trigger associations, or the use of meta-linguistic cues e.g. recognition of *-re* or *-er* endings for a verb.

However, the predominant strategy by far was making associations with English. When presented with the French vocabulary item, students would try to guess its meaning through English associations. When this was unsuccessful, the majority of students appeared not to have recourse to any other strategies.

Reflecting on their reactions to the two treatment conditions, students expressed a preference for the L1 translation explaining they were unable to understand the L2 paraphrase and thus could not work out the meaning of the word. The majority of students preferred either the L1 translation or a combination of L1 translation and L2 paraphrase. A small minority suggested they would be more likely to remember words in the long term if

they were given the L2 paraphrase and indicated that the L2 paraphrase enabled them to see how the word might be used in a sentence.

## Discussion

This paper began by referring to the development of language teaching in the UK through the last 15 years. The debate about teachers' use of the learners' first language (L1) in the L2 classroom has been ongoing since the National Curriculum introduced almost exclusive L2 use to the foreign language classroom. Research on the issue has investigated various aspects of L1 use but has left the question of its impact on acquisition largely unexamined. The research literature reports that one of the consistent functions of L1 use in L2 teaching is to convey the meaning of lexical items. The findings presented in this study contribute evidence to suggest that this strategy is more likely to facilitate vocabulary acquisition than requiring learners to infer the meaning from an L2 definition. In doing so the findings also provide an initial empirical basis for questioning the assumption that the use of the L2 for virtually all communication in the foreign language classroom is the indicator of effective language teaching.

The quantitative findings of this study offer support for the concept of teacher as dictionary designer referred to previously (Macaro 2005). In particular they suggest a greater impact on vocabulary acquisition of the bilingual dictionary model over the monolingual. This extends the work of Laufer & Shmueli by suggesting learning advantage of L1 glosses in listening activities as well as written work. However, Macaro *et al.* (2009) argue that the knowledge the teacher has of the student's level of linguistic proficiency and motivational levels can be instrumental to determining judicious use of the L1 such that learners can access the L2 because they are being offered sufficient scaffolding in the L1 to be able to understand and engage with the classroom activity. Indeed, the qualitative evidence presented here, also pointing to a number of perceived benefits to giving students the L2 definition, supports a pedagogical approach that combines the two models of the teacher dictionary the delivery of which would rely greatly on the teacher's familiarity with the learners' proficiency.

At post-test in both phases students performed better in the L1 condition, suggesting a counter to the theory of input and interaction (Krashen 1985; Long 1981) discussed above, which proposes the exclusion of the L1, on the basis that acquisition of vocabulary or grammar is achieved through implicit processes stimulated by L2 interaction. Furthermore, input and interaction theory proposes that bringing L1 into the interaction forces the

learner to tap into explicit processes by making almost inevitable comparisons between the two languages. Stimulated recall data indicated that learners are bringing in the L1 themselves by resorting primarily to a strategy that looks for similarities with English. Proponents of input and interaction theory might argue that this should be discouraged. However, while the evidence is unclear as to the long term benefits of L1 or L2 for vocabulary acquisition, it does support the benefits of L1 use in the short term and as such calls for further investigation.

This study also drew on the theory of memory, proposing that the brain does not operate on separate language-specific lexicons (Ellis 2005). This theory would predict that making mental comparisons between the two (or more) languages leads to acquisition. In showing more favourable outcomes for participants in the L1 condition, the empirical findings of this paper offer initial support for this theory.

The findings of this study do not in themselves offer a conclusive answer as to whether use of L1 should be encouraged. However, they do present initial evidence suggesting that there are benefits to its use both in terms of motivation and attainment. The study reflects the complexity of the issue and highlights the need for further research to establish guidelines for the principled use of the L1 in the foreign language classroom.

The study considered intentional vocabulary as compared with incidental learning. In finding no overall effect of the intervention groups over the control groups the study challenges previous studies which report that intentional vocabulary learning is more effective than incidental learning (Laufer 2005; Mondria 2003). Learners' attention in the treatment groups was explicitly drawn to the specific target items. The findings of the study seem to suggest that drawing attention to the lexical items does not necessarily lead to increased vocabulary acquisition. It is important to note however, that an effective model of language learning is assumed to engage a number of different approaches and learning strategies. Interview data indicates that this is not the context in which language learning is taking place and students show familiarity with a very limited range of language learning strategies. Furthermore, the design of the study did not allow learners to make any written notes and did not engage the learners in manipulation, negotiation or production of the new language. The study therefore indicates that simple explicit exposure to new language, regardless of the medium of instruction, does not result in improved vocabulary acquisition when compared to an implicit presentation.

Limitations of the study must be acknowledged. The delayed post-test was conducted a long time after students had been exposed to phase A lexical items making a comparison between phase A and phase B at delayed post-test less plausible. Nevertheless, from a pedagogical perspective this delay provides a useful insight into the effects of the treatment on a timescale that more closely reflects teaching practices. The study has implications for both pedagogy and research. There is a clear need for further research to examine the effectiveness of the two media of instruction in combination with other approaches and strategies. There is also a need to shed further light on the interaction between proficiency and vocabulary acquisition. The findings of this study have contributed empirical support for the proposition that principled use of the L1 can lead to improved language acquisition. Further research might focus on outlining these principles and testing their impact on longer term acquisition.

There is a need for strategy training, which bears implications for the view of teacher as dictionary. In addition to making decisions about the lexical information they provide learners with, teachers need to equip learners with the tools to access this information.

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# 20

## The crossroads between language and literature: developing an EAL pedagogy and intercultural learning

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### Introduction

The research presented here investigates the development of an EAL pedagogy for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) at the crossroads between language and literature. The main precept of this argument is that literary texts use language in aesthetic, imaginative and engaging ways that have considerable potential to extend the learning of EAL pupils. The study explores how teachers effectively support EAL learners to access diverse texts and draw on the pupils' cultural capital. EAL pedagogy that embraces intercultural learning enables children to understand both the local and global in acts of reading. This research argues for the need to maintain literature within the learning and development of language and that literature enables bilingual pupils to learn the musicality of the new language: the prosody, intonation and paralanguage intrinsic to opening the road to a plurilingual and pluricultural identity.

### Crossroads between language and literature

Classroom dynamics are shifting dramatically as people move across countries and borders and the language of schooling is learnt as an additional language by growing percentages of pupils. As communities become scattered across the globe, Vertovec (2007) argues that we have entered the age of *superdiversity*. Current research indicates the favourable effects of bi- and multi-lingualism on cognition and the interdependency between languages, but there is a lack of expertise in schools to implement inclusive language policies. In recent years, EAL specialists and subject teachers have developed pockets of excellent practice, but in a report into EAL provision in England and Wales, the researchers found that 'any sense of an EAL Pedagogy is strikingly absent' (IoE 2009: 11).

In looking at developing an EAL pedagogy in the English classroom, it is useful to explore how language and literature are woven together and how 'language may either confirm or deny the life histories and experiences of the people who use it' (Freire & Macedo 1987: 149). Students are moving

in the borderlands between cultures and teachers need to draw on students' language, culture and experience to engage them as learners. Students who can negotiate the borderlands may develop intercultural literacies and a deeper knowledge of how language works. The ability of EAL learners to understand demanding literary texts and the development of reading comprehension ability 'requires very different forms of instruction than the forms that are successful in teaching discrete language skills' (Cummins 2001: 65).

Students start to understand the complexity, depth or nuance of a language and 'as lifeworlds become more divergent and their boundaries more blurred, the central fact of language becomes the multiplicity of meanings and their continual intersection' (Cazden et al 2000: 17). The role of pedagogy is viewed as 'an epistemology of pluralism' where cross-cultural discourses occur around a range of texts without pupils 'having to erase or leave behind different subjectivities' (Cazden et al 2000: 18).

McRae (1996), in reflecting on language, literature and the learner, states that 'it takes imagination to learn a language' (McRae 1996: 18). He sees the interface between language and literature as 'the richest vein of learning potential for learners at all levels of language' (McRae 1996: 23). Representational language allows students to question rules, play with language, and start to understand the complexity and nuance of deeper word knowledge. Language is not neutral and, in studying language at the interface with literature, students recognise that texts are historically situated. Carter (1996) defines literary discourse as 'culturally-rooted language which is purposefully patterned and representational, which actively promotes a process of interpretation and which encourages a pleasurable interaction with and negotiation of its meaning' (Carter 1996: 12). The ability of teachers to look both ways and engage EAL learners with language-rich texts is a key to students' ability to make meanings and start to move more freely within the language. Valdès argues that when working with emergent bilinguals we must move beyond the acquisition of grammar and lexis and contextualised and decontextualised language and 'continue to struggle to make accessible to our second language students the textual worlds that are now beyond their reach' (Valdès 2004: 33).

### **Context of this study**

This was a one-year research project that was carried out in London secondary schools from 2009 – 2010. This study built on the findings from a recent survey which reported that only 37% of newly qualified teachers



(NQTs) felt that their preparation to work with children learning English as an additional language was good or very good (TDA 2008). This is worrying when the latest Annual School Census in January 2009 shows that 11% of the learners in secondary schools in England are EAL pupils. Currently, there is a gap in research into EAL pedagogy and provision for the 11-19 age range in the English school sector; this project adds insight into this field of language development.

The research question looked at how teachers support EAL pupils' academic language development with a focus on the language of literature; and how teachers can design pedagogies that effectively support language learning for EAL pupils. The study first examined how initial teacher education prepares teachers to work with EAL learners in their classes, and 21 pre-service teachers were interviewed at the end of their English course. Then five of these teachers were observed and interviewed during their NQT year in four East London schools. This part of the study focused on situated practices in mainstream schools and examined how teachers of English work in collaboration and partnership with EAL specialists. I also interviewed and observed five EAL specialists in schools to understand their perspective on EAL pedagogy.

NQTs of English	Ethnicity	Background	Languages
Yasemin	Turkish/Irish	Literary Studies & Social Sciences; TEFL teaching; PGCE English	Turkish/English
David	Welsh/English	English Language & Literature; TEFL teaching; PGCE English	English
Sue	Irish/English	English Language & Literature; Journalism & TEFL teaching; PGCE English	English
Helen	English	English Literature; TEFL teaching; PGCE English	English
Verona	Afro-Caribbean	Education Studies & English Language; PGCE English	English

**Table 1:** Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) of English in the Research Study

**Key:**

*TEFL – Teaching English as a Foreign Language*  
*CELTA – Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults*  
*TESL – Teaching English as a Second Language*  
*PGCE – Postgraduate Certificate in Education*

EAL Specialists	Ethnicity	Background	Languages
Farida	Indian	MA in English Literature	Bengali/English
Safia	Indian/Bengali	German/French degree; CELTA course	Bengali/English/ German/French
Adele	French	Languages degree; TEFL teaching	French/Spanish/ Italian/English
Carol	English	Humanities degree; Diploma in TESL	English
Renata	Polish	English degree; PGCE in Teaching EAL	Polish/English

**Table 2:** English as an Additional Language (EAL) Specialists in the Research Study

## Methodology and data collection

The educational research is a longitudinal in-depth study over a year and I adopted a multilayered approach employing both ethnography and ethnomethodology. Through ethnographic interviews, I developed an understanding of the life histories, perspectives and attitudes of the teachers. Through ethnomethodology I focused on classroom interaction and analysed the patterns of learning of EAL pupils within videoed/observed lessons.

I believe that by taking this approach to educational research the analysis of data is contextualised in the school context and teachers are seen at the forefront in constructing progressive pedagogies to meet the needs of learners from diverse backgrounds. The findings from my research study have the potential to improve the training of secondary school teachers by developing knowledge of pedagogic practices to support language development of EAL learners. Literature is seen as a shared way of interpreting the world and this study will add to the body of research that recognises the potential of literary texts to extend the intercultural learning of EAL pupils and develop their academic language.

## Talk around texts

Creating opportunities for structured classroom talk has been proven to be important for all pupils in the development of language, but it is vital for EAL learners and particularly with regard to intercultural learning. The teachers in the research explain how they approach literature with classes and Yasemin comments that EAL learners need to verbalise what they think about a text 'learning through talk is actually really important and so I go that way round'. Talking around texts is also about giving EAL learners a voice in the classroom and keeping them engaged in the learning so they are not, as Verona puts it 'engulfed by the language'.

Carol points to the importance of her training to work with EAL learners because it gave her an understanding of the role of language in the classroom and ‘the absolute fundamental central role of talk as part of the learning process’. She believes that the support for EAL learners in mainstream classes is to ensure that every activity and every stage of learning is supported by talk. This approach is particularly important in developing deeper knowledge of vocabulary that goes beyond learning lists of key words to understanding the nuances of the language.

### **Engagement with texts**

The teachers of English discussed the particular literary texts that engaged EAL learners in the classroom. Yasemin encourages EAL learners to take ownership of texts and emphasises the importance of stories ‘I just think stories ... they’ve gone for story and creativity and understanding generally and then we’ll go for specific analysis’. Understanding the associations and cultural connotations of words can be difficult for EAL learners and Sue talks about how older EAL learners pick up the grammatical rules very quickly, but there is a huge gulf in their vocabulary ‘they don’t quite understand the gist of a story, they might have just misread one little bit of dialogue and not understood how the story’s gone in a different way, so I think with them doing lots of work about character motivation has really helped them understand a lot of other stories’.

The EAL specialists are aware of texts that can create cultural barriers due to their use of idiomatic language and Carol comments on a particular young person’s novel ‘the text is much too confusing, so many layers of cultural assumption, they don’t get it’. However, texts are seen as fostering intercultural learning and poetry was viewed as a powerful way into learning the language and developing deeper word knowledge.

### **EAL learners’ interaction with texts in the English classroom**

David teaches English in a girls’ secondary school (predominantly Bangladeshi) in East London and works in close collaboration with Safia (the EAL specialist). The following observations are from work around a range of texts where EAL learners are situated in different classroom contexts. Safia reflects on the importance of working in tandem with teachers to develop strategies in context and create an all-inclusive environment. David believes that EAL learners may be baffled by the language of literature but ‘it’s about being able to translate that and say

what does it make you think of; what do you imagine; does it appeal to your sense of smell or sight or sound?’

### Using a familiar cultural context

In looking at the cultural aspects of the language of literature and engaging EAL learners with longer pieces of text, David selected some travel writing as it uses many literary techniques. The EAL learners in this class of 12-13 year olds were all from Bangladesh and he chose a chapter on Bangladesh from Michael Palin’s book *Himalaya*. He wanted pupils to understand the crucial role of historical and cultural context in travel writing. He approached new vocabulary in a familiar context for the Bangladeshi pupils, so they’re immediately engaged with the text and active in making meaning. David focuses on the figurative and idiomatic language in the text to develop pupils’ knowledge of the language and they discuss the following phrases: flat as a pancake; the blessing and the bane of Bangladesh; lazy meandering waters; water squeezes arthritically from the taps. Their intimate knowledge of the country enables them to understand the imagery. Later in the text (p. 265), the pupils become experts and enjoy correcting David on his accent.

- David:** I hear my name called in a Bangladeshi-Cockney accent.  
‘Michael!’  
**Pupils:** Not ‘Michael!’  
**David:** What is a Bangladeshi-Cockney accent then, can you do it?  
**Pupils:** Michael!

The EAL learners are engaged with this text and enjoying their cultural familiarity with the characters and places in the travel writing. They understand the concept of water being the blessing and the bane of Bangladesh and start to develop a deeper word knowledge.

### Collaborative writing

In supporting EAL learners to access the language of literature and develop their analytical writing about literary texts, David uses a collaborative writing approach with a class of 13-14 year olds. He works in close conjunction with the EAL specialist to scaffold the learning around pre-nineteenth century gothic literature. Safia provides specific support for two early stage EAL learners in a focused withdrawal group and in the mainstream English classroom.

In the withdrawal group, Safia thinks about different ways to extend the EAL learners’ vocabulary and writing on the gothic genre and uses words

and pictures of gothic conventions, such as subterranean passageways, old derelict houses and darkness, to create an understanding of how writers create fear and suspense in a narrative. David builds on this in the mainstream English class in their work on *The Red Room* by H.G Wells. The EAL learners have a place in the classroom, as they have prior knowledge of the gothic conventions and language of literature.

David believes that modelling is a useful strategy to develop writing about texts and collaborative writing can pave the way for extended analytical writing. He scaffolds their writing slowly as the pupils, including the EAL learners, write and then pass on their writing to another pupil in the group to analyse the language further.

**David:** We want really strong analysis and I think by passing these examples of analytical writing round you'll be able to see examples of some really good work.

The writing is continually shared and discussed and Safia works closely with a range of EAL learners in the class. Their writing is supported at each stage of the analysis through talk and shared practice.

**David:** The convention was draughty subterranean passageways, but also underground. Also, in that quote you picked out the idea of an echoey passageway. So what you might say is the word echo suggests loneliness or emptiness, or something that's hollow. So now take one word or phrase and even more closely analyse that and talk about its effect on the reader.

In the withdrawal group, Safia works with the EAL learners on the idea of madness and insanity and at the next stage of the writing, David moves onto looking at contextual ideas and thinking about how particular themes and concerns of the Victorian era make their way into fiction. In the final stage, David shares the writing of some pupils and focuses on their excellent vocabulary usage and real knowledge of the genre.

**David:** Some of these responses show what we can actually do working together and how much we can write about texts.

The EAL learners in this class are learning the language of literature in context and developing the confidence and ability to use this vocabulary in their writing.

## **Conclusions and significance for education**

This comparative longitudinal study explored the practice and continuing professional development needs of mainstream English teachers in supporting EAL learners develop academic language. The research presented here reveals the importance of fostering the interconnectedness between language and literature in an EAL pedagogy. The EAL learners in the research that are given opportunities to access literary texts as an integral part of their language development engage actively in making meaning and learning words in context.

The teachers highlighted the need for a network of shared resources on ways to engage EAL learners with literary texts and Sue reflected on the changes in her own perception of how to cater for EAL learners ‘there is a tendency to think I’ll put pictures in, but that might not actually help unless you check there is some sort of link being drawn, and it’s not just a pretty picture. I think I probably started out doing that’. However, the opportunities for these pupils to learn the language of literature is seen as crucial to all stages of their language development and David comments ‘any literary text; you can access it at any level; there are fantastic multimodal texts’.

The research findings here point to the crucial role that a culturally inclusive curriculum plays in the successful learning of EAL pupils. The research showed that familiarity with context and development of intercultural literacy can help EAL learners develop deeper word level knowledge and have a place in the English classroom. Sue talks about encouraging EAL learners to have a voice in the classroom and feel confident about their ideas and responding to texts from a different perspective.

All the research into developing an EAL pedagogy at the crossroads between language and literature indicates the central tenet of developing a pedagogy that gives space to structured dialogic talk in the classroom and collaborative learning. The research shows the value of talk at each stage of the learning process and giving EAL learners time to rehearse and process language in small groups before contributing to whole-class discussion. The EAL specialist, Renata, firmly believes that EAL learners ‘can be engaged in a wide range of texts if there is preparation time, if before we ask them to write we give them a thorough understanding’.

## **Implications for educators**

This research study strongly indicates the value of developing related pedagogic practices for EAL learners at the interface between language and literature. Developing a more integrated approach exposes older EAL learners to deeper levels of cognitive and linguistic processing in reading and using representational language. Valdès argues that the classroom must be opened to multiple texts and multiple voices and worries that for EAL learners ‘the discussion of texts and students’ relationships to texts – indeed their interaction in rich dialogues with the writers of many types of texts – is not part of the conversation in the majority of schools’ (Valdès 2004: 31). Learning the language of literature encourages EAL learners to understand the richness and variety of a language and gain agency in the process, as they actively make meaning and enter dialogues around texts. Bakhtin in his work on discourse and the novel demonstrates the organic and dialogic way that words form meaning in prose and that these meanings are receptive to new perceptions ‘the word is born in a dialogue as a living rejoinder within it’ (Bakhtin 1981: 279). In this study, EAL learners gained understanding of the figurative language that enlivens texts, and by discussing new words and phrases, such as ‘water squeezes arthritically from the taps’ in a familiar cultural context, students were ‘able to process word meanings and forms at greater depth’ (Harper et al 2010: 85). My research project showed that EAL learners, at all levels of language, actively engaged with stories and longer pieces of text and were learning to interpret texts from their own cultural perspective, such as Bangladeshi-Cockney.

Recent research reveals the pressing need to find ways to develop academic language and deep word knowledge in EAL learners (Vasquez 2010). The research project shows that EAL learners’ vocabulary and writing can be extended when they are given the space to rehearse new words and phrases and develop real knowledge of a particular literary genre, such as gothic. Both the English teacher and EAL specialist developed an integrated approach when expanding vocabulary usage and understood the importance of giving EAL learners access to a range of texts. The study reveals the part that literary texts can play in engaging EAL learners with the new language and supporting them in developing intercultural learning. McRae advocates an interrelated pedagogy at all levels of language and how this is integral to developing deeper word knowledge ‘the acquisition of vocabulary which goes beyond the merely synonymic is frequently the turning point in this process’ (McRae 1996: 18). In this study, the EAL learners interpreted the gothic convention ‘draughty subterranean passageways’ beyond the merely

synonymic and suggested the idea of emptiness and loneliness. Cummins (2001) strongly argues that ‘a diet of engaging books works much better than a diet of worksheets and drills in developing reading comprehension and academic language’ (ibid: 87).

The implementation of an EAL pedagogy across schools that fosters the development of both linguistic and literary competence, must also build on the cultural capital of EAL learners. This research project showed how developing an ongoing dialogue between EAL specialists and mainstream English teachers led to more inclusive classroom pedagogies. This dialogue needs to now be extended into the borderlands between subjects, classrooms and communities to look at ways that mainstream English teachers and teachers of other languages can work together to cultivate a school environment that promotes cultural diversity and plurilingualism.

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# 21

## Self-concept in the EFL context

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Self-concept is defined as an individual's self-perception of competence and their related self-evaluative judgements in a specific domain (e.g., Pajares & Schunk 2005). It is related to but differs from other self-related constructs such as self-efficacy, personal knowledge, self-esteem or identity. Within the discipline of psychology, extensive studies have already highlighted the central role played by domain-specific self-concepts in successful learning as well as the close connection of the construct to other key variables such as motivation, anxiety, goal setting, strategy use, persistence, attributions and self-regulated learning. Although the applied linguistics literature contains numerous references to self-related constructs and recognises the central importance of an understanding of self in language learning, very little empirical study of this particular key psychological construct has been conducted within the field.

This presentation reported on a PhD study (now published – Mercer, 2011) which set out to explore the nature of self-concept in the EFL context. In particular, the research sought to describe the theoretical nature of and factors affecting the development of the EFL self-concept of tertiary-level learners. In an attempt to present an alternative perspective on the self-concept construct to complement the abundance of experimental quantitative studies which exist within psychology-based research, a qualitative, grounded research approach was taken. Data were generated using four different methods, each of which served as a form of triangulation for the others: a longitudinal single case study, written narratives, written language learner autobiographies and in-depth interviews. All the participants were students at the English department of an Austrian university and were studying English as their major subject, either on its own or in combination with other subjects. None of the research participants took part in more than one form of data generation.

In respect to the theoretical structure of the self-concepts of the learners in these data, the analysis found that their various self-concepts did not appear to be hierarchical in nature, as proposed in the dominant Marsh & Shavelson (1985) model. None of the learners appeared to transcend any kind of hierarchy in terms of how their self-descriptions seemed to be

configured; indeed, they often made unexpected connections across their self-concept networks. Further, self-concepts, which would be at the same level of the hierarchy, often differed in terms of their relative complexity, and there was little evidence of beliefs from other, broader self-concepts subsuming beliefs from different domains. Rather, these learners displayed evidence of a complicated, interconnected network of overlapping and related self-beliefs, more akin to a molecular than a hierarchical structure.

The analysis of the data also revealed many instances of inter- and intra-learner variation in the reported self-concepts. In particular, learners appeared to vary in the selection, relative strength and dominance of their reported self-concepts depending on the context. The data also suggested that the learners hold distinct self-concepts in several domains, thus confirming the multifaceted nature of the self-concept construct. Specifically within the EFL self-concept, the data raised questions about the possible existence of even more domain-specific self-concepts, such as distinct EFL writing and EFL speaking self-concepts. Therefore, in order to describe the characteristics of the self-concepts emerging from the analysis of these data, a 3-dimensional network model was proposed.

The second main issue addressed by the research considered the factors which may affect EFL self-concept development. The analysis of the data revealed a multitude of highly-interrelated factors, which were separated into two broad categories, either internal or external factors, in order to facilitate a comprehensible overview of the factors, and to connect the findings from this study to research concerning the I/E model (Marsh 1986). Internal factors were defined as being any factors which are centred within the self, such as beliefs, other self-concepts, affective and cognitive reactions. External factors were defined as those factors which stem primarily from outside the individual, such as actual experiences, experiences with significant individuals, one's learning environment, feedback from others, etc. It was noted that the internal/external distinction is an oversimplification of a much more complex reality, as the two categories are likely to overlap and, in reality, it may not be possible to separate the two. In terms of the internal frames of reference employed by learners in this study when forming their EFL self-concepts, it was found that learners mainly used their self-concepts in other domains (especially in other foreign languages), their belief systems about the nature of foreign language learning and each specific language as well as affective responses. In terms of the external factors, the study found learners' EFL self-concepts were mostly influenced by social comparisons, explicit and

implicit feedback from significant others, their own perceived experiences of success and failure, as well as their subjective critical experiences. Each of these factors was further constrained by a range of caveats, and it was noted that more than one factor can affect an individual's self-concept simultaneously and be mediated through a series of other psychological processes such as self-verification, self-enhancement or self-protection.

The presentation concluded by proposing a possible agenda for future research into EFL learner self-concept. It was stressed that in order to fully understand the complexity of the construct there is a need for both qualitative & quantitative studies to complement each other. Qualitative studies in particular may be able to cast light on issues related to inter-/intra-learner variation, in particular important dimensions surrounding the situated nature of the construct. Further research also needs to clarify how the L2 self-concept may vary at different ages, different levels of proficiency, across gender, and in different learning/acquisition contexts. Additionally, any future comprehensive model including self-concept would need to indicate how the construct relates to other key variables in the language learning process such as attributions, goals, motivation, beliefs, identity, strategies and actual achievement. It was concluded that future studies into L2 self-concept could benefit considerably from interdisciplinary work and understandings already made in respect to the construct in the field of psychology.

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# 22

## The Expansion of Theme

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### Introduction

How do successful writers use Theme in the literary response genre at senior secondary level? This slightly incongruent-sounding question reflects the fact that the application of theory in empirical research and pedagogical practice is often challenging. The Systemic Functional Grammar (SFG) concepts of linguistic metafunctions and Theme were the theoretical constructs applied in the research into secondary writing that informs this paper.

To answer the opening question, the sentence Themes of top-rated literary essays on Cambridge International Examinations A-level and New Zealand Qualifications Authority, National Certificate in Educational Achievement, Level 3 (Year 13) standards were examined. Initially, the theoretical delimitation for Theme boundary was strictly applied but it quickly became apparent that, in light of the theoretical description of the functional roles of Theme, the delimitation was prohibitive. Further investigation led to a more expansive conceptualisation of Theme and a fuller understanding of its use by successful writers.

### Theoretical Background

The first linguistic metafunction, the ideational, has two components: experiential and logical. The experiential entails the construal of human experience into language by naming participants (people and things), processes (actions and states of being) and circumstances (“sequences related by time, cause and the like”, Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 29). The “logical” component involves language that represents how the experiential components are connected (prepositions and some items of conjunction). The second metafunction, textual, “relates to the construction of text ... an enabling or facilitating function ... organising the discursive flow and creating cohesion and continuity as it moves along” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 30). The third metafunction, interpersonal, entails language “enacting our personal and social relationships with the other people” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 29).

“Theme” is part of the Theme/Rheme construct. It recognises that one strand of meaning within the clause is its “meaning as a message” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 58) and aligns with its textual metafunction. Theme has a positional specification, two functional specifications and a grammatical-functional delimitation. It is: “the point of departure of the message [positional]; it ... locates and orients the clause within its context [functional]” and it is “the element the speaker selects for ‘grounding’ what he is going on to say [functional]” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004, pp64 & 58, respectively). Its grammatical delimitation is “the first constituent that is either participant, circumstance or process [experiential metafunction].” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 79).

“Grounding” and “orients” are not defined but grounding is understood as aligning with the experiential component of the ideational metafunction, fulfilling the “quantum of information” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 58) required to give the clause the “meaning” part of its “meaning as a message”; “orients” is understood as ensuring the clause coheres with surrounding clauses, “within its context”. The experiential element of Theme is sufficient for grounding the clause but does it always orient it? The analysis for this research suggested that “orients” may involve the textual and, in many instances, also the interpersonal metafunction. Thus, “sentence initial elements” were analysed, beyond the Theme delimitation, facilitating a fuller understanding of successful writers’ use of sentence openings.

## Historical Background

In 1844, French-speaking academic Weil used the term “point of departure” to divide the initial part of a sentence from “another part of the discourse which forms the statement” when comparing word order in ancient and modern languages (Leong Ping 2000b: 2). Thus, at its inception, “point of departure” was vaguely qualified as “an initial notion ... which forms, as it were, the ground upon which the two intelligences meet” (Weil, in Leong Ping 2000b: 2). In the nineteen thirties, Mathesius described a linguistic concept of “theme” using three (“Czechoslovakian”) words (translated by Daneš 1964) meaning: “point of departure”, “theme” and “basis, foundation” but Mathesius “explicitly stated that the point of departure was not necessarily always identical with the theme” (Firbas 1987: 140). Since then, “theme”, has had several interpretations in Functional Linguistics, both metaphorical and literal, and is frequently, yet rather indeterminately, qualified as, “the point of departure of a sentence”.



Mathesius's 1939 definition of "theme" as "that which is known or at least obvious in the given situation and from which the speaker proceeds" comprises two elements: (1) "information which is known" and (2) "information from which the speaker proceeds" (Fries 1981: 1).

Merging these implies a metaphorical interpretation of "proceeds", where "theme" comprises the elements of a sentence which express how it relates to information already available (Fries 1981: 1). It includes the "feature of what the sentence is to be 'about', or 'aboutness' for short", which Firbas regards as "an essential function of the theme" (Firbas 1987: 140).

Alternative to this, Fries (1981: 2) writes of the "separating approach" espoused by systemic linguistics such as Hallidayan SFG. Here the two elements are distinct. "Theme" is seen as a structural element, literally "the point of departure of the clause as message" (while Rheme consists of the remaining elements). Conceptually separate, is the metaphorical "point of departure" represented in the "given" in the Information structure units of the "given and new" relationship where "given" is dissociated from Theme but it is recognised that the two often coincide (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004, pp93 – 98).

In 1985, when Halliday defined Theme as "the element which serves as the point of departure of the message; it is that with which the clause is concerned" (cited in Fries 1995: 318), practitioners argued that this definition was not felicitous. It made for a very elegant analysis if the Theme and the grammatical Subject of the sentence were always identical and always initial, as is the typical or unmarked case in declarative sentences. However, commonly, other elements occur initially, such as: Adjuncts having purely textual or an interpersonal roles, or elements that substitute for the topic or have subordinate topical roles (different from the Subject), for example, structures such as "empty it" (where "it" has no specified referent), cleft-type sentences (where single clauses are expressed bi-clausally), existential-There sentences and initial circumstantial clauses. When this is the case, some researchers (Leong Ping 2000a; Downing 1991; Thomas & Hawes 1994; S. Thompson 1985) suggested that it was inaccurate to describe the Theme as being "the point of departure", metaphorically or literally, since, firstly, the Theme would exclude the grammatical Subject of the sentence and was, therefore, not what the sentence was "concerned with" and secondly, in some cases the Theme may actually stand in predicate position, ("predicated Theme" is the term for cleft sentences in SFG), meaning that it was not initial at all.

Downing (1991: 119) proposed, “Theme and topic [what the sentence is about] are ... distinct categories” and after analysis of different realisations of Theme, concluded:

the point of departure, realised by the initial element, is not necessarily “what the clause is about”. In fact, unless the point of departure is a participant or a process, it almost certainly is not what the message is about.  
(p.141)

Alternatively, this problem of Theme being both the point of departure and what the clause was about, led Thomas and Hawes (1994), in their study of Theme in scientific reports, to include the grammatical subject as part of Theme, even when other experiential elements preceded.

Although the current definition of Theme (see Theoretical Background) downplays the idea of what the clause is “about” and augments the role of Theme as an organisational element, the term “orients”, albeit accurate in encapsulating the role of Theme, may still in some contexts, be problematic when it comes to recognising its metaphorical nature, having textual metafunctional implications and interpersonal overtones. However, it is not so much the two-part functional definition that is problematic but rather the grammatical-functional delimitation.

Leong Ping (2000a) argues that “There” is insufficient as Theme in “existential There” clauses, and Thompson (2004) argues that it is not really useful to consider the initial “It” in thematicised comment clauses as Theme, because, despite standing in for experiential elements, neither of these gives the reader adequate information to orient the clause in its context. The same is true of any experiential element that does not support clarity of meaning in context. Orienting elements following the initial element may contribute subtle textual and interpersonal meanings to the message that need to be acknowledged. To make the construct of Theme as useful as possible for research and pedagogical purposes, therefore, it may be helpful to consider extending its boundary and recognising that an orienting construct may demand more than an experiential component.

When grammatical elements precede the Subject (or unmarked topical Theme) in declarative sentences, supplying additional experiential information (called a marked topical Theme) or arranging information explicitly by connecting parts of the text, to make reasoning clear (a textual Theme) or, thirdly, enacting writer-reader interaction (an interpersonal Theme), such as writer evaluation of information (Bloor & Bloor 2004,

pp283 - 289), it is called a “multiple Theme” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 81). It seems odd then, that when such elements follow the topical Theme, they are excluded from the construct, especially when such elements serve a strongly orienting role, as the remainder of this paper will demonstrate.

## Research Project

The top-rated literary essays collected for this project were analysed for linguistic features that may be taught to candidates achieving lower ratings. Features of interest were those that: (1) those that could be associated with descriptors of top-rated writing stated by a variety of curriculum boards (New Zealand, Australian, British and International, see Appendix A) and (2) those that appeared to counter the criticisms of external examiners. (See Appendix B for a list of commonly appearing criticisms over the research period: 2006 – 2009.)

Since curricula and examiner reports use qualitative terms, means of linguistically defining the characteristics they mention were sought. The terms used appeared relatable to linguistic metafunctions and the Theme/Rheme construct in SFG. Appendix A shows that descriptors of top-rated writing arising on curriculum statements centre on, firstly, “organisation” and “control”; this largely involves the textual metafunction; secondly, descriptors call for “complexity of thought”, “insightful / perceptive writing”, which relates to the experiential metafunction; and thirdly, descriptors such as “persuasion”, “flair” and “originality” imply a need for control of the interpersonal metafunction. Moreover, the references to “linguistic devices” and “breadth of style” suggested that identification of grammatical and metafunctional elements that facilitate varied writing styles is desirable.

Similar connections were evident in the examiners’ criticisms (Appendix B). Deficits were indicated in all three linguistic metafunctions. The experiential limitation is shown in the inability to develop the topic beyond simplistic and generalised ideas, description or listing; textual problems are suggested by the inability to structure their writing effectively and the interpersonal deficit is revealed in the inability to show personal engagement, a “consistent voice”, or engage with the given question. Furthermore, since many of the descriptors and criticisms suggested that control of writing was critical, Theme as the “orienting” element of the clause seemed key.

There is precedent for the use of Theme to investigate the qualities and control of students' writing. Macken-Horarik (2006) examined the linguistic differences among student writers' use of Theme according to skill level. Weaker writing is characterised by "thematic slippage" or an "unstable", "shifting orientation to the task" (p.62); middle-range writing reveals an "ability to recapitulate and generalise" (p.65) by the selection of characters or the text as Theme; stronger writing displays "a global orientation to the narrative text ... discerned in the stable pattern of starting points in the Themes of each clause" (p.68).

Christie & Dreyfus (2007) examined two secondary students' literary essays. The students' teacher regarded one essay as more successful than the other. Tracing the presence within the successful text of what they term "Macro-Theme" (overarching Theme, related to concepts within the topic and forward looking in the text to what is to be discussed) and several "Hyper-Themes" (ideas relating back to the Macro-Theme but also pointing forward to the content of the paragraph they start) (pp239-241), The researchers were able to show how these produced a strong sense of organisation that was rewarded by the teacher. In the other student's work, no clear Macro-Theme was established, making it difficult to develop a relevant series of Hyper-Themes and causing the writer to drift into information not explicitly shown to be relevant (pp243-244). This student's essay had been graded poorly. By examining top-rated writers' use of Theme, therefore, and analysing the linguistic metafunctions applied to it, it seems possible to find more linguistically precise ways to identify some characteristics of top-rated writing, with potential pedagogic application.

For my research, it was decided to retain the positional and functional specifications of Theme because they would give some insight into how the skilled writers were approaching each sentence ("point of departure"), making it relevant with regard to its content ("grounding") and its role ("orients"). However, the grammatical-functional delimitation was restrictive for the purposes of the study since many sentences included elements directly following the initial experiential element that were clearly involved in an "orienting" function. The sample below will illustrate this at sentence level, before further examples demonstrate how such elements operate within their contexts.

In sentences below, from the sample, the unmarked topical Theme would be the initial nominal groups (underlined):

- (1) Hamlet's delay **thus** shows us that the act of revenge is morally and emotionally complicated...
- (2) The biggest confining force **however** was his own fear of rejection ...
- (3) This **perhaps** proves that there is truth to the idea of the cinematic voyeur.
- (4) The screen, **therefore**, is equated with the window, with the blinds mimicking the curtains that previously rose before a movie started.
- (5) Gee **clearly** feels that the mix of these two personality types has sculpted the country we live in today.
- (6) Both views **then** held their value during the era.

The elements following these nominal groups, Adjuncts (in bold), orient the sentences in their contexts, either in a textual sense or, in the case of (3) and (5), with an interpersonal or evaluative orientation. Had these elements preceded the initial nominal groups (and apart from the **then**, any of them could), they would have been acknowledged as part of a multiple Theme structure. But analysing Theme, by its grammatical definition, would have meant overlooking such elements, which could still be considered part of the “point of departure” and plainly do orient the sentence in its context by controlling the direction of the argument and/or offering an evaluation. Ignoring such elements would have hidden linguistic strategies used by top-rated writers and impaired the purpose of the research, which was to seek out such features so that they may be taught to lesser-rated writers.

The question is not a simplistic one of expanding the Theme boundary to include post-topical Theme elements but examining the effect of the choice of the placement. With pre-topical Theme, the Adjuncts appear to have more impact. Compare hypothetical sentences (2'), (3'), (4') and (5') to those above:

- (2') **However**, the biggest confining force was his own fear of rejection ...
- (3') **Perhaps** this proves that there is truth to the idea of the cinematic voyeur.
- (4') **Therefore**, the screen, is equated with the window, with the blinds mimicking the curtains that previously rose before a movie started.
- (5') **Clearly** Gee feels that the mix of these two personality types has sculpted the country we live in today.

With pre-topical Theme, the Adjuncts vigorously pivot the text, (2') and (4'); or strongly foreground the writer's evaluative conclusion, (3') and (5'). When used as a post-topical Theme (as above), they more subtly manoeuvre the text (2), (4) or influence the reader's conclusions (3) and (5). Either way they orient the reader into the cognitive position the writer wishes the reader to occupy when decoding the remainder of the sentence, pursuing, or shifting, a line of argument, with or without an evaluation. This represents the more metaphorical interpretation of "orients" hinted at in the descriptor of Theme.

Systematically investigating the thematic placement of textual and interpersonal elements it became clear that in some cases the initial nominal group (or topical Theme) did not successfully perform an orienting role in the context. It may have grounded the clause experientially but it did not produce orientation within the context and thus did not perform the full function of a Theme as the element that both "grounds" and "orients" the clause. In these cases, other elements were necessary to fulfil the Theme function.

The following example demonstrates that when the initial experiential element does not serve a contingent textual role in the context, another textual element is essential to orient the clause. Consider the following paragraph:

*Despite this moral muddle, most critics have concluded that an Elizabethan audience would have watched the play with the assumption that Hamlet should have obeyed the ghost. The reasoning behind this is that had Hamlet acted immediately and killed Claudius, the seven other lives lost would have been saved. The question then would be the way that Hamlet carries out his duty.*

Strictly, the Theme of the final sentence is *The question*. This coheres with elements such as *muddle*, *concluded*, *assumption* and *reasoning* but without *then*, the paragraph would lack coherence, and the final impact would fail. Only by acknowledging the Adjunct, *then*, as part of Theme can the closing sentence of this paragraph be considered to be successfully located and oriented in its context. Its function is to indicate that the previous matter is closed. Thus, it is not the first experiential element but the second textual element that orients the clause in its context by alerting the reader to the fact that the *question* the writer is going on to discuss is not the *moral muddle* but is a new matter arising in the essay.

Even more interesting is the subtle play of the placement of Adjuncts in the following paragraph:

*What is so artistically noticeable about the film's treatment of voyeurism, however, is that it does not view it simply as a theme to be examined on the screen. Rather, in a masterly move, Hitchcock chooses to compare movie watching to voyeurism. Parallels are made throughout the film; for instance, the film's very first shot is of the blinds being drawn up, which is framed so as to fill the screen exactly. The screen, therefore, is equated with the window, with the blinds mimicking the curtains that previously rose before a movie started.*

Notice the shifting location of the Adjunct from post-topical Theme to pre-Topical and back again. All of these Adjuncts have a textual metafunction in controlling the argument direction; however, *Rather* has a strong interpersonal metafunction. It is placed initially, after a full stop. The other initial Adjunct, *for instance*, has a strong supporting role for the points made after *Rather*, but following a semi-colon, slightly reduces its impact. The two post-topical Theme Adjuncts are more subtle, first introducing a new idea and then establishing it. These interplays of placement and punctuation are remarkably effective and contributed to the quality of information gathered from the research for the benefit of improving less successful students' writing.

## Conclusion

There are two points that can be drawn from this paper. Firstly, and most basically, if Theme is, by specification, the element that both grounds and orients the clause within its context, then in addition to the experiential (grounding) metafunction, that element must ensure the clause coheres in its context (orients). However, in some cases, there may be a separate textual or interpersonal element, positioned either before or after the topical Theme that performs the orienting role. Those placed after the topical Theme need to be recognised as part of the thematic function of orienting as much as those placed before, which are identified as part of a multiple Theme construct. Secondly, and more fascinatingly, the placement of (and punctuation surrounding) other orienting elements may be crucial to understanding more sophisticated compositional strategies. This means that to expand Theme into a richer construct, recognising its compositional value, the boundary perhaps needs to be enlarged to include elements located after an initial experiential element, and the effect of placement choice investigated more fully. Theme could perhaps more accurately be described as the initial element, or *cluster of elements*, which both grounds and orients the clause in its context.

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## Appendix A

Key descriptors of top-rated writing:

1. Fluency, organisation and accuracy at the level of grammar, sentences and whole text
2. Logical, consistent and controlled reasoning emerging through writing
3. Sustained complexity of thought informing insightful/perceptive writing
4. Persuasion through evidence and linguistic devices
5. Flexibility and breadth of style to fulfil a variety of writing situations/conditions/audiences
6. Flair, creativity and originality in expression



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## Appendix B

**Examiners' criticisms:** some candidates ...

1. had difficulty moving beyond simple story re-telling, plot description or listing of examples from texts
2. presented “inelegantly expressed” ideas, “variable language control”, “a quality of expression that compromised the ability to communicate complex ideas”
3. failed to engage with the question or wording of the topic, failed to relate details to the question or lost sight of the main thrust
4. lacked structural direction in their writing, could not link ideas to form patterns

- and “should be aware of the importance of developing a coherently structured piece of prose”
5. students were “not confident with unpractised topics” and therefore “rehashed answers to the previous year’s questions” or “referred to previous years’ topics” to suit a “rote learned” response
  6. produced responses and language that were too “generic” or “over-generalised” with superficial understanding, simplistic observations and a lack of evidence of thought processing and development of ideas.
  7. did not demonstrate “personal engagement” and “consistent voice”.
  8. had difficulty with formal writing that used analysis and evaluation in building and sustaining an argument.

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# 23

## Creating gender distinctions: migrant teens' acquisition of sociolinguistic variation<sup>9</sup>

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### Introduction

How much social and linguistic information can older learners of a language acquire from the speakers around them? Our study investigates the patterns of variation in the speech of teenage migrants in Edinburgh and London, looking at the well-studied and well-understood (ing) variable in English. We have interviewed Polish teenagers and a comparable number of locally-born teenagers in each city, who we use as a benchmark for establishing the norms of variation the Polish kids have the most frequent exposure to. This paper focuses on the social variables of gender and style. We question to what extent Polish adolescent immigrants are acquiring the variable constraints of their local peer group in respect to gender and style. We then discuss how our findings on gender and style among native and non-native speakers relate to current ideas on indexing gender in sociolinguistics. We speculate that some social indexes are more readily assigned to variation than others, and we explain why we think gender constitutes one such index.

### Data collection

Fieldwork on this project took place at high schools in London and Edinburgh. Linguistic production data were collected from 16 Polish migrants living in Edinburgh and 21 Polish migrants living in London. Linguistic data were also collected from 21 Edinburgh-born and 24 London-born teenagers attending the same school as the Polish adolescents to provide a benchmark for the types of English to which these Polish adolescents are regularly exposed. Sociolinguistic interviews were carried out between all participants and a female local researcher. Speakers were also recorded performing a short reading task of 17 sentences that was designed to elicit a wide range of different phonological variables. Personal information and language attitudes were collected in a short questionnaire and a verbal guise test which required the teenagers to listen to short recordings of speakers with London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham,

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<sup>9</sup> We would like to thank the ESRC for funding this research (RES-000-22-3244). Authors' names are in alphabetical order.

Newcastle, Polish, RP and Scottish Standard English accents (see Clark and Schleeff forthcoming). The conversation and reading-task data were transcribed orthographically using ELAN (<http://www.lat-mpi.eu/tools/elan/>), resulting in a time-aligned corpus of around 100,000 words.

## Analysis

As a first step in our analysis, we explored the variable realisation of (ing) (with variation between [ɪŋ] and [ɪn] in unstressed syllables) in this corpus. We extracted all tokens of (ing) from the conversation and reading passage data (1833 tokens in Edinburgh and 1556 tokens in London) and coded these data for a range of different social and linguistic constraints often found to operate on (ing) variation in English<sup>10</sup>. We then subjected the data to a multivariate analysis to determine which social and linguistic factors constrain the realisation of (ing) among each of the two speaker groups in Edinburgh and London<sup>11</sup>.

## Results

In most English-speaking communities world-wide there is a common core of social and linguistic constraints on the distribution of the apical and velar variants of (ing) (Hazen 2006, Labov 2001). In respect to gender and style, this research has show that the velar variant is more frequent in formal than conversational style and that females are more likely to use the velar form than males. In both the London and Edinburgh locally-born teenagers we find only some of these constraints are significant (see Table 1). In neither city do we find the common gender pattern among the native speakers, such that the velar variant is probabilistically associated with female speakers and the apical variant with male speakers. Instead, in both London and Edinburgh, style is statistically significant among the native speakers.

London-born adolescents			Edinburgh-born adolescents		
	in	ing		in	ing
Female reading	16	84	Female reading	31	69
Female speaking	29	71	Female speaking	94	6
Male reading	18	82	Male reading	48	52
Male speaking	45	55	Male speaking	88	12

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<sup>10</sup> Predictor variables included preceding and following phonological context, grammatical category of the lexical item, number of syllables in the word, previous realization of the (ing) variable, lexical frequency, speech style, sex of speaker and the speakers' attitude towards the local Edinburgh accent (see Schleeff, Meyerhoff & Clark (forthcoming) for further details).

<sup>11</sup> Rbrul (Johnson 2008) was used to run a mixed-effect multiple regression analysis in which the individual speaker was also included as a random effect. Full details of this regression can be found in Schleeff, Meyerhoff & Clark (forthcoming).

Polish-born adolescents in London			Polish-born adolescents in Edinburgh		
Female reading	14	86	Female reading	20	80
Female speaking	32	68	Female speaking	40	60
Male reading	3	97	Male reading	65	35
Male speaking	17	83	Male speaking	71	29

**Table 1:** Percent distribution of variants of (ing) by gender and style in London and Edinburgh

Style is not significant among the non-native speakers. However, in London, the Polish teenagers have generated a statistically significant gender distinction, but one that reverses the typical pattern in native speakers. In Edinburgh too, we see a gender trend emerge. However, this trend is not significant. Instead, social network emerges as a significant factor. Gender and social network are not unrelated, and we would argue that what we see here are different facets of the same processes of translating variation into sociolinguistically meaningful patterns. Constraints seem to have been transformed among the L2 learners, i.e. new constraints on (ing) seem to have been adopted which are not apparent in (or not relevant to) the UK-born adolescents<sup>12</sup>. This leads us to our hypothesis. It seems that when social constraints start to emerge among our Polish-born teenagers, there is a tendency for them to be associated with more visible, transparent group categories close to the speakers' immediate surroundings, rather than more abstract social categories such as style.

We are observing something among the L2 speakers which seems to run counter to other assumptions about the indexical relationship between language and social attributes. Ochs (1992) and Eckert (2008) propose that the association of linguistic variants with social attributes and social groups, such as gender, is an indirect relationship, mediated by more direct indexicalities, such as stance or activity. Following their work, we might expect a casual stance or an activity like reading aloud to emerge first among the Polish teenagers, and only after such stances or activities have achieved some shared recognition, for characteristics such as gender or friendship network to be indexed. However, this does not seem to be the case as there is no evidence that they have acquired any stylistic constraints on (ing). How can we then explain the results on gender? Since it is not entirely clear what exactly our Polish teenagers know about the social

<sup>12</sup> Similar transformations have also been found in respect to linguistic constraints, e.g. grammatical category. A detailed discussion of this point can be found in Schlee, Meyerhoff & Clark (forthcoming).

meaning of (ing), its indexical potential and what their competence is in regards to indexing variations in style, we are left with speculations:<sup>13</sup>

- (1) Polish teenagers might generate gender or friendship network as a first-order index when trying to make sense of the sociolinguistic complexity of (ing).
- (2) Gender and network indices among migrants may emerge indirectly from a direct indexing of a style or stance based on stylistic stratification of (ing) in locally-born peers.
- (3) Our Polish teenagers do not replicate style as an expression of formality (as elicited in our interviews), but they may very well create other more contextualized styles (or persona styles, Eckert 2008: 456) that have escaped our analysis.

While (1) and (2) would require additional data collection, there is some evidence we can put forth in favour of (3). The verbal guise tests of eight British accents give us some speculative hints about what Polish-born teens know about the social meaning of variants and their ability to index variations in style. Clark and Schlee (forthcoming) show that they can perceive the social evaluation of extremes, and they seem to be doing this much better at the solidarity (rather than status) end, i.e. they are doing better at acquiring evaluations associated with attributes such as friendliness, coolness and solidarity rather than poshness and intelligence. If we were to tentatively extend this proposal to persona styles, we could argue that our Polish-born teenagers first build up competencies in perceiving styles that are linked to friendliness, coolness and solidarity, styles to which variants of (ing) may very well contribute and which may indirectly index other social categories. This is in line with the suggestion that for our teenagers more visible, transparent, concrete group categories associated with their immediate surroundings are acquired first. However, based on this line of interpretation, it is not style as such that is acquired later, but certain specific styles (especially those related to formality and status) are acquired later. If we are correct, then persona styles should emerge first that are associated with more visible group categories, e.g. friendship networks and gender, rather than more abstract categories. Thus, some styles may be acquired more easily, and indirect indexing may certainly be possible in respect to these styles. Confronted with a context

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<sup>13</sup> A detailed discussion of these points can be found in Meyerhoff & Schlee (under review).

that was set up to elicit formality style resulted in the natives producing exactly this style, indexed partly by variation of (ing), and ignoring other styles that (ing) variation may contribute to. The Polish teenagers could not do this, instead, their production of (ing) may have been influenced by very local persona styles about which we know too little.

## Conclusions

Including non-native speakers in variationist analyses presents sociolinguists with new challenges. We have to base our interpretations on these speakers' limits and potential and accept the possibility that some social meanings can be perceived by them, while other social meanings cannot be perceived or are reinterpreted. Future research must aim to find out more about the competence of non-native speakers in this respect. While more research must be conducted to gain a better understanding of what our Polish teenagers know about the social meaning of variables, we believe we have provided some initial evidence that when social constraints and social styles start to emerge there is a tendency for them to be associated with more visible, transparent group categories close to speakers' immediate surroundings no matter whether they are in the native input or not.

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# 24

## Spoken Artistic Discourse and its Global and Local Aspects

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### Introduction

Directors, actors, and other participants in artistic productions that have the task of forming a manuscript into an acoustic text, such as a theatre or a radio play production, have specific ways and routines for collaboratively developing an artistic piece. These ways and routines, which might be culture/scene specific depending on which culture/scene they belong to or identify with, show and take place in the interaction between the participants and consist of communicative activities, such as instructing, negotiating, and reformulating. Participants are mostly familiar with the ‘general’ practice in such productions, but due to various factors such as style, approach, personality, status and power of participants, the ‘specific’ practice needs to be negotiated, either individually or among the whole group. I examine how specific features can be identified, and how they appear in the work of individual directors. The features of the ‘specific’ practice of (spoken) artistic productions, depending on local norms, are the ‘local aspects’. The features of spoken artistic discourse that are independent from local norms would be the ‘global aspects’ in this context.



**Figure 1:** Conversation between director and actresses

The main issue in this contribution is: what are the specific features of artistic discourse? Or, looking at it from a slightly different angle, what are the specific features of a (spoken) artistic working process? How can we tell which features are culturally/scene/approach/style specific, and which ones are not? Spoken artistic discourse has features that are both independent from and dependent on local norms. These features are a rich area of research, and overlapping research areas, such as discourse at the work place, have received a lot of attention, but these features—and artistic discourse in general—is still a neglected research area. In artistic productions that have the task of forming a manuscript into an acoustic text, directors, actors and other participants have to work collaboratively. I investigated the directing-conversations through which the artistic process takes place—but how does one look at such complex artistic processes?

In order to investigate spoken artistic discourse one needs to analyse the interaction, which requires making recordings and transcriptions, and one needs to analyse the artistic text-development. I developed a method for analysing spoken artistic text productions (directing analysis) that combines spoken discourse analysis with the French literary approach of *critique génétique* or genetic criticism (Grésillon 2004; 1999), and applied and adapted these means of analysis to spoken artistic productions (Milde 2007a, 2007b). Spoken discourse analysis (and its many varied forms), which was originally inspired by Californian ethnomethodological conversation analysis and goes back to the research of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1978), among others, is a discipline, not a method of research, that helps analysing and investigating spoken communication (Blommaert 2005; Cameron 2001; Goffman 1996; Gülich & Kotschi 1995; Schiffrin 1994; Tannen 2007; Van Dijk 1997; among others). However, discourse analysis was developed for the analysis of everyday discourse, rather than artistic discourse, where different versions usually occur in the process of production (Milde 2007b). The aim of *critique génétique* is to look at the writing process of literature, in order to deconstruct the myth of the final text version (Grésillon 1999, 17). It therefore provides methodological tools for investigating the different versions produced in the process of literary production, but has so far been used on written, rather than spoken, texts. By combining spoken discourse analysis with *critique génétique*, I have been able to develop a method for studying *spoken artistic productions*.



**Figure 2:** Conversation between the director and other participants

What are the specific features of artistic discourse then? In the following I will first briefly present the aspects that are independent from local norms ('global'), and then turn to the aspects that are dependent on local norms ('local'). The latter are still work in progress, and I haven't fully explored that area yet.

### **Specific features of (spoken) artistic discourse**

In this section I will give a short overview of the features that I have identified for discourse in artistic productions, and how they appear in the work of individual directors. I will not discuss every feature in detail in this contribution as my central aim is, as mentioned above, to generally discuss what the specific features are. There are five specific features that are *independent* from local norms, and they fall into three different groups. The first two features belong to the first group:

#### **Unique features**

##### ***1) The aim/task to produce an artistic piece.***

This piece will either be a performance, such as a theatre play, or it will be an edited recording of a film or radio play which can be broadcast or shown somewhere.

##### ***2) The aim/task to exclusively work on the voice (and nonverbal aspects) of a character.***

The following transcription extracts are very simplified, and example 1 shows the English translation below the German, which is the original

language of the conversation. It is supposed to be read from left to right moving down like reading a musical score (cf. Ehlich & Rehbein 1976). Examples 1 and 2, shown below, show briefly the second feature (work on the voice and nonverbal aspects) in a context.

***Example 1 (from a conversation in a radio play production)***

A = Actress, D = Director (extract of a transcription in German, translated by author).

- 
- 1 A: ((als Figur sprechend)) und ER erzÄhlt ihr . dass er eine kleine  
((speaking as a character)) and he tells her . that he has a little
- 
- 2 A: TOCHter habe . SIE sagt . das fände sie REIzend .  
daughter . she says . she thinks it's lovely .
- 3 D: am ENde würde  
at the end I would
- 
- 4 A: ((privat gesprochen)) AH .  
((speaking privately)) oh
- 5 D: ich nich das . ER . sondern eher das erZÄHln beton: .  
not emphasize the . he . but rather the tells .
- 
- 6 D: weil es geht ja um die TOCHter . dann  
because it is about the daughter . then
- 

This extract shows how the director and the actress work on the voice (of the character) the actress is presenting. The actress makes a suggestion with her acting version, and the director gives her feedback. After that the actress will make a new suggestion based on the director's comments.

***Example 2 (from a conversation in a theatre play production)***

D = Director, A = Actress (extract of a transcription)

- 
- 1 D: so . You jUst have to wAtch yourself . (?) when you sAt there . agAIn. you
- 
- 2 D: sort of did thIS . yes it All looks a bit prEtty . an . it gets a bit prEtty . right'
- 3 A: dId i
- 

This short extract shows how the director and the actress work on the nonverbal aspects. D wasn't so happy with A's physical appearance in that scene and gives her feedback on that.

These first two features are essential and will only occur in artistic productions, regardless of their style or approach.

### **Necessary, but not unique features**

There is only one feature in this group.

#### ***3) The text production contains several reformulated text versions.***

This feature is also necessary for spoken artistic productions, but it is not a unique feature as it also occurs in non-artistic productions, such as in speech training for politicians, business people, etc.

The participants will produce an aesthetic text, either with or without a manuscript. The text-development is based on a turn-taking structure and consists of reformulations the director makes of the versions that the actor presents.

### **Common features, but neither unique nor necessary**

The fourth and fifth feature of spoken artistic discourse belong to the third group:

4) The production is based on a written literary text which is the basis for the working process (if a manuscript is used in the artistic process—and mostly it is).

5) The participants have to collaboratively solve the task of oralising a written artistic text (and realise it nonverbally) (if a manuscript is used in the artistic process—and mostly it is). The director mainly focuses on the oralisation process and the realisation of the nonverbal aspects (see example below).

The last two features are very common features in artistic productions, but they are neither unique nor necessary features.

The aspects that are *dependent* on local norms which appear to be ‘culture’ or ‘scene’ specific also show and take place in the interaction between the participants. I look at the work of individual directors in order to explore whether the same specific features occur in the work of different directors who work in a similar way. It’s a complex area, and I will only be able to mention a few examples at this point, which need closer investigation. One example—which I am still exploring at the moment— would be the phenomenon of how ‘notes’ are given after a performance in theatres. ‘To give notes’ means to give feedback to the relevant participants about how the performance was perceived. There are different practices (regarding

notes and other aspects) in different countries and also different practices between different types of theatres within the same national boundaries. 'Notes' for the actors from a director's assistant who has got the *Abendspielleitung* ('director for the evening') at a theatre (that is of a certain size and financial means) in Germany might be similar in a Danish theatre of a comparable size, but might be different in the UK or in Australia. But the feedback culture for performers might be the same in all those places when looking at an internationally working theatre company that exports its feedback culture along with its overall structure and style.

## Conclusion

It has been shown that there are specific features of discourse which only occur in the context of artistic productions, and a summarised overview has been provided on how artistic discourse has been defined and approached. It is surprising that discourse in the arts contexts is still a neglected area, despite the many studies on discourse in overlapping areas, such as discourse in the workplace, education, and intercultural communication. Thousands of people work in the arts and many teachers, pupils and students are involved in drama in schools and make use of elements of artistic discourse every week, even if it's within the educational framework. It is important that the arts are included in the discussion about discourse practices and analysis.

## Transcription conventions

Standard orthography is generally used here for the transcriptions with the following exceptions:

- capital letters are not used. Capital letters are only used for demonstrating an emphasis in pronunciation;
- punctuation marks do not have their normal meaning, but are used as diacritic symbols;
- special features in articulation are demonstrated through untypical orthography.

((as a figure)) **double parentheses** present comments for the following text.

agAIn **capital letters in utterance element** indicate emphasis.

... **full stops** mean a pause (number of dots indicates approximate length of the pause).

wa:s **colon** stretches previous sound.

(?) **parentheses** with question mark indicate elements that are difficult or impossible to understand.

.....  
Hier ist ... **utterance elements written underneath in the system** are spoken at the  
.....  
aber same time

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# 25

## The Role of Collaborative Learning in Improving the EFL Students' Reading Comprehension

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### Introduction

It is commonly assumed that collaborative learning is beneficial for students. There is a great deal of research evidence to support this assumption in different parts of the world particularly in the West. But, little research has been carried out in Iran. This research investigated the extent to which collaborative learning in the Iranian EFL setting had an influence on the reading comprehension ability of university students majoring in English.

The study addressed three questions:

1. Does collaborative reading lead to greater comprehension of a text than private reading?

If so:

2. What strategies are used by the students during collaborative learning, and
3. In what ways might they contribute to the higher level of comprehension?

The first two questions can be answered empirically, and this was the primary aim of the study. The third is more speculative, and is intended to lead to proposals for further, more narrowly focussed research in the field.

### Method

A quasi-experimental design was used to answer the first research question. The major part of the research lasted about seven weeks. In the first week the participants were pre-tested and divided into two homogeneous classes based on their reading comprehension ability. Each class comprised 18 students all of whom were second year students studying at the Islamic Azad University of Malayer, Iran. The pre-test, selected from an actual TOEFL test (2004), included four reading comprehension passages, each of which had ten comprehension questions. In the second week the subjects were taught four reading comprehension strategies adapted from Collaborative Strategic Reading (Klingner & Vaughn 1998). The strategies

included Preview, Click and Clunk, Get the gist, and Wrap-up. The students were expected to make use of these strategies while they were reading the texts collaboratively. The intervention was commenced in the third week. It consisted of comprehension lessons based around four texts. In order to minimise the effect of text type on the outcomes, the four texts selected were all popular journalistic essays of equal length. They were chosen to represent two kinds of difficulty: two were rated by the researchers as conceptually difficult and linguistically easy, and two were rated as conceptually easy and linguistically difficult. These initial ratings were tested and confirmed in a pilot study with Iranian university students and with experienced EFL teachers.

The subjects in each class were involved in reading the two types of texts for four sessions. Each class read two of the texts collaboratively in small groups and the other two privately. Since the focus of the research was on the nature and quality of the students' interaction, the teacher's intervention was carefully limited to introducing the text to the students both orally and in written form. The purpose of this introduction was to provide the students with the relevant background information about the reading passage. The teacher's intervention was scripted and followed precisely by both collaborative and private readers. It should be noted that the students in both classes were allowed to use one type of dictionary, i.e. *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. There were four to five students in each group. One of them was allocated the role of the leader on the basis of the pre-test scores. The leader's main responsibility was to make sure that everybody was actively involved in group interactions. Another student took the role of the recorder. During the whole class wrap-up, this student reported to the class the main idea(s) of the paragraphs the group had learned. The other members of the group were just collaborators.

## Procedures

The students in the collaborative reading class read the text in stages. After the teacher's introductory explanation, they were asked to listen to the tape recorded by a native speaker of English to become familiar with the correct pronunciation of the words. Then they read the text paragraph by paragraph while applying the first three collaborative reading strategies mentioned above. At the end of each paragraph they were supposed to achieve consensus on what the main idea(s) were. When they finished the whole text, they were engaged in whole-class discussion. In this stage all groups shared their understanding of the text with the rest of the class. The teacher's role was to chair the discussion with minimal intervention.

After reading the text the subjects were asked to answer in writing ten comprehension questions. The comprehension questions comprised 4 items of vocabulary knowledge, one item of grammatical knowledge, and 5 items related to textual concepts. Apart from varying the method of reading (private or group), exactly the same procedures were followed in each class, and the teacher's interventions were scripted to ensure that they were identical in all cases.

### Qualitative data

Qualitative methods were employed to answer the second question. Group interactions during collaborative reading were tape recorded (two groups in each session) and transcribed to identify the processes of collaborative reading. In the seventh week of the study ten participants selected at random from the two classes in the study were interviewed concerning their feelings and attitudes towards the two modes of reading.

In summary, the data consisted of: (1) the scores of the comprehension measure, (2) the transcriptions of the student's interactions in small groups, and (3) the transcriptions of recorded interviews.

### Data Analysis and Results

With respect to the quantitative data the comprehension test scores were compared across reading mode using an independent-samples t-test. Collaborative reading resulted in consistently higher scores than private reading, for all four texts. The statistical evidence provided below reveals that the difference was significant in three of the texts.

VAR00002		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR00001	1.00	18	6.0139	1.77497	.41837
	2.00	18	3.8750	1.81345	.42743

**Table 1:** Independent samples t-test for Test 1 (Group Statistics)

An independent-samples t-test was carried out to compare the reading comprehension scores on text 1 for the two classes involved in the study. There was a statistically significant difference in scores for class 1 ( $M = 6.01$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ) and class 2 ( $M = 3.87$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ), ( $sig. = .001$ )

VAR00002		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR00001	1.00	18	5.3750	2.28043	.53750
	2.00	18	7.2500	1.82507	.43017

**Table 2:** Independent samples t-test for Test 2 (Group Statistics)

An independent-samples t-test was carried out to compare the reading comprehension scores on text 2 for the two classes involved in the study. There was a statistically significant difference in scores for class 1 ( $M = 5.37$ ,  $SD = 2.28$ ) and class 2 ( $M = 7.25$ ,  $SD = 1.82$ ), ( $sig. \dots 01$ )

VAR00002		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR00001	1.00	18	5.8472	2.39506	.56452
	2.00	18	6.4028	2.17293	.51216

**Table 3:** Independent samples t-test for Test 3 (Group Statistics)

An independent-samples t-test was carried out to compare the reading comprehension scores on text 3 for the two classes involved in the study. There was a difference between the means of the two classes as follows, but this difference was not statistically significant. Class 1 ( $M = 5.84$ ,  $SD = 2.39$ ) and class 2 ( $M = 6.40$ ,  $SD = 2.17$ ), ( $sig. \dots .47$ )

VAR00002		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR00001	1.00	18	7.1250	1.58404	.37336
	2.00	18	4.1111	2.42569	.57174

**Table 4:** Independent samples t-test for Test 4 (Group Statistics)

An independent-samples t-test was carried out to compare the reading comprehension scores on text 4 for the two classes involved in the study. There was a statistically significant difference in scores for class 1 ( $M = 7.12$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ ) and class 2 ( $M = 4.11$ ,  $SD = 2.42$ ), ( $sig. \dots .000$ )

With regard to the qualitative data the transcripts of the students' collaborative interactions were analysed carefully and it was revealed that students were engaged in various types of processes in their attempt to comprehend the texts. There was a preliminary labelling of the students'

utterances. Then, the two researchers discussed and modified the labels and eventually consolidated them into five major categories as follows: brainstorming, summarising, paraphrasing, using meta-linguistic utterances and using interaction management utterances. Other minor processes were also identified such as positive/ negative claim to understand, eliciting confirmation, and confirming. It should be noted that the utterances made in Farsi are translated into English and italicised in the following data.

### **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming was manifested in a number of ways. First, a student made an initial text interpreting utterance (TIU, initial). Then, other students made other types of text interpreting utterances such as convergent expanding text interpreting utterance, confirming text interpreting utterance, and divergent text interpreting utterance. Sometimes text interpreting utterances included utterances which asked for explanation, utterances explaining something and utterances in the form of questions and answers. Example:

#### **Transcript 3.2, Paragraph 5**

- 3.2. A: He wants to emphasize the colour of white here...unfortunately, he forgets that crayon. TIU (initial)  
3.2. C: The most important colour for painting on a brown paper is white. TIU (convergent, expanding)  
3.2. B: Yes, because this is very visible. TIU (convergent, expanding)  
3.2. C: So what it wants to show? TIU (asking for explanation)  
3.2. B: It wants to show the importance of white colour on brown paper. TIU (explaining)

### **Summarising**

In most cases, the groups involved in the collaborative reading while applying the 'get the gist' strategy attempted to summarise the texts paragraph by paragraph and it was the recorder's duty to make a written record of the summary of the paragraphs already agreed by all members of the group. The summary was supposed to include the main idea(s) of the paragraphs. Example:

Transcript 1.1, Paragraph (4)

1.1. B: [probably to the reporter] *Write the main idea in this way:*

The children from middle classes are more independent than the children from rich families.

## Paraphrasing

In their attempts to interpret the texts, the students sometimes resorted to paraphrasing which took the form of either rephrasing the ideas presented by other students or pure paraphrasing of the original sentences contained in the text. Example:

### Transcript 2.1, Paragraph (3)

2.1. A: *In spite of this, nine days after the first burglary she suffered from the second burglary.*

2.1. B: *It means that the second burglary happened nine days after the first.*

## Meta-linguistic Utterances

One noticeable phenomenon observed in the students' interactions was the use of meta-linguistic utterances to a great extent, which included activities such as asking for the meaning of unknown vocabulary items, providing definition from dictionary or by participant, asking about the word's part of speech, etc. This phenomenon discloses the fact that students draw on each other's linguistic knowledge to comprehend the texts. Example:

### Transcript 1.1, Paragraph (3)

1.1. C: *What does 'rely on' mean?*

1.1. B: /tekye kardan/ [Farsi equivalent]

1.1. A: *Inspire means?*

1.1. B: *It is a verb...*

1.1. B: *It means encourage.*

1.1. A: *Monarchy means?*

1.1. B: /saltanati/ [Farsi equivalent]

1.1. C: *Their (line 5) refers to what?*

1.1. B: *"Their" refers to multimillionaires.*

## Interaction Management Utterances

As mentioned before, each group had a leader, a recorder (or reporter) and two or more collaborators. To play their roles appropriately, every student had to make use of certain interaction management utterances. The leader of the group was supposed to be the most active person in this respect. Example:

### Transcript 4.2, Paragraph (5)

4.2. B: [to the others] *Read to this point.*

4.2. C: *Let's read to the end.*

4.2. C: *Forget about the details.*

4.2. B: *Translate the last part.*

4.2 A: [probably to the reporter] *Read to us what you have written.*

### Other Utterance Types

Most of the transcripts contained utterances with other communicative functions such as 'positive/negative claim to understand', 'eliciting confirmation' and 'confirming'. These, however, were fairly infrequent, and appeared to play little if any part in students' developing understanding of the text. Example:

#### Transcript 1.2, Paragraph (1)

1.2. B: Is it right? (Eliciting confirmation)

1.2. A: Yes, that's it. It is correct. (Confirming)

### The interview data

The recorded interviews held in Farsi were transcribed verbatim and analysed. In the analysis process attempts were made to identify and group together the co-occurring and similar statements under some general themes. Eventually eight themes emerged from the interviews, as shown below. The first two were dominant themes; a large majority of the interviewees raised them in one way or another. The others were less commonly mentioned, and the last three were raised by only a few of the interviewees (although they are clearly of interest to the research).

These themes represent an initial attempt to answer research question 3 ("In what ways might the strategies used contribute to the higher level of comprehension?"). Given that they were specifically mentioned as positive aspects of the collaborative (by contrast with the private) reading, it is reasonable to hypothesise that they contributed in some way, directly or indirectly, to the processes by which the students achieved improved comprehension.

### Affective Domain

Almost all of the interviewees stated that collaborative reading provided them with an enjoyable and relaxed learning environment thus leading to the removal of affective filters. To quote a few of many such comments:

"In collaborative reading students' anxiety is reduced and students develop more self-confidence".

"In my view collaborative reading is a good idea because it decreases students' stress and anxiety and motivates the students as well".

"Collaborative learning helps the students be more sociable".

“Working in a group creates some sort of emotional and intimate relationship among the members which can be interesting”.

### **Access to multiple perspectives**

A large number of the students acknowledged that through collaborative reading they could have access to multiple perspectives, which in turn made learning more effective for them. For instance:

“We shared our understanding of the text and thus we had a better comprehension. Sometimes, when I compared my interpretation with my peers’ interpretations, I came to the conclusion that mine was wrong”.

“One advantage of collaborative reading is that you can rely on your better peers when you don’t understand the meaning of a particular sentence, for example. Since different people read the text from different perspectives, less able students may sometimes help the others”.

“In wrap-up stage groups could refine their understanding of the text by listening to other groups”.

We read the paragraph collectively and had different interpretations of it. Then, we discussed those interpretations to reach a consensus on whose interpretation was correct. As a result, sometimes I had to revise my original interpretation”.

### **The social interaction**

A few of the students believed that the mere social interaction available in collaborative reading made learning fun for them:

“It was fun to read the text collaboratively and due to this the quality of learning was also better”.

“In collaborative reading a pleasant learning environment is created”.

“Collaborative reading is much better because a feeling of cooperation exists among the group members”.

### **Efficiency**

Some students stressed on the efficiency of collaborative reading especially with regard to saving time and energy. Comments included:

“It took me longer to read a text privately. But we managed to save time considerably while we were reading a text collaboratively

“When we read and discuss the text together, every member of the group expresses his/her opinion and we manage to get the concepts more easily and quickly. But, when we read privately, we cannot detect our mistakes. And certainly in collaborative reading if we commit a mistake, our collaborators can correct it”.

“In collaborative reading it is more probable to learn the exact meaning of words as they have been used in context than private reading”.

“Collaborative reading helps students retain the materials longer”.



## **Linguistic development**

Some interviewees believed that collaborative reading could help develop their vocabulary knowledge and reinforce other language skills:

“Collaborative reading also develops other language skills particularly listening and speaking”.

“Sometimes when we didn’t know the meaning of some words and we were short of time, we relied on each other’s vocabulary knowledge”.

“Through collaborative reading we also helped each other with understanding the language of the text, especially the complex sentences”.

## **Motivation**

A few of the students contended that they are better motivated when they read the English texts collaboratively. One student said, “Collaborative reading can act as a trigger for those mostly in need of a good stimulus for studying”.

## **Development of team work skills**

Another theme emerged from the interviews was the development of team work skills. For example, one student maintained, “When you are in a group, you learn team work and collaborating with others”.

## **Reservations**

Despite the fact that almost all of the interviewees expressed a positive attitude towards collaborative reading, some of them pointed out some of the limitations they had observed in their experience of collaborative reading. For example, some interviewees felt they needed more time for reading strategy training and more practice in applying the strategies. A few of them also pointed out that they could have more concentration on text concepts during their private reading.

## **Implications and Limitations of the study**

This study provides evidence that collaborative learning can be effectively implemented in a reading comprehension class with Iranian university students who are majoring in English as a foreign language. It also gives evidence to the potential impact collaborative learning can have on students’ development of linguistic and world knowledge. The linguistic knowledge in this research is interpreted in terms of vocabulary knowledge and knowledge of the grammatical structures. The world knowledge is interpreted in terms of the concepts, and overall purpose or meaning contained in the texts. However, it should be noted that this study was not precisely the test of collaborative learning format or fully strictly defined

collaborative learning. Basically, this research *did* investigate one of the major principles of collaborative learning, i.e. students' interaction.

Despite significant gains obtained by collaborative readers, this study had some limitations. Firstly, the participants were restricted to two classes comprising 36 university students. With such a small sample of students it is difficult to generalize the results to other populations. Future studies on more student participants implementing collaborative reading in more classes are recommended in order to generate more evidence on the effects of collaborative reading. Secondly, students received direct instruction on specific reading comprehension strategies for only two sessions. As some of the students noted in the interviews, they needed more time for strategy training. Thirdly, the students experienced collaborative reading for only two sessions, which cannot be considered enough as the students need more practice implementing the reading comprehension strategies.

## Discussion and Conclusions

The results of this study suggest that students reading collaboratively tend to outperform the students reading privately. The effects of collaborative reading appear to be salient in enhancing the reading comprehension ability of Iranian EFL university students. These findings corroborate those of Chang (1995) that the average scores of students in cooperative learning were about two points higher than those students in a traditional teacher-oriented learning in English reading class. Why should this be so? The gains of the collaborative readers can be grouped under the following categories: (1) the increase of student talk in the collaborative reading context; (2) the supportive and communicative learning available in collaborative reading context; and (3) the presence of interactive processes in the collaborative reading context naturally stimulating the students' cognitive, linguistic, and social abilities.

In collaborative learning, the students were able to maximize the level of their peer interactions, which was an essential feature of learning when the learners were in the action of interacting with people in their environment and in cooperation with their peers (Vygotsky 1978). The students in collaborative reading groups had more opportunities to interact with their peers and, therefore, had more chances to be corrected by their peers whenever they made mistakes. Collaborative reading created natural, interactive contexts in which students were engaged in interactive processes such as brainstorming, listening to one another, asking questions, eliciting confirmation, asking for explanation, clarifying issues, collective

summarising of paragraphs, and collective paraphrasing of the utterances. Such frequent interaction among students increased the amount of student talk and student participation in the classroom, which in turn played a role in developing the students' world and linguistic knowledge. The private readers, on the other hand, were deprived of these interactive processes.

In the collaborative reading class students had opportunities to receive feedback and modelling from their peers. According to Vygotsky (1978), an essential feature of learning is that it awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are able to operate only when the learner is in the action of interacting with people in his or her environment and in collaboration with his or her peers. Therefore, when it comes to collaborative reading comprehension, the authenticity of the environment and the affinity between the participants are essential elements to make the learner feel part of this environment. These elements were absent in private reading. Much of the value of collaborative reading, in effect, lay in the way that group activities encouraged students to engage in such high level cognitive skills as analysing, explaining, synthesizing, and elaborating.

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## Assessment of second language readers in Norwegian lower secondary school – three shortcomings

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### Introduction

National reading tests in Norwegian are mandatory for all students in fifth, eighth and ninth grade. They are meant to be part of a comprehensive assessment system, alongside a range of other methods for evaluating students. This system is designed to secure accountability, since several OECD reports have pointed to the lack of structured assessments in Norwegian schools. This is believed to be one of the reasons for Norwegian students' relatively low scores on international educational tests like PIRLS and PISA. The concept of accountability is well known in educational contexts outside of Norway, and the Norwegian test and assessment system is inspired by countries like the US, UK and Canada. However, educational researchers, especially in the United States, are quite critical as to how the huge emphasis on the concept of accountability has affected the school system (eg. Hillocks 2002; Murphy 2008; Willis 2008). Many school researchers report on negative washback effects of the tests. Is there reason to be reserved towards the introduction of this system in Norwegian schools? In my PhD research project, I examine the ways in which tests and assessments affect teaching practices in Norwegian lower secondary school, mainly from the teachers' point of view.

Norway has a new curriculum in Norwegian for L2 students since 2006. Earlier the curriculum was labelled "Norwegian as a second language" (L2 curriculum), now it is called "Basic Norwegian for students with a minority background" (Basic Norwegian curriculum). While it was possible to sit for final exams based on the L2 curriculum, the new curriculum is a transitional curriculum, and in order to get a school diploma, the students must transfer to the regular Norwegian curriculum. After 2006, the schools or the local councils can also choose whether they want to use the Basic Norwegian curriculum, or make adjustments in the ordinary curriculum to attend to the L2 students' special needs for language learning. Partially as a result of this, Norwegian L2 students with only a short period of Norwegian training are exposed to the same tests as the L1 students, and decisions about the teaching to be offered to the individual student is often

based on these tests. The teachers have only one tool that is specially designed to assess L2 language acquisition, and that is a self assessment form based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

An essential question connected to L2 reading assessments is whether the instruments used assess reading ability, or language skills. Through interviews with teachers in grade 8 in three different lower secondary schools, I aim to find out what the teachers think the results from reading tests, as well as the self assessment tool, can tell them about their L2 students' reading abilities, and what role the assessment system plays in their work with this particular group of students.

### **Reading in a second language**

Compared to the vast amount of second language research in general, the research on second language reading is rather limited. One reason for this might be, as many researchers have pointed out, that it is a much more complex task to assess second language reading than assessing first language reading. Charles Alderson points to this, as he says:

Since the validity of a reading test might be conceptualized to depend in part on whether it taps first- or second- language ability, it is important to know what variables allow or inhibit such transfer. (Alderson 2000: 39)

Underestimating the complexity of the assessment of second language reading might have negative consequences, as assessment and testing may fail to give adequate information to inform instructional decisions. Jim Cummins highlights the negative aspects of testing second language skills with tests designed for measuring first language skills, and claims such testing often "provides largely meaningless and potentially harmful data" (2000: 150). He also points out some problems related to the interpretation of test results. Immigrant students' low scores on PISA tests in mathematics and reading have lead to the interpretation that:

Inadequate proficiency in the school language and academic underachievement are partially caused by insufficient opportunity to learn the language as a result of speaking a minority language at home (Cummins 2008: 495).

Cummins claims that by ignoring the multiple factors that mediate the relationship between students' language use at home and their academic achievement, researchers, politicians and practitioners have interpreted it as a causal relationship.

## Methods

The findings I will report on here are from individual interviews with 16 grade 8 teachers in three schools located in the east of Norway. Two of the schools (school A and B) are located in a relatively rural area, quite typical of many areas in Norway, with a fairly small immigrant population. In the two schools, about 10 percent of the students have Norwegian as their second language. The third school (school C) is located in the most central region of Norway, the Oslo- region. This school has a student population in which 40% have an immigrant background, which reflects the average percentage of immigrant students in the area. All three schools have between 300 and 400 students, which is a fairly regular size for Norwegian lower secondary schools.

### Three schools – and assessment of second language readers

At all the three schools the teachers I have interviewed believe formative assessment or testing of second language reading is necessary, and several describes their difficulties with determining whether their L2 students have sufficient skills in reading. An even more pressing issue though seems to be that when students read poorly, the teachers are not able to tell if they have a language problem or a reading problem. And if they believe it to be a language problem, they are not able to describe it, partially because they haven't got the tools to assess or diagnose the problem. However, the problem of assessing L2 reading takes a somewhat different shape in the three schools.

#### *School A*

In the local council where school A is located, another school is responsible for giving new immigrant teenagers sufficient language skills, which according to the Basic Norwegian Curriculum is level B2 in the CEFR. This means that most of the minority language students that start in school A, are supposed to be at this proficiency level in Norwegian already, and as such should have few linguistic problems when reading grade 8 texts. Nonetheless, the majority of these students score well below average on the national reading tests. The teachers tend to think of this as sad though natural, and pay more attention to the L2 students that score above average.

School A uses quite a lot of tests of the students reading abilities. Especially the readers with the poorest test results, many L2 students were among these, were put through a lot of tests. The Norwegian language teachers started the school year, by assessing the students with a test that is supposed to measure general reading comprehension, *Kartleggeren* ("the

screeners”). The students who received low scores on this test got a new test that is supposed to measure reading speed as well as reading comprehension, “Carlstens reading test”. Students who got low scores on this test as well, got a reading test that measures word decoding skills and another test measuring sentence decoding skills, before they joined the rest of the class in doing a preparation test for the National reading test, which they all did in September. Ultimately, the idea was that the lowest scoring students should be put through a reading course. Partially because none of these tests makes sense if students don’t understand the language they are meant to decode, I asked the teachers if they believed that they had the assessment tools they needed to assess all the different students. At this point the teachers said that they believed they had. Later in one of the interviews though, I focused explicitly on the L2- students:

**Interviewer:** If we return to the second language students (...) for example, do you think that you have the assessment tools that you need to assess them? To find out where (...) what their problem is?

**Teacher:** Well the *one* we have / that assessment of Norwegian as a foreign language/ well/ that’s about/ I think/ it is mostly unqualified guesswork. I wish we had something that was more accurate. That wasn’t based on unqualified guesswork. Because you can easily/ yeah/ overrate or underrate the students, you know. And/ and I don’t think that it is always evident in these questions what it is that they’re actually supposed to answer to. So I am not satisfied with it.

The teacher points to the only assessment tool she had access to that was designed to assess Norwegian as a second language. Strangely, she does not even mention all the tests that the L2 students take together with the rest of the students. I think there is an explanation for this that I will return to later.

### ***School B***

In school B, some of the L2 students are taught according to the Basic Norwegian Curriculum and some of them are considered to have Norwegian skills that are sufficient for instruction according to the ordinary Norwegian curriculum.

The school mainly focuses on two tests in addition to the National test. Both of them are also in use in school A, “Kartleggeren” and “Carlstens reading test”. Most of the teachers in school B are not sure whether or not the students who are taught according to the Basic Norwegian curriculum take these reading tests. This is partially because they are not absolutely certain which of the minority background students follow this curriculum. When I talked with the teacher who teaches the L2 students in the Basic



Norwegian curriculum, she told me that there are some difficulties in deciding when the students have sufficient skills to be transferred to the regular Norwegian curriculum. Some of the criteria for being transferred exceed what average students in eighth grade can manage, she believes. She also thinks it can be difficult to decide what the criteria imply:

**Interviewer:** Do you think it is easy to understand what the criteria imply? (.) / Or do you sometimes think there can be doubt?

**Teacher:** Well/ There are some interpretations behind some of it/ a bit like/ to what extent do they have to fulfil before you can tick off on the list/ because there are some adjustments/ one has to use some subjective judgement I think  
[...]

**Interviewer:** So who is doing the interpretations of this assessment tool together with you?

**Teacher:** That would mainly be myself ((laughter))

As we can see, the teacher is quite alone in interpreting the assessment tool. Much like most of the other Basic Norwegian teachers, she has not had any training in using the assessment tool, she is barely familiar with the CEFR on which the tool is based, and in addition to this, she has no formal qualifications for teaching an L2.

### *School C*

In school C, there seems to be a great deal of disagreement among the teachers as to how they should address issues regarding assessment of Norwegian L2 as well as issues connected to instruction of L2 reading. Most of the teachers seem to agree that quite a lot of the L2 students are good readers, even some that have poor results on the National reading test. They base this belief partially on the fact that these students have good results on the National English (as a foreign language) test, which also mainly assesses reading. Even though they do not explicitly say so, they seem to interpret the poor reading result in Norwegian as a language issue rather than a reading issue. The teachers also have thoughts on why some of the L2 students seem to have poor reading skills. One teacher that teaches maths and natural science mentions the lack of vocabulary skills that some students seem to have. His knowledge of this does not come from the reading tests, but from the tests in natural science, where the students fail to answer what they are asked about. Generally, most of the teachers do not point to the reading tests that the students have taken when they talk about their reading skills. It is mostly informal assessments that inform the decisions the teachers make about the reading instruction to be given the individual student. Most of the teachers point out that the tests are mainly documentation of the students' reading skills, and there seem to be

scepticism among the majority of the teachers as to the usefulness of the test system. As one of the teachers expresses it:

And the experience I have is, I believe, that the schools don't attend to it in the way they are supposed to/ the forms are put in a drawer/ and they are not attended to any further/ I think this is the biggest problem in Norwegian schools today/ it is that "And then what?"/ We do the test/ the results are reported at local council level, county level, national level/ some local councils are denounced, some are praised up to the hilt: "Oh, they have done well!"/ and then what?/ We don't have a plan of action

Even though this frustration is shared by many, there are teachers that put a lot of trust in the tests. This is perhaps especially true for the youngest teachers. In school C, the youngest teachers are also the teachers with least articulated knowledge about L2 reading. One of the youngest teachers teaches Norwegian both in her regular class, and in groups with different forms of difficulties with reading and writing. Her explanation as to why some of the L2 students get poor reading test result is somewhat off target:

[...] in my experience they often/ for example/ do not speak Norwegian at home/ and that/ in a way/ you know/ they don't get any better when they in addition to everything don't use the language very much/ some only use Norwegian when they are with their friends or when they are at school and then the use will be limited/ but that being said/ most of them I believe also use Norwegian at home/ so it is only in the most extreme/ or/ I don't necessarily believe that there are many that do not speak Norwegian at home [...]

### **Three shortcomings**

The reading tests in Norway are really designed to assess L1 reading, but due to the new curriculum and due to the fact that the teachers don't have access to other tests, the reading tests are also used to assess L2 reading. Besides, the new system of testing is actually meant to provide information about the level of proficiency of all the students. In the information the schools get about the national tests, it is clearly stated that the fact that students receive some kind of special Norwegian training does not alone give grounds for exemption from the test. However, as school A serves as an example of, the teachers often treat the test results from the L2 reading differently than they would treat the L1 reading test result. In school A, low scores on the L2 students reading tests were seen as natural. One reason for this might be that the teachers really consider these students in relation to another frame of reference, namely, more or less explicitly, the curriculum from before 2006. One might ask why the teachers would do so when we have had the new curriculum for four years. I believe it is because even though the curriculum has been developed, the teachers' knowledge of L2

acquisition has not. When we got a new curriculum for the L2 students, it was mainly because the Norwegian training offered to many of the L2 students was inadequate. Some received instruction well below their achievement level, some stayed in the L2- classes for too long, some were taught by teachers without any formal qualifications, and a great deal of the students were underachievers in many school subjects. Hence we needed to change this situation. We therefore got a new curriculum. Since this was a transitional curriculum, a self assessment tool to assess the language proficiency of the students was also developed. Even though the shortcomings in the assessment (and ultimately instruction) of the L2 students are interwoven, I will formulate them as three different shortcomings:

The first shortcoming is connected to the fact that the change of curriculum does not solve the main problem it is designed to solve. None of the teachers I spoke to have any formal qualification for teaching a second language. Many of them did not know that the term ‘second language’ existed outside of the curriculum that we left four years ago, so when I asked them about students with Norwegian as a second language some teachers said that “it isn’t called that any more”. The CEFR is barely familiar to any of the teachers, and the concept of self assessment that the CEFR comprises is new to most of the teachers. It is therefore difficult for the teachers to interpret the criteria that they are supposed to help the students assess. In school A and B, as in many rural schools in Norway, there are rather few L2 students. Because of this, there is at the most one teacher in each team that teaches Norwegian to the L2 students. This means that the teachers are alone in interpreting the criteria, and in deciding how to use the tool and when the L2 students have sufficient language skills to transfer to the ordinary curriculum. When this teacher doesn’t have any training in teaching a second language, no training in interpreting the criteria from the CEFR, and ultimately little knowledge about L2 acquisition, there is really no reason to expect the new curriculum to change the situation.

The second shortcoming is the confusion related to the guidelines of the Basic Norwegian Curriculum and the fact that it is voluntary for schools and local councils to use it. Since it is voluntary, many schools and local councils choose not to use it. It is fair to believe that in many local councils this will be a question of economy. As I believe we can see in the example in school C, the lack of a clear standard can sometimes lead to confusion as to how the L2 students should be taught. The teachers report that they

desire such a standard. Since the responsibility for the L2 instruction is spread out on many teachers with different views on L2 acquisition, and they don't have any common guidelines, the result might be that the overall L2 instruction lacks structure. There also seems to be some confusion in some schools as to which students are taught according to this curriculum and which are not.

The third shortcoming is that which is directly linked to the reading test system. As we have seen, the new test system is meant to measure the proficiency level of each student, as well as giving the teacher information as to what steps should be taken to accommodate the students' reading. The L2 students are therefore taking the tests together with the rest of the students, but as we have seen, some teachers do not question the background for the low L2 test results, even though the results some times are used to inform instructional decisions. In school A, this leads to the fact that L2 students are taught reading in groups with students with general learning disabilities and different forms of special needs. Even teachers that do question the background for the test results may fail to gain sufficient information from the test. As Cummins (2008) points out, ignoring factors connected to the students' academic achievement (reading in this context) often leads to the wrong interpretation of test results. In school C, one of the teachers explained poor reading results by pointing to students not speaking Norwegian at home. If this is a message she passes on to her students, I would say that her lack of knowledge is potentially harmful. However, I do not believe the teacher can be blamed for this. The way I see it, her statement is a result of the lack of attention that L2 learning and assessment gets in the Norwegian school system. The fact that most of L2 students with limited Norwegian training are tested only with tests designed for L1 is a sign of this lack of attention.

## **Conclusion**

I have suggested that although the new L2 curriculum together with the new test system in Norway is meant to secure accountability for the L2 students, we so far fail to reach this goal. I have mainly been focusing on three shortcomings that are related to each other. Many schools in Norway lack teachers with formal qualifications in L2 acquisition and even knowledge of L2 in general. The introduction of a new curriculum and an assessment tool that really demand such knowledge in addition to more specific knowledge about the CEFR is not adequate to fix this. The curriculum is not only hard to interpret, but it is also voluntary, which leads to a great deal of confusion. Some of this confusion is connected to the

question of when the L2 students can follow the ordinary Norwegian curriculum. For many students, the teachers are not sure whether they lack language proficiency, or if they need to take extra measures to help the students develop reading skills. When the L2 students then are tested with the tests designed to measure L1 reading, it is still unclear what measures would benefit the students. In addition to little knowledge of L2 reading, the teachers have no means to test L2 reading or even L2 general language ability. Perhaps standardised testing is not a good way of assessing this, but since standardised testing is the way we choose to secure accountability, isn't accountability as important for the L2 students?

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# 27

## **Learner autonomy, agency and identity: an interview based investigation of Syrian EFL university students' stories of learning English**

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### **Background**

Since its inception over three decades ago, the concept of learner autonomy (LA) has occupied a very prominent position in different areas of language learning and teaching (Benson 2001). However, very little has been done on practical issues such as how do language learners go about managing their learning? How do practices in learning environment as well as learners' identities shape and how are they shaped by the process of language learning? (Benson 2007). Thus, this paper reports on one stage of my PhD investigation into (LA) among a group of Syrian EFL university students. The study adopts a recent strand of thinking regarding autonomy in language learning which argues against a misconception of (LA) as independence; and conversely views (LA) as "socially oriented agency" rather than "individualized performance" (Norton & Toohey 2003 : 59).

### **The study**

My research takes a longitudinal, qualitative ethnographic case study approach. The part presented in this paper examines the interviews I conducted with fifteen Syrian university students learning English at one language institute in a Syrian public university. During these interviews, individuals talked through their experiences of learning English; their reasons for learning the language, their perceptions of English and how have they gone about learning it in Syrian EFL contexts.

### **Analysis and findings**

Drawing on concepts of: Identity (Wenger 1998), Agency (Van Lier 2007), Investment (Norton 1995), the analysis gauges participants' different long term stories of learning English in the specified context. It reveals interesting findings regarding participants' experience of becoming successful language learners.

### ***Beliefs about “English” and “Learning it”***

Individuals in this study started learning English at primary school when they were 10 – 11 years old and continued through preparatory and secondary school with little contact with English outside school or in fact outside the English classroom. Consequently they did not see the point behind learning it and wondered about its relevance. From the beginning of secondary school and later at university however, they experienced a change in their orientations to English. They started to realise that it is a tool. That is, it has an important role in their learning and future jobs, a means of communication with the world. The following excerpts from interviews with students shed light on the change of awareness they have gone through.

#### **At School:**

“At that time English was just like Math and Geography [...] we did not have contact with English outside school we watched Arabic Cartoons we read Arabic books...(Hadya,S2/C2); “I can say it meant nothing to my life it was like all other subjects” (Jehad, S2/C1); “Before university English was a school subject like math. I wanted to pass it and get high marks” (Lama, S2/C2).

“I did what the teacher said because I wanted a high mark at the Baccalaureate exam”; “study hard.. memorise..pass exams just like studying formulas for Math exam”

#### **After school:**

“I need English to go online and use the internet which is part of my everyday life” (Maher,S2, C1); “All interesting things around us are in English, if you go outside now you will find hundreds of ads and posters written in English even here in the corridors “(Salem,S2, C1)

“I need to communicate in English I need to use it in my everyday life I am not going to do exams any more. Now I want to express myself it is not like I am studying English I am speaking English” (Hassan, S2/C2); “need to use it in order to learn it... talk in English with friends and interested people” (Rula, S2, C1)

### ***Reasons underpinning reported beliefs***

Their responses show that although their language experiences seem to follow a broad pattern in terms of stages of formal instructions and schooling; they do so with a good degree of variation within them. Most of them seem to have had certain encounters and experiences throughout their long-term journey of language learning that triggered their engagement with the language and encouraged them to carry on with it in different ways and at different stages. But for almost all individuals in this study one needs to have a clear and relevant purpose in order to actively begin an



engaging journey of learning English. For many individuals in this study the actual goals of learning English are not passing the exam. They have to pass exams, can pass exams and they actually did pass exams.

Their aims however are something more relevant to their lives and view of self; doing well in English is a stage in a personal life project and in order for this project to be delivered up to the standards and achieve its ends it needs to be led by an interested and benefited project manager – the learner.

When examined carefully their stories revealed a number of different motives which are part of a personal long-term plan constructed through interaction with key people and going through certain experiences along their learning journey. A plan to change their circumstances, solve problems and subsequently be in charge of their present and future. English for the majority of them functions as a tool of transformation. An example of that is Ranya who studies English literature but actually does not like it.

*“Actually I did not want to do English literature in the first place but was forced to do it because of my grades at the Baccalaureate. It was the best I could do with my grades” (Ranya/SS2/C2)*

Ranya cannot see herself teaching literature or doing it as a life job. She thus sets a strategic plan; she develops her general English and does literature for the sake of getting a degree. Then after graduation she can establish a private business herself as an English teacher for young learners especially since nowadays most parents in Syria want their children to learn English.

*“after my first year of doing English literature I found that it is worth doing it. you know you do not need to do literature you can start your own business after graduation like private English tutor. I can start a private English course for kids because when I finish studying I will have a certificate in English from the department which is enough to allow me to do it and my general English will be good as well so I can do it. You know now these courses for young kids are very popular” (Ranya/SS2/C2)*

A crucial element that further motivates Ranya to persist in fulfilling her plan and invest in learning English is the image of a Syrian girl learning English. Ranya likes the link that society builds between learning English and the image of modern girl. She therefore wishes to be associated with the view of an English speaking girl that everyone around can identify by the way she talks and dresses up.

*“People I meet in general say wow you study English even they say that from my cool look and the way I talk and dress one can tell that I am studying English so it becomes part of me” (Ranya/SS2/C2)*

From my own experience as a former English literature student at the same Syrian university, it is absolutely true that people share the view that Ranya describes of girls studying English. Furthermore, men in general like to marry a girl from the English department because girls there are all modern and open minded and good looking. It is the image associated with a girl studying English that attracts Ranya to English. The way society defines a girl studying English seems very appealing to her.

*“when people come over to visit us at home like mum”s friends they ask me what do I do and I say English they say oh we thought that you are studying English because it shows in how you look and dress... you know this sort of things.*

*K: how is that? Do you feel it yourself or just because they say that?*

*Ranya: yes I do in the way I speak, the way I dress I kind of follow the way Western people speak and dress so it changed my life style” (Ranya/SS2/C2)*

At the beginning of the interview Ranya stated that improving English helps in her studies which initially seemed to me the goal behind her voluntary process of looking for additional courses to supplement what she gets in her English literature course. However, later, as the interview went on what she said about the view of a girl studying English literature and how she expressed it were quite revealing. She referred to her studies as “English literature” only once or twice in the beginning of the interview; she then used learning English instead throughout the interviews. Additionally, Ranya’s actions and body language were as revealing as the words themselves. When describing the Syrian girl studying English, Ranya was very passionate and excited. She put a dreamy smile on her face when telling me how people around her recognise a girl learning English; I could even see the spark in her eyes.

Thus by learning English Ranya hopes to achieve two transformation purposes. First, she escapes doing literature which she does not really like to be her life job. Secondly, she affiliates herself with a community of modern, stylish and open minded Syrian girls of which she strives to become a legitimate member.

So learning English for those individuals is not just about learning a new language; it is as Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000: 174) put it “about a profound struggle to reconstruct a self”. It is a transition from one way of being to

another through mastering English; an imagined identity that English is a key factor in constructing it.

Another major theme running through many interviews is the role that significant people and role models played in individuals' shift in orientations towards learning English. Salem was still at school in grade 9 when a visit by his aunt who lives in Australia marked a turning point in his relation with English.

*"Salem: I started in Grade 5 with English at school and remained like that till Grade 9*

*K: What happened in Grade 9?*

*Salem: My aunt came to visit from Australia She spoke very nice English she talked to me about life in Australia and other places she has been to and how different they are from Syria so I became interested in knowing more about countries.*

*K: what did she talk about that made you want to know more?*

*Salem: She talked about work social life what people do there"*  
*(Salem/SS2/C1)*

Salem's aunt, who looked different and knew about a lot of things, has actually widened his horizons and inspired him. He then began to look for further information and linked the image of his aunt with learning English. In order for Salem to be like his aunt he needs to search for information and accumulate more knowledge.

*"so I started looking on the internet for more information for example I am reading a long article about the status of women in Australia and the US and how does the employment system work there and in general I became more interested in English movies it became like my leisure reading"*

The fact that she spoke good English increased her chances in accessing information, travelling and living in a different country. He then said it clearly that he liked her English and wanted to be like her.

*"[...] I liked the way she talked in English at home and wanted to learn to speak like that" (Salem/SS2/C1)*

In addition to the role of the significant people, role models and near peer role models (Murphey & Arao 2001) who had access to the community that individuals do not but wish to; Individuals personalities and actual identities have their own shares in the process of constructing positive orientation towards English.

Rula is a successful student in general. She was a top student at school and continued to be good at university. She got the best student prize in her second year of Environmental Engineering studies at university.

*“at school I was always a good student. I was top student actually. I got high marks in my baccalaureate and even at university in my second year I was awarded the best student award for that year. I mean I am a good student in general and got the highest marks in English exams at school”*  
(Rula/SS2/C1)

Regarding learning English she states that she loved it from the beginning even at school her teacher noticed that she liked English and used to ask her why does she like it. Rula did not quite know the reason at that time; she however remembers that her parents encouraged her a lot and that she was good overall.

*“My teacher used to ask me why do you like English I didn’t know why maybe now I can say because I love to learn about other cultures and travel abroad and I love watching English speaking TVs but at that time I do not know. I remember that my parents encouraged me a lot to learn it and I always got the highest grades in English I think the full mark always”*  
*“I was always good at English in school I was a good student in general I studied hard and I got 30 out of 30 for my English exam in my Baccalaureate”* (Rula/SS2/C1)

When she talked through her experience in the interview she sounded like a successful student who is aware of her own success and attributes it to the effort and beliefs that she has about learning. She thinks that from the beginning she believed that “no one knows everything” and that it is normal “to commit mistakes and ask because you are learning and making mistakes is part of learning”. She even proudly said to me when I commented that her English is very good

*“You will be surprised to know that this is the first time I have taken an English course”* (Rula/SS2/C1)

As the discussion with Rula proceeded an element of “Success breeds success” stood out. An identity of a successful learner of which she is certainly aware seems to feed her confidence. When talking about what to do and not to do when learning English she showed a high level of confidence in her abilities and efforts as an adult successful learner with valuable experience and history of success. This was evident in her critique of the course in that it did not need to teach her reading or grammar.

"I can learn Grammar by myself. Actually I learnt it I have a grammar reference book and I read a lot of a articles in English in my area and references online in English and see the grammar I learn in the book. I do not need a teacher to teach me that"

K: What do you need then?

Rula: I need to talk in class in English to talk about the areas that I know a lot about like environmental engineering" (Rula/SS2/C1)

Rula's conceptualizes herself as an experienced and successful person who has the ability to learn from others and the rich knowledge to be learnt from. The strong positioning (Norton 2001) that Rula assigns to herself positively influences her language learning.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

The analysis discloses that the process of becoming an autonomous, successful language user entails intentional reconstruction of past experiences through interaction with key inspiring people, as well as envisioning a transformed future identity through learning English.

Participants' conceptualisations of English and learning it has developed and changed along their long term stories of learning and being. These stories are composed of interwoven threads of personal, social and historical experiences and encounters through which an awareness of the relevance of English to participants' actual and imagined identities has emerged. This understanding later triggered an awareness of the importance of personal effort in pursuing goals and persisting in learning.

Individuals, therefore, developed a historically and socially constructed vision which relates learning English to change as "learning transforms who we are and what we can do" it becomes "an experience of identity" (Wenger 1998: 215). These constructed understandings of learning English are kept in private places within individuals' minds which I was privileged to have had access to through my interviews with them. They helped me understand their goals for learning English which were driven and structured by these mindsets.

This study confirms (Gao 2003; 2007; Malcolm 2005) findings that Strategies, Beliefs, Perceptions and Identities are not fixed; rather they changes with the change of contexts and interests. The study shows the importance of learner's agency in strategy use and suggests that strategies never work on their own (technical version of autonomy); it is individuals investing in them and making them work.

Similarly, taking control over learning is not a fixed psychological trait of learners. It manifests itself differently and to varying degrees in different contexts. It also depends on learners' clarity of purpose and relevance of learning to one's own identity formation and long term learning goals.

The view of autonomy that this study supports is that autonomy is "the feeling of being the agent of one's own actions" (Van Lier 2007:p48). This according to participants is part of "communicative proficiency [which] is dependent not simply on the use of the target language, but on the learners capacity to exercise autonomy in articulation of meanings in the domain of language use" Benson (2002: 15)

Agency in participants' accounts is manifested in their goal oriented attempts to learning English which they hope it will change who they are. So as Benson (2007) predicts, "agency can perhaps be viewed as a point of origin for the development of autonomy, while identity might be viewed as one of its important outcomes".

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# 28 Effects of Input Processes on Generations of False Memory in L2 Word Learning

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## Background of the Present Study

In order to teach second language (L2) vocabulary effectively, teachers need to understand how L2 lexical networks are constructed, how L2 words are stored in one's long-term memory, and how these words can be reactivated. The hierarchical network model (Collins & Quillian 1969) is one of the models of word association, which assumes that the concepts in the higher hierarchy (superordinates) contain the semantic features of concepts in the lower hierarchy (subordinates). In addition, concepts at a medium level of the hierarchy are called the basic-level category because this level is acquired by infants earlier than the other levels. In Figure 1, *tree* and *flower* are regarded as the basic-level category.

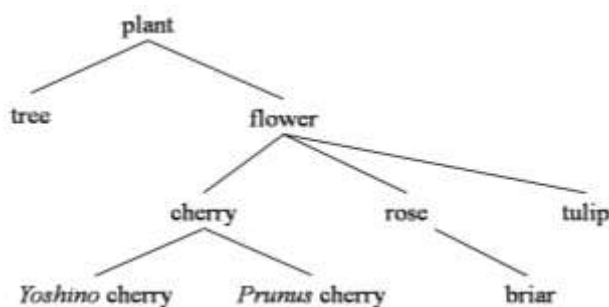


Figure 1: Hierarchical model

Some studies which used a cued recall task or a recognition task, reported the influence of categorical hierarchy on the memory activation, and associative memory illusion (e.g., Deese 1959; Pansky & Koriati 2004; Park, Shobe & Kihlstrom 2005; Roediger & McDermott 1995). The associative memory illusion was originally reported by Deese (1959) and rediscovered and thoroughly documented by Roediger & McDermott (1995). Hence, the task which assesses this illusion is called the DRM paradigm after their name. This illusion is induced by asking a subject to study a list of words (e.g., *thread*, *pin*, *eye*, *sewing*, *sharp* and *point*), all of which are semantic associates of an unstudied item known as the critical lure (e.g., *needle*). To date, many researchers have shown (a) that superordinate category labels are elicited when the study lists are composed of either free associations or category-instances, (b) that generation of false

memory is accelerated when listed words are the semantic associates of a particular word rather than the hyponyms of a particular word and (c) that the generation of false memory is an automatic/unconscious process that occurs in the encoding phase. However, some researchers have found a different tendency in retrieval of word memory. Those researchers have investigated the false recognition of words during sentence processing and generation of false memory. Pansky & Koriat (2004) found a tendency for participants' memory of words to converge into the basic-level from both the superordinate and subordinate levels. They called this basic-level convergence: memory is distorted not only by losing detail, but also by adding details that were not contained in the original information, perhaps in an attempt to achieve some degree of specificity and concreteness. According to fuzzy-trace theory, items are encoded at multiple levels of abstraction in parallel. To this theory, Pansky & Koriat added the assumption that basic-level representation may be the dominant level because of its preferred cognitive status, and this tendency become latent after a longer interval because basic-level representations decay more slowly than other representations.

The present study aims to reveal how learners process target words in word pair contexts focusing on the conceptual hierarchy which words represent. Using a two-word-pair learning condition, the present study examined the following research questions: (a) How do the memories of three types of words change in one week, and (b) Is the false recognition of target words affected by insufficient encoding processing or retrieval errors?

## **Methods**

### ***Participants, Materials and Procedure***

A total of 66 undergraduates of a Japanese university participated in this study. All the tests were conducted individually for each participant. They were randomly assigned to one of the following three input conditions: (a) learning superordinate words ( $n = 24$ ) (hereafter, SUP condition), (b) learning basic-level words ( $n = 21$ ) (hereafter, BL condition) and (c) learning subordinate words ( $n = 21$ ) (hereafter, SUB condition). All of them were given 18 two-word pairs in the encoding phase. The first four pairs and the last five pairs were filler items which were presented in order to avoid the primacy effect and recency effect. Target word pairs were presented between the 5th and 13th pairs (see Appendix).

In the three-minute encoding phase, participants were asked to judge at what stage of education the underlined words should be taught: junior high



school, senior high school, or university? Also, they were asked to judge whether the two words could be used together or not? These questions were prepared to make sure that the participants paid enough attention to the target words and the words paired with the targets. Participants were asked to circle words if they did not know their meaning. As a result, there were some students who did not know the meaning of filler words such as *formula* and *analysis*, but all the participants knew the meaning of all the target words. Next, they were asked to complete a 30-second filler task (calculation task). An immediate recognition task followed the filler task. The participants were asked to judge whether they saw the words or not and to mark “presented” if they thought they saw a word on the list, and mark “not presented” if they thought they did not see it in the encoding phase.

A delayed recognition task was conducted one week later. The participants were not told they would have this test which asked them to judge whether or not they saw the words in the encoding phase. After completing all the items, they were given 18 words with three possible choices: (a) superordinate words, which were the correct choice for SUP condition, (b) basic-level words, which were the correct choice for BL condition and (c) subordinate words, which were the correct choice for SUB condition.

### ***Scoring and Data Analyses***

In order to examine which of the conceptual levels were correctly or less correctly recognized by the participants, a three-way ANOVA was carried out with recognition time (recognition: immediate, delayed), and target word level (superordinate, basic-level, subordinate) as within-participant factors and input condition (SUP, BL, and SUB) as a between-participant factor. The results of the analysis will be discussed in the light of the robustness of each conceptual level. This analysis considered the number of “presented” responses that participants gave, including both correct responses and incorrect responses following the scoring system used by Pansky & Koriati (2004).

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Learners' Recognition Rates of Words of Different Conceptual Levels***

In order to examine the conceptual levels that the learners both correctly and incorrectly recognized, the recognition rates of each target word which had different conceptual levels were compared. The average recognition rates of superordinate, basic-level, and subordinate words are listed in Table 1.

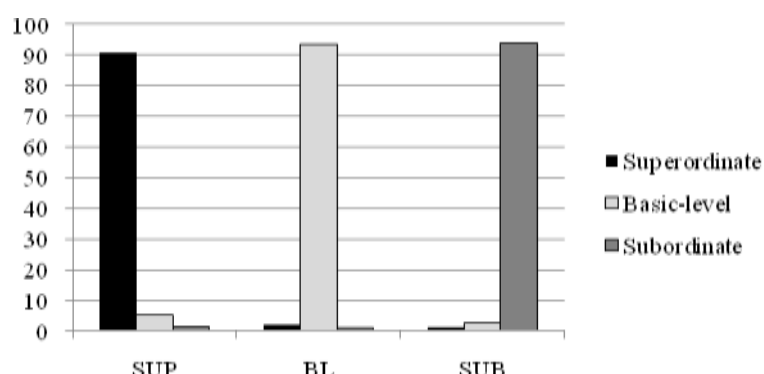
		Immediate		Delayed	
	n	M	SD	M	SD
<b>Recognition of Superordinates</b>					
SUP	24	90.74	19.29	84.26	11.31
BL	20	2.22	7.73	30.55	16.47
SUB	20	1.11	3.42	21.67	19.24
Total	64	35.07	45.24	47.92	32.52
<b>Recognition of Basic-level</b>					
SUP	24	5.09	9.82	31.02	24.95
BL	20	93.33	8.38	86.11	16.47
SUB	20	2.78	4.94	27.22	10.49
Total	64	31.94	42.48	47.05	32.39
<b>Recognition of Subordinates</b>					
SUP	24	1.39	4.98	14.81	12.97
BL	20	1.11	3.42	21.67	20.54
SUB	20	93.89	9.17	86.67	14.24
Total	64	30.21	43.71	39.41	35.91

**Table 1:** Recognition Rates of Each Level on Immediate and Delayed Recognition Tasks

The results of a three-way ANOVA showed significant effects of interaction among three factors,  $F(4, 117) = 36.61$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $\eta^2 = .89$ . This indicates the fact that learners' perception of words with different conceptual levels (superordinate, basic-level, and subordinate) varied according to two factors: input condition (SUP, BL, and SUB conditions), and time of recognition (immediate, and delayed). Next, in order to examine the interaction effects obtained from a three-way ANOVA in more detail, results of recognition rates were analyzed separately by an immediate recognition task and a delayed recognition task.

#### ***Levels of Word Memory in the Immediate Recognition Task***

First, a 3 (input condition group: SUP, BL, SUB)  $\times$  3 (target word level: superordinate, basic-level, subordinate) two-way ANOVA was conducted for the results of the immediate recognition task. This showed a significant interaction effect,  $F(3.07, 93.71) = 837.63$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $\eta^2 = .97$ . None of the main effects reached statistical significance (target word level:  $p = .39$ , input conditions:  $p = .97$ ). These results indicate that in the immediate recognition task, the recognition rates of target words which lexicalized different levels of concepts differed according to their input conditions.



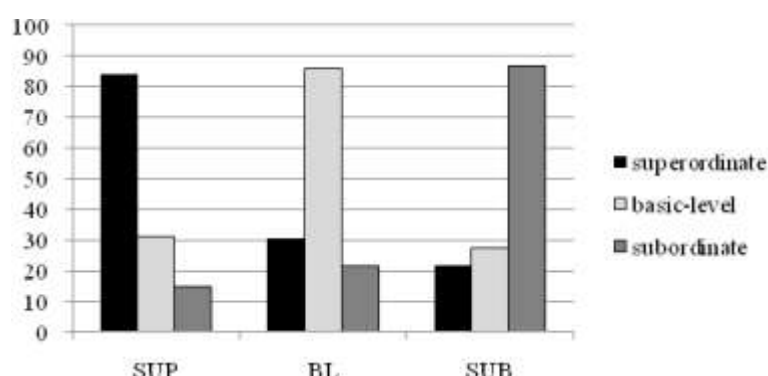
**Figure 2:** Results of immediate recognition in word-pair context

Next, three one-way ANOVAs were conducted separately for the recognition rate of each target word level. The results showed that one of the word levels was recognized as “presented” by the participants who learned that level. More precisely, superordinates were recognized as “presented” by the participants who were assigned an input condition in which superordinates were presented as targets,  $F(2, 61) = 366.04, p = .00, \eta^2 = .86$  (SUP-BL,  $p = .00$ ; SUP-SUB,  $p = .00$ ; BL-SUB,  $p = .96$  by Tukey HSD). This tendency is the same for basic-level,  $F(2, 61) = 833.60, p = .00, \eta^2 = .94$  (BL-SUP,  $p = .00$ ; BL-SUB,  $p = .00$ ; SUP-SUB,  $p = .62$  by Tukey HSD), and for subordinates,  $F(2, 61) = 1504.24, p = .00, \eta^2 = .97$  (between SUB-SUP,  $p = .00$ ; BL-SUB,  $p = .00$ ; SUP-BL,  $p = .99$  by Tukey HSD). A similar tendency was found in the comparison of recognition rates of three word levels within each input condition. The recognition rates of each word differed significantly in all the conditions. Participants in an input condition in which superordinates were presented as targets recognized the superordinates significantly more than the other levels,  $F(1.18, 27.05) = 296.46, p = .00, \eta^2 = .93$  (SUP-BL,  $p = .00$ ; SUP-SUB,  $p = .00$ ; BL-SUB,  $p = .09$  by Tukey HSD). As for the basic-level learning group, learners recognized the correct target words as “presented” more frequently than incorrect targets,  $F(1.43, 27.21) = 1319.72, p = .00, \eta^2 = .99$  (BL-SUP,  $p = .00$ ; BL-SUB,  $p = .00$ ; SUP-SUB,  $p = 1.00$ ). Those in the subordinate learning group showed the same results as the other groups. They recognized correct targets more frequently than incorrect targets,  $F(1.51, 28.61) = 1434.00, p = .00, \eta^2 = .99$  (SUB-SUP,  $p = .00$ ; SUB-BL,  $p = .00$ ; SUP-BL,  $p = .56$ ).

These results were not surprising. They showed that learners actually paid attention to the words in the encoding phase, and that they recognized the target words successfully and could suppress the activation of the other conceptual levels in the immediate recognition task.

### *Levels of Word Memory in the Delayed Recognition Task*

The results of the delayed recognition task were examined in order to reveal the change of word memory. The results of recognition rates differed according to input conditions (SUP, BL, and SUB) as there was a significant interaction effect between input condition and types of target words,  $F(4, 122) = 171.52$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $\eta^2 = .85$ . The main effect of the levels of target word reached statistical significance,  $F(2, 122) = 3.45$ ,  $p = .03$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ . The main effect of input condition was not significant,  $F(2, 122) = 0.33$ ,  $p = .72$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ .



**Figure 3:** Results of the delayed recognition task

Next, three one-way ANOVAs were run separately for the recognition rate of each target word level. The results showed that each word level was recognized as “presented” by the participants who learned that level. More precisely, superordinates were recognized as “presented” by the participants who were assigned in an input condition in which superordinates were presented as targets,  $F(2, 61) = 103.86$ ,  $p = .00$  (SUP-BL,  $p = .00$ ; SUP-SUB,  $p = .00$ ; BL-SUB,  $p = .18$ ). This was the same for basic-level,  $F(2, 61) = 63.02$ ,  $p = .00$  (BL-SUP,  $p = .00$ ; BL-SUB,  $p = .00$ ; SUP-SUB,  $p = .78$ ), and also for subordinates,  $F(2, 61) = 116.91$ ,  $p = .00$  (SUB-SUP,  $p = .00$ ; SUB-BL,  $p = .00$ ; BL-SUP,  $p = .34$ ). These results were identical to the immediate recognition task. However, different results were obtained in the analyses by input conditions.

The results of SUP condition showed significant differences between two of the three conditions,  $F(2, 46) = 143.72$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $\eta^2 = .86$ . As in the immediate recognition condition, participants judged that superordinates were “presented” more frequently than the other word level (i.e., basic-level and subordinates) with a statistical significance ( $p = .00$  in both case). A significant difference between the recognition rate of basic-level and

subordinates, which was not shown in the immediate condition, was obtained in the delayed condition ( $p = .00$ ). In other words, learners were apt to perceive basic-level as “presented” as time advanced but did not misconceive subordinate words which lexicalized specific concepts. The results of BL condition were identical to that of the immediate condition. The level of word concepts which was perceived as “presented” differed significantly,  $F(1.46, 27.78) = 69.02$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $\eta^2 = .78$ . The basic-level, which was presented in the input phase, was judged as “presented” more frequently than superordinates ( $p = .00$ ) and subordinates ( $p = .00$ ) and there was no significant difference between superordinates and subordinates ( $p = .46$ ). Lastly, the results of the SUB condition were analyzed. The results showed a statistical difference among the three word levels,  $F(2, 38) = 193.21$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $\eta^2 = .91$ . Similar to the BL condition, only a subordinate word which was actually presented in the input phase was judged as “presented” more frequently than superordinates or basic-level ( $p = .00$ ). There was no significant difference between misconception rates of superordinates and basic-level ( $p = .23$ ). These results indicate that convergence from the subordinate to the basic-level does not occur.

To sum up, a difference between immediate and delayed recognition tasks was found only in the SUP condition: learners who were presented with superordinate words in the input phase misperceived the basic-level words as “presented” significantly more often than the subordinate words. When we look at the percentages of recognition of each word level in SUP condition closely, we can find high false recognition rates in basic conceptual level (see Table 2). The basic-level convergence was particularly obvious in the following word sets: (a) person-woman, and (b) plants-flowers.

Super-ordinate	Basic-level	Subordinate	Super-ordinate	Basic-level	Subordinate
person	woman	actress	79.17	37.50	12.50
creature	insect	bee	87.50	50.00	16.67
machine	computer	desktop	87.50	54.17	4.17
clothes	coat	fur	95.83	8.33	12.50
vehicle	car	jeep	91.67	41.67	8.33
meal	lunch	pizza	75.00	16.67	12.50
animal	dog	poodle	83.33	16.67	8.33
plants	flowers	roses	70.83	50.00	25.00
sport	ball-game	soccer	87.50	4.17	33.33

**Table 2:** Recognition Rates of Each Word Level in the SUP Condition

In contrast, the recognition rate was remarkably low in the case of *coat* and *ball-game*. As for the last word set (*sport*, *ball-game* and *soccer*), the subordinate, *soccer*, was judged as “presented” by more than one third of the participants in the SUP condition.

There are two reasons why two of the basic-level words (i.e., *coat* and *ball-game*) did not gain as high false recognition rates as other words in the same level: (a) the basic-level perceived by learners is different from the basic-level of the category hierarchy model, and (b) word frequency is the key to explaining the generation of false memory in the learner’s mental lexicon. In order to examine these possibilities, the correlations between the JACET (2003) frequency order and false recognition rates in each input condition were calculated. As a result, a significant strong correlation was found only in the SUP condition ( $r = -.66$ ). This means that familiarity affected the participants’ false recognition of words when they encoded familiar words with comparatively abstract meanings. In the case of the others, correlation coefficients did not reach statistical significance (BL condition,  $r = -.39$ ; SUB condition,  $r = -.27$ ).

These results pointed out the possibility that the high false recognition rates observed in the SUP condition were generated by familiarity with the target and response words in the encoding and recognition phases. This was salient in the case of superordinate and basic-level word pairs that have high rank in frequency, such as “*plant*” with 403 and “*flower*” with 822 rank orders. In the encoding phase, participants processed the target word “*plant*” but half of the participants answered “*presented*” when they were shown the word “*flower*” which was not presented in the encoding phase. The opposite result was found in the case of a word pair, *sport*, *ball-game* and *soccer*. The encoded word, *sport* (749) was familiar to the participants in the SUP condition, but the corresponding basic-level word, *ball-game*, was unfamiliar to them. Hence, they did not falsely recognize the basic-level word as “*presented*.” Instead, many of them misconceived the subordinate word, *soccer* (2284), as “*presented*.”

There may be two stages at which familiarity with the response words affected learners’ recognition of the words. First, participants did not process the target words deeply or did not pay much attention to the response words when they felt they had high familiarity. Second, familiarity increased the participants’ feeling that they had seen the words in the encoding phase; hence the participants perceived the incorrect target words with which they felt high familiarity as “*presented*” in the retrieval

phase. If the failure of recognition is generated by the encoding phase, it would be difficult to select correct options even if the participants were provided with cues which were presented explicitly and encoded with the target words. In contrast, the participants would be able to recollect the correct target memory in the cued recognition task if the failure in the retrieval phase in the delayed recognition task had occurred due to the difficulty of activating a relevant memory which one had correctly stored. In order to find out whether the false recognition of target words was affected by insufficient encoding processing or retrieval errors, the multiple-choice task was conducted.

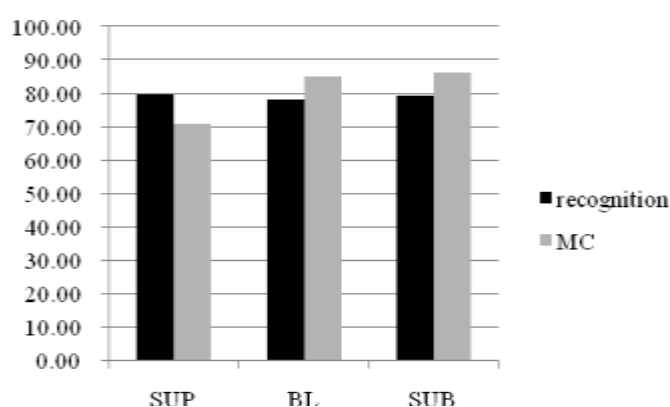
### ***Results of Multiple-Choice Task***

The descriptive statistics of multiple-choice task is listed in Table 3.

	<b>n</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>SUP</b>	24	70.83	21.19
<b>BL</b>	21	80.95	28.79
<b>SUB</b>	21	82.01	23.17
<b>Total</b>	66	77.61	24.61

**Table 3:** Percentages of Correct Answers in the Multiple-Choice Task

First of all, delayed recognition rates and success rates in the multiple-choice test of each condition were compared by a two-way ANOVA with input condition (SUP, BL, SUB) as a between-participant factor and task type (recognition, multiple-choice) as a within-participant factor. The results showed significant interaction effects between these two factors,  $F(2, 61) = 7.81$ ,  $p = .00$ ,  $\eta p^2 = .20$ . The main effects of task and condition did not reach statistical significance ( $p = .37$ ,  $p = .15$ , respectively).



**Figure 4:** Results of delayed recognition and multiple-choice tasks

The results of a test of simple main effects showed that percentages of correct answers did not differ greatly among input condition groups,  $F(2, 63) = 1.46$ ,  $p = .24$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ . On the other hand, tests of simple main effects using T-tests showed a significant change in all the groups except for BL ( $p = .07$ ). Whereas participants in the SUB had significantly higher scores in the multiple-choice test,  $t(19) = -2.24$ ,  $p = .04$ , those in the SUP had significantly lower success rates in the multiple-choice test,  $t(23) = 2.75$ ,  $p = .01$ . These results strongly suggest an encoding failure in the case of the SUP condition.

## Conclusion

The present experiment addressed two research questions: (a) How do the memories of three types of words change in one week and (b) Is the false recognition of target words affected by insufficient encoding processing or retrieval errors? The answers to the first two questions were provided by examining the correct and false recognition rates of each response word – superordinates, basic-level words, and subordinates – by the participants in each condition.

The results of the delayed recognition task showed an interesting tendency in the SUP condition: learners who were presented with superordinate words in the input phase misperceived the basic-level words as “presented” significantly more often than the subordinate words. There were two possibilities that could explain the results of these conditions: (a) a shallow/deep encoding process, and (b) activation confusion in the retrieval process. In order to find out whether the false recognition of target words was affected by insufficient encoding processing or retrieval errors, the multiple-choice task was conducted. The results showed a significant decrease in success rates from the delayed recognition task to the multiple-choice task in the case of the SUP condition, whereas the other conditions showed an increase in success rates. Hence, the first explanation, which relates the recognition rates with depth of processing in the encoding phase, was plausible in the case of the present study. That is, learners processed the target words less deeply because of the great familiarity they felt towards them. Thus, the activation of a particular node (i.e., target) was not strong enough to leave a trace that could be distinguished with the other activated nodes. These results seem to be consistent with previous studies that examined the word-frequency effect and word frequency mirror effect on word memory. Both the *word frequency effect* and *word frequency mirror effect* are closely related to the dual process model of recognition (Mandler 1980). This model attributes the false recognition of high



frequency words to a familiarity process, and the correct recognition of low frequency words to recollection. More precisely, participants have greater familiarity to high-frequency words, so false recognition rates become higher. Low-frequency words, on the other hand, are easier to recollect, and this produces higher correct recognition rates. There are many studies that have examined the word frequency effect and mirror effect (e.g., Criss & Shiffrin 2004; Diana & Reder 2006; Park, Reder & Dickison 2005). For example, Diana & Reder (2006) stated that low-frequency words require more processing resources to be encoded than high-frequency words.

However, we obtained some exceptions that cannot be explained by these effects. For example, some of the basic-words had high false recognition rates in the SUB group in which learners encoded low-frequency words. In the SUB group, based on the word frequency mirror effects, we expected that the participants would process the less-frequent target words deeply and would not confuse them with high-frequency words. However, they identified some of the high-frequency basic-level words as “presented” (e.g., *computer*, *flowers*). This might be because the basic-level concept is also activated in encoding subordinate words. Activation of basic-level concepts and convergence of memory into basic-level should be further investigated in future studies of word frequency and conceptual hierarchy.

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## Appendix

Paired words	SUP condition	BL condition	SUB condition
bark	animal	dog	poodle
team	sport	ball-game	soccer
drive	vehicle	car	jeep
warm	clothes	coat	fur
deliver	meal	lunch	pizza
connect	machine	computer	desktop
sent	plants	flowers	roses
fly	creature	insect	bee
movie	person	woman	actress

# 29

## A Validation Study of the CEFR Levels of Phrasal Verbs in the English Profile Wordlists

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### Background

The English Profile Wordlists are part of the English Profile Programme, the aim of which, according to Kurteš and Saville (2008), is to produce Reference Level Descriptions for English linked to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR; Council of Europe 2001).

The core objective of the initial phase of the Wordlists project has been to establish which words are commonly known by learners around the world at the CEFR levels A1 to B2, and to assign these levels not merely to the words themselves but to their individual meanings (Capel 2010).

Currently the Wordlists include 442 phrasal verbs as well as approximately 4700 individual word entries. Each meaning that is listed in an entry is ordered according to its CEFR level. Decisions about level were based partly on the evidence of the Cambridge Learner Corpus (CLC). Additionally, for all Wordlist entries, a range of other sources was consulted, including native speaker evidence of frequency in the Cambridge International Corpus, ESOL exams vocabulary lists at A2 and B1 levels, coursebook wordlists, readers wordlists, vocabulary skills books, and the *Hindmarsh English Lexicon* (1980).

We investigated into the validity of the tentative decisions made on phrasal verbs, for which there is less learner evidence in the CLC, by administering a test to English learners. The purposes of this research are as follows:

- 1) to identify the actual difficulty of each phrasal verb in the Japanese context
- 2) to validate the tentative decisions on CEFR levels in the Wordlists
- 3) to explore factors that explain the difficulties for Japanese learners, using a textbook corpus.

## Method

### *Participants*

1,622 Japanese students, consisting of 1,550 senior high school students and 72 university students, participated in this study. They were enrolled in fourteen different high schools and one university located in the areas of Tokyo, Fukushima, and Akita prefectures in Japan.

### *Test sets*

For this particular research, a phrasal verb test was developed. When the test was administered, the Wordlists included four phrasal verbs at A1 level, 27 phrasal verbs at A2 level, 145 phrasal verbs at B1 level, and 263 phrasal verbs at B2 level, where phrasal verbs with multiple meanings are counted separately. Of these 466 items, 100 items were selected and the test included four A1 items, 19 A2 items, 40 B1 items, and 37 B2 items. Here is an example:

He ( w..... ) < > his mug and put it back on the shelf. 洗う

The test was designed in this way in order to tap students' productive use. As said above, the Wordlists have been based partly on the production of written answers to examination questions, though there is less evidence of phrasal verbs in the CLC. It was for this reason that we were asked to undertake this validation task.

The participants were required to fill in the gaps with a verb and an adverb or a preposition in each sentence, with the help of the Japanese translation. The round parenthesis was for the verb and the angle bracket was for the adverb or the preposition. The initial letter of the verb was indicated in the round parenthesis so that there was more than one possible phrasal verb that fitted the context.

### *Procedure*

First of all, the participants answered a questionnaire asking what authorised textbook they used in their junior high school, and then they moved on to the test. The questionnaire and test were conducted in one regular lesson, which means it took approximately 50 minutes for them to finish both.

In scoring their answers, one point was allotted for one correct answer. All the items were scored dichotomously (i.e. 0 or 1). Spelling mistakes and inflection mistakes were not penalised as long as they were intelligible.

The statistical software used to analyse the data was R, Iteman, Rascal (IRT-One parameter), and Xcalibre (IRT-Two parameter).

## Results

Table 1 shows the test statistics. The mean score of 31.443 suggests the test was quite difficult for the students. However, the alpha was 0.965, which means the test was internally consistent, and reliable.

N of Items	100	Alpha	0.965
N of Examinees	1622	SEM	3.659
Mean	31.443	Mean P	0.314
Variance	384.211	Mean Item-Tot.	0.463
Std. Dev.	19.601	Mean Biserial	0.664
Skew	0.568	Max Score (Low)	16
Kurtosis	-0.575	N (Low Group)	466
Minimum	0	Min Score (High)	44
Maximum	91	N (High Group)	455
Median	27		

Table 1: Test statistics

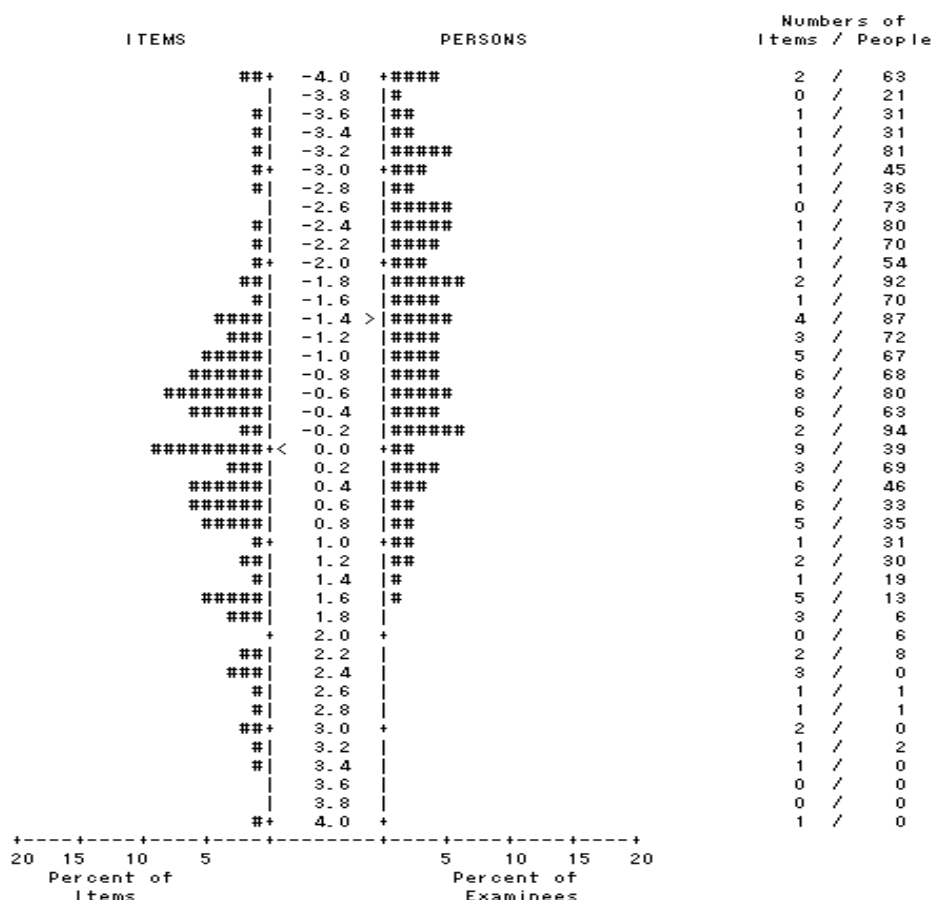
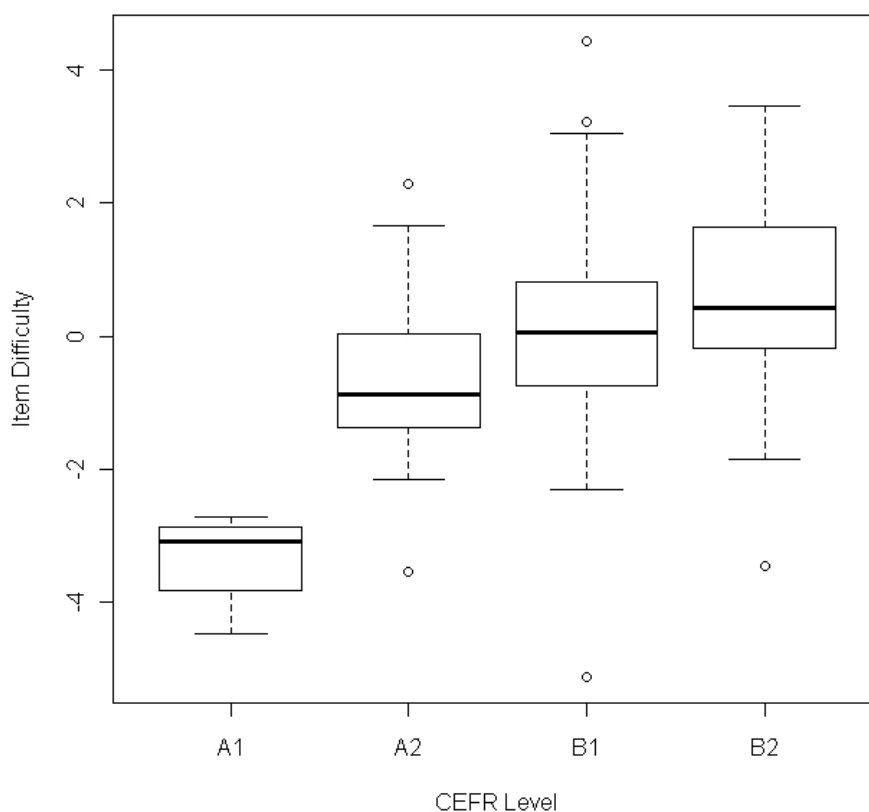


Figure 1: The item by person distribution map

Figure 1 is the item by person distribution map, which shows there are many students for easier items, and fewer students for more difficult items.

Figure 2 shows the variance of item difficulty by CEFR level. The item difficulties were calculated with the program RASCAL to answer research questions 1 and 2. RASCAL is based on the one-parameter Rasch logistic IRT model for dichotomous data. In this model, as the index gets closer to minus three, the item is getting easier, and as the index gets closer to plus three, the item is getting more difficult.

The result of the one-way ANOVA indicates the phrasal verbs at A1 level are significantly easier than those at upper levels. However, the phrasal verbs at A2, B1, and B2 levels are not significantly different, although the average scores are getting higher, as they go up the levels.



**Figure 2:** The variance of item difficulty by CEFR level

phrasal verb	definition	item difficulty
get up	to wake up and get out of bed, or make someone do this	-4.487
go out	to leave a place in order to go somewhere else	-3.154
wake up	to stop sleeping or to make someone else stop sleeping	-3.039
come from	to be born, got from, or made in a particular place	-2.729

**Table 2:** Item difficulty, definition of A1 phrasal verbs

phrasal verb	definition	item difficulty
grow up	to gradually become an adult	-3.551
come back	to return to a place	-2.168
take off	If an aircraft takes off, it leaves the ground and begins to fly.	-1.919
put on	to put clothes or shoes onto your body	-1.523
get on	to go onto a bus, train, aircraft or boat	-1.402
come in	to enter a room or building	-1.370
look after	to take care of someone or something by keeping them healthy or in good condition	-1.175
turn on	to move the switch on a machine, light, etc. so that it starts working, or to start the supply of water, electricity, etc.	-1.083
turn off	to move the switch on a machine, light, etc. so that it stops working, or to stop the supply of water, electricity, etc.	-1.068
get off	to leave a bus, train, aircraft or boat	-0.868
take off	to remove something, especially clothes	-0.857
try on	to put on a piece of clothing to discover if it fits you or if you like it	-0.411
call back	to telephone someone again, or to telephone someone who telephoned you earlier	-0.302
belong to	If something belongs to you, you own it.	-0.290
pick up	to collect someone who is waiting for you, or to collect something that you have left	0.364
put on	to put make-up or cream onto your skin	1.478
put on	If someone puts on weight, they become heavier.	1.557
lie down	to move into a position in which your body is flat, usually in order to sleep or rest	1.656
leave behind	to leave a place without taking someone or something with you	2.284

**Table 3:** Item difficulty, definition of A2 phrasal verbs

phrasal verb	definition	item difficulty
hurry up	to make someone do something more quickly, or to make something happen sooner	-5.132
belong to	to be a member of a group or organization	-2.322
look forward to	to feel happy and excited about something that is going to happen	-1.716
believe in	to be certain that something exists	-1.445
laugh at	to show that you think someone or something is stupid	-1.328
take out	to go somewhere with someone and pay for them	-1.299
write down	to write something on a piece of paper so that you do not forget it	-1.175
fall down	to fall onto the ground	-1.076
base on	If you base something on facts or ideas, you use those facts or ideas to develop it.	-1.065
depend on	to need the help and support of someone or something in order to exist or continue as	-0.788
bring up	to care for a child until it is an adult	-0.726
break down	If a machine or vehicle breaks down, it stops working.	-0.644
hear from	If you hear from someone, you get a letter or telephone call from them, or they tell you	-0.592
keep on	to continue to do something, or to do something again and again	-0.566
put off	to arrange to do something at a later time	-0.551
get back	to be given something again that you had before	-0.510
give up	If you give up a habit, such as smoking, or something such as alcohol, you stop doing it or	-0.506
remind of	to be similar to, or make you think of, something or someone else	-0.430
send back	to return something to the person who sent it to you, especially because it is damaged or not suitable	-0.376
find out	to get information about something, or to learn a fact for the first time	0.031
deal with	to take action in order to achieve something or in order to solve a problem	0.065
go on	to happen	0.069
hand in	to give a piece of written work to a teacher	0.139
put on	to put a CD/DVD, etc. into a machine so that you can see or hear it	0.318
shut down	If a computer or machine shuts down or someone shuts it down, it stops operating.	0.464
consist of	to be made of or formed from something	0.469
go on	to continue to happen or exist	0.542
run out	to finish, use or sell all of something, so that there is none left	0.592
hang up	to finish a conversation on the telephone by putting the phone down	0.706
care for	to look after someone or something, especially someone who is young, old or ill	0.809
set up	to formally establish a new company, organization, system, way of working, etc.	0.837
look up	to try to find a piece of information by looking in a book or on a computer	1.035
carry out	to do or complete something, especially something that you have said you would do or that you have been told to do	1.174
put out	to make something that is burning stop burning	1.630
keep off	to not go onto an area, or to stop someone or something going onto an area	1.734
work out	to exercise in order to improve the strength or appearance of your body	1.874
pass on	to tell someone something that another person has told you	2.926
key in	to put information into a computer using a keyboard	3.057
put through	to connect someone using a telephone to the person they want to speak to	3.231
split up	If two people who have a romantic relationship split up, they finish their relationship.	4.443

**Table 4:** Item difficulty, definition of B1 phrasal verbs

phrasal verb	definition	item difficulty
knock out	to make someone become unconscious, usually by hitting them on the head	-3.466
look forward to	used at the end of a formal letter to say you hope to hear from or see someone soon, or that you expect something from them	-1.860
run away	to secretly leave a place because you are unhappy there	-1.011
burn out	to become ill or very tired from working too hard	-0.795
break out	If something dangerous or unpleasant breaks out, it suddenly starts.	-0.744
depend on	to trust someone or something and know that they will help you or do what you want or expect them to do	-0.532
keep from	to prevent someone or something from doing something	-0.521
go on	to continue doing something	-0.457
rely on	to need someone or something in order to be successful, work correctly, etc.	-0.388
do without	to manage without having something	-0.179
look up to	to respect and admire someone	-0.086
cheer up	If someone cheers up, or something cheers them up, they start to feel happier.	-0.061
turn out	to be known or discovered finally and surprisingly	-0.023
burn down	to destroy something, especially a building, by fire, or to be destroyed by fire	0.018
put up with	to accept unpleasant behaviour or an unpleasant situation, although you do not like it	0.040
die out	to become more and more rare and then disappear completely	0.044
make up	to say or write something that is not true	0.209
calm down	to stop feeling upset, angry or excited, or to stop someone feeling this way	0.267
take after	to be similar to an older member of your family	0.425
go ahead	something that you say to someone to allow them to do something	0.478
stand for	If one or more letters stand for a word or name, they are the first letter or letters of that word or name and they represent it	0.664
result in	to cause a particular situation to happen	0.669
burst into	to suddenly start to make a noise, especially to start crying	0.675
point out	to tell someone about some information, often because they do not know it or have	0.696
pass away	to die	0.728
go through	to experience a difficult or unpleasant situation or event	0.876
live on	to only eat a particular type of food	1.123
deal with	to talk to someone or meet someone, especially as part of your job	1.630
figure out	to finally understand something or someone	1.681
count on	to have confidence in someone because you know they will do what you want	1.752
sum up	to describe briefly the most important facts or characteristics of something	2.296
go by	If time goes by, it passes	2.336
think over	to consider an idea or plan carefully before making a decision	2.390
date back	to have existed a particular length of time or since a particular time	2.446
slow down	If someone slows down, they become less active.	2.505
cool off	to become less hot, or to make someone or something become less hot	2.865
live up to	to be as good as someone hopes	3.466

**Table 5:** Item difficulty, definition of B2 phrasal verbs

Tables 2 to 5 show definitions of the phrasal verbs and item difficulties. The phrasal verbs are classified according to the CEFR levels and in each group they are ordered in line with the item difficulties.

Those item difficulties indicate that there is a wide range of difficulty in each group, in particular A2, B1, and B2 levels.

In addition to the analyses, a corpus of junior high school English textbooks, which consisted of six series covering years 7 to 9, was compiled to explore the effects of L2 input on the difficulties of the phrasal verbs. Although most of the participants were high school students, the



corpus was developed by using only the junior high school textbooks in this study due to practicality.

The total size of the corpus was 29,251 tokens, or 3,291 types. The phrasal verbs were extracted by preparing a list of search patterns for each of the phrasal verbs, using regular expressions, and used a perl script to automatically extract all the instances of phrasal verbs from the textbook corpus.

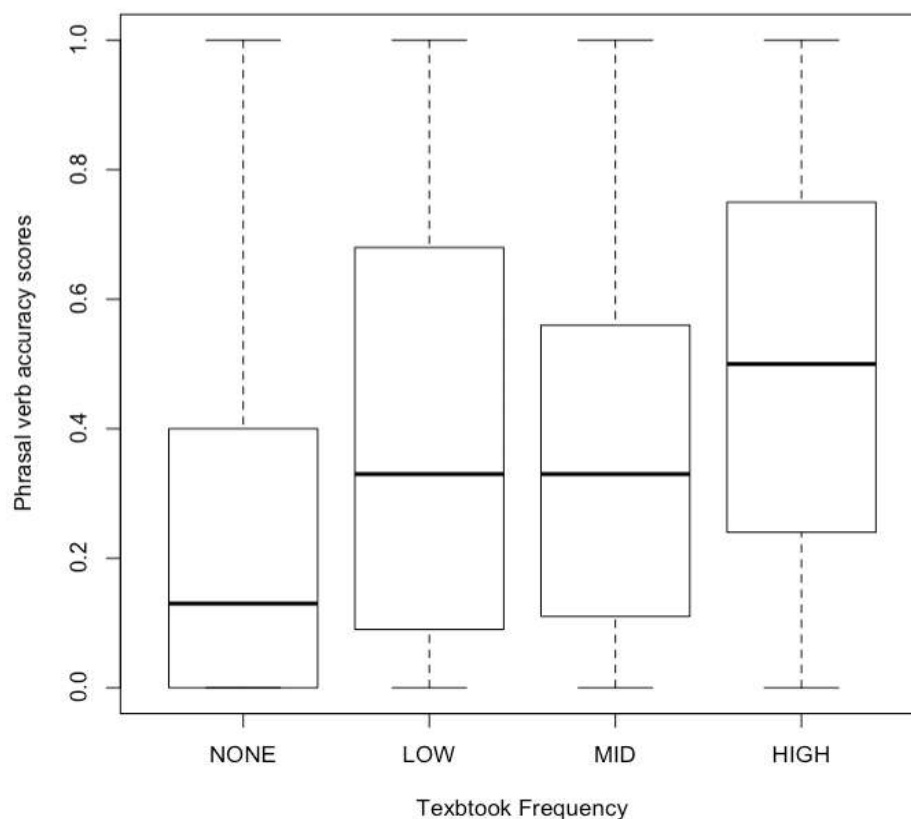
Table 6 shows the frequencies of the phrasal verbs in the corpus. 48 out of the 100 phrasal verbs appeared in the textbooks at least once. The rest of the items, namely 52 items, did not occur at all. As it shows, the frequency of phrasal verbs is really low in junior high school textbooks. This might be because the target level of English in junior high is assumed to be at A1 and/or A2.

Phrasal Verbs	TOTAL
pick up	9
get on	8
come from	7
come back	6
find out; go for; come in	5
put on; give up	4
fall down	3
die out; grow up; take out; look forward to; keep on; wake up; take off; try on; live on; look up; believe in; set up; make up	2
hurry up; get up; go on; go out; keep off; hear from; cheer up; call back; hung up; run away; leave behind; write down; put out; turn on; hand in; get back	1

**Table 6:** Frequencies of the phrasal verbs

The accuracy rates of phrasal verbs were compared based on relative frequencies in the textbooks. Phrasal verbs were grouped into four categories: NONE, LOW (one to two), MID (three to six), and HIGH (seven to nine). The mean differences in accuracy scores were examined for statistical significance, though other multivariate analyses could not be employed due to very low frequencies and null scores of the phrasal verb items.

Figure 3 shows differences in accuracy among phrasal verbs with different frequencies in the textbooks. The result of one-way ANOVA and Kruskal-Wallis test shows that a significant mean difference was found between the HIGH group and the NONE group.



**Figure 3:** Differences in accuracy among phrasal verbs with different frequencies

In order to estimate how much exposure native speakers have received in terms of frequencies, a comparison was made between the frequencies of phrasal verbs and the words in the same frequency range in BNC.

Table 7 shows the estimated amount of exposure regarding phrasal verbs under study. The left column shows examples of phrasal verbs, the middle one shows BNC frequencies, and the right column shows the words in the same frequency range. As is shown, some phrasal verbs appear to be really rare.

Phrasal verbs	BNC Freq	Words in the same frequency range
go on	21861	language; watch; free; difficult; die; product; stage
pick up	7496	equal; conflict; danger; sight; expert; belief; decline
belong to	4808	abuse; attach; championship; liability; atmosphere
wake up	1985	crystal; handicap; restoration; doctrine; motive
leave behind	1424	coastal; parking; alike; diesel; tighten; tidy; ankle
keep off	473	editing; sperm; patio; stiffen; rename; alienate
split up	446	amplitude; quiver; drawl; tart; knuckle; immature

**Table 7:** Estimated exposure to phrasal verbs

## Discussion

The gap between CEFR levels and item difficulties

The results of the analyses indicate that some B1 or B2 items are not necessarily as difficult as their level might indicate, and conversely, that some A2 items are not always easy for Japanese students. The results also suggest possible factors for interpreting the gaps between CEFR levels and actual item difficulties.

For instance, *knock out* is a B2 item in the Wordlists, which means the phrasal verb is seen as relatively difficult for learners. However, the item difficulty is -3.47, and it is actually very easy for Japanese learners. The reason is that “*knock out*” is an English loan word that is used in boxing, and also used figuratively.

The other interesting item is *leave behind* whose level at the time of this research was A2, but the item difficulty is 2.28, which means it is statistically more difficult. This can be attributed to its very low frequency in English textbooks in Japan, as indicated in Table 7; the phrasal verb appears only once in the textbook corpus. Japanese students rarely come across this phrasal verb in the classroom. In addition, the frequency of *behind* is surprisingly low for a preposition in the textbooks, and therefore students do not acquire the core meaning of the word. Subsequent to our research, the level of *leave behind* has been raised to B1 in the Wordlists.

The most difficult item out of 100 in this study is *split up*, whose level is B1, with the meaning “to finish a relationship”. The percentile correct is 0.00. Only two students out of 1622 got the item right. The reason might be that “relationship” is one of the topics which tend to be avoided in authorised English textbooks in Japan, so Japanese students have very few opportunities to encounter English expressions related to this kind of topic. Japanese students as well as Japanese teachers never talk about relationships in the classroom, whereas, for example, European learners have a lot of exposure in their textbooks to relationship issues and coverage of the language that attaches to them.

In this study, a number of phrasal verbs with multiple meanings were deliberately chosen. Those meanings are quite often assigned to different levels. According to the Wordlists *go on* has three meanings within A1-B2 level: “to happen” as in “What’s going on?”, “to continue to happen or exist” as in “The meeting went on until six o’clock.”, and “to continue

doing something” as in “We can’t go on living like this.” The first two meanings are labelled B1, and the last one is labelled B2. However, in our study, the B2 item turned out to be the easiest of the three. Although this phrasal verb is given three distinct meanings, in our own view, they are very similar. The essential meaning of “go on” is more or less related to “continuation”. Therefore, these differences in difficulty should be attributed to something other than “meaning”. A close examination reveals that only the third (B2) meaning has an animate subject. This is an easy construction for Japanese EFL learners, because animate subjects are “unmarked” in the Japanese language, so they are more familiar to Japanese learners, and therefore easy to process. The reason why “What’s going on?” appears to be easier than “The meeting went on ...” might be that the former is a formulaic expression.

### ***Limitations***

Some limitations need to be noted regarding the present study. One is that although there are 466 phrasal verbs included in the Wordlists, only 100 of them were tested in this study. If different items had been selected, the results might have been different.

Another possible limitation is that the response to this elicitation device used in the research is different from the writing process of an exam answer. In the latter process, the examinees can decide which expressions to use in the essay by themselves, whereas in the former process, the examinees are required to produce the phrasal verb indicated by the stem of the test item. This difference might have affected the results.

Finally, it should be noted that only Japanese students participated in this study. If the test had been administered to learners with other L1 backgrounds, the results might well have been different.

### ***Further research***

For further research, three points should be considered. Firstly, a new selection of phrasal verb items should be based on the frequency information from the English textbooks, and those textbooks scrutinised should include some used at senior high, as only there will the level reach B2. In this study, test items were pre-selected without taking frequencies of occurrence of phrasal verbs in textbooks into consideration.

Secondly, numerical data such as frequencies from NS and NNS corpora could add more value to our data analysis, and more complex models, such

as generalised linear regression, could be explored using those variables. Thirdly, more advanced learners, such as university students or adult learners of English, should participate in the survey in order to test those items whose accuracy rates were very low.

## Conclusion

The primary objective of this study was to identify the actual difficulty of each phrasal verb in the English Profile Wordlists, and to explore factors that might explain the difficulties. The results of our analyses show that some items are not necessarily ordered as suggested by the Wordlists, which might suggest the need to make some adjustments to the CEFR level decisions. As for exploring other factors that could determine the level of a phrasal verb, one of them might be a learner factor and the other might be an input factor. Learners with specific L1 characteristics, such as linguistic features and lexical similarities, might acquire phrasal verbs in a different order from those with other L1 backgrounds. Moreover, learners are greatly influenced by the input they receive from textbooks and all sorts of texts in real life. Further administrations of the test are happening in Spain and the Czech Republic, using our test.

Although there are some limitations mentioned above, it is hoped that the results of this study will contribute to the improvement of the Pilot version of the A1-B2 Wordlists, to give more beneficial information to the future users of the Wordlists.

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# 30

## Effectiveness of a long-term extensive reading program: a case study

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Japanese English education has been suffering from students' low proficiency in English mainly because of the absolute lack of students' exposure to English in real life situations. Japanese students are rarely required to use English in their talking or writing activities on or off campus. For most of them, English is a subject to learn but not a language to use. We need an effective means to increase their exposure to English language if we want to improve their English proficiency, without sending all of them to study abroad. One of the candidates is extensive reading (ER), which has recently gained popularity in Japan. We expect our students to fill their minds with the scenes of the stories and have virtual experiences with the protagonists of the stories while reading.

This paper reports on a case study of a five-year extensive reading program for reluctant Japanese EFL learners. The effectiveness is measured with TOEIC tests, and three groups of students are compared. Group A, the control group, had traditional English education based on the traditional 'grammar and translation' method for six years. Group B, the experimental group, had 45-minute extensive reading classes once a week in addition to the traditional English lessons for five years starting from their second year. The students of Group C paused their English education at their third year, stayed in English speaking countries for one year, then resumed their traditional education for three years after returning to Japan. They all belong to the same college where students' initial English proficiencies are in the middle level of Japanese EFL learners of the same age.

All the students took two TOEIC tests, one in the third and one in the sixth year, and the score increments are compared to each other (Table 1). The students of group C took the first test after they returned home from their stay abroad.

Group	N	1 <sup>st</sup> Test		2 <sup>nd</sup> Test		Increment		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	t-value
A	23	323	76.6	387	93.3	64	86.7	(control)

Group	N	1 <sup>st</sup> Test		2 <sup>nd</sup> Test		Increment		
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	t-value
B	13	410	118.8	516	113.5	106	96.7	0.047
C	4	539	10.3	565	51.5	26	55.3	0.036
National average		386 <sup>*1</sup>		484 <sup>*2</sup>		98		

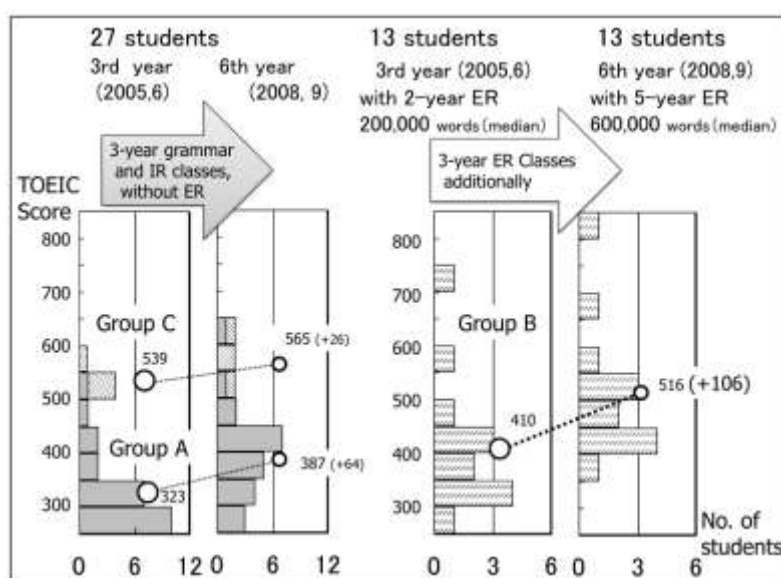
**Table 1:** TOEIC score increments with/without ER

<sup>\*1</sup> Average score of 11,513 third year high school students reported in ETS (2006)

<sup>\*2</sup> Average score of 59,176 third year university students reported in ETS (2009)

In both the first and second tests the average TOEIC scores of group A, the control group, were lower than national average for students of the same age. During the three years between the two tests, there was an increase of 64 points on average. Group C had the highest score in the first test just after their time studying abroad and the score exceeded the national average of third year high school students. In the second test the score increment was significantly smaller than that of group A. The students of group C hardly improved their English skills by following traditional English education after their time studying abroad, and they were losing the advantage.

The students of Group B scored higher than those of group A in the first test, and the average score was slightly higher than the national average. The score increment of group B was also significantly higher than the control group. Their average score in the second test was higher than the national average of third year university students.



**Figure 1:** TOEIC score distributions with/without ER



Score distributions of group B (Figure 1, right hand side) also show that both the students of lower and higher proficiencies improved their TOEIC scores during the three years between tests. It shows that additional five-year ER lessons were effective in improving English skills of students with widely different levels of proficiency.

One of the features of the ER program is its long duration. All the students of group B followed the same instructions, to read English texts regularly, in and out of the classes, and recorded their reading histories in journals. During the five years, a half of the students read 600,000 words of English texts, which is considered to be more than ten times of the amount read by the students of the control group.

The second feature of the extensive reading program is the readability of English texts. The students in group B started their reading from picture books, tried to read as many easy-to-read books as they could find in the college library, and, by their fourth or fifth year of the program, became able to read story books in the A2/B1 Council of Europe levels. They have been reading far easier-to-read books than the ones recommended by many ER programs such as the Edinburgh project (Figure 2). The solid line in Figure 2 show the recommended readability levels shown by Mateer (2009), which are roughly equal to the recommended readability levels of Edinburgh project. The vertical axis of Figure 2 is expressed in YL, the readability scale for Japanese EFL learners proposed by Furukawa et al. (2010), which shows the YL of each level of major Graded Readers: Cambridge English Readers (CER); Penguin Graded Readers (PGR); and Oxford Bookworms (OBW). The broken line in Figure 2 shows the actual readability levels of the students in our ER program.

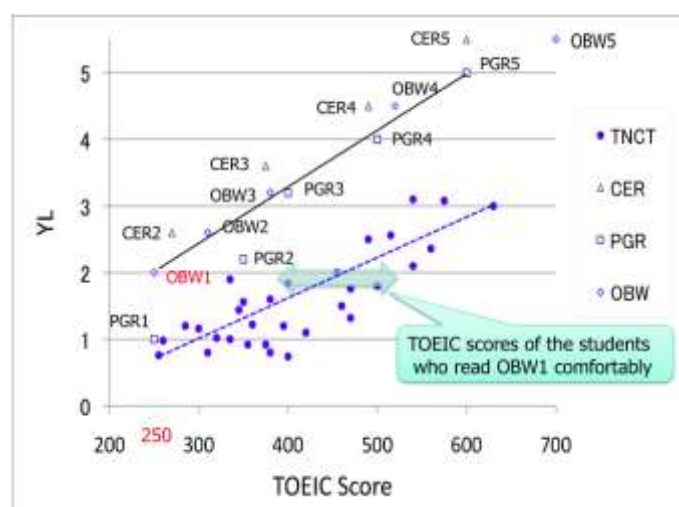


Figure 2: Readability levels of recommended English texts

For example, Oxford Bookworms level 1 (OBW1) is the series of books recommended to students whose TOEIC score is 250 according to Mateer, but the students who can read OBW1 smoothly in our ER program score about 450 in a TOEIC test. If we recommend that students whose TOEIC scores were 250 should read OBW1, the only thing they could do is translate every word into Japanese, which takes them several hours to complete the 6,000 words of the texts. Such an activity is commonly done in Japanese high schools, but it is translating, not *reading*. We also found that reading English texts is often fun for Japanese EFL learners, but translating is rarely fun.

This study showed the effectiveness of a long-term ER program in an EFL environment. The long duration allows the students to enjoy easy-to-read English books with little intervention from English-to-Japanese translation. It also suggests the needs of far easier books for EFL learners, compared with ESL learners.

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# 31

## The Relation of Identities, Power and Culture in Lingua Franca English: Diaries of Japanese Users of L2 English

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### Introduction

Since the mid-1990s, studies on L2 identity have flourished and contributed to L2 learners being seen as individuals with multiple and fluctuating identities, and have explored how L2 learners' identities are constructed and negotiated in the situated L2 learning environment. The common position on identity is a poststructuralist view. Identity is not fixed, but rather is socially constructed, changes over time, and therefore is seen as a site of struggle. Identity refers to a sense of who people are and how they relate to the world. Also, identity construction is about the 'desire for recognition' (West 1992: 21) meaning 'the sense of being acknowledged; a deep desire for association', 'a profound desire for protection, for security, for safety, for surety' (Norton 2000; Kanno 2000).

Much L2 identity research studies recent immigrants who learn a new language to assimilate into new communities. For instance, Norton (2000) explored adult female immigrants in Canada from different countries. McKay and Wong (1996) and Miller (2000) investigated adolescent Chinese immigrants in a U.S. and in an Australian mainstream school, respectively. Others contributed to the research in non-immigrant contexts, but often targeted specific and narrower contexts compared to those in immigrant contexts. For example, Jackson (2008) researched ethnographically on Hong Kong university students' border crossing, i.e., the context of studying abroad. In the language classroom context, Duff & Uchida (1997) explored Japanese EFL teachers' identities at private language schools where they collaborate with NS teachers, and Morita (2004) studied Japanese students' identities and their academic socialization in a Canadian graduate school.

Research exploring the identities of Japanese users of L2 English (e.g., Block 2006) in their relationship to the wider social world is scarce. Because of the spread of English, many English interactions are conducted regardless of the speakers' physical locations and L1 background, i.e., Lingua Franca English (LFE) (not excluding NSs). L2 English speakers' identities need to be understood under such glocal English use, because

identities of L2 English users are negotiated through (non-)access to linguistic resources and interactional opportunities.

### **Power relations on L2 learning and use**

Power relations affect the (re)construction of linguistic identity (Block 2007; Norton 2000; Jenkins 2007). Norton (2000) defines the term 'power' as 'the socially constructed relations among individuals, institutions and communities through which symbolic and material resources in a society are produced, distributed and validated' (p. 7). Power relations can affect identity construction positively/collaboratively or negatively/coercively. They can either empower individuals so that they can build up favourable subject positions in their communities, or constrain them, subsequently enabling them to resist or withdraw from communication (Norton 2000).

Thomas (1983) discussed uneven power relationships between NSs and NNSs, although NSs may be unaware of the fact, because NNSs see themselves as disadvantaged. Moreover, NNSs feel insecure because they do not have as automatic and free cognitive access to the language being used as their NS interlocutors (House 1999). Conversely, House postulated that interactants in NNS-NNS talk feel secure and fearless because of NSs' absence, i.e., they are in power-free environments. Meanwhile, Jenkins (2007) mentioned other aspects of power relations in NNS-NNS communication. The constraints on teachers/learners' choices mean that they frequently comply with native competence that is supposedly superior to theirs. Thus, NNSs apparently see themselves as unequal and rank themselves according to, for instance, accent.

If the power relations described above contribute to how L2 English speakers negotiate their identities in NNS-NNS interactions (Jenkins 2007), it is worthwhile to explore how such power relations are constructed and influence L2 English users' identities in social interactions.

### **Shared culture/ethnicity in L2 English use**

The notions of culture and ethnicity also greatly influence identity construction. Cultural and ethnic identity is seen as one level of multiple identities, referring to an emotional/subjective sense of belonging, affiliation, and identification with the larger cultural and ethnic group (Ting-Thoomey 2005: 214-215). Physical appearance, racial traits, language usage, national origin, religion, ancestry, etc., can be formulas for

identity construction. However, culture/ethnicity<sup>14</sup> is not a pre-conceptualized notion, but something (re)constructed during social interaction (Baker 2009).

For L2 English users, the degree of their sense of belonging to a larger cultural/ethnic group fluctuates because communication is intercultural. Similarly, individual perceptions of the cultural/ethnic group change depending on their interlocutors. Jackson (2008) documented identity reconstruction during interactions with culturally dissimilar others in a study of female Hong Kong university students and their experiences of studying abroad. These students became more aware of their cultural/ethnic identities through their experiences of staying in England.

In English-speaking countries, east-Asian students, a visible minority with foreign accents, often encounter perceived marginalisation. Similar to Jackson's (2008) study, ethnic Chinese adolescent students in a mainstream school in Australia (Miller 2000) underwent cultural/ethnic identity reconstruction due to their experience of being a marginalized minority.

However, few studies have documented how Asian L2 English speakers negotiate their identities through interactions with culturally similar others (e.g., other Asian L2 English speakers) in LFE world.

### **The present study**

The objective is to explore the identities of Japanese users of L2 English (hereafter, L2 users) when using English in glocal contexts through their day-to-day L2 English use. As mentioned above, English is used regardless of speakers' physical locations and L1 background. Without exception, L2 users are also communicating in English regularly inside or outside Japan. Through English interactions, their identities are constructed and negotiated. By observing their day-to-day English use (often outside classrooms) via their diaries, I will answer the following two research questions. First, how do power relations between NSs and NNSs with Japanese L2 users emerge in the users' identities? Second, how are the L2 users' identities reflected by perceived cultural and ethnic similarity/closeness with the interlocutors? Having explored how power relations and shared culture/ethnicity are socially constructed and influence

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<sup>14</sup> Differentiation between cultural identity and ethnic identity is indefinite (e.g., "culture can refer to ethnicity" (Collier & Thomas 1988: 103)).

the L2 users' identity negotiation, I will discuss the analysis in relation to their current or future membership in imagined communities<sup>15</sup>.

## Participants

The participants include nine Japanese users of English. Three were living in Britain (females, mid-20s to mid-30s), and six of them were living in Japan (five females and one male, early-20s to mid-30s) at the beginning of the diary study. All reported that they use English regularly (for example, daily conversation, at work, and outside classrooms). The focal participants in this essay are Isuzu and Yayoi, both UK sojourners.

## Method

The method of qualitative inquiry is diary observation. I chose this method because I was interested in understanding how L2 users perceive their own thoughts and feelings with regard to their day-to-day English use, especially in occurrences that may be so minor that people may not remember them when they are being interviewed.

The diarists were instructed to record communicative events/activities that were conducted in English, about which participants felt positively or negatively, and to clarify or expand the issues raised. The file with my questions was sent back by e-mail to the original diarist, who responded to the questions. Generally, I received their diary entries weekly or fortnightly. The study lasted from six to eight months, depending on the respective participants' frequency of diary entries. The numbers of diaries received from each diarist ranged from 11 to 20 entries.

## Findings

### *Narrative of Isuzu*

She has lived in Britain for about six years since 2003 for her higher education up to the doctoral level. Despite her lengthy stay in Britain, she often struggles with English interactions in daily life because of her lack of confidence in her English proficiency.

Isuzu talked of experiences she perceived as discrimination against her.

I went to Tesco yesterday. A lady at the till (British, 20's) was unfriendly. She had a sullen attitude and spoke coldly. When a store staff's attitude is bad, if it is in Japan, I just think, 'Ah, this store staff has a terrible attitude' but when I'm in the U.K., I think 'is it because I'm Japanese?' It's not

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<sup>15</sup> Imagined communities' are 'groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination' (Kanno & Norton 2003: 241). Communities are constructed through the imagination of people, who perceive themselves as a part of the group.

simply ‘terrible mannered staff’, but I think, ‘staff who changes his/her attitude depending on customer’s race’. After I encounter such events, when I speak to other British people (except for friends), I get nervous a little. The problem lies with the store staff if the person is a discriminator, but I am starting to think that other people, who have nothing to do with this store staff, may actually look down on some [minority] people in their mind, which is covert discrimination. Because of wariness that I don’t want to be treated with cold attitude, I get nervous about it [speaking to British people]. (Isuzu Diary 10: 2009-08-30. Translated from Japanese.)

Elsewhere, she explained that the reason behind the perceived discrimination was not only based on her racial background but also her ‘limited’ English competence. She felt that she was in a powerless position. Here, the power relation is represented between Isuzu who is a ‘racialized’ being with ‘disadvantaged ability’ in English and the British who comprise the majority of the community speaking British English (e.g., Jackson 2008). Her sense of self as an English speaker was misaligned. Subsequently, she hesitated to engage in future interactions with British people because she was afraid of being a victim of identity misalignment again.

However, she was more comfortable speaking English with culturally similar others. In the next episode, she discusses how she felt about her chat with a Taiwanese friend met on a bus by chance.

Among non-native English speakers, I thought it is easier to speak to them compared to speaking to a NS. When I speak to a NS, I care about my grammatical mistakes and such more compared to when speaking to NNS. I think I feel at ease most when the conversational partner’s English [proficiency] is similar to mine. And I feel at ease most when the other’s nationality is in [pan-]Asia. Probably when both nationality and English competence are closer to mine, I would feel more at ease because I would feel intimacy with him/her. (Isuzu Diary 9: 2009-08-21. Translated from Japanese.)

Because she does not have to worry about her ability to speak English, she feels more relaxed to interact with them. Additionally, perceiving that she shares a similar culture with her east-Asian interlocutor facilitates comfort during the conversation.

Her identity as an English speaker was negotiated by her interactants. When her identity was misaligned, she could not invest more in interacting with the majority of the immediate community. Conversely, when she interacts with culturally similar others, her identity as an English speaker was affirmed.

### *Narrative of Yayoi*

Yayoi is a Ph.D. student in applied linguistics, in her late 30s. She has lived in Britain for six years for postgraduate study. She generally demonstrates great investment in using and learning English. She said English was ‘the most natural language’ for her because she has lived in Britain using English extensively. She was comfortable with using English ‘when feeling (assessing) that the other person has the same or lower English level’. Her identity as an English user was changeable based on her self-perception of English proficiency. Despite English being the most natural language for her, through lengthy living in Britain, and near completion of her doctoral degree, her self-perception of English proficiency was quite low, and she described it as ‘intermediate’. This is probably due to how she compares her English ability with other English speakers, especially NNSs, around her.

As an example, in this diary entry, she describes an experience of feeling uncomfortable when speaking to a NNS with more fluency in English than she has.

When I was about to leave a lab today, a young guy sitting next to me spoke to me and found it was Mark (Dutch, 21 years old). I felt like leaving the place as soon as possible because when I chat with him, I always feel my low English ability. He is almost a native speaker of English and also speaks super fast. I get nervous and feel a pressure when I speak to him, and so I make mistakes that I usually do not make or I cannot remember easy words. While we were chatting today, he always asked me questions and I just answered. I could not ask him anything and my answers were short. I knew it was not good, but I could only manage to follow what he said and what I should say. (Yayoi Diary 10: 2009-09-14. Original in English.)

She feels so uncomfortable speaking to the interlocutor that she cannot make any effort to facilitate the interaction. Speaking to a more fluent NNS makes her nervous because she compares her own fluency with his/hers. She puts herself in a powerless position by comparison, because as a NNS, there are fair chances for her to be able to speak English as fluently as he. Therefore, she blames herself for her ‘low English ability’ and ‘regret that she had not made opportunities to expose to English’. She always puts forth effort to use English; however, when she is actually engaged in social interactions where she feels uncomfortable about her self-perception, she cannot invest much effort for further interactions. Consequently, she resorts to not having to expose her ‘poorer’ level of English by withdrawing from the conversation.



Interestingly, when she explains more about this interlocutor, it appears that his ethnic background and racial trait is an additional issue.

He is from Holland but his parents are both from one of the East Asian countries. So, he just looks Chinese or Japanese. From my experience, usually people from those countries do not have a high English proficiency level or they can speak but pronunciation is really bad, etc. But this is not the case to him, and so, I think it gives me a pressure.

[...] I do not expect Asian people to speak English very well (both pronunciation and fluency) [...]. Even if he were Japanese who were born and grew up in Japan and had such a high proficiency, I would feel a pressure merely because of his Asian looking. (Yayoi Diary 10: 2009-09-14. Original in English.)

She cannot imagine east-Asian-looking NNSs as near-native English speakers. Sharing racial traits with him, but not similar English proficiency, creates great pressure on Yayoi. Sharing culture/ethnicity with other (east-)Asian English speakers means sharing physical appearances and similar degrees of English proficiency. A person who is an ethnic Asian speaking L2 English fluently violates Yayoi's perception of the shared culture/ethnicity of L2 English users. When her perception of sharedness is violated, it puts even more constraints upon her identity as an English user.

## **Summary and discussion**

I presented narratives from two diarists focusing on how power relations and perceived shared culture/ethnicity were constructed. The relations of power and culture/ethnicity with various interlocutors affect their identity negotiation and construction in the community of English users. How they positioned themselves was different in each communication episode.

Identities of the L2 users were fluctuating; often, they saw their position as an English user related to their interlocutor's English competence. Commonly, the L2 users recognised equal status with peer NNSs. Some stated that being NNSs is what they share, that is, having a foreign accent, making linguistic mistakes, and sympathising with the difficulty of learning/using L2. This perception of sharedness helped to construct equal power relations, and L2 users felt secure and positively affirmed in their positions as English users. They were legitimate L2 English users in this community of L2 English users who share similar degrees of competence.

Conversely, by recognising their lower English competence than the interlocutor (including NS and NNS), they experienced discomfort, anxiety, and insecurity, and sometimes inferiority about their position as English users because of lack of confidence in their L2 abilities. Such

feelings of inadequacy and low self-confidence were linked to power relations they had to negotiate in their social interactions (Norton 2000). With whom they found power imbalances depended on who saw symbolic power in what resources (Norton 2000). Some had to deal with unbalanced power relationships with NSs and others had to do so with NNSs with perceived higher competence. When the power imbalance worked coercively, it affected their identities detrimentally. Some were unable to invest in further communication, and others perceived the experience as discrimination. Consequently, their identities were misaligned (Norton 2000; Jackson 2008).

Cook (2008) explained that feeling insecure about their 'deficiency' in English use when interacting with NSs is a discourse of 'native speakerness'. Pavlenko (2003) discussed that L2 English users who experience power imbalances between NS and NNS are seeking membership in an 'imagined community of NSs', or an 'imagined community of L2 learners/NNSs'. Doing so has negative and undesirable effects on L2 English users' identities because they often perceive themselves as 'failures' in relation to NSs, and their self-perception is based on their English competence, which is a representation of aiming toward native-based competence. It is fair to say that many L2 users in my study are seeking and claiming their membership in the imagined community of NNSs/L2 learners, where they are engaged in a native/non-native dichotomy (Pavlenko 2003). To be and become fully-fledged members of imagined communities is to acknowledge each other as legitimate members, namely legitimate L2 English speakers (Norton 2001; Pavlenko 2003). In imagined communities where the NS/NNS dichotomy is relevant, it is restrictive for self-representation of L2 English users (Pavlenko 2003). They should be able to seek and claim their membership in alternative imagined communities where they can expand their identities.

It appears that what the L2 users perceive in sharing culture/ethnicity with the interlocutor was an important factor in identifying themselves positively as English users. They often expressed feeling close to, at ease with, and similar to L2 English users with east-Asian backgrounds. Ting-Toomey (2005) explained that such psychological effects lead to emotional security and maintenance of positive identity with culturally similar others in intercultural communications. Additionally, the participants commonly expressed that they would be understood well by interlocutors with perceived shared culture/ethnicity. This reveals that communication with

culturally familiar others can be more predictable, which leads to trust and reliability (Ting-Toomey 2005).

Perceived shared culture/ethnicity with the interlocutor is constructed within and by the lived experience of the L2 users as they participate in the communities of English speakers. When they perceive shared similar culture/ethnicity with their interlocutors, it played a robust role in endorsing their identities positively. They are active members of imagined communities of east-Asian speakers of English, where they are legitimate members and their identities as English speakers were empowered in this imagined community.

Scholars have contested the on-going discourse of native/non-native dichotomy, and proposed an alternative model to see 'NNSs' as multi-competent speakers/L2 users (e.g., Cook 2008). In this framework, we treat L2 users as legitimate speakers of the language rather than failed NSs, which can empower L2 users' identity. The imagined communities of east-Asian users of English offered places where the L2 users could claim fully-fledged membership and positive self-identification. However, they can potentially claim their multiple memberships in different imagined communities which link them to a wider world of English users. Having taken up Cook's multi-competent speaker, Pavlenko (2003) demonstrated that reimagining their linguistic membership and ownership by imagining themselves as members of a multilingual/L2 user community had a great impact on TESOL trainee teachers' identities. Imagining/reimagining themselves as members of an alternative community, for example, of multi-competent L2 users may have a significant effect on how they see themselves. There are options available to consider themselves as bilingual/multilingual, multicultural, and legitimate L2 users, so that they can find ways that empower themselves to reconstruct positive self-identification (Cook 2008; Pavlenko & Norton 2007; Pavlenko 2003). Providing an alternative vision for current and future possible selves by (re)imagining the process during education would help L2 learners optimise construction of their L2 identities (Jackson 2008; Kanno 2003; Kanno & Norton 2003; Pavlenko 2003).

## Conclusion

There are complex connections of power and culture for construction and negotiation of L2 users' identities in the communities of English users. The

analysis of lived experience of L2 users described how identities are socially constructed through the influence of power relations and shared culture/ethnicity, which are also socially constructed. The participants in my study are regarded as successful L2 learners from the language classroom point of view. However, their L2 learning trajectories have not ended yet, and they have struggled at times over imbalanced power relations, which influenced their identity construction negatively. We need to acknowledge the social world in which L2 English users participate from a glocal point of view, considering, for instance, to whom they have opportunities to speak, and how they establish their identities through LFE. With a little educational guidance they are capable of reimagining their membership in alternative imagined communities (e.g., multi-competent L2 users) where they can explore more identity options as legitimate L2 users and their identities are positively endorsed.

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# 32

## "It's OK as long as it's campur!" Mixing it up in Southeast Asia

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This paper was inspired by its title, a casual throwaway remark made by a Bruneian colleague in the midst of staffroom chatter sometime in 2010. I asked her to repeat what she had said to clarify that I had caught it accurately and would not misspell the Malay component of her sentence. I was struck by the way these seven words could capture the essence of what was happening around us and condense it so succinctly. The Malay word *campur* translates into English as 'mixed' and is an apt description of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Modern life is nothing if not mixed and herein lies the secret of its acceptability. The by-line of this conference theme-*Global and Local* also speaks to this mixture. We now live in a world where global and local elements have moved from being merely juxtaposed concepts to notions that variously collide, merge or reconfigure in places and spaces all over the world. Bauman's (2004: 26) "liquid modern world" captures this momentum. Its liquidity reflects the constant state of flux, the movements, the flows that surround us in all domains. Appadurai (1996: 33) termed them 'transcultural flows' and enumerated them as ethnoscapescapes, mediascapescapes, technoscapescapes, financescapescapes and ideoscapescapes. These relate to the flows of persons, information, technology, finance and ideology or ideas. Canagarajah (2005a: 17) added to this model by coining the term 'glottoscapes' to account for the interactions between languages that accompany and actuate all other flows and mixes. As denizens of such a world modern, man cannot but be caught up in the mix. We are all *campur*.

Against such a backdrop I aim to provide a synoptic overview of a research study currently being conducted in the locality of Brunei Darussalam, a tiny sultanate on the northern coast of Borneo island. The study explores the identities' quests of a group of 16 young adult Bruneians, 8 students and 8 teachers as they construct their multiple selves in this " 'era of identity' full of sound and fury" (Bauman 2001: 129). In capturing their locality I will attempt to represent its linguistic landscape by honing in on a number of road signs bearing witness to Brunei's colonial past as well as outlining some of the country's definitive features. In this way it is hoped that the 'local' can be constructed as a vibrant dynamic space. I will draw on research data offering a dual perspectival account of how the local

context is regarded by the participants themselves as well as by others. In conceptualising the 'global' I have chosen to veer towards a positive view that focuses on interconnectivity, translocal relationships (Canagarajah 2005b) and Friedman's (2005) image of a *flattening* world because these orientations are more in keeping with the notion of the agency inherent in the mixtures and hybridity that result. This stance hopes to avoid the triumphalism often associated with discourses of globalisation and also eschews the homogenising, Westernising or Americanising forces that can be a part of the globalisation spectrum whilst acknowledging that these need to be problematised.

Following a brief glimpse at Brunei's linguistic landscape, that is, language in the environment in the form of words and images displayed in public spaces (Shohamy & Gorter 2009: 1) the areas of food, language, and music have been selected to give readers a sense of some of the emergent themes of my study. All three are fertile areas in which mixtures can thrive and are also some of the most visible and universal of cultural manifestations. The global-local nexus can thus be regarded as a site where such universalism meets and interacts in various ways with the particularism of a given locality.

My presentation began by locating the country of Brunei Darussalam in South East Asia, not such a straightforward task as might be imagined given the promulgation of the notion that our world has shrunk into a veritable global village. Data from interviews reveal a general confusion about the exact position of Brunei on the world map with many people placing it in the Middle East, perhaps mistaking it for the vaguely homophonous emirate of Dubai. Participants' attitudes to this vary from amusement through frustration, exasperation and wounded national pride. Some explain the confusion as likely stemming from connotations associated with Brunei being both oil producing and Islamic. Among other salient features delineated were the country's small size, its designation of the Malay language as its official language, the presence of a pervasive national ideology and its century-long status as a British Protected State.

Having positioned Brunei geographically, the next step was to consider what 'local' means in terms of both this particular space and the persons who inhabit it. In conceptualising the local as both vibrant and dynamic I am drawing on Pennycook's (2010:7) assertion that "local practices construct locality" and that the local is not a fixed immutable entity but rather is always defined in relation to something else, in this case, the



global (Pennycook 2010: 4). In Brunei, in common with most other locations I would imagine, the word 'local' has a multiplicity of connotations that go well beyond the dictionary meaning of being *of or related to a particular place*. It is a word that regularly appears in Bruneian newspaper headlines and news broadcasts. A recent headline proclaimed "Local ideas could be part of global conversation" (Farah 2010). The word invariably confers insider status, a sense of being part of "us" rather than one of "them", a feeling of solidarity and of shared values and identities.

Regardless of this shared understanding, the issue of what actually constitutes the 'local' in our mixed world remains problematic. Moving away from the purist notion of *local* as meaning all that is heritage, traditional or authentic means acknowledging that the local embodies elements of all that has happened over time in that place. This includes colonialism in the case of Brunei, a time when elements of what was then British culture became inextricably mixed with the *local* culture as it found it. These elements have now become embedded in the reconstituted, evolving 'local' (Sassen 2003: 4) by virtue of both their contact and acceptance by the people here. Together they have formed and continue to form what is today's 'local'.

The road signs in Brunei's capital, Bandar Seri Begawan (BSB), bear witness to the way Bruneian and British cultures have interwoven and showcase how what was once *foreign* has become *local*. Therefore, sharing the assumption of linguistic landscape researchers that language in the environment is not arbitrary and random (Shohamy & Gorter 2009: 2) I focused on a number of street and other signs as a means of "unveiling the nexus between language and other social attitudes such as religion, ethnicity, nationality and race" (Coulmas 2009: 14). A typical signpost for a street name in the capital features the name first in Malay language rendered in Jawi ( a modified Arabic script for Malay) followed by the Malay word 'Jalan' or its abbreviation 'Jln' meaning road or street written in Rumi (Romanised Malay) combined with the actual name. Here we can see the mixture in public space: Jawi script asserts Brunei's Islamic faith, 'Jalan' further authenticates the position of the Malay language as the official language of the Sultanate, and what is perhaps most surprising is that many of the streets are still named for past British Residents from Brunei's Protectorate period ( Figure I). There are streets names such as "James Pearce", "Cator" and even one called "Elizabeth 2". In addition, one of the royal palaces is known as "Istana Edinburgh" and Brunei's finest hotel completed a mere ten years ago bears the name "The Empire".



**Figure 1:** Local street names

The linguistic landscape of Brunei features street signs immortalising its colonial masters and buildings bearing names that honour its links with the former colonial power. This could be regarded as contradictory or seen as somewhere along a continuum between Bhabha's (2004: 13) "celebratory romance of the past" and an articulation of a new local reality that has absorbed its past and moved beyond it. This peek at Brunei's linguistic landscape supports the contention that "...signs are part of ideological social practice" (Sloboda 2009: 181) and testify to the dynamism of the relationship between state ideology and the linguistic landscape of Brunei (Sloboda 2009: 1790).

Brunei's apparent lack of antipathy towards its former coloniser, as evidenced in its current linguistic landscape, may also have been instrumental in the decision to opt for a bilingual (Malay-English) system of education on regaining full independence in 1984. In fact, the country retains many links with Britain. All of the participants in this study have taken Advanced ('A') Level examinations administered by Cambridge International Examinations and many have studied at British universities. This suggests an openness to influences other than the local and a desire to engage at a global level. Participants recall early influences on their English language learning which include the Ladybird series "Peter and Jane", Enid Blyton's "Famous Five" series, "Sesame Street" television programmes and "Archie" comic books. All of these reflect an earlier

version of what we now call 'globalisation' and each is steeped in a tradition that would have been alien to the locality of Brunei at that time. The increased rate and reach of globalising forces has likely made this less so for the current generation of English language learners. However, participants did not recall being adversely affected by these materials instead viewing them as benign resources that helped their language acquisition. When it comes to language use mixing is regarded as natural with one student participant confidently asserting "That's what Bruneians do." while a teacher participant acknowledges "There's bound to be moments where you mix Malay and English...it depends on the contexts". Another student takes this a step further by applying the notion of mixing to education systems as a whole, she claims "I think mixing is good....I always thought that if you mixed Western educational systems with Asian educational systems it would just work out perfectly".

Mixture or *campur* seems inevitable in all spheres of modern life as transcultural flows are facilitated by greater mobility and technological capabilities that were once beyond our wildest imaginings. Nowhere is that more visible than in the gastronomical world. Food touches everything according to Counihan and Van Esterik (2008: 3) citing the renowned food writer M.F.K. Fisher and it "unites all humans" (p8). Our world has become a global smorgasbord (incidentally this word is a synonym for 'mixture') where the flavours of all nations can be shared and savoured. Yet all is not lost in the sharing, Japan retains its claim to sushi, Italy is regarded as the home of pizza and Brunei clings to its unique ambuyat. Though largely unknown outside of the country as yet, this dish which is derived from the interior trunk of the sago palm and dipped in sour fruit sauce using a special bamboo fork, could be regarded as Brunei's national dish. Participants stress that this dish is uniquely Bruneian and defines home for them in a culinary sense. Some recall craving the dish whilst overseas and as an expatriate living in the country I am frequently asked if I have tried it. Anecdotal evidence gleaned from conversations and Facebook indicates that Bruneians will eat ambuyat before leaving the country for an extended period (such as overseas study) and soon after they return. This suggests that local flavours still have their place in the modern world despite the influx of exotic temptations from elsewhere and far from being subsumed they may even enjoy a revival of interest as an assertion of local identity.

Food plays a central role in all festivities and social events in Brunei. One such occasion is the birthday of His Majesty Hassanal Bolkiah, the Sultan,

which takes place in on July 15<sup>th</sup> and leads to a month long much-anticipated celebration. In 2010 this coincided with the FIFA World Cup in South Africa, an event that attracted worldwide audiences including avid Bruneian fans. One of the globally disseminated images that emerged was that of *Paul the Octopus* who gained a reputation as the World Cup oracle. In an example of “appropriation of the global by the local” (Canagarajah 2005b: 10) and “local take-up” and “re-organization of the local” (Pennycook 2007: 7) *Paul* became *Paulo* and featured in a cartoon strip in one of Brunei’s English language daily newspapers. This time he was not predicting winning football teams since gambling is prohibited by Islam and is illegal in Brunei. Instead he was required to indicate which of two fast food items would prove most popular at open air food stalls during the July holiday period. The choices were both local specialities, a dessert made with coconut milk mixed with shaved ice, palm sugar and red beans known as *cendol* or ironically, a savoury dish called *sotong tutuk* which translates into English as ‘hammered squid’! This is a traditional finger food made from dried squid that has been hammered to tenderise it, which is served with a sweet, spicy sauce. The picture suggests *Paulo* will opt for the *cendol* rather than his fellow cephalopod. Apart from its pure entertainment value, this could be regarded as a potent example of how unwelcome elements (in this case gambling) can be removed and content modified to embrace the global whilst simultaneously localising it. Mixing makes it acceptable. It’s okay as long as it’s *campur*.

I chose to end my presentation by playing a hit song performed by Malaysian artist Zee Avi. Entitled “Kantoi” which translates as “Busted” it tells a story of infidelity in lyrics that move seamlessly from Malay to English. It is the essence of perfectly interwoven *campur*. Similar Bruneian examples include “Sudah Enough” by prominent local artist Adi Rani. The choice of the Zee Avi track is based on its having had more extensive airplay outside of the locality. This paper treats the area of music cursorily based on the scope of my presentation. I do however acknowledge that music is among the most influential sites for global and local interaction given its universal appeal and our unprecedented technological capability to spread the many unexplored, under-exposed musical traditions that exist, but have remained unheard in all but their immediate locations. It is an area that will be given much more comprehensive treatment in my research study.

The reality of globalisation for most people is where the global meets the local in their daily lives rather than an abstract, disembodied concept to be

pondered. I will conclude with the words of one of the student participants in my study speaking about globalisation from a Bruneian perspective: "...in Brunei it's something like the middle ground...I think it's the unique blend that we get between modernisation and, you know, mixing our culture into it..."

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# 33

## "Localising" the CEFR and ELP: The Need to Incorporate Socio-Pragmatic Features in Japanese University EFL Classes

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### Introduction and background

In 2002, Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) established *An Action Plan to Cultivate "Japanese with English Abilities"*. The plan emphasises the need for the development of communicative ability in English (MEXT 2002), which had long been neglected in EFL education in Japan. This prompted wide-spread attention to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and the European Language Portfolio (ELP) at Japanese universities. In particular, the CEFR self-assessment grid has been increasingly introduced as tools to develop more communicatively oriented as well as standardised, coherent and transparent curriculum. On the other hand, the goal-setting and self-assessment checklists adapted from the ELP have been used in individual classes to foster learner reflection and autonomy (O'Dwyer, Imig, Jacob, Nagai, Naganuma & Sakai 2008). However, the applicability of these "European" tools to the Japanese EFL context, with its distinct characteristics both in terms of L2 use and teaching/learning culture, has yet to be established. This ongoing study set out to investigate if and how the CEFR and ELP can be used effectively in Japanese university EFL classes as tools to enhance students' reflective skills, with a specific focus on their "can do" statements. More specifically, this paper reports on the challenges the researcher faced when she introduced these tools into one-year weekly English classes, and suggests possible solutions.

### Method and preliminary findings

Four classes of approximately fifteen to twenty students (n=76) from four different faculties (Business Administration, Intercultural Communication, Law, and Letters) were involved. Three were taking compulsory intermediate English courses for first year students, the main focus of which was on oral communication. One was an elective course for beginner-level students in all years of study, the aim of which was to review the basics of grammar and the four skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing). All four were weekly 90-minute courses taught by the researcher, and lasted for two semesters (i.e. one year).

The CEFR self-assessment grid (levels A1 to B2) was first administered at the beginning of the year. A Japanese translation by Yosijima & Ohashi (2004) was used except for one class where English was used as the language of instruction. This was followed by a questionnaire in Japanese to obtain information about the students' previous experience of self-assessment and whether they encountered any difficulty completing the grid. Sixty-nine students completed the questionnaire. The results show that many (72.5%) had never conducted self-assessment of this kind. (11.6% indicated they did not remember.) However, only 13.2% indicated difficulty completing the grid. The most frequently mentioned was interpretational problems caused by the general nature of the descriptors. Also reported was a difficulty of self-evaluation, either in general terms, or due to the lack of previous experience of performing communicative tasks.

In addition, the researcher observed during the lesson that many students' performances in the conversational activities did not match their self-evaluation. In particular, the students tended to base their judgement solely on their (perceived) lexico-grammatical *knowledge*, rather than their *ability* to perform communicative tasks. It was observed during communicative activities that the students' performances were often socio-pragmatically inappropriate even when they could convey the gist of the literal meaning of their messages. Their performances were characterised by such features as extended silences, lack of verbal or non-verbal responses to the interlocutor and under-elaborated (often one-word) utterances. This observation coincides with some of the findings of the researcher's previous studies (e.g. Sato 2008) that Japanese EFL learners' communicative performance tends to be particularly problematic in the socio-pragmatic domain and that these learners tend to be unaware of this fact. In these studies it was suggested that this was probably because of negative socio-pragmatic transfer from Japanese, which has very different communicative conventions from those of English. It was also suggested that such transfer was, in turn, caused by the lack of communicative use of English due to the FL environment and the examination-oriented English education in Japan. The questionnaire results and classroom observation mentioned above support these findings and suggestions. Thus, it was felt crucial to incorporate the socio-pragmatic aspect, including non-verbal features, into self-assessment tools as well as regular instruction in order to raise these learners' self-awareness as to communicative conventions in English and to help them evaluate their own ability more effectively.



The original CEFR grid does not contain non-linguistic aspects, and the socio-pragmatic aspect is considered to be relevant only to learners at higher levels of proficiency (Little & Simpson 2003: 3-4). As the grid was difficult to modify without impinging on its original validity, socio-pragmatic elements were incorporated into goal-setting and self-assessment checklists, adapted from the Swiss version of the ELP (Schneider & North 2000, cited in Little & Perclová 2001) and *A Bank of Descriptors for Self-Assessment in European Language Portfolios* (2004). Different from the CEFR grid, which was used at the end of each semester in a summative manner, the checklist was used formatively in each teaching/learning unit. Both "can do" statements and the evaluative criteria in each checklist were modified in such a way to match the focus of each unit. Figure 1 below is a sample checklist used for the task of asking and talking about the summer holiday.

< Goal-setting & Self-assessment Checklists: Summer Holiday >				
Your Name: _____				
<p>● <b>Based on your recent experience</b>, think about what you can do according to the following criteria, and tick (✓) and enter dates in the appropriate columns on the right:</p> <p>*if I try very hard, spend a lot of time and use a dictionary and/or handouts frequently</p> <p>**if I spend some time to think and/or use a dictionary or handouts occasionally</p> <p>***easily and quickly, without using a dictionary or looking at handouts</p>				
Spoken Interaction: Level A2	*	**	***	→ Date achieved
I can ask simple direct questions about my friend's summer holiday.				
I can make comments and ask further questions to show my interest.				
I can answer simple direct questions about my summer holiday.				
I can elaborate on my answers to show my willingness to communicate.				
I can speak clearly and loudly.				
I can speak with a smile and keep eye contact to show my friendliness and willingness to communicate.				
I can use fillers and phrases to fill pauses when I have difficulty speaking.				
I can use gestures to show my willingness to communicate.				

**Figure 1:** Sample goal-setting and self-assessment checklist

The checklists were accompanied by the explicit instruction on the importance of socio-pragmatic appropriacy in communication, and by awareness-raising and practice activities using video-recording, and peer- and teacher-evaluation. (See Sato 2010 for the detailed description of the instructional procedures.)

At the end of each of the two semesters, the students completed the CEFR grid. This was followed by a questionnaire about the ease/difficulty of using the grid and about the usefulness and the impact of the checklists and other reflective practices. Fifty-nine and fifty-five students answered the questionnaires respectively. 11.9% and 5.5% of the respondents indicated difficulty completing the grid in the respective questionnaires, showing much ease at the end of the one-year instruction. In addition, a few students wrote such comments as “I can [perform the task] but not fluently” in the margin of the grid on both occasions. This could be interpreted as the learners’ heightened socio-pragmatic awareness of their own performance. Most respondents (93.2% and 89.1% respectively) found both the grid and other reflective tools and practices useful and reported their positive impacts on learning. They typically felt that these helped them to identify their own progress, strengths and weaknesses, and this in turn enabled them to set clear learning goals and study plans.

## Conclusion

This paper reported on some of the challenges faced in introducing the CEFR self-assessment grid and ELP goal-setting and self-assessment checklists in Japanese university EFL classes as tools to enhance student’s reflective skills. The initial administration of the CEFR grid, classroom observation and the first questionnaire survey results suggested the need for incorporating the socio-pragmatic aspect in self-assessment in order to raise awareness of the students, whose negative socio-pragmatic transfer from Japanese was likely to cause major communication problems. The improved ease of completing the grid and the positive impact of the reflective tools reported in the two end-of-the-semester questionnaires, as well as heightened socio-pragmatic awareness indicated by the comments on the grid, suggest that the approach was effective. The preliminary conclusion is that the socio-pragmatic aspect of communication needs to be incorporated in order for the CEFR grid and ELP goal-setting and self-assessment checklists to be used effectively in the Japanese university EFL context.

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# 34

## The Influence of Choice on Lexical Complexity in TBLT

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### Introduction

The aim of this study is to investigate how increased autonomy, through the introduction of choice, which may enhance foreign language learners intrinsic motivation will effect the changes that occur in the language output of learners when choice is introduced. Common in research assessing output in TBLT are three measures: accuracy, complexity, and fluency. However, this study will focus on one of these parameters of output—complexity, and this will be further defined by a focus on lexical complexity.

First, to define complexity. Increased complexity indicates change and development in the interlanguage system and is based on the ability of learners to take risks, use more syntactically complex language, and use more language subsystems with the possibility that such language may not be controlled effectively (Ellis 2003; Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005; Skehan 1996 2003; Skehan & Foster 1999). Complexity indicates how advanced, (i.e., subordinated) the learners' language is at the time (Skehan 2007).

In terms of language acquisition, complexity is very important. With increased complexity, students may effect more changes in their interlanguage, possibly increasing their acquisition of the language. Complexity in oral output in the task-based language teaching environment is seen as important enough that an entire colloquium at the AILA conference in 2008 was centered on the issue of complexity in task-based language teaching. Also, complexity as hypothesized by Robinson in his Cognition Hypothesis was highlighted in a special issue of *IRAL* (Robinson & Gilabert 2007) and was a central focus in a recent special issue of *Applied Linguistics* (Housen & Kuiken 2009). Researchers such as Robinson (1995 2001a, 2001b, 2003, 2007) and Skehan (1998 2007) center their concepts of language acquisition on increased complexity.

Many teachers desire the promotion of greater complexity in the oral output of their students. However, Robinson (2001a) stated that tasks designed to do this (such as the “There-and-Then” type of tasks) are also more difficult.

Some teachers may not wish to increase the complexity of students output through task design if it would increase the tasks difficulty and possibly cause a de-motivating affect. Through choice, it may be possible to increase complexity in the oral output with no possible loss to intrinsic motivation or interest in the task, possibly preventing de-motivation. This may mean that with the provision of choice, even more relatively difficult tasks, which are needed, according to Robinson, to increase complexity in the students output, may be utilized without adversely affecting those students intrinsic motivation.

## Choice and Motivation

The power of choice to motivate has been shown to exist in several studies. Even the illusion that there is a choice, such as when gambling (Langer 1975), has been shown to be a powerful motivator. For example, Zuckerman, Porac, Lathin, Smith & Deci (1978) studied university students who were given a choice of a puzzle form to complete and students who were not given a choice. The result was that the students who could choose the puzzle form spent more time completing the puzzle, possibly indicating greater intrinsic motivation. Zuckerman *et al.* (1978) stated, “people’s motivation is greater when they have more rather than less control over their environment” (p. 445).

A theory of human motivation that operationalizes choice is Self-Determination Theory (SDT). According to Ryan and Deci (2000: 68), SDT is an organismic metatheory of human motivation centered on the human capacity for inner personality development and behavioral regulation. Figure 1 shows the continuum of Self-Determination Theory from intrinsic motivation on the top through extrinsic motivation in the center to amotivation at the bottom. The strongest influence of intrinsic motivation is autonomy. For autonomy, the most important component is choice. If there is no choice, there is no autonomy, and if there is no autonomy, there is no intrinsic motivation.

<i>Motivation Type</i>	<i>Regulatory Styles</i>	<i>Locus of Causality</i>
Intrinsic Motivation	Intrinsic Regulation	Internal
Extrinsic Motivation	Integrated Regulation	Internal
	Identified Regulation	Somewhat Internal
	Introjected Regulation	Somewhat External
	External Regulation	External
Amotivation	Non-Regulation	Impersonal

**Figure 1:** The continuum of Self-determination (from Ryan & Deci 2000: 72)

Supposing that when choice is involved and that greater levels of affect may result, the question now is whether that would play a role in influencing the attentional resources a learner may utilize when conducting a task, and therefore, would have a positive influence on the complexity of the oral output of the students. Some research in the psychological field may help to answer this question.

Dember, Galinsky and Warm (1992) found that participants were more vigilant (in detecting bar flashes on a computer screen) when they were told that they had a choice of a difficult or easy task compared to those who had no choice of the difficulty of the task, even though there was no actual difference between the two tasks. Vigilance requires a high level of attention and this study postulated that it was possible choice may have had an influence upon the allocation of attentional resources.

This was a study that indicated the possible effects of choice upon attentional resources. Other researchers have studied the influence that positive affect in general, which includes positive emotions, greater interest, and greater intrinsic motivation, may have upon attention and complexity in general.

Isen (2000; 2002) speculated that with greater affect, people would be more willing to take a risk, are more willing to explore and try new things, increase their variety-seeking and cognitive flexibility, well as, effective thinking. Fredrickson (2001) claimed that greater affect would broaden the scope of attention and cognition and would create an urge to explore and take in new information. McDaniel, Waddill, Finstad and Bourg (2000) stated that greater affect may reduce the costs required to allocate attention to various aspects of text processing and may allow reader to focus on organizational and structural elements and less on extracting meaning. Hidi (1990) stated that greater affect would create greater automaticity of attentional allocation, which would involve attention, concentration, and persistence. Rowe, Hirsh and Anderson (2007) claimed that greater affect would decrease the capacity to process irrelevant information and would be facilitative in tasks requiring a more global style of information processing. Robinson (2007) claimed that affect plays a greater role on speech production, interaction, uptake, memory and focus on form for complex tasks.

Derryberry and Tucker (1994) made a strong case for the connection between motivation and the allocation of attention. In their paper, they

claimed that “motivational processes recruit attentional mechanisms to adaptively regulate perceptual and conceptual processes” (p. 168). In this case, motivational processes in part control attention which can influence the direction (spotlight) and breadth (zoom lens) of attention. The breadth of attention is the working memory, which, according to Robinson (2001a), is important in the learning of a second language. Derryberry and Tucker also stated that attention to local features requires left-brain usage but that attention to global features requires the right-brain. However, anxiety can enhance left-brain processing, bringing attention to local features, which may not meet the needs of the task. A recent definition of a task (Samuda & Bygate 2008) includes a holistic dimension, which attention to local features may not augment. According to Stotland and Blumenthal (1964), on the other hand, anxiety can be reduced by choice, perhaps matching the needs in the task.

### **The Outline of This Research**

The independent variable in this paper is the two levels of choice—the no choice of topic treatment in which the topic was pre-selected by the teacher, and the limited choice of topic treatment in which the students conducted the same type of task but could choose one task topic from amongst three topics preselected by the teacher. The type of the task, either a descriptive task or a narrative task, does not change.

Data from transcripts will be used to assess lexical complexity. This study will examine lexical complexity using assessment methods based on Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki and Kim (1998); (a) ratio of lexical to function words, (b) percentage of lexical to total words, (c) percentage of advanced words, (d) ratio of verbs to nouns and (e) Guiraud’s Index (Gilgibert 2007). Based on past research connecting greater affect (greater task interest) in Thurman (2008), it is possible that greater complexity in the oral output will result from higher levels of affect induced through task topic choice.

### **Research Questions**

For this study, the research question is whether or not the participants produce increased lexical complexity in their oral output when they could choose the topic of the task. Increased levels of autonomy may strengthen the participants’ affect to the degree to where differences may occur (Thurman 2008).



## Method

### *Participants*

The participants from which the data was elicited were 86 mostly first-year students attending five different English classes at a Japanese university, seated in 43 pairs. Their average age was 19 years. Of these students, 22 were male and 64 were female. All but two of the pairs were same-sex pairs. Each pair was the same two participants, sitting in the same seats, for the two treatments.

### *Task Materials*

The students performed a descriptive task during the treatment sessions. A common version of this type of task uses a picture that has to be described by one of the learners to complete missing information. The tasks in this study were closed, one-way, jigsaw, information gap tasks modified from Nicholson & Sakuno (1982). An example of this modification to the task is in Appendix A, showing the task used for the no-choice treatment sessions. For the narrative task type, the students completed a jumbled story from Heaton (1966).

### *Procedures*

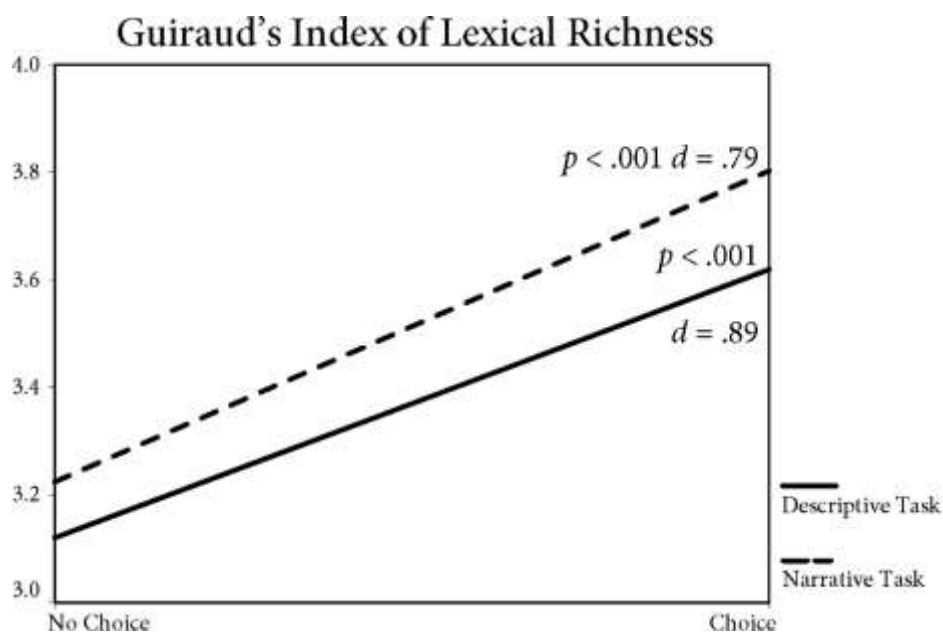
The data collection procedures for the no choice and limited choice sessions are shown in Appendix B. On the left of the figure are the procedures for the no choice of topic treatment sessions and on the right are the procedures for the treatment sessions with limited choice of topic.

## Results

Analysis indicated that of the measures utilized in this study, only the measure for lexical richness (Guiraud's Ratio showed an increase in the limited choice of topic treatment compared to the no choice of topic treatment for both types of tasks to a statistically significant degree. Figure 2 presents the results in a graphical format. In order to examine the differences between the treatments, *t*-tests were utilized (shown in the graphic). Cohen's measure of effect size(*d*) was also examined with this results also shown in the graphic. There was a large effect size for Guiraud's index of lexical richness ( $d = .89$ ).<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> For the record, the students in this study utilized more time, a measure of intrinsic motivation, to complete the descriptive task limited choice than the same task type with no choice ( $N = 43$ ,  $p = .001$   $d = .53$ ). In addition the entire population of participants for this study showed greater affect (task interest) for the limited choice narrative task than the narrative task with no choice ( $N = 140$ ,  $p = .004$   $d = .26$ ).



**Figure 2:** Results of Guiraud's Index of Lexical Richness

## Discussion

In this study, lexical complexity as measured by Guiraud's Index was statistically significantly greater for the limited choice of topic than for the no choice of topic. In addition, the effect size for the lexical measure was very strong, indicating a robust association between the introduction of choice and the increased level of lexical richness.

A reason that *Complexity* overall increased when choice was introduced may stem from an increased utilization of attentional resources in the limited choice treatment. Dember et al. (1992) found that their participants were more vigilant when they were told that they had a choice of a difficult or easy task. Therefore, the attentional resources of the students may have been stimulated to some degree towards improving complexity when they had choice in this study.

Why the effect was so large for the lexical measure may have a connection with a reduced negative bias in lexical access. Mirman, McClelland, Holy and Magnuson (2008) examined 80 participants in a university in the United States, half assigned to a high lexical attention condition, and the other half assigned to a low lexical attention condition. Each participant was asked to separate words, i.e., those that contained the phoneme /t/ or /k/ in a phrase sent out from a speaker, from non-words, i.e., those that did not contain either phoneme. Results indicated that the participants in the high attention condition (with 80% of the sample being target words) were statistically significantly quicker in recognizing non-words than the

participants in the low attention condition (with 20% of the sample being target words). Mirman et al. explained that there is a competition at the lexical layer between net input gain and negative bias. According to the authors:

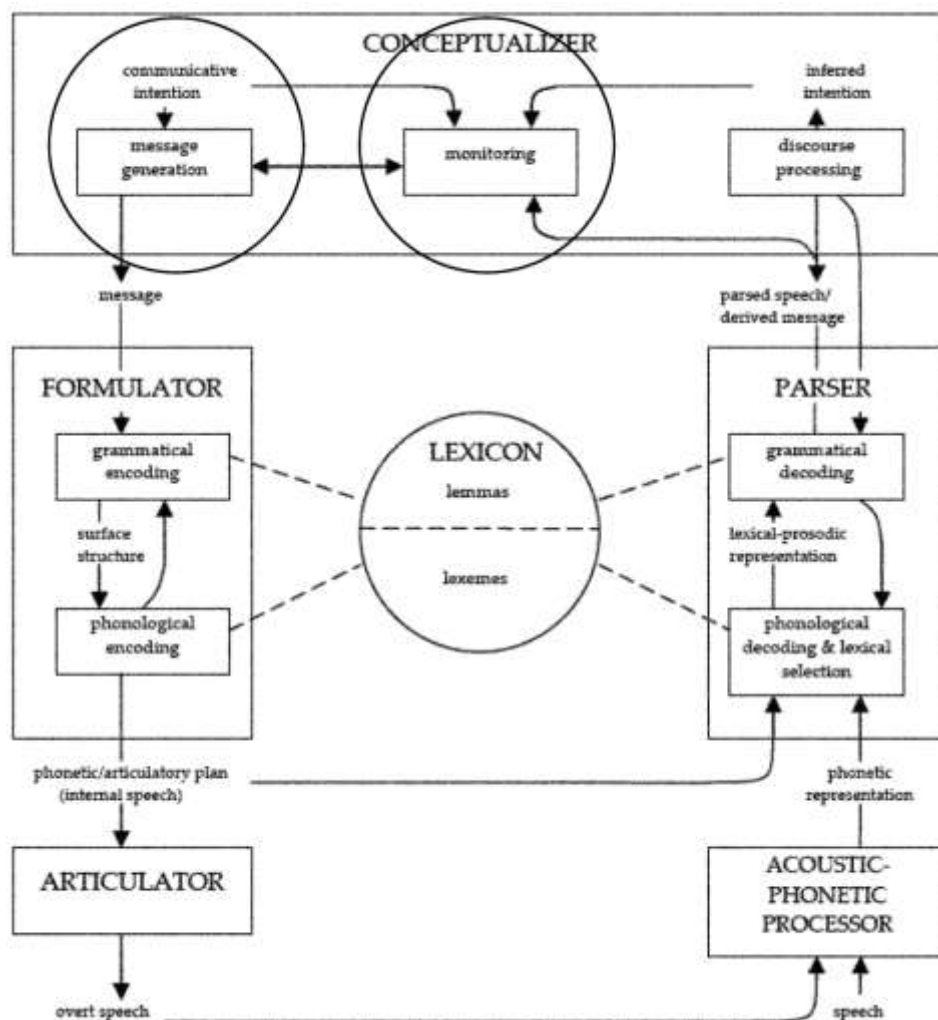
as net input gain ( $\alpha$ ) is decreased, lexical feedback becomes dominated by the cumulative effects of many words rather than the activity of the single best matching word. At high lexical attention the high activation of a single matching word provided facilitative feedback to phonemes in that word, giving rise to a word advantage, but at low lexical attention, no single lexical item could reach high activation levels (p. 409).

It is possible that with the introduction of choice, which increased the affective tendencies of the participants in this study, that rather than the net input gain improving, the negative bias was in some cases reduced, allowing greater access at the lexical layer (Mirman et al. 2008). This reduction of the negative bias could be from suppressed levels of anxiety, again promoted through the introduction of choice (Stotland & Blumenthal 1964; Thurman 2008).

In addition, it is possible that in Levelt's (1989) model of language production, the conceptualizer may be effected by increased attentional control enhanced by an increase in affect promoted by topic choice. According to Gilabert (2004):

[C]onceptualizing the message requires attentional control. That means that the different types of information needed to express the intention have to be attended to in order for them to be retrieved from long-term memory (LTM) and instantiated into working memory (WM), a task which is supposed to take up memory resources (pp. 28-29).

The figure below shows Levelt's model. Circled are the areas where this research may have had an effect. It is possible that with greater attention, the pool of vocabulary in long term memory was more open to be utilized in the working memory for message generation. It is also possible that with monitoring may also have been effected by the increased motivation introduced by choice.



**Figure 3:** Levelt's Model of Language Production

## Conclusion

In this study, choice seemed to be a factor in increasing students lexically complex output. The results indicated that choice is a viable procedure to implement previous to conducting lessons utilizing tasks based on task-based language learning guidelines.

The limitations of this study include the fact that an overwhelming majority of the participants chose one topic of a task in the limited choice treatment for both the descriptive and narrative task types. In the future, by incorporating more types of tasks, by eliminating some of the limitations of this study, and by including more methods of assessment, a stronger relation of choice to affect and oral output may be revealed to build a better foundation for curriculum design.

The results from this study indicate that there is an additional dimension to task implementation in the design of a task-based language teaching program, in addition to that of pre-task planning (Ellis 2003, 2005, 2009). There are various types of pre-task planning, such as strategic planning, and detailed and undetailed planning (Foster & Skehan 1996). As demonstrated in this study, a new procedure involving task topic choice can be utilized. The results of this study suggest that complexity can be increased through choice and students intrinsic motivation to engage in the task may also be improved at the same time, or, at least, not reduced when a teacher wishes to introduce more difficult tasks for the sake of promoting increased complexity in the output. Being able to improve linguistic and affective factors simultaneously would be beneficial for teachers and students.

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**Appendix A**  
Example of Descriptive Task  
(no choice of topic, second round task)  
*From Nicholson & Sakuno, 1982, p. 25*


Please describe the picture to your partner to complete the numbers.

Partner A: Page 1









Partner B: Page 1

In this picture, there are many missing pieces. Your partner will describe the full picture to you. Please put the numbers below next to the proper picture on Page 2.



Partner B: Page 2

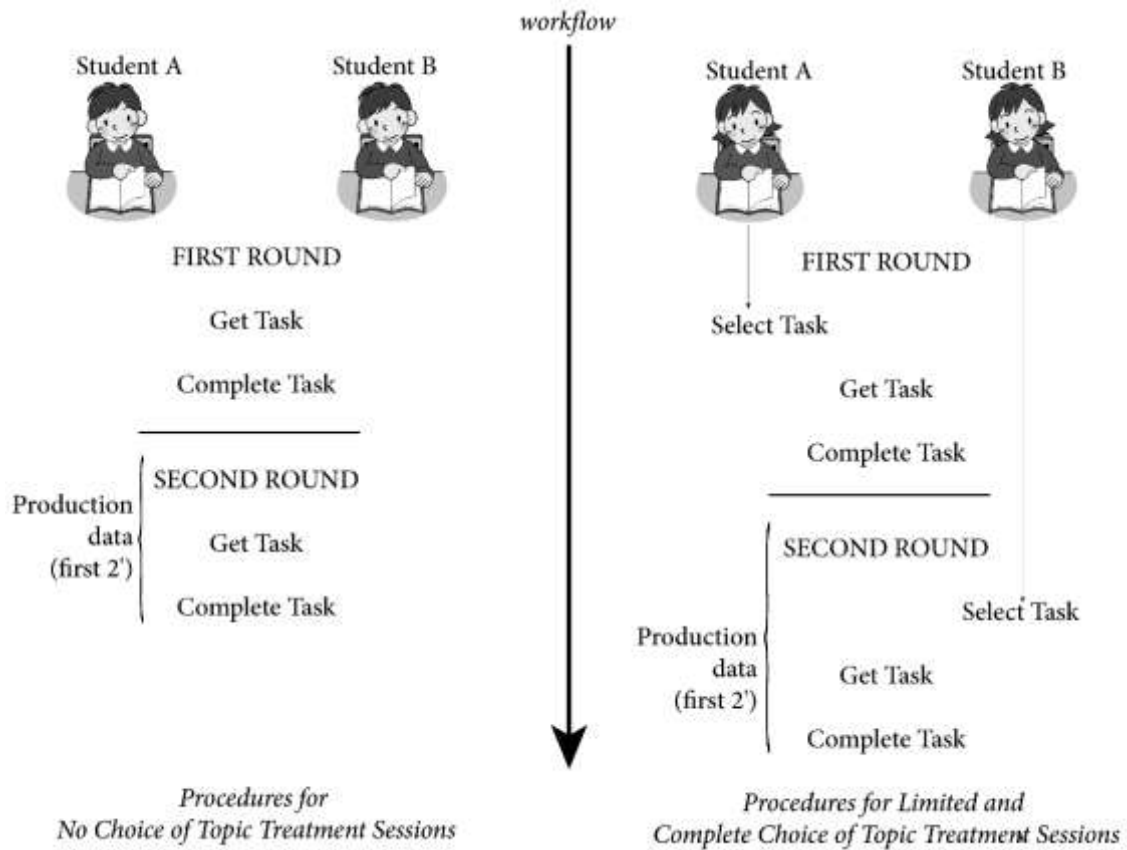
Where do these pictures go on Page 1? Listen to your partner describe the picture and please put the number of the missing piece where the picture should go. Thank you.





## Appendix B

### Procedures Diagram





# 35 Attitudes of tourists towards the perceived lack of English proficiency at international travel destinations

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If English is the *lingua franca* of tourism, one would expect that travellers would have similar attitudes about the levels of English they expect to find in all international tourist destinations. To test this assumption, this paper analyzes a selection of complaints about lack of English proficiency among hospitality industry employees located in various non-native English speaking destinations – Madrid (Spain), Punta Cana (Dominican Republic) and Phuket (Thailand). These complaints were all posted on TripAdvisor (URL: [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)), a website including advice and reviews written by travellers about hotels, restaurants and other attractions. The following analysis of some of these website excerpts will help show the circumstances in which travellers expect the locals to speak English. Excerpts are verbatim, and include the stated location of the reviewer in parenthesis after the quote.

The data was analyzed for who was expected to speak English, under what circumstances, and at what level of proficiency. The results reveal great complexity in tourist attitudes towards lack of local English proficiency, and not the simplistic viewpoints one might expect if the language is simply considered the undisputed tourism *lingua franca*.

## Accommodation Theory

Much research has been done over the past decades on what factors may affect an individual's speech patterns – including the influence of the interlocutor, the topic under discussion, and the setting in which the conversation takes place. Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) explains the motivation underlying style shifts – e.g., modifications in prosody or accent, or even choice of language itself – as a function of the speaker's relation to the interlocutor (Giles, Taylor and Bourhis 1973; Giles, Coupland and Coupland 1991; Giles and Powesland 1997), relative power, and the desire for approval. The frequency of comments in the data reflecting an expectation of local accommodation by using English shows clearly that many travellers place a very high value on language selection

convergence as a means by which to show respect and consideration, which in turn indexes power relations.

Although Accommodation Theory is based upon speech, not writing, it is adaptable to text – especially the data analyzed in this study which is much more ‘dialogic’.

Since its origination, the core concepts of Accommodation Theory have been applied to a very wide range of methodological designs that address convergence and divergence in interaction (Giles, Taylor and Bourhis 1973; Feldman 1968; Bourhis, Montarulli and Amiot 2007). This theory, with its emphasis on the perceived relationship between interlocutors as a determinant of style choices, is especially relevant to the language accommodations between the hospitality staff and the tourists. The choice of languages used in the tourism sector, both by employees in the local hospitality industry (hotel and restaurant workers) and by the tourists themselves, demonstrates both convergence and divergence behaviors depending on the individual situation. Accommodation theory states that the person with the most power is generally accommodated to, and the employees (and the hotels who hire them) would logically accommodate because they recognise that the tourists’ expenditures are the source of their employment and income. However, this paper will show that the level and extent of accommodation vary.

The current study uses “indirect observation” and thus focuses on the second perspective – the intent of the speaker – as the data precludes directly observing the behaviour of, or obtaining information from, the hearer. However, the objective of the writer is inferred through what is written – which may or may not be the same as what is meant. Therefore, to a certain extent, this study deals with how an addressee (the author of this study) perceives the intent of a text.

### **Cultural and Social Capital**

The concepts of cultural and social capital Bourdieu (1986) are important to the present study as they relate to the capital granted through proficiency in the English language. The value associated with English language ability is conveyed through the collective power “owned” by English speaking countries and the economic benefits assumed to be associated with the language’s acquisition.

Bourdieu (1991) also argues that linguistic exchanges are “relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized.” (p 37). Taking Bourdieu’s statement that languages can have relative value or *linguistic capital*, (Bourdieu 1991), it is reasonable to view attempts at accommodation as reflective of these differences in worth.

Use of Bourdieu’s terms describing the types of capital which are strictly symbolic is a departure from his original intent and claims. As Betensky (2000) described Bourdieu’s theories, he clearly stated that “symbolic capital is capital that says it is not capital” and that it is, by definition “convertible into material, ‘economic’ (in the most common sense of the term) capital.” (p. 208) While the arguments about the roles of cultural and linguistic capital in accommodation to local languages as outlined in the following analysis have some overt economic implications, these terms are used in more of a metaphorical sense than Bourdieu intended. This use will be supported by my data.

Indeed, Bourdieu’s theories regarding cultural capital have been deemed relevant – in metaphorical contexts – to tourism studies by several researchers (Jacobsen 2003; Hannerz 1990; Thompson and Tambyah 1999) These tourism studies serve as a precedent for using the various kinds of capital in the following analysis.

This analysis finds that local levels of cultural capital play a major role in tourist attitudes. Complaints about English proficiency show that the expectation of accommodation sometimes goes beyond the respective statuses of the interlocutors. Rather, the language itself has become metonymic, representing the power held by travellers, with the demand for English coming from native-speakers from all over the world as well as from some tourists who speak English as a second language.

This paper will analyse reviewers’ comments about communication problems to discover the source of their beliefs about who has responsibility for language accommodation – the tourist or the local hospitality industry staff – as well as to determine the role of the English language itself. Differences in the way the communication difficulty is described offer opportunities to analyze the effect of power and cultural capital on these issues. However, it should be noted that the explanations offered below are preliminary, and more data and analysis are needed to arrive at more solid conclusions.

## Madrid, Spain

Madrid hotel reviews do include some complaints about the lack of English, but many of the comments excuse the lack of English proficiency because the reviewer had anticipated this and accepted it. For example, the following excerpt describes proficiency problems, but also implies that this situation is consistent with the writer's expectations:

*"The staff is OK but their English isn't great, but that's the way it is in Madrid. If we ever went back to Madrid (which we wouldn't) we would stay in this hotel again."* (UK)<sup>17</sup>

The writer of the above review assumes at least partial responsibility for communication problems. Clearly, that the writer feels that there is a lack of English proficiency in Madrid; however, the review does not suggest that the solution is for the locals to learn the language, but for the tourist to go elsewhere if English proficiency is important. An excerpt with a similar viewpoint, entitled "*Just OK*," warns readers not to "*expect too much*" – including English speaking staff. The opinion that the lodgings are adequate even without English language proficiency shows that accommodation is not vital to fulfilling expectations:

*"The good things about this hostel*

*(1) Location*

*(2) Wireless Internet*

*(3) Air conditioning*

*Apart from that, do not expect too much. Staff does not speak english that well."* (Hong Kong)<sup>18</sup>

Although the following quote does not address language expectations directly, it includes information intended to portray the confines of local English language proficiency without making value judgments about those limitations, and indicates that the trip was worth making regardless:

*"But be warned - we queued 2 hours at the main railway station in Madrid to buy a ticket - although the station itself is worth a visit. English is not easily understood!"* (UK)<sup>19</sup>

The following review, depicting the hotel staff as "*skilled enough*," shows a writer's attitude that only a limited amount of proficiency is really required:

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<sup>17</sup> Retrieved August 25, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187514-d231636-r3622372-Intur\\_Palacio\\_San\\_Martin-Madrid.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187514-d231636-r3622372-Intur_Palacio_San_Martin-Madrid.html)

<sup>18</sup> Retrieved August 25, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187514-d239434-r5414461-Hostal\\_Madrid-Madrid.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187514-d239434-r5414461-Hostal_Madrid-Madrid.html)

<sup>19</sup> Retrieved August 25, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187514-d228600-r4029339-Maria\\_Elena\\_Palace\\_Hotel-Madrid.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187514-d228600-r4029339-Maria_Elena_Palace_Hotel-Madrid.html)

*“The staff we dealt with were not strongly proficient in English, but skilled enough to direct us where to find what we were looking for.” (USA)<sup>20</sup>*

The depiction of the proficiency of the hotel staff in the next excerpt [*“a range of English language ability”*] also ignores the question of who has responsibility for accommodation. In addition, the lack of importance attached to the absence of strong English language skills is shown in the phrase *“We ... would return given the opportunity.”*

*“Staff were friendly and helpful, but had a range of English language ability. We (a mature couple) would return given the opportunity.” (Australia)<sup>21</sup>*

### **Punta Cana, Dominican Republic**

None of the quotes about poor English proficiency within Punta Cana hotel reviews include any suggestion that the writers believe that tourists themselves are responsible for any degree of language accommodation. The failure of the hotel staff to speak English well is described as a “difficulty” or a “challenge”. The following review blames miscommunication and a “*language barrier*” on the fact that “*most [staff] did NOT speak english well.*”

*“The check in process was fine. Upon our arrival I realized that there would be a language barrier since most did NOT speak english well. Actually they barely spoke English.” (USA)<sup>22</sup>*

*“The staff does not understand English so it was very hard to communicate” (USA)<sup>23</sup>*

*Language barrier was challenging at times, some staff went well out of their way to assist others had very little interest in understanding (this was the minority). Dollar bills help in most cases.” (USA)<sup>24</sup>*

*“When we went to pay at about 940 the store clerk refused to sell us the items until she opened in the morning, apparently she had closed her drawer out early. I pleaded with her but she stuck to NO which seemed to be*

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<sup>20</sup> Retrieved August 25, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187514-d232819-r6082114-Hotel\\_Preciados-Madrid.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187514-d232819-r6082114-Hotel_Preciados-Madrid.html)

<sup>21</sup> Retrieved August 25, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187514-d622666-r7796402-Hotel\\_Room\\_Mate\\_Laura-Madrid.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g187514-d622666-r7796402-Hotel_Room_Mate_Laura-Madrid.html)

<sup>22</sup> Retrieved July 2, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d611114-r7381661-Riu\\_Palace\\_Punta\\_Cana-Punta\\_Cana\\_Dominican\\_Republic.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d611114-r7381661-Riu_Palace_Punta_Cana-Punta_Cana_Dominican_Republic.html)

<sup>23</sup> Retrieved May 11, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d611114-r5288676-Riu\\_Palace\\_Punta\\_Cana-Punta\\_Cana\\_Dominican\\_Republic.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d611114-r5288676-Riu_Palace_Punta_Cana-Punta_Cana_Dominican_Republic.html)

<sup>24</sup> Retrieved May 12, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d149395-r5607290-Paradisus\\_Punta\\_Cana-Punta\\_Cana\\_Dominican\\_Republic.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d149395-r5607290-Paradisus_Punta_Cana-Punta_Cana_Dominican_Republic.html)

*the only english word she knew. That was that. Not even a toothbrush!"*  
(USA)<sup>25</sup>

The reviewers quoted in the above excerpts clearly place the responsibility for any language barrier or failure to communicate on shortcomings of the local employees.

Some of the reviews go beyond mere description of language problems and indicate a certain level of resentment at the lack of English:

*"Make English a lanuage in Punta Cana" [title of review] The shows seemed good if you could understand the. Everything was done in a diffrent language. Never ENGLISH"* (USA)<sup>26</sup>

*"Tourists- 80% Spanish and very rude so if you are from anywhere else be prepared because nobody speaks English. This resort caters to the Spanish tourists mostly."* (Canada)<sup>27</sup>

The next set of reviews, although indicating a negative attitude towards non-English speakers, focuses on English language expectation as a personal preference rather than a general expectation.

*"I was happy to have visited the dominican but think I would have had a better time if I had stayed somewhere else. Not many english speaking people at this hotel."* (USA)<sup>28</sup>

*"...I'm glad a saw the beach and water but I have not intentions of returning back to the Domenican Republic. I'm on to a more "luxurious" resort in an English speaking Island."* (USA)<sup>29</sup>

The above quotes equate the value of the English language with luxuriousness, with the level of (dis)satisfactions linked to future destination choices. This reveals a monetary value to the language, counting it as one of the expected amenities in more expensive locations.

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<sup>25</sup> Retrieved May 12, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d150863-r3199871-Occidental\\_Allegro\\_Punta\\_Cana-Punta\\_Cana\\_Dominican\\_Republic.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d150863-r3199871-Occidental_Allegro_Punta_Cana-Punta_Cana_Dominican_Republic.html)

<sup>26</sup> Retrieved May 11, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d151022-r910189-Natura\\_Park\\_Beach\\_EcoResort\\_Spa-Punta\\_Cana\\_Dominican\\_Republic.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d151022-r910189-Natura_Park_Beach_EcoResort_Spa-Punta_Cana_Dominican_Republic.html)

<sup>27</sup> Retrieved July 2, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d218492-r5818232-Grand\\_Oasis\\_Punta\\_Cana-Punta\\_Cana\\_Dominican\\_Republic.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d218492-r5818232-Grand_Oasis_Punta_Cana-Punta_Cana_Dominican_Republic.html)

<sup>28</sup> Retrieved May 12, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d276421-r7485865-IFA\\_Villas\\_Bavaro-Punta\\_Cana\\_Dominican\\_Republic.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d276421-r7485865-IFA_Villas_Bavaro-Punta_Cana_Dominican_Republic.html)

<sup>29</sup> Retrieved July 2, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d611114-r7381661-Riu\\_Palace\\_Punta\\_Cana-Punta\\_Cana\\_Dominican\\_Republic.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g147293-d611114-r7381661-Riu_Palace_Punta_Cana-Punta_Cana_Dominican_Republic.html)



## Phuket, Thailand

Many of the reviews indicate that the expectation of English proficiency in Phuket by tourists was quite high, and there is little indication that the reviewers accept any responsibility for accommodation due to a different local language:

*"The personnel/thai people doesn't speak English like you would expect in one of the most popular places in the world"* (Belgium)<sup>30</sup>

*"You must learn Thai to speak to the staff on this hotel as they don't really understand English, suprising for a 4 star hotel which I don't thing passes for a 4 star."* (Australia)<sup>31</sup>

The above reviews clearly tie the location and rating of the hotels to the expectations of English proficiency. The writer of the first quote indicates that the popularity of Phuket was sufficient grounds to expect English, while the second stated that English was related to the amenities a traveller would reasonably expect in a 4-star hotel. In both of these cases, the English language itself was given cultural and social capital. The availability of the language was indexed by the location's popularity and demanded of hotels claiming to provide a high level of service. The comments place English in the same class/category as good hotel facilities such as comfortable rooms, cleanliness or good food in the restaurant. The writers feel cheated, as they believe that they gave sufficient payment for English availability but it was not provided. In the third quote below, the tourist was so perturbed that the lack of English proficiency is listed twice among the hotel negatives:

*"Unfortunately thats where the positive things end, when we arrived they only had one cabana room free, the majority of staff don't speak English well at all, the safe in our room was broken and not fixed while we where there, (2 weeks), the shower did not drain in either my parents room or my own."* (New Zealand)<sup>32</sup>

*"Disliked: The service, very hard to communicate with the staff in English."* (Australia)<sup>33</sup>

*"Negatives:*

*Horrible service*

*Non-English speaking employees*

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<sup>30</sup> Retrieved July 8, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d305858-r7973451-Kata\\_Beach\\_Resort-Phuket.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d305858-r7973451-Kata_Beach_Resort-Phuket.html)

<sup>31</sup> Retrieved July 6, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d309095-r7367833-Patong\\_Beach\\_Hotel-Phuket.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d309095-r7367833-Patong_Beach_Hotel-Phuket.html)

<sup>32</sup> Retrieved July 6, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d593536-r4465888-Woraburi\\_Resort\\_Spa\\_Phuket-Phuket.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d593536-r4465888-Woraburi_Resort_Spa_Phuket-Phuket.html)

<sup>33</sup> Retrieved July 6, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d309095-r7367833-Patong\\_Beach\\_Hotel-Phuket.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d309095-r7367833-Patong_Beach_Hotel-Phuket.html)

*Waitress/ Servers rather be sitting on the beach  
Poorly managed hotel  
Understaffed*

*It is very difficult to find an employee that can speak English—which would probably explain why there was never an order taken down correctly.”*  
(USA)<sup>34</sup>

*“Disliked: staff’s lack of english, strange air conditioning, restaurant menu*  
*“(UK)”*<sup>35</sup>

*“The service was average and food at the restaurant adequate but meagre and uninspiring. The staff at the resort seemed disinterested and most speak little English.”* (Australia)<sup>36</sup>

The vast majority of the negative reviews simply criticized the staffs’ English proficiency. In these cases, the expectation of English proficiency on the part of the local Thai staff was considered to be so naturalized that no justification was required. Some of these comments related to specific problems caused by miscommunication, and detailed the trouble encountered. Several of these quotes relate to hotel staff who would generally not be called upon to interact extensively with English-speaking hotel guests, but the existence of a problem expands the range of staff to which an English expectation applies.

*“All of us were bitten by mosquitos because as it turns out the maid would routinely leave the door open while cleaning the rooms. Our maid did not speak English so communication was difficult.”* (USA)<sup>37</sup>

The type of problems detailed give indications as to the type and/or degree of English language expectation. For example, in the above complaint the level of language competence expected extended somewhat beyond the basic duties that would reasonably be expected of a maid to do. Leaving the door open while cleaning the rooms is probably her standard practice or hotel policy, and the amount of English vocabulary required to communicate a requested change in usual routine might be beyond a basic level. However, the blame for the mosquito bites was placed directly on the maid’s lack of English proficiency. The options of using signs or gestures

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<sup>34</sup> Retrieved July 6, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d302525-r5711173-Le\\_Meridien\\_Phuket\\_Beach\\_Resort-Phuket.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d302525-r5711173-Le_Meridien_Phuket_Beach_Resort-Phuket.html)

<sup>35</sup> Retrieved July 6, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g303917-d607307-r6574374-Aleenta\\_Resort\\_Spa\\_Phuket\\_Phangnga-Phangnga.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g303917-d607307-r6574374-Aleenta_Resort_Spa_Phuket_Phangnga-Phangnga.html)

<sup>36</sup> Retrieved July 6, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g297930-d455314-r4322101-Baan\\_Yin\\_De\\_Boutique\\_Resort-Patong\\_Phuket.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g297930-d455314-r4322101-Baan_Yin_De_Boutique_Resort-Patong_Phuket.html)

<sup>37</sup> Retrieved July 6, 2007, from [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d595720-r7710210-Club\\_Med\\_Phuket-Phuket.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d595720-r7710210-Club_Med_Phuket-Phuket.html)

or speaking with the staff at the front desk are not addressed, so whether these solutions were tried is unknown.

Other similar comments were made about the English proficiency of hotel staff who would not normally be called upon to converse with English-speaking guests. The following writer complained about the inadequacy of an attempt at compensation for blackouts in the hotel:

*"We stayed 5 nights, 2 of which we had no electricity for most of the day and all night and therefore no air con. I know Phuket is known for its blackouts however when you're paying \$250 plus a night you expect (as they seem to at other hotels) that they'd have a generator... no such luck. We went to reception and asked to speak to someone about it and it was either 'no english sorry' or 'not our fault.' We weren't trying to suggest it was their fault however it just didn't seem right considering what we paying each night that the hotel didn't offer anything in the form of compensation. When it was over they sent the maid around with a hand picked flower for each room. She couldn't speak any english other than sorry. I really didn't think this was appropriate or fair on the maid as by this stage we feeling pretty fed up and a flower from outside didn't really cut it." (Australia)<sup>38</sup>*

The implication of the above excerpt was that the writer wanted or expected an opportunity to complain to management in English and receive either a detailed, sufficient response in the same language or their money back. This expectation could have been further complicated by cultural miscommunication as the guest and the hotel staff appeared to have very different ideas of what would entail an appropriate response. Regardless, the lack of English language proficiency by several layers of hotel staff, even when coupled with the need to respond to a somewhat unusual situation, seemed to be one of the major contributing factors to the writer's frustration.

Another insult based on lack of English proficiency follows:

*"English is poorly spoken for such a resort which often leads to problems. Ordered food and drinks by the pool one day. Thirty minutes later, the order hadnt arrived, so wife enquired as to where it was. The usual confused look on the waiters face appeared, followed by the ususal "dont speak english/french/german anything" monotonal grunts." (Australia)<sup>39</sup>*

In this case, the staff member's lack of comprehension when addressed by the reviewer's wife, asking a question in English, is ridiculed as *"the usual*

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<sup>38</sup> [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g297930-d299572-r6705747-Novotel\\_Phuket\\_Resort-Patong\\_Phuket.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g297930-d299572-r6705747-Novotel_Phuket_Resort-Patong_Phuket.html) (Retrieved July 6, 2007).

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d309081-r6709593-Moevenpick\\_Resort\\_and\\_Spa\\_Karon\\_Beach\\_Phuket-Phuket.html](http://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g293920-d309081-r6709593-Moevenpick_Resort_and_Spa_Karon_Beach_Phuket-Phuket.html) (Retrieved July 6, 2007).

*confused look.*” The writer describes the utterance by the waiter in response to being addressed in this foreign language as “*the usual ‘dont speak english/french/german anything’ monotonal grunts.*” The reviewer’s listing of English, French and German portrays them as having value [“*anything*”], especially when contrasted with the local language or the staff’s attempt to communicate despite language difficulties, which is described as “*monotonal grunts*” – insulting in its implication of animalistic conduct.

## Conclusion

Based on Accommodation Theory, which states that the person with the most power is generally accommodated to, hospitality industry employees would logically converge with the guests because they recognise that the tourists’ expenditures are the source of their employment and income. However, analysis of the comments about local English proficiency shows that tourist expectations vary, and capital plays a very large role in the differences in attitudes.

The reviewers did not state that they expect the use of English because they are wealthier, or because they come from a more economically advanced country, or even because they are guests who deserved a certain level of hospitality, but there are definite claims of power. Some of these attitudes could be unconscious assumptions of greater status.

Unquestioning assumptions that hotel staff proficient in English should be available internationally is based on the perceived power of English as a *lingua franca*, and the tourist assumes a level of power by being part of the English-speaking community. There is a definite sense of entitlement conveyed by the English speakers, solely based on their command of the language. The lack of willingness displayed by some of the tourists to recognise and use other tools when the English proficiency of the local staff is deemed inadequate indicates a belief that based on their status as English speakers, using anything other than that language to communicate is beneath them. In some of these complaints, the tourists feel comfortable expressing a certain level of outrage at the absence of English that is not associated with the individual interlocutors.

While the data show that there are definite shades of language expectations, one important issue not explored in the preceding analysis is the correlation between types of destinations and the expectation of English proficiency – particularly whether the setting itself is relevant or whether there are

differences based on the type of vacation (e.g. sightseeing, relaxation) sought.

In Madrid, the remarks generally indicate that the tourist is responsible, but the responsibility is not clear-cut. There is a fairly even division between comments reflecting visitors' responsibility versus locals' need to accommodate. However, writers who complain about the local residents' lack of English proficiency often include some justification – details about the specific problems caused by the lack of English proficiency. These excuses imply their need to explain why their point of view is reasonable. Therefore, local English proficiency is not just taken for granted or assumed as a right.

In Punta Cana reviews, the responsibility for accommodation is clearly placed on the local hotel staff. Moreover, there is a certain level of resentment directed at the non-English speaking tourists staying at the hotels as well.

The most serious problems with lack of English, however, are noted in the Phuket reviews, and demonstrate a level of overt racism not found in the other locations. Many of the writers go on at some length to describe the problems caused by the lack of English, and indicate high levels of frustration and intolerance.

Tourists are generally aware of the relative inequality in group status of the locals in the tourism service sector. If they have determined that the local residents are of lower socioeconomic status, they expect convergence – demonstrated by English language proficiency and use.

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# 36

## Students' and teachers' notions of effective (business) English teaching: global and local influences

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Learner attributes and cognitions are increasingly seen as critical factors determining approaches, behaviours and choice of strategies, and thus, by extension, ultimate attainment (Gan, Humphreys and Hamp-Lyons 2004, Rivera-Mills and Plonsky 2007, Yang 1999). In the field of foreign language learning, learners' conceptions about what the process of language learning entails include ideas about the nature and difficulty of the language to be studied, about the role of personal attributes such as aptitude or self-efficacy, and about the effectiveness of certain teaching approaches and learning strategies (Brown 2009, Horwitz 1988, Wenden 1999). Specifically in the realm of *English* language teaching, the status of English as a global language has led to debates about the value of native-speaker norms versus English as a lingua franca (ELF), which, together with the dominance of English in business and (social) media, is starting to cause shifts in perceptions of what constitutes useful, appropriate and goal-relevant English. This in turn has rekindled inquiries into the value of normative accuracy, which may well influence teachers' practices of assessment and error correction.

The effects of beliefs on learner actions (or refusal of action) is well documented in the literature (Breen 2001, Mori 1999, White 2008, Yang 1999) and can be disconcertingly direct. Learners may refuse or invest little effort in learning activities if they conflict with their views of how languages should be taught, and what appropriate roles for teachers/learners are. Mismatch between beliefs and the prevailing teaching approach has been found to cause disillusionment and demotivation or even lead to discontinuation of study (Brown 2009, Noels 2001, Stracke 2007). Less attention, however, has been paid to the factors determining a particular teaching approach. Common sense would suggest that teachers' own beliefs about effective teaching, acquired during their teacher training courses or even earlier, would translate directly into specific instructional practices. However, such a view fails to take important contextual factors and outside pressures into account; in reality, many practitioners have to adapt their instructional approaches if they are to cover an (externally

dictated) syllabus despite, say, cuts in contact hours and increases in student numbers.

Only few researchers (e.g. Plonsky & Mills 2006, Ranta 2010) have attempted to present a more global picture of how teachers' and students' beliefs compare against the background of a given teaching context. The present study aims to redress this issue. It was conducted at Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU) and adopted a qualitative approach (interviews and mini-essays) to answer the following research questions:

1. What global and local influences affect students' present and predicted uses of English, their learning behaviours and strategies in and out of class?
2. What are students' and teachers' beliefs concerning the nature of language learning, the usefulness of the target language and native speaker norms, and the role of individual learner attributes?
3. How do students' and teachers' notions of effective teaching and learning practices compare?
4. To what extent are these practices facilitated by the WU programme? How do they correspond to students' aims and motivations?
5. How do students and teachers deal with mismatches between their beliefs and the actual learning situation?

The entire departmental teaching staff (n=28) was interviewed to provide an insight into the ramifications of context and beliefs from the faculty's perspective; this was compared and contrasted with advanced students' views established through open-ended questions in the form of mini-essays (n=60) and through an earlier interview study (Sing and Trinder 2009) focusing on student perceptions (n=20).

Entwistle (1991) argues that any investigation of student learning must take account of the complex net of environmental factors shaping the reality of studying at a higher education institution. In line with this exhortation, we attempted to identify local and global influences determining the teaching situation at our department before investigating teachers' and students' views on what actually happens in the classroom.

Contextual factors shaping the learning context range from global to national and local. Global developments include a shift from EFL (English as a foreign language) to ELF (English as a lingua franca), the



predominance of English in international business, and the ubiquity of the web and social media such as Skype and Facebook - all of which may have altered students' perceptions of the relevance of native speaker norms as well as their motivations and opportunities for learning in and out-of-class. Developments that impact on the situation of Austrian universities have taken place on the European level (i.e. Bologna process) and the national level (i.e. open university access, budget cuts). Effectively, the latter two factors have meant reductions in contact hours and, consequently, oversubscribed classes and highly unfavourable student-teacher ratios. The strongest local influence is departmental policy, dictating strong emphasis on content and terminology and standardized assessment. These conditions interact to produce heavy constraints on what is actually feasible in terms of instructional approaches and testing, and have led to teaching situations that may be at odds with teachers' as well as students' aims, motivations and expectations.

Thus it could be argued that contextual factors have conspired to produce enhanced learning and communication opportunities 'in the real world', whilst effectively placing heavy restrictions on what happens in the classroom. Most of the open questions we asked directly or indirectly tapped into students' and teachers' perceptions of this conundrum.

In answer to the introductory question of what constituted, in their eyes, "good and useful English", we found that the vast majority of students assessed communicative competence to be the main benchmark. In particular, respondents mentioned "being able to express yourself", "talking about variety of topics", and "fluency". To give some examples:

- Useful English means being able to communicate freely on an advanced rhetoric level, in a professional manner and about complex issues.
- As language skills are first and foremost about communication, interpersonal and communication skills are of paramount importance.

This strong emphasis on communication reflects students' conceptions of the nature of language learning. Many respondents considered exposure to the target language, as well as the readiness to exploit communication opportunities, to be the prime drivers of language acquisition - at least at a more advanced level. Accordingly, they found an outgoing nature to be a facilitative or even necessary personal attribute without which a learner would never achieve a high level of competence:

- The more outgoing and extroverted a person is, the more likely he or she is to practice their language skills and apply them outside the classroom.
- A friend of mine studies languages like nobody, sitting down for hours reading books. But being introverted, he will never fully grasp the language, use it and live it.
- People underestimate the possibility of learning a language subconsciously, meaning that by speaking and listening people can learn automatically.

This perspective is strengthened both by students' present opportunities to use English out of class and by their projected future uses. Respondents communicate in English (often as a *lingua franca*) when travelling and to keep in touch with people they meet abroad, with keeping in contact being conducted mainly via social media and e-mail. Receptive language skills are honed through English language films, TV-shows, newspapers, journals and the Internet.

As students of international business, many of the respondents expect to work in an environment where English is either the corporate language or used at least regularly in international negotiations. The following quotes illustrate again the *lingua franca* aspect of the kind of English students expect to need. Students differed merely in their views of the degree of communicative competence indispensable for their future careers:

- The most important thing is being able to communicate with other people and to express oneself. If you want to start an international career, you have to create a good image and a good first impression. To do so, you have to have excellent English communication skills.
- I want to improve my English so far that I can use it in business communication, to discuss with a business partner as well as to be able to sell the products and services.
- My main aim is being able to work in a company that has English as its corporate language; to be able to communicate with English speaking people without having a disadvantage.

Obviously overlapping with communication skills, but separately mentioned as signs of a good command of English were, in order of frequency, 'extensive vocabulary', 'good pronunciation', 'good knowledge of business English', 'appropriacy', and, to a much lesser extent, accurate

grammar. Yet as far as pronunciation and grammar are concerned, few respondents aspired to native speaker accents and norms. Instead students showed great awareness that, in a globalised world, they were far more likely to use English with other non-natives:

- English is not connected to a country anymore – you need it when travelling, working...
- It's important to speak and pronounce correctly, but it looks fake if foreigners try to imitate native speakers ...it looks plastic.

Mostly, a kind of neutral ELF accent that does not immediately betray the origins of the speaker was deemed to be sufficient. However, there were diverse opinions when it came to 'correctness'. Although there was this pervasive insistence on the dominance of fluency over accuracy, quite a few students thought that error-free language would give them more credibility and status on formal (business) occasions:

- You seem more competent when you speak correctly.
- Written texts should be correct; in presentations you should speak correctly, but for informal communication – it's not so important.
- I put a lot of importance on a right pronunciation in order to sound less German to international business contacts which might be a sign of professionalism to them.

If anything, teachers were even more adamant in stressing the importance of effective communication. In contrast to the majority of students, they see individual features such as grammatical correctness, extensive vocabulary and correct pronunciation generally only as means to an end, namely the end of successfully getting the message across, rather than an end in itself. Given that teachers - quite in line with students - assume that the latter use or will use English for practically anything, from their studies to private life to their prospective jobs at international companies, this seems conclusive. Thus, elements such as accuracy and an extensive vocabulary, though doubtlessly important, are only interpreted as relevant in their contribution towards achieving the communicative goals and avoiding ambiguities and misunderstanding. This is clearly in some contradiction to what is expected of students in most of the exams, which effectively shows the discrepancy between externally determined conditions and the teaching staff's own beliefs.

Respondents were also asked which learner attributes and contributions facilitate language learning. We have already shown that students consider an outgoing, extrovert, open-minded personality to be a great asset as it predisposes people to take up informal communication opportunities. However, most students were also convinced that aptitude plays an important role, with many defining aptitude as ‘a good memory’ and ‘a good ear for pronunciation’. ‘Continuous practice’ and ‘effort’ could make up for a lack of ‘talent’ for languages, with particularly the former being considered necessary even for inherently gifted language learners. Finally, subjects mentioned interest in foreign languages and other people as well as motivation as facilitative. It is interesting to note that although most respondents had purely instrumental motivation for improving their competence, there were also some voices that went beyond that and saw the global aspect of English as something bigger, allowing them to get to know cultures and people from all over the world:

- It’s a huge gift that there is one language that we can all communicate with. I never thought that I would ever speak to a guy from Sri Lanka. I had problems understanding him first, but then it went brilliant. That’s the magic!
- I love the fact that it does not matter to which country I go, I am able to communicate in English.

Teachers mainly stress motivation of all kinds, intrinsic as well as extrinsic, as the major factor facilitating language learning. In contrast to learners, they do not deem aptitude, although not seen as totally irrelevant, to be of any significant importance at all. Further attributes that are thought to be influential include openness to new ideas and cultures, having an outgoing personality, patience, diligence, a risk-taking attitude (in the sense of not being afraid of making mistakes), and the ability of overcoming one’s own anxiety.

The conceptions of learning and professional aims put forward by the student sample obviously have ramifications on the type of teaching they would value. Virtually all respondents agree that smaller groups, discussions (also of non-economic current topics), group work, more lectures in English, conversation classes, and different types of assessment (e.g. oral examinations not focusing on business English) would improve the quality of the WU offering. Yet though a large majority would welcome a more communicative approach to teaching that “gets students to speak”, we find two distinct schools of thought: the first group puts the

responsibility for providing opportunities for improving speaking skills firmly in the teachers' court, criticising the strong focus on business and the lack of oral interaction:

- Classes are too specialised in business topics. For me it is more important to improve my every-day life English, for getting into contact with people. Also within business life it is important to be able to talk about different topics, not only about business and work. If you're having lunch with your partner it's important to be able to do small talk.
- Being prepared for the world of business does not necessarily mean holding presentations on business topics or writing memos, but also means entering oral negotiations and going out to dinner with a partner. And we do not get trained for that.
- Day-to-day speaking is neglected in class, I can't do it, I can only discuss economic concepts.
- It doesn't make a lot of sense to learn endless keywords by heart only to forget them the next day without having improved the English skills that count: presentation skills, to be able to talk freely.

It is this group that suffers most from a mismatch of their expectations and the actual situation at university. The frustration students experience causes them to adopt a surface, syllabus-bound, exam-oriented approach to studying:

- I use 3 highlighters, learn books and sample letters by heart, don't remember anything, but it is effective for passing the exam.
- I concentrated strictly on studying keywords by heart because the exam is like that; I then easily forget words learnt for exam.

The second group shows greater awareness of the constraints teachers operate under. They have a more realistic outlook and a more autonomous approach, perceiving the remit of business English classes as limited – i.e., to provide/transmit specialized knowledge - and accept it as their own responsibility to complement the content-based classes by looking for communication opportunities in the real world.

- WU classes are very much business oriented but as we are a business school it is all right.
- It's the responsibility of the WU to teach business vocab; it's the students responsibility to find opportunities to speak.

- Depends where you use English. Business English is taught very well at the WU; if you want to learn the slang, you have to be among natives.
- Good English means having a variety of words and phrases- looking for synonyms in articles is a good approach.

Particularly the second group is adept at finding measures to make up for the shortcomings of the WU setting. Strategies frequently mentioned include:

- Stay/study abroad
- Online media (news, AE TV shows) and ‘old media’ (books, films, newspapers) for vocabulary development
- Social media to communicate (often ELF)
- Native speaker assistance
- Strategy adaptation for WU programme (formal practice)

In view of the above, it is not surprising that particularly those students who actively look for and exploit out of class learning opportunities have very different expectations of the kind of benefits they are seeking from formal and informal learning: a sound grounding in business language vs. fluency and general vocabulary. This dual approach is also reflected in many students’ notions on error correction: whilst in informal communication situations respondents would find it unbecoming to have incorrect grammar or pronunciation corrected, they welcome it in classes, with some even claiming that overt correction of mistakes “was one of the main points of classes”.

Interestingly, in many respects teachers feel quite similar about the shortcomings of the current situation. Practically unanimously they feel that there is clearly too little focus on communication, and in particular oral communication skills. They also consider the exams as too difficult and believe that they do not always test language skills but only content. Also, given the students’ often less than impressive level of general English, they broadly think that there is too much emphasis on business English, especially terminology, while the learners would actually need support in more basic language skills. In addition, they also feel that they generally have very little room for creativity and that the non-compulsory attendance in first-semester classes is counterproductive to effective learning. Regarding the learners, finally, teachers criticise the students’ rote-learning attitude. Of course, and in contrast to at least the first group of students

mentioned above, teachers are aware of the main reasons the situation looks the way it does: the local (excessive content-orientation and no legal limit on the number of students) and global (shortened curricula and reduced funding) constraints on the learning/teaching environment. Potentially the awareness of this substantial mismatch between pedagogical beliefs and reality makes their experience all the more frustrating.

Nevertheless, the teaching staff do try to make the best of an unsatisfactory situation. Some of the more commonly applied strategies to make up for the shortcomings are:

- Including more interactive exercises, pair & team work, presentations, projects, and role play
- Making modifications to course books and other course material by e.g. making selected cuts and adding extra material
- Focusing on explanations, feedback and repetition
- Using a broad variety of media
- Trying to establish a rapport and encouraging more contact with students (e.g. by offering more and extended office hours)

Concerning error correction, there is an interesting discrepancy between teachers' and students' attitudes: while the latter, as mentioned earlier, mostly appreciate having their mistakes corrected, the majority of teachers in fact deliberately try to avoid individual error correction in most cases, in order not to embarrass students in front of their peers. Making teachers aware of this mismatch can thus eradicate this particular source of dissatisfaction without great effort. Finally, as is the case with students, there are quite diverse views of what actually constitutes a serious mistake.

## **Conclusion**

Results indicate that in many relevant areas, students' notions concerning parameters hindering or promoting effective learning and studying is broadly in agreement with the teacher perspective. For instance, the importance of both English as a lingua franca and the need for good communicative skills are universally acknowledged. There is also overall agreement on the flaws in the design of the classes and how the situation, ideally, could be improved.

There are just a few aspects where teachers' and learners' opinions diverge, such as the role of aptitude, which teachers deem of much less significance

than motivation, and the usefulness of explicit error correction, where teachers apparently err on the side of caution.

What clearly transpires is that the main conflict students and teachers experience is due to top-down pressure and contextual constraints, and in the case of some students, a lack of autonomy and, concomitantly, an overreliance on teacher-provided learning (and speaking) opportunities. The major local factors of constraint are a strong focus on content-based teaching, born of tradition and the fact that language teaching constantly has to stress and justify its integration into a business-school environment on the one hand, and the legal situation that does not allow any restriction on student numbers on part of the university on the other. Global factors of constraint are firstly the ongoing tendency to unify European university systems and the accompanying reduction in curricula and, secondly, budgetary pressures resulting in less funding for teaching programmes.

The study uncovered how academic institutions may fall short of fulfilling students' (and teachers') needs, and, furthermore, how students' studying orientations may be dysfunctional in a given context. One step towards alleviating the present situation would be to key into students' meta-cognitive knowledge and explicitly address curricular goals and constraints, as well as to discuss limiting beliefs and underused strategies; in short, to point students in the direction of autonomy and independent learning.

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# 37

## Functions of *and so on* and *or something (like that)* spoken by Japanese learners of English at different speaking proficiency levels in a learner corpus

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### Introduction

This paper explores functions of *and so on* and *or something (like that)*, forms of general extenders (GEs), spoken by Japanese learners of English (JLEs) at different speaking proficiency levels in a learner corpus. The corpus is the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology Japanese Learner English Corpus (the NICT JLE Corpus) (Izumi et al. 2004), including 1.3 million words uttered by JLEs in an English speaking test.

This paper firstly explains the rationale for the study. It then reviews the literature of GEs and describes their forms and functions. Thirdly it illustrates the outline of the NICT JLE Corpus and how the data was analysed. Following this, it presents the findings of *and so on* and *or something (like that)* at different speaking proficiency levels in the corpus and discusses their functions respectively. It ends with some applications for language education.

### Rationale

It has been found in corpora of native speakers of English that English vague language is widely used in spoken and written English, especially in spoken English (Biber et al. 1999, Carter and McCarthy 2006). Functions of English vague language have been revealed: softening expressions so as to avoid sounding authoritative or too blunt, marking an assumed shared knowledge with the hearer as an in-group code, hedging the force of assertion in order to signal the speaker's uncertainty (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 202-203). It can make the atmosphere of interaction relaxed (Crystal and Davy 1975: 112).

GEs are one of the various English vague language forms (Crystal and Davy 1975, Channell 1994, Overstreet 1999) (see the next section for the forms and functions of GEs). O'Keeffe et al. (2007: 66) show that *and things like that* occurs the fourteenth most frequently and *or something like*

*that* occurs the fifteenth most frequently among all the four-word clusters in Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English (CANCODE), a five-million-word corpus of British and Irish spoken English occurring in everyday situations (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 11).

JLEs may tend to use GEs when they speak in English possibly because Japanese has a word *toka* (*'pan toka tamago toka'*, in English 'bread, eggs and stuff'), which is used to hedge a speaker's utterance as English GEs do (Lauwereyns 2002). JLEs may transfer the use of *toka* into English and utter GEs when showing their vagueness.

Exploring the JLEs' way of using GEs will be able to inform people who communicate with JLEs, especially teachers of English and examiners of speaking tests, of how JLEs express their vagueness by using GEs. This study will present the relevance of JLEs' GEs at the different speaking proficiency levels and saving a hearer's face and their own face, coping with their linguistic struggles, and managing turn-taking in interaction. Knowing JLEs' way of using GEs may help teachers of English to avoid communication hitches or misunderstanding which might arise between them and JLEs, and to scaffold JLEs when they get stuck on how to express themselves in English. It may also help examiners of English speaking tests to notice JLEs' vagueness and they may be able to help JLEs to make their utterance fluent, to find when to take turns from them and to see when to encourage them to speak out so that they can produce enough utterances to be assessed on their speaking proficiency.

Referring to the literature, a quantitative analysis of JLEs' spoken linguistic features, including English vague language, was conducted by Shirato and Stapleton (2007) and it was found that vague language, including GE forms, did not occur in their participants' utterances (2007: 405). However, no quantitative study of GEs at different speaking proficiency level or qualitative study of GEs used by JLEs has been carried out yet.

In the light of teaching GEs to learners, Carter (2010) suggests that, as the importance of EVL in spoken grammar has been discussed and frequent occurrence of the forms has been found, they should be taught so that learners can see how they are used in spoken English. Walsh et al. (2008) consider GEs as essential vocabulary items in the academic spoken English context to non-native speakers of English. Before teaching GEs to learners of English, I believe, examining the target learners' way of using GEs at

different speaking proficiency levels would inform us of what to be taught at each level.

As mentioned at the beginning, the focus of this paper is on the functions of *and so on* and *or something (like that)* among other GE forms. This is because there is a large difference in their frequency among the lower, intermediate and higher levels (Table 1). In the quantitative analysis, *and so on* is the most frequently occurring GE form at the lower level. It occurs 334 times per one million words (wpm). Its occurrence at the intermediate level is 163 wpm, and only 40 wpm at the higher level. *Or something (like that)*, on the other hand, is the most frequently occurring GE form at the intermediate and higher levels. It occurs 546 wpm at the higher level, 294 wpm at the intermediate level, and only 31 wpm at the lower level. This quantitative analysis will be illustrated below. The quantitative difference led me to my research question: whether or not there are functional differences in the expressions at each level. The research question addressed in this paper is what are the functions of *and so on* and *or something (like that)* when spoken by JLEs at different speaking proficiency levels in the corpus.

	<i>and so on</i>	<i>or something (like that)</i>
Lower level	334	31
Intermediate level	163	294
Higher level	40	546

**Table 1:** Frequency of *and so on* and *or something (like that)* at each level (wpm)

## Forms and functions of general extenders

GEs consist of two linguistic forms; adjunctive GE, which is basically *and* plus general noun phrase, disjunctive GE which is basically *or* followed by general noun phrase (Overstreet 1999). *And so on* is included in the group of adjunctive GEs, and *or something (like that)* is in disjunctive GEs.

These linguistic forms and their functions have been studied and named in different ways in the literature: ‘set marking tag’ (Dines 1980), ‘utterance final tags’ (Aijmer 1984), ‘extension particles’ (Dubois 1993), ‘vague category identifier’ (Channell 1994; Jucker et al. 2003), ‘coordination tags’ (Biber et al. 1999), ‘etcetera indicators’ (Cotterill 2007), ‘vague categories’ (Koester 2007), ‘vague category marker’ (Evison et al. 2007; O’Keeffe et al. 2007; Murphy 2010) and ‘general extenders’ (Overstreet 1999). This paper adheres to the term ‘general extenders’.

The functions of GEs have been studied; they function to show solidarity toward a hearer (Cutting 2000, Carter and McCarthy 2006, Terraschke and Holmes 2007, Murphy 2010), to shorten the speaker's utterance (Crystal and Davy 1975, Channell 1994, Overstreet 1999, Jucker et al. 2003, Carter and McCarthy 2006, Koester 2007), to indicate that the exemplar(s) before a GE is a joke or exaggeration (Overstreet 1999), to avoid sounding too assertive, to avoid threatening a hearer's face, to show tentativeness and to fill the speaker's lexical gap (Channell 1994, Overstreet 1999, Adolphs et al. 2007, Terraschke and Holmes 2007, Murphy 2010). It is worth noting that GEs can be multifunctional (Overstreet 1999: 148). If a speaker supposes, for instance, that the hearer can infer what the speaker would like to indicate by using a GE, s/he can use it in order to shorten the utterance, and at the same time, to show solidarity by implying that both the speaker and hearer share the background knowledge. All GEs do not have the same functions and their characteristics differ from each other. Functions and characteristics of *and so on* and *or something (like that)* have been discussed in the literature as follows.

### **Functions of *and so on***

It has been found that *and so on* used by native speakers of English tends to occur in academic English settings (Biber et al. 1999) and in spoken academic classroom discourse (Walsh et al. 2008). In academic classroom settings, *and so on* used by lecturers functions to facilitate the phase of tasks or activities in that *and so on* indicates information or concepts which do not have to be clarified as they have already given and shared between lecturers and students (Walsh et al. 2008).

### **Functions of *or something (like that)***

*Or something like that* occurs frequently in informal conversations (O'Keeffe et al. 2007: 66) as mentioned in the previous section. Overstreet (1999) shows that *or something (like that)* functions to mitigate the speaker's force of utterance, to signal that the exemplar before it is an exaggeration, joke or analogy, and to show negative politeness toward a hearer in requests, invitations or offers, in order not to threaten her/his face (Brown and Levinson 1987).

### **Description of the corpus and methodology of data analysis**

The data in the NICT JLE Corpus is collected from a fifteen-minute speaking test to assess JLEs' speaking proficiency. The test consists of five stages and three follow-ups. Stage 1 is for warming-up, in which an interviewer asks an interviewee some questions about themselves such as

her/his hobby or job. Stage 2 asks the interviewee to describe a picture of, for instance, a room or a restaurant. Stage 3 is for role-playing in the context of, for example, shopping or inviting. Stage 4 gives the interviewee a task of storytelling based on a series of four or six pictures about, for example, camping or a zoo. Stage 5 closes the speaking test with some questions being asked about the interviewee, for instance, her/his plan after the test, and greetings. In follow-ups after Stage 2 (describing a picture), 3 (role-playing) and 4 (story-telling from pictures), the interviewer asks the interviewee some questions related to themselves.

After the interview test, the interviewee's speaking proficiency is assessed and allocated in nine bands: from Band 1, absolute beginner, to Band 9, the most advanced. In this study, I divide the nine bands into three groups: the lower level from Band 1 to 3, the intermediate level from Band 4 to 6, the higher level from Band 7 to 9.

This study adopts both quantitative and qualitative approaches of corpus linguistics. The quantitative approach is taken to investigate the frequency of use of a certain word or phrase, the most frequent words or phrases, frequency of co-occurrence of two or more words; while the qualitative approach displays the way in which the language is used (Biber et al. 1998; Hunston 2002: 35-36; O'Keeffe et al. 2007: 2), for example, in what context a specific feature of language is used, what function a word or phrase has in the context.

Wordsmith Tools 5 was used to analyse the transcribed data in the corpus with a computer. In the quantitative analysis, first of all, I ran single word/multi-word cluster lists and took single words or clusters which looked likely to be GEs. Then I ran concordance lines of each word/cluster, and looked into the co-texts, and see whether they were used as GE. For example, *and so on* in 'apple, banana *and so on*' is a GE, while *and so on* in '*and so, on* the desk' is not.

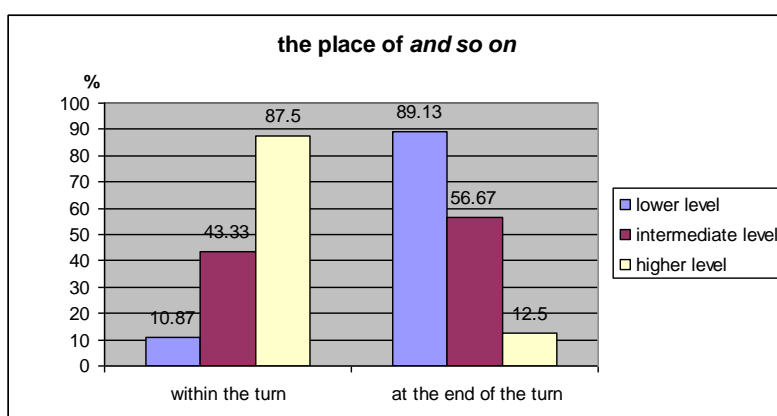
The qualitative approach was used to investigate the function of *and so on* and *or something (like that)*. I ran concordance lines of each GE form, looked into the lines, broader co-texts and the context in order to investigate the subtle meanings or usage of a word/phrase in a text (Hunston 2002: 56), looking at words and phrases which co-occurred with the GE form, and I explored its function. For instance, *or something* in 'Could you give the money back *or something*?' can be assumed to show the speaker's avoidance of threatening the hearer's face, considering that it

occurs with a linguistic form *could you* for requesting something. Finally, a close look was taken as to where in the interviewees' turn *and so on* occurs at each level: within their turn or at the end of their turn.

## Findings and discussions

### *Findings for and so on*

Figure 1 shows the percentage of *and so on* at each place at each proficiency level. It has to be noted that this figure includes the number of *and so on* which occur at Stage 1 (warming-up), 3 (role-playing), 5 (closing) and follow-ups for Stage 2 (describing a picture), 3 (role-playing) and 4 (story-telling from pictures), but does not include the number of *and so on* which occur at Stage 2 (describing a picture) and Stage 4 (story-telling from pictures) because the task types at these stages are monologues so that turn-taking is not supposed to occur. It can be seen clearly that the lower the interviewees' speaking proficiency level is, the lower the percentage of *and so on* within the interviewees' turn is, and the higher its percentage at the end of the interviewees' turn is.



**Figure 1:** The place of *and so on* at each level

Figure 2 shows sample concordance lines excerpted from Stage 1 (warming-up) at the lower level, the NICT JLE Corpus. B is an interviewee and A is an interviewer. Slash B in angle brackets </B> means the end of the interviewee's turn. It can be seen that, in all the concordance lines apart from line 8, the interviewees' floor is taken by the interviewers just after the interviewees utter *and so on*. *And so on* here can be considered as a close of their turn.



1 <B>to buy er magazine and books</B><A>Uhu.</A><B></B></>	and so on.</B>	<A>Hum. So you like reading?</A><B>Yes.</B>
2 <B>and uum <H pn="others1">XXXX03</H> Stadiums	and so on.</B>	<A>Uhu. I see. So what's so special about Mister Nagasima?
3 difficult to make to cook to cook Uum and ee wash to wash my clothes clothes uum	and so on um.</B>	<A>All right.</A><B>Um.</B><A>So what is your hobby?</A>
4 <B>For example, um so </> so er er chirashi zushi.</B><A>Hum.</A><B>	and so on.</B>	<A>Hmm. I see. Good. So er you get a lot of money from your
5 <B>Erm. Er <H pn="others5">XXXX07</H>, er <H pn="others6">XXXX08</H>, maybe er	and so on. </B>	<A>Hmm I see. O K. Er tell me about your family.</A>
6 I mm we can we can play sports er all er all kind of sport. Erm er mm mm play ball, soccer,	and so on.</B>	<A>What is your favorite sport?</A>
7 uhm </> I usually do </> go shopping or uhm going with my friend </> uhm	and so on.</B>	<A>Uhm. Where do you usually go for shopping?</A>
8 program, er for example, urr "HEY HEY HEY" and </> "Utaban" </B><A>Uhm.</A><B>	and so on.	And </> now, </> I like ur dra drama </> T V
9 <B>I sometimes go to walk with my dog, and feed feed my dog.</B><A>Uhu.</A><B>	And so on.</B>	<A>Uum. I see. Good. O K. <H pn="B's name">XXXX02</H>
10 </> two er </> er th three er er afternoon, I'll study err politics and economics an	and so on.</B>	<A>Hum. I see. O K. Then please tell me about your favorite

**Figure 2:** Sample concordance lines of *and so on* excerpted from Stage 1 at the lower level, the NICT JLE Corpus

Figure 3 shows the concordance lines of *and so on* which occur at the higher level except for Stage 2 (describing a picture) and 4 (story-telling from pictures). It illustrates that all *and so on* except for one on line 5 occur within the interviewees' turns. *And so on* in lines 2 and 4 are regarded to be occurring within the turn as these interviewees go on with their utterances after the interviewers' backchannels 'Hmm' and 'Oh really'. *And so on* in line 5 occurs at the end of the utterance as the interviewer takes their turn to move on to the next stage of the speaking test. This trend can tell us that, unlike *and so on* at the lower level, it is not used as a signal of finishing their turn.

1 I have to do like er I have to wash my clothes and I have to clean up my room' and so on.	So I really don't have time to go out with my friends. </B>
2 <B>Then er I studied sociology, anthropology and then cultural studies and so on. </B>	<A>Hmm. </A><B>Yeah. The life is really interesting. Well
3 and, you know, they are going to the beach. They're wearing beach sandals and so on.	Uh the I was the only person wearing suits.</B><A>Yeah. </A>
4 </B><A>Hm. </A><B>but er now I'm doing, you know, just I drawing flowers and so on.</B>	<A>Oh really. </A><B>just for practice. </B>
5 and erm look after, or cooks cook our suppers, and erm do some washing, and so on. </B>	</stage1><stage2><A>Oh. I see. O K. All right. Now, I'm going
6 'r belongings', ur "Please ur make sure that you don't forget your umbrellas" and so on.	Whereas um in foreign countries, you don't have all these
7 n, we have er station men to see the ticket, and I mean to check the ticket, and so on.	But in <H pn="others7">XXXX08</H>, er they rarely have the
8 tell them my experience and also how did I success for study or activities, and so on.	So, that was, yeah really, actually successful, but the final

**Figure 3:** Concordance lines of *and so on* at the higher level, the NICT JLE Corpus

I deduce from these findings that almost 90 per cent of *and so on* at the lower level and about 57 per cent of *and so on* at the intermediate level may signal that it is the end of the interviewees' utterance and that it is time to change the turn to the hearer. *And so on* may function possibly to avoid awkwardness of expressing themselves in English or to ask the interviewer for help to compensate for their linguistic gaps.

At the higher level, *and so on* tends to occur within their turns. *And so on* at the higher level seems to mark the interviewees' decision to cut off their utterances even though they possibly have more items or concepts to express: they leave these possible items or concepts indicated by *and so on* for the interviewer to deduce, relying on the shared knowledge that the interviewer might have. Alternatively it may function as a filler to hold their turn and move on to the next utterance.

## Findings for or something (like that)

The interest of this section is in *or something (like that)* which occurs at Stage 3 (role-playing) in the speaking test because the task of role-playing causes speech events such as request, invitation, suggestion, apology, which rarely occur in other stages.

At Stage 3 (role-playing), *or something (like that)* occurs 394.3 wpm at the higher level, 115.6 wpm at the intermediate level, and none at the lower level. It is interesting that both at the intermediate and higher levels more than 60 per cent of *or something (like that)* are used in the context where the interviewees request something (Table 2).

Speech event	Request	Suggest	apology	complaint	agreement	
Intermediate level	11	2	2	2	0	17 (115.6 wpm)
%	64.71	11.76	11.76	11.76	0	100
Higher level	9	2	3	0	1	15 (394.3 wpm)
%	60	13.34	20	0	6.67	100

**Table 2:** Percentage of *or something* occurring at each speech event

### **Extract 1**

Extract 1 is a sample dialogue excerpted from the intermediate level in which *or something* occurs in the context of requesting the interviewer to reduce the price. The co-occurrence of *could you* indicates that the interviewee is trying to mitigate the force of his utterance to request the reduction and, by indicating in *or something* that an alternative option other than reducing the price would be fine, he is trying to avoid threatening the interviewer's face.

[The interviewee is playing the role of a customer who is buying something.]

B: Uh-huh. And, uhh, now, uhh, *could you, could you*, umm, discount more?

A: [laughter]

B: <laughter>*or something*</laughter>?

A: Well

B: Um.

(Excerpted from the NICT JLE Corpus)

### **Extract 2**

Extract 2 is a sample from the higher level in which *or something* occurs in the context of asking the interviewer to give money back. Here again *can I* and *probably* mitigate the interviewee's force of request so as not to

threaten the interviewer's face and, by adding *or something* indicating that alternative service to refunding would be fine, the negative politeness is intensified.

[The interviewee is playing the role of a customer who bought a CD.]

B: Can I have a, can I exchange it for another one?

A: Urm, we're very sorry we can't do that in our shop.

B: Urm, then *can I* return it and *probably*, ur, get a refund *or something*?

A: No, we're sorry.

(Excerpted from the NICT JLE Corpus)

There does not seem to be any significant difference in terms of functions of *or something (like that)* between the intermediate and higher levels. The difference will be that *or something (like that)* occurs more at the higher level than at the intermediate level to mitigate the interviewees' force of utterances and help to save the hearers' face. In other words, *or something (like that)* tends to be used more as one of the negative politeness strategies at the higher level than at the intermediate level. At the lower level, compared to these levels, *or something (like that)* does not appear to show negative politeness.

## Conclusion and application for language education

To sum up, this paper has revealed that *and so on* occurred at the end of JLEs' turn, and at the lower level and half of the intermediate level, may function to signal the ending of the speakers' utterances, possibly due to the awkwardness of their utterances in English. On the other hand, *and so on* at the higher level seemed to function as a marker of assumed shared knowledge, indicating that there may be more items or concepts to enumerate but the JLEs are leaving what *and so on* indicates for the hearer to infer. It also seemed to work as a filler to continue their utterance. In terms of *or something*, it was argued that *or something* is used to mitigate the interviewees' force of request and to avoid threatening the hearer's face, and that this trend can be seen more at the higher level than at the intermediate level.

The findings regarding *and so on* may be useful for teachers and examiners of speaking tests in that they may be able to notice the end of the utterances of Japanese learners of English at the lower and intermediate levels. *And so on* at both levels may work as a signal so that teachers can scaffold JLEs to speak more. This may also help them decide whether or not to take the floor or to let the learner hold the floor.

In the light of teaching GEs, the learners at the lower and intermediate levels may be taught that *or something (like that)* can be one of the negative politeness strategies and have an effect on saving the hearer's face and, eventually, making the interaction successful.

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# 38

## Examining Effects of L2 Extensive Reading in the Cognitive and Affective Domains

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Extensive reading (ER) is a form of pedagogical intervention aiming at facilitating development of reading ability. As the name indicates, its essence is reading in quantity, where learners are encouraged to read as much as possible. Although ER can be implemented in language classrooms in various ways, there are several characteristics typically observed when it is adopted. A variety of reading materials on a wide range of topics is made available for learners, learners choose what they want to read, learners read for pleasure or for information rather than for being tested on what they read, learners tend to choose relatively easy books (i.e., books within their reading/linguistic ability), and reading rate is faster rather than slower. The role of the teacher is to orient and guide students rather than teach them. Teachers try to be a good role model of a reader (Day & Bamford 2002).

ER can be one of the best methods for providing an input-rich language learning environment that facilitates second language (L2) acquisition (Ellis 2005). Even stronger theoretical support comes from the input hypothesis (Krashen 1982) and the reading hypothesis (Krashen 1993), which together maintain that linguistic input received through reading can be sufficient for acquiring a range of knowledge and skills in L2. L2 researchers and educators have long been interested in the impact that ER may have on L2 learning. Despite some cautions on the lack of rigour of many past studies (e.g., Grabe 2009), various positive effects have been reported in the field (see Day & Bamford 1998 and Grabe 2009 for informative reviews).

In spite of this growing enthusiasm toward ER, there is a cautious remark that deserves our attention: It is difficult to observe the benefits of ER in a relatively short period of time (Grabe & Stoller 2002). This is conceivable because ER is a process of implicit learning where new linguistic knowledge and skills are acquired incidentally as a by-product of reading for content. The literature increasingly supports the effectiveness of explicit instruction over implicit instruction (e.g., Norris & Ortega 2000). There are various reasons for this, but this may partially be because it takes longer for

implicit learning to make a measurable effect. It is therefore important to understand how long it takes for the beneficial effects of ER to appear. It seems reasonable to anticipate differential impacts of ER on different L2 abilities. That is, some aspects of reading may change by ER more quickly than others. Such information is useful particularly when the period for ER is limited, because teachers and learners can have more accurate and realistic expectations for achievement within a given time frame and can make plans for further reading. Motivated by this need to understand the time course in the emergence of the effects of ER, Yamashita (2008) compared its effects on two reading related skills, general reading comprehension ability and lower-level language ability, and found that, while test scores on general reading ability significantly increased after 15-week ER intervention, scores on lower-level language ability did not. The present study follows the same line of research by expanding the scope of investigation. It looks both at the cognitive domain (abilities/skills) and the affective domain (attitudes) in L2 reading, comparing different components in each domain.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

The participant consisted of two groups of undergraduate students at a university in Japan, where English functions only as a foreign language and students' exposure to English is minimal outside the language classroom. One group, consisting of second year students whose field was agricultural science, enrolled in an English class that adopted ER. This was their only English class during the semester when the study was conducted. This group is called the ER group and serves as a target group in the study. There were originally twenty students enrolled in the course, but only data from seventeen who completed all the tests were submitted to analyses. These seventeen students read an average of fourteen graded readers at various levels during the semester. The number of readers read by each student ranged from seven to twenty-two with a standard deviation of 3.62.

The other group (the comparison group), consisting of first year engineering students, enrolled in a more traditional intensive reading class, where they studied one textbook paying attention to vocabulary, grammar, and text structures. During the semester, they finished 10 units in their textbook. Each unit contained two passages, which provided approximately 500 words of total reading. In addition, the comparison group attended another English class focusing on oral communication skills and studied a set of CALL (computer assisted language learning) material on a self-study



basis as required in their curriculum. In the CALL material, they read various passages accompanied by comprehension questions and vocabulary/grammar exercises. There were 40 students in this group, but only data from 30 who completed the data collection was used for analysis.

The target group was tested in both cognitive and affective domains, but the comparison group was analyzed only for the affective domain. Therefore, we can only compare them in terms of reading attitudes. The reason for this imbalance in the design was the considerable difference between the groups in the exposure to English in their curriculum.

## **Materials**

### ***Reading comprehension***

Reading comprehension ability was measured with the Extensive Reading Test developed in Edinburgh Project in Extensive Reading (EPER). Based on the experience of using this test in past years, we used Level B & C tests (version 1). There was a relatively long passage at each level (1663 and 1460 words long at Level B and C respectively) with short-answer comprehension questions. There were 41 questions with the total score of 60. The time limit was 60 minutes.

### ***General English proficiency***

In order to measure general English proficiency, a 58-item cloze test was used. This test was made by simplifying one of the placement/progress tests originally constructed in the EPER (see Yamashita and Ichikawa 2010 for the details). Each correct answer was scored one and the total score was 58. The time limit was 20 minutes.

### ***Reading rate***

Passages to measure reading rate were chosen from a standardized test of English proficiency widely used in Japan (The Eiken Test in Practical English Proficiency). Two descriptive type passages originally used for listening comprehension at the pre-first grade level were adopted (see Yamashita & Ichikawa 2010 for the rationale for this choice). The length of the passages was 145 and 141 words at 8.3 and 8.4 grade levels respectively. Two multiple-choice comprehension questions per passage in the original test were adopted as well.

Reading rate was measured by each participant timing themselves with a stopwatch. They switched it on at the start of their reading, stopped it when finished, and recorded the time on a sheet of paper. The comprehension

questions were answered after reading without referring back to the passage. The mean score of the four questions was 2.53 (SD = 1.07).

### ***Word recognition efficiency***

Timed judgement tasks were used to measure three aspects of word recognition efficiency: decoding, sight word reading, and lexical meaning access.

Half of the stimuli for measuring decoding and sight word reading efficiencies were adopted from the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE) (Form A). The test provides estimates of two kinds of word recognition efficiency: sight word reading and phonemic decoding. Although the original task calls for reading a list of words orally, we changed it to a paper-pencil judgement task in order to make group administration possible. There are 104 real words and 63 pseudowords (pronounceable letter strings consisting of orthographically plausible letter combinations) in the original test. In addition to the TOWRE stimuli, we created another 104 pseudowords and 63 nonwords (unpronounceable letter strings consisting of orthographically implausible letter combinations) using the ARC Nonword Database (<http://www.maccs.mq.edu.au/~nwdb/>) and WordGen (Duyck et al. 2004).

The sight word reading efficiency test consisted of 104 real words from the TOWRE and 104 pseudowords created for this study ( $k = 208$ ). These two types of words were randomized and presented as a single word list. The task was to make a yes-no dichotomous judgement regarding whether an item in the list was a real English word or not. Similarly, the decoding efficiency test consisted of the original 63 pseudowords from TOWRE and the 63 newly created nonwords ( $k = 126$ ) randomized in a single list. The task was to make a yes-no judgement regarding whether an item could be an English word or not (i.e., whether an item can be read as an English word) despite the fact that all items were non-existing words. When creating word lists, care was taken to control for the length of items so that the lists started with short words (two letters) and gradually became longer (up to ten letters). Preliminary word lists were pilot tested with three native speakers of English. Several items to which two or three of them responded differently from our expectations were changed. The new items were tested again and were finally confirmed.

Lexical meaning access efficiency was measured by using 89 out of the 128 items created by Kojima (2010). The original task was computer based,

but we turned it to a paper-pencil task in order to administer it in a group. Each item was a pair of words listed next to each other. The task was to make a yes-no judgement on whether the two words were antonyms or not.

Each of the three word lists were printed on a sheet of paper with the instructions and practice items. The tasks were given in the following order: sight word, decoding and meaning access. The participants were asked to respond as quickly and accurately as possible. The time limit for each task was one minute. Thus, the efficiency score was the number of correct responses made in a minute.

### ***Reading attitudes***

A questionnaire of 22 items used for the final analysis in Yamashita (2007) was employed. It was a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, in which 22 statements such as “Reading English is troublesome” were followed by a 5-point scale from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree). The participants were asked to circle one of the points that best fit their feelings or beliefs concerning reading in English.

### **Procedure**

The ER programme for the study formed the basis of a 15-week course. The class met once a week for 90 minutes, and all the measures were administered within class hours. Since it was impossible to give all measures in one class, they were administered in three consecutive weeks at the beginning and at the end of the semester. It was scheduled so that the time lag between pretests and post-tests of all cognitive measures was 11 weeks and that of the affective measure was 14 weeks. During the pretest, measures of English proficiency and reading attitudes were given in the first week, that of reading comprehension in the second week, and finally those of reading rate and word recognition efficiency in the third week. For the post-test, the order of administration was identical except that the reading attitude questionnaire was given in the last week.

ER was incorporated in the class in the same way as Yamashita (2008). There were about 500 various English graded readers. The students read books of their own choice and submitted a book report for each book. The 90 minutes were divided into two: The first 45 minutes were used for classroom administration, lectures, or test administration, and the latter half was devoted to independent reading. The students read books both inside and outside of the ER class.

The comparison group answered the attitude questionnaire in the first week and the last week of the semester during their intensive reading class.

## Results

### *Cognitive domain*

Internal consistencies of all measures are summarized in Table 1. Different estimates were adopted for different measures as shown in the table. Cronbach alpha was computed in two ways for the reading comprehension test: one with 1-0 dichotomous scoring (unweighted) and the other with prescribed score weights (weighted). Considering that there were only seventeen samples, we have obtained sufficient internal consistencies from the current measures.

	Pretest	Post-test	Indices
Reading comprehension	0.861*/0.830**	0.922*/0.881**	Cronbach Alpha
English proficiency	0.721	0.794	Cronbach Alpha
Reading rate	0.587	0.630	between passage r***
<b>Word Recognition:</b>			
decoding	0.845	0.791	odd-even r***
sight word	0.968	0.970	odd-even r***
meaning access	0.718	0.830	odd-even r***

**Table 1:** Internal consistency estimate for all measures

Note. \* unweighted, \*\* weighted, \*\*\* Pearson product-moment correlation

In order to see the possible improvement from the pretest to post-test, Bonferroni adjusted paired samples t-tests ( $p < .008$ ) were run on each measure. Table 2 summarizes descriptive statistics and t-test results. Although most measures displayed improvement, the scores on decoding did not reach the significance level.

	Pretest mean	SD	Post-test mean	SD	t	p
Reading comprehension	40.76	9.79	51.09	7.52	-5.09	.000
English proficiency	17.88	3.94	22.24	4.8	-6.03	.000
Reading rate (wpm)	104.97	15.17	122.49	18.35	-4.77	.000
<b>Word Recognition:</b>						
decoding	49.82	8.46	54.53	7.32	-2.43	.027
sight word	64.59	9.84	70.94	9.74	-3.28	.005
meaning access	32.12	4.12	36	5.23	-5.42	.000

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics and t-test results

### ***Affective domain***

First, five attitude variable scores (Anxiety, Comfort, Intellectual Value, Linguistic Value, and Practical Value) were computed using the combination of items in Yamashita (2007). Anxiety and Comfort respectively represent anxious and comfortable feelings toward L2 reading. The remaining three attitude variables represent beliefs that readers attach to L2 reading, such as “I can get various information if I read English” (Intellectual Value), “I can acquire vocabulary if I read English” (Linguistic Value), and “Reading English is useful for my future career” (Practical Value).

When Cronbach alphas were computed for each attitude variable from the current sample of 47 students, some alphas were very low. In order to increase internal consistency, we deleted four items in the end that were working against the internal consistency. Table 3 lists the final solution of the number of items used to calculate scores of attitude variables (column k) and Cronbach alpha for each variable. Internal consistency of the post-test was satisfactory, but that of the pretest could be improved. Although we would probably need to compromise to some extent due to the small sample size and small number of items on each variable, it remains a question why only the pretest displayed lower internal consistency.

	<b>k</b>	<b>Pretest</b>	<b>Post-test</b>
Anxiety	3	0.531	0.681
Comfort	5	0.694	0.873
Intellectual Value	4	0.490	0.886
Linguistic Value	3	0.474	0.786
Practical Value	3	0.414	0.783

**Table 3:** Internal consistency estimate for five reading attitude variables

A score of an attitude variable in this study was the mean of the responses on the number of items listed in Table 3. Responses of negatively loaded items in Yamashita (2007) were converted, so that higher scores represent stronger feelings or beliefs towards reading. Changes of reading attitudes from the pretest to post-test were examined by 2 x 5 repeated measures ANOVAs run for each group separately with test time (pretest and post-test) and five reading attitudes as within-participants variables. For the ER group, main effects were significant both for Time,  $F(1,16)=9.47$ ,  $p < .001$ , and Attitude,  $F(4, 64)=49.39$ ,  $p < .001$ . These main effects were qualified by the significant interaction between the two,  $F(4, 64)=2.58$ ,  $p < .05$ . For the comparison group, main effect was significant only for Attitude,  $F(4,116)=29.11$ ,  $p < .001$ , and that of Time was not significant,

$F(1,29)=1.32$ ,  $p = .259$ . Interaction between the two was significant,  $F(4, 116)=27.81$ ,  $p < .001$ . Since both groups displayed significant interactions, multiple comparisons (Bonferroni) were conducted. Tables 4 and 5 summarize descriptive statistics and the results of multiple comparisons (shown by  $p$  values, where the significance level is  $p < .05$ ) for each group.

	Pretest		Post-test		p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Anxiety	2.90	0.9	2.61	0.78	.290
Comfort	2.26	0.64	2.68	0.71	.000
Intellectual Value	4.01	0.76	4.37	0.58	.019
Linguistic Value	4.16	0.49	4.43	0.44	.054
Practical Value	3.94	0.56	4.2	0.57	.120

**Table 4:** Descriptive statistics and the pretest/post-test difference for ER group

	Pretest		Post-test		p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Anxiety	2.44	0.6	3.13	0.86	.000
Comfort	3.23	0.54	2.06	0.75	.000
Intellectual Value	3.39	0.49	3.59	0.9	.190
Linguistic Value	3.31	0.67	4.02	0.8	.000
Practical Value	3.76	0.65	3.79	0.76	.859

**Table 5:** Descriptive statistics and the pretest/post-test difference for comparison group

The results indicated that ER group increased scores on Comfort and Intellectual Value from pretest to post-test ( $p < .001$  and  $p < .05$ ). Their score on Linguistic Value showed a tendency of increase ( $p = .054$ ). On the other hand, the comparison group decreased Comfort, and increased Anxiety and Linguistic Value ( $p < .001$ ).

## Discussion

The present study attempted to examine differential effects of ER incorporating a large number of components of reading ranging from the cognitive to the affective domains. Results in the cognitive domain suggest that EFL learners can improve disparate aspects of reading abilities (comprehension, reading rate, language proficiency, word recognition efficiency) through ER. However, this result needs to be considered with caution. One of the limitations of the present study is that we used the same tests for the pretest and the post-test. We cannot deny the possible repetition effect. In a strict sense, the improvement observed here could be an amalgamation of true improvement and the repetition effect.

Considering this possible limitation, the non-significant improvement in decoding ability is interesting, because this shows that even if the students did the same judgement task on the same items, their score did not significantly improve on decoding at least after eleven weeks of ER. This makes a contrast with the other two aspects of word recognition skills. Viewed collectively, the results suggest that processing efficiency of known words, both forms (sight word reading) and meanings (lexical meaning access), can improve more quickly than that of less familiar words (decoding) using ER. This difference might be attributed to the fact that the learners tended to choose books within their current English proficiency so that they could read smoothly and with ease. The possibility of encountering new vocabulary may be relatively small, which could result in smaller opportunities for acquiring or strengthening English grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules necessary for decoding. On the contrary, the students must have read known words repeatedly, which is likely to improve the processing efficiency of already familiar words. Another possible explanation is the different processes that ER and decoding would require. Decoding requires phonological processing of written words, while ER normally involves silent reading. In order to improve decoding ability, which is crucial for learning new vocabulary, more explicit intervention of converting unknown words into spoken forms may be more effective than simply being engaged in silent ER.

As for the impact on reading attitudes, the result demonstrated a positive effect of ER. After 14 weeks of ER, the students have increased reading comfort and strengthened the belief that reading English is intellectually satisfying. They have also come to believe that their linguistic ability improves by reading, although this was only a marginally significant result. There are some possible explanations for these results. Regarding the increase in Intellectual Value, the students were able to choose books which interested them and to learn something new through reading. This seems to be a very satisfying experience for them. For example, an excerpt from a book report reads; “I chose this book because I knew the name of Shakespeare but I did not know what kind of life he had. I was surprised to know that...” As for Comfort, the linguistic level of the books was usually within the students’ English ability and they were able to read fluently. Repeating this experience may have helped them feel comfortable in reading in English. Thus, regarding the differential effect of ER in the affective domain, the result suggests that Comfort and Intellectual Value are more quickly affected by ER than the other three components.

On the contrary, the comparison group displayed a dramatic difference from the ER group. Not only did their comfort toward reading decrease but their anxiety toward reading increased. The precise reason is not known, but at least partially it may be because the material was beyond their current English ability, as is often the case in intensive reading classes where students study reading materials carefully and try to learn new linguistic items. Despite the fact that they read various passages containing new information for them both in the class and in the CALL material, the intellectual value they attach to reading did not increase. This might be because they did not really enjoy reading and may also because the contents did not truly meet with their own interests. Their perceptions the linguistic value clearly increased, and this may be because they paid more explicit attention to new vocabulary, grammar, and text structures during reading than the ER group did.

This study is still at a preliminary stage and there are limitations to be addressed in future studies. For example, as mentioned above, the possible repetition effect of measurements should be controlled. Second, we should have a better comparison group, whose exposure to English is identical to the target group with the only difference in the ER condition. Third, the sample size needs to be increased. Fourth, reading related skills and attitudes not included in the present study should be examined.

## **Conclusion**

The present study investigated effects of ER in the cognitive and affective domains of reading. Although this study is still at a preliminary stage, the results lend support to the insight from previous studies: ER can improve various aspects of reading ability. In terms of differential effects of ER on different aspects of reading, it has been suggested that ER may improve processing efficiency of familiar words more quickly than decoding skill. ER together with some intervention of oral reading might provide better opportunities for learners to improve their overall word recognition skills. The study also demonstrated that ER can have positive effects on learners' attitudes towards reading, such as an increased liking for reading and intellectual satisfaction. This is a very welcoming result because such positive change in affects may motivate learners to read independently even after the class is over.



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# 39

## Essential Readings in Vocabulary Studies Vocabulary Studies SIG Colloquium

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### Introduction

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Vocabulary Studies have enjoyed something of a renaissance in the last 20 years after a period when the subject was downplayed in importance and rather neglected. Perhaps as a result of this, much of the work we do now draws on studies not just from the recent past but from considerably earlier; the time before structuralist approaches to language teaching effectively side-lined the subject. For example, the work done on lexical sophistication and lexical diversity in the analysis of written texts, which still excites a considerable literature through from TTR to Malvern and Richard's D, draws extensively on the ideas of George Udny Yule in the 1940s. Another example would be West's *General Service Word List*, which was developed in the 1930s, and which has laid the foundation for so much modern work using corpora and is still used, for example, in the development of Coxhead's Academic Word List and Cobb's *vocabprofile*. Much of this material is now quite hard to access. Even comparatively recent papers, such as Laufer's work which gives rise to the 95% coverage figure required for comprehension, and which is hugely cited and influential, can be quite hard to track down in the original form. Sometimes these works, quite undeservedly, disappear from view. Others develop a life of their own, as with Laufer's 95% coverage figure which is often over-generalised and misinterpreted.

The intention of this colloquium was to allow researchers in the field of vocabulary studies to propose papers which they think have been particularly important in the development of the subject and in shaping the study of the subject today. They described their chosen work and described why they thought their choice is so important. Participants at the colloquium could then judge the proposals and indicate which they thought were truly important.

The individual short papers are presented below.

The outcome of the discussion after the presentations was that Jack Richards' (1976) paper on *The role of vocabulary teaching* was the single paper participants thought most influential but that it was clear that researchers in vocabulary studies draw widely for their sources of information, methodology and inspiration. The subject is so diverse in its origins that it probably is not possible to encapsulate this in a single canon of works that shows clear developmental sequence.

**B. Laufer (1989) What percentage of text-lexis is essential for comprehension? In Ch. Lauren & M. Nordman (eds.) *Special Language: From Humans Thinking To Thinking Machines. Multilingual Matters: Clevedon, England*, pp316-323.**

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In this paper Laufer reports studies indicating that the greatest difficulty learners perceive in understanding a foreign language text is in the lexis the text contains. This raises the question of how much of the lexis is required to be known before comprehension is complete. Full coverage would require a foreign language vocabulary of thousands of words, something learners find difficult to achieve. To calculate the percentage of coverage learners require for comprehension, Laufer investigates 100 university students in Israel who need to study through the medium of English as a second language. These students were given a comprehension test to ascertain comprehension, and a lexical coverage test to calculate the percentage of coverage needed for understanding. The testees had to demonstrate they could correctly translate the words they claimed to know. A score of 55% on the comprehension test was taken to indicate full understanding. The results showed that students who knew 95% of the words in the texts were more likely to achieve the comprehension score of 55% or better. Laufer concludes that 95% coverage is a threshold and a minimum level required for comprehension required in the University of Haifa. This in turn suggests that learners will need to know 5,000 words or more in English to achieve full understanding or something like it.

This is a much quoted conclusion and reflects, I think, a general truth which we all recognise: learners will need to understand pretty much all the words in a text if they are to take full and complete meaning from it, and they will need large vocabularies to do this. It is possible to argue about the method and the precise figure of 95% or 5,000 words, but this general conclusion is surely true. Almost certainly this is not the first paper to suggest the significance of this 95% coverage figure. I think I can trace it back to Michael West and he may, in turn, have got it from somewhere else. Nonetheless, this is the paper which seems to have given the 95% figure its current prominence and is the one always quoted in reference to this. But its importance lies in what follows in direct line from it. It gives rise to studies which use coverage to generate wordlists to aid comprehension such as Coxhead's Academic Word List (Coxhead 2000). It leads onto to very widely used techniques of analysis in lexical profiling such as Vocabprofile (Laufer and Nation, 1995) and RANGE (Healy et al 2002). And it certainly gives rise to calculation of the much better figures we now have for the volumes of vocabulary needed by foreign language learners who aspire to fluency, for example Nation (2006).

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**Z.O. Weizman & C.E. Snow (2001) Lexical input as related to children's vocabulary acquisition: Effects of sophisticated exposure and support for meaning. In *Developmental Psychology*, 37, 2001, pp265-279.**

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The study is an observational investigation of the quality of maternal input and interaction and its contribution to vocabulary development. Fifty-three disadvantaged children from low-income families in the

United States were studied as part of the 'Home-School Study of Language and Literacy Development' (Snow, Tabors & Dickinson 2001). Vocabulary input and the associated interaction in the home was assessed at five years and related to PPVT scores for receptive vocabulary at the end of kindergarten and second grade. Data were collected across five controlled contexts: story book, factual book, toy play, magnet play and mealtime. Particular emphasis was placed on input containing 'sophisticated' lexis, defined as items outside 3000 words known by most fourth graders (Dale & Chall 1995).

Results indicated that less than 2% of maternal vocabulary was low frequency, but its occurrence was more strongly related to children's later vocabulary scores than the total amount of vocabulary input. Over 80% of conversations containing sophisticated vocabulary were 'informative', i.e. they supported the child's interpretation of sophisticated words. Both the frequency of sophisticated lexis and the degree of informativeness independently predicted more than a third of the variance in children's vocabulary in later assessments. In addition, after controls for child non-verbal IQ, quantity of child talk and maternal education, they jointly predicted half the variance at the end of second grade.

The quality of this research is suggested by its longitudinal design, large speech samples (150,000 word tokens), the controls mentioned above, and the careful structuring of context; a major achievement is that an impressive amount of variance can be explained in such a restricted sub-sample of the population. But even more importance should be attached to the focus on the *quality* of both the lexical items to which the child is exposed and the *quality* of the interaction that enables children to infer their meaning. In order to assess the latter, the researchers coded all interactions that mentioned a sophisticated word for the informativeness of the maternal interaction (three categories) and the degree of scaffolding provided (four categories). These data were then combined to give a single measure of interactional support.

The main title of the article ('Lexical input as related to children's vocabulary acquisition') could simply exemplify another of the numerous input-output multiple regression analyses in the child development literature. The subtitle, on the other hand, indicates the true worth of the article: its explanatory power in helping to identify the mechanisms that underlie individual variation in language development, particularly in an area that is thought to make an important contribution to educational achievement. Studies that pinpoint such explanatory mechanisms are, regrettably, all too rare, but the work of Weizman and Snow described

here makes an important contribution to our knowledge of first language development and one that has potential implications for future research in second language.

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**H. Ringbom** (1991) Crosslinguistic lexical influence and foreign language learning. In R. Phillipson, E. Kellerman, L. Selinker, M. Sharwood Smith & M. Swain. (eds.) *Foreign/Second Language Pedagogy Research*. Multilingual Matters: Clevedon, England, pp172-181.

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This article discusses two important questions: what does knowing a word entail and how does vocabulary knowledge develop, bearing in mind it is affected by learners' previous vocabulary knowledge both in L1 and possible L2s? Ringbom discusses the development of a second language learner's vocabulary knowledge as a cluster of gradual processes that entails various aspects ranging from the meaning(s) of a word to its associations. He thus develops further the ideas previously introduced by, for example, Nation (2001) and Carter (1987). Also, the article gives a concise overview of crosslinguistic lexical influences, with several illustrative examples. Ringbom brings up not only the effect of L1 on L2, but also how existing L2 vocabulary knowledge influences the acquisition of new vocabulary in L2. Furthermore, Ringbom's examples reflect on differences between language families as he has studied English produced by Swedish vs. Finnish L1 speakers, the first being a Germanic language and the latter belonging to a non-Indo-European, Finno-Ugric language family.

There are several reasons why this article is significant. Firstly, it presents a multidimensional model of vocabulary acquisition, making it clear that

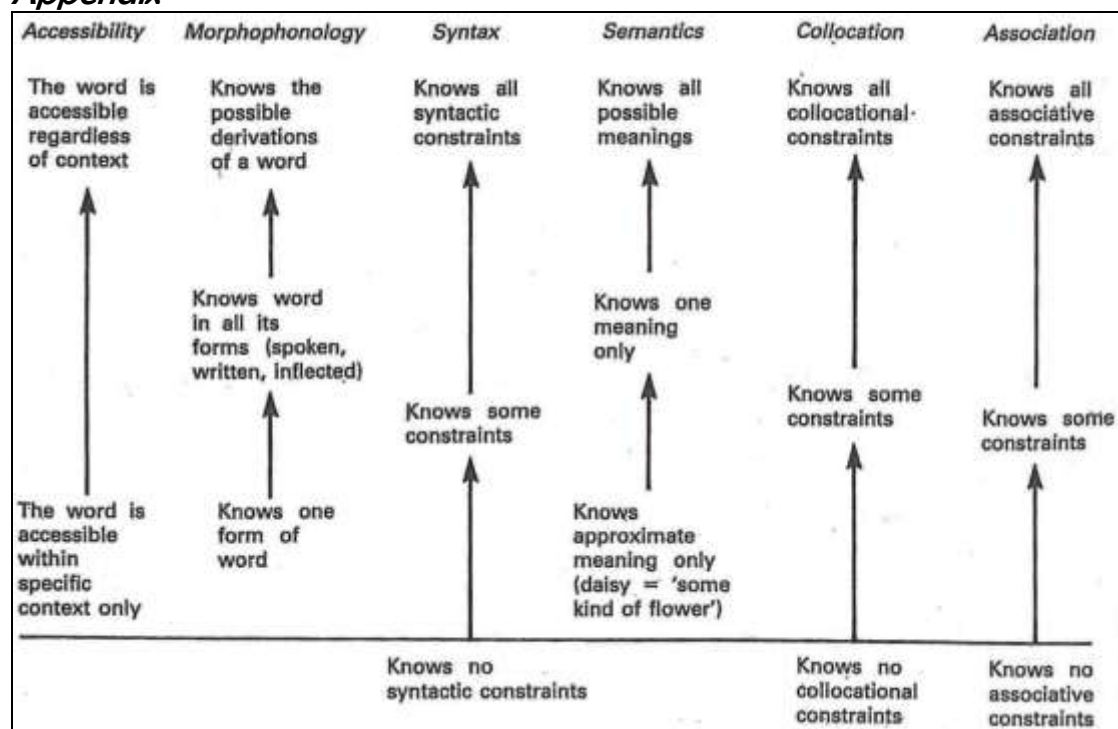
different areas of vocabulary knowledge may and often do develop at a different pace:

Secondly, the article discusses the effects of L1 on the learning process rather than on the product. It thus investigates what similarities to learner's L1 can be perceived in the L2 at different stages of learning. Thirdly, the article brings up crosslinguistic lexical influence on comprehension rather than on production that had previously been the target of investigation. After all, comprehension precedes production and Ringbom argues that crosslinguistic influence on production has a facilitating effect on learning and should hence be studied more in order to better understand positive transfer in production. All this has had an impact on later work on crosslinguistic influence in the field of vocabulary studies by, for example, Scott Jarvis.

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### Appendix



Stages of knowing a word. (Ringbom, p. 174)



**J. Richards (1976). The role of vocabulary teaching. In *TESOL Quarterly* 10(1), 1976, pp77-89.**

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Richards' (1976) list of eight assumptions concerning the nature of lexical competence (see below) is a must-read for all researchers in the field of vocabulary learning and teaching because it is one of the first summaries of what it means to know a word. According to Meara (1996: 1) this paper set much of the agenda for research in this field, and it continues to influence researchers in the field of vocabulary learning and teaching more than thirty years after its publication. Nation's (2001: 15) overview of what is involved in knowing a word – currently the most widely cited source for this key information - is clearly inspired by Richards' assumptions.

Since Richards' publication, significant progress has been made in studying many of the assumptions he listed. Important progress has been made for example in developing standardised tests for measuring vocabulary size, such as Nation's levels test (<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/staff/paul-nation.aspx>) and Meara & Milton's (2003) X-Lex, and our understanding of the development of vocabulary among native speakers and L2-learners has been studied widely too (see for an overview for example Milton 2009 and Treffers-Daller, Daller, Malvern, Milton & Richards 2008). In addition, Meara (2009) and Fitzpatrick (2006) have made important contributions to our understanding of word associations among L2-learners.

Investigating Richards' assumptions has only started to be possible in earnest when large corpora and accompanying tools for the analysis of language data became available, such as the British National Corpus, Granger's International Corpus of learner language and the Talkbank of the CHILDES system. Large corpora of spoken or written language used by native speakers or L2 learners/users can be used, for example, to obtain realistic estimates of the frequency of words and of the words which normally accompany these words. Researchers working on formulaic sequences (Wray 2002) or phraseology (Granger & Meunier 2008) among second language learners have contributed very much to testing Richards' (1976: 79) assumptions about the syntactic behaviour of words and the ways in which they collocate or co-occur with other words. In an early paper (Richards 1974) had already investigated the assumption that knowing a word implies knowing the degree of

probability of encountering that word in speech or print. Richards correlated the subjective frequency estimates from 1000 Canadian university students with the observed frequencies of the same words in oral and written corpora, which led to the conclusion that native speakers are able to indicate reasonably accurately how frequent words are in discourse (Richards 1976: 79). These findings were later confirmed by Schmitt & Dunham (1999) who asked native speakers to rank order lexical sets of five synonyms in order of frequency.

In many ways, Richards' paper formed the starting point for much of the research in vocabulary learning, but it is important to heed his comment that "such information cannot be translated directly into teaching procedures" Richards' (1976: 77). For this reason, Richards calls for more research into how teaching techniques can support vocabulary development in learners. At the end of his seminal article Richards (1976: 88) also reminds us of the importance of linking our understanding of *what* we are teaching with *how* we teaching this. This point is as important nowadays as it was thirty years ago.

### ***Appendix***

#### **Richards' eight assumptions.**

1. The native speaker of a language continues to expand his vocabulary in adulthood, whereas there is comparatively little development of syntax in adult life.
2. Knowing a word means knowing the degree of probability of encountering that word in speech or print. For many words we also know the sort of words most likely to be found associated with the word.
3. Knowing a word implies knowing the limitations imposed on the use of the word according to variations of function and situation.
4. Knowing a word means knowing the syntactic behavior associated with the word.
5. Knowing a word entails knowledge of the underlying form of a word and the derivations that can be made from it.
6. Knowing a word entails knowledge of the network of associations between that word and other words in the language.
7. Knowing a word means knowing the semantic value of a word.
8. Knowing a word means knowing many of the different meanings associated with a word. (p. 83)

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**J. Ure (1971) Lexical density and register differentiation. In G.E. Perren & J.L.M. Trim (eds.) *Applications of linguistics: selected papers of the Second International Congress of Applied Linguistics, Cambridge 1969*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, England, pp443–452**

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Ure's 1971 paper was published as a conference proceedings in the early days of what later became BAAL. It is based on an astute mix of observation, intuition and analysis; it is punchy but not showy, and it is elegantly written.

It is also an early breakthrough in vocabulary studies. Although it made use of an existing distinction between 'lexical' and 'content' words, it was the first to clearly define the concept of Lexical Density (LD). Working with two corpora of around 20,000 words, and using a relatively simple formula based on dividing the number of lexical words by the number of tokens, Ure calculated the percentage of lexical words for a series of texts taken from a variety of spoken and written sources, and from a variety of discourse types. The results showed that LD varied systematically and widely according to genre, and particularly between spoken and written registers.

The great advantage of LD as a measure is its simplicity: it accurately describes a clearly recognisable phenomenon. It is also relatively easy to carry out the analysis, and it works on texts of varying lengths. These strengths have been recognised, and several variants bear witness to the power of the original: such variants and developments have improved the distinction between 'lexical' and 'grammatical' items (Halliday 1986, O'Loughlin 1995), employed a range of word classes (noun LD, verb LD, adjective LD: see Wolfe-Quintero *et al* 1998), and used low-frequency lexis (O'Loughlin 1995).

Like other measures of lexis, LD has weaknesses. It is almost certainly language dependent, since LD scores will reflect the morphological make-up of any particular language (Johansson 2008). It also rides on an arguable distinction between 'lexical' and 'grammatical' (although this is probably a weakness in the terminology – and many other lexical measures suffer from the same problem to a greater extent).

The paper continues to be important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it gives an early strong empirical account of the importance of genre and the 'social function' of text. Secondly, it has enjoyed considerable longevity, and feeds a continuing stream of research across the L1 / L2 divide. Ure's formula, unlike many others, possesses formal grace and intuitive appeal, and has been employed by researchers in a surprisingly wide variety of applications, including assessment studies (Yu 2009), genre analysis (Stubbs 1986), corpus work and discourse analysis, language development (Johansson 2008) and semi-automated language testing (Shohamy 1994).

It is a crucial paper in the development of genre studies, vocabulary studies, and British applied linguistics.

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**A. Ellegård (1960) Estimating vocabulary size. In *Word*, 16, 1960, pp219-244.**

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Ellegård starts the article by plotting on a graph the distribution of English words according to their frequency in the language. In order to do so, he calculates the words' relative frequency (i.e. probability of occurrence) according to the Thorndike and Lorge (1944) list. In this way, he predicts the contribution of words from different frequency ranges in the language as a whole or in 'theoretically mixed samples'. He continues by plotting word frequencies from actual texts and comparing the resulting distributions with each other and with that found for English. These real texts, which vary in length, topic and authorship, provide the 'observed' vocabulary values. With the information obtained from his analysis, he shows how the relationship between 'theoretical' and 'observed' values can be used to estimate the vocabulary size of an individual.

This paper is significant because it addresses three main points that are fundamental in vocabulary research. First of all, it deals with vocabulary measurement, which is necessary to answer questions such as ‘how many words are there in a given language?’ or ‘which vocabulary size should learners from different proficiency levels aim at?’ Therefore, the development and use of measurement techniques have direct implications on language learning, teaching, testing and syllabus making.

Although in the 1960’s there was already previous work on measurement, the size of the vocabulary of the person tested was still mostly determined by the size of the dictionary from which the test sample was taken. However, this piece of work is a good example of how the knowledge of the statistical structure of language can be applied in practice. For instance, Ellegård points out that instead of trying to estimate an individual’s vocabulary in relation to a particular dictionary, it could be more properly estimated in relation to the words in the language within definite frequency ranges, which could be extracted from counts on methodologically selected materials.

Secondly, the paper explores these quantification questions in quite innovative ways: some of the ideas and methods that it puts forward have become common procedures in vocabulary research. For example, the idea that the lexical diversity of a text is not fully self-contained can also be found in Jarvis (2003). The outlined proposal of ascertaining the vocabulary profiles of language users has been supported by many researchers, and lexical frequency profiles have been applied for different purposes (e.g. Laufer & Nation 1995; Muncie 2002). Additionally, methods such as those based on the Poisson formula, which he uses to determine the occurrence of infrequent words, have been adopted in studies such as Meara and Bell (2001).

Finally, the third reason why this article is worthy of attention is its rigour in examining issues that, despite seeming minor or having been overlooked, can greatly influence research results. To name just two: it tests some tacit assumptions in languages typologically different from English and it problematises the established notion of ‘word’, drawing a distinction between ‘lexical unit’, ‘word form’ and ‘semantic element’.

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Vocabulary measures based on the ratio between types and tokens face a fundamental methodological problem because the type token ratio (TTR) systematically decreases with increasing text length since the speakers/writers run out of new words the longer they speak or write. This makes it difficult to compare texts with different lengths which occur in natural language production. Earlier researchers were clearly aware of this methodological problem and tried to overcome it in various ways. In 1915 Thomson and Thompson wanted to compare the writing vocabulary size of school children and sought to address this issue in their work by introducing frequency bands for vocabulary but their work seems to have been interrupted by the First World War. An approach that makes reference to Thomson and Thompson (1915) is presented by Guiraud (1954). Based on an analysis of vocabulary in literary texts and dictionaries Guiraud proposes an index that is stable over different text lengths and can therefore be used as a measure of lexical richness for texts in different settings. This index comes in two different forms:

1.  $R(\text{ichesse}) = V / \sqrt{2N}$   
N = Total number of “mots-forts” (Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives and Adverbs)  
V = Types “mots-forts”

or including function words:

2.  $R(\text{ichesse}) = V / \sqrt{N}$   
N = Total number of “mots-forts” plus “mots-outils” (function words).

In both formulae “mots de signification très large” (words with a large number of meanings = most frequent words) are excluded since they do not contribute towards the lexical richness of a vocabulary. Guiraud was also aware of the problem of what counts as a single word. He takes a quite modern approach towards multi-word units. He suggests that not only verbs and their auxiliaries should be counted as one word but also expressions that are used as a whole, e.g. expressions such as “par conséquent” (1954: 20).

Guiraud (1954: 52) shows on an empirical basis that his index is stable over text lengths up to 100,000 words. A number of recent studies (Daller and Phelan 2007, Tidball and Treffers-Daller 2007, Turlik 2007, Van Hout and Vermeer 2007, Housen *et al.* 2008) use the index and show that it correlates highly (between .73 and .97) with other measures of vocabulary richness. This is an argument for the validity of Guiraud’s index. Recently a slightly modification of Guiraud’s index has been suggested (Daller, van Hout and Treffers-Daller 2003) which excludes all words from the 2k frequency band from the computation. These words are known by most speakers/learners and make therefore no contribution to an analysis of different proficiency levels. This new approach allows to include Guiraud’s index into automated measures of proficiency since no individual judgment has to be made about what counts as “mots de signification très large” or “mots-outils”.

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**I.S.P. Nation (2006) How large a vocabulary is needed for reading and listening? In *Canadian Modern Language Review* 63(1), 2006, pp59-82.**

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A key pedagogical issue is the amount of vocabulary necessary for people to use language effectively. The typical research methodology addressing this issue involves two steps: 1) determining the percentage of vocabulary in written texts or oral discourse which people need to know in order to obtain adequate comprehension (i.e. *vocabulary coverage*), and 2) calculating how many words/lemmas/word families are necessary to reach this coverage percentage in various types of language use. This has mainly been done for reading, and to a much smaller extent listening. The difficulties in quantifying productive use (speaking and writing) mean that we still know little about the amount of vocabulary necessary for successful language production.

The seminal paper in establishing the necessary vocabulary coverage for reading comprehension was published by Laufer in 1989. She came to the conclusion that 95% coverage was needed after carrying out a small study with her students. Although it was a limited study published in a relatively obscure edited volume, the 95% ‘number’ was picked out and the chaining of citations eventually led to it becoming an accepted figure. Based on 95% coverage, calculations showed that it took around 3,000 word families to begin to read authentic English materials, and somewhere around 5,000 word families to read them independently without vocabulary being a serious constraint.

In 2000, Hu and Nation carried out a more carefully controlled analysis, and came up with a coverage figure closer to 98-99% for adequate comprehension. Based on this, the figure of 98% coverage has become the currently accepted figure, although again a coverage figure has been based on a study with noteworthy limitations, especially small participant numbers. (See Schmitt, Jiang & Grabe 2011 for a larger-scale study into vocabulary coverage.)

Using this 98% figure, Nation (2006) made a new estimate of the vocabulary requirements to read a range of authentic texts (e.g. novels or newspapers). Based on British National Corpus (BNC) data, Nation

calculated that it takes a vocabulary size of around 8,000-9,000 word families ( $\approx 34,660$  individual word forms). Similarly, using word lists based on the Wellington Corpus of Spoken English, he calculated that 6,000-7,000 word families ( $\approx 28,015$  words) are required to understand a range of spoken discourse.

Nation's article is important because it suggests that a far larger vocabulary size is necessary to operate in English compared to estimates based on Laufer's lower 95% coverage figure. If Nation is correct, learners will have to acquire a daunting number of lexical items. The scope of this vocabulary learning task, and the fact that many learners fail to achieve even moderate vocabulary learning goals (Laufer 2005), indicates that it can no longer be assumed that an adequate lexis will simply be 'picked up' from exposure to language tasks focusing either on other linguistic aspects (e.g. grammatical constructions) or on communication alone (e.g. communicative language teaching). Rather, a more proactive, principled approach needs to be taken in promoting vocabulary learning, which includes both explicit teaching and exposure to large amounts of language input, especially through extensive reading (Schmitt 2008).

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**J McK. Cattell (1887) Experiments on the association of ideas. In *Mind*, 12, 1887, pp68-74.**

Proposed by Paul Meara

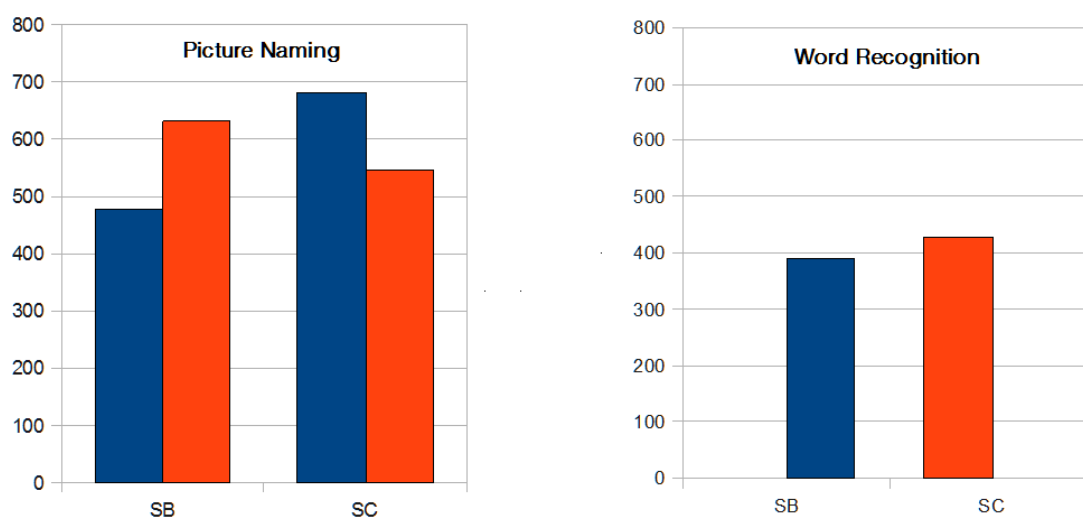
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This paper is rather older than the other recommendations and was

published nearly a hundred and twenty-five years ago. James McKean Cattell was born in 1860 in the United States, but he spent his formative years working in Europe – Göttingen, Leipzig, Paris, Geneva and Cambridge. He returned to the USA as Professor of Psychology in the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University, where he founded the *Psychological Review* in 1894, and was responsible for the journal *Science* from 1895. During his stay in Leipzig, he worked with Wilhelm Wundt, who is widely regarded as one of the founding fathers of Experimental Psychology. It was during this period that this paper was published – perhaps on one of the new-fangled typewriting machines that Cattell introduced to Wundt's Laboratory.

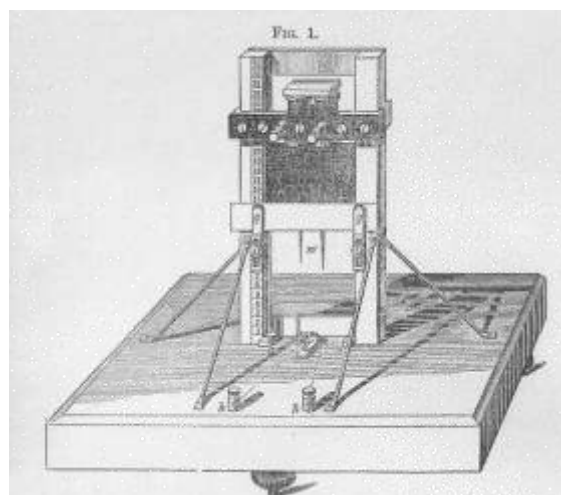
The paper reports a series of experiments in which Cattell compared how quickly an L1 English speaker (himself) and an L1 German speaker (his laboratory assistant) could name objects in these two languages, recognise these names in print, and translate them into the other language. Although single subject studies are uncommon nowadays, and studies where the experimenter also serves as Subject are even rarer, there seems to have been something of a tradition of studies of this sort in Germany at the time. Most readers of this paper will be familiar, at least second hand, with Ebbinghaus' 1885 study - another piece of work which has stood the test of time, despite the fact that it too uses the experimenter as a single subject data source. Ebbinghaus reported in minute detail his own ability to learn and remember thousands of nonsense words, and from this data was able to establish some basic laws about memory and forgetting.



**Figure 1:** Mean reaction times (msecs) for two Subjects on a picture naming task and a word recognition task. SB is a native speaker of German, SC is a native speaker of English.

Cattell's basic findings (see figure 1) were that the L2 words are harder to

process than L1 words, with L2 words taking about 150 msec longer than L1 words. He also noted some variation between subjects, and suggested that word recognition speed in an L2 might be a function of L2 proficiency. By modern standards, of course, there is nothing remarkable about these figures. The data is very much in line with the sort of results that are widely reproduced in modern work (e.g. Dijkstra and van Heuven 2002). It is only when we stop to think about the technology that Cattell had at his disposal that we realise what an astonishing piece of work this is. Modern day research into word recognition relies very heavily on the ability of computers to control stimulus displays, and to measure reaction times accurately. Cattell had nothing like this, of course, but he developed an apparatus that allowed him to control exposure times and measured reaction times to an accuracy of about five milliseconds. The apparatus (shown in Figure 2) is basically a heavy brass guillotine-like structure attached to an exceptionally accurate clockwork timer, recently developed by Swiss watch makers. The guillotine is held up by an electromagnet - another recent invention. Breaking the circuit that powers this magnet allows the guillotine to fall, and to expose a stimulus. As long as the apparatus is properly set up, with the posts exactly vertical, the rate of this fall depends on gravity, so the fall and the exposure can be exactly timed. At the bottom of Cattell's apparatus is a small dish of mercury - a liquid metal which conducts electricity; needles protruding from the bottom of the guillotine break an electrical circuit when they touch the mercury. The clockwork timer starts as soon as this contact is made. Subject's reaction times were recorded by another piece of equipment - a spring-loaded contact made of ivory which was held together by the Subject's teeth. As long as the Subject kept his mouth shut, current flowed across the contact, but once the subject opened his mouth to make a response the electrical circuit was broken. Putting the two bits of kit together allowed Cattell to record reaction times to various stimuli.



**Figure 2:** The equipment designed by Cattell to measure word recognition time.

Why is Cattell's work worth reading? This paper is of more than just historical interest. It reported results which were not really challenged until the 1960s. Even then, Cattell's results were improved upon, rather than swept aside. If anything, this later work merely underlined how perceptive Cattell's insights about bilingual lexicons were, and how far ahead of the time his thinking was. However, there are three features of Cattell's paper which make it particularly interesting for undergraduates to read.

The first feature is a formal one. This paper is not written in what we might call modern journal style. Rather it is a straightforward account of what Cattell was thinking about at the time, and how he set up an experimental study to test these ideas. In that respect, Cattell's paper reads more like a modern day blog than a paper in a journal. It has few references, for example, and it does not report a formal statistical analysis of the results. The language is simple and straightforward, if slightly old-fashioned by modern standards. This is a useful corrective to the idea that good science only appears in the approved journals, and overblown rhetoric that characterises much of the modern research. It shows students that you can write good science in a way which is simple and accessible.

The second reason why Cattell's paper is worth reading is that it points to the value of single subject studies in which the experimenter also serves as Subject. Modern practice tends to look askance at case study research, but it seems to me that the case for case studies is much stronger than people think. Specifically, case studies allow you to explore methodologies that you cannot, for logistical reasons, implement with large groups of subjects. In Cattell's case, the sensitive nature of the equipment meant that it had to be recalibrated and readjusted after every single trial. Collecting even small amounts of data for a mere handful of words under these conditions actually took several days. A commitment of this sort would clearly make it impossible to work with large subject groups. It was possible, however, with a conscientious experimenter who was prepared to use himself as a subject over a long period of time. This is an approach which encourages researchers to explore serious questions by examining their own performance over a long period of time with an innovative research methodology.

The third, and most important, feature which makes this paper worth reading is its attitude towards technology. Cattell is really interested in how people's minds work, and he sees lexical access as a way of looking into the workings of these minds. Faced with the problem of how to research deep and intractable questions of this sort, Cattell operationalises

them in a piece of equipment. He designs and builds the apparatus he needs to test his ideas, making use of cutting edge clockwork technology and recent developments in electricity. This is a creative use of technological innovation, which allows him to turn some very abstract and difficult ideas into measurable reaction times. Without the technology, it would simply be impossible to collect data of this sort, or to answer the deeper questions that he is interested in.

This ability to operationalise a research question in terms of a new research technology is really astonishing, and it has few modern parallels. Few of us build our own equipment these days, of course, and modern health and safety regulations would make it impossible for students to work with Cattell's own apparatus. Nonetheless, the idea of asking students to design equipment to answer empirical questions strikes me as a really powerful one, which I would have liked to exploit in my own teaching. Equipment design is something of a lost art, however. Most modern researchers, even at the cutting edge of psycholinguistics, use off the shelf technology in fairly conventional ways, and the development of a new research technology is a rare event, even for seasoned researchers. I suppose that the nearest most of us come to this would be writing innovative computer programs, but to be honest, not many researchers can do this, and it is noticeable that computer programming skills are not routinely included in the training provided even to doctoral students in applied linguistics, let alone undergraduates. We maybe need to find ways of reincorporating this link between curiosity and technology into our psycholinguistic syllabus.

These three lessons seem to me to be ones worth learning, both for students and, perhaps more importantly, for their teachers.

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