

# Opening New Lines of Communication in Applied Linguistics

Proceedings of the 46th Annual Meeting  
of the British Association for Applied Linguistics

*5-7 September 2013  
Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh*



Edited by Bernadette O'Rourke,  
Nicola Bermingham,  
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## **Opening New Lines of Communication in Applied Linguistics**

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Over the last few decades, research in the area of applied linguistics has been transformed by an increasing focus on the social, cultural and linguistic changes brought about by globalisation, increased mobility and transnational flows, new technologies and a changing political and economic landscape. These changes have had major implications for the ways in which we conceptualise the relationship between language and society in the twenty-first century. A new communicative order has emerged in which we find new types of speakers, new forms of language and new modes of communication. The 2013 conference theme 'Opening New Lines of Communication in Applied Linguistics' addressed the challenges and opportunities that this new communicative order presents in the field of applied linguistics.

This publication brings together a selection of those papers and examines the complexity and different facets of this new (socio)linguistic reality. The papers cover a broad range of topics including intercultural interaction, globalization and global English, the dynamics and challenges of contemporary academia, identity construction, language in new forms of social media, language and the economy and new technologies in language teaching. The authors provide interesting and innovative perspectives on emerging trends in applied linguistics and open new lines of communication in our understanding of language in the twenty first century.



# 1 Towards A New Process Approach to Rate Test Format Difficulty

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## Abstract

The study reported here revisited the issue of rating the difficulty of two test formats or test types, using a new process approach instead of the traditional product approach. This process approach relied on spotting signs of difficulties encountered by respondents while verbalizing their thoughts in two English vocabulary achievement test formats, an open cloze test (20 items with no choices offered) and a multiple choice test (20 sentence-based gap filling test which can be filled from a pool of alternatives, MCGF). These two test types were selected as they are said to be the ones used most commonly in Saudi Arabia. Close analysis revealed eight signs of difficulties: reporting difficulty of the test as a whole; stating a problem; pausing at a gap (filled or unfilled) and longer time spent on an item; skipping an item; repeating words and phrases; number of answers considered for an item; use of  $L_1$ ; number of all strategies and processes used in each test plus getting an item wrong, which is a product approach. Ten males and ten females participated in this study. The analysis of these signs of difficulty showed that the multiple choice test was found by participants to be significantly more difficult, based on four out of seven common signs of difficulty (one was MCGF-specific), than the cloze test, although the level of both tests was appropriate for the participants according to the students' scores and some expert judgments.

## Introduction

The issue of rating the difficulty of test formats (test types) has not been looked at in depth. Traditional procedures have always relied upon statistical analysis of the product (test scores) to rate the easiness or difficulty of taking a test. Sometimes this analysis includes expert judgments, to judge whether a test is difficult or suitable for a given population. For example, it is believed that multiple choice (MC) items are preferred and found easier by  $L_2$  learners compared to open items (items that are not restricted by certain choices), as in MC tests there is help provided by the inclusion of the correct answer (along with a certain number of distractors). However, a literature survey

established that Connolly (2008) criticized the belief that MC items are easier, calling it a myth without providing any further explanations. Bridgeman (1992), on the other hand, speculated that MC items are easier because it is possible for learners to work backwards from the distractors to the stem, and because MC items are more easily guessed than open items. Moreover, Nation (2001, p. 359) believes that recognition items are easier than production items “because even with partial knowledge, a test taker may be able to make the right choice”, especially when the distractors in the recognition task are not close in meaning and / or form.

However, a search of the literature on testing anxiety, which is considered one element that may affect or reflect students’ performance on a test, produced studies which showed learners’ preferences for one or the other test type. Shohamy (1982) and Madsen (1981) found that learners classified cloze tests as high anxiety tasks. Roizen (1982, in Cohen, 1984) found that 60% of his subjects did not like the cloze test due to its difficulty, which caused them to be nervous. Cohen (1984), however, found that students disliked multiple choice items when they were associated with a passage and preferred open-ended questions, which means they preferred test types such as the cloze test. Additionally, Cohen (1984, 1996) believes that it is possible to ask students for their reactions about the test tasks they just have completed. Therefore in the retrospective interviews conducted as part of this study (i.e., our supplementary instrument), we asked a question about the difficulty of both tests and the reasons for it. This might help the researcher, along with the data from the verbal protocols of the think-aloud sessions and interviews, to determine which test format is easier.

Famularo (2007) notes that the relationship between test format difficulties and test taking strategies (TTS) has not been explored to date, as most studies have only compared test formats scores (product) to determine difficulties. Ironically, in her study Famularo used test scores to determine that MC items were easier than open items in three algebra tests rather than employing a process approach to see how difficult the items were. She used a checklist of 18 selected strategies to see if the strategies affected the test scores or not. The checklist contained background knowledge, guessing, approximation, reading, distractor elimination among other factors, but did not explain how these strategies were selected or what their source was. Also, no explanation was given for how the selected 18 strategies affected test format difficulty, only addressing how they accounted for differences between the two test formats.



Cohen and Upton (2006, 2007) found that the strategies used in their study, drawn from different tasks in the TOEFL reading section, provided some indicators of test item difficulty: wrestling with language intent, wrestling with option meaning, reconsidering or double-checking the response, considering preliminary options, and postponing consideration of an option. However, they did not report the strategy use differences among the tasks. They reported the difficulty of items by calculating the success rates for the different types of items, again relying on test scores.

The current study takes a similar approach to Cohen and Upton's by identifying some signs of difficulties in the verbal protocol data from the think-aloud sessions and interviews, which can be seen as indicators of test type difficulty, and otherwise uses Al Fraidan (2011) as the basis of this investigation. Al Fraidan identified seven signs of difficulties: reporting difficulty by the participants; getting the item wrong; number of pauses and longer time spent at an item; number of times items were skipped and returned to; repetition of words and phrases adjacent to the gap; number of candidate answers considered for the gap; and use of  $L_1$ . He found some differences between these signs between the two tasks; however, these were not statistically significant.

This study will look for other signs of difficulty and analyse them statistically in order to reveal differences between the two tasks. Additionally, it will compare the students' scores on each test to help answer the study's main research question and hypothesis:

- Q: What are the signs of difficulty reported by students, or analysed by the researcher, while taking the two tasks?
- H: There will be some insignificant differences among the signs of difficulty based on Al Fraidan's (2011) finding.

### **Sampling and methods**

Ten male and ten female Saudi English majors from different levels participated in this study. The number of participants is appropriate for studies using verbal protocols. They were trained in the use of think-aloud protocols during several training sessions which lasted 45mins each, after which they were given two vocabulary achievement tests. These tests were teacher-made tests with some flaws, but these were overlooked to simulate real-life situations as Saudi students are frequently exposed to flawed teacher-made tests. The first test was a text-based cloze test about "social networking", a topic with which the students were familiar. The test asked

the participants to provide a suitable word for 20 gaps without providing them with any alternatives. The text had previously been studied one semester earlier. It seemed that the test maker used a rationale deletion method.

The second test was a multiple choice gap-filling (MCGF) test. The test had 20 disconnected sentences, with one gap in each sentence, and a pool of 26 alternatives given above the sentences from which to choose a correct answer. According to Al Fraidan's (2011) classification of test types, these two test types are the most frequently used ones in Saudi Arabia. Some applied linguistic experts have checked the two tests and confirmed their suitability for the participants' levels.

Students verbalized their thoughts during both tests; each student had a different test in order to safeguard against order effect. Retrospective interviews followed the think-aloud sessions. The tests lasted for one hour.

## **Analysis**

The verbal protocols of the think-aloud sessions and interviews were transcribed for a very close analysis. Segments were identified and then given a code for the sign of difficulty identified. The analysis was blindly checked by a second coder, and there was an agreement of 88% between the two coders. The tests were marked by the researcher, and the cloze test was marked by another scorer using the acceptable word method.

## **Results**

### ***Tests results***

The students' performance in the MCGF test was slightly better than their performance in the cloze test. The mean of their total score in the MCGF test was 11.45 out of 20 as shown in Figure 1. By looking at both Figures 1 and 2, one can see that in the MCGF test the students scored slightly higher marks than in the cloze test, even though both are regarded by the test designers as equivalent tests for students at the same level. On other grounds, however, it was expected that the MCGF test would be easier given that it provides the answer in a list of alternatives.

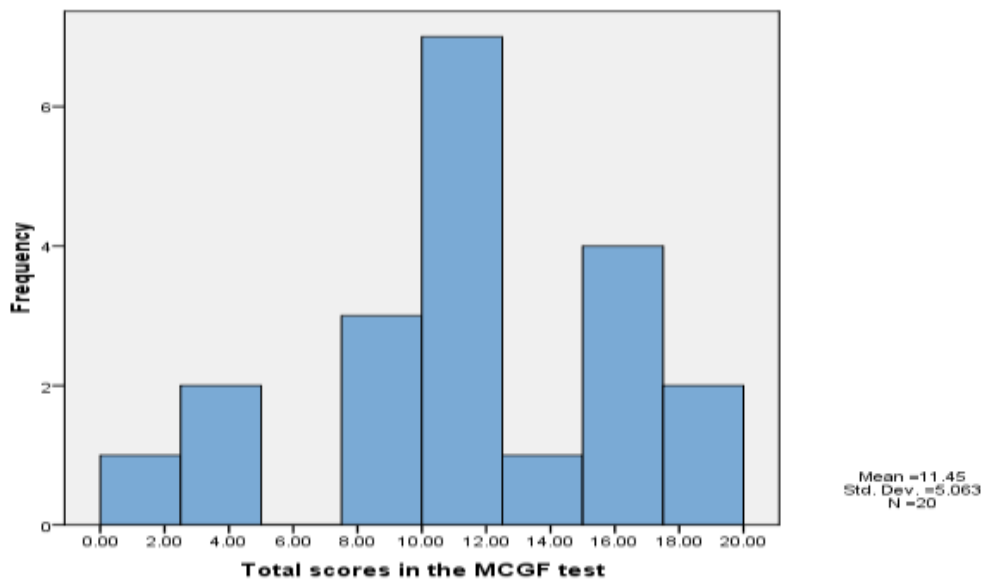


Figure 1: Students' total score in the MCGF test

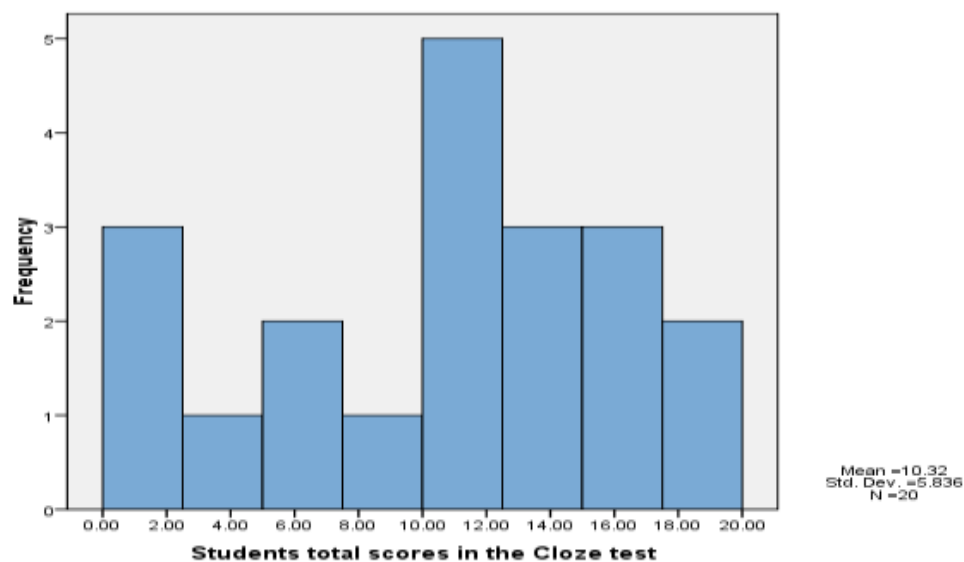


Figure 2: Students' total score in the cloze test

The students' performance in general in the cloze test was not similar to their performance in the MCGF test. This is shown by the difference in the means of the total scores in both tests. Pearson correlation and ANOVA were used to calculate and relationship and differences between the two tests. The mean score for the cloze test was 10.32 out of the same possible maximum score as the MCGF as shown in Figure 2, while the mean score in the MCGF test was 11.45. However, when comparing the test scores and gender using ANOVA, the difference was not significant (test scores  $F = 1.468$ ,  $p = .241$ , gender  $F = 196$ ,  $p = .663$ , test scores x gender  $F = .262$ ,  $p = .615$ ). Both Figure 1 and Figure 2 show that the two tests were neither too hard nor too

easy, which confirms their suitability as tests of achievement for these participants as claimed above. The two test scores correlate highly with each other, which strengthens the validity of the students' scores; that is, they both can give us the same assessment of students' levels.

Test pair	Correlation	
Cloze/MCGF	Pearson correlation	.730**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

**Table 1: Correlations among the three test**

### ***Difficulty of both tests***

It was noted above that most educators and students feel that MC tests are easier because they allow an answer to be chosen from a list of alternatives. This study offered an opportunity to explore the evidence for this beyond the usual evidence of test scores (product) by looking at process evidence as well, as first discussed in Cohen and Upton (2006, 2007). The signs of difficulties listed below were formulated after a close analysis of the data, which led to the development of a list for measuring the difficulty of both tests. The proposed list comprises eight signs, compared to six signs in Al Fraidan's (2011) study:

- 1) Reporting difficulty of the test as a whole
- 2) Stating a problem
- 3) Pausing at a gap (filled or unfilled) and longer time spent on an item
- 4) Skipping an item
- 5) Repeating words and phrases
- 6) Number of answers considered for an item
- 7) Use of L<sub>1</sub>
- 8) Number of all strategies and processes used in each test

There are some similarities between this list and the list by Cohen and Upton (2006, 2007). For example, skipping corresponds to these authors' "postponing consideration", repeating of words and phrases corresponds to their "reconsidering and rechecking", and stating a problem corresponds to their "wrestling".

An ANOVA was carried out of the eight signs, plus gender; however, gender was not found to be significant. Additionally, the study looked at how many items were gotten wrong (the traditional product approach), which was labelled as "getting an item wrong".

### ***Getting an item wrong***

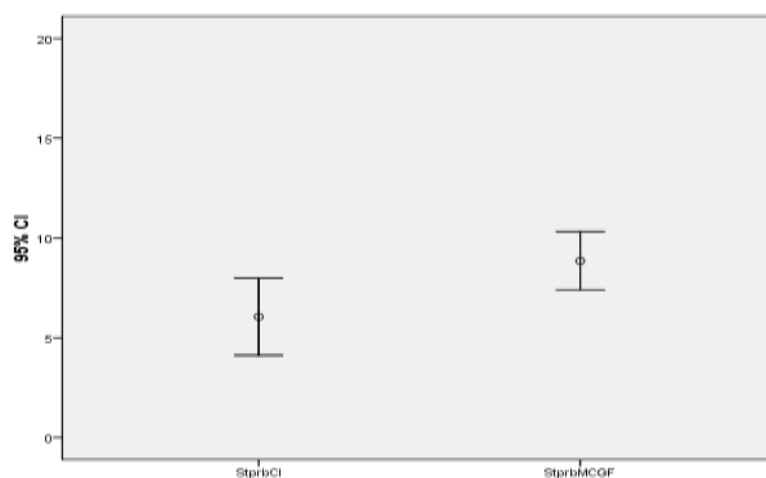
Our earlier analysis of the students' total scores in both tests revealed that there was no significant difference between the two test scores, although there was a slightly better performance in the MCGF test. That means that the number of wrong items in both tests was not significantly different. However, we found some significant differences among the eight signs.

### **Reporting difficulty of the test as a whole**

The participants were asked their perception of the difficulty of both tests in the interview. Figures 3 and 4 report the number of participants who reported one or the other test as easy or difficult. The participants considered the cloze test to be more difficult than the MCGF test although the difference was not significant (50% binominal test conducted at  $p = .503$ ), which confirmed our expectation. The difference between the two tests could be due to how males and females perceived the tests. The males reported the MCGF test to be easier than the cloze test, while the females reported the opposite. Unexpectedly, the most commonly given reason for the cloze test being easier was the open choice available for the answer, unlike the MCGF test which limited the choices available, some of which might not be known to the participants. Interestingly, no one reported that the cloze test was easier because they had read the text before.

### **Stating a problem**

When participants said, "I am not sure", "I do not know", "I have not come across / seen this word before", "difficult", etc., or raised a question either in their  $L_1$  or their  $L_2$ , this was considered a sign of having some kind of struggle answering the item, and the more often they said anything like this, the more obvious it was that they indeed had a problem.

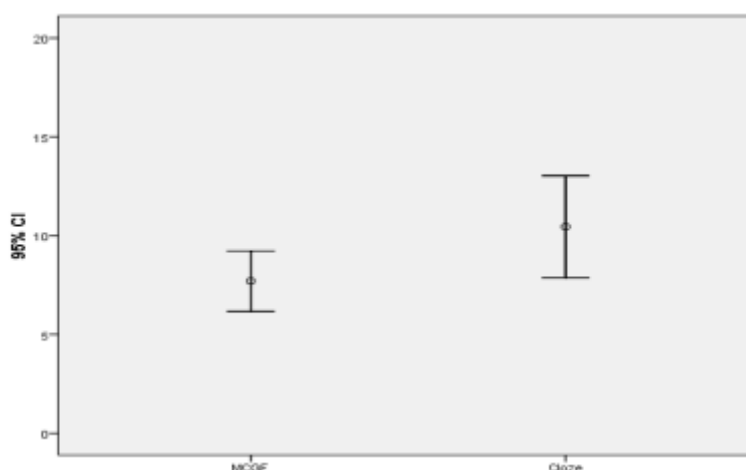


**Figure 3: Stating problems in both tests**

These problems arose as Saudi EFL English major learners suffer from “a core threshold mental lexicon” (Al-Shabab 2011) and thus struggle with different word aspects like meaning and form. All of these problems were counted among both tests, and ANOVA showed that there was a significant difference in the number of occurrences of these problems ( $F = 24.459$ ,  $p = .000$ ) in favour of the MCGF test (see Figure 4), which means students had considerably more difficulties in that test than in the cloze test. Most of the problems in the MCGF test were experienced while weighing up alternative words.

### **Pausing at a gap (filled or unfilled) and longer time spent on an item**

Abdel Latif (2009) found that EFL university-level Egyptian learners paused as a sign of having a problem while writing. Thus the more pauses, the more difficulties encountered. In this study, the ANOVA of the number of pauses in each test was significant ( $F = 4.762$ ,  $p = .043$ ) for the cloze test; that is, the participants paused more often in the cloze test than in the MCGF test, as shown in Figure 4.



**Figure 4: Pauses in both tests**

The cloze test consisted of a text that required comprehending and considerable decoding, i.e., working out the meaning of an item. In addition, there was no support given to work out the answers as in the MCGF test, thus much mental lexical access was required, which might be the cause of the difference between the two tests.

### **Skipping an item**

The strategy of skipping, associated with pausing, means that a participant may pause at a gap to think of an answer, and then decides to skip the item. A calculation of all instances of skipping and coming back, and of skipping

without coming back, was carried out and subjected to analysis. Figure 5 shows that more skipping occurred in the MCGF test than in the cloze test, with the difference being significant ( $F = 24.458, p = .000$ ). This was likely to be the result because it is easier to skip between disconnected sentences than to do so in a coherent text that requires the synthesis of information from almost all the sentences in the text.

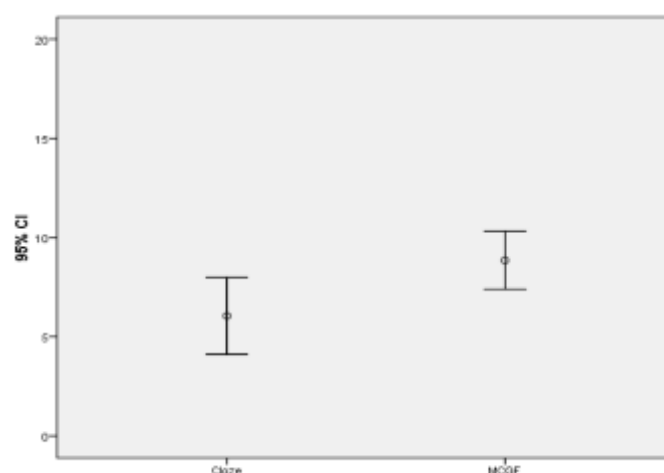
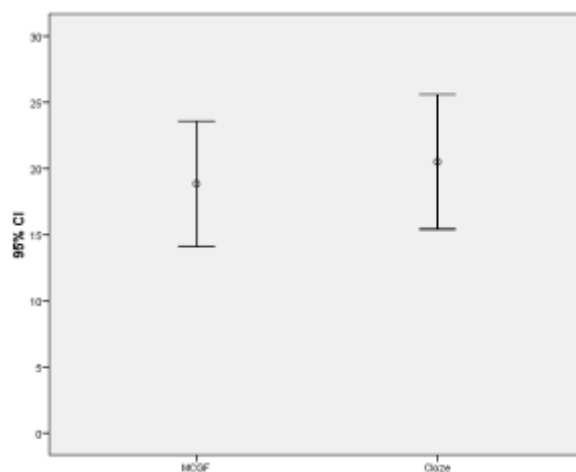


Figure 5: Number of skipping in the two tests

### Rereading of words and phrases

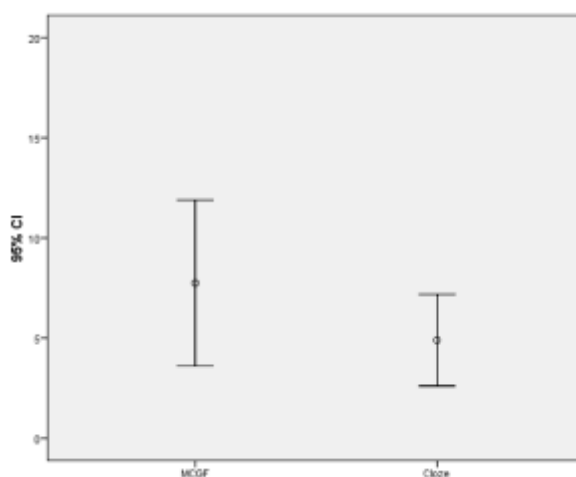
Rereading the item to retrieve a guess to fill a gap is one of the signs of difficulty in reading or understanding in general and also in a test situation, as found in the study. Counting all the rereadings for the purpose of comprehending a language element (e.g., a word, a phrase, a sentence, etc.) or of retrieving a guess to fill the gap showed that the difference in the context characteristics of the two tests is what made all the difference. As the cloze test required more reading (since it consisted of connected sentences) than the MCGF test (which consisted of disconnected sentences), students did a lot more rereading in the cloze test than in the MCGF test, as seen in Figure 6, but the difference was not significant ( $F = .380, p = .540$ ).



**Figure 6: Rereading in both tests**

### **L<sub>1</sub> use**

One frequent strategy when meeting difficulties while reading in L<sub>2</sub> is the use of L<sub>1</sub>. Woodall (2002) noted that the difficulty of the writing task affects the duration of L<sub>1</sub> use, i.e., when a task is more difficult the use of L<sub>1</sub> increases, and this can also be applicable in vocabulary test situations. As seen in Figure 7, the total number of times L<sub>1</sub> was used by the participants was greater in the MCGF test than in the cloze test, with the difference being significant ( $F = 4.476, p = .049$ ).



**Figure 7: Use of L<sub>1</sub> in both tests**

It could be suggested that the participants already processed the cloze in L<sub>1</sub> silently while reading the item. However, the alternatives available in the MCGF test may have caused the participants to use a more overt L<sub>1</sub> translation to find the best word for each sentence.



### Number of candidate answers considered for an item

This sign of difficulty was hard to accurately identify in this study because of the presence of alternatives in the MCGF test which could possibly be considered for all the 20 gaps in the MCGF test, while in the cloze test a participant could only retrieve or verbalise the first word that popped into his or her head. In both test types, but particularly in the MCGF test, an easy item could be answered “automatically” or in some cases with few alternatives being considered for the gap in order to check the most suitable one. However, this problem is an important one when comparing two tests that are alike or measuring the difficulty of items within a subtest.

### Number of all strategies and processes used in each test

Rice et al. (2012) claim that the harder the task, the more inconsistent a person’s performance is. That is, both performance and processes might differ from one task to another, with difficulty an important factor. All strategy types (not tokens) in both tests were counted, with the first occurrence of a single strategy (not its repetition, or token), considered a strategy type. The ANOVA showed that the participants exhausted and taxed their resources and processes in the MCGF test more than in the cloze test ( $F = 7.746, p = .012$ ).



Figure 8: Number of strategies in both tests

### Conclusion

It is an interesting finding that subjects scored a little better on the MCGF test but faced more difficulties while taking it than while taking the cloze test. Of the eight identified signs of difficulty, there were seven common signs and one MCGF-specific. The results showed that the MCGF test was found by the participants to be significantly harder (4 signs out of the seven common signs). This result is at odds with Al Fraidan’s (2011) findings, and

the hypothesis proposed here proved to be a failure. This difference is likely due to the fact that the current study had more participants. The study also looked at students' scores on both tests (known here as getting an item wrong), which was not significant. This shows the significance of conducting a process approach to rate test difficulty.

Another interesting point is that gender had no effect at all on test difficulty. None of statistical analyses of any of the signs of difficulty for the two tests showed gender to be statistically significant.

It can be concluded that the MCGF test may be objectively easier in the sense that scores are usually higher, but it may be subjectively harder because the test subjects are given words whose meaning they are expected to know, while in an open test they can use words known to them. Apart from this difference, the tests require similar reading and inferencing skills to find a meaning for the gap.

Educators, and especially those in Saudi Arabia, need to be aware of the fact that taking an MC test is not as easy as they may think. Raising students' awareness of how difficult it can be to take a MC test also should be highlighted in classrooms. This can change students' views about the easiness of MC tests as reported here and lessen their demands to be tested using this format.

Further investigation into these same test types and others is highly recommended in order to generate a more comprehensive list of processes to rate test formats' difficulty.

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## Keywords

Multiple choice, Cloze test, Test difficulty, Test taking strategies



## 2 Vocabulary Attrition and Retention among Arabic speaking English Graduate Teachers

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### **The state of foreign language attrition research**

There has been a great deal of research on various aspects of language acquisition, including vocabulary, in the last three decades. As a result we have witnessed new insights being gained, hypotheses generated and evidence and counterevidence cited. However, there has been comparatively little research into lexical attrition specifically in the foreign language (FL) arena, describing key processes and how quickly or slowly lexical knowledge is forgotten. Yet, more recently attrition and retention of lexical knowledge by adults has received increased attention in the research literature (see Alharthi, 2012; Bahrick, 1984; de Bot & Weltens, 1995; Weltens, 1989). Previous empirical studies that have contributed significantly to the literature on FL attrition at the lexical level have been focused on situations where learners of English rarely use words they know after the conclusion of formal instruction (e.g. Abbasian & Khajavi, 2011; Bierling, 1990; Marefat & Rouhshad, 2007). However, equally interesting is attrition in situations where some possibly limited use is made of the FL after formal instruction has ceased.

To take a concrete example, the type of exposure to English for King Abdulaziz University (KAU) graduate students in Saudi Arabia is very often mainly – and in some cases even entirely – confined to the classroom. As a result, this limited exposure is likely to lead to lexical attrition over time. This can create a challenge for EFL majors who are supposed to build up a much larger lexical repertoire which then can help them with their teaching of English. By extension, it is possible that they may find it hard to retain the bulk of their vocabulary knowledge upon leaving KAU and therefore will start to lose their vocabulary. Thus, it appears that once students finish their formal study of English, they are less likely to use the target language.

The aim of this research then is to measure the extent of attrition and retention of vocabulary knowledge over time among EFL graduate students.

The study focuses on one of the four settings of attrition outlined by de Bot & Weltens (1995): foreign language learners who upon leaving school, start losing their acquired foreign language skills. According to Weltens and Cohen (1989), further research into language attrition in various situations can throw a remarkable light on patterns and variables that researchers need to consider and which may have implications for the FL teaching profession.

### **Key issues: A dearth of evidence in studies of FL vocabulary attrition**

Few studies have been focused on some of the independent variables that might influence FL lexical attrition. These include the following: initial proficiency in or achievement of lexical knowledge, rate of attrition in vocabulary knowledge, type of vocabulary knowledge, such as receptive versus productive, and parts of speech (POS), such as noun, verb and adjective. These are briefly discussed below.

### **Attrition and proficiency level**

Attained proficiency level is one of the learner-internal variables that has been reported to be an important factor on subsequent attrition in the literature of FL attrition (Bahrick, 1984). “Initial proficiency” relates to the learners’ ability to recognize and produce the target vocabulary. However, to date there have been few studies which have addressed this issue directly. For example, research by Bahrick (1984) and Weltens (1989) failed to determine the effect of initial proficiency on the attrition of vocabulary. Such results have been due to imprecise measurements (e.g. of level of training and grades received) that have not accurately documented the relationship between proficiency and attrition. Similarly, Alharthi’s (2012) findings revealed that the amount of attrition was the same for his participants regardless of their level of attainment. It would be extremely useful to employ more precise and appropriate lexical measurements that would help show the correlation between proficiency and attrition. Hence, this study examined the amount of prior lexical knowledge and the impact of this knowledge on the attrition process as measured by lexical achievement.

### **Rate of attrition**

Perhaps one of the most essential yet at the same time most complicated key issues in language attrition research, is the rate of forgetting. There are two possible predictions made concerning attrition. The first is that attrition occurs soon after the learning process stops and then the rate of forgetting slows down over time. The second is that there is a level of language proficiency beyond which language skills become relatively immune to loss

and the level of language proficiency is maintained. There is some evidence that a rapid decline of FL target vocabulary occurred soon after formal instruction had ended (Bahrack, 1984; Weltens, 1989; Bierling, 1990; Abbasian & Khajavi, 2011; Alharthi, 2012). Apart from Alharthi's (2012) study, there seems to be a lack of longitudinal research concerning the rate vocabulary attrition. The present study is designed to compensate for the scarcity of quantitative studies where the rate of vocabulary attrition is measured longitudinally at least two points in time.

### **Receptive versus productive vocabulary knowledge**

Not only does lexical knowledge seem to be more prone to attrition than other aspects of language, such as grammar or phonology, but it is also the case that various types of word knowledge are affected to different degrees of attrition. This also holds true for receptive and productive types of lexical knowledge, as shown by Alharthi (2012), Bahrack (1984), Bierling (1990) and Marefat and Rouhshad (2007) who reported that productive lexical knowledge is more vulnerable to attrition than receptive lexical knowledge. Given the differences found in the attrition and maintenance of receptive and productive word knowledge, it might be predicted that this is due to the difficulty with which some lexical aspects are learned. That is, acquiring productive word knowledge takes the greatest effort and the greatest amount of time and will therefore be the most susceptible to the force of attrition (Cohen, 1986). The present study aims to gain further understanding of the effect of attrition on receptive and productive word knowledge, relying on paper-pencil vocabulary measurements.

### **Parts of speech**

Another view is that POS affects the level of difficulty of learning words. Therefore, words belonging to some categories are more easily forgotten. Several factors have been identified to impact the learnability of FL vocabulary including words' grammatical properties, such as POS (Milton, 2009). It has been reported by, among others, Laufer (1997) and Milton (2009), that nouns are easier to learn than verbs, which in turn are easier to learn than adjectives. Studies of the grammatical class of words have examined them from the perspective of acquiring new words. However, the question of how much this knowledge influences attrition has scarcely been asked. Research by Cohen (1989) suggested a greater loss of the knowledge of nouns compared with other POS. Interestingly, Alharthi (2012) reported unexpected results in his study in which nouns were more immune to attrition than verbs and adjectives. Given that the number of studies is quite small, replications are needed in order to verify reported outcomes and to improve

our understanding of the issue of attrition; hence, the present study will look at the effect of POS on the attrition of vocabulary.

## **The study**

### ***Research Questions***

The study was primarily based on a quantitative approach with an aim to examine evidence of vocabulary attrition or retention after the end of FL instruction. However, drawing on existing research results, the study was guided by four principal research questions:

- Is there a relationship between the initial achievement of lexical knowledge and the degree of attrition?
- Is there any significant difference in the degree of attrition in terms of receptive or productive word knowledge?
- Is there a significant rate or pattern of attrition in word knowledge after the end of formal instruction?
- Which POS is most susceptible to attrition?

## **Method**

### ***Participants***

The initial sample comprised 67 graduate teachers and attempted to establish a baseline (Time 1) for their knowledge of vocabulary prior to the end of formal training. In the two subsequent data collection intervals (Time 2) and (Time 3), with a one-year time span between them, 43 participants were identified as available and took part in the longitudinal study. All participants were Arabic-speaking learners of English as Foreign Language (EFL) and had studied English for a minimum of 10 years. We can report with some confidence that EFL instruction was alike for all participants.

### ***Instruments, procedure and data analysis***

Two instruments were used to measure the participants' attrition of receptive and productive knowledge of word meanings. These instruments, or tests, were specifically created to have matching and cued recall formats. Each test presented participants with a set of 60 word items. Target words were mainly high-frequency words that appeared in one of their subject textbooks, comprising words which were introduced in their earlier English classes. The tests reflect the distribution of POS into 10 nouns, 5 verbs and 5 adjectives at 1000, 2000 and 3000-word levels successively.

In order to identify the participants' baseline vocabulary knowledge, receptive and productive vocabulary tasks were administered prior to



graduating. Participants were not informed that they would be subsequently assessed on the target items. Two posttests were handed out one and two years later to track their vocabulary attrition and retention in relation to their receptive and productive word knowledge. The content of the tests was kept the same over the intervals.

Methods used for processing the data were repeated measures ANOVA, *t*-tests and Pearson correlation coefficients. The alpha level for all analyses was set at  $p < .05$ .

## Results and Discussion

### *Is there a relationship between the initial achievement of lexical knowledge and the degree of attrition?*

In order to test whether the attained level of vocabulary knowledge is an important factor in the attrition or maintenance for the same constructions at Time 2 and Time 3, correlational analyses were performed. Table 1 displays the correlations between the initial achievement tests and the amount of vocabulary attrition of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge (Time 3 – Time 1).

Variables: word knowledge type	Correlation / Sig	
	R (T3-T1)	P (T3-T1)
Receptive	$r = -.624, p < .001$	
Productive		$r = -.601, p < .001$

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Table 1: Pearson correlations between initial achievement and amount of attrition of receptive and productive word knowledge**

To be more specific, there were significant correlations between the participants' initial knowledge of receptive and productive scores and their scores on the delayed posttests. The tests also provided evidence of strong inverse correlations ( $r = -.624, p < .001$ ) and ( $r = -.601, p < .001$ ) between Time 1 and Time 3 on reception and production respectively. These negative values imply that the learners' levels of receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge in question at Time 1 are strong indicators of what they will forget over time. In other words, the more that the participants knew the items initially, the less able they were to maintain their knowledge in the long term. While 'the more one knows, the more one forgets' makes intuitive sense and has been alluded to occasionally in the classical psychological literature, the research presented here suggests that such concept is an empirically supportable notion which is worthy of further attention. It should be mentioned that the current findings do not lend support to research by

Bahrack (1984), Weltens (1989) and Alharthi (2012). We assume that the different findings might have been due to the different ways in which we measured the participants' initial vocabulary knowledge. That is, the original attainment level of the participants in those studies was determined according to the number of years of study in a certain language or by scores obtained using inaccurate measurement tools.

***Is there any significant difference in the degree of attrition in terms of receptive or productive word knowledge?***

To examine apparent within-group attrition or retention, we first carried out a series of tests to ensure that parametric statistics can be applied. This was identified through histograms for both vocabulary pretest and posttest which had normal distribution curves. These were supported by Kolmogorov–Smirnov tests of normality (R- K-S= .828;  $p= .311$  and P- K-S= .698;  $p= .743$ ). The descriptive statistics of Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3 tests scores are reported in Table 2. Time 1 scores were considered as scores of vocabulary learning. However, those of Time 2 and Time 3 tests which were taken one and two years after the formal instruction ended were considered as attrition and retention scores.

Word knowledge type	Time 1		Time 2		Time3	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Receptive	67.24	7.45	64.11	7.56	65.77	7.44
Productive	44.12	3.33	37.69	5.51	37.74	5.43

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics of Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3 scores for receptive and productive word knowledge**

An important fact exposed in Table 2 is that participants' capacity to recognize and produce the meaning of target words declined from Time 1 and Time 2. However, it appears to have been retained somewhat at Time 3 meaning that at any point in time receptive vocabulary is greater in size than productive vocabulary. The results of repeated measures ANOVA for vocabulary scores (see Table 3) show that the amount of vocabulary forgotten varied as a function of type of word knowledge ( $F= 125.92$ ) and as a function of time of vocabulary administration, one year after the course completion ( $F= 57.31$ ). The main effects were qualified by significant interaction of Time 1 and Time 2 and the degree of attrition between receptive and productive word knowledge ( $F= 1.29, p<.001$ ). These findings thus appear to confirm and replicate the findings of previous investigations (Bahrack, 1984; Bierling 1990; Marefat & Rouhshad, 2007; Alharthi, 2012).

Source	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Receptive & Productive	125.92	<.001
Time of administration	57.31	<.001
Time X R & P	1.29	<.001

**Table 3: ANOVA for attrition scores measured over time as a function of type of word knowledge**

Even though it appears that there was significant measurable attrition between Time 1 and Time 2, the participants' mean scores for each type of word knowledge appear to show some slight degree of retention (between Time 2 and Time 3) which did not reach a level of significance. While improvement in learners' vocabulary knowledge was not at all anticipated, particularly in our context where little contact with English was expected after formal FL instruction, one can find similar behaviors in a study by Alharthi (2012) who reported that the level of maintenance was higher for receptive than productive vocabulary in the interval of 15 months. The current findings also point to a tendency among our participants to exhibit little communication not only inside but also outside the classroom. Moreover, this variation might be due to the different test formats. As one would expect, the production task that asked the test-takers to complete a word in a sentence is one of the most difficult test formats and consequently leads to low scores, whereas the multiple choice format that requires the test-takers to match words with their relevant definitions presumably produces high scores. A widespread belief is that one might recognize the meaning of a word in a given text but is not able to retrieve it when it is needed in production. This can be referred to a well-known phenomenon called *tip of the tongue* (TOT) which is a common experience in one's L1. Seemingly, the presence of partial information is enough to recognize a word; however, the productive stage needs more complete information so an item can be successfully retrieved.

The trends emerging at Time 3 likewise reflect the perception among researchers (Weltens, 1989) that factors such as general cognitive maturation, further academic training and continued learning of other FLs might explain the participants' increase in their test performance over time.

***Is there a significant rate or pattern of attrition in word knowledge after the end of formal instruction?***

We have partially answered this research question in the discussion of the second research question. Returning briefly to the descriptive statistics presented in Table 2, these provide a trend which confirms our prediction

that once the subjects leave KAU, their competence in vocabulary decreases. The participants demonstrate sharp attrition on the receptive and productive vocabulary posttests. The pattern of decline can be seen most clearly in the productive vocabulary test between Time 1 ( $M=44.12$ ) and Time 2 ( $M=37.69$ ). A paired sample  $t$ -test shows that the difference on this type of knowledge is significant ( $df=42$ ,  $t=2.32$ ,  $p<.001$ ). However, Table 2 indicates a small decline from Time 1 to Time 2 in mean scores of the receptive vocabulary ( $M=67.24$ ), ( $M=64.11$ ). Interestingly, with such a slight drop, a paired sample  $t$ -test reveals a significant difference ( $df=42$ ,  $t=1.88$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The rate of forgetting found here is in line with the work of Bahrick (1984), Weltens (1989), Bierling (1990), Abbasian and Khajavi (2011) and Alharthi (2012) and mirrors memory research that finds that attrition occurs relatively soon after the end of a learning session (Baddeley, 1990). On the other hand, the participants' mean scores on receptive and productive word knowledge increase a little at Time 3 ( $M=65.77$ ), ( $M=37.74$ ) though the gains are not statistically significant. One plausible explanation for this finding can be given from the psychological perspective of the critical threshold. The participants in the present study seem to have reached some sort of critical threshold for vocabulary knowledge prior to Time 1 which enables them to improve at Time 3, though to a lesser degree. Clearly, the participants' performance displayed improvement in accuracy after a certain period of time, lending further support to the explanation offered by Cohen (1975) that following a period of lack of or reduced FL input, some sort of residual learning may be held.

### *Which POS is most susceptible to attrition?*

The last research question aims to provide evidence as to whether a particular POS influences the attrition of vocabulary. Table 4 shows the mean scores for nouns, verbs and adjectives for each type of word knowledge at the three administrations of the test.

POS	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3	
	R	P	R	P	R	P
Noun	66.91	53.56	63.08	49.88	62.20	48.37
Verb	65.01	48.28	57.50	41.48	51.74	36.17
Adjective	55.29	46.63	47.06	38.89	41.59	32.30

**Table 4: Mean scores of vocabulary by POS for the three administrations of the test**

The results show that POS declined over time; however, the drop is more pronounced for verbs and adjectives in both receptive and productive word

knowledge. The results of repeated measures ANOVA indicated that the mean attrition scores for different POS varied as a function of time ( $F = 2.25$ ,  $p < .001$ ), ( $F = 3.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ) in receptive and productive word knowledge respectively. The difference between POS reached levels of significance only for verbs and adjectives ( $t = 5.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and ( $t = 4.55$ ,  $p < .001$ ). These findings to some extent confirm Alharthi's (2012) results that nouns were less vulnerable to attrition than other POS. In practice, empirical evidence seems to support the 'depth of processing theory' articulated by Craik and Lockhart (1972). This suggests that learning new words such as nouns, which involves extra effort, is likely to promote retention of this type of word. This might be one reason why verbs and adjectives were more likely to be subject to attrition than nouns. One could argue, for instance, that in almost any natural text, including KAU textbooks, verbs and adjectives occur less commonly than nouns. Hence, instances of these word classes are more likely to be forgotten than nouns. It is worth mentioning that the present findings are contrary to that reported for previous research by Cohen (1989). The most likely explanation for this difference is that it is due to the effect of task type. For example, in storytelling tasks, subjects were required to describe images with a great focus on verbs and therefore such tasks reduced the possibility of using nouns.

## Conclusion

The findings for the four research questions investigated in the current study are summarized as follows:

- The results brought about by the first research question suggest that there is a negative correlation between the initial knowledge of vocabulary and the degree of subsequent attrition over time. What such a trend shows is that the higher the knowledge at peak attainment, the higher the attrition the participants will experience in receptive and productive word knowledge.
- The results of investigating research questions two and three indicate that there was significant loss in the participants' receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge from Time 1 to Time 2, with a slight increase at Time 3. The results also show that reception scores are higher than production scores at all points in time. The long-term vocabulary attrition and retention is portrayed in the rate of forgetting over time. That is, the participants' scores dropped immediately after formal instruction had ended and then increased slightly by the end of a two- year period.

- The results of investigating research question four showed the potential effect of POS on the rate of attrition. The study revealed that verbs and adjectives received lower scores than nouns and therefore were more prone to attrition than nouns. This observation bears a close relationship to the depth of processing principle ( Craik & Lockhart, 1972) which states that superficially learned words (e.g. verbs and adjectives), are more vulnerable to loss than are deeply learned words such as nouns. It remains to be investigated whether other word characteristics such as orthography, frequency, imageability and abstractness may positively or negatively affect the process of attrition. It would be interesting to explore these concepts in future research in FL vocabulary attrition and or retention.

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# 3 The Communication of Gratitude in Jordan and England: A Comparative Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Study

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## Abstract

Very few studies investigated the linguistic expression of gratitude especially in the Arabic context and none in Jordan. This study investigates the similarities and differences in the use of strategies for the linguistic communication of gratitude in England and Jordan. Data were collected from 46 Jordanian native speakers of Arabic and 46 native speakers of English using Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and Role-play. The findings show some similarities and some significant cross-cultural differences in terms of the number and types of strategy used by English and Jordanian people across several social situations. I argue that these cross-cultural differences are best explained in terms of a small number of socio-cultural and contextual variables. The study has some interesting ramifications for explaining the relation between the universal and the culture-specific features of speech acts and point to some promising directions for future cross-cultural.

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural pragmatics, sociolinguistic and sociocultural knowledge, politeness theory, socio-cultural variables.

## Background

Expressing gratitude is a cultural and universal communicative act due to its wide use and significant role in keeping the bonds among society members strong and well-cemented (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1986; Intachakra, 2004; Kumar, 2001, Al Khawaldeh & Žegarac, 2013a). Expressing gratitude is identified by Searle (1976) as an expressive illocutionary act performed by the speaker for the hearer because of his previous beneficial action.

The communication of gratitude has been investigated from different perspectives: speech act theory (Searle, 1976; Coulmas, 1981), pragmatic research instruments (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1986 & 1993; Schauer and Adolphs, 2006), second language analysis and language teaching (Eisenstein and Bodman 1986; 1993; Jacobsson, 2002; Dumitrescu, 2005), and social

pragmatics including cross-cultural pragmatics differences (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1986; 1993; Díaz, 2003; Haverkate, 2003; Komter, 2004; Dumitrescu, 2005; Lin and Yu, 2006; Chang, 2008; Ohashi, 2008; Pablos-Ortega, 2010). Although the communication of gratitude is universal, research has revealed cultural differences (Clankie, 1993; Koutlaki, 2002; Intachakra, 2004; Cheng, 2005; Hickey, 2005; Farnia and Suleiman, 2009). Expressing gratitude is greatly valued in the Arabic context since it helps to establish on-going social reciprocity and strong social relationships between interlocutors (El-Sayed, 1990; Samarah, 2010; Al-Khawaldeh & Žegarac, 2013a). In view of its social significance and compared to other communicative acts, gratitude has not been investigated extensively, especially in Arabic cultures (Hinkel, 1994; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 2008; Al-Khateeb, 2009; Morsi, 2010) and only one has been conducted on peoples' perception of gratitude expression in the Jordanian culture (Al-Khawaldeh & Žegarac, 2013a).

## Methodology

This study aims to answer the following question and support the hypothesis related to it:

Are there any differences in the communication of gratitude between Jordanian native speakers of Arabic and native speakers of English in terms of the use of different types of strategy in expressing gratitude?

The null hypothesis adopted was: Jordanian native speakers of Arabic and native speakers of English do not significantly use different types of strategy for expressing gratitude.

The total number of the recruited subjects was 92 male and female postgraduate Jordanian and English students in the academic year 2011/2012. The participants were relatively homogenous in term of their cultural backgrounds, academic experience and age (between 20 to 40 years old). DCT and role play<sup>1</sup> were used because they serve the purpose of the study, enhance easy comparability among cultures, and are easy to administer.

The responses were first analysed to come up with a proper coding scheme (Al-khawaldeh and Žegarac, 2013b). The data were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed using SPSS, pointing out the frequencies and percentages as part of the descriptive analysis. The T-test was conducted to

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<sup>1</sup> Will be provided upon request.

compare both groups in terms of the length of thanking expressions and strategy types.

## Results and Discussion

The study reveals various strategies that can be used to communicate gratitude in Jordan and England. The overall distribution of the percentages and frequencies of the types of gratitude expression strategy is presented in Figure 1 and Table 1 (Appendix A) respectively. The Jordanian participants use strategies more than their British counterparts. This could indicate that it is the recognition of the favour received using any gratitude strategy – not the number of strategies – that expresses consideration and politeness in the English culture.

Communicating gratitude by thanking explicitly appears to be the preferred strategy in both cultures. Though both groups tended to resort to the most commonly used gratitude strategy expressions, namely “Thank you”, the frequency and the percentage of the overall use of thanking strategy in all situations were higher for English participants. This suggests that thanking would be the first favoured strategy in several cultures, though its frequency differs reflecting specific-cultural values.

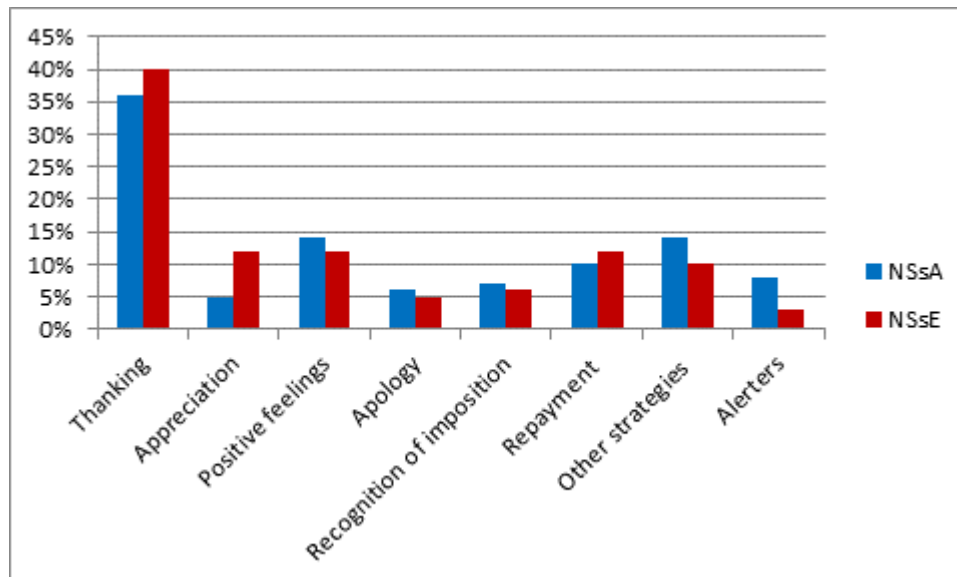


Figure 1: Percentages of each strategy used in all social situations by NSsA and NSsE

The frequencies of the other types of strategy show that Jordanians prefer to use a greater variety of strategies than the English. The overall distribution of gratitude strategies for Jordanians shows their tendency to use *thanking* (“شكرا جزيلا لتوفيرك الكثير من جهدي و وقتي”, ‘Thank you very much for sparing

a lot of my time and effort'), *other strategies* (e.g. *prayers* "يسر الله امرك", 'May Allah ease your affair'), *expressing a desire to maintain a relationship* ("معرفتكم شرف كبير لنا", 'Knowing you is a great honour for us'), *positive feeling* ("كرم و لطف منك هذا", 'This is kindness and generosity from you'), *repayment* ("انا مستعد لأي خدمه تحتاجها", 'I am ready for any service you need'), *alerters* (e.g. *titles and names* "دكتور باروك", 'Dr. Barwick'), *recognition of imposition* ("لم أكن أنوي تعطيلك عن عملك", 'I did not intend to distract you from your work'), *apology* ("انا محرج منك لدرجه كبيره", 'I am embarrassed of you to a large degree') and *appreciation* ("أقدر لك عاليا", 'I highly appreciate for you' respectively. *Appreciation* appears to be the least preferred strategy for Jordanians to use when expressing gratitude with a percentage of (5%). The graph reveals the English participants' preference for using *thanking* "Thank you very", *repayment* "let me give you my share of the money", *appreciation* "I really appreciate that", *positive feeling* "This will help me a lot", "I am very pleased that you could have done this for me", *other strategies* (e.g. *here statement* "I have got your notes here", *leave-talking* "Have a good day", *initiating a small talk* "I've taken a copy of your notes"), *recognition of imposition* "I realise I put you in a difficult situation", *apology* "I am really sorry for that", and *alerts* (e.g. *names*, "Smith" respectively. The graph shows that the least preferred strategy for English is *alerters* with a percentage of (3%).

The variation in the use of these strategies by both groups is further illustrated by their subcategories (Al Khawaldeh & Žegarac, 2013 b). The '*thanking*' strategy was found the most frequent strategy used by both groups. Compared to the English participants who prefer using simple thanking 'Thank you so much', Jordanians used more elaborate thanking strategies such as expressing *thanking and mentioning the imposition caused by the favour* ("شكرا لك على الجهد الذي بذلته لإرسال الرسالة قبل الموعد المحدد", 'Thank you for the effort you made to send the letter before the deadline') and expressing *the inability to thank enough* ("أنا حقًا عاجز عن شكرك", 'I am really unable to thank you').

Though there is a strong agreement as to the relative importance of compliment (expressing positive feeling), there is cross-cultural variation in the frequency of its use. English participants preferred *complimenting the favour giver* 'It is extremely kind of you to look at the computer' and 'The notes were very helpful'. The Jordanians used *the inability to articulate positive deep feelings* ("عاجز عن التعبير عن امتناني تجاه معروفك", 'I am unable to express my gratitude to you for your favour') and *complimenting the favour giver* ("هذا من طيب اصلك", 'This is of your good pedigree'). Compared to the

English, the Jordanians seem to prefer indirect ways of expressing gratitude to show that they are overwhelmed by the favour presented.

Compared to the English participants, Jordanians used some *other strategies* more, such as: *prayers* (“الله يطول عمرك”, ‘May Allah make you live longer’), *small talk* (“هل تتوقع ان تكون الرحله جميله؟”, ‘Do you expect the trip to be nice’) and *expression of intent to maintain a relationship* (“سازورك قريب في مكتبك في”, ‘I will visit you at your office in the university very soon’). The English mostly preferred to use the *here-statement* “Here you go” and *leave-talk* “Have a nice day” strategies. These cannot be discussed here in detail, but point to different roles of religion and socio-cultural factors in everyday life and the importance different cultures place on managing rapport through communication (see Al-khawaldeh and Žegarac, 2013a)

Regarding the use of *alerters*, Jordanians used most of the subcategories of *alerters* such as *stating the person’s title* (“دكتور سميث”, ‘Dr. Smith) and *name and getting attention* (“ان شاء الله”, ‘God willing’), (“السلام عليكم”, ‘Hello’) more than the English participants. As Gu (1990) observes, alerters are not only utilised to “alert the hearer’s attention to the ensuing speech act” (p. 277) but also to confirm recognition and acknowledgment of the social roles and status. The findings show that the use of address forms, their interpretations and rules which govern their use vary across cultures and situations. Jordanians use them significantly more than English. In Jordanian society social status plays a significant role in the use of terms of addresses. This could be ascribed to the distinctive Jordanian social structure and cultural values attached to it compared to the English society which based on super-egalitarianism, at least at the level of interpersonal communication. This switch the Jordanian participants make between formal and informal addressing styles could, as Mills (2011) argues, reflect their awareness of their social roles in relation to their interlocutors. Signalling the social relationship ties them and attitudinal signal of politeness or rudeness. Failing to use alerters or even inappropriate use of such forms leads to inadvertent insults, thus miscommunication.

The results revealed that both groups resort to the use of apologies to express gratitude. This could be because of the imposition caused as a result of the favour. In particular, they intend to show speaker’s indebtedness for receiving a benefit and an apology and indebtedness for any obligation or harmful action caused. English participants expressed *apology* mainly using *apologetic words* (“I’m sorry for the short notice”), *mentioning the imposition caused by the favour* (“I am sorry for any inconvenience”) and

showed a high preference for apologising by *expressing embarrassment* (“I really feel embarrassed”) more than Jordanians, who opt for indirect apology strategies, such as: *criticizing or blaming themselves* (“انها غلطتي”, ‘It is my mistake’) and apologizing by *giving reasons or excuses and showing the imposition caused by the favour* (اعتذر عن التأخير, ‘I apologise for the delay’) and “ارجو ان تسامحني علي اي احراجا سببته لك”, ‘I beg for your forgiveness for any embarrassment I caused to you’) respectively. The frequency of apologies was higher for Jordanian than for English participants. This could further lead to the point highlighted by (Nakia and Watanabe, 2000) that expressing apology in gratitude expression situations in English may be relatively restricted i.e. when receiving a great favour which involves taking too much time from people and interfering in others’ affairs and. Their apology was mostly followed by stating the reason of being indebted (‘I am sorry for taking so much time from you). This could be related to the Jordanian participants’ orientation towards showing greater “debt-sensitiveness”, particularly in situations when dealing with high status people even when there is no explicit imposition, as in the *Recommendation letter* situation. They believe that intensifying apologies and excuses could powerfully help them to justify the imposition caused, thus showing greater overwhelming appreciation.

The analysis of the subcategories of the *recognition of imposition* shows the preference of the English participants for *acknowledging the imposition* generally (“I realise that I put you in an awkward situation with regard to the other students”) and by *stating the reason and the need for the favour* (“I don't know what I would have done without your help”), while the Jordanians tend to *diminish the need for the favour* (“ما كان يجب عليك أن تفعل”, ‘You should not have done that’) and state *the interlocutor’s non-existent obligation* (“أرد لم ازعاجك”, ‘I did not want to disturb you’).

With regard to *repayment*, the analysis revealed the English participants’ preference to offer to *reciprocate help* (“If you need any copies in the future, please let me know”), *money* (“I would like to reimburse you for the FedEx costs”) and *promising self-improvement* (“I will be more organised next time”) compared to Jordanians who preferred *offering help* (“انا جاهز اخدمك”, ‘I am ready to help you from my eyes’) and *food* (“يشرفنا أن نتناول”, ‘We will be honoured when you have lunch with us’) showing *inability to repay the favour giver* (“لن نستطيع أن نرد معروفك مهما فعلنا”, ‘We will not be able to repay your favour whatever we do’).

The English appeared to use more repayment strategies than Jordanians and both differed in their preferred subcategories. This could be explained by the fact that Jordanians find no need sometimes in some situations (very high familiar and very high status situations) to offer repayment such as in the *in a restaurant* or even class notes situation or it could be because Jordanian in general value receiving a prayer more than a physical repayment. This is further supported by the fact that they do generally reply to the thanker by saying “We only need your prayers” or “Remember us in your prayer”. The English used more the offer of reciprocating the help and promising future self-restraint and improvement. Jordanians in general prefer to invite the benefactor even a high status or unfamiliar person for having a special traditional meal (at home) more than bringing a present or merely verbal reciprocating the help. Food in their culture is an acceptable contribution toward the favour they receive, powerful in wiping off the imposition incurred on the person and a sign of respect and appropriate repayment instead of giving money back. This could also highlight the impact of religion on their thought patterns particularly the prophet’s saying “the best people are those who feed and greet other people”. On the other hand, the English find it really unusual to invite anyone, particularly a stranger, into their home for food.

*Appreciation* appeared to be the least used strategy by Jordanians and significantly used by the English. The English participants used all the subcategories with different degrees (“I really appreciate that”, “your efforts are much appreciated”) more than Jordanian participants. This could be explained by the fact that appreciation is mainly used in formal situations. This could also because indicate that the English are more formal than the Jordanians in the situations considered.

The act of swearing was only found to preface gratitude expressions in the Jordanians’ data. Abdel-Jawad (2010) defines swearing as “the invocation of the divine powers for backing what one has said or done” (p.217). In fact, swearing in Arabic culture particularly Jordan culture is a common interaction feature that often precedes most types of communicative acts. He argues that it “has retained its original form and function in the Arab world but has not developed the western senses of imprecation, cursing, blasphemy, or the like” (p.218). Swearing was used in combination with some gratitude strategies (*thanking* (“والله اني عاجز عن شكرك”, ‘By the name of Allah, I am unable to thank you’), *apology* (“والله اني متاسف كثير كثير”, ‘By the name of Allah, I am very much very much sorry’), *positive feeling* (“والله انك على راسي”, ‘By the name of Allah, You are on my head’(show high respect), *repayment*

(“والله لازم تتفضل معنا على الغداء الان”), ‘By the name of Allah, you have to come to dine with us’), *recognition of impositions* (“والله لو كنت اعرف انه يأخذ جهد”), “By the name of Allah, if I had known that it will take long time and great efforts, I would not have asked you to fix it”). It serves to intensify gratitude expressions, substantiate the thanker's pure intent to restore equilibrium in the cost-benefit relation between thanker and thankee and the thanker's lack of intent to impose on the thankee. This use of swearing in Jordanian culture indicates the impact of religion and socio-cultural factors on communicative acts behaviour.

Regarding the overall use of strategies, T-test results show that some significant differences in the use of *appreciation* “Your efforts are much appreciated”, *positive feelings* (“لا اعرف ماذا اقول لك”, I do not know what to say to you), *other strategies* (e.g. *prayers* “رفعك الله اعلى المراتب”, ‘May Allah raise you to the highest echelons), and *alerters* (يا دكتور باروك, ‘Dr. Barwick’) strategies. Table 2 (Appendix A) shows that the English participants used the *appreciation* strategy significantly more than Jordanians (p.000), whereas Jordanians used the latter three strategies significantly more than the English; *positive feelings* (p.045), *other strategies* (*prayers and showing intent to establish and maintain further relationship*) (p.000), and *alerters* (p.000). Thus, the null hypothesis (H0 1.2: Jordanian native speakers of Arabic and native speakers of English do not significantly use different types of strategy for expressing gratitude) is rejected. The significant differences found between both cultural groups in the number and the types of strategy used in each of the situation considered could be accounted for by the fact that cultures do vary in their evaluation of the impact of the social and contextual variables on the performance of the communicative act. This indicates that these variables determine the number of strategies to be used and the speaker's linguistic (lexical and syntactic) choices.

## Summary

The study presented in this paper aims to make a substantial contribution to the growing body of cross-cultural comparative research, the theoretical issues concerning the nature of communicative acts, the relation between types of communicative acts and the general principles of human communication, the relation between culture-specific and universal features of communicative act types. The data shows that the conceptualization and verbalization of the communication of gratitude in the cultures of Jordan and England differ systematically. The findings mesh well with Bond, Žegarac and Spencer-Oatey's (2000, p: 53) description of a cultural group as having its unique behavioural norms and cultural values which form its identity and



the view of culture as a network of causally related public and mental representations. Such findings further necessitate and support the importance of such cross-cultural communicative acts studies to find out the cultural distinctions that might hinder communication exchange between cultures, by this way intercultural communication will be facilitated and strengthened.

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## Appendices

	Thank-ing	App-reci-ation	Apol-ogy	Posit-ive feeling	Recog-nition of Impos-ition	Repay-ment	Others	Alert-er	Total
<b>NSsA</b>	36%	5%	14%	6%	7%	10%	14%	8%	100%
<b>(n=76)</b>	601	80	226	95	106	173	234	140	1655
<b>NSsE</b>	40%	12%	12%	5%	6%	12%	10%	3%	100%
<b>(n=76)</b>	610	189	189	75	90	190	147	52	1542

**Table 1: The Frequencies and Percentages of Each Gratitude Expression Strategy used by Both NSsAs and NSsE**

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tail) P Val.	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Thanking	Equal variances assumed	36.080	.000	-.825	1214	.410	-.0148	.01795	-.0500	.0204
	Equal variances not assumed			-.825	974.66	.410	-.0148	.01795	-.0500	.0204
Appreciation	Equal variances assumed	257.694	.000	-7.668	1214	.000	-.1793	.02338	-.2251	-.1334
	Equal variances not assumed			-7.668	1106.81	<b>.000*</b>	-.1793	.02338	-.2252	-.1334
Positive feelings	Equal variances assumed	31.506	.000	2.010	1214	.045	.0609	.03027	.0015	.1203

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tail) P Val.	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
	Equal variances not assumed			2.010	1153.08	<b>.045*</b>	.0609	.03027	.0015	.1203
Apology	Equal variances assumed	10.997	.001	1.643	1214	.101	.0329	.02002	-.0064	.0722
	Equal variances not assumed			1.643	1199.24	.101	.0329	.02002	-.0064	.0722
Recognition of imposition	Equal variances assumed	6.300	.012	1.240	1214	.215	.0263	.02122	-.0153	.0680
	Equal variances not assumed			1.240	1206.79	.215	.0263	.02122	-.0153	.0680
Repayment	Equal variances assumed	4.756	.029	-1.049	1214	.295	-.0280	.02666	-.0803	.0244
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.049	1211.92	.295	-.0280	.02666	-.0803	.0244
Others	Equal variances assumed	87.154	.000	4.974	1214	.000	.1431	.02877	.0867	.1995
	Equal variances not assumed			4.974	1152.61	<b>.000*</b>	.1431	.02877	.0867	.1995
Alerters	Equal variances assumed	177.026	.000	6.459	1214	.000	.1447	.02241	.1008	.1887
	Equal variances not assumed			6.459	1014.37	<b>.000*</b>	.1447	.02241	.1008	.1887

**Table 2: T-test analysis of Overall Use of Strategies of the Gratitude Expression for both NSsA and NSsE Independent Samples Test**

# 4 Of Anoraks and Oysters: Metaphors of Social Communication in the Historical Thesaurus

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## Introduction

It is now common to state that metaphor pervades language and communication. The tremendous work that has gone on over the last thirty years or so has shown this repeatedly, and we now have a very significant bank of evidence for the importance of metaphor in language and thought (cf. for example Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980], Lakoff 1987, Sweetser 1990). Work on the so-called ‘conduit metaphor’, for example, has shown that we use this metaphor conventionally in English to conceptualise and talk about communication and language, as in the following examples from Michael Reddy’s well-known work which first identified this metaphor:

- (i) Try to *get* your *thoughts across* better
  - (ii) You still haven’t *given me* any *idea* of what you mean
  - (iii) Try to *pack* more *thoughts into* fewer *words*
  - (iv) Whenever you have a good *idea* practice *capturing it in words*
- (Reddy 1979, pp. 286-287, highlighting in original)

Such examples as (i) and (ii) above show that we conceptualise communication as taking a parcel of thoughts from one container, the mind, and transmitting it from a sender to a receiver, as if along a conduit. In keeping with this, we conceptualise linguistic expressions as containers for meaning objects: consider examples (iii) and (iv) above and also the expressions *hollow words* and *heavily loaded words*.

Inspired by the conference theme, ‘Opening New Lines of Communication in Applied Linguistics’, we took a closer look at metaphors of communication, specifically metaphors in the area of *social* communication.

## Mapping Metaphor

This work is part of a project currently being undertaken at the University of Glasgow, entitled ‘Mapping Metaphor with the *Historical Thesaurus*’, and funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council.<sup>2</sup> The principal aim of Mapping Metaphor is to provide an overview of the foundations and nature of metaphor over the history of English. This is made possible by the nature of our source data, and will take the form of an online ‘Metaphor Map’ for English which will show all of the metaphorical connections between semantic domains. Alongside this broad overview, we are also carrying out case studies of metaphor in selected semantic domains, and reconsidering a number of theoretical questions in metaphor studies from this new, heavily data-driven perspective. These questions include the nature and identification of semantic domains, the productivity of new metaphorical connections at particular times in the history of English, and the direction of metaphorical transfer.

The Mapping Metaphor project is one example of the research which has been made possible by the completion of the *Historical Thesaurus* (HT) database at Glasgow a few years ago. The HT was initiated by Professor Michael Samuels in the 1960s, and the final entry in the database of almost 800,000 word senses was put in place some forty-odd years later. Its source data is the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED2), supplemented by *A Thesaurus of Old English* (TOE, Roberts and Kay 2000) for data for the period before 1150. The HT is available online and also in print form (Kay, Roberts, Samuels and Wotherspoon, eds, 2009).<sup>3</sup>

The HT offers ideal data for an examination of metaphor for several reasons. First, it is large and therefore allows for a more comprehensive empirical study of metaphor than has previously been possible. Second, it has a hierarchical semantic structure which can be exploited in a semi-automated ‘mapping’ of lexical items between semantic categories covering the entirety of semantic space. Third, as its name indicates, the HT is historical, giving sense information for all periods of English and recording attestation dates from OED2.

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<sup>2</sup> The project website can be found at [www.glasgow.ac.uk/metaphor](http://www.glasgow.ac.uk/metaphor). Information about the AHRC is here: [www.ahrc.ac.uk](http://www.ahrc.ac.uk).

<sup>3</sup> The online version of the *Historical Thesaurus of English* is available at: <http://historicalthesaurus.arts.gla.ac.uk/>.

## Methods

Our starting point in identifying metaphor is lexical overlap. Target domains are metaphorically expressed through lexis from source domains: it follows that we find words from the domain of War in the domain of Arguments, because we conceptualise arguments in terms of war, as in expressions like *fight your corner*, *take sides*, *he attacked my argument*, *she shot down my case*, and so on.

In other words, lexical items can be identified in the HT which are used in more than one semantic domain. Sometimes this is motivated by metaphor. We applied this approach to the entire HT database. First, we grouped the data into a total of 411 semantically-coherent categories. Most of these categories have an Old English (OE) and a post-OE section: OE data include all of the lexical items that are attested up to 1150, and post-OE sections contain the lexis attested in later varieties of English, which includes the vocabulary which has its origins in OE but survived into later stages of the language. A few categories, notably those representing science and technology, do not have OE content.

We then ran queries on the database to extract all of the lexical overlap in categories. That is, we automatically compared the set of lexical items in every category with the set of lexical items in every other category in turn. The resulting data sheets were then manually analysed to identify the metaphorical connections contained in the lexical overlap. This was a labour-intensive process, which involved systematically working through sets of data for around 800 (OE and post-OE) categories, many of which contained tens of thousands of word senses. Only a small proportion of the lexical overlap is due to metaphor: the majority is a result of polysemy motivated by processes other than metaphor (such as widening, narrowing and metonymy), and ‘accidental’ connections such as homonymy. For the purposes of the project, we coded this as ‘noise’. A proportion of the overlap data also resulted from the semantic similarity of some categories. For example, it was not a surprise that much of the lexis in our categories of Killing, The Body, and Disposal of Corpses should be shared.

Our analysis of these data has brought to light metaphorical connections of varying degrees of strength. At one end of the scale, we have ample evidence of strong, systematic links instantiated by large numbers of lexical items, such as the established connection between the concepts of intelligence and light (cf. *brilliant*, *bright*, *brightness*, *elucidate*, *enlighten*). At the other end of the scale, the process has also uncovered weaker connections, where

concepts do still appear to be linked through metaphor but where there is only limited evidence from the shared lexis. Some of these weak connections may prove to be an artefact of the categorisation system and actually part of stronger connections once all of the data have been analysed; others may simply represent connections that are not yet well established, or which were fleeting and perhaps tied to a particular social context. At the present stage, our analysis does not distinguish between domains which are used as Source and those which are Target (and indeed those which are both Source and Target): however, we intend to incorporate this information into the final resource.

### **The Categories of Social Communication**

Here we focus on two of the Mapping Metaphor categories: P06 Society and Social Communication, and P07 Lack of Social Communication.<sup>4</sup> The two are naturally semantically close, and both fall within the superordinate category of ‘Society/the community’ (a *Historical Thesaurus* level 2 category). The scope of P06 takes in: the study of society; civilization; social relations; social communication; fellowship and companionship; co-operation; holding meetings; societies, associations and factions. P07 encompasses: lack of social communication and relations; unsociability; solitude; retirement and seclusion; exclusion from society. While we concentrate here on the post-OE sections of these categories, we incorporate analysis of the OE sections where this allows us to present a fuller picture. In this way, we investigate which semantic areas speakers of English have drawn on and continue to draw on to express complex and abstract ideas when talking and writing about social communication itself.

In the first round of category coding which provided the data for the present research, we identified metaphorical connections as follows. For category P06, there are metaphorical connections with 63 other categories; 255 category connections coded as ‘noise’; and 36 categories in which the lexical overlap can be attributed to semantic similarity (e.g. categories such as Politics, Social Event, and Speech). For category P07, metaphorical connections are identified with 78 other categories; there are 172 connections where the lexical overlap is simply ‘noise’; and 13 categories which have been coded as semantically similar. Given the close semantic connection between the two categories, namely the strong degree of antonymy that we might anticipate, naturally many of the metaphorical connections are shared.

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<sup>4</sup> Category names may be slightly amended by the time the finished Metaphor Map appears online.



The discussion below therefore considers patterns of metaphorical connections in the two categories taken together.

## Metaphors of Social Communication

Figure 1 is a close-up of a network diagram produced in Gephi which shows the metaphorical connections identified between category P06 Society and Social Communication and other Mapping Metaphor categories.<sup>5</sup> The inner circle of category names, linked by solid lines to the central category, are those which have been coded as having a strong, systematic metaphorical connection; the categories positioned further from the centre and linked by paler, dotted lines have weaker metaphorical connections.

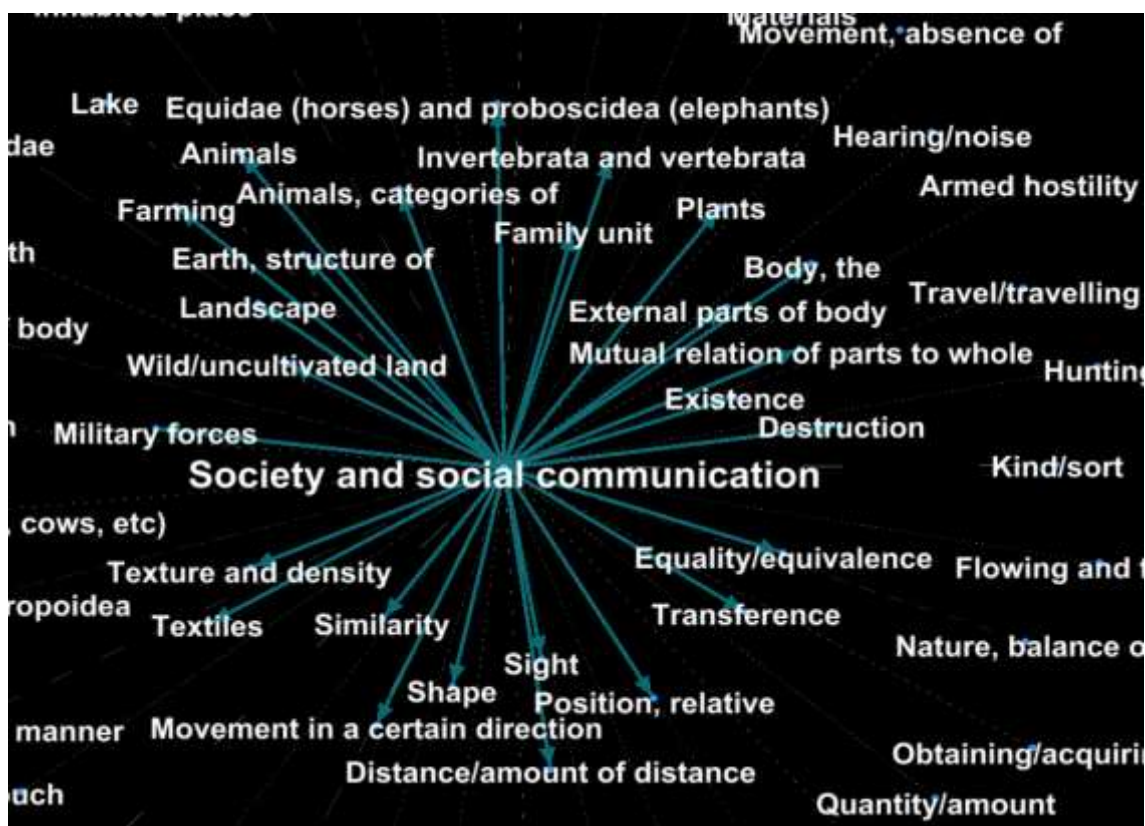


Figure 1: Gephi visualisation of metaphorical connections involving category P06 Society and Social Communication

As can be seen from Figure 1, there are clusters of related categories which share metaphorical connections with the central category: we might expect, for example, to find similar types of metaphorical connections in the various ‘animal’ categories. Similar connections and clusters emerge for P07 Lack of Social Communication. The discussion below concentrates on a number

<sup>5</sup> Gephi is a free open source interactive visualisation platform, available at <http://gephi.org/>.

of the main clusters, selected to highlight categories of different degrees of concreteness/abstractness.

### ***Land and Plants***

The semantic areas of land and plants are connected by the concept of wildness, and this forms one of the main metaphorical connections between the categories of Social Communication and other Mapping Metaphor categories. A04 Land, for example, contains several lexical items shared with P07 Lack of Social Communication, such as *island* (with the sense ‘one who is isolated’ attested from 1652), *backwater* (vb, ‘to seclude’, dated 1885-1920 in OED2), *nook* (‘secluded place’, attested with a sense in the social domain in 1555), *insulate* (‘separated/isolated’, attested in 1803) and *enisle* (‘to separate/isolate’, recorded from 1848 with no end date recorded). A05 Landscape adds to the metaphorical picture, with *mountainous* (‘uncivilised’, 1613-1703) and *savage* (‘uncivilised person’, from 1588). A07 Wild/uncultivated land brings *wildness* (in the sense of ‘lack of civilisation’, attested in 1680), and *jungle*, the latter also meaning ‘uncivilised’ and attested in 1908, demonstrating the continuing availability of this conceptual metaphor to speakers and writers of English over a period of several centuries at least. Finally, A15 Structure of Earth overlaps lexically with Social Communication through *underground* (as a type of society from 1959 to the present), and *uncivil* (meaning ‘infertile’, attested in 1675 and 1733). The latter is especially interesting as here the category of Social Communication provides the source concept rather than the target: that is, an aspect of physical land is conceptualised in terms drawn from the domain of social communication. The connection between Land, broadly considered, and Social Communication is therefore bidirectional, albeit stronger in one direction than in the other.

Generally, therefore, society is conceptualised as land with various ‘topographical’ features, and uncivilised society is conceptualised as wild land. The detail of this well-established metaphorical connection is further filled in when we consider the various categories falling within the domain of Plants. This connection too turns out to be bidirectional. While the connection normally has its source in Plants – there is lexical evidence of the well-known conceptual metaphors ORGANISATIONS ARE PLANTS (*branch*), UNCIVILISED SOCIETY IS WILD LAND/PLANTS (*jungle*, *wild*, *state of nature*) – there is also evidence of a weaker metaphor with its source in Society (cf. the botanical terms *social* and *gregarious* in the sense of plants ‘growing in groups’, attested from 1834 and 1829, respectively).

## ***Animals***

Another systematic link with the physical categories is that with Animals. This is evidenced in lexical overlap with the general Mapping Metaphor categories B44 Animals, B45 Categories of Animals, B46 Animals in Groups, and also with categories of specific species or classes, such as B48 Invertebrates and B58 Horses and Elephants. Unsurprisingly, the connection also comes to light with B75 Farming, which overlaps semantically with both Land and Animals, and gives evidence of the major link represented by the two main senses of *culture*.

A lack of civilisation in people is seen in animal terms (cf. *bestial*, attested in the sense of ‘uncivilised’ from c.1400 to 1816, and *brutish*, with a single attestation in OED2 in 1647 but clearly part of a more systematic metaphorical link). However, it is not only the negative connotations of animals that are transferred. Associations of people are also conceptualised as groupings of animals (*stud*, attested from 1804 in the sense of ‘company/body of persons’; *yoke*, ‘to associate together/with’, recorded from 1500 to 1607; and *herd*, with the same sense, from c.1400). Moreover, these connections are visible in the Old English sections of the Mapping Metaphor categories: *flock* (from OE *flocc*) is attested from OE-1822 with the sense of ‘company/body of persons’.<sup>6</sup> So here we have empirical evidence of the long-standing, high-level connection between People and Animals, and a more specific metaphor through which lack of civilisation in people is conceptualised in terms of the wild qualities of animals. Indeed, there are arguably more specific metaphors still. A connection with Invertebrates is visible from lexical items such as *soft-shell* (in the sense of ‘advocating a moderate course’), *barnacle* (in Social Communication, a type of companion, which is rare, but attested in 1607 and 1858), and *oyster-like* (‘retiring, withdrawn’, attested in 1784). Similarly, the category of Horses and Elephants emerges as particularly relevant, with *stable-mate*, *stable companion*, *stud*, and *coach-fellow* occurring both here and in Social Communication.

## ***Texture and Density***

Though society relates to people and their means of existing in the world, then, it really describes the relationships between people which are altogether a more abstract matter. In general, it is very difficult to talk about things which are intangible without describing them in terms of the physical. We would expect therefore that the Mapping Metaphor results would show

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<sup>6</sup> On metaphors in Old English, see also Kay (2000).

links between the categories of Social Communication and categories encompassing more concrete entities. The links with categories of Land, Plants and Animals discussed above have already demonstrated this to some extent and the results from categories of Texture and Density emphasise it further.

Social ties, metaphorically speaking, have density and substance, and are talked about in terms of solidity. In academic literature on sociology or sociolinguistics, for example, they are often *dense* or *loose*. D04 Texture and Density is the physical source for the following word senses in P06 Society and Social Communication: *solidify* ('bring to unity of interest', attested twice in 1885), *cohere* (i.e. 'associate with', from 1651) and *indissolubleness* ('specific quality of cooperation', recorded in 1699 and 1863). The pervasiveness of this link is supported by analysis of P07 Lack of Social Communication, where category D05 Lack of Density provides *dissolute* (disunited/separated, from 1651) and *unconsolidated* (1874). In sum, a substantial amount of lexical evidence points to the fact that social ties are conceptualised and talked of on a continuum from solid to dissolute.

### ***Textiles***

The use of the term 'ties' to describe these relationships is itself metaphorical and the Mapping Metaphor data open this link up further. B77 Textiles is another major source category for Social Communication. Social relations are described as a *network*, and, with the recent rise of social media, social networks are now often discussed in public discourse as well as in academic literature. The notion of a network now seems almost basic to any discussion of people in society and how they interact, but it is attested in OED2 from as late as 1947 as an interconnected group of people, and from 1560 in its original sense of threads being arranged in the form of a net. Work on social networks also often discusses how 'close-knit' a society or individuals are: *knit* ('associate with', 1541) too is found in our data. Social ties are being conceptualised as threads or wool, that is, part of the make-up of a piece of cloth rather than an entire garment. Finally, *anorak*, from the category of Clothing, is found in P07 Lack of Social Communication in the sense of a person who is boring or socially inept (recorded from 1984 and characterised as 'slang/derogatory'): however, this appears to be an isolated metaphor rather than an indication of a systematic link represented by the more basic textile words.

### ***Physical Objects***

Social ties are only one aspect of the ways in which we talk about society. Society itself is also conceptualised in a metaphorical way, most significantly as a physical object or a combination of physical objects. The Mapping Metaphor data reveal how society is described in this way: it can be broken down and has parts which stand in relation to the whole.

As physical objects, elements of society can be shaped, as shown by E43 Shape which lends terms such as *straight*, *round* and *fashion* or *fashionable*. Society is also seen as specific objects, such as *body*, *corporation* and *incorporate* (all from B27 Body). This systematic metaphor breaks down further, with parts of the body used: B29 External Parts of the Body lends *arm*, *foot* and *two-handed*, with the latter referring to co-operation between two people (recorded from 1657 onwards). On a more abstract level, this type of relationship between society as object and elements of society as parts of that object is shown in the metaphorical overlap with the category F37 Mutual Relation of Parts to Whole. Here, the data show how members of society can *associate*, *combine* and *cohere* in the same way as physical objects. Some of these relationships are difficult to unpick. For example, the primary sense of *associate* in English seems to be in relation to people, so the more general signification could be metaphorically derived from the social sense. An OED2 quotation from 1658 seems to support this: “a way to make wood perpetuall and a fit associat for metal” (OED2, *associate*, ppl. a. and n. B6). Importantly though, the mass of evidence allows us to see that the category link as a whole is systematic. Indeed, this relationship is long-standing, holding at least from Anglo-Saxon times. In the Old English data, lexical overlap from category F37 includes *gesamnian* which could mean both ‘joint (as in physically together)’ and ‘associate for common purpose’, and *onsundran* meaning both ‘apart/separately (physically)’ and ‘apart from the crowd (socially)’.

### ***Physical Space***

As well as being a physical object, it is clear from our data that speakers of English conceptualise society as existing within a physical realm. The evidence for this includes links showing that concepts of distance, position and sight are all represented in the social categories.

Social distance is conceptualised as physical distance. Links with E41 Distance include *close* between people on an emotional, rather than solely physical, level. Other links which show social communication described in terms of distance include *join*, in relation to social closeness, and *out of the*

way, meaning socially distant or isolated. Physical/social distance originating from people specifically is productive in lexemes such as *shoulder to shoulder* and *neighbour*. In *shoulder to shoulder*, physical alignment is transferred to social alignment. *Neighbour* has its source in the domain of society (from 1300 onwards) and is being used to express physical distance between objects (from 1567 onwards).

Position is similar to distance, as position in space is generally seen as close or far from a particular perspective. This relationship emerges especially clearly when we look at the metaphorical overlap between E45 Relative Position and P07 Lack of Social Communication, though there is also a great deal of lexical overlap with P06 Society and Social Communication. The overlap with P07 includes lexemes such as *seclude*, *marginal* and *separation*, which are all commonly used in present-day English to discuss people's position in relation to society as a whole. Movement and direction within a space are also shown by our data across several categories, with examples including *introverted* and *outcast*.

To summarise, aspects of society which are conceptualised as objects exist in a space and take up a particular position. Further, they are at a distance from other parts, can be seen from a particular perspective, and can move in different directions within that space. As part of the wider picture, these objects are also *visible*. Lexical links with C12 Sight include *show* and *see*. Naturally, of course, objects cannot be seen in the dark: this explains the conceptual relationship between P07 Lack of Social Communication and D33 Darkness, which leads to lexemes such as *shadow* and *shade* being used in the context of social obscurity.

## Conclusion

This paper offers only a glimpse into the Mapping Metaphor data, with a particular focus on metaphors of social communication throughout the history of English. Such metaphors help to explain how people make sense of the world, and are therefore valuable for Applied Linguistics. Some clear metaphorical links emerge, alongside evidence for weaker or less long-standing connections. These links, among thousands of others, will be available for fuller exploration in the Metaphor Map resource soon. In addition to presenting detailed data on the lexical overlap instantiating specific links, the Map will allow for the first time a near-complete overview of the metaphorical transfer between semantic domains of English. General tendencies, such as the dominant pattern of transfer from concrete Source categories to abstract Targets, which has emerged from decades of work on

conceptual metaphor, will be able to be explored on the basis of data covering many centuries of English and the entirety of semantic space. Alongside the evidence of smaller-scale or newer patterns and connections, this will contribute to a complex picture of one of the major mechanisms of semantic change in English and a fuller understanding of how we talk about and conceptualise the world.

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# 5 Healthy Communication: the discourse of research and practitioners in health care

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## Introduction

Within the fields of medicine and health care, the relationship between the findings of academic research and the clinical practice of healthcare professionals is often perceived as distant (Moroni, Bolognesi, Muciarelli, Abernethy, & Biasco, 2011; Walsh et al., 2012). This study examines how the discourses of the two communities are implicated in the way this relationship is currently constituted with a view to identifying how applied linguistics can impact on how this relationship can be improved.

## Literature Review

We have identified two broad explanations of how the differences between research and clinical writing can be understood. The first relates to the content of the articles. According to Avorn and Fischer (2010), the documents produced by researchers:

are so long and detailed that they often fail to influence – or even get read by – most practitioners (2010 p. 1892).

An alternative view locates the issue in the relationship between authors and audiences.

The aim of academic disciplines is to know, and their theories are **descriptive and explanatory** in nature. Fields that apply research are more correctly termed applied disciplines, or applied branches of academic disciplines, rather than professional disciplines, which have **prescriptive** theories (Dougherty and Tripp-Reimer, 1985 p. 224) [our emphasis].

This mirrors Tsang's (1997 p. 85) characterisation of descriptive research as being aimed at academics and intended to create theories as opposed to prescriptive research which is aimed at practitioners and is meant to improve organisational performance. This led us to identify two research questions:

1. How do researcher and practitioner oriented texts in health care differ in terms of how they relate to research?
2. To what extent are researcher and practitioner oriented texts in health care descriptive rather than prescriptive?

### Corpus construction

The study is corpus based. We identified *The Journal of Advanced Nursing* (JAN) as a publication targeted at academic audiences. The Editors welcome papers that advance knowledge and understanding of all aspects of nursing and midwifery care, research, practice, education and management. All papers must have a sound scientific, theoretical or philosophical base (Watson, 2013).

We collected our practitioner oriented articles from *Nursing Standard* (NS). This is the UK's bestselling nursing journal (Scott, 2013). The author's guidelines say that

Articles should be of interest to **nurses working in clinical practice**, have something new to say or offer a fresh approach to an old subject, challenge current thought or practice, predict future trends, or review current thinking (Clarke, 2013) [our emphasis].

Both journals operate a system of double blind peer review.

Our search focussed on the term "wound care". We selected this term for two main reasons. Firstly, the care of wounds is carried out predominantly by nurses rather than medical staff. This is reflected in the fact that research into wound care is carried out predominantly by departments or services within the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK such as the tissue viability services which are often nurse led. Secondly, wound care in general, and the prevention of pressure sores in particular is one of the strategic aims of the NHS. Although the extent of general wound care cost to the NHS is not known, the cost of managing pressure sores alone is estimated to be £1.4 – 2.1 billion (Bennett, Dealey, & Posnett, 2004).

We carried out a search for articles with the term "Wound Care" in both journals over a five year period until August 2013. Table one provides information about the results of this search.

2008-2013	Journal of Advanced Nursing	Nursing Standard
Articles	80	67
Words	738, 755	364,0480
Words/article	9,234	5,433

**Table 1: Articles in corpus taken from the Journal of Advanced Nursing (JAN) and Nursing Standard (NS)**

## Data analysis

We carried out two kinds of analysis. Firstly, we carried out a key word search. This meant identifying what words are relatively common in our two corpora Secondly, we analysed the concordance lines for the phrase “wound care” in both our corpora.

The key word analysis was carried out using *Sketch Engine* (Kilgarrieff, Rychly, Smrz, & Tugwell, 2004). We compared our two corpora with the British National Corpus (BNC) ("The British National Corpus", 2007) and with each other. Our list was based on lemmas rather than words and we set no minimum frequency.

The first five key words resulting from each search are given in tables two to five. For both journals, the top two key words relative to the BNC were *nursing* and *journal*, something which is consistent with the origin of the two corpora. Less frequent words give some indications of differences between the two corpora with the *Journal of Advanced Nursing* having two research related words “publishing” at three and research at five while *Nursing Standard* had two clinical terms “wound” at four, and “care” at five.

	Journal of Advanced Nursing		BNC		
Lemma	Freq	Freq/mill	Freq	Freq/mill	Score
1. Nursing	2172	2940.1	1	0.0	2915.1
2. Journal	2056	2783.1	5	0.0	2665.3
3. Publishing	829	1122.2	3	0.0	1093.9
4. Health	835	1130.3	11	0.1	1030.3
5. Research	721	976.0	1	0.0	968.3

**Table 2: Keywords in *Journal of Advanced Nursing* compared with the BNC**

	Nursing Standard		BNC		
Lemma	Freq	Freq/mill	Freq	Freq/mill	Score
1. Nursing	1105	3035.3	1	0.0	3009.5
2. Journal	807	2216.7	5	0.0	2123.1
3. Standard	606	1664.6	2	0.0	1636.4
4. Wound	438	1203.1	0	0.0	1204.1
5. Care	450	1236.1	6	0.1	1174.3

**Table 3: Key words in *Nursing Standard* compared with the BNC**

The differences between the two corpora are more obvious when they are compared with each other. The frequency of references to research in *The Journal of Advanced Nursing* is reflected in the “findings” at one and “significant” at four but also by a word often used to describe research, “original” at two, and a description of a common feature of the research process “identified” at three. In contrast, *Nursing Standard* has more clinically oriented terms with “pacemaker” at one, “meningitis” at four and “fibroid” at five. We note but do not have the space to comment on the appearance of “first” in the key words for *Journal of Advanced Nursing* and last for *Nursing Standard*.

	Journal of Advanced Nursing		Nursing Standard		
Lemma	Freq	Freq/mill	Freq	Freq/mill	Score
1. findings	403	545.5	0	0.0	546.5
2. original	336	454.8	0	0.0	455.8
3. identified	320	433.2	0	0.0	434.2
4. significant	303	410.1	0	0.0	411.1
5. first	270	365.5	0	0.0	366.5

**Table 4: Key words in *Journal of Advanced Nursing* compared with *Nursing Standard***

	Nursing Standard		Journal of Advanced Nursing		
Lemma	Freq	Freq/mill	Freq	Freq/mill	Score
1. last	142	390.1	0	0.0	391.1
2. pacemaker	136	373.6	0	0.0	374.6
3. box	99	271.9	0	0.0	272.9
4. meningitis	94	258.2	0	0.0	259.2
5. fibroid	89	244.5	0	0.0	245.5

**Table 5: Key words in *Nursing Standard* compared with JAN**

The second strand of our analysis focussed on the concordance lines for “wound care”. We identified two hundred and twenty five instances in the *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, that is about three hundred instances per million words, and just under four hundred instances in *Nursing Standard*, that is over one thousand instances per million words. The relatively higher frequency in *Nursing Standard* is partly a reflection of the shorter article length but also indicates that wound care is more central to more of the articles in *Nursing Standard* than in JAN. More detailed figures are given in table 6.

Journal	Instances	Instances/ million words
Journal of Advanced Nursing	225	303
Nursing Standard	397	1089

Table 6: “Wound care” in the two corpora

Our analysis of the concordance lines had two strands, related to whether there were differences between the two corpora in terms of how they related to research and the extent to which they were descriptive rather than prescriptive.

We identified the number of research related concordance lines by a manual search of each set of lines. We identified the following lemmas as research related: “research” as a noun or a verb; “literature”; “publish”, “data”; “analysis”/ “analyze”; “find”/ “findings”. We also identified a set of items which could be research related in appropriate contexts: interview, observation, questionnaire, significance and “standardise”/ “standardisation”. An observation may be part of a medical or health care procedure or a research instrument. To enhance reliability, fifty lines for each corpus were independently classified as either research or not research oriented by the two authors. Interrater reliability was 100%.

Here are three lines from the *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. In the third item, “standardised” and “interviews” were taken as related to research because of the co-text.

- Nurses are **found** to focus more on the physical care of their patients, such as <wound care> and other postoperative symptoms;
- These **results** support the proposition that there are clinical benefits from using honey in <wound care >, but further research is needed.

- The < wound care > session was **standardized** for all the participants, and semi-structured qualitative **interviews** with open-ended questions were conducted with all the children in conjunction with the procedure.

Here are two examples from *Nursing Standard*:

- Based on the above findings, the management of a biofilm community is significantly more challenging than that traditionally used in planktonic-based <wound care >.
- The literature indicates that management of pain by nurses and doctors is not always addressed alongside the clinical aspects of <wound care> (Douglas 2001, Husband 2001, Hareendran et al 2005, Morgan and Moffatt 2008).

In the first example, “significantly” was taken not to be an indication of a research orientation but as a synonym for important.

Using these terms we identified fifty six research related concordance lines in the *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, that is about a quarter of all the lines, and forty two, or about ten percent of lines in *Nursing Standard*. This supports the notion that the *Journal of Advanced Nursing* is more research oriented than *Nursing Standard*.

A second element in this research related to references in the concordance lines. For the *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, sixty nine lines included a reference. This is about 30% of all the concordance lines. For *Nursing Standard*, the number of lines was one hundred and ninety six, which is just under half of all lines. This might be taken as contradicting our findings related to research orientation as measured by the number of research related words. Our interpretation of the two findings was that *Nursing Standard* was focussed on the research findings while the *Journal of Advanced Nursing* was concerned more with the process of research. We take up this point again in the discussion section.

To address the question of whether there were differences in terms of prescription versus description, we also carried out a manual search of the concordance lines looking for three features, imperatives, the use of the modals “should”, “ought to” and “must”, and the use of adjectives such as “necessary” and “important”. Again we independently coded fifty lines from both corpora. We agreed on the imperatives and modals. Some examples of imperatives and modals are:

- Take time for <wound care >. [imperative] (JAN)
- During assessment the environment should be kept warm,(NS)
- This implies that honey dressings should be avoided for routine use in <wound care> until sufficient evidence is available. [modal should] (JAN)

However, we had difficulty in identifying what did or did not count as a modalising adjective and we also identified some lines which did not include any of these features where there was a prescriptive element in the meaning of the line. Here are some examples of data we found problematic.

As wounds can quickly turn from small and relatively harmless to large and life-threatening, it was **urgent** that quick and effective <wound care> was provided (JAN).

Despite the presence of “urgent”, which is often used to prescribe certain behaviours, the use of the past tense here meant that this line could not be treated as prescriptive. We dealt with this by adding the requirement that modalising adjectives had to be used with present tense verbs to be classified as prescriptive. An example would be:

- It is therefore **important** to explore coping strategies that help children who are undergoing <wound care >.

An additional and more fundamental issue was that many other kinds of sentences seemed to have a prescriptive element. For example there seems to a hedged instruction to avoid scrubbing wounds despite the absence of a clear linguistic signal of prescription in the following:

- Many authors state that scrubbing has no place in <wound care> unless carried out to appropriate wounds with extreme care (Blunt 2001, Myers 2008) (NS)

Similarly the authors of the extract below indicate that Health Care Trusts or equivalent organisations should provide clearly written local guidance:

- Clearly written local guidance, based on national guidelines, and competency frameworks around < wound care > and pressure ulcer management will safeguard the patient, the clinical support worker and the registered nurse delegating the wound care task (NS).

In the next example, there is an implication that Health Care Trusts or equivalent organisations should provide appropriate training:

- However, with the correct competency training, attitude and support, a clinical support worker may be expected to perform < wound care > safely.

More tendentiously, one reading of the question in the following example is that it suggests that all types of antimicrobials should be made available:

- Are all types of antimicrobials available or are some used only on the authorisation of the tissue viability nurse or < wound care > pharmacist? (NS)

Using the narrow interpretation of prescription, we found twenty four prescriptive concordance lines in the *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, about 11%, as against fifty lines, or 12%, in *Nursing Standard*. The relatively close figures here and the problems with identifying prescriptive and descriptive lines suggested to us that we could not say that either journal was more descriptive or prescriptive than the other. In addition, the problem we had in reaching agreement about whether concordance lines without clear linguistic signals of prescription were prescriptive suggests that there may be a more fundamental issue with the use of linguistics markers to identify prescription.

## Findings and Discussion

Our findings suggest that there are differences in the discourse in the *Journal of Advanced Nursing* and *Nursing Standard*, with *Journal of Advanced Nursing* being more focussed on research, or perhaps more accurately on the research process while *Nursing Standard* has a clinical orientation but is also concerned with the results of research. This would be consistent with the view that those who read *Journal of Advanced Nursing* are often researchers who are interested both in what other researchers have discovered as well as in how that research is carried out. *Nursing Standard* readers are more concerned about the implications of what research has found for clinical practice.

However, we found little to support the notion that *Journal of Advanced Nursing* is more descriptive than *Nursing Standard*. This may reflect weaknesses in the research methodology but we would argue that the distinction between prescriptive and descriptive discourse is a reflection of power relations between text producers and their audiences and is not always signalled explicitly in the language used.

Indeed, we would hypothesise that the difference between the two journals is best seen as related to ontology rather than a focus on research versus



practice or prescription versus description with the *Journal of Advanced Nursing* presenting our knowledge of reality as contingent and *Nursing Standard* seeing our understanding of reality more positivistically, that is as relatively fixed. We would not claim this to be more than a hypothesis at the moment but this is a useful hypothesis in that it draws attention both to the limits of this study and indicates some potential areas for future research.

The main limitation of our study is the size of our corpora and the fact it is unclear whether sampling the two journals by using the search items “wound care” introduced some distortion into the selection procedure. This could be addressed by the creation of larger corpora or a parallel set of corpora using a different search item.

It would also be possible to look at the corpora we compiled more holistically as we did with our analysis of concordance lines containing “wound care”. There are a range of possibilities here but we enumerate three.

1. An examination of concordance lines and/or word sketches for the research related vocabulary identified above would provide a clearer indication of the orientation to research.
2. An examination of the number and type of references in the articles in the corpora and some evaluation of the kinds of articles that are referred to.
3. An examination of the authors of the articles in the corpora and their affiliations.

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## 6 When Language Issues Strike One's Alma Mater: Responding to Language Regression and the Campus Community's Resulting Linguistic Tension

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Pierre Bourdieu has revealed that the privileged and the underprivileged both vie for power. In the process, however, they unconsciously subject themselves to or perpetuate a psychological harm. The following quotation illustrates this notion:

Symbolic violence is violence wielded with tacit complicity between its victims and its agents, insofar as both remain unconscious of submitting to or wielding it. (1998: 17)

In a parallel way, symbolic violence can stem from the occasional intentional or unintentional fallout from language issues that marginalize or, on the contrary, emancipate people. Largely ignored until 1978, when Hilary Tovey linked language policy with socioeconomic development in Ireland, the causal relationship between these two elements is difficult to establish: the two variables – socioeconomic development, or emancipation, and socioeconomic impoverishment, or marginalization - correlate infrequently with language issues. That is, to establish economic gains as the result of language planning or language learning efforts is difficult. Granted, research shows a relationship between English literacy in Canada and higher income (Statistics Canada 2005), but one must ask – what about language issues in Canada besides the English language one? Asking if other languages (particularly French, Indigenous or immigrant languages) having minority status or national language status can contribute to one's economic growth is worthwhile.

Scholars suggest that this matter of language, linked to economics, is a growing field of study, with certain economists predicting that globalization will erase many local or regional languages (Norberg-Hodge 2011; Abley 2005) and others arguing the contrary (Bhawuk 2008). Certainly, the issue of language death is increasingly a cause for alarm among linguists (Abley

2005), with some predicting a drop from close to 6,700 languages to 200 (Mufwene 2013).

Still, when one's alma mater displays characteristics of linguistic symbolic violence, statistics, however disturbing they may be, serve little role in rectifying matters. The phenomenon occurring at Laurentian University, a "university [that] comes closer than any other to being a microcosm of Canada....[as it] is a bilingual university with strong links to our First Nations" (Daniel 2006) raises a red flag. The issue of linguistic symbolic violence unveils tangible language conflict, which merits close study. For example, some aspects of campus life include students staging protests, organizing sit-ins and publishing articles in the French student newspaper that criticize the university president's grammar. Similarly, the French faculty resist the continuing growth of English for International Students, while some campus workers who are Franco-Ontarian surreptitiously 'ethnically self-cleanse' for reasons that remain ambiguous. Linguistic tensions emerge, and students, faculty, and administrators also find themselves with reduced courses offered in French. Programs in certain departments that had been offered in French collapse, and Aboriginal faculty find their languages to be of little value when the process of obtaining tenure requires them to pass a French test. Language decision makers thus face a challenging task: to both comprehend and address the dilemma Canadian national speakers face; namely, the question of whether or not their languages are conducive to socioeconomic development or responsible for their socioeconomic impoverishment. This author proposes investigating this matter through three lenses: language ghettos, language rights and language injustice.

Any form of socioeconomic marginalization or socioeconomic impoverishment is distressing, and while linguistic ghettos are pertinent to applied language matters, all ghettos, linguistic or otherwise, involve overt or covert restrictions on living (Dumouchel 1975). Speakers may self-impose the restrictions, or breakdowns in the political system may result in their being imposed. Characteristic of such language ghettos is "insufficient knowledge of the language of the country, or, more precisely, the labour market where one wishes to earn a living [which] drastically reduces one's competitiveness" (Coulmas 1995: 65-66).

According to Alan Patten (2003), one of the arguments for linguistic rationalization is that if minority language communities climbing the social ladder resist or suffer impediments when learning and using the major

languages, this will lead to a type of socioeconomic stagnation, regression, or marginalization. Since members of these communities speak only their language, limited work opportunities will be available to them. Similarly, they will miss out on the larger societal context and have limited participation in political life. Policies that promote integration, according to this philosophy, promote a better way of living.

In some workplaces, a linguistic ghetto presents itself as a phenomenon causing precarious safety issues. For example, in Australia, some migrant construction workers have jobs that require performing many low-level operative tasks. These international workers communicate in a language other than English. When speaking with their coworkers, they revert to their first language, a practice which hinders integrating and learning the second language. Unsafe working conditions follow (Trajkovski & Lossemore 2006). How, then, can second language enthusiasts resolve such problematic situations in which the minority speakers act in a way that hinders their own social mobility?

Research suggests that the situation faced by Hispanics in the United States is worth studying. Changes in bilingual policy, such as Proposition 203 in Arizona and Proposition 227 in California, worsened conditions for minority language speakers. Government officials dismissed the value of bilingual education as enhancing a child's learning. Despite the growing numbers of immigrants working in the United States, whose children would benefit from a bilingual education, a significant number of American people would prefer a monocultural society, thus resisting accommodating immigrant children and speaking languages other than English. This ideology ignores the fact that bilingual education provides an added value for all children (Jarmel 2010). Certain critical analysts, however, view that the concern for marginalizing people and resisting bilingualism, vehiculating the term linguistic ghetto, is, instead, conservative rhetoric disguised. The ethnocentric mentality propelling the English Only movement, for example, receives financial assistance from private interests (New Internationalist 2003).

Gruez (2008) suggests that using the term *linguistic ghetto* as rhetoric connotes an attitude relegating a language other than English to a second class, impoverishing it culturally, financially, or symbolically. Others detect the spread of neo-liberal thinking; for example, if one believes that certain religious groups live in marginalized enclaves, one ignores the notion that the social fabrics of communities are interwoven within the context of work,

school, and other social settings (Crane 2000). Certain analysts, moreover, have observed that promoters of English Only immersion over bilingual education have weak pedagogical methods, disturbing educational social ethics and biased key researchers (New Internationalist 2003). Finally, findings by Florian Coulmas (1992) challenge the notion that English fluency correlates with financial wealth.

Beneath what suggests a neoliberal mentality, the way in which one studies occurrences of linguistic ghettos also leads one to question the matter of language rights. Language legislating in Quebec, through the efforts of French language promoters, reveals a compelling case in favour of respecting linguistic rights. Quebec citizens have framed their interest in upholding language prerogatives as an effort to preserve and protect their distinct society, which in turn allows them to maintain a culture distinguishing them from the United States, for example. By way of illustration, the Quebec cultural industry enjoys international respect, garnering prestigious awards at film festivals among other venues. The language rights question in Canada, however, largely ignores another significant national language topic: the Aboriginal languages. Treaty promises with Indigenous peoples and commitments to making reparation for injuries inflicted on these original dwellers of Canada are weighty concerns. Why make this point? Hallet, Chandler & Lalonde (2007) and Dufault (2003) have identified correlations between stronger psychological health and Indigenous language recovery, which demonstrates the significance of undergirding language preservation with legal scaffolding. Let us, though, differentiate between the urgency of respecting Indigenous language rights and French language rights: while French people living outside France will always have a mother country to which they can return, Indigenous speakers will only have their own 'backyard', where their languages are already beginning to disappear. Once these practitioners of Indigenous languages die out, recovering their heritage or patrimony (Leclerc 1992) from a homeland, such as France for French or Spain for Spanish, is impossible (Nicholas 2010). Indigenous peoples have generally remained in their lands, venturing little from their home base unlike other imperialistic civilizations which have spread their cultures and languages across various borders.

How, then, can language decision makers deal with the matter of French and Aboriginal language speakers whose fluency is dropping, as is the case, for example, in Ontario (Ontario Today 2013)? Despite the many efforts national, minority, or second language professionals make (such as

providing book fairs, book stores, radio programming, theatre productions, etc.), it seems that assimilation is well under way. Similarly, who heeds the concerns of Aboriginal language rights activists who worry that the younger generation of Canadian natives will face significant challenges in accessing the traditions, songs and wisdom of their elders? It appears that Canadian bureaucrats simply offer tokens in implementing the teaching of Aboriginal languages in K-12 schools; one has difficulty believing that these government education officials genuinely take language rights seriously. Whether these initiatives are a simple act of appeasement for historical wrongdoing remains unknown. Many grey areas abound and are too complex to sufficiently clarify within the confines of this paper.

Dr. Elizabeth Dawes, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at the aforementioned Laurentian University, encourages undergraduates to become certified bilinguals, inviting students to learn from a host of faculty with expertise in language rights. However, the infrastructure of the school does not assist students in meeting the high demands of critical professors, whose French-language education was completed abroad, in a satisfactory manner such that student grades will not suffer. Many students, fearing lower averages, thus switch to English courses. Once again, blaming individuals when the social support network fails to bridge the gap between what faculty expect and what students can produce reflects neoliberal thinking.

John Ralston Saul (2008), a leading Canadian thinker, has proposed his own hypothesis as to what is the matter. He believes that Canada still behaves as a colony; to him, Canadians must instead assert their identity as members of a multicultural nation, emphasizing the rich diversity that this promises. This multicultural fabric begins with the national groups: aboriginal peoples/First nations, French, and immigrant people.

Do such programs [as teaching Aboriginal languages] work? The answer lies in the...growth of French outside of Quebec over the last thirty years, both through French first-language programs and French immersion. Or in the revival of Welsh in Britain. Or the growth of Mandarin – the Northern dialect – in China. Or in the revival of Hebrew in Israel. Why are there no serious programs in Canada?

*(Saul, 2008: 236)*

Convinced that many of the Canadian élite are ethnocentric and lingua-centric, Saul argues that this élite would rather be allies with those across the Atlantic than to develop alliances from within their own nation. Policy makers can thus address language rights with careful attention to enlisting

the government to invest in infrastructure, social programs and making Canada more economically independent. Similar thinking was evident in German economist Friedrich List's belief-system that Germany could regain its economic autonomy and prowess by strengthening its own industrial efforts, rather than by depending on imports that would weaken German enterprise.

Finally, language injustice is an aspect of the language dilemma that requires special consideration in terms of both language decision makers and language practitioners. The general idea behind linguistic injustice is that, while pursuing linguistic justice, other nonlinguistic injustices can occur, such as socio-economic injustices. Pierre Foucher, in a plenary speech entitled "Language, territory and rights: rebalancing the triangle," draws from Helder de Schutter (2008), Van Parijs (2010), and John Rawls (1999) in suggesting that language be defined as cultural capital. This point is critical to the present study because language as cultural capital belongs to an ecological language planning model. However, such an ecological language planning model is also accompanied by other language planning models, such as the conflictual language planning model. The conflictual language planning model is the model most representative of such language matters as those occurring in multilingual countries like Spain, where different regions vie to preserve their own language, inspiring heated demonstrations and other bold gestures. This linguistic activism represents clear language tension between peoples. Also, in certain Canadian provinces, language can be a liability. Such is the case for youth in the Maritime province of New Brunswick, who must move to the big cities for work despite their command of the French language and its associated cultural capital. Here, language vitality is challenged by a dearth of financial prospects and opportunities for the young. Hence language rights promotion can lead to language injustice questions.

The question this conundrum leads to, then, is if pursuing language policies, education and planning are socially just projects when economic variables indicate the contrary. That is, certain language vitality endeavours lead to major confrontational incidents between the peoples involved and a lack of financial prospects and opportunities, among other factors. A look at Canada's balance of payments highlights, for example, that the languages conducive to business are either English or Japanese (Statistics Canada 2013). These phenomena are too significant to ignore, despite the aforementioned argument by Saul who suggests recapturing Canada and emphasizing its national languages. While Saul believes in reclaiming Aboriginal languages



for national purposes, is he at fault for infantilizing the people who speak them or even folklorizing these languages? The next section will seek to address this matter.

Language injustice is persistence in learning languages that have long since changed according to natural language evolution (Mufwene 2008). Mufwene observes that languages inevitably mutate. For example, while English may adopt certain words and French and Finnish may resist them, these latter languages do so because of academies policing their national linguistic capital. Languages, however, are living and naturally metamorphosing entities. Phenomena such as migration, neocolonialism, and globalization have caused permeable barriers and, as a result, new dictions and extinctions come about (Mufwene 2008). A particular case is Ojibwa speakers who play with the English language by adding particle endings. For example, in a Northern Ontario reserve, Aboriginal speakers say, 'I am so broke-*sha*' instead of 'I am so broke.' It would thus be shortsighted to suggest that these Aboriginal speakers were being disloyal to their language and culture simply because of their linguistic negotiation. Such language practices suggest fluidity (Mufwene 2008) and, one ventures to say, resist a kind of futile linguistic nostalgia.

To respond to such matters of language injustice, language decision makers and language speakers will face a significant challenge. First, the State must enforce the teaching of the national language. It has a duty to offer such instruction and encourage the population to learn the official language, even if the language is secondary. This proven and accepted strategy is necessary to prevent segregation between different linguistic groups. State education can thus lead to the division of people into language enclaves if it neglects to implement priority language policies. Such neglect can then result in impeding social mobility in the context of the national community, as the nature of national language teaching can influence the construction of language barriers. Having already occurred in the past, the failure to teach the priority language also qualifies as language-based injustice (Varennnes 297).

As discussed earlier, Saul (2008) portrays French and Aboriginal language activism in a way which may unintentionally infantilize Aboriginals. An idea closely associated to this accidental patronizing attitude is the folklorization of people, which leads to their exploitation. References to this latter phenomenon can be found in relation to Indigenous peoples in Syria (Salamander 2011), South Africa (Caring 2005), Turkey (Smith 2005),

Columbia (Smith 2005), Chile (Bacigalupo 2004), Cuba (Rahier 2004), and Mexico (Chavez 2010), and some even add Canada to the list (Bokhorst Heng 2007). Folklorizing a culture is a way of representing it as a 'bygone tradition' (Salamandra 2011). The following is an example of the folklorization of people, as evident in Turkey:

Constructing a civic state and a national culture almost inevitably entails the leveling of diversity and the folklorizing of minorities. In the garb of civic inclusion, the institutions of the state become vehicles for the majority. In politics as well as economics, the path to success may be open only to the assimilated. (Smith 2005)

When a national culture becomes prominent and diversity lessens, this often results in a quaint, static, and picturesque objectification of a people. While the discourse suggests inclusion, only through assimilation can social, political, and economic mobility occur. Another case in point is the Mapuche of Chile. Here, folklorizing works to win votes and exoticize while still stigmatizing. Those who take part in national discourse treat Mapuche women, in particular, as 'passive retainers of the nation's soul.' Chileans only view Mapuche as genuine if these Indigenous people remain unchanged. A hypocritical attitude ensues as people regret that progress has eliminated Mapuche customs, thus feminizing them by exploiting the idea that they embody a pristine tradition. The Mapuche, in turn, have reacted to how the nation represents them in a variety of ways: some have embraced "folkloric, gendered images of machi and longko," while others have reacted by confronting 'nationalist discourse' (Mariman 1990, pg.505). Chileans have subjected Mapuche to 'folklorization,' marginalization and attempts at assimilation. There are thus three mutually contradictory attitudes at play: marginalize the Mapuche to keep them out of national society; assimilate them to try to keep them in (if only on conditions set by the Chilean nation-state); and make them folkloric by embracing aspects of both (Mariman 1990; Bacigalupo 2004).

The Mapuche made the news in the 1990s by contesting multinationals, reclaiming their rights to language, etc. One wonders whether their access to petroleum was enough for them to resist assaults of symbolic violence, such as the assaults this paper suggests are happening to linguistic groups at Laurentian University, the author's alma mater. To answer this, one must distinguish between symbolic capital and economic capital. A country that is petroleum wealthy may not have an entire culture that is easily importable to the West; in other words, while their culture and language have rich

heritage and meaning, their economic capital translates problematically to symbolic or cultural capital without considerable interpretation. In a similar way, while the Mapuche may have acquired economic symbolic capital through their natural resources, their language and culture are still tenuous marketable capital. As a result, symbolic violence through the folklorization of the Mapuche, and for the intents of this study other Indigenous peoples such as those at Laurentian University, may still occur, even if, as the case of the Mapuche shows, these Indigenous peoples have substantial economic capital.

As previously mentioned, folklorizing is an oppressive strategy carried out by the powerful and applied to a people. In a parallel way, one can folklorize a language. Making a language folkloric, in this author's opinion, qualifies as a linguistic injustice.

An interview with a French immersion high school teacher in Sudbury, Ontario, the same city in which Laurentian University is located, revealed themes which this paper has been discussing:

Why is French important?

"I have my job because I can speak French."

"French contributes to multiculturalism."

"Canada has both official languages."

"Wherever you travel, it will help you for communication."

"If you want to work in government, it is important."

"I am also part Italian."

"Sudbury is bilingual."

*(A. Malafarina, personal communication, February 8, 2013)*

If the causal relationship between learning a national language such as French in Canada, or more particularly in Ontario, and socioeconomic development or social mobility is true, as this participant suggests with the words 'French,' 'job,' 'work' and 'government,' then the pendulum swings in favour of economic rewards for national language maintenance, persistence and language learning efforts. The question, however, remains whether an Indigenous language can hold such financial potential or provide such marketable linguistic capital. Technically speaking, while Canada has two official languages (French and English), one may ask if an Indigenous language could obtain an official status? The official status achieved by Quechua in Peru, for example, was short lived. If an Aboriginal language succeeded in obtaining official status, one wonders which Aboriginal

language would take precedence. Similarly, if the Aboriginal linguistic role is ostensibly to occupy postcard status, certain Aboriginal stakeholders challenge the suggestion, as voiced by the interview participant above, that Canada is multicultural, suggestive of an all inclusive celebratory attitude to diversity. To put it another way, government officials proudly display colourful images of Aboriginal peoples to the world in such international affairs as the Olympic games, yet elected officials neglect educational standards on reserve schools (Blackstock 2011). One suspects that such a Janus-faced approach does not bode well for the commitment to honouring Aboriginal peoples' linguistic heritage.

Similarly, in the interview participant's response, the theme of travel and communication spoke to the notions of a flatter world and the international character of French. However, as in the case of bilingual tri-cultural Laurentian University described in this study, French is losing its presence and Aboriginal languages have a tenuous presence with a noted absence from the University Act. Finally, but also importantly, the comment that Sudbury is bilingual suggests that the variable of territory is significant when discussing language matters such as those this author has been exploring until now. That is, while a city such as Sudbury or Ottawa can make space for bilingualism, some geographic spaces accommodate the same languages and language interests with difficulty. For example, Laflamme & Reguigui (2003) noticed that French language literacy in heterogenous spaces, as may be the case for French in Ontario, was hard-earned. Yet, in homogeneous spaces, as is the case for French in France, literacy was more robust. Similarly, while language vitality efforts may be successful across islander spaces like New Zealand (Māori: Aotearoa), such success may not hold strong across vast and diversified continental areas, such as the Canadian landscape. Also, while much research cites the resurrection of Hebrew as a success story, the Hebrew language was propelled by a critical (Crystal 2002) and highly educated (Lamberton 2002) mass movement, which suggests that, while the case of Hebrew's revitalization is compelling, it is not possible to draw a simple comparison between the language revitalization efforts of the Hebrew people in Israel and the speakers of Indigenous languages in Ontario or the rest of Canada. Clearly, language planning efforts are complex, multilayered, and have many variables at stake, thus simple comparisons are difficult to maintain.

As a result, this paper has provided evidence that language planners, language educators, and language policy makers must possess a particular human character capable of nuanced understanding, deep critical analysis

and a sensitive ability to respond appropriately to numerous factors and contending elements. Will their decisions lead language speakers to their socioeconomic development, or will their policies lead to these speakers towards socioeconomic regression? This paper suggests clarifying these outcomes through three lenses: language ghettos, language rights and language injustice. One has seen the role that neoliberal thinking can play in lingua-centric elitism, as well as the possibility of old colonial dependence; however, one has also looked at language ecology against the backdrop of significant economic paucity related to fragile marketable linguistic capital. Lastly, this study has also examined the role of State obligations to literacy and, on the contrary, the complicity of the State in folklorizing both people and languages.

Providing an answer to whether language issues add to socioeconomic development or, on the contrary, to socioeconomic marginalization is a formidable task that cannot be conclusively given at this point. While much persuades this author to believe that compelling scientific findings are present, many answers still remain unknown. At this stage of the research journey, the author can only recommend further research and hope that proposed fieldwork will lead to these observations becoming more verifiable. This expected fieldwork focuses on the bilingual and tri-cultural Laurentian University where, through language policy analysis, surveys, and conducting of focus groups, the author will ask whether Canada's national languages (French and Aboriginal languages) have strengthened or deterred students and faculty at Laurentian University in terms of developing their economic capital. Secondly, the author proposes to do fieldwork involving a study of present language policy and recommendations concerning how it should look so that equitable qualities are inherent, thus embracing the mandate that makes Laurentian University distinct. This initiative would be implemented informed by the matters discussed, such as language ghettos, language rights and language justice.

David Crystal suggests "[having only English dominate] will be the greatest intellectual disaster that the planet has ever known" (Crystal 2002: 41). The answer, therefore, is perhaps obvious; but, depending on how myopic our vision, we may not be able to clearly see the long term consequences to the loss of intellectual DNA embodied in Canada's Aboriginal, French and Immigrant languages. In the end, the author suspects this research journey will lead her to view her alma mater, Laurentian University, anew, hopefully through Bourdieuan eyes sensitized to the aspects of symbolic violence found occasionally in the unconscious accomplices of school and economic

pontificates (2000). Perhaps Nobel Laureate José Saramago's final words in *Blindness* will ring true, as the fine line between blindness and seeing is frequently disguised: "... I think we are blind, Blind but seeing, Blind people who can see, but do not see." (Saramago 1997: 326).

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# 7 Low proficiency students' motivation to learn English in the Thai tertiary context

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## Introduction

This paper focuses on university students' motivation to learn English in a Remedial English course in Thailand. In EFL settings where English is mostly learned in academic or formal classroom contexts, the role of teachers and their classroom teaching practice are important. The purpose of this study is to examine students' motivation for learning English and to identify the elements of classroom teaching practice that contribute to an increase in students' motivation. According to Dörnyei (1994), there are various motivational teaching practices that can be employed to improve the level of students' motivation, attention, participation and contribution of students in the class. This study aims to create a more relaxed and supportive language-learning atmosphere, which could make learning English easier and more interesting. It also aims to come up with a possible set of effective classroom motivational teaching practices, which will enable the learning development of students and have positive perceptions towards English language learning at the university. This, however, leads to the issue of whether there is a valid theoretical framework to examine students' motivation and changes in their motivation as well as effectiveness of the classroom teaching practice.

## Theoretical framework

As improving the students' motivation to learn English is one of the aims of this study, I have attempted to bring the students' voices to the forefront through the lens of Self-determination Theory (SDT). In this study, SDT is used as a main framework in the design and implementation of the 14-week period of the teaching intervention programme. I believe SDT is valid on the basis that it considers different types of motivation as a developmental process of extrinsic motivation, from the lower degree of self-determination to the higher degree of self-determined forms of motivation. Its constructs and continuum of motivation consist of 'graded internalisation of external motives', which clearly describe distinct motivational orientations as a process of transformation of external motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011:

82). Besides, the constructs of SDT are broad enough to understand the students' motivation and changes in their motivation in various EFL situations, such as in Thailand, the context of this study. It is also useful for the teacher to identify suitable motivational teaching strategies to promote the students' motivation in many different stages.

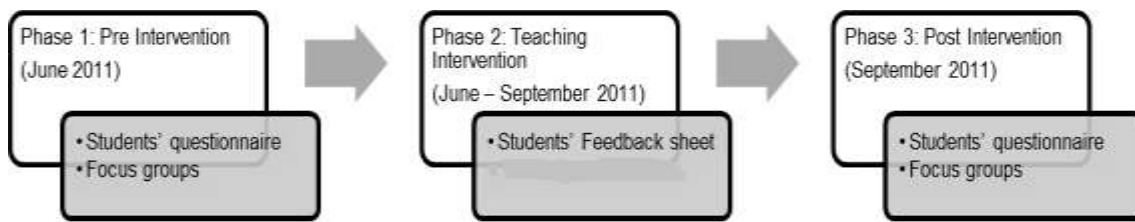
The SDT concept of psychological need satisfaction is also useful for teachers to identify suitable classroom motivational teaching practices which support students' motivational development. SDT posits that students need to learn in an environment that supports the growth of their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness, which enable them to see values in their learning, and continue to learn on their own. With more satisfying learning experiences and greater academic achievement, students tend to be more motivated to engage, even in less interesting tasks and academic activities (Niemic & Ryan, 2009).

As confirmed by previous studies, the SDT concept of psychological need satisfaction is applicable and useful to explain students' history of learning English and learning situations. It is also applicable in Thai EFL classroom contexts. With its hypothesis that students' lack of motivation could be improved if their basic needs are met, using the SDT framework in this study will not only help me examine English learning motivation of Thai tertiary students and monitor my own teaching practices, but also identify suitable teaching strategies and learning activities that match with students' needs and interests to support their motivational development.

### **Design of the study**

The study was based on an assumption that motivating teaching practices require a two-way communication between the teacher and the students in the class. The effectiveness of the teaching practices is not only due to the fact that the teacher considers the practices to be motivating and brings them into the class, but also because the students perceive the teacher's classroom teaching practices as being motivating. As suggested by Dörnyei & Csizer (1998) and Cheng & Dörnyei (2007), when students feel more comfortable, this helps increase and sustain their students' motivation. Moreover, for the low achieving students, there is no doubt that the teacher has a strong effect on their English learning motivation.

In keeping with these assumptions, a mixed method approach unquestionably serves the aim of this study. As can be seen below, the design of this study involved the integrated use of three research instruments.



**Figure 1: Three phases of the research design**

This study was conducted with first year students during the first academic semester at a public university in Bangkok. The course lasted for 14 weeks, from June to September 2011. The length of course was 180 minutes each week. The design of the teaching plan was influenced by the need to make it easy to follow and able to be implemented in actual teaching situations. It had to be convenient for the teachers who are normally overwhelmed with teaching loads and administrative responsibilities at the university. To elicit preliminary findings of data, a pre-intervention questionnaire was administered. Then, focus groups were conducted. This served as a baseline of the study for measuring the effects of the intervention. The second phase was based on a survey conducted through students' feedback sheets during the 14-week period of the teaching intervention. The teaching plan was divided into a series of learning activities based on students' comments that were received by the teacher throughout the course. The implementation featured two-way communication opportunities between teachers and students, and several types of feedback activities. For instance, students' feedback sheets, post-it notes, a nominated head of the class, and a university web-based course evaluation. The third phase focused on the post-intervention questionnaire and focus groups to measure the effects of the intervention on students' motivation; between beginning and end motivation in all students, and between the groups.

### **Preliminary findings**

This study clearly established that the level of students' proficiency could not be used as an indicator to predict the degree of students' motivation. In general, low proficiency students tend to be labeled as less-able, less successful, or low-achieving students. These labels reflect societies' negative perception of this group of students as having a low tendency to succeed. However, under the learning conditions that supported their needs and interests, as well as satisfying their sense of autonomy, competence and relatedness, the students' motivation was improved. Findings of this study also confirm that the students did not actually lack the motivation to learn English. At the beginning of the course, most participants seemed to have

low motivation for learning English. Their motivation appeared to be constrained by a long history of failure and painful experiences in learning English. They appeared not to derive pleasure from learning and felt obliged to learn. Most of them expressed concern about having to pass the university English courses. While some were pressured by their family to get good grades, some felt anxiety that failing any English course might delay their graduation and the opportunity to get a job.

At the end of the course, there were a number of participants who felt motivated to learn by their perceived progress in learning English. Some of them expressed satisfaction from being able to understand a difficult word and construct in English, while some came to realise the value of knowing more than one language. Most of them stressed the importance of English as it enabled them to expand their knowledge and access information in their area of interest. That is, for instance, to access information on the Internet, to entertain themselves by playing online games, or reading online comics, which are dubbed into English. Most participants were highly future-oriented. They strongly expressed the need to meet with growing demands for English and the highly competitive nature of the labour market, as well as the need for English during their undergraduate study.

The results of this study show that English language teaching situations in Thailand are not different from other Asian EFL contexts (e.g. Chen, 2012; Chen et al., 2005) where students learn English because of their concerns about future careers and education. As English is learned as a 'required' foreign language subject (Warden & Lin, 2000: 539) and learners do not have much opportunity to use it outside the classroom, they do not see the real value of their learning and their motivation decreases through time. For most participants, the necessity and utilitarian values of knowing English seemed to play an important role in nurturing their motivation throughout the semester. There were participants who seemed to still lack any motivation to learn English, but the number of students who felt this way was low in comparison with the motivated students.

The study shows that the SDT concept of basic psychological needs is useful for explaining the necessity of using motivational classroom practices. There is also a need for Thai teachers to consider the benefits of using these motivational elements to create the motivating English learning atmosphere which is rarely found in the Thai context. Findings of this study also suggest that satisfying the students' sense of relatedness, or the need to belong in the social community, is the most essential element for the remedial students.

The SDT concept of basic psychological needs could be linked to the basic motivational preconditions suggested by Dörnyei (2001). The motivational preconditions include (1) the teacher's appropriate behaviours e.g. enthusiastic, approachable and able to build a good relationship with the students; (2) supportive classroom atmosphere, and (3) a feeling of intimacy between the teacher and learners and among learners and group norms, as essential for the growth in the students' motivational development.

Although the role of the teacher to support students' basic needs and their sense of self-determination is important in SDT, previous studies have reported a mismatch or conflict between teachers' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the teachers' teaching styles and strategies used in the classroom. This study has strongly established that the use of students' feedback in the class can be an effective channel which allows the teacher to build up and maintain a good relationship with his/her students. In brief, the students' feedback is useful for the teacher to improve their own teaching practices, and monitor and facilitate the students' motivational development. The teachers' response to students' feedback provides a means of communication between the teacher and students in the class. This not only creates a good relationship between them, but also a supportive learning atmosphere.

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## 8 Negotiating understanding and agreement in masters supervision meetings with international students – okay?

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### Introduction

University supervision is a central aspect of pedagogy in higher education and it makes particular demands on both supervisors and students. Grant describes it as differing from other forms of HE teaching and learning in its ‘peculiarly intense and negotiated character, as well as in its requirements for a blend of pedagogical and personal relationship skills’ (2003: 175). It is, as she says, ‘not only concerned with the production of a good thesis, but also with the transformation of the student into an independent researcher’. Various researchers have drawn attention to a tension in the demands on students and supervisors. On the one hand, students need to show compliance with institutional requirements and therefore (at least to some degree) with the wishes of their supervisor as institutional representative. On the other hand, they need to demonstrate initiative and independence. At the same time, supervisors are called on to support and develop that initiative whilst ensuring that their students’ work meets institutional requirements. These demands may be that much harder to meet when students are studying in a less familiar language or culture.

Previous research into supervision has tended to focus on students’ and supervisors’ perceptions, but there has been little microanalysis of talk in supervision meetings. This was my focus in this study, which was motivated by an interest in the problems of the negotiation of understanding and agreement between supervisors and international master’s students. To this end, I transcribed and analysed nine audio-recordings of supervision meetings with international students who were beginning or engaged in master’s dissertation research in business-related areas in a Scottish university. The students were Chinese, Pakistani and Polish, and their proficiency in English varied. The meetings ranged in length between 12 and 32 minutes.

## Methodology

The transcription and analysis followed the principles of conversation analysis (CA). These entail a fundamentally inductive approach to the data to uncover interactional practices. Heritage identifies an interactional practice as ‘any feature of the design of a turn in a sequence that (i) has a distinctive character, (ii) has specific locations within a turn or sequence, and (iii) is distinctive in its consequences for the nature or the meaning of the action that the turn implements’ (2011, p.212). He describes three stages in studying one of these practices: deciding that it is distinctive, locating it sequentially, and determining its distinctive role or meaning. The interactional practice that I decided to focus on was the use by supervisors of *yeah?*, *okay?* and *right?*, particularly after a gap or a student response. These tokens have been described as response elicitors or, more generally, as invariant question tags.

## Invariant question tags

There have been a number of studies of invariant tags in ordinary conversation, and a few that have looked at their use in academic discourse, particularly lectures.

In my data set, all three supervisors made frequent use of *yeah?*, as well as *okay?* and *right?*. In 174 minutes of interaction, these tags were used 357 times by supervisors, an average of just over 2 per minute. What was particularly striking was the sequential position of many of these tags. Invariant tags are generally described as appearing at the end or in the middle of a turn, as in extracts 1 and 2 respectively:

### Extract 1: Turn-final tag

Supervisor: So you’re comfortable with that, **yeah?**

### Extract 2: Turn-medial tag

Supervisor: ... this is why I think it’s important that you you’re taking down notes when we’re discussing what you’ve to do in the next chapter and everything **yeah?** Now most of these things are just grammatical. ...

One student also used *yeah?* in these positions to request confirmation, as in extract 3:

### Extract 3: Student’s turn-final tag

Student: So I need to reword it **yeah?**

However, as well as using these tags at the end and in the middle of their turns, all three supervisors (but none of the students) deployed them in



response to a student's turn (what I have termed 'second position') or after a student's minimal response or failure to respond. An example of a second-position tag can be seen in extract 4:

**Extract 4: Second-position tag**

- Student: Um, well, (1.3) I did think about (ours) and I've done  
(.) some stuff and I do have a question.  
Supervisor: **Yeah?**  
Student: =And I think today m- (.) ah this morning lecture?

Tags in this position function as an invitation to the student to continue.

Much more frequent in my data are tags which appear as a third turn in a sequence, usually after a student's minimal response, as in extract 5:

**Extract 5: Post-response tag**

- Supervisor: =So hybrid just means (0.6) it's (.) part Western, part  
Chinese.  
(0.4)  
Student: Ah.  
Supervisor: **Yeah?**  
Student: Yeah.

Tags used in this position are particularly noteworthy because they appear to be eliciting a response when one has already been given.

There are also many examples of tags being deployed after a gap in the talk, a gap that can be analysed as being attributable to the student. In other words, the tag appears to be more like a post-response tag than a turn-final tag, as it follows what can be analysed as the student's failure to respond. An example can be seen in extract 6:

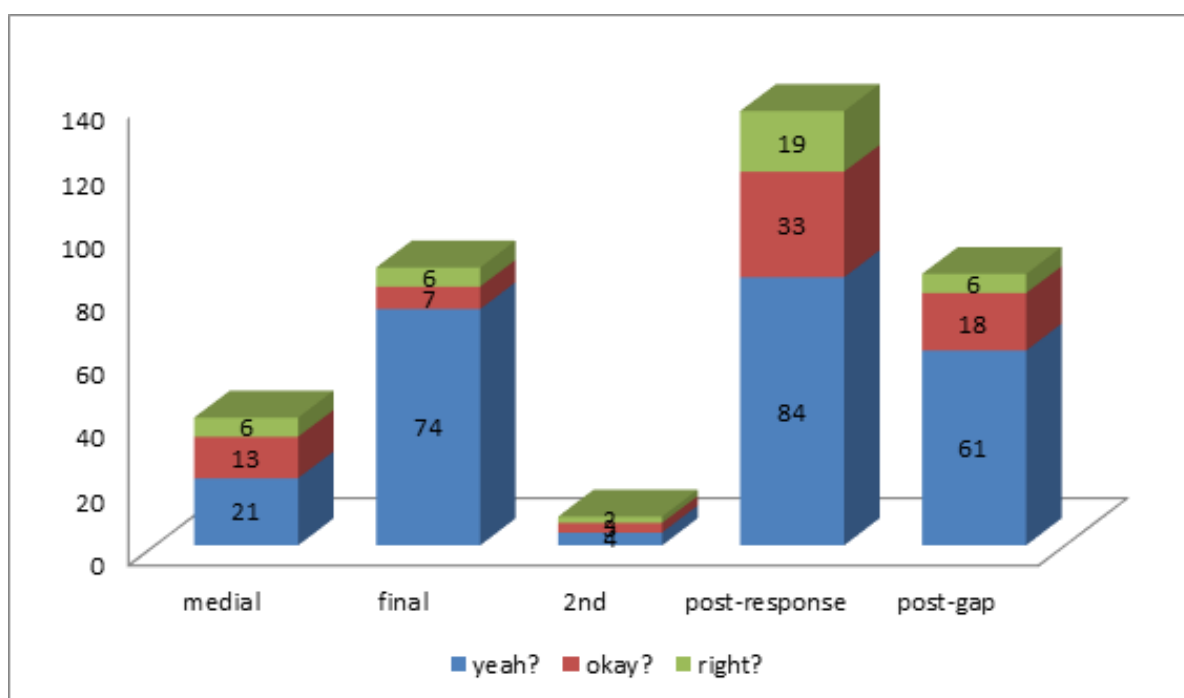
**Extract 6: Post-gap tag**

- Supervisor: Wha- what I would suggest that you do now,  
Student: Uh huh,  
Supervisor: (.) is (.) refine the research question.  
(0.6)  
**Okay?**

Here the supervisor's *okay?* follows a 0.6 second silence, a gap in which the student might have responded with a continuer (as she did with *uh huh* after the first part of the supervisor's turn) or an acknowledgement, such as *okay*.

Both extracts 5 and 6 therefore illustrate a three-turn sequence of (1) supervisor's utterance (usually declarative), (2) student's minimal response or silence, and (3) supervisor's *yeah?*, *okay?*, or *right?*.

Figure 1 shows the relative frequency of the three tags in different sequential positions:



**Figure 1: Sequential positions of supervisors' *yeah?*, *okay?* and *right?***

It is clear that post-response and post-gap tags (henceforth PG/R tags) are frequent in my data set, and the fact that they are used by supervisors but not students suggests that their use is a distinctive feature of supervision in this context. Having identified this particular interactional practice, I sought to identify:

1. the functions of PG/R tags;
2. the relationship of PG/R tag sequences to supervision;
3. the relationship of PG/R tag sequences to students' displays of interactional competence.

### Functions of PG/R tags

#### ***Function 1: Punctuating the supervisor's talk: marking importance and transitions***

PG/R tags are usually 'marking that there is a point to be taken' (Jefferson, 1981, p.63). They usually follow a turn in which in the supervisor is informing, advising, persuading, instructing or assessing – all actions which

display a ‘knowledgeable’ epistemic stance (Heritage, 2012). One of the functions of PG/R tags is thus to underline or emphasize the action expressed in that turn. In doing so, they display the supervisor’s stance towards the importance or relevance of that action.

At the same time, much of the supervisors’ talk consists of *extended* informing and advising turns. These are punctuated by student continuers and other response tokens, usually at transition relevance places. In addition, they are frequently marked by PG/R tags, both in the course of and at the conclusion of the extended turn. This transition-marking function is also a feature of turn-final and turn-medial tags.

### ***Function 2: Questioning the student’s understanding or agreement***

However, PG/R tags do not simply function as discourse markers. What makes PG/R tags particularly distinctive is that they follow a minimal, absent or delayed student response to the supervisor’s first turn. Since that turn usually involves informing or advising, it is the student’s expression of understanding or agreement that is being questioned or marked as insufficient. PG/R tags frequently prompt a stronger response from the student, as in extract 5, where the student’s initial *ah* is upgraded to *yeah*. PG/R tags therefore mark the student’s preceding silence or minimal response as in some way inadequate.

### ***Function 3: Offering student the floor***

PG/R tags may also be a way of inviting the student to speak, particularly when the student is hesitant or after an extended turn by the supervisor. *Okay?* in particular often seems to be used in this affiliative way, whilst also marking more significant transitions than *yeah?* and *right?*. Both functions are illustrated in extract 7:

#### **Extract 7: *Okay?* marking transition and inviting participation**

- Supervisor: .h So really (.) the best thing to do, would be to treat the proposal as a: m:icrocosm.
- Student: Mhm.
- Supervisor: Of your actual research. So that all all you will then have to do, when you come to do the research, is expa:nd (.) on the on the on this literature review section.
- Student: Right.
- Supervisor: **Okay?**  
(1.4)
- Student: Mm.°°

(2.0)

Supervisor: So, have you found much research?

In this case it is clear that the supervisor's *okay?* marks the end of a topic, as he waits for two seconds after the student's acknowledgement before re-starting with an unrelated question. The *okay?* also functions as an invitation to initiate a new topic, an invitation which is not taken up.

### **PG/R tag sequences and supervision**

The actions of both participants in PG/R tag sequences display an orientation to their identities as supervisor and student. The most frequent action in the first turn in the sequence is informing. By thus displaying a knowledgeable epistemic stance, the supervisors orient to their roles as teachers. Other frequent actions in the first turn are advising, persuading and instructing, all actions which reflect supervisors' rights and responsibilities with regard to students. For their part, the students generally accept this orientation in the second turn, responding with acknowledgments and continuers of various kinds. This is often indicative of an orientation to the supervisor as engaged in an extended turn at talk, at times not dissimilar to a lecture. Minimal responses in this position can be heard as indicating the student's 'passive reciprocity' (Jefferson, 1983, p.4), and this can be still more marked when the student withholds an immediate response. The student's minimal second turn can therefore function to elicit further talk from the supervisor, and in this way instructional or advisory sequences are co-constructed by both parties.

It is in the third turn of the sequence, the PG/R tag itself, that this institutional asymmetry is most clearly seen. In pursuing a response after one has already been given or apparently withheld, the supervisor asserts their right to control the interaction in a way that is not open to the student. At the same time, this action underlines the importance of the supervisor's first turn, challenging the student's freedom to make their own judgment as to its significance. In addition, the tag's expression of doubt about the student's understanding or agreement is itself tied to the asymmetrical relationship, particularly when it follows the student's expression of understanding or agreement in the second turn. By deploying PG/R tags, supervisors assert their right to question students' claims in a way that would be unacceptably face-threatening if the situation was reversed. At the same time, the tags paradoxically address students' face needs by treating their understanding or agreement as consequential. The pursuit of a response orients to a norm of interactivity whereby the supervisor does not simply assume understanding or agreement,

but rather solicits an explicit assurance of it. And the pursuit of a response after one has been given or withheld displays a recognition that (to some degree at least) it is the asymmetry, or power imbalance, itself that undermines the credibility of the students' claim to understand or agree.

### **PG/R tag sequences and students' interactional competence**

In the second turn in the sequence, the student makes or passes up a claim to understanding. At the same time, their response (if they give one), may display more or less knowledgeability. At one extreme of this continuum, *yeah, I know* claims prior knowledge, while, at the other end, *oh* or *ah* (as in extract 4) marks the supervisor's informing or advising as unanticipated. Both these types of response may display a lack of sophistication that may be associated with the student's limited linguistic or interactional competence: the first because *I know* (rather than *I see*) face-threateningly marks the supervisor's first turn as unnecessary, and the second because a freestanding *oh* marks the prior talk as informative without explaining what it is that makes it so. By contrast, responses such as *right* (as in extract 7) and *I see* may display greater interactional competence.

### **Conclusion**

PG/R tag sequences highlight a dilemma for supervisors, particularly when students are displaying passive reciprocity. This orientation by students may be short-lived, in informing or advice-giving episodes, or it may prevail over longer periods of the supervision meeting. In the latter case, where the interaction is largely one-sided, the epistemic asymmetry between student and supervisor is particularly marked, and this may relate to the student's linguistic and cultural background as much as their junior academic status. In other words, some students may limit their contributions to minimal response tokens because they lack fluency in English or because they regard it as culturally appropriate. Such minimal uptake may encourage supervisors to use PG/R tags in order to pursue a fuller response, or, at least, a more credible claim of understanding. The difficulty with this, as Jefferson (1981) points out, is that the asymmetrical power relationship makes the PG/R tag conducive of an affirmative response, such that even an 'upgraded' response to the tag may represent no more than a display of compliance.

Sometimes, of course, it may be in the interest of either or both parties not to pursue a problem of understanding or agreement but to 'let it pass'. Nevertheless, there is a danger that supervisors may unwittingly make it more difficult for students, especially those who feel less confident in their use of English or in their academic ability, to speak, to admit non-

understanding or to express disagreement. There are times when it may be more productive to wait for the student to process what has been said than to pursue a response with a PG/R tag.

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# 9

## Academic Writing in L1 and FL

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### Abstract

In the past, academic genres have generally been rather diverse in their respective cultures. Today, the English academic genre has become dominant since English has taken over the role of academic lingua franca, and with it, its genre conventions.

However, when looking at texts written by FL English writers in international journals or books, one often notices the specific colouring and references to their native academic genre. For example, in English texts written by French, Spanish or German native speakers, one finds a stronger tendency for digressions and hedging than in the texts of L1 English writers. These writers tend to build more complicated and more embedded sentences in order to integrate more content into them. Often, more than one topic is discussed in one paragraph etc. In texts written by Arabic writers, the topic is often not discussed directly. On the contrary, the analysis in some passages appears only indirectly related to the main topic to a Western European or American reader.

This phenomenon is analysed more closely in texts written by German FL English writers. One notices that both Anglophone and German academic text features are combined, generating a new variance of the academic genre. It is proposed that since phenomena like this occur rather frequently in the international academic context, a new academic genre might arise incorporating different features from different academic contexts. This academic genre might be a *genre franca*, (hopefully) resulting in a much more fruitful international exchange than nowadays, when a great number of academic articles are rejected because of not coinciding with the English genre.

### Introduction

Although academic genres across different cultures have so far been rather different (Kaplan, 1966), globalisation has led to our witnessing a dominance of one academic culture these days, namely the English speaking one. It is generally useful to have a common ground for academic communication; however, this tendency also has the disadvantage that the strengths and possibilities of other academic cultures becomes lost. For those who are not

first language (L1) English speakers and who learn academic writing mainly through reading, it is even more difficult to adopt the English genre as they are confronted with texts from such a wide range and variety of academic backgrounds. In the following article, the latter aspect is examined by analysing German students' essays in their first language as well as in their foreign language (FL), English, for traces of their L1 genre.

### **Cultural differences in the academic genre**

Galtung (1981) analysed academic texts from different countries and closely examined three occidental intellectual styles (*Saxonic*, *Teutonic* and *Gallic*) as well as one oriental intellectual style (the *Nipponic*) (leaving out Indic, Sinic, Arabic or other cultures). Terms like "Saxonic" were chosen because the styles are not exclusively located in the respective countries (Britain, Germany, France and Japan), but are spread over different regions due to different historical reasons. For example, the Teutonic style had been dominant in Northern Europe and Eastern Europe for many years because Germany dominated the sciences for centuries and one of the most influential philosophers of the last century in Eastern Europe, Karl Marx, was German (Mauranen, 1993; Siepmann, 2009; Yakhontova, 2002). The academic cultures that are examined in the following are Saxonic and Teutonic, which is why the academic genres only in these cultures will be outlined.

Galtung compares the styles in four dimensions: paradigm analysis, proposition-production, theory-formation and commentary of other intellectuals (cf. Yakhontova, 2002). There are also general commonalities between the styles with the differences in fact decreasing since the styles interact with each other and lead to the "subjugation to a general world intellectual style" (Galtung, 1981: 819). For example, there is a general agreement amongst all four intellectual styles that intellectuals comment on other intellectuals because the academic culture is a closed culture "feeding on itself in all societies" (Galtung, 1981: 823).

The ways in which this "rather incestuous and delightful activity" (823) is carried out amongst the different styles varies, however, as the academic communities view the field of academic community in different ways. When comparing the Saxonic and the Teutonic cultures, for example, the Saxonic cultures see the academic community as a team, and thereby encourage discourse within the academic genre. It is more important to foster the community than to 'fight' for the individual academic's values in an aggressive manner; pluralism is allowed and asked for, and the participants do their "very best to find even in the most dismal performance that little



nugget which, when polished, might produce a credible shine” (824). In the Teutonic (as well as in the Gallic) discussions, the opposite is true. Although the discussants form a rather homogenous group so that discrepancies do not take place very frequently, the discussants tend to look for the weak point in the argument of colleagues which “will be fished out of the pond of words, brought into the clearest sunlight for display. ... [N]o attempt will be made to mop up the blood and put wounded egos together” (825). As all participants in the Teutonic academic community know these rules, a negative consequence of this attitude might be that the individual researcher does not dare put forward new ideas, but sticks rather to the well known and widely accepted thesis. The consequence of this could be a loss of innovation. On the other hand, the English ‘anything goes’ mentality might lead to a lack of thorough analysis of ideas *before* one introduces them to the community because no thorough, threatening criticism is to be expected.

Underlying these differences is also a different purpose of academic writing. Saxonian writing is rather fact-oriented. The writer tends to collect data and is good at empirical research. Paradigm analysis and theorizing are not in the centre of research. For this reason, the ‘pyramids’ built by the English writers are smaller and no “major catastrophe” takes place if it is falsified. This allows English research to be much more flexible than the Gallic one.

The Teutonic writer forms (new) theories. Because of this, Teutonic academic communities are grouped around a school of thoughts. If one member wants to oppose the idea behind it, she must deconstruct the school and become the ‘master’ of a new one. Schools are built without taking considerable effort to find empirical data which support the theory, but build up a ‘pyramid’ of propositions. If one of these propositions is falsified, the whole building collapses, which is a “tremendous intellectual risk” (Galtung, 1985: 840; see also: Siepmann, 2006) for the writer. However, since the researcher *believes* in their cause and is ready to defend it, this again is reflected in the academic register and the writer’s way of expressing the ideas – without any humour or anecdotes.

That is, the geo-cultural background strongly influences the academic approach and how its purposes come into being linguistically. English-speaking countries use distinct discourse patterns, in order to ‘sell’ their ideas (Swales and Feak, 1994). The language is consequently characterised by:

- linearity and coherence
- no digressions
- one thought/idea per paragraph

- clear transitions
- high number of advance organisers
- rich vocabulary, not overly complicated syntax

In Germany, the level of abstractness which is realised in language is a consequence of theory building (Clyne, 1987). Key characteristics of academic language in Teutonic style are (Galtung, 1981, Siepmann, 2009):

- missing continuity
- preference of foreign words
- high number of digressions and repetitions in order to get the reader back on track
- more than one topic per paragraph
- blurred transitions
- hedging
- passivisation and nominalisation
- complex/complicated syntax

Knowing these linguistic aspects in theory, however, does not necessarily mean that one is able to apply the appropriate conventions in a FL target community.

### **The globalisation of academia**

Academic communication has changed a lot in recent years because of the enhanced possibilities of international exchange via Internet, via cheaper travelling opportunities, or via Skype (Rijlaarsdam *et al.*, 2012). The academic community has had to find a language in which this exchange can take place and has agreed on English as the prospective *lingua franca* – at least in North-American and Western European academic settings (Swales, 2004). Publishing in English does not only mean that an international academic exchange can take place but also means a higher impact factor for the author, as well as an enlargement of chances for one's own academic career. As a consequence, a high number of (national) academic journals prefer publishing articles in the foreign language English although they are exclusively read by first language readers or those who are interested in this language (Jenkins, 2011, Yakhontova, 2002).

It is not only the language that is taken over in these articles but also the 'Saxonic' understanding of the academic genre. If writers do not adjust their writing style to these conventions their proposals are refused often because the reviewers come from an English-speaking context who are not used to

other academic conventions than their own (Armstrong, 2011, Grabe, 2001; Hüttner, 2008; Kaplan, 1966; Leki, 1992; Matsuda, 1997; Ramsay, 2000). As a result, the academic conventions of the Saxonic academic genre tend to be taken over into other cultures.

However, when one looks at texts written by FL English writers in international journals or books, one often notices specific traits from their native academic genre. For example, in texts written by Arabic writers, the topic is often not discussed directly. On the contrary, the analysis in some passages appears only indirectly related to the main topic for a Western European or American reader. Texts written by French, Spanish or German native speakers tend to contain more digressions and hedging than in texts of L1 English writers. The writers tend to build more complicated and more embedded sentences in order to put as much content into one sentence as possible, and more than one topic is discussed in one paragraph. The following paragraph gives an example of how sentences in German academic texts were commonly structured:

Syncretism develops at those places where differentiation shall be paid attention to (be gained or be kept up), but is not paid attention to (kept up). For example in those cases when phenomena of two different processing levels, e.g. the level of knowledge and the level of verbal knowledge processing, are put into context with each other and – at least on one level, in our case at the level of formulation – cannot be configured in the way that would be expected by standard. (Ortner, 2003, ‘translated’ by author)

German readers are accustomed to these kinds of sentences. They illustrate the characteristics of the old Teutonic way of writing, and it is telling that the example consists only of one sentence since the full stop separates the sub-clause from the main clause.

Still, if academic writing is taught at all at German universities, it is not the Teutonic style that is taught but the Saxonic style because English has become the “global language of science” (Lillis and Curry, 2010:1). However, as most students learn academic writing through reading, this means that they have to become competent by reading texts which are often not written in the Saxonic but in the Teutonic style.

It was thus the aim of this study to test whether German students indeed write in the (intended) Saxonic genre, whether there are differences in this regard in L1 and FL English texts by the same author, and whether the Teutonic influence is apparent in their texts.

## Methods

In the test, ten German students of English philology at Cologne University were asked to write four academic essays – two in German and two in English. Seven of the students were female, three were male – a ratio which corresponds to the male/female ratio at the university. Their average age was 24.3, and they were on average in their third year of studies. Eight of the participants were enrolled in the teacher-training programme and two were in the BA/MA programme. Seven of them had also spent some time studying in an English speaking country. The minor subjects of the students differed: six studied minors in the humanities, two studied sports, and two took minors in the natural sciences. Each of these programmes makes different demands on the students with respect to writing but they all had to master the same writing programme in their major subject, English.

The participants were asked to fill in a questionnaire in which they made statements about their writing experience and their attitudes towards writing. All of them stated that they had a positive attitude (which does not correspond to the average attitude of their fellow students; see also Parker-Corney, Kilpin, and Taylor, 2011, Paulson and Armstrong, 2011), and eight evaluated their writing as advanced. Only one participant evaluated their writing as being on a lower level, and one was undecided.

They used two different ways of planning – note-taking and freewriting – because we wanted to see whether the language-activating planning method of freewriting had a positive influence on the generating of (coherent) texts. All of the participants had attended English essay writing classes, but none had done so for German academic writing.

The final texts were evaluated using an adjusted version of Taboada and Mann's (2005) method of *structure analysis*. In the following, the results of the analysis of the introductions are presented.

The introductions were evaluated in two parts: the title and the introductory paragraph. These elements were analysed with regard to their topic-relevance and their topic-adequacy (titles) and with regard to containing the crucial elements of introducing the topic, the attempt to catch the reader's interest, the introduction of the thesis and an overview of the text to come.

## Quantitative analysis

First, a quantitative analysis was executed, taking a look at whether a title and an introductory part were written at all. Although each of the participants

should have known how important these aspects are in academic texts, the results show that only eighty per cent of the participants provided a title as well as an introduction (table 1). In the case of the essays written after planning by freewriting in the first language, the rate is even lower with only sixty per cent.

	No introduction	Only the title	Title and introduction
<b>L1N</b>	2	0	8
<b>FLN</b>	1	1	8
<b>L1F</b>	2	2	6
<b>FLF</b>	1	1	8

**Table 1: Number of introductory parts and titles in the different text types**

The participants who left out the title or the introductory paragraph differed between the texts. That is, one cannot say that these results are the effect of general missing writing competencies of specific writers. The case is rather that a number of them (theoretically) know how to write essays but that due to the demands of academic writing they are not able to apply this knowledge. It is also note-worthy that freewriting in the L1 had the negative effect of making the participants pay less attention to the academic conventions and the demands of the assignments. The participants produced their texts more fluently and also produced a higher number of ideas in this condition (Breuer, 2013) but were not able to do this in a genre-appropriate way.

## Quality of titles

In a next step, the titles were evaluated regarding their adequacy and their relevance for the texts. Here we see again that the writers did not produce the texts in ways that would be expected regarding the genre standards. 60% of the titles in the L1 were not adequate or appropriate. The students did not name the topic to the readers but were rather vague, in some cases even misleading. One participant, for example, named his essay: *Enlightened Monolinguality: a Way out of a Heated Debate* [translation by author] – a title which leads the reader to expect a text in which the author will argue for using one language (namely the L1) in the academic discussion. Instead, the student argues for using English in academic presentation while permitting the talkers to switch into their L1 each time they face difficulties in expressing themselves in the FL.

The results for the FL titles were not better: none of the titles met the qualitative standards that were set for the titles: The topics were again not introduced and the words suggested that a new academic school would be created. Examples were: *The Indispensability of Universal Logic*, or: *The Bologna Enigma*.

In other words, the students wrote in a Teutonic manner, making use of foreign and important sounding words in order to make the titles sound ‘academic’ and to evoke the impression that big ideas would be discussed in the texts.

### **Qualitative analysis: introductory paragraph(s)**

When one looks at the standard elements of the introductory paragraphs, one again finds Teutonic influences (table 2). None of the participants provided a ‘perfect’ introduction in any of the texts. Background information was often missing; in two text types even less than 50% of the participants provided this information. The students were also not keen on letting the readers know what thesis they were going to develop or defend. It is only in the L1F that more than 50% of the participants gave an outlook regarding this aspect. The only introductory element that was found in most of the introductions was an overview of the steps the writer would take in the following (without letting the readers know why they were doing it).

	<b>Background</b>	<b>Thesis/attitude</b>	<b>Preparation/overview</b>
<b>L1N</b>	8	4	7
<b>FLN</b>	3	5	8
<b>L1F</b>	4	6	7
<b>FLF</b>	7	5	6

**Table 2: Elements of the introductory paragraph**

The writers presupposed that the reader already knew what the essay would be about, which mirrors students’ general attitude that they do not have to write for a larger audience since they will only have one reader – the tutor. That is, this attitude found in the study was probably not purely based on the traditional understanding of the academic genre. At the same time, this attitude is Teutonic since the writers expect the reader to find out for him/herself what the text will be about; it is writer-oriented, not reader-oriented.

Related to the lack of background information and to the missing reader-orientation is also the missing attempt to get the readers interested in the

topic. None of the participants wrote about the relevance of the topic or mentioned a reason for why their text was worth reading. It is again the readers who have to find this out for themselves and who have to be perseverant when reading the text.

It is not only in the (non)existence of the relevant elements of introductions that the Teutonic influence on all texts becomes obvious. This can also be seen in the unconventional order in which the students present the content. There are cases, for example, where the writers present their thesis first and add the topic at a later point. The consequence is that the readers are more or less left alone thinking about what the paper will be about. Doing this, they build up expectations on what will happen in the paper and they will be disappointed when these expectations are not met. The following first sentence demonstrates this well:

*The discussion of whether to ban violence from the media is one that is, in many cases, conducted in a shallow manner.*

The writer starts by mentioning a discussion which she presupposes the reader to know, even before there is a mention of what the article will deal with. Without having read the assignment, the reader could expect all kinds of discussion groups (for example a discussion about whether violent media as in books, films or the Internet is bad for one's intellectual development, a discussion about stress factors, *etc.*). It is only three sentences later that the author mentions the background of the discussions, i.e. school shootings.

Further, the Teutonic element of hedging was present when one of the writers made up an academic discussion about a topic which he had never heard about before; the students made much use of the passive and of substantivation in order not to be the one who stood behind the position taken; sometimes no position was taken at all. In other cases, the amount of digressions was so high that the introductions take 30-50% of the entire text. One writer philosophized about academics' intentions to change the world when discussing the role of English as a *lingua franca* in academic texts; another described his brother's intelligence in detail and that this boy had not committed any school shootings so far although he loved to play videogames.

## Conclusion

The analysis of the introductions of the students' texts shows that the participants mixed different academic cultures when writing their essays.

Neither in their L1 nor in their FL were they able to consistently perform their writing in either academic culture: neither in the expected Saxonian nor in the traditional Teutonic way. This proves that the method of ‘teaching’ students academic writing by simply asking them to read academic texts is insufficient. The students are not able to acquire a clear picture of how the texts need to be structured or which linguistic characteristics are expected, nor do they understand which philosophy lies behind the academic genre. The students are in a state of ‘intra-genre’.

This, however, might also be rather a blessing than a curse because it is in this way that the strengths of the different academic cultures might interact, and the different positive aspects of the genres might be used more effectively. Digressions, for example, which can be a nuisance, inhibit the possibility of activating different ways of thinking about a certain topic. The Arabic way of discussing a certain topic by analysing it from a variety of different angles without addressing it directly offers (guiding) perspectives to the reader but does not push the reader in the ‘right’ direction as strongly as do the Saxonian or the Teutonic writers. It is through learning from each other that we might create a *genre franca*, in which academic participants all over the world feel at home.

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# 10

## Parental factors and young learners' motivation to learn English

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### Introduction

In Asia, English is recognized as a powerful lingua franca. Families, schools, and governments invest substantial time and resources in English education. The enthusiasm for English education has extended to even very young learners, a group that would appear to be particularly susceptible to the influences of their parents and teachers. At the same time, however, it has been reported that young learners lose their motivation to learn English by their upper elementary school years (e.g., Kim and Seo 2012; Lopriore and Mihaljević Djigunović 2011).

This study is part of a longitudinal project investigating the role of contextual factors (i.e., parents, peers, and teachers) in the development of language learning and language learning motivation among young learners in the context of learning English as a lingua franca. Using data from a cross-sectional component of the larger project, the present study focuses on parental factors – including their socio-economic status (SES) and their beliefs and support for their children's English learning – and examined their potential effect on the young learners' development of English learning motivation.

### Self-determination Theory (SDT)

Among various motivation theories, of particular relevance to the present study is Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan 2002), because SDT has been applied in motivation studies in hierarchical relationships including parent-child and teacher-student relations.

Major underlying motivational constructs in SDT are *intrinsic* and *extrinsic motivations*. A person participates in an activity intrinsically because “that activity is enjoyable and satisfying to do,” whereas extrinsic behaviours are performed in order to “achieve some instrumental end” (Noels, Pelletier, and Vallerand 2000, 61). SDT sees that *intrinsic motivation* is central for human

behaviour, but SDT also acknowledges that *extrinsic motivation* plays an important role.

A central concern in SDT is how an individual's motivation, originally driven by external goals and behaviours, can be internalized eventually under social supports that meet his/her psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. SDT predicts that in order for extrinsic goals to be internalized, one needs to know that she/he has an ability to achieve the goal successfully. In other words, higher self-perceived competence facilitates the process of internalization of extrinsic motivation. SDT also predicts that a primary drive for people to willingly carry out a task that is initially externally regulated is that they feel connected to other significant individuals such as parents and teachers. Thus, social factors are thought to play a significant role in the development of motivation in SDT.

### **Parental Factors and Students' Achievement and Motivation**

Parents, as a major social-contextual factor influencing children's motivation and achievement, have received substantial attention in general educational literature. After reviewing such research, Wigfield and colleagues (Wigfield, Essoles, Schiefele, Roeser, and Davis-Kean 2006) identified the following four major parental factors influencing children's outcomes, such as school achievement and motivation: (a) parent, family, and neighbourhood characteristics (including major SES indicators such as household income, parental education, and parental occupation); (b) parent-specific behaviours (parental involvement in child's study and school, teaching strategies, training values, etc.); (c) parents' general beliefs and behaviours (parenting styles, values of school achievement, efficacy beliefs, etc.); and (d) parents' child-specific beliefs (perception of their child's competence, expectations for the child's success, etc.).

In addition, Cheung and Pomerantz (2012) hypothesized that the children's parent-oriented motivation would explain the positive results of parental involvement in children's learning. Their data indicated that parent-oriented motivation was a unique type of motivation, distinct from extrinsic and intrinsic motivations, and that it uniquely explained the positive effects of parental involvement on the students' achievement.

### **Motivation Research among Young Learners of Foreign Language**

With respect to changes in motivation to learn foreign language (FL) among young learners, empirical studies are scarce. The limited number of

published studies indicates that children's motivation to learn a FL generally declines over time, as mentioned above. Motivational studies based on SDT, such as Carreira's (2012) examination of Japanese elementary school students of EFL, have indicated that fundamental human needs showed stronger correlations with higher self-determined forms of motivation (i.e., intrinsic motivation). Wu (2003) reported that an instructional intervention designed to enhance EFL young learners' intrinsic motivation in Taiwan increased their self-perceived competence and autonomy.

Although the importance of intrinsic motivation is generally acknowledged, the role of extrinsic motivation in the process of developing a higher degree of self-determination among young learners is not totally clear. In the context of FL learning, Nikolov (1999), who interviewed young learners between the ages of 6 and 14 in Hungary, found that instrumental motivation (a type of extrinsic motivation) emerged around age 11 or 12, with students ages 11 to 14 addressing utilitarian reasons for their language learning drastically more frequently than younger students. In contrast, based on a survey distributed to Japanese elementary school students, Carreira (2006) observed that not only the children's intrinsic motivation but also their instrumental motivation (extrinsic motivation) declined from the third-grade level (8- to 9-year-olds) to the sixth-grade level (11- to 12-year-olds). The reasons for such mixed results are not clear.

Finally, with respect to young FL learners' motivation in relation to their SES background, the research is very scarce. Despite the fact that there is growing concern about SES disparities and their impact on young learners' education, the factors of learners' SES have been largely ignored in motivational theories in second language acquisition. My previous study (2013) in China found that the parental assistance for their children's English learning differed by SES but their beliefs about their own child's competence in English did not. SES effects were rather minimal in listening and reading during primary school years, but were already significant in speaking at an early stage of their English learning in elementary school. There is no doubt that more research is needed to better understand the role of parental factors, including their SES, in young learners' development of motivation and performance.

## **Research Questions**

Building on the findings described in the preceding section, the present study investigates the following questions:

1. How do young learners' motivation to learn English, their self-perceived competence, and their anxiety differ according to their parental SES backgrounds at different grade levels?
2. How do young learners perceive their parents' influence on their English learning? How do such perceptions differ by SES and grade level?

## **Participants**

The participants were 198 fourth-graders (aged 9-10), 191 sixth-graders (aged 11-12), and 183 eighth-graders (aged 13-14) (572 in total) and their parents in an eastern city in Mainland China (referred to as C-City). C-City was chosen because of the rapidly growing SES disparities among its citizens.

With the help of the Education Bureau in C-City, I chose for the study two sets of public schools (two elementary and two secondary schools) that were located in distinctly different SES areas. Although the participants were not randomly selected from the whole school-age population, by recruiting the participants from schools with distinct SES backgrounds, it was assumed that the participants could sufficiently cover the whole SES spectrum in C-City.

Out of the 572 participating students, 96 students were selected as focus students for in-depth analyses. In selecting the focus students, a stratified random sampling was used while controlling for gender and general proficiency levels.

Based on a uniform curriculum, all the students in C-City received English instruction (4 hours per week) from the third-grade level on, using the same set of textbooks approved by the local government throughout the city. However, additional materials were used in class at the secondary school in the high-SES area.

## **Instruments**

The present study used the following instruments from the original, larger project: (a) a parental survey; (b) a student survey on motivation; and (c) an interview with the focus students. They were all conducted in Chinese.

### ***Parental Survey***

An extensive survey was distributed to the participants' parents through the students' English teachers. Following Wigfield et al. (2006), our survey consisted of items covering five parental factors.

### ***Student Survey of Motivation***

The students were asked to indicate the extent to which motivational statements were true in a five-level Likert scale (1=not at all true, 5=very true). The survey covered three affective components: types of motivations (intrinsic, extrinsic, and parent-oriented motivations); self-perceived competence (referred to as *confidence*); and anxiety. Each component consisted of five items, for a total of 25 items in the survey. In constructing the items, we consulted with a number of previous studies, including Carreira (2006, 2012), Cheung and Pomerantz (2012), and Wu (2003). The items were pilot-tested with elementary school students in two other sites in China.

### ***Interviews with Focus Group Students***

A semi-structured interview was conducted with the 96 focus students individually. The interview concerned the parental support for and attitudes about the students' English learning as well as the students' perception of such parental support in relation to their motivation to learn English. Each interview was conducted in Chinese, took 10 to 15 minutes per student, and was audio-recorded and transcribed.

## **Results and Discussion**

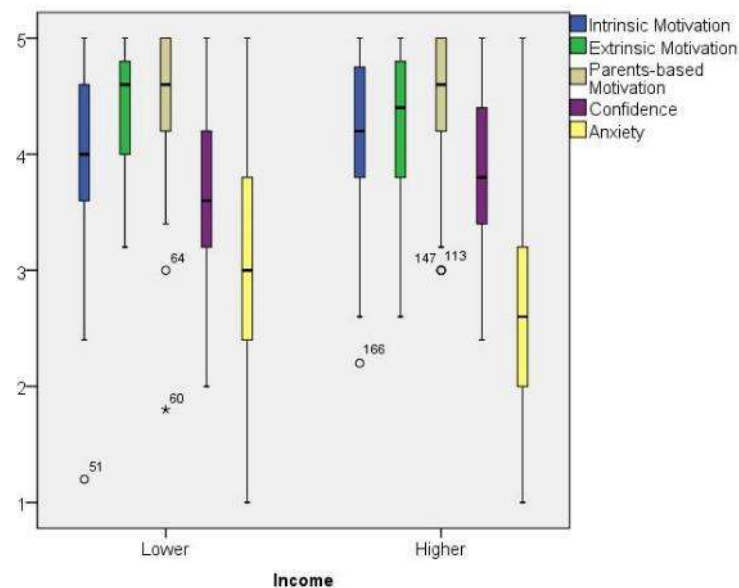
### ***Q1: Students' motivation measures and their parental SES***

As expected, because the three SES measures (income, father's and mother's education levels) were highly correlated among themselves for all the three grade levels, *income* was used as a representative measure of SES for the rest of the analyses. Figures 1 through 3 present the same results in boxplot formats. The four income levels were collapsed into two: lower and higher income groups (i.e., lower and higher SES groups).

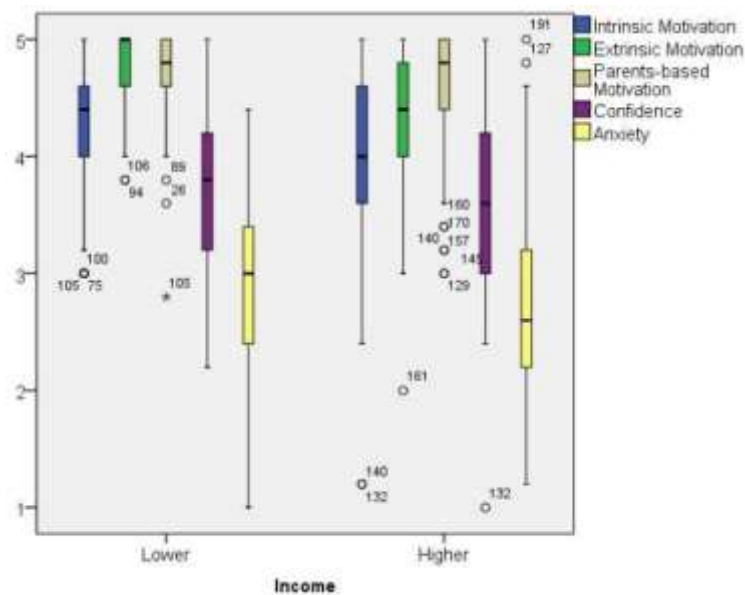
The results show that extrinsic and parent-oriented motivations were generally high among the elementary school students. The motivational differences by SES were rather minimal at the elementary school level. Interestingly, post hoc analyses showed that the lower SES students, compared with the higher SES students, showed slightly higher extrinsic motivation both at the fourth- and sixth-grade levels and higher intrinsic motivation at the fourth-grade level, although the effect sizes were small.

In contrast, at the eighth-grade level, differences by SES were found in the all motivation-related variables except anxiety; the higher SES students showed higher motivations than the lower SES students. Although the higher SES students' motivations and perceived competence levels remained almost the same with those of elementary school students, there was a

notable drop in intrinsic motivation among the lower SES students at the eighth-grade level.



**Figure 1: Results of motivation-related variables in boxplots – Fourth Grade**



**Figure 2: Results of motivation-related variables in boxplots – Sixth Grade**



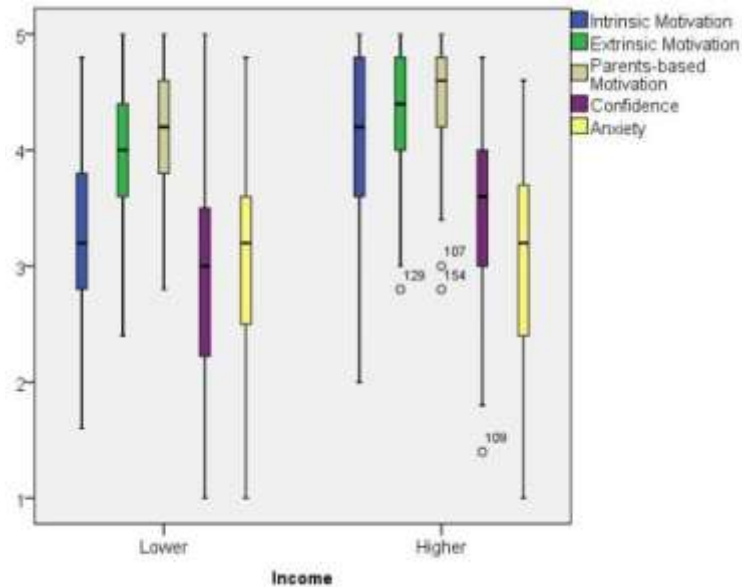


Figure 3: Results of motivation-related variables in boxplots – Eighth Grade

### ***Q2: Children's perceived parental influence in relation to their SES***

This question was answered based on the interview with focus group students. The interview results revealed the substantial role that parents played in the development of young learners' motivation to learn English. They also indicated that the nature of the parental roles in the children's motivation differed across the grade levels. The SES showed greater impacts on learners' motivation as grade level increased.

#### ***Fourth-grade students***

The children at the fourth-grade level, if not earlier, could already clearly articulate the utilitarian importance of English for their future lives regardless of their SES background. It was very common for the parents, including lower SES parents who could not directly help their children's English study *per se*, to constantly encourage their children to devote a lot of effort to the study English, as exemplified by SK<sup>7</sup> (fourth grade, L-SES), who said: “有的时候就算妈妈加班，早上都要说上五遍或者六遍。[Sometimes my Mom tells me five-to-six times a day that it is important to learn English, even in the morning when she worked overtime the day before.]”

It was very common among the parents in our study, regardless of their SES backgrounds, to compare their child's achievement with that of others, such as neighbours, relatives, and children of their friends. Curiously, most

<sup>7</sup> The students' pseudonym initials are used.

children in our study, at least at the fourth-grade level, did not seem to feel pressure from such constant comparisons, or they seemed to take the pressure positively. Also, it was not uncommon among the children to believe that being compared with somebody else was a good motivational source for them and that a certain degree of pressure was necessary to motivate them. After being asked if he felt pressure from his mother's constant comparison with others, SZ (fourth grade, H-SES) stated that “有了压力才有动力。[Motivation comes from pressure].”

At the fourth-grade level, the students' major source of intrinsic motivation came from English cartoons on TV or on Internet. Thanks to the increasing accessibility of the Internet, watching English programs on computer was not necessarily a luxury even for many lower-SES students in this study. Moreover, the fourth-grade students in this study often articulated their fascination with the differences between English and Chinese. Various linguistic features of English that the children discovered seemed to be attractive to them regardless of their SES backgrounds.

### ***Sixth-grade students***

At the sixth-grade level, the majority of the children in this study already associated English with their career goals. They were also fully aware that their parents wanted them to have high scores in English.

Interestingly, “studying abroad” appeared to be a strong drive for developing their self-controlled motivation regardless of their SES backgrounds. The children said that they wanted to study abroad because of their own interest and curiosity as well as for the sake of their future careers. We may say that this was an emergent self-motivation, relatively independent from the parental direct influence.

English-language cartoons and programs on TV and the Internet continued to be a major source of intrinsic motivation among the sixth-graders. Some sixth-graders also deepened their meta-analyses between Chinese and English and continued to be attracted by differences between the two languages.

Some sixth-grade students said that they started having trouble with English at around fifth grade. Accordingly, the nature of parental involvement in the children's English learning began to change as well. Most parents, except ones with strong confidence in English, started having less direct involvement in assisting their children's English. Some sixth-grade students

expressed the opinion that parents should not be directly involved in their children's study, as seen in ZT's remark (sixth grade, L-SES) “因为要是大人逼紧了的话对小孩将来到大学之后没有好处。所以他们监督着我但从来不逼我。 [If parents push their kids too much, it will do no good when their kids go on to college. So, instead of pushing me, they (= my parents) only supervise me].” This can be another sign of growing self-controlled motivation at this grade level.

### ***Eighth-grade students***

At the eighth-grade level, although both higher and lower SES students thought that English was important, some lower SES students began to think that English might not be relevant to their own future lives. PJ (eighth grade, L-SES), for example, said that English was useful for China's development, but that “因为我也不打算出国，所以就不要学那么深嘛，一般能看得懂句子就行了。 [Because I do not plan to go abroad, there is no need to learn advanced English. Understanding a few sentences is enough].”

A growing number of students mentioned that they were no longer as fond of English as they had been before. Some students felt pressured when their parents compared their English abilities to the abilities of others. The students wanted their parents to value their inner-growth or progress, as exemplified in ZF (eighth grade, L-SES), who said that “为了让我努力，他们会把我跟班里好的同学比...有时候压力挺大的...我跟他们说不要这么比，只是让他们跟我以前的自己比。 [I feel great pressure when they (=my parents) try to push me and compare me with top students in my class. I prefer them to compare ‘the present me’ with ‘the past me’].”

When the parents tried to assist their children's English at this grade level, it was not unusual that their “assistance” did not meet the children's needs and desires, particularly among lower SES group. Although some students seemed to be frustrated with their parents' rather misguided efforts, many still indicated that they understood why their parents kept doing it.

However, as English study at school was increasingly highly exam-driven, even more so than at the sixth-grade level, the eighth-grade students (both lower and higher SES students) who wanted to improve their communicative skills felt compelled to find opportunities to use English outside of school. Higher SES students whose parents could afford to provide their children with various opportunities to use English appeared to have increasingly more advantages in maintaining their high intrinsic motivation to learn English.

## Discussions and implications

The present study examined the role of parental factors, including parents' SES and their behaviours and beliefs about their children's English learning, in their children's motivation to learn English in a city in China where SES disparities and achievement gaps among school-age children were a serious concern.

### *Parent-oriented Motivation and Extrinsic Motivation*

The study found that the Chinese parents played a substantial role in the development of their children's motivation. The young learners in China, irrespective of their SES backgrounds, generally showed high parent-oriented motivation. The only exception was among lower SES eighth-graders, who exhibited sizable drops not only in parent-oriented motivation but also in other motivations and confidence.

Extrinsic motivation was also high in general among our Chinese students, even at an early stage of their English learning. Children were fully aware of the utilitarian need to score high on English exams, even at the fourth-grade level. From the sixth-grade and beyond, the children also described their motivation to learn English in relation to their career goals and opportunities. At the same time, sometime around the sixth-grade level, the children also acknowledged the importance of English beyond immediate utilitarian reasons. In the framework of Self-Determination Theory (SDT), this finding can be interpreted as a development of their self-regulated motivation. The finding can also be understood as a sign of the children's gradual independence from the direct influence of their parents' perceptions of them. In the specific context in which the present study was conducted, the young learners' extrinsic motivation not only remained relatively high but also showed stronger correlations with their English achievement and their SES as the students' grade level increased.

The interviews with the focus-group students suggested that the parental involvement in their children's English education should be different at different grade levels. Some parents seemed to adjust their involvement according to the children's needs, but others did not. Lower SES parents were likely to fall into the latter case due to their relative lack of information and resources compared with their higher SES counterparts. The lower SES parents tended to have limited communication with their children with respect to English-learning needs. It is thus advisable for teachers to be

mediators for children who may not be able to clearly articulate their “true” needs to their parents.

The Chinese parents in this study often compared their children with others in order to motivate their children. It seemed to be a common cultural practice in China. As far as the interview data was concerned, the majority of the children seemed to understand their parents' intentions, and the comparisons did not seem to be a major source of anxiety in general, at least among the children at the elementary school level. At the older grade levels, however, some students began to feel uneasy about being compared with others, and other students wanted their parents to focus on their inner-growth as opposed to comparing them with others. Having their feelings listened to appears to become particularly important around the sixth-grade level, when the students started wanting more self-control over and self-regulation of their actions. It appears that lower SES parents, and in particular those who did not themselves experience secondary and higher education, would benefit from extra assistance in order for them to better understand their children's changing needs.

### ***Intrinsic Motivation and Perceived Competence***

The children's intrinsic motivation and their self-perceived competence were correlated with their English performance already at the fourth-grade level, and the correlations became stronger as the grade level increased. The effects of parental SES on the children's intrinsic motivation and confidence were rather minimal in elementary school, but lower-SES students sharply dropped their intrinsic motivation and confidence at the eight-grade level. Given the fact that intrinsic motivation and self-perceived competence are important factors leading high achievement, as SDT predicts, these drops among lower SES eighth-graders warrant special attention. In addition, lower SES parents also lowered their confidence in their children's competence at the eighth-grade level, which in turn was correlated with the children's self-confidence and achievement. Thus, assistance is necessary in order to maintain the students' higher intrinsic motivation and confidence, especially among lower SES students sometime before the eighth-grade level.

The interview data revealed that the Chinese young learners' major source of intrinsic motivation varied across grade levels. In order to maintain children's intrinsic motivation, it is important to identify major sources of intrinsic motivation at different age groups in a given context and to highlight those sources. For the students in this study, it may be a good idea to use popular TV and cartoon series as material for classroom instruction. It is

advisable for teachers to foster students' meta-linguistic awareness in such a way that it can respond to the learners' age-related curiosity.

As English education at school became increasingly more exam-driven and more challenging for students, parental SES played greater roles in maintaining the students' intrinsic motivation. Extra resources that higher SES parents could provide helped their children keep (or foster) their intrinsic motivation. Thus, teachers need to create more opportunities for their students to use English at school. Using technology may be a good possibility. Creating such opportunities is particularly critical for lower SES students, who typically have much fewer opportunities to use English outside of the classroom compared with their higher SES counterparts.

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# 11

## **TEPhL – Teaching English as a Phraseological Language: Changing learner and teacher perception of ‘words’**

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### **Introduction**

Research suggests that a significant proportion of the English lexicon and of native-speaker production comes in the form of phraseological units of one sort or another. However, phraseology does not yet have the role it deserves within ELT methodology or syllabuses. There are probably a number of reasons for this, including conservatism, the heterogeneous nature of phraseology, and the conditioning power of written text. In this paper, I focus on the last of these three, and show how normal typographical presentation can easily be altered so as to highlight the phraseological relationships between words. I also describe the main features of a short course and a course module which were designed to give a massive input of phraseology to students who were quite possibly going on to become language teachers or other language professionals.

[As has often been noted, many different terms are used in this field of language description. In the present paper I use words such as ‘phrase’ and ‘phraseological’ to refer generally to any combination of words in text which warrant definition or comment when describing the English lexicon. Some writers use ‘formula’ and ‘formulaic’ in the same way.]

### **The recognized importance of phraseology in the teaching of English as a foreign language**

The need to incorporate phraseology more fully into language teaching (and language description generally) has long been recognized by some practitioners, especially those working in the field of pedagogical lexicography. A pioneering work in this respect was Hornby et al (1942), which itself owed much to the research carried out by Harold Palmer in the 1920s and ‘30s (see Palmer 1933). Hornby et al was to become the first in a long line of monolingual learners’ dictionaries (MLDs), all of which have offered the learner a considerable amount of data on the phraseology of English. In 1987 the first corpus-based dictionary was published (Sinclair,

ed), and now, more than 25 years later, MLDs are able to offer learners a wealth of phraseological data. There have also been a number of pedagogical dictionaries devoted specifically to phraseology, from Cowie et al (1975, 1983) through to Rundell (2010).

In addition to the knowledge and expertise provided by lexicographical tradition, as well as the advances made possible by the methodology of corpus linguistics, pedagogical phraseology has also received significant input from the field of psycholinguistics and benefited too from what has been called the ‘lexical approach’ in language teaching.

As testimony to this varied activity, in the last twenty years or so there have been a considerable number of publications wholly or partially relating to the role of phraseology in English language teaching and learning. Examples are: Willis (1990), Nattinger & DeCarrico (1992), Cowie (1992), Lewis (1993), Francis et al (1996, 1998), Ellis (1997), Howarth (1998), Hunston & Francis (2000), Lewis (2000), Wray (2000), Wood (2002), Schmitt (2004), Meunier & Granger, eds (2008), Corrigan et al, eds (2009), Wood ed. (2010), Simpson-Vlach & Ellis (2010), Herbst et al, eds (2011), Martinez & Schmitt (2012), Wood (2012), Annual Review of Applied Linguistics (2012), and Martinez (2013).

### **Phraseology in TEFL: still work in progress**

However, despite the increasing interest in phraseology, and despite the publication of supplementary materials devoted to this area of language description (e.g. Woolard 2004, 2005a, 2005b, Walter & Woodford 2010), phraseology still does not have the role it deserves in general language syllabuses and classroom methodology. In a 2002 publication, Wood wrote that “There is still a long way to go to consolidate the evidence presented thus far and to use the knowledge to further classroom language pedagogy. Virtually no classroom materials and programs are available commercially that capitalize on the vital significance of formulas in production and acquisition” (2002: 13). In a similar fashion, in 2004 Jones and Haywood observed that “In spite of the increasing interest in and knowledge about phraseological development amongst L1 and L2 speakers, little progress has been made when it comes to applying the new insights to the EFL classroom” (2004:271). There has also been some criticism of the choice of phrases that have been included in textbooks. Koprowski (2005) concludes that “... the findings in this study suggest that the designers may have done an unsatisfactory job in specifying consistently useful lexical phrases” (2005: 330), and Gouverneur (2008), though restricting her study to phraseology



involving the verbs *make* and *take*, says that there is “conclusive evidence of the need for redefining the principles underlying the selection and presentation of phraseological units in EGP [English for General Purposes] textbooks” (2008:223). Meunier (2012), after reviewing progress made in the previous 10 years or so, paints a more optimistic picture. Among other things, she states that “[m]any textbooks include awareness-raising activities related to the formulaic nature of language” (p.119). However, she also concludes that “despite considerable efforts made by some publishers to include more authenticity (and hence formulaicity) in teaching materials, more work will be needed on that front to make such efforts more visible ... language textbooks for general purposes seem to lag behind in this respect” (p.122).

### **From words to phrases, using typographical devices**

I have referred above to the ‘conditioning power of written text’. This is a very simple point, but one which needs stressing. We, or at least many of us, live in a highly literate society; and since English is a word-based language, this means that learners and teachers are constantly seeing ‘words’, even when the latter clearly form parts of ‘phrases’. And as Erman (2009: 324) notes, “The vast majority of multiword expressions are made up of collocations. However, collocations usually go unnoticed ...”. To make matters worse, if a learner’s mother tongue is also word-based, then he or she will have come to view language as a series of words from a very early age, thus making it very difficult to give adequate importance to phrases.

Most language teaching materials take the form of printed text (and therefore of words), and it would be useful if phrases were highlighted in some way. This happens sometimes, but it is more the exception than the rule. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that at least in some text types in modern English it is now quite common to find links between typography and meaning; an example is children’s stories (for some discussion, see Serafini & Clausen 2012).

Until it becomes more frequent for published materials (either in printed or digital form) to represent, graphically, the phraseological connections between words, it would be useful if individual teachers adapted texts with the aid of some sort of electronic display. A simple program which can be used to achieve this is Microsoft PowerPoint. To give an example of how a text can be re-presented, here is a sentence from a short story (Dahl 1959), first in its normal typographical form and thereafter in phraseologically marked form:

“Sooner or later, of course, there had been some bad moments and a number of unpleasant incidents, but then nine years is more than four hundred Sundays, and that adds up to a great quantity of houses visited.”

“**Sooner or later**, **of course**, **there** [had been] some [bad] **moments** and **a number of** [unpleasant] **incidents**, **but then** [nine] **years** is **more than** [four] **hundred** Sundays, and that **adds up to a** [great] **quantity of** houses visited.”

The second version uses bold type, colour, and square brackets to turn words into phrases. In particular, the combination of bold type and colour is intended to indicate that words constitute a more or less lexicalized phrase, (though there is no direct correspondence between colour and type of phrase), whereas non-bold colour indicates a collocational relationship of some sort. Coloured square brackets enclose a collocate, and where the enclosed word or words are coloured (e.g. ‘had been’), this fact is intended to suggest that there are a fairly limited number of items that can fill the slot.

Other devices which may be used to foreground lexico-phraseological connections are: italics, underlining, radically different fonts, vertical lines ( | ) to separate text elements, and the removal of spaces to bring certain words together.

Sometimes the same word or words belong to more than one phraseological item, and in this case the teacher can alternate quickly between two different typographical views. For example, elsewhere in the same short story we find the following stretch of text: “... it was as much as he could do to prevent himself from turning aside and taking a bow or two...”. Here, the phrase ‘taking a bow or two’ could be represented both as ‘**taking a bow** or two’ and as ‘taking **a bow or two**’. These two views can also be brought together at the same time, for example by using underlining or italics: ‘**taking a bow or two**’, ‘***taking a bow or two***’.

I have not seen much reference to this type of ‘phraseological mark-up’ in the literature, but two articles that discuss it are Jones & Haywood (2004) and Bishop (2004). In the former, the authors describe an experimental study involving reading and writing in the context of English for Academic Purposes. The purpose of the study was “to research a possible approach to the teaching of formulaic sequences which would raise awareness of the

sequences, and develop the students’ learning strategies.” (p. 275). During the study, learners were first given normal texts to read, and thereafter adapted texts, in which selected sequences had been converted to bold italics. The second study (Bishop 2004) describes a more (computationally) complex experiment, the main findings of which “are consistent with the claim that making unknown formulaic sequences typographically salient increases readers’ willingness to seek glosses, and also that glossing leads to some increased comprehension of lexical items” (p. 241). (For further references to phraseological awareness-raising activities involving ‘chunking’, see Boers & Lindstromberg 2012).

### **A Module and a Course devoted to phraseological awareness raising**

As mentioned in the Introduction, I have used this general technique of typographical mark-up in both a course module and a complete short course. PowerPoint was used in both cases.

The module was part of a teachers’ training course for aspiring English teachers in Italian secondary schools, and I considered that the trainee teachers would benefit greatly from intensive work which focused on the importance of phraseology in English. The actual phrases encountered and discussed in the lessons were not of great significance in themselves: the aim was above all to raise awareness of the importance of phraseology and thereby try to convince the trainees that in their teaching they should adapt course materials wherever necessary, so as to place more emphasis on the phraseological connections between ‘words’.

One of the key aspects of the module was the fact that the course participants were asked, beforehand, to send the teacher a short English text of their own choice, the only specifications being that it should be of native-speaker standard and must have been written within the last few decades. The teacher subsequently carried out a phraseological analysis of the texts so as to decide how best to present them in class. The fact that it was the students who had chosen the texts, and not the teacher, reinforced the idea that phraseology is to be found virtually everywhere in English. This point was further emphasised by the fact that there were several different text types involved (e.g. fictional narrative, press report, weather forecast, recipe). During the module, parts of some reading texts in published English teaching materials were also re-presented in what might be called ‘phraseo-typographical’ form. (Regarding points made in this paragraph see also Hill 2000, pp 56-59).

I turn now to the short course devoted to phraseology. This formed part of an undergraduate degree course in Foreign Language and Literature, and again I had decided that it would be useful to design a course in which students would be given as much knowledge and awareness of phraseology as possible, especially since some of them would go on to become language professionals of some sort.

The course revolved around ‘text’, since the most important thing I wished the students to go away with from the course was the realization that a significant proportion of the language we use is made up of phraseological units of one sort another. Corpus interrogation was also used at times during the course, but only to examine specific items and phenomena encountered during text analysis. The standard methods of corpus linguistics are excellent tools for finding out about phraseological patterning between words or associated with specific words, but it is by working with individual texts that we can most directly appreciate the importance, quantitatively speaking, of phraseology. (For some discussion regarding the proportion of texts which is phraseological in nature, see Cowie 1992, Van Lancker Sidtis 2009, and references in Pawley 2007, pp 20-21).

Virtually any text or texts (I use the word ‘text’ generically, and include both written and spoken language) can prove useful for phraseological analysis, and it can also be useful to analyse different types of text. I chose to work with just one, fairly long text, the short story mentioned and quoted above (Dahl 1959). The story is something over 9,000 words in length, and consists mainly of narrative prose and the fictional representation of speech. Working with just one text meant that a simple end-of-course test could be constructed, in which students would be asked to identify and describe anything of phraseological interest in an extract from the story they had studied. The exam, then, from one point of view, was similar to a literature exam in which learners are asked to translate or comment on extracts from literary works which they had studied as part of the course syllabus.

[At this point I should introduce another important ‘ingredient’ of the course: the monolingual learner’s dictionary. Above, I have praised dictionary writers for the importance they have given to the treatment of phraseology. However, this is not the same thing as saying that all learners benefit from the information present in MLDs. Indeed, it is my experience that many learners have relatively little idea of what a corpus-based dictionary has to offer, and the latter is often consulted solely to find out the meaning of a word or to check its spelling. The phraseology course more or less compelled

students to get to know their dictionaries. Furthermore, they were informed at the outset that they would be allowed (indeed, encouraged) to use a dictionary in their end-of-course exam, and advised that they should, therefore, become as familiar as possible with the dictionary’s typical data types and entry structure. The course, then, was not only a course in phraseological awareness raising but also one in dictionary awareness raising.]

Before the course began, the teacher carried out a fairly thorough analysis of the whole story, so as to be in a position to describe the phraseology of the text in as coherent a manner as possible during lessons. This analysis was carried out ‘manually’, though with the aid of corpus-based dictionaries, and sometimes using corpora as well when it was necessary to investigate phrases which were not documented in the dictionaries consulted.

Lessons themselves consisted mainly of two interwoven strands. On the one hand, extracts from the story were analysed; on the other hand, specific phrasal types were described and exemplified. Each extract analysed was typically about 80-100 words in length. It was first presented in normal, that is typographically neutral, fashion, and students were given time to try to identify phrases of interest. They were encouraged to discuss ideas among themselves and also to consult their dictionaries.

After students had had time to examine a particular extract, the teacher and class then worked slowly through the text together. After each phrasal unit had been identified, the screen shot changed to incorporate the ‘phraseo-typographical’ version of the part of the extract being discussed. The sentence quoted earlier, for example, initially changed to:

“**Sooner or later**, of course, there had been some bad moments and a number of unpleasant incidents, but then nine years is more than four hundred Sundays, and that adds up to a great quantity of houses visited.”

Sometimes parts of dictionary entries were displayed as well, both to show students the different techniques employed by dictionaries for describing phraseology and to ‘prove’ that there was a significant connection between a given pair or group of words. For example, with reference to the above sentence, the following dictionary explanation (COBUILD 2006) of the phrase *but then* could be usefully shown to students:

**but.** 11. You use **but then** before a remark which suggests that what you have just said should not be regarded as surprising. *He was a fine young man, but then so had his father been... Sonia might not speak the English language well, but then who did?*

The second main element of the lessons was the description of phrasal types. A typology had been built up by the teacher on the basis of the phrases found in the short story, and the resulting groups of phrases belonged to six broad categories: 1) phrases organized by grammatical class (in which, for example, is found the sub-category 'phrasal verbs'); 2) lexical collocation (e.g. verb + noun); 3) phrases beginning with a preposition; (4) verbs, nouns and adjectives followed by a linking particle; (5) phrases linked by their meaning (e.g. expressions of time); and (6) the phraseology of conversation.

Most examples given for individual phrasal types came from the short story itself, though additional ones were sometimes provided, either borrowed from dictionary entries or taken directly from a corpus.

### Concluding remarks

This paper has been a brief report on highly specific language teaching, the aim of which was to increase awareness and knowledge of phraseology on the part of language learners who were quite possibly going on to become teachers or other language professionals. The key didactic elements can be summed up by the labels 'text' and 'typography'. It is hoped that other teachers might wish to incorporate these methods into their teaching, either in extensive forms such as those exemplified above, or as part of more general teaching.

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# 12

## Complementary Schools in the Global Age: Tackling the Diversification of Students' Background

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### Introduction

Complementary schools (sometimes also called community schools, supplementary schools, heritage schools, or Saturday schools) are mainly non-statutory educational settings where linguistic and cultural practices are taught particularly through specific community languages (Blackledge & Creese, 2010). There is an increasing number of studies conducted in the context of complementary schools, as they provide a unique opportunity for investigating multilingual speakers' language and literacy practices, their negotiation of identities, and school policies (e.g. Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Li, 2006; Martin, Bhatt, Bhojani, & Creese, 2006; Martin & Lytra, 2010).

In contrast to the majority of complementary schools, which are non-statutory educational settings, *Hoshuko* (Japanese complementary schools) are Japanese government approved schools where children of professional expatriates prepare for their return to Japan. Despite this original intention, however, the various transnational movements of the global age have brought a diversification in the family backgrounds of students (e.g. children of international marriage; children of globally mobile professionals), causing certain quandaries and tension within the school.

This paper particularly highlights this unique *Hoshuko* context and the government's impact on the school policy and individuals' language practices, seeking to delineate the potential of these complementary schools.

### Aims, Methodology, and Research Context

Firstly, the paper looks at the Japanese government approved *Hoshuko* context, and aims to disclose the government's intentions regarding these schools. It then explores the ways in which those governmental intentions are adopted, challenged, and applied to the actual *Hoshuko* context – specifically focusing on the UK – by exploring school policies and voices from local children, teachers and parents.

The methodology employed in this study is a combination of critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) and ethnography. Employing CDA for examining government's policy documents, this paper attempts to reveal the ideologies driving the Japanese government's involvement in *Hoshuko* education. This study also investigates how these government policies have influenced the local practices at *Hoshuko* in the UK.

According to the government's report in 2012, there are currently about 17,000 students at 202 *Hoshuko* in 55 countries – 9 *Hoshuko* in the UK (MEXT, 2013). This study collects data from 1) government's<sup>8</sup> policy documents regarding *Hoshuko*, 2) online sources (e.g. school prospectus) from the 9 *Hoshuko* in the UK, and 3) an eighteen months ethnographic fieldwork at one such *Hoshuko*.

### ***Finding 1. Only for Future Returnees: Government's intentions regarding Hoshuko***

The policy documents were analysed employing CDA in order to reveal the government's embedded intentions towards *Hoshuko* (analysed documents: MEXT, 2013, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c, n.d.-d; MOFA, 2011). Firstly, while the government states that *Hoshuko* is for 'children of Japanese nationals' and therefore seems to refer to all Japanese children abroad in general, the analysis reveals that, in fact, it only denotes those children whose families will return to Japan in the future, and whom the Japanese government consider the sole rightful beneficiaries of education abroad. Secondly, although there are no explicit statements, the analysis reveals a strong assumption that education abroad should be in many respects similar to domestic education in Japan. Thus, *Hoshuko* need to follow the model of domestic Japanese schools.

### ***Finding 2. Domestic Schools in Japan as a Model: Hoshuko discourse in the UK***

Similar underlying ideologies to those of the Japanese government have been found in the online material of *Hoshuko*. For example, a strong dichotomic view towards students of 'children of professional expatriates (i.e. future returnees)' and 'the others' is disclosed, those who are 'not future returnees' often being labelled *Eiju-gumi* [groups of people living in the UK

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<sup>8</sup> Regarding the education at *Hoshuko*, two ministries announced their policies; the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Although the detailed analysis dealt in more depth with the differences in their position, for the purpose of this paper they are regarded together as 'the government'.

permanently] or *Kokusai-ji* [international children; i.e. children of international marriage families]. These labels seem to derive from the conception that the children of professional expatriates are the desired *Hoshuko* students, consequently leading to considering 'the others' as minorities and/or outsiders.

Moreover, this study has found that there is strong pressure on the school principals to make *Hoshuko* similar to domestic schools in Japan as long as they receive financial support and personnel from the government for maintaining the teaching quality. There is also pressure on the parents – especially on the Japanese partners of international marriages – to assume responsibility for their children's Japanese language competence; e.g. some schools require passing a language test as a prerequisite to enrolment for such children, but not for children of professional expatriates. These discourses seem to derive from a general view that the Japanese language competence of children who have only been living in the UK could not be elevated by the *Hoshuko* alone, and they could possibly become a problem for schools.

### ***Finding 3. The Reality against Hoshuko's Ideologies?***

The real situation in *Hoshuko* in the UK – especially regional *Hoshuko*<sup>9</sup> – is more complex in terms of students' background when compared to the *Hoshuko* policies seen above. For instance, when looking at the number of students at *Hoshuko*, children of professional expatriates do not always dominate the number of students. The observed *Hoshuko*, where the ethnographic fieldwork was conducted, has recently experienced increasing numbers of families with diverse backgrounds – e.g. children of international marriage families, children of globally mobile professionals –, while the number of students coming from professional expatriate families is decreasing. This shows the gradual diversifications of students' background in the recent decade. Thus, the *Hoshuko* ideology – copying teaching/learning practices from domestic schools in Japan – does not necessarily fulfil the family demands, especially those who are planning to reside permanently in the UK. As a result, many of those families have left *Hoshuko* after a few years of studying.

Considering that the number of students in the observed *Hoshuko* has been decreasing (at the peak there were about 150, but currently about 50 students) – and this phenomenon is widespread at regional *Hoshuko* –, attracting

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<sup>9</sup> This paper treats the *Hoshuko* in London as an exception, as the situation there is highly different. For instance, in contrast to regional *Hoshuko* where student numbers are usually between 30 and 100, in London there are 1,300 students in total.

students is an urgent task for securing resources for the management of the school. Since the number of expatriate professionals depends on international companies' decisions and therefore the *Hoshuko* management does not have control over it, the only available option is to attract other families as well. However, this causes other difficulties within the *Hoshuko*. The following are the words of a *Hoshuko* teacher (bracketed information was added for clarification by the author);

For large schools, having enough financial income without them [i.e. family of permanent residents in the UK], it might not be a problem; but schools like ours, with a small number of students cannot survive in that way. Therefore, these schools tried to accept as many students as possible. It is good to recruit many students [e.g. in terms of school management], however, problems arise after the enrolment. Some children really struggle to keep up with the classes (teacher at the observed *Hoshuko*, 2012).

That is, there is a dilemma for those regional *Hoshuko*; on one hand, they need to retain the support of the government, and for that purpose, they are required to satisfy the *Hoshuko*'s criteria; on the other hand, they also need to attract not only professional expatriate families but also families with different backgrounds.

#### ***Finding 4. Teachers' and Parents' Efforts to Achieve Flexibility within the Hoshuko***

To satisfy local demands and to attract many families, the local *Hoshuko* attempts to involve flexibility in their school policies while satisfying the criteria of *Hoshuko*. At the observed *Hoshuko*, for instance, the recent establishment of kindergarten classes has been popular among many international marriage families and seemed to contribute to the preparation of year-1 study at *Hoshuko*. As kindergarten is not a compulsory level of education, and therefore it is, to some extent, independent from government official policies, the classes at kindergarten level can be much more flexible (e.g. regarding age of enrolment, children's Japanese language skills, or entrance requirements).

What is more, the observed *Hoshuko* employs as teachers local Japanese living in the UK – some are qualified teachers, others are trained locally – as they no longer receive dispatched teachers from the Japanese government due to the fall in student numbers. Although not having dispatched teachers from Japan is usually regarded as an unfavourable situation, the ethnographic

data shows that local teachers are more flexible in designing classes based on their own experience of living in the UK. They are thus better able to apply multilingual and multicultural teaching support during classes, which consequently benefits both the children of professional expatriate families and others. Such teaching practices might be difficult to follow by dispatched teachers from Japan, who are professionally qualified in the Japanese school context but have limited local linguistic and cultural competence.

The ethnographic data also indicate that the *Hoshuko* plays an important role in supporting the community, being a meeting place for parents to consult their children's linguistic concerns. Also, children themselves help each other's learning through multilingual interactions. Newly arrived children of expatriate professionals learn English from children of settled families through multilingual interaction during breaks, which helps their integration in the British mainstream schools they attend during weekdays.

## Discussion and Conclusion

As seen above, the Japanese government has a highly centralised policy regarding *Hoshuko*. Considering the history of these schools abroad – in most cases founded by Japanese professional expatriates for their children – it is understandable for the government to support education abroad specifically for future returnees to keep up with Japanese curriculum on their return. However, this exclusionary attitude towards diversity in education abroad has brought difficulties and dilemmas within *Hoshuko* in a globalising world where students' backgrounds become increasingly complex and diverse. Namely, there is a gap between *Hoshuko* ideologies in policy documents and local *Hoshuko* realities. Thus, local *Hoshuko* struggle to secure their position as *Hoshuko* in order to obtain financial support and personnel from the government, and to attract as many students as possible for a successful management of the school.

Despite the difficult situation, ethnographic data has disclosed local teachers', children's and parents' efforts for seeking flexible practices within *Hoshuko*. For instance, losing personnel support from the government is usually regarded as unfavourable; however, this actually developed unique teaching practices, which fit local children's needs regardless of their family backgrounds.

Admittedly, *Hoshuko*'s situations are diverse throughout the world, and the situation seen above is just one case. Hence, the argument is not whether the situation of *Hoshuko* in this paper is generalizable. Rather, this paper casts

doubt on the governmental top-down *Hoshuko* policies and *Hoshuko*'s dichotomic views of 'children of professional expatriate (future returnees)' and 'the others', since it is easily assumed that the background of those coming to *Hoshuko* will become more diverse and complex in the future. The findings in this paper thus suggest the future potential of *Hoshuko* which involves the incorporation of a bottom-up perspective into their teaching/learning practices and emphasizing local uniqueness and knowledge. The practices highlighted in this paper are also valuable for taking into consideration in the more general context of complementary schools around the world.

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# 13

## **Interactions between identity negotiation and language learning: learning Chinese as a heritage language in the ancestral homeland**

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### **Introduction**

The term ‘heritage language’ (HL) has gained currency since the 1990s and refers to indigenous and immigrant languages that are different from the dominant language(s) in a given society (Fishman, 2001; Valdes, 2001). For example, in the American context all the non-English languages (including the aboriginal languages and immigrant languages such as Spanish, Chinese and Russian) are referred to as heritage languages. The term ‘heritage language learner’ refers to one who is raised in a home where a HL is spoken, who speaks or merely understands the HL, and who is to some degree bilingual in the dominant language of the society and the HL (Valdes, 2001). The past two decades have witnessed an ever growing body of research on heritage language and heritage language education, addressing the needs to maintain and revitalise the language and culture of minority groups in an increasingly multilingual and multicultural world.

Compared with traditional foreign language or second language learners, heritage language learners are generally exposed to the HL in the home environment from a very early age and therefore have certain linguistic advantages over other learners when learning the HL (especially in listening and speaking). Another distinct characteristic of HL learners is the complexity of their self-identifications: because they grow up in the heritage home environment which is embedded in the mainstream culture of the society, their sense of self is closely related to both their heritage and the mainstream society. When learning their heritage language, many HL learners are driven by the desire to discover their roots, to establish their sense of self and to connect to their family, which indicates that for these learners their identity and the learning of HL are intrinsically related.

When these HL learners go to study their heritage language in the ancestral homeland—a context which is both familiar and foreign to these heritage

sojourners, their identities are often subject to challenges, negotiations and reconstructions, which may interplay with their language learning. Therefore, the aim of the current paper is to explore the interactions between identity negotiation and language learning for these HL learners in the study abroad context. Through investigating the experience of 14 HL learners of Chinese studying abroad in Mainland China, the paper aims to contribute to the theorization of the relationship between identity and language learning for HL learners in the study abroad context in general.

The main research question addressed in the current paper is as follows:

What are the interactions between identity negotiation and HL learners' learning of Chinese in the ancestral homeland?

There are two sub-questions under this overarching question:

- a. How does HL learners' language use influence their identity negotiation?
- b. How does HL learners' identity negotiation influence their learning of Chinese?

In the current study, the three-layered model of identity analysis proposed by Riley (2007) is adopted as an analytical tool. The three layers of identity analysis include: 1) self-identity, which an individual holds intrinsically and attempts to position outwards; 2) social-identity, which is a quality ascribed or attributed to an individual human being by other human beings. In other words, social identities are imposed upon individuals by others about who they are; 3) the social processes through which identities are established, attributed and negotiated, which provide a dynamic vision of identity formation.

Following the poststructuralist view of identity (e.g. Block, 2007), I operationalize the concept of 'identity' as a fluid and contextualised construct of a set of self-conceptions concerning who an individual is and his or her relationship with the world, with a certain group of people etc. Another important construct 'identity negotiation' is defined as the process whereby individuals attempt to evoke, assert, modify, challenge or support their own and others self-identifications (Littlejohn & Foss, 2008).

## Method

This paper presents part of the results from my PhD research. The overall aim of the PhD project is to understand the linguistic benefit and the social experience of both HL learners of Chinese and non-HL learners of Chinese (i.e. foreign language learners who have no Chinese background) when they study abroad in China. In total 14 HL learners and 10 non-HL learners were enrolled as participants during the data collection phase. All 24 participants were American university students and were studying abroad in the same university in a metropolitan city of northern China. Their study abroad period lasted for a total of 8 weeks—from June to August in 2011. At the study abroad site, these students took Chinese language classes during weekdays and had group sightseeing activities organised by their study-abroad programmes. The accommodation arrangement for these participants varied, with some staying in the international student dorms on campus, some staying in hotels close to campus and some staying with local Chinese families.

In order to investigate how the HL and non-HL learners benefited linguistically from the study abroad experience, oral narrative tests in Chinese were given to each participant at the beginning and end of the study abroad period. Background questionnaires were also filled out by each participant, eliciting information such as the participant's family immigration background, linguistic background and previous Chinese learning and study abroad background. Language Contact Questionnaires adapted from Freed, Dewey, Segalowitz et al.(2004) were filled out by participants both at the beginning and end of the study abroad sojourn. The purpose of this was to understand the frequency and amount of time participants used the Chinese language for before and during the study abroad programme.

In order to explore the social experience of these HL and non-HL participants, open-ended interviews were conducted twice with each student, once at the beginning of the study-abroad programme and once at the end of the programme. These interviews mainly invited participants to talk about their everyday encounters with native speakers in China, their narratives of their identity related stories and their actual use of the Chinese language during the stay in China. Participants were also asked to keep language learning journals to record their everyday social and learning experience. All interviews and journals were conducted or written in English in order to give participants the maximum ease and freedom to express their ideas. All interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed with the focus on the

content. Thematic analysis was conducted on all interview transcripts and journal entries using the software Nvivo.

This current paper only focuses on the findings from the analysis of the interview recordings and journal entries collected from the HL learners. Data sources such as the oral test recordings, questionnaires and interviews/journal entries that concern the non-HL participants are beyond the scope of the current paper.

## **Results**

In this section some preliminary results are presented below each sub research question. Brief quotations from some HL participants are also presented to illustrate these findings.

### **Sub research question a: How does HL learners' language use influence their identity negotiation?**

For the HL learners, because of their very Chinese-looking physical appearance, they would normally blend in well in the local Chinese society. It was usually their language use that would arouse local people's attention and identity negotiation would normally follow.

#### ***The use of English triggered identity negotiation:***

One of the biggest give-away signs was the use of the English language by these HL learners when they were socialising with their own group of friends from the USA. Since for most of the participants English was their dominant language and the language that they were most comfortable using, they almost always conversed in English within their own group, regardless of whether the group consisted of only Chinese HL students or students with different ethnic backgrounds. The Chinese-looking HL students reported that when people heard them speak English it would almost always lead to questioning of their identity.

Christine, born in the US and with both parents being Taiwanese, described a vivid picture of how the locals reacted when confused by the Chinese-looking physical appearance of her group of HL learners and their use of English:

‘So it’s like, when we speak English people are looking, they go ‘who is speaking?’ and then look at you and it’s like ‘oh they look Chinese’, and they go ‘what?’, and they stare like two seconds

longer and then they started listening and like, I think that in their mind they are also like ‘oh they are probably foreigners’.

Christine further explained that for the group of HL students that she socialised with, it was normal for them to be questioned three or four times every day about their identity simply because people heard them talk in English.

***The use of Chinese triggered identity negotiation:***

Not only would the use of English give these HL participants away and prompt the local people to perceive them as foreigners, but some of the non-native like features of their use of Chinese would be detected and used as identity signifiers.

Often it would be the non-native like accent that would give these HL participants away and make people think that they were foreigners. For example, Diana, a Singaporean born Chinese HL participant, reflected that people did not see her as local because of her un-recognizable accent:

‘Do they see me as a local Chinese person? They can tell that I am not, because the way I speak, I do not have a local accent, I do not even have a recognizable accent, like you can tell if people are from another town [in China], you can tell where they are from sometimes right, you cannot tell... you can just tell I am not from here, because there is that weird accent to my Chinese.’

Similarly, several other HL participants, such as Eddie, Steve and Lucy (who all looked very Chinese from their physical appearance), also reported that when they spoke Chinese, people would know they were foreigners because their Chinese was ‘not fluent’ (Steve & Lucy) or ‘not like local good’ (Eddie).

In addition, for some HL participants who had imbalanced oral and literacy skills in Chinese, their ability to speak and inability to read or write would also lead locals to perceive them as foreigners. For example, Steve was born in mainland China and immigrated to the USA when he was five years old. He was fairly proficient in spoken Mandarin while he self-reported having problems reading Chinese characters. He reported that when he dined in restaurants, he would normally be seen as an average Chinese person in the beginning, but then when it became clear he had difficulty reading the menu, the restaurant staff would laugh and ask ‘are you a foreigner?’

### **Sub research question b: How does HL learners' identity negotiation influence their learning of Chinese?**

The HL participants' use of English and the non-native like features of their Chinese triggered the local Chinese people to question the identity of the HL participants. Furthermore, how the HL learners were perceived by the locals also had some influence on the opportunities these participants had to practice their Chinese.

#### ***Perceived identity influenced local people's expectations of participants' Chinese proficiency:***

The locals normally interpreted participants' identity on the basis of their physical appearance: the Chinese-looking students would often be seen as Chinese or local, while the foreign-looking students (including a half-Chinese half-Hispanic HL participant) were perceived as foreigners. The local people's perceptions of these students based on physical appearance would influence their expectations of the students' proficiency in Chinese.

May (ethnically Chinese) and Carlos (ethnically half Chinese half Hispanic) reported very different experiences concerning local people's expectation of their Chinese proficiency, which serves as a good illustration of the point I want to make here.

For May, because she looked very Chinese, she reported that it was 'funny' because people would always come up to her and start speaking to her in Chinese, even though her Chinese proficiency was at the beginning level and she had trouble understanding the Chinese that locals spoke to her. She then commented: 'It's interesting just to see who they think speaks Chinese and who they don't think speaks Chinese.'

Conversely, Carlos (who was half Chinese half Hispanic but did not quite look Chinese) reported that when he spoke Chinese the local people would 'always say 你的汉语这么好 (translation: you speak Chinese so well)', which to some extent annoyed him because he felt certain that 'they wouldn't say that to a native.' Though he got complimented on his Chinese, he felt these compliments showed that he was still seen as a foreigner and people did not expect him to speak Chinese well, especially because many times these compliments were made when people hear him 'speak only one sentence'.

***Perceived identity influenced the Chinese exposure available to the participants:***

Because the locals' expectations of the participants' Chinese proficiency levels were based on the participants' physical appearance, this influenced how the locals spoke to them and consequently affected one crucial aspect of the study-abroad experience—the amount of exposure to the Chinese language that is available to these learners.

The HL participants generally reported that they would be spoken to in Chinese because people assumed from their looks that they should be Chinese and should be able to speak Chinese. In fact, when the HL participants mixed with non-HL students, the local people would pick the Chinese-looking students out and speak almost exclusively to them and not to their foreign-looking friends. This phenomenon was so common that Diana, the Singaporean born HL participant who was highly fluent in Chinese, had to pretend not to speak any Chinese when she was out with her Caucasian friends, just to give the foreign-looking students more opportunity to practise their Chinese with the locals:

‘So I started pretending like I don’t speak any Chinese. Sometimes, I mean there would be situations where I just speak only English and when they spoke to me, I just look puzzled. Just to give other people a chance [to speak Chinese], and to see how people react to like a Chinese looking person who doesn’t speak a word of Chinese.’

Similarly, Anna, a HL-participant who was very Chinese looking and very proficient in spoken Chinese mentioned that:

‘When we go out to eat, I will like order or like me and one other person would order for everybody, and so then the waiters know very little English sometimes, so they would speak to us in Chinese, and they won’t even like approach the white students, they won’t like say anything to them, because they don’t understand.’

Anna not only noticed that the HL students were spoken to in Chinese, but also that the white students would not be spoken to in Chinese because locals thought they didn’t understand. It seems that because the HL participants were perceived as someone local and Chinese, they were given more opportunities to practice speaking or listening to the Chinese language, while non-HL students’ opportunities to practice their Chinese were much more

limited because of their perceived identities as foreigners and consequently non-Chinese speakers.

## Conclusion

From the preliminary results presented above, it can be seen that some of the interactional patterns between identity negotiation and language learning have already emerged. For the HL participants, on the one hand their existing Chinese proficiency and their choices to use Chinese or English triggered identity negotiations between themselves and the local native speakers; on the other hand, how their identities were perceived by the local people influenced the way that the locals interacted with them, and ultimately influenced the opportunities available to them to practice and learn the Chinese language.

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# 14

## **Views of professionalism in higher education teaching: modern languages compared with other disciplines**

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### **Introduction**

It is fairly clear what service teachers in higher education are expected to provide for students (c.f. Biggs, 1999; Butcher, Davies and Highton, 2006; Ramsden 2003), with little disagreement or differences in criteria between authors. For example, according to Butcher, Davies and Highton, (2006), teaching in higher education involves: determining what students are supposed to learn and be able to do; matching the content of courses to outcomes; selecting appropriate teaching and learning methods; matching assessment to outcomes; meeting and supporting diverse learner needs; managing the course; and evaluating it afterwards. Chapter 3 of the Quality Code (QAA 2012) provides nine indicators to ensure that these kinds of activities are properly attended to in institutions of higher education in the UK ‘so that every student is enabled to develop as an independent learner, study their chosen subject(s) in depth and enhance their capacity for analytical, critical and creative thinking.’ (p.24). Exactly how such a framework is fleshed out in different disciplines in different contexts is less clear, but both traditional and innovative practices may be accommodated in a principled way within the overall framework of learning support.

In the field of language teaching, practitioners in higher education share with language teacher colleagues in other educational sectors a solid background in the specifics of teaching. Language teaching is supported by extensive research, and in higher education the theoretical and empirical literature dedicated to teaching and learning is accessible to practitioners so that language teachers can call upon different kinds of knowledge, skills and attitudes in making educational decisions. Other disciplines in higher education lack such a knowledge, attitude and skill base for teaching, and it may be that this difference between modern language lecturers and lecturers in other disciplines is reflected in their views of professionalism in higher education teaching.

This paper reports a qualitative study of the views of lecturers in a United Kingdom Russell Group university.

### **Research questions**

1. Is there any difference between modern languages lecturers and lecturers in other disciplines in their conceptions of professionalism in higher education teaching?
2. Is professionalism a helpful term to apply to quality teaching in higher education, and if so, in what way may it be helpful?

### **What is professionalism?**

Professionalism is a highly contested term. Schön (1991) characterises professionalism as reflection in action. Schön's formulation of the characteristics of professionalism includes managerial activities and design discipline teaching, but he finds urban planning, for instance, too dependent on external pressures to fully meet his criteria for professionalism. His view of professionalism as independent creative problem solving has been particularly attractive for language educators, as it seems to acknowledge the complexity and indeterminacy of the teacher's task while placing relatively less weight on paper qualifications.

Other authors have taken a trait theory approach to professionalism (cf. Goode, 1969), simply listing the characteristics that established professions seem to share. In this conceptualization of professionalism, professional qualifications and membership of professional bodies feature much more strongly than in Schön's formulation. Trait theory has been discredited as having no explanatory power. Nevertheless in the field of higher education, trait theory has provided a convenient description of professionalism that at least allows the phenomenon to be discussed (c.f. Evans, 2008; Whitty, 2008).

Yet other authors (cf. Evetts, 2003) are not convinced that professions are really any different from other occupations, but acknowledge that certain occupations known as the professions have acquired special status and rewards for their labour. For these theorists, the special characteristics of professions and professionals are not relevant to researching the way they acquire and use status and power.

Ethicists (c.f. Koehn 1994; Oakley & Cocking 2001) seek a moral basis for the power and status granted to professionals, and find that Aristotelian virtue ethics helps to clarify what society may expect of professionals and

how they are held accountable for the use of the freedom and status they are afforded for doing their work. One of the problems raised by virtue ethicists is the difficulty and undesirability of establishing a contract between professionals and their clients for professional services. The solution for Koehn (1994) is the public pledge taken by professionals to serve some overarching human good, which legitimizes the freedom of action afforded to professionals, defines the broad range of their responsibilities and provides a framework for the analysis of apparent conflicts of interest in their professional and personal lives.

Dingwall & Fenn (1987) explore the relationship between the professions, their clients and the state within a legal framework of accountability. According to Dingwall & Fenn, the individual vulnerability of professionals to legal actions for negligence ensures both individual attention to protecting their client's interests and constant demonstration of the necessity for the exclusive right of the profession to provide professional services through certification of the professional's knowledge, skills and attitudes. In Dingwall & Fenn's account of professional accountability, the client is protected both by ensuring that practitioners hold the credentials necessary to enter the profession and provide a service, and that the practitioner's knowledge, skills and attitudes are in fact dedicated to the client's interests, enforced through legal actions for professional negligence.

Freidson's (2001) approach to professionalism identifies three separate systems for organizing work, which may be called bureaucracy, market forces, and professionalism. For Freidson, the locus of power is the main distinguishing feature of these systems, so that in a bureaucracy power lies with the organization, in market forces with the customer, and in the professions with the professional. Freidson's focus on professionalism as a system allows him to identify five interrelated elements which together constitute the characteristics of an ideal type of professionalism (2001, 127):

1. Specialized work in the officially recognized economy that is believed to be grounded in a body of theoretically based, discretionary knowledge and skill that is accordingly given special status in the labour force.
2. Exclusive jurisdiction in a particular division of labour created and controlled by occupational negotiation.
3. A sheltered position in both internal and external labour markets that is based on qualifying credentials created by the occupation.

4. A formal training programme lying outside the labour market that produces the qualifying credentials, which is controlled by the occupation and associated with higher education.
5. An ideology that asserts greater commitment to doing good work than to economic gain and to the quality rather than the economic efficiency of work.

Freidson's (2001) view of professionalism as one of three ways of organizing work generates a list of characteristics, like those identified by trait theorists. Unlike trait theory, however, these characteristics are not isolated items but rather interdependent parts of a complete system.

Dingwall & Fenn's (1987) analysis of the role of the state and the legal system in the regulation of the professions complements Freidson's system by including aspects of accountability as well as the power of the professions.

The complete system of power and accountability inherent in this combined view of professionalism is appropriate for expert services which have diagnostic and prescriptive dimensions. In these services, neither market forces nor bureaucracies can ensure that clients get the services they need. It may be argued that teaching in higher education as analysed by Butcher, Davies & Highton (2006) is, or should be, this kind of expert service. It is therefore of interest to explore what those teaching in higher education think of the requirements for this form of professionalism, and how far recent reforms in the evaluation of quality in higher education in England facilitate the delivery of professional services.

### **Professionalism and teaching in higher education**

The discussion of professionalism in education in general takes a trait theory approach where the essential characteristics of professionalism are sought and developed (c.f. Evans, 2008; Whitty, 2008). The lists of essential characteristics are often short. For instance, Macfarlane (2004) and Lunt (2008) reduce professionalism to an ethical project, Light, Cox & Calkins (2009) rely entirely on reflective practice, while Nixon *et al.* (2001) combine only ethical and reflective elements and reject the self-regulatory dimensions of professionalism.

Cheng (2012) links power, accountability and moral commitment as elements of academic professionalism in higher education. Cheng's formulation of professionalism conceptualizes the academic as providing expert services to students, and with a moral though not a contractual

relationship with them. He also positions higher education as a public good, which is compatible with a virtue ethics approach to professionalism. He notes, however, that institutions in the UK do currently have a contractual relationship with students, and failure to deliver the service can be prosecuted in the courts. For Cheng, the institutions of higher education are properly subject to a 'hard' accountability to the government and indirectly to the society, while academic professionals should concentrate on their 'soft' moral commitment accountability to students.

Macfarlane (2004) develops at length the virtue ethics approach to academic professionalism by exploring the way virtues can guide the kind of 'soft' accountability Cheng seems to have in mind. The virtues for university teaching identified by Macfarlane are: respectfulness, sensitivity, pride, courage, fairness, openness, restraint, and collegiality. These are reasonable things to expect of university teachers, and their adequate expression would be a natural development of a healthy learning organization. However, they form the background to teaching rather than the substance of the activity. If university teachers are to be fully accountable for the uses or abuses of their power, there must be hard accountability for the delivery of the service as well as soft accountability.

Sadler (2011) argues for an academic professionalism where professionals and professional bodies assume specific functions. As developed by Sadler, these are compatible with the formulations of Dingwall & Fenn (1987), Freidson (2001) and Koehn (1994). His main area of concern is the lack of collegial mechanisms in higher education for assuring the validity and reliability of assessing student work, but his point is more widely applicable. In calling for the formation of a profession of university teaching, he is obliged to rely on convenient lists of attributes of professionalism taken from trait theory, which lack the sense of a systematic approach to accountability for the delivery of expert services developed in the present paper.

The researchers cited above have found something in the literature on professionalism to support their positions, but not all authors have found professionalism helpful for meeting their concerns. The term 'professional' is sometimes applied to non-academic staff in universities to distinguish them from academics (Holbrook and Bourke, 2012), implying a fundamental polarization between the academic and the professional. Leihy (2011) uses references to professionalism to argue against the formation of a profession of university teaching and to reject any declaration of a public oath by academic staff. Cheng (2009) interviewed academic staff in a UK university

and found that while they all considered themselves to be professionals, they had a wide range of views on the defining characteristics of professions. In his discussion of whether or not university teaching is a profession, Cheng (2009) found arguments both in favour of and against the proposition, reflecting the lack of consensus in the literature on the defining characteristics of professionalism.

If the literature on professionalism lacks consensus, it does not also have to be interpreted as incoherent. The present paper has identified forms of professionalism which link power, accountability and moral commitment and which could be applied to teaching in higher education.

### Design of study

This study focuses on the power of professionals to do what they need to do, and on professional accountability. Volunteers in a United Kingdom Russell Group university completed questionnaires and participated in individual interviews and a focus group discussion to explore their views on professionalism in teaching in higher education in a qualitative study (see Table 1 for participant profiles).

Participant No.	Discipline	Position	Experience (years)	Contract
1)	Education	Director of Programmes	8	F/T
2)	Education	Director of Programmes	20	F/T tenure
3)	Education	Senior Teaching Fellow	10	P/T tenure
4)	Education	Lecturer	12	F/T
5)	Modern Languages	Lecturer	29	F/T tenure
6)	Modern Languages	Teaching Fellow	4	F/T
7)	Modern Languages	Professor	40	F/T tenure
8)	Education	Lecturer	4	F/T tenure
9)	Chemistry	Reader	13	F/T tenure
10)	Physics & Astronomy	Professor	33	F/T

**Table 1: Participant profile (F/T=Full Time, P/T= Part Time)**

Data on participants' views on professional power were collected using a survey questionnaire based on Freidson's (2001) system of professionalism, individual semi-structured interviews, and a focus group presentation followed by discussion. Participants' views on professional accountability as formulated by Dingwall & Fenn were explored through individual semi-structured interviews, and a focus group presentation followed by discussion. Not all of the participants took part in the individual interviews and focus

group. All interview and discussion material was recorded, transcribed and coded for analysis.

## **Findings**

There was no difference between modern languages and other disciplines regarding conceptions of professionalism in teaching, and all participants claimed to be professionals.

### ***Conceptions of professionalism in higher education teaching***

Some participants were aware that their professionalism was not the same as that claimed by other professions. Participants interviewed considered themselves professional partly because of their qualifications for teaching in higher education, although there was some awareness that Higher Education Academy qualifications may not be sufficiently rigorous. Participants partly based their claims to professionalism on their dedication to doing the job well, and most believed that having a PhD has been and continues to be the main requirement for higher education teaching. Status, or lack thereof, was an issue for some participants, although they were personally secure in their status as university lecturers or professors. The professionalism of one participant came close to Freidson's system of professionalism, but as a qualified school teacher rather than a university lecturer.

### ***The diagnostic element in higher education teaching***

Participants considered the diagnostic element in higher education teaching to have an impact on course and curriculum design, the development of teaching practices, and the monitoring of the progress of individual students. There was concern that impartial diagnosis of student needs, lacks and wants may be compromised by treating students as clients or customers.

### ***Legal responsibility in higher education teaching***

In spite of acknowledging a significant diagnostic element in their work, participants had no sense of threat from legal action for negligence. Nevertheless, a need for a professional approach to teaching in higher education was identified in relation to recent increases in student fees in England and the government policy of reframing the student as the client of a professional service. The participants considered that academics have responded appropriately to these new pressures by submitting themselves to managerial systems of evaluation. Participants felt that university teaching had not been sufficiently controlled in the past, and that Higher Education Academy training coupled with Quality Assurance Agency evaluation represented an improvement.

### ***The need for a professional body with entry requirements and membership independent of employment***

No evidence was obtained for the need for a professional body with entry requirements and membership independent of employment. Participants acknowledged that the professional organizations that exist in higher education had no statutory power to exclude aspiring members, as is the case in the professions in general.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

Two research questions were posed in this study:

1. Is there any difference between modern languages lecturers and lecturers in other disciplines in their conceptions of professionalism in higher education teaching?
2. Is professionalism a helpful term to apply to quality teaching in higher education, and if so, in what way may it be helpful?

The data obtained go some way towards answering the research questions, at least for the small and self-selected group of participants.

The finding that there was no difference in views of professionalism among different academic disciplines may reflect a full integration of modern languages lecturers into the culture of their university. However, modern languages lecturers really do have a more complete notion of teaching than their colleagues in other disciplines, and the findings show that they underestimate the value of their own expertise.

Teachers in higher education trust managerial approaches to evaluating the teaching service. They believe that these systems will take precedence over those described by Dingwall & Fenn (1987) which regulate other professions through an exclusive license to practice legitimized by the vulnerability of individual practitioners to legal action. Legal accountability for professional teaching in higher education has not been tested in the courts yet, but there is no reason to believe that current quality control systems will protect lecturers from legal action. The continuation of traditional beliefs in academic freedom and research qualifications, albeit within a new framework of accountability, may leave lecturers exposed to unexpected legal action. Where university lecturers, either individually or collectively, take diagnostic decisions about student needs, lacks, and wants in the provision of what has become in England a very expensive service paid for



by the student client, professional systems of accountability apply. The lack of the institutions of professionalism in higher education teaching may turn out to be a serious problem for all lecturers, including those in modern languages.

Professionalism conceived as occupational power and privilege is of little value. However, professionalism as a system for the validation of professional knowledge, skills and attitudes, awarding the power to apply these to the provision of important services and applying appropriate systems of accountability, gives a useful perspective on the profession of teaching in higher education. Participants in this study saw no role for a professional organization, but perhaps only a properly constituted profession can ensure that members are prepared and protected in carrying out their duty to their clients and to the society as a whole.

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# 15

## Whose Genre Awareness? The Case of Medical Titles

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### Introduction

Whether it is employed for descriptive or pedagogic purposes, genre analysis relies on the assumption that communication in specialised domains is ritually encoded in ways that are most salient to the members of those communities. By researching their discourse, analysts can make explicit the conventional features of each genre – that is, the norms that regulate its form and function in everyday practice. Genres are something ‘out there’, living organisms whose life is independent of our ability to dissect and explain them.

The range of stakeholders engaged more or less consciously in genre analysis is potentially large: from linguists, language teachers and translators to publishers, editors and copywriters. In academia, aspiring scholars are presented with a plethora of guidelines, specimens and handbooks for producing texts fit to purpose. In offices and shops, new recruits are regularly bombarded with tips and tricks on ‘how things are done here’ through language.

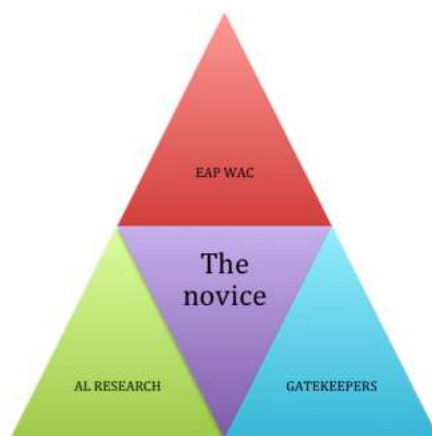
Against this diverse and rather confusing backdrop, one of the tenets of EAP is that learning is facilitated by greater *genre awareness* (cf. Swales 2000; Yayli 2011). For Johns (2008: 239), this is one of “the principal goals for a novice literacy curriculum”. A teacher/trainer is someone that can help students to notice what makes each genre unique and hone their writing/speaking skills to match their observations. But is genre awareness limited to educational settings? What is known of its role outside/after the classroom?

The present study is a part of a project driven by these questions. It reflects a concern voiced elsewhere – though not often enough – by authors researching the mismatch between instructional material and empirical data. For example, Paltridge (2002: 125) complains that “nearly all of the literature on thesis and dissertation writing consists of handbooks and guides with,

apart from a few notable exceptions, very little analysis having been carried out o[n] actual texts”. And more recently, Millar et al. (2013) found a significant discrepancy between journals’ guidelines on the passive voice and actual usage in the same journals. The overall impression is that genre awareness (its content as well as its degree) varies with experience and from person to person.

If we accept that the advice provided to novice or aspiring members of specialised communities differs according to its source, there are at least three authorities regulating academic English (Figure 1):

- authors of textbooks and writing manuals addressed to L1 (WAC) and/or L2 (EAP) readers;
- applied linguists offering insights from research and empirical data;
- gatekeepers in the field (editors, reviewers, senior colleagues, etc.).



**Figure 1: Potential sources of genre knowledge for novice academics**

Although the three sources may partly overlap, each one arguably has its own awareness of what counts as textually pertinent in a given genre. As a result, the novice may be confronted with potential tensions and inconsistencies between educational material, empirical evidence and gatekeeping practices.

A simple test of the variation present within this framework is to compare guidelines dealing with quantitative aspects of a certain genre. Measurable features are easily verifiable and less exposed to subjectivity. The case in point chosen in this study are the titles of research articles appearing in (bio)medical journals, whose strategic significance for editors, authors and readers has generated a fair amount of linguistic research.

## Titles in biomedical journals

Despite their diminutive nature, titles are “serious stuff” (Swales 1990: 224). They allow readers to locate relevant content, are used for indexing purposes and – most importantly, from the author’s perspective – showcase a publication’s strengths. The way titles are structured tends to reflect disciplinary and/or editorial preferences (Soler 2011) and usually adopts one of following options [my examples]:

- declarative or full sentence (*Diabetes risk linked to age in adults*)
- question (*Does diabetes risk increase with age in adults?*)
- nominal groups (*Age link evidence in adult diabetes*)
- compound (*Diabetes and age: increased risk for adults*)

Apart from the interrogative form, all of the examples above are *informative* (or *conclusive*), because they anticipate the article’s conclusions; in so doing, they attract the reader’s attention but simultaneously run the risk of being over-optimistic. Goodman (2000: 915) says “I do not know why informative titles are becoming more popular. It may be unconscious mimicking, or maybe researchers, sponsors of trials, or journal editors prefer them. We live in a ‘soundbite’ society, and there is evidence that doctors sometimes make clinical decisions from the titles of journal articles”. Sisó (2009), however, found that *descriptive* (or *indicative*) titles, which only detail the object of the research, remained prevalent over a range of biomedical journals published in 2006.

Turning from structural features to length, Lewison and Hartley (2005) report an average of around 13 words per title in articles, notes and reviews from British biomedical journals published in 1981-2001. The figure for original articles in the *New England Journal of Medicine* was 11.6 words in 2003, 11.3 in 2004, and 9.9 in 2005 (Wang & Bai 2007). Soler (2007) quotes an average of 15.48 words for 1996-2002 research papers in *American Journal of Cardiology* and *Journal of Hepatology*. Jacques and Sebire (2010) examined articles in *BMJ*, *Lancet* and *Journal of Clinical Pathology* for 2005, finding that the most cited had 18 and the least cited 9 words per title.

Writing manuals also address title length but tend to do so in very vague terms. For Day (1995: 15-16), a title consists of “the fewest possible words that adequately describe the contents of the paper... Occasionally, titles are too short [...] Much more often, titles are too long. Ironically, long titles are often less meaningful than short ones [...] Most titles that are too short are too short because they include general rather than specific terms”. Swales

and Feak (2004: 278) only warn authors that “the expected length of RP [i.e. research paper] titles is very much a disciplinary matter. In some areas, such as the life sciences, titles are becoming longer and looking more and more like full sentences”.

The need for closer integration between empirical research and pedagogical advice dealing with titles was first signalled by Lewison and Hartley (2005). However, the picture would not be complete without mention of the gatekeepers’ influence: editors in particular are likely to be in the business of shaping what submissions look like, but “recommendations of scientific journal editors regarding article titles are largely based on their personal experiences” (Paiva et al. 2012: 509) and therefore subjective.

## Material and methods

Biomedical journals tend to show considerable interest in language-related topics, partly reflecting their effort to improve communication within the discipline and between researchers and practitioners (e.g. Horton 1995; Kassirer & Angell 1997; Rzepa 2011; Liumbruno et al. 2013). A recent contribution of this type appeared in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* (henceforth *JCI*), a leading journal published by the American Society for Clinical Investigation whose entire archive (since 1924) is accessible online. The homepage informs us that *JCI* is “a top-tier venue for discoveries in basic and clinical biomedical research that will advance the practice of medicine [...] an ideal home for authors seeking the broadest audience for their most important work” ([www.jci.org](http://www.jci.org)).

The piece is an article from the Executive Editor (Neill 2007) with detailed guidelines for prospective authors, including advice on how to plan and write a research paper (title, abstract, results, discussion, introduction, methods, figures) and manage the peer-review process. What matters here is the paragraph on titles, which opens with these tips: “Start with an appropriate title, not one that inflates the relevance of your findings and not one that claims to cure cancer and the common cold. And it need not be long: 15 words should suffice (the limit at the *JCI*)” (Neill 2007: 3599-3600).

Taking this advice as a starting point, I decided to explore variations in the title-length requirements of *JCI*, based on the following data:

- the word limit specified in the journal’s Instructions to Authors over the years, partially available through Wayback Machine ([www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org));

- the length of titles appearing in the journal during the same period, from the *JCI* online archive;
- the average length of article titles in PubMed, taking a recent sample as control ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed)).

### ***Instructions to Authors***

Word length was first regulated in December 1998 (my emphasis here and subsequently): “The title itself should be no longer than 14 words, be descriptive of the work, and understandable to the readership of a general journal”.<sup>10</sup> In October 1999, the requirement becomes: “The manuscript title should be as concise as possible while conveying the essential conclusion of the paper. Titles must be no longer than 17 words [...] The Editors reserve the right to reword titles, with the final approval of the authors”. The January 2007 version states instead that “The manuscript title should be concise while conveying the essential conclusion of the paper. Titles must be no longer than 15 words”. Finally in April 2012, authors are informed that “The manuscript title should be clear, concise, descriptive and limited to 10 words including conjunctions”.

### ***Titles***

A total of 745 titles were considered, belonging to the Research Articles published in one volume (i.e. six issues) of *JCI* for each of the years 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2013. As a control, a random selection of 100 titles in the PubMed database was taken from the first one hundred ‘clinical trials’ (the text type closest to *JCI*’s research articles) published in 2012. When calculating title length, hyphenated forms count as one word, so a character count was also performed for greater precision.

### **Results**

The figures detailing title-length at 5-year intervals and in 2013 are given in Table 1 below. Before the implementation of a word limit, the average count is 16.52 words (1997), then falls to 12.87 with the 17 word limit (2002) and, interestingly, remains similar (12.92) when the limit is lowered to 15 words (2007); five years later (2012), with the same limit in place,<sup>11</sup> the figure rises to 14.31. But the greatest change occurs after the 10 word limit, with the average falling to 9.61 words in 2013. Over the whole period considered,

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<sup>10</sup> The 1998 word limit was very short lived and is not covered by the corpus. As it can be difficult to reconstruct developments over time relying on online material alone, I apologise for any errors or omissions.

<sup>11</sup> As the switch to 10 words, introduced in April 2012, appears to have been fully implemented in the latter part of the year, it does not affect the 2012 issues analysed here.

therefore, research article titles in this journal have seemingly become 43% shorter.

A second aspect is the degree of flexibility present within such data, as shown by standard deviation (SD) and word range. The introduction of a word limit appears to have constrained length variation, with the upper range dropping sharply between 1997 (33 words) and 2002 (24 words) and SD almost halved (from 5.45 to 2.78) over the same period. A major change occurred in 2013, when SD fell to 0.90, and the upper word range to only 11 words. This suggests that the latest limit is being enforced far more strictly.

	1997	2002	2007	2012	2013	Control
Volume	100	109	117	122	123	-
Issues	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	1-6	-
Titles	182	72	126	173	192	100
W. limit	-	17	15	15	10	-
W. mean	16.15	12.87	12.92	14.31	9.61	14.95
Compound	23%	-	-	-	-	46%
Ch. mean	123	101	102	106	79	114
W. SD	5.45	2.78	2.57	3.47	0.90	6.06
W. range	5-33	6-24	6-19	5-24	7-11	5-32

**Table 1: Title length in *JCI* and Control (PubMed)**

The control data – indicative of the general pattern in medical journals (as of 2012) – highlights two interesting aspects. Firstly, average title length (14.95 words) is similar to the 2012 figure for *JCI* (14.31), while SD is higher (arguably due to the diverse sample of journals in the control). Secondly, compound structures – those incorporating a colon or full stop – are present in almost half (46%) of control titles, while they disappeared from *JCI* after 1997.

For an additional comparison, I checked the title-length requirements of similar journals, as stated in their online Instructions to Authors. The 2012 edition of *Journal Citation Reports* (based on articles published in 2010-2011) ranks *JCI* 4th by impact factor in the ‘Medicine, Research & Experimental’ category. The 1st journal in the list (*Nature Medicine*) only has a word limit for titles of Short Communications, i.e. 10 words or 90 characters; the 2nd (*Annual Review of Medicine*) gives no limit; the 3rd (*Journal of Experimental Medicine*) specifies that “the manuscript title must be limited to 130 characters (including spaces)”. This indicates that title-



length policies can and do vary substantially across top-ranking international journals, even within the same disciplinary area.

A problematic aspect of these measurements is of course the yardstick used to define title length. What counts as one word may range from short lexemes (e.g. *novel*) to long compounds (e.g. *hypercholesterolemia-associated*), with the latter taking up far more space but also proving more informative and harder to process. Another problem is the use of hyphens, which are often optional (thus *T-lymphocytes* counts as one word, but *T cells* as two).

The simplest way to avoid such drawbacks is to quote length in characters – a better criterion than words, especially for very short texts. The following titles from *JCI* (each measuring eight words) are a good example:

- *An obligate cell-intrinsic function for CD28 in Tregs* [54 ch];
- *Renal tubular NEDD4-2 deficiency causes NCC-mediated salt-dependent hypertension* [80 ch].

There is in fact evidence that biomedical papers whose titles have fewer characters are more likely to be cited in the literature (Paiva et al. 2012).

## Discussion

Although only a modest contribution to the literature, this study raises a number of issues about genre awareness that deserve consideration. The main one is whether gatekeepers' guidelines express subjective perceptions of what is textually appropriate. The risk, one might argue, is to generalise features of academic writing that appeal to experts (or journals) but do not reflect actual practices across the board. The advice given in textbooks and handbooks (often the work of senior scholars) is also prone to the same risk. A second question, suggested by the comparison between similar journals, is whether editorial teams are in fact exerting a form of *genre ownership* by applying requirements that make their serial *different* (rather than merely better or more impactful). In other words, are the generic features of biomedical titles journal-specific?

It is important to bear in mind that titles do not exist in isolation but are part of the publishing environment they serve. The editor of a well-respected medical journal offers this description of the wider picture: “We at the *BMJ* are poised, sometimes uncomfortably, between academia and journalism [...] The trend is undoubtedly for journals to become more like newspapers [...]

It's about readability and trying to grab people's attention in an ever more crowded world" (Smith 2000: 915). Thus more research is needed into the impact of specific title features, especially in terms of reader interest and retention; we also need to understand how different categories of readers respond to such features. Finally, the bibliometric evidence of a link between title length and citation rates remains patchy and mostly indirect (as it may involve a number of other co-factors).

Applied linguists can contribute through corpus-assisted investigations of single journals or disciplines (cf. Haggan 2004), focusing on current practices rather than the genre awareness of gatekeepers and EAP instructors. In Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas's words, "By analysing how language is used [...] and heightening awareness of its specific and contextually-motivated features, applied linguistics has an important role to play in helping scientific researchers participate more effectively in the discourse practices of their field" (2005: 45). On the other hand, as a note of caution, we should be ready to admit that 'normal' is not always best in academic writing. Disciplinary experts may put forward recommendations that, albeit apparently idiosyncratic, point to evolutionary improvements in genre design that others fail to notice and no quantitative analysis will ever expose.

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# 16

## Language and affect in digital media: Articulations of grief in online spaces for mourning

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### Introduction

Digital media offer new domains for people to articulate aspects of their everyday self and share resources, views, attitudes, and emotions by variously combining the affordances and constraints of different media. The study of users' articulations of self and moments of sharing opens up new lines of communication for applied linguists, sociolinguists, discourse analysts, linguistic anthropologists, and scholars of computer-mediated communication interested in developing a nuanced understanding of digital practices (see Barton and Lee 2013, Georgakopoulou 2006, Jones and Hafner 2012).

The present paper considers articulations of grief in online spaces for mourning, which constitute a unique window into contemporary ways of displaying and sharing sympathy and/or pain at the face of irrevocable loss. The focus on digital mourning encourages a shift from modernity's lamenting over the loss of 'traditional' grieving and mourning practices and a turn to the study of ways of dealing with death and dying in current Western socio-cultural contexts that are characterized by individualized<sup>12</sup> and medicalized regimes of emotion (see Wilce, 2009). Furthermore, the exchange of support resources, attitudes and emotions accompanying the extraordinary moment of one's encounter with death renders digital mourning spaces apt for an in-depth understanding of fundamental expressions of affect.

Digital mourning practices raise a set of questions worthy of empirical investigation: first, what types of grieving practices are encouraged in these new domains and how does grief become linguistically articulated? Secondly, what types of meanings are shared and how does grief become socially

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<sup>12</sup> As Billig (cited in Wetherell, 2013) has pointed out, thinking and emoting are not a set of hidden processes taking place in an individual's mind emerging in uncontested statements like 'I am angry', 'I am sad'.

intelligible in spaces for digital mourning? Finally, how can we study digital mourning systematically and what types of insights can such explorations offer to the study of digital affect more broadly? This paper seeks to shed light to the aforementioned questions to the extent made possible by the discussion of preliminary findings from an on-going empirical study of grieving online.

### **Grieving practices in online spaces for mourning**

Spaces for mourning on the Internet have existed since the 1990s in the form of cyber-memorials, web memorials, virtual cemeteries, and shrines, which have been mainly characterized by static content and low interactivity. More recently, popular social networking sites (henceforth SNSs), characterized by user-generated content and high interactivity and encouraging participants to communicate with people already part of their extended social network (Boyd and Ellison 2007, cited in Athique 2012, p.103) have turned into the primary sites for mourning, grieving and memorializing the deceased. Post-mortem profiles on SNSs now form ‘techno-spiritual spaces in which the identities of the deceased are intersubjectively produced by the contributions of SNS friends’ (Brubaker and Vertesi, 2010) raising issues of entitlement to grieving and bereavement in semi-public domains. At the same time, activity on SNSs generally encourages relational maintenance and technologically augments active and latent social bonds (Athique 2012, p.103), providing users with affordances for constructing and sustaining post-mortem relationality and bonds that can help the bereaved cope with their loss.

As previous research on MySpace post-mortem personal profiles and comments has shown (Brubaker and Hayes 2011), post-mortem social networking practices include among others the following: *sharing memories*, *posting updates* and *maintaining connections with the deceased* via comments flooding users’ personal profile page for at least up to the 3 years after the user’s death. Similar findings regarding the content of the comments posted have been reported in recent empirical investigations of post-mortem messages in a range of online platforms, including memorial websites created by parents who have experienced a loss due to sudden infant death syndrome (Finlay and Krueger 2011), online forums for the bereaved by suicide (Schotanus-Dijkstra et al. 2013) and posts following the death of Michael Jackson on Twitter, TMZ.com and Facebook (Sanderson and Cheong 2010).

This paper focuses on Facebook, whose growing popularity after 2009 has turned it into one of the most popular sites for sharing everyday moments, including moments of sadness and grief. A digital memorial on Facebook can be created as a new page which allows the addition of new ‘friends’ and is particularly useful in the case of deceased celebrities or public figures. The page is headed as R.I.P. (Rest In Peace) followed by the name of the departed. When it comes to non-celebrities, Facebook memorials are most commonly created by family members or friends of the deceased through the application *Facebook Groups*. Group sites can be set up as *open*, making posts visible to all users, members and non-members alike, or *closed*, making posts visible to group members only. Members of the group can post on the site’s wall, upload photos to shared albums, and invite members who are friends to group events.

### **A computer-mediated discourse field of grieving online**

The present study of online grief has been informed by a discourse-centred online ethnography approach (DCOE) (Androutsopoulos 2008) involving the monitoring of a range of sites to establish (i) the kinds of activities unfolding online in relation to grieving (e.g. communicating with the bereaved, the deceased or group members), (ii) participants (e.g. bereaved vs. online memorial ‘tourists’) and (iii) different types of interactivity involved (e.g. guestbook comments, post-mortem wall posts, private messages, R.I.P. posts on SNSs, etc.). The field of research covered interrelated websites making up a *computer-mediated discourse field* representing spaces for online grieving, including funeral home webpages, Facebook memorialised profile pages, online obituaries, Facebook R.I.P. sites and pages created following someone’s death.

One specific R.I.P. group site joined by 1,265 members was selected for close study so as to encourage a situated approach to the study of grieving. Upon reflection *advenience* (Barthes, 2000 [1980]), that is a sense of dynamism and liveliness emanating from the particular site, rather than convenience, constituted the guiding principle for the group site’s selection. The group site in question was created immediately after the death of an 18-year-old college student in May 2012 (to be referred here as J. for reasons of anonymity) by six of his closest friends in a state of Georgia, US.

The remainder of the paper discusses the linguistic-affective style of grieving for J. in two online sites where mourning for his loss is publicly displayed: the online guestbook hosted by the funeral home entrusted with the

organization of the official mourning services for J.'s death and the R.I.P. group page created on Facebook by J.'s friends.

### **Grieving in formal online spaces: online guestbook comments**

The funeral home's online guestbook is hosted on a separate section of its official website and takes the form of a linearly organized forum reserved for the public posting of formal expressions of condolences and messages of sympathy. Online guestbook comments cover a period of ten days since the day immediately following J.'s death. Activity on the guestbook, which features fifty-two comments in total, is launched by the funeral home with the post '*Please accept our deepest condolences*' and peaks on the day of the visitation service, when 51.9% of the total number of comments are posted. In the ensuing ten days, posting activity decreases significantly and no further comments are posted after the final brief post '*I am sorry.*'

The funeral home's online guestbook includes comments that are authored by people who knew the family or the deceased as well as by members of the wider community who don't appear to have been acquainted with the deceased or the family but nonetheless, feel compelled to express their sympathy. The comments are predominantly addressed to the bereaved family and in only three of the comments do the authors address the deceased directly. In terms of the linguistic style of comments, we notice the high use of the personal pronoun 'you' and other function words as well as the predominance of words that relate to conventional Christian funerary expressions, such as 'god', 'praying', 'prayers', 'family', 'comfort'. Function words include a higher count of personal pronouns 'you' (90) and 'your' (44) compared to first person personal pronouns.

Online guestbook comments illustrate the linguistic style of conventionalized expressions of Christian sympathy and signal the writers' expression of support and comfort towards the bereaved family. The funeral home's online forum for grieving comments constitutes a formal online space for mourning, where grief becomes socially intelligible through a solemn acceptance of the event of death expressed in and through the adherence to convention and etiquette. It can be argued that the afore-described linguistic style indexes ideologies of mourning that construct the labour involved as a process with a set ending point when the disrupted social order is restored and life can finally return to a sense of normality.



## Grieving in informal online spaces: Facebook R.I.P. group site posts

The Facebook R.I.P. group site presents a richer and rather more complex picture of grieving activity, as will be shown in this section. Posting on the group site dates from the creation of the page in 2012 and covers a year and five months following the death of J.

At the time of writing this paper, the group site numbered 525 logs of a total 29, 136 words ranging from 281 words maximum to 2 words minimum. Out of the 1,265 group members listed on the site, 198 can be considered as active participants, having logged at least one post and 24 members as most active, having logged more than five posts from the day of the site's creation.

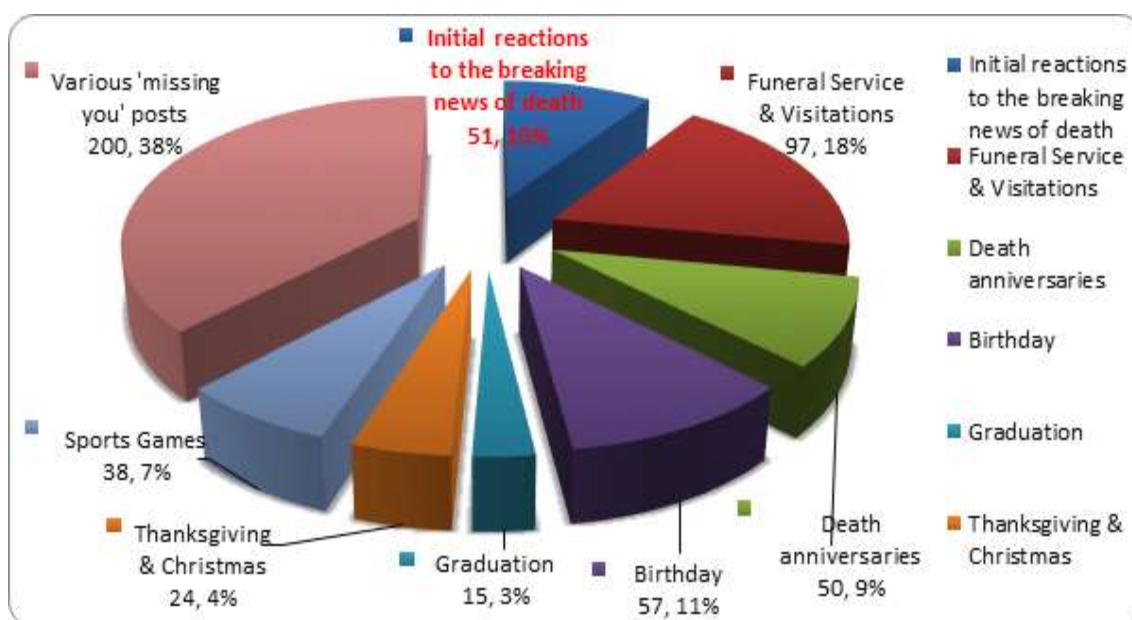


Figure 1. Distribution of threads in the Facebook R.I.P. for J. log corpus

Posts cover a range of topics which have been coded in the corpus as *threads* depending on their predominant content type (see Figure 1). Posting activity is at its highest in the days immediately before and after the set mourning ceremonies, namely the visitations and funeral service and decreases over time although never entirely ceasing. Posting activity peaks at specific moments over the year associated with commemoration events such as the weekly, monthly and annual death anniversaries or celebrations, such as J.'s missed school graduation, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and his birthday anniversary. In terms of its content, the group site illustrates the *spatial and temporal expansion of* grieving and mourning practices (cf. Brubaker, Hayes and Dourish 2013) and provides the bereaved with a mediated space for

mourning before, contemporaneously to and after the set ceremonies, which are fixed in time and place.

In terms of the linguistic style of comments posted by Facebook users on the group site, they are characterized by direct addressivity to the deceased rather than to other members of the group or the bereaved family. Posts contain conventionalized expressions of affect associated with expressions of sympathy typical of American English (for instance, 'we miss you', 'we love you', 'you will always be loved and missed'). Features of new media language are occasionally embedded in the published posts alongside standard spellings and grammar (for example, 'love u bro...r.i.p/ :( ', 'truly miss but neva forgotten # R.I.P. J.'). Furthermore, a high level of second-person and first-person personal pronouns, past tense verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and negations as well as a relatively high word count per comment is observed in contrast to the typical brevity of Facebook updates, foregrounding the writers' high emotional involvement in the communicated message. In sum, writers of Facebook posts are seen to break away from the conventionality of expressions and displays of sympathy and support typical of the online guestbook and analogous formal spaces for grieving. Instead they favour a linguistic style which can index a high degree of involvement and affectivity.

The Facebook R.I.P. group site functions as a semi-public diary of grief and sadness. Online writing practices in this informal space are based on a mixture of standard and non-standard spellings signalling the familiarity of users with the social networking site environment and at the same time indexing ordinary practices of grieving among young adults. Most notably, conventional funerary expressions appearing at important discourse junctures of the message combine with turns of everyday talk, such as greetings and leave-takings, terms of address and endearment and construct a sense of unbroken post-mortem relationality and bonds with the deceased. In sum, on the social networking site of Facebook, grief becomes socially intelligible through its weaving into everyday life and relationality. It can be argued that the hybrid, informal linguistic style described above indexes ideologies of mourning that construct the labour involved as an on-going and never-ending painful process that does not aim to the restoration of the disrupted social order (see discussion of the linguistic style of the online guestbook comments) but rather to the continuation and expansion of bonds with the deceased.

## Grieving in informal online spaces: R.I.P. posts as narratives

This section concludes with some remarks on the type of narrative activity observed in the Facebook R.I.P. group site for J. and its role in weaving grief into everyday life and relationality. Through their posts, writers on the site record and share memories of the deceased, post updates on their daily life and maintain their bonds to him or in some cases appeal to him for help or comfort at times of hardship. If we are to understand narrative as a cognitively and discursively complex genre activity that routinely contains some or all of the following discourse components: description, chronology, evaluation and explanation but also routinely involving questions, clarifications, challenges, and speculations about what might possibly have transpired (Ochs and Capps 2001, pp.18-19), most of the posts published on the group site qualify as everyday narratives.

More specifically, posts which combine the abbreviation R.I.P. (also spelled as RIP) at the opening or closing of the post, one or more conventional parting expressions (e.g. *I am missing you*) and additional material qualify as a *RIP story*. RIP stories make part of the semi-public archived diary of grief emerging on the site and can be further classified into the following types: (i) breaking news stories: writers share the reported events or feeling states as they are still unfolding (ii) projections: tellers refer to events which are going to happen or create a fictional tale world made up of hopes, dreams and wishes (iii) past events: references to past moments of time in close proximity to the present moment of narration (cf. de Fina and Georgakopoulou 2011, Page 2010).

Finally, there are stories that cross cut the afore-listed categories and form a running thread that contributes to the overall coherence of individualized published posts published. An example of this type of narrative activity which forms a special type of discursive-affective resource is a story referred to in this paper as ‘the bracelet story’ which emerges in and through mini-statements included in eleven posts authored by nine different active group members at different points in the timeline. The trajectory of the ‘bracelet story’ starts on Day 3 in three posts written by the same writer and runs through eight additional posts authored by different authors on dates ranging from May 2011 to March 2012. The story refers to more than one hundred handmade memorial bracelets passed around at school and the church following J.’s death in honour of his memory. Bereaved friends wrapped the bracelets around their wrists on the day of the funeral and held on to them feelingly. In addition to J.’s friends, people who had never met J. took to wearing them, turning the bracelets into bonding icons.

In the course of the story's trajectory across posts, writers contribute a little slice of their own experience relating to the bracelet: hand-making it, wearing it, looking at it, talking to others about it, getting attached to it, refusing to remove it, losing it... Along with their reports, group members offer their own version of the meaning and salience of the bracelet for them as a symbol of honouring and remembering J., of loving and grieving for him. Their contributions thus expand its signification from a death bracelet to a bonding icon, a charm, or a prompt for engaging with grief and mourning in everyday ways that others can recognize and acknowledge. The story about the bracelet illustrates how members of the R.I.P. group construct, negotiate and re-affirm their membership to the group of grieving. It also foregrounds the salience of narrative activity in the context of online affective practices.

### **Concluding remarks**

The paper reported preliminary findings from an on-going project on grieving online. It was suggested that formal and informal spaces for grieving online are associated with different types of linguistic-affective styles, different ways of rendering grief socially intelligible and hence different meaning potential for writers and readers. Based on the data taken from a funeral home's online guestbook and a Facebook Rest in Peace (R.I.P.) Facebook group site, it was argued that such linguistic styles index different types of ideologies of mourning with differing emphasis on post-mortem relationality and bonds. Finally, it was suggested that informal spaces for mourning encourage the weaving of grief into everyday life through different types of narrative activity that lends coherence and affective power to individualized articulations of grief.

The above discussion suggests that if we are to do full justice to the complexity of affective articulations, we need to combine analyses of the linguistic-affective style of grieving online with the systematic study of narrative activity online. Narratives help grieving young adults to articulate their affective experience in more general terms and thus, contribute to the long process of coping with loss. Furthermore, narratives' trajectories across posts become vehicles of meaning making in which writers rework slices of their affective experience in online public writing.

To conclude, social networking sites such as Facebook can be described as a site for public and semi-public mourning, an expanding platform for enacting death and grief that takes the form of a publicly shared diary. On Facebook, the bereaved engage with grief that is socially situated in the daily lives of users (Brubaker, Hayes and Dourish 2013, p.161), foregrounding

that online spaces constitute socio-digital formations which are embedded in the larger societal, cultural, and subjective, structurations of lived experience and hence cannot be treated as something entirely new. There is scope for enriching the growing body of empirical content-based investigations of grieving online with contextual approaches to the study of networked language practices, calling attention to the linguistic-narrative style of grief and mourning and its associated ideologies.

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# 17

## **When the power of language becomes unjust – some issues facing mainstream education in Vietnam**

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### **Background**

Represented within the country of Vietnam are 54 different ethnic groups with over one hundred spoken languages, 28 of which have written scripts (Vu 2008; Lewis 2009; Kosonen 2004). The largest group - also the majority in the country - is Kinh, which accounts for 86 per cent of the total population of 91.94 million people (World Population Review 2013). The language of this majority group is Vietnamese, which is also the national language and the only official language used.

The Vietnamese language is also the dominant language in the education system despite the 1946, 1981 and 1992 State Constitutions and the Education Law of 2005, which all stated the right of ethnic minority children to receive primary education in their indigenous languages (Kosonen 2009). Most teachers are from the majority group and often have little or no knowledge of the language and cultures of the students from minority groups (ADB 2007). While there has been a growing number of ethnic minority languages introduced in schooling, most remain a subject and not the language of instruction, and the time spent learning the language can be as little as one period (45 minutes) per week (Vu 2008; World Bank 2009). As a result, an official report from the Vietnamese government still shows that the rate of minority children completing primary school in Vietnam (60.6%) is significantly lower than that recorded for the majority Kinh children (86.4%) (GSO 2006). One in five children never completes primary school, with language barriers and financial and cultural barriers thought to be the main reasons behind this figure (AITPN 2003; ADB 2007).

My research aims to develop a thick description of the learning situations of ethnic minority pupils in mainstream education in Vietnam in order to understand any difficulties that directly or indirectly affect their learning in schools. Ultimately, this research seeks to contribute to improvements in the

country's education quality, particularly the delivery of education for all groups of learners.

## **Literature Review**

Examining learners' cultures in order to understand the environments that impact and influence the learner is grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural approach. This theory contends that cultural artefacts, activities and concepts influence one's mental functioning (Ratner 2002), resulting in factors such as family, peers, school and teachers all playing a role in a child's development and learning (Conteh 2003).

### ***Inclusion of diversity - connecting culture with education***

One's culture is embedded with one's identity. I believe that recognising someone's identity also means recognising the culture with which she or he is associated. In understanding sociocultural theory, I think that if educators want to fully understand and respond to the diverse needs of their multi-ethnic learners and comprehend why they learn, behave, interact and think the way they do, referring to and making a connection with these learners' cultures is essential. In addition to this, Conteh and Brock (2010) argue that while learning is a process of participating, joining, and sharing ideas and understandings in order to construct new meanings, such a process is unlikely to be effectively co-constructed if disagreement exists between school and home.

Lending further support to the sociocultural approach, Cole (1998) posits that human behaviour should be understood relationally and contextually because thought is partly influenced by culture. When relating this to education, Cole develops Bronfenbrenner's (1979) diagram by using layers surrounding a learner to represent this dynamic. These layers include the influences of community, family, school, classroom and lessons planned by teachers, thus indicating that any interpretation about one learner's situation should not be viewed in isolation from all these surrounding influences.

Achieving an understanding of learners' failure or success must not take place separately from a consideration of the other factors or layers that surround them. This is why, when explaining the reasons behind the failure of many students, Cummins (2001) states that failure is mainly due to these students' identities, cultures and languages being diminished and misrepresented by wider society. Furthermore, Ogbu (1978; 1992) maintains that the way in which students from diverse cultures are disadvantaged educationally is also the way that their communities are historically



disadvantaged in their relations with society. Ogbu (1978; 1992) further observes that students across different societies who experience severe educational difficulties are likely to be those whose communities have inferior social status and are discriminated against by the dominant majority group. This, Cummins (2001) claims, is because the students perceive their identity as being endangered by such devaluation and believe that withdrawal from schooling is the only way for them to protect ‘their sense of self’.

Ogbu (1994) remarks that the historical, political and economic differences between different ethnic groups may lead to dissimilar cultural frames of reference, noting that these frames of reference are how the students view themselves and their peers and how others view them in the school setting. To effectively incorporate children from diverse cultures into education, their cultural references must not be disregarded by educators. Ladson-Billings (1995) also posits that a ‘culturally relevant pedagogy’ may help culturally diverse students succeed academically whilst effectively maintaining their identities. McCarty (1993) supports this by asserting that a child’s potential is realised when learning from a curriculum and pedagogy which is built on, and relevant to, their linguistic and cultural assets.

### ***Language issues for culturally diverse learners***

Referring to language theoretically whilst identifying factors that affect the learning of children whose home language is dissimilar from the school language, Krashen (1982) finds that there is a ‘silent period’ experienced by many learners. This silent period refers to the stage that commonly arises when learners are initially exposed to the target language and production in this language, unlike in the child’s mother tongue, is still very limited. When studying speech samples from a five-year-old Japanese girl, Hakuta (1974) observed that during the first three months of her exposure to English, the girl produced very little speech. This silent period, Krashen (1982) believes, occurs because learners are listening and learning to understand the language that they hear around them. Such behaviour reflects an internalisation of processing and making sense of new information - in this case a new language - before trying it out. The research findings on second language learners presented by Pica (1992) and Ellis, Tanaka and Yamazaki (1994) show that learners who ‘just listen’ comprehend as much as those who actively participate in oral activities. Krashen (1994) further claims that people are capable of developing a high level of language competence without any productive capacity. Postovsky (1974) states that when oral

practice was delayed during the early stage of instruction, the adult learners in his studies displayed a better development of language proficiency.

Approaching the silent period from an equality perspective, Bligh (2011) suggests that educators refer to learners' rights, including the right to remain silent. Bligh's work could be used to explain why many learners whose diverse backgrounds, languages and cultures may differ from the mainstream might be categorised as 'special educational needs': once the concept of *silence* is mistakenly interpreted, the silence of these learners is considered undesirable, and thus the silent period - while potentially not needed by all learners - is unlikely to be granted. Consequently, the *safe spaces* for ethnic minority learners discussed by Conteh and Brock (2010), however valuable such spaces may be, are also unlikely to be granted to learners.

Discussing the 'delay' experienced by second language learners, many scholars claim that while it may take up to two years for a second language learner to develop interpersonal communication skills, it can take much longer for the development of the full range of academic language skills (Cummins 1985; Skutnabb-Kangas 1981). In examining this point, Cummins (2000) identified two aspects of language proficiency, namely 'conversational' - also termed *contextualized language* (Cummins 1981) or *surface fluency* (Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukomaa 1976) - and 'academic'. The former was originally named *basic interpersonal communicative skills* (BICS), and the latter *cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP). The conversational language proficiency - BICS - refers to colloquial fluency in that language which should be developed between two and three years. The academic language proficiency - CALP - refers to a much higher level of language development which involves mastering language skills - such as synthesis, evaluation and analysis - that are believed to be obtained much later in the learning process, after five to seven years of learning the non-mother tongue language (Cummins 2000).

Different starting points mean that the learning of these children is inevitably not the same as that of those children whose first language is used in school. Conteh (2011) therefore calls for "a need to find ways to dialogically construct policies which allow schools and communities to build on their own funds of knowledge in teaching, learning and assessment" (p.14) for the benefit of all and not just some learners.

## Methods

An ethnographic approach was adopted in my research. This approach was chosen because ethnography is the study of people in natural settings (Brewer 2000), which has as its goal to depict a culture and to gain an understanding of things from the ‘native point of view’ of the participants (Malinowski 1922), as well as to understand what actions or events mean to the people we seek to understand (Spradley 1979). Gregory (Conteh *et al.* (2005) takes this idea further when describing ethnography in education as giving a voice to ordinary people, whilst challenging the researcher to question what is often considered to be the natural order of things. Ethnography, as suggested by Wolcott (1975), has much to offer to an attempt to answer the questions of *what, who, why, how*.

The data collection methods chosen are *participant observations* and *interviews*, and I have made use of them ethnographically so as to capture participants’ activities and their points of view in real-life settings and to understand them in relation to all the socio-cultural layers with which they are associated, such as school, home and community. Additionally, documents were collected and analysed for the study to support the development of a thick description of my studied cases.

A *case study* has been designed to ensure a wider variety of data, including documents, artefacts, interviews, observations and participant-observations, which will also allow me to closely examine the topic and the individuals being researched in a real-life environment, with participants studied in the contexts in which they live and learn. The object of the present case study is a school that enrolls largely pupils from ethnic minorities.

Four child participants were selected after careful observations of both their classroom settings and their personal situations. I decided to select participants who appeared to be struggling more than their peers in school, and I aim to find out why that has been the case.

The data collection process lasted roughly one year and spanned four main phases consisting of piloting, two main phases of data collection, and a follow-up period to cross-check and validate the data collected. As such, rich data comprising observational field notes, audio-recordings and documents have been collected.

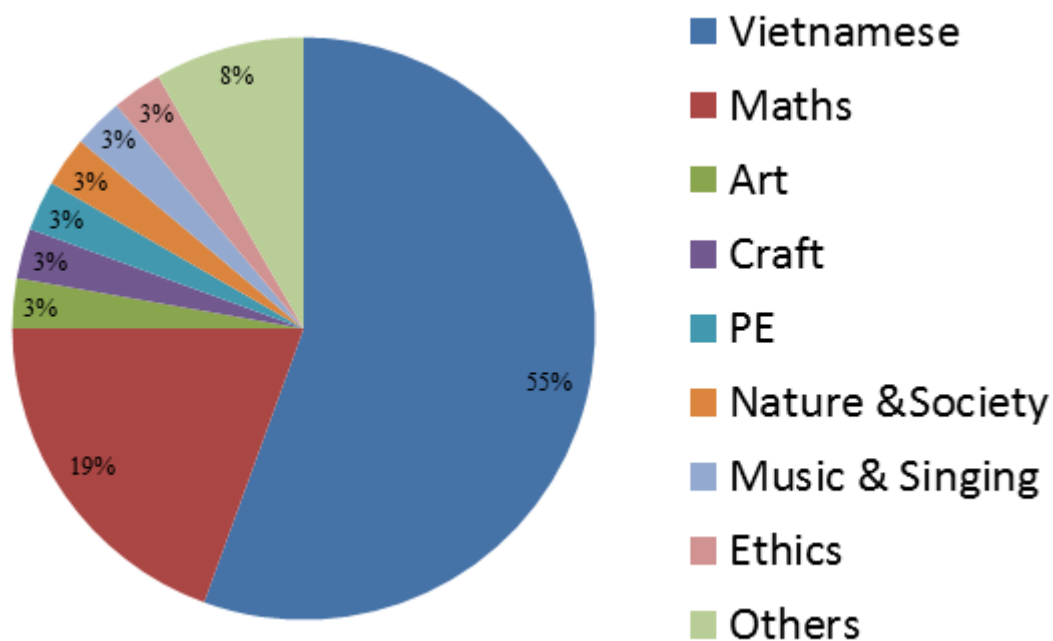
## Initial Findings and Discussions

Over the course of my data analysis, some major issues have emerged which appear to be significant influences in terms of affecting educational outcomes for culturally diverse learners. Given the limited space in this paper, only two major issues will be discussed here: the learning and assessment process and the potential consequences that follow assessment.

### *Learning and Assessment*

Vietnamese is not the home language for all the research informants, thus their language starting point is already lower than that of Vietnamese-speaking children. This point is also raised by Cummins (2000), who finds that the mother tongue language is key to a person's identity and that when such language, together with the culture and experiences of a student, are not recognised and validated in classroom interactions, that student's starting point is clearly a hindrance.

The diagram below portrays the subject weightings in primary schools in Vietnam. The results show that a large amount of time is spent on learning Vietnamese language literacy, including studying letters, sounds, vowels, the forming of words and sentences, handwriting, spelling, grammar and reading.



**Figure 1: Time allocated weekly for each subject**

Results from the research show that children in the first grade of primary school are formally tested four months after they enter the school by what

are called mid-year tests. The result from this test is weighted 1/3 for the whole academic year and is added to the result from the second test which is administered after another four months. The second test – the end-of-year test – is given a weighting of 2/3 of the whole academic year. The results from these two tests are used to calculate the final academic achievement for each learner. There are nine subjects to be studied but only two are tested: Vietnamese language and Mathematics.

At this point, pupils with scores of less than 50% in either Vietnamese language or Mathematics are given a second chance in a retest. If the score of the retest remains less than 50%, the children are required to retake the year. This means that only those who score 50% or more will be promoted to the next class level (Year Two).

This finding poses the question of *WHEN* is the best time to test? Referring back to the theory of learning for second language learners discussed above, I argue that these learners are still in their initial stage of developing their *basic interpersonal communicative skills* (BICS) and are nowhere near achieving *cognitive academic language proficiency* (CALP); consequently, formally testing them at this stage creates problems. Furthermore, early testing in this context goes against the second language learning theories cited above by failing to recognise the ‘silent period’ of these learners, thereby disallowing the ‘safe space’ that should be given to them at this stage of their learning.

The issues of ‘*WHAT*’ to test and ‘*HOW*’ to test are also significant in the research, with numerous issues relating to both test items and content as well as the administration of the tests. Given the allotted space, I will not discuss such issues in detail here, but generally speaking they highlighted a need to consider content appropriateness and its consistency and fairness. For example, part of the test requires examiners to select from Vietnamese literature or poetry taught during the year in order to assess the children’s reading skills, which results in different levels of reading ability being identified by different examiners. This ultimately allows room for inconsistency, as the children’s outcomes could depend on the examiners of the day and the choices they make.

### ***From assessment to categorisation – the link between second language learning and special educational needs***

While assessment results are used to decide final academic outcomes, for my research informants the results were further used to categorise these learners

as quick, slow or learning disabled. The pupils in my research experienced being labelled as learning disabled based on their test outcomes. The results of the repeated year are of particular importance in the process. If in the students' second year their academic results stay at less than 50%, the learning disabled category is applied to them, in most cases without any formal assessment by specialists.

Relating these observations to learning theory, surely one would realise that children who learn in a language other than their mother tongue face greater difficulties than those who do not. Not only do these children need to learn a new language, but they are also expected to master the academic content taught in this language with which they are not yet familiar. Explaining the low academic achievement of these children is not easy. (Hall *et al.* 2001) acknowledge that educators often find it challenging to differentiate between learning difficulties and the second language barrier encountered by learners. Examining the issue in the UK, these authors report that there are still cases where teachers equate low English skills with an intelligence deficit or learning problems. They advance the idea that low English proficiency should not be regarded as an indication of learning difficulties or special educational needs, and that the two issues – special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language (EAL) - must be separated (Hall *et al.* 2001). This seems to be a global issue, and as suggested by my study Vietnam is no exception,, with Vietnamese as an additional language (VAL) being equated with SEN.

Observations from my research also demonstrated that those students categorised as learning disabled then became almost invisible in their class, and that most of the time they were not supervised or asked to do the same learning tasks as their peers. This is similar to the situation observed by Rodriguez (2005), where children with special needs from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds were often placed in classrooms where the academic instruction was less challenging. We can see in cases where educators believe certain children's academic level is much lower than their peers, and this results in a less challenging learning environment, that this may further widen the language gap between these EAL learners and their peers who learn in their mother tongue because the former are not challenged to realise their full potential. Clearly this is not beneficial for these learners, as many researchers confirm that students, including those with special needs who are from diverse cultural and linguistic background, learn more effectively when the content learnt is sufficiently challenging and well-structured (Smith and Sanders 1981; Schuck 1981; Brophy 1986).

Wrongly categorising learners due to the confusion between special educational needs and learning in a second language is a complex issue and requires high levels of educator competence. Avis (1994) recognises the importance of teacher expertise in assessing learners and states that such professionalism must start with the teacher training process. The author acknowledges that diversity issues need to be covered during training so that teachers can later address any challenges that arise in their diverse classrooms and thus enhance the learning experience and achievement of their students.

## Conclusion

While the two groups of learners - SEN and EAL - have special learning needs, the requirements for meeting the needs of each group are not the same. Problems encountered by EAL learners can be resolved as their language competence develops, while problems encountered by SEN learners require targeted support (such as with physical disability or emotional/behavioural difficulties) from a different group of specialists (Hall *et al.* 2001). Whilst this research relates to the UK context, it also applies to the situation of VAL learners (the children from ethnic minorities) in Vietnam. Their position is further disadvantaged by assessments conducted when they are not yet ready and are still familiarising themselves with a new language and culture. Rather than providing more support for these VAL learners, this early assessment further widens the gap between them and their peers. Although this research is still in the early stages of analysis, these findings pose some serious questions regarding the inclusion of children from diverse cultures in mainstream education. The position of power of Vietnamese as the sole language of instruction in the education system remains a significant issue, as it serves to undermine the learning of the ethnic minority children in my research. More significantly, the differences between learners with SEN and those with difficulties derived purely from learning in a second/additional language are not differentiated, identified and addressed. More research in the field in Vietnam will surely provide additional information for policy makers, education managers and practitioners to help in better ensuring that children from different cultures are effectively included in the education system.

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# 18

## Effects of Task on Attention to Unknown Word Processing in Second Language Reading

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### Introduction

Studies on second language acquisition (SLA) have combined reading comprehension and successive incidental vocabulary development, and discussed it as a primary research issue. In vocabulary development, written texts are often considered a major source of exposure to new words. Numerous studies have explored how readers acquire vocabulary through text reading (e.g., Bolger, Balass, Landen, & Perfetti, 2008; Borovsky, Kutas, & Elman, 2010; de Bot, Paribakht, & Wesche, 1997; Hamada, 2011; Huckin & Bloch, 1993; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999; Wesche & Paribakht, 2009). Their findings suggest that a context-based lexical inference, which is the cognitive process of generating an appropriate meaning of unknown words based on contextual information, plays an important role in vocabulary development.

Whereas many researchers have highlighted the importance of lexical inferences, their effects in SLA are not well established. Specifically, certain researchers have dismissed incidental vocabulary learning through text reading because of its weak effects or inefficiency (Bensoussan & Laufer, 1984; Mondria & Wit-de Boer, 1991). However, earlier studies did not focus on how processing unknown words through inferences leads to word-learning outcomes because the functionality of the lexical inference process had not yet been elucidated (e.g., Nassaji, 2006; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999; Wesche & Paribakht, 2009). Given the clear importance of the relationship between context-based lexical inferences and incidental vocabulary learning, it is meaningful to reveal how second language (L2) learners manage unknown words, and how context-based lexical inferences work.

### Literature Review

Several studies have adopted, adapted, and devised theoretical models of the lexical inference process in order to predict its success and failure.

Researchers have employed various research methods to examine the process of making lexical inferences when reading (Nation & Webb, 2011). For L2 reading, many studies have used the think-aloud method to verbalize learners' thoughts during their attempts to infer the meaning of unknown words from contexts (de Bot et al., 1997; Hamada, 2011; Huckin & Bloch, 1993; Nassaji, 2006; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999; Wesche & Paribakht, 2009). The protocols elicited by think-aloud techniques have been a primary focus for categorizing the types of knowledge sources (i.e., types of previous knowledge and contextual information from an unknown word as well as the surrounding contexts) used by L2 learners when inferring the meaning of new words. These studies have demonstrated that a meaning-oriented cue, embedded in the same sentence as the target word, is the most important type, rather than a word-based cue embedded only in an unknown word (e.g., Wesche & Paribakht, 2009). For example, L2 learners often rely on syntactic and contextual information compared to word-form analogy and morphology to infer the meaning of unknown words (Nassaji, 2006). In addition, when none or few contextual cues are available in a context, readers are more likely to fail at making lexical inferences and skip unknown words without guessing their meaning (Bensoussan & Laufer, 1984; Huckin & Bloch, 1993; Paribakht & Wesche, 1999). This can result in ineffective incidental vocabulary learning.

Word skipping may lead to a lack of attention on new word meanings. In the study of SLA, many researchers have examined the role that attention plays in language learning. For example, empirical findings by Godfroid, Boers, and Housen (2013) show that more attention leads to more vocabulary learning, by indicating that the amount of attention is positively correlated with eye fixation time on target words. However, their study also indicated that individual differences considerably affect whether L2 learners pay attention to unknown words when reading. Recent studies have frequently employed "input enhancement" (i.e., underlining, bolding, highlighting, increasing the font size, and providing reading tasks), which can be used to emphasize target words in order to attract L2 learners' attention (Horiba & Fukaya, 2012). Wesche and Paribakht (2000) showed that task-based reading substantially enhances incidental vocabulary learning.

The effects of context on the process of lexical inferences and learning outcomes must also be considered. Mondria and Wit-de Boer (1991) showed that whilst rich contextual information facilitates cognitive processes in making lexical inferences, it is unable to promote vocabulary development. This indicates that the high guessability of unknown words reduces learners'

attention in word processing. For example, consider sentences (a) and (b) by focusing on the semantic congruity between the contextual information and the nonword *marf* borrowed from Borovsky et al. (2010, p. 290):

(a) He tried to put the pieces of the broken plate back together with *marf*.

(b) She walked across the large room to Mike's dirty desk and returned his *marf*.

Although both contexts provide informative cues regarding the meaning of *marf*, the difference in the semantic congruity of *marf* between the two contexts is notable. If *marf* in sentence (a) represents “glue,” the meaning seems highly related to the contextual information. However, “glue” as the meaning of *marf* has less congruity with the message in sentence (b), because “something on Mike's desk” does not necessarily converge with “glue.”

The degree of semantic congruity between a contextual message and word meaning is often defined as the strength of a “contextual constraint” (e.g., Bolger et al., 2008; Chaffin, Morris, & Seely, 2001; Griffin & Bock, 1998; Otten & van Berkum, 2008). In sentence (a), the contextual message strongly constrains the inferable meaning of *marf* to “glue.” However, *marf* can be subject to various interpretations in sentence (b) because the context has a relatively weak constraint on its possible meaning. Chaffin et al. (2001) studied the effects of contextual constraints on lexical inference processes by conducting an experiment in which they manipulated the strength of contextual constraints. Using eye-tracking measures, Chaffin et al. showed that when a contextual message strongly constrains the meaning of unknown words, the processing time of those words does not differ from that of high-frequency words. Moreover, the readers in their study made regressive eye movements more frequently when they encountered unknown words under weak contextual constraints. These results demonstrate that the readers were sensitive to the strength of the contextual constraints, to the extent that they were able to integrate the contextual message with the unknown word meanings for reading comprehension. According to Otten and van Berkum (2008), a strongly constraining contextual message such as that in sentence (a) allows readers to anticipate the meaning of an upcoming word such as *marf*. Therefore, the word can be processed rapidly in the same manner as highly familiar words. However, because the facilitated processing of unknown words may reduce the amount of attention (Godfroid et al., 2013), contextual information seems to play a paradoxical role between lexical inference success and subsequent incidental learning.

In summary, a strong contextual constraint helps L2 learners process unknown words. However, some previous studies have indicated that facilitated lexical inferences may not necessarily promote incidental vocabulary learning because of insufficient attention to new word processing. Therefore, reading tasks require input enhancements to direct learners' attention to unknown words.

## Overview of This Study

This study examines how the interaction between a task and contextual constraints affects the amount of attention during the processing of unknown words when reading. We crossed two levels of contextual constraints and two task types in a factorial design (Table 1).

Based on Jiang (2012), we collected data on the reading time of contextual sentences to determine whether the effects of contextual constraints were present. We then compared the reading times of contextual sentences, including target words with filler sentences that did not contain any unknown words. Chaffin et al. (2001) demonstrated that the processing time of strongly constrained unknown words was as short as that of highly familiar words, because readers had learned the meaning of unknown words online. Given such immediate effects of contextual constraints, the participants in our study were expected to process unknown words such as highly familiar words by inferring the target word meanings.

Constraint	Contextual sentences	Task
Strong (Inference)	He tried to put the pieces of the broken plate back together with <i>marf</i> .	Read for recall
Strong (Inference)	He tried to put the pieces of the broken plate back together with <i>marf</i> .	Read for comprehension
Weak (Control)	She walked across the large room to Mike's dirty desk and returned his <i>marf</i> .	Read for recall
Weak (Control)	She walked across the large room to Mike's dirty desk and returned his <i>marf</i> .	Read for comprehension

Table 1: Sample sets of stimuli

This study also examined how the interaction between task and the strength of contextual constraints affects lexical inferences and the amount of attention. Certain think-aloud studies have shown that L2 learners are more likely to skip unknown words without guessing (e.g., Paribakht & Wesche,

1999), although past studies rarely controlled the strength of contextual constraints. Based on Horiba and Fukaya (2012), we prepared two reading conditions. Participants were asked to read only for comprehension and for a recall task which manipulated the degree of their attention on target words. This manipulation was based on the following assumption: If participants are asked to recall and write down what they read in advance, they must comprehend and memorize all contextual information including target words (hereafter  $\pm$ attention conditions). When the recall task functions properly, the reading time of contextual sentences should be significantly longer, reflecting the considerable amount of attention learners devote to processing unknown words.

This study addresses the following: (a) A strong contextual constraint facilitates the processing of unknown words (hypothesis); and (b) Does a recall task affect the amount of attention on the processing of unknown words (research question)?

## Method

### *Participants*

The participants in the experiment were 38 Japanese-speaking learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). All participants were undergraduate and graduate students majoring in Education, Social Studies, Comparative Cultures, International Relations, or Linguistics. They had studied English for more than six years in a formal education setting in Japan.

### *Materials*

The reading material used in the experiment consisted of 16 contextual sentence pairs created by Griffin and Bock (1998). One sentence in each pair strongly constrained the possible meaning of a target word, whereas the other did not; thus, 16 contextual sentence pairs were categorized as inference and control sentences. Griffin and Bock subsequently validated the strength of each contextual constraint by using a cloze completion task. It showed that the inference sentences (e.g., *George taught his son to drive a \_\_\_\_\_*) were completed using the highest cloze probability words (e.g., the blank was most frequently filled in with *car*):  $M = .93$ ,  $SD = .08$ ,  $Min = .73$ ,  $Max = 1.00$ . However, the same words were low cloze probabilities (e.g., *The TV commercial was for a new \_\_\_\_\_*) for the control sentences (e.g., the blank could be filled in with *furniture*, *household appliances*, or *car*):  $M = .32$ ,  $SD = .16$ ,  $Min = .05$ ,  $Max = .58$ . A target word in the contextual sentence pairs was inferred using one of 16 English-like nonwords. Some excessively difficult words in the contextual sentences were replaced with easier

synonyms in order to prevent lexical difficulties from influencing sentence processing. In addition, 16-filler sets were adopted from other sentences used by Griffin and Bock.

### ***Procedure***

Each volunteer participated in a single 60-min experimental session. A computer monitor displayed each contextual sentence in the reading section on the center of the screen after 1,000-ms fixation crosses. The participants were told that they could read at their own pace by pressing a button on a response pad (Cedrus, model: RB-730). We used Super Lab 4.5 for Windows to record the reading times of each contextual sentence.

To examine whether a recall task instruction directs the learners' attention to unknown word processing, we first had the computer randomly display four inference and four control sentences without a free written recall task (hereafter, –attention condition). Afterward, the other contextual sentences were presented with the same task (hereafter, +attention condition); that is, the participants had previously been instructed to write down what they read in Japanese. We also randomly inserted a set of 16-filler sentences and we ensured that all possible combinations of the contextual sentence pairs were counterbalanced throughout the experiment.

### ***Data Analysis***

To examine how the interaction between a task and contextual constraints affects the processing of unknown words, we conducted two-way analysis of variance ( $2 \times 3$  mixed ANOVA) for a comparison of the reading times among the conditions. Two factors of Task (+Attention and –Attention) and Constraint (Inference, Control, and Filler) were within-participants variables. The reading times for each contextual sentence were converted into the time spent on each syllable. Outlier data from one participant were excluded because the average reading times were above 2.5 standard deviations.

We used a consistent alpha level of .05 throughout the study, and the effects of marginal significance were considered non-significant. Based on Field (2005), we applied the Bonferroni adjustment in order to avoid a type-I error in all subsequent analyses on any interactions and post-hoc comparisons.

### ***Results***

Table 2 shows the overall results of reading time data under each condition. When the participants encountered the target words under the –attention condition, each context type seemed to elicit different reading times; for

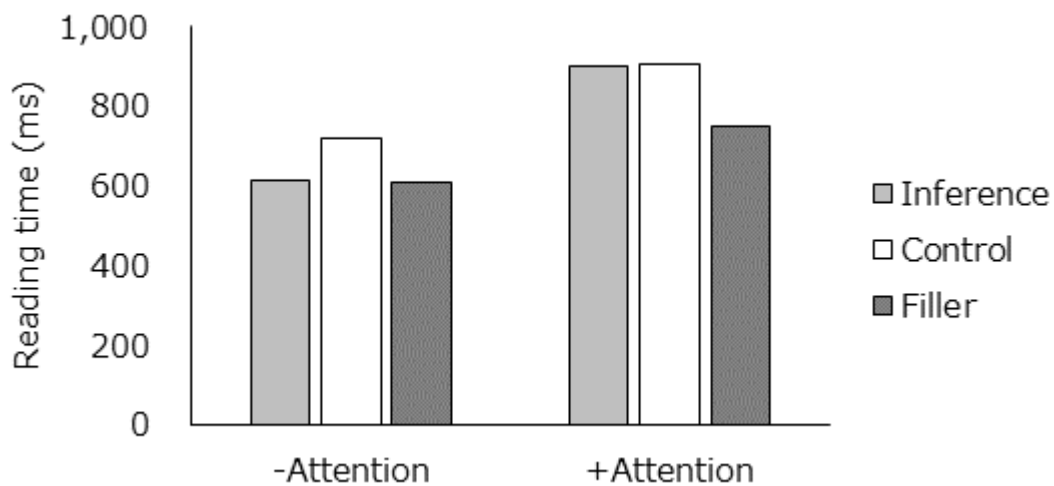


example, no difference was apparent in the reading time between the inference and filler sentences, but the reading of the control sentences resulted in the longest reading time for all contexts. However, the effects of the contextual constraints were dissimilar under the +attention condition. The observed reading time between the inference and control contexts did not differ, and was longer than that of filler contexts.

	–Attention			+Attention		
Constraint	<i>M</i>	95% CI	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	95% CI	<i>SD</i>
Inference	612	[550, 674]	186	899	[800, 999]	299
Control	718	[673, 763]	135	907	[774, 1,039]	397
Filler	611	[552, 670]	176	748	[668, 827]	239

**Table 2: Means with confidence intervals and standard deviations of reading times (ms) among conditions ( $N = 37$ )**

The statistical analyses corroborated these observations with a significant interaction between Task and Constraint on reading time,  $F(2, 72) = 5.09$ ,  $p = .009$ ,  $\eta^2 = .023$ . In addition, the main effects of Task were significant,  $F(2, 72) = 24.79$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .249$ , as were those of Constraint,  $F(2, 72) = 19.51$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .070$ .



**Figure 1: The mean reading times (ms) of contextual sentences**

Figure 1 shows the interaction between Task and Constraint. A subsequent analysis further demonstrated that a simple main effect of Constraint was significant both under the –attention condition,  $F(2, 72) = 10.96$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .233$ ; and under the +attention condition,  $F(2, 72) = 11.69$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .245$ . Post-hoc comparisons with Bonferroni adjustment showed that under the –attention condition, the differences in reading time were non-significant between the inference and filler sentences ( $p = 1.000$ ), and that the reading

time of the control sentences was significantly longer than that of inference sentences ( $p = .005$ ) and of filler sentences ( $p = .005$ ). Under the +attention condition, differences in reading time were non-significant between the inference and control sentences ( $p = 1.000$ ), but the reading time of the filler sentences was the shortest compared with that of inference sentences ( $p < .001$ ) and of control sentences ( $p = .004$ ).

The ANOVA results also revealed a significant simple main effect of Task on reading time for every sentence type: inference sentences,  $F(1, 36) = 52.02$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .591$ ; control sentences,  $F(1, 36) = 8.03$ ,  $p = .008$ ,  $\eta^2 = .182$ ; and filler sentences,  $F(1, 36) = 14.08$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $\eta^2 = .281$ . These results indicate that the reading time of contextual sentences was longer when the participants directed their attention to individual words in the sentences.

## Discussion

The reading time data provide evidence that strong contextual constraints facilitate the processing of unknown words by reducing the amount of attention required to make context-based lexical inferences. For this study, we manipulated the strength of contextual constraints and compared three reading time data sets among sentences that included unknown words (i.e., inference and control sentences) and those that did not (i.e., filler sentences). Although the inference and control sentences shared common target words, the reading time was significantly different between the two sentence types. Further, the reading time of the inference sentences was as short as that of the filler sentences under the –attention condition. This result suggests that the unknown words in the inference sentences were processed in the same manner as the known words during reading. Overall, these results are consistent with the findings of L1 reading studies (Chaffin et al., 2001; Otten & van Berkum, 2008), which showed that the participants were able to identify the meaning of the target words at the end of the inference sentences. This implies that EFL readers could rapidly integrate unknown words into sentential representations without effortful cognitive processes.

By comparing the effects of the recall task as input enhancements, we obtained results that demonstrated an increased amount of attention, regardless of the strength of a contextual constraint. In the control sentences, the reading time of the contextual sentences was longer under the +attention condition than under the –attention condition. This result demonstrated that the recall task allowed L2 learners to concentrate on individual words in a sentence because they were required to read the contextual sentences for the successive task. One additional finding shows that L2 learners spent more time processing

unknown words in the inference sentences under the +attention condition than under the –attention condition, and no differences in reading time emerged between the inference and control sentences under the +attention condition. Consequently, under the +attention condition, the inference and the control sentences, both of which contained an unknown word, required a longer processing time compared with the filler contexts without unknown words, clearly indicating that input enhancements strengthened the processing of unknown words through lexical inferences.

These findings offer informative implications for L2 lexical inferences and successive vocabulary learning. However, our study did not provide an understanding of the entire role of attention when processing unknown words. The following points warrant future research: an examination of how tasks and contextual constraints affect learners' attention in discourse comprehension beyond a single sentence, and testing to identify reading conditions that lead to incidental vocabulary acquisition. In addition, eye-tracking measures should be used when focusing on the processing of only unknown words (Godfroid et al., 2013). Although we controlled the lexical difficulty as much as possible to prevent unwanted effects on sentence processing, some factors related to language processing (e.g., grammatical knowledge) might have influenced the sentence understanding beyond the processing of unknown words.

A general implication for second language education is that it is important to apply the learners' reading process to practical reading instructions (Grabe, 2009). Most L2 learners feel concerned with the burden of encountering unknown words in a text and worry about word learning. The findings of this research imply that teachers should consider the effects of a task and contextual constraints. Specifically, this study presents empirical data that demonstrates that the amount of attention increases by input enhancement. This suggests that teachers can provide task-based reading as input enhancement in reading instructions when they aim to promote incidental L2 vocabulary learning.

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# 19

## Immediate or delayed effect of context: Japanese learners' vocabulary learning using translation

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### Introduction

While it is widely argued that vocabulary in a foreign language should be learnt in context, studies have shown that *context-based* learning is not very efficient when compared to *translation-based* methods. To examine the effect of a single glossed sentence, Webb (2007) compared contextualised and decontextualised learning groups, presenting both groups with translations. As a result, there was no significant overall difference between the two groups (i.e., translation-only and translation-and-context groups). The research concluded that a single glossed sentence context may have little effect on vocabulary knowledge.

On the other hand, according to Hasegawa's (2013), when learners were provided with both translation and context, vocabulary gain was affected by how well they could imagine the described situation in context. However, it was unclear whether this *imageability effect* persists in memory or is merely a short-term tendency. The present study was designed to explore how context imageability is important in translation-based learning.

### Purpose

A new experiment was conducted to further examine the effect of context image by comparing three learning conditions under three contexts: (a) highly imageable context, (b) neutral context, and (c) no context. *Imageability* is defined here as ease of evocation of mental imagery by written or spoken materials (de Groot, 2011). Generally, imageability of concepts has been found to have a strong effect on ease of word learning (Ellis & Beaton, 1993). The current study focuses on whether a learner's use of imageable and/or neutral context facilitates vocabulary learning when its translation is explicitly provided.

## Method

For three consecutive weeks, 17 Japanese university students (13 male and 4 female) learned 30 low-frequency English words with their Japanese translations across the three conditions. They were all beginner-level learners, but were further divided into a higher-proficiency group ( $n = 9$ ) and a lower-proficiency group ( $n = 8$ ) according to their scores on the *vocabulary size test* (Nation & Beglar, 2007; Japanese version).

The properties of the learning materials were carefully controlled. The target words were nouns and verbs consisting of one or two syllables and word imageability was not biased, in accordance with the MRC psycholinguistic database (Coltheart, 1981). For the contexts, which were based on example sentences from an English–Japanese dictionary (Konishi & Minamide, 2001), eight graduate and undergraduate students majoring in SLA judged whether each context was imageable or not. Imageability measures the quality of a context. Furthermore, according to Hasegawa (2012), it also affects how likely students are to remember the contextual meaning. In this pilot study, the eight students rated the ease of imaging for the situation described in each context. Examples of imageable and non-imageable contexts are shown in Table 1.

List	L2	L1	Example sentence
A (Imageable)	<i>rite</i>	儀式	<i>The festival comes from an ancient <u>rite</u>.</i>
B (Neutral)	<i>zeal</i>	熱意	<i>They prepared for it with <u>zeal</u>.</i>
C (No context)	<i>proxy</i>	代理	

**Table 1: Example items for each of the three learning lists**

In the experimental session, students took a pretest to confirm that they were unfamiliar with the target words. Next, they were given five minutes to learn three 10-word lists. Each list belonged to one of the following three categories: (a) highly imageable context (List A), (b) neutral context (List B), and (c) no context (List C; see Table 1). The participants were asked to recall the meanings of the words immediately after learning them and again a week later.

## Results

The results of the immediate and delayed post-tests showed differences among the conditions. Namely, translation-based learning with no context was more immediately effective than the other two conditions while the contextualised method using imageable contexts showed the greatest delayed effectiveness (see Figures 1 and 2). In contrast to the results for the



imageable contexts, retention in the neutral context condition was as poor as in the no context condition.

Although the differences were not dramatic, the results shown in the graphs suggest that the effect of context imageability might be larger in delayed performance, especially among the higher-proficiency group. The results can be explained in terms of how learners process contexts. When higher-level beginners are provided with imageable contexts, they might be able to process the context information more deeply and consider what is described in the contexts more thoroughly.

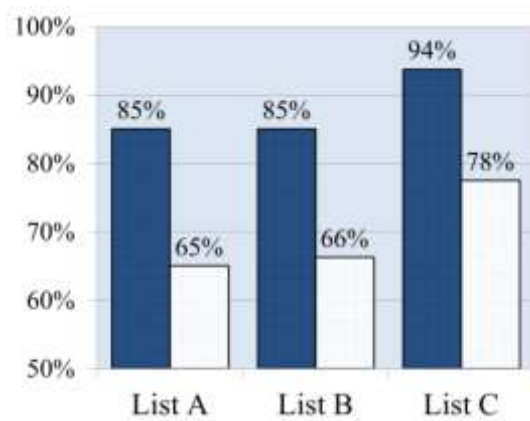


Figure 1: Immediate test results

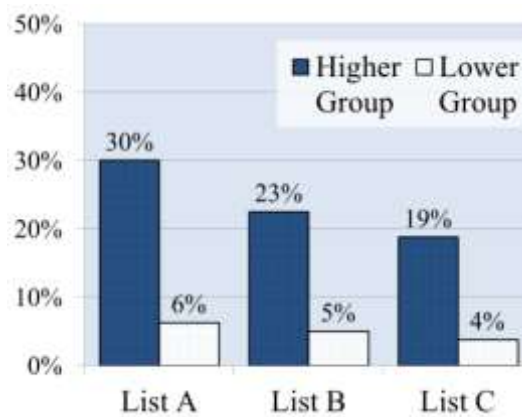


Figure 2: Delayed test results

## Conclusion

The current study suggests that translation is a source of prompt learning. In contrast, the effects of translation-based vocabulary learning are maximised in the longer term, as learners come to better understand how the meaning is realised in context. Given the results from the present study, the term *translation-based* seems rather ambiguous. Although this type of learning is always based on translations, one may argue that learners do not always

experience a mental process of translating. It could be argued that the combination of the higher-proficiency learners and a learning condition that uses imageable contexts makes the most suitable situation for the mental translation in this study. In Cook's (2010) words, teachers should train students to use *translation as a process* rather than a *product*. For their part, students should compare translations and contexts to understand how word meanings are contextualised.

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# 20

## Assessing the Impact of Graded Readers on Non-English Majors' EFL Learning Motivation

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While a great deal of research has been conducted into the characteristics of Japanese learners' EFL learning motivation, little inquiry has been directed toward how particular curricular interventions can influence and affect learners' motivational states. One area which holds significant potential, and which instructors have some degree of control over, is the content of instruction. Instructional content, particularly instructional materials, has been identified as having potentially motivating and demotivating influences on language learners (Chambers, 1998, Falout & Maruyama, 2004; Gorham & Millete, 1997; Peacock, 1997). The demonstrated importance of this classroom variable suggests that its enhancement might provide a possible direction for instructors seeking to improve motivational engagement in learners.

It is particularly difficult for educators to find instructional materials that are consistently motivating and effective. The recent development and expansion of graded readers series and extensive reading (ER) resources, and the plethora of research that has accompanied their increased use (see Day & Bramford, 1998 and Krashen, 2004 for summaries), have rendered these materials and approaches reliable and proven options for foreign language (FL) instruction. The use of graded readers in extensive reading environments has demonstrated that they not only improve learners' reading speed and proficiency (Bell, 2001; Constantino, 1995; de Morgado, 2009), but are also an efficient means for implicit acquisition of vocabulary and grammar structures (Horst, 2005; Horst, Cobb, & Meara, 1998; Waring, 2009; Webb, 2005). In addition to these language learning outcomes, learners' attitudes towards, and degree of enjoyment and interest in, reading have been shown to improve when using these materials and approaches (Al-Homoud & Schmitt, 2009; Cho, & Krashen, 2001; Dupuy, 1997). Similar positive results have been observed with Japanese learners using graded readers and taking part in extensive reading programs (Critchley, 1998; Hayashi, 1999; Iwahori, 2008; Powell, 2005; Tanaka & Stapleton, 2007).

In addition to the benefits discussed above, ER has also been identified as contributing to motivation in learners (Brantmeier, 2005; Elley 1991; Gee, 1999; Grabe, 1991). Elly (1991) reported that motivation appeared to accompany improvement in reading proficiency and attitudes in “book flood” programs in Fiji. She observed that an increase in intrinsic motivation appeared to stem from learners’ experiences selecting and sharing picture books with others. A high state of intrinsic motivation, or “flow”, was also observed in readers by McQuillan and Conde (1996), who reported that texts that were perceived to be interesting, or to have personal or intellectual value, were particularly effective in promoting optimal engagement in learners. In a study expressly examining the motivational and attitudinal impact of extensive readers in Tunisian EFL students, Maamouri Ghrib (2003) revealed that ER was particularly effective in initiating motivation in learners. However, the interest value of reading resources and program structure were important factors in sustaining motivation over an extended period of time. In a more recent study, Arnold (2009) observed motivation accompanying an increase in confidence in learners reading in a modified ER program. Interviews with readers participating in the study revealed that some became motivated to read independently. A similar outcome, with ER affecting learners positively in terms of autonomous learning, was revealed in Hitosugi and Day’s (2004) examination of FL learners in the United States. Similarly, extensive reading has also been demonstrated to positively affect language learning motivation in Japanese EFL students (Heal, 1998; Nishino, 2007; Nishizawa, Yoshioka & Fukuda, 2010; Yamashita, 2007).

### **Study overview**

The demonstrated value of ER in improving reading proficiency and promoting learner motivation resulted in it being selected in a modified form for trial in an EFL reading course at an engineering university in Japan. The target population of engineering majors has been described as “reluctant” toward FL learning (Nishizawa, Yoshioka & Fukuda, 2010), and would therefore potentially benefit from more motivationally stimulating curricular content. The trial course was structured around the use of graded readers in conjunction with the Moodle Reader Module; an optional add-on to the open-source Moodle course management system. In this semester-long trial reading class, students were required to check graded readers out of the school library and then take weekly quizzes in the school’s computer lab. Students were evaluated on the total number of words read from quizzes that were successfully passed. The present study describes the results of a formal retrospective evaluation of the materials and course design used. It was hoped that this formal evaluation would provide insights into the value of

such a program, and into how it might be improved in the future. The following research questions are reflective of these overall goals:

- RQ1: How did the use of graded readers and the online evaluation system affect learner motivation?
- RQ2: How did learners generally perceive the use of graded readers and the online evaluation system?
- RQ3: How did the characteristics of specific graded readers affect their appeal to students?

## Methods

### *Data collection and analysis*

Data collection for this study was carried out with a questionnaire comprised of an adapted version of Keller's (2010) Instructional Materials Motivational Survey and additional open-ended items. The IMMS was originally designed to measure attitudes, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction components of instructional materials according to Keller's ARCS model of motivation. The questionnaire designed for the current study retained the four main variables of the original IMMS, but the items were rewritten and scales adjusted to better assess the specific characteristics of graded readers and the online evaluation system. This adapted version of the IMMS was piloted with a sample of thirty ( $n=30$ ) students. Cronbach's Alpha for each scale indicated good internal reliability (Confidence:  $\alpha=.75$ , Attention:  $\alpha=.76$ ; Relevance:  $\alpha=.78$ ; Satisfaction:  $\alpha=.81$ ). The questionnaire was administered in the final week of a fifteen-week semester and required approximately ten minutes to complete. A total of 230 questionnaires were collected, of which 219 ( $N=219$ ) were retained for analysis. IMMS results were then entered into Predictive Analytics Software (PASW) version 18 to derive descriptive and inferential statistics. Open-ended item responses were translated into English, and responses to each item were coded and separated into themes. Following first round coding, themes were revised and re-organized with input from a colleague.

### *Participants*

All participants were second-year Japanese engineering majors with specialties in chemical and mechanical engineering. A total of 230 ( $n=230$ ) students filled out questionnaires, although the data represents responses from 219 ( $N=219$ ) completed questionnaires. The participants were of mixed English ability, although the majority were at a low-intermediate reading level.

## Results

### *IMMS results*

Results of the IMMS indicated positive overall endorsement of the four scales used in the questionnaire. The most highly endorsed scale was Satisfaction (SAT), with a mean of 3.41 derived from the five-point Likert scale items. This was followed by Confidence (CON) (M=3.32), Attention (ATT) (M=3.29) and Relevance (REL) (M=3.20). The Cronbach's alpha for each scale (CON  $\alpha$ =.66; ATT:  $\alpha$ =3.29; REL:  $\alpha$ =.78 and SAT:  $\alpha$ =.79) indicated good internal reliability for each. While SAT was the most highly endorsed overall, its average endorsement of 2.86 to 3.86 indicates a range of variability in responses.

	n of items	n	$\alpha$	m	min	max	range	variance
CON	7	219	.667	3.32	3.04	3.61	.571	.053
ATT	10	219	.807	3.29	3.04	3.61	.580	.044
REL	7	219	.784	3.20	2.71	3.45	.744	.056
SAT	6	219	.792	3.41	2.86	3.83	.968	.143

**Table 1: Graded reader IMMS scale summary**

The direction and strength of relationships between scales was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. Results indicated positive correlations between all scales (Table 2), with correlations falling between the  $r$ =.50 to  $r$ =1.0 range being indicative of a strong positive relationship (Cohen, 1988). These findings reflect the high correlational relationships between IMMS scales observed in other studies (Keller, 2010).

	1	2	3	4
1. SAT	--	.640**	.713**	.573**
2. REL		--	.774**	.591**
3. ATT			--	.733**
4. CON				--

**Table 2: Pearson product-moment correlation between GR-IMMS scales**

\*\* $p$ <.001(2-tailed)

### *Open-ended item results: Overall impressions of graded readers*

The first open-ended question was: "How did you feel about using graded readers?" A total of 196 responses were received for this item. The majority of responses were positive (74%:  $n$ =149), while 27, or 13.7%, were negative. The remainder of responses were either mixed ( $n$ =12: 6.1%), with students expressing mixed positive and negative feelings, or ambivalent ( $n$ =8: 4%),

with such participants expressing that they had no particular feelings regarding using graded readers.

The overwhelmingly positive results produced a number of specific reasons why graded readers and the online reading course were perceived positively by learners (see Table 3). The three most frequently cited reasons for positive endorsement were: the self-perceived level of improvement students experienced (n=22), the selectivity aspect of the course (n=21), and the overall enjoyment of the experience (n=21).

There were comparatively fewer negative responses (N=27) to the first item. The most frequent negative responses came from those who found the graded readers difficult (n=15), those who did not like the class style (n=7), and those who stated having no interest in, or disliked, studying English (n=5).

<b>Positive</b>	<b>n=149</b>
improvement	n=22
level choice	n=21
enjoyment:	n=21
confidence:	n=18
novelty	n=14
personal transformation	n=13
learning appeal	n=12
class style	n=10
promote specific skills	n=8
opportunity	n=8
other positive responses	n=22
<b>Negative</b>	<b>n=27</b>
difficult	n=15
didn't like class styles	n=7
no interest in, don't like, English	n=5

Table 3: Open-ended item 1: Summary of positive & negative responses

### *Open-ended item results: Preferred graded reader types*

The second open-ended item asked students which types of books they preferred using. Participants identified readers they liked according to their particular content features, genre, structural or lay-out characteristics, and publisher type or series. The responses to this item are summarized in Table 4.

<b>Content features (n=124)</b>	<b>Genre (n=79)</b>	<b>Characteristics (n=36)</b>	<b>Publisher (n=11)</b>
Easy (n=38)	movie (n=20)	pictures (n=13)	Foundations (n=7)
matched interests (n=28)	fiction (n=12)	short (n=6)	MacMillan (n=2)
familiar (n= 22)	mystery (n=11)	word count (n=5)	Penguin (n=2)
daily life (n=7)	non-fiction (n=8)	long (n=4)	
understandable (n=7)	biographies (n=5)	variety (n=4)	
famous (n=6)	fantasy (n=4)		
dialogues (n=5)	traditional (n=4)		
moving (n=5)	history (n=4)		
funny (n=4)	Japanese (n=3)		
good flow (n=2)	thriller (n=3)		
	science fiction (n=3)		
	romantic (n=2)		

**Table 4: Open-ended item 2: Attributes of preferred readers**

***Open-ended item results: Disliked graded reader types***

The third open-ended item asked participants what types of graded readers they disliked. The same three categories as above emerged, although with a slightly different order of frequency: content features (n=54), reader characteristics (n=34), and genres (n=24). The specific features of these characteristics are summarized in Table 5.



Content Features (n=54)	Characteristics (n=34)	Genre (n=24)
hard to follow n=20	insufficient pictures n=9	biographies n=5
difficult n=17	short / low level n=9	history n=4
dark n=7	long n=8	non-fiction n=4
uninteresting n=7	tight layout n=7	mystery n=3
unfamiliar n=3	too many pictures n=1	traditional n=3
		horror n=3
		romance n=2

**Table 5: Open-ended item 3: Attributes of disliked graded readers**

## Discussion

The first goal of this study was to evaluate how the use of graded readers and the Moodle Reader module affected learner motivation. The overall positive endorsement across each of the adapted IMMS scales indicated that the graded readers and the online evaluation system were viewed positively by participants. As the IMMS scales represent major cognitive variables contributing to motivation, this result is a positive indication that learners' motivation likely benefited from using these instructional materials and this course design. A particularly encouraging finding within the scales was the high endorsement of the confidence items. This endorsement, combined with students' strong preference for easy books as revealed in the open-ended item results, suggests that self-selection of books according to self-perceived ability supported students' learning confidence. Self-efficacy is a key component for initiating and sustaining learner motivation in that learners who think they will be successful are more likely to initiate and carry through with positive learning behaviours (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Self-selected graded readers appear to engender confidence in learners, and for this reason alone should be recommended for use with this group of learners. As a number of studies have indicated low levels of confidence in Japanese EFL learners (see Johnson 2009), this finding represents an important direction in facilitating more positive attitudes and behaviours in the EFL classroom.

The second goal of this study was to identify how learners perceived using the graded readers and the online evaluation system. The results of the first open-ended item indicated that almost three quarters of learners perceived the course positively. While a variety of explanations were provided for these positive impressions, the most frequently cited reasons were improvement, level choice, enjoyment, and novelty. Learners felt they improved in reading, or in their overall English ability, through taking this course, a positive outcome that aligns with other studies (Bell, 2001; Constantino, 1995; Horst, 2005; Horst, Cobb & Meara, 1998). Other students cited the self-selection of

graded reader level as a positive aspect of the course. This constitutes important as learners appear to feel more comfortable with the proficiency level of self-selected instructional materials, and the selection process stands to potentially increase learners' sense of investment, or stake, in the learning process. Students additionally cited a general feeling of enjoyment as a reason for liking the course. Such responses suggest that graded readers may be a means for promoting more intrinsically-oriented motivation in learners. Particularly considering Japanese engineering students more extrinsic, instrumental or utilitarian orientations towards English studies (Kimura, Nakamura & Okumura, 2001), this finding may indicate that specific types of instructional materials might have a positive influence on expanding, or stretching, motivational orientations. A further attraction of the course cited by learners was its novelty appeal, with a number of learners citing the uniqueness of this learning experience as appealing. As most of the learners' prior EFL learning experiences were characterized by traditional teacher-centred classrooms, their willingness to embrace a more student-centred and autonomous learning approach is an encouraging finding.

The final goal of this study was to identify which types of graded readers learners liked and disliked using. The number of types of graded readers identified as being "liked" was over twice as many as those "disliked". This finding provides some important insights into learner preferences. First, the range of responses, with 30 specific types identified across four thematic areas, speaks to the variability of preferences in learners. This range demonstrates that EFL programs utilizing graded readers require a wide selection of titles in order to meet the varying interests and learning style preferences of learners (Day & Bamford, 1998; Murphy, 1987). Regarding the specific types of graded readers that learners liked and disliked, it was observed that content, genre and layout characteristics were important in determining learner preferences. In both positive and negative evaluations, content types were cited most frequently, with "easy" books being liked, and "hard to follow" or "difficult" books being disliked. This general preference for easier books aligns well with the general goal of extensive reading approaches, which is to have learners embrace books that are easy to read and which are effortlessly assimilated (Day & Bramford, 1998). Additionally, returning to the discussion of confidence above, reading easier books is a good way for Japanese EFL learners to regain, or develop, confidence in English learning. The findings above speak to the importance of providing learners with guidance in selecting graded readers appropriate to their level; participants voiced displeasure with inadvertently chosen books that turned out to be too difficult, or in some cases too easy, for them. More specific

directions on how to choose appropriately-levelled readers would likely promote confidence and lessen such frustration in learners.

Learners also identified preferred graded readers by genre. The range of genre types liked ( $n=12$ ), and disliked ( $n=7$ ), which were at times conflicting, are yet another indicator that a broad range of readers need to be acquired in order to accommodate the array of preferences in learners. This is also true of learner preferences in regard to graded reader types characterized by their layout characteristics. Learners variously identified preferences and dislikes of reader types according to their having pictures or not having pictures, being short or too short, and easy or too easy. These conflicting preferences suggest that a wide range of graded reader series with different layout characteristics from a number of different publishers is necessary to appeal to the differing preferences across learners.

## **Conclusion**

This study revealed a number of benefits associated with the use of graded readers in conjunction with the Moodle Reader Module. The overall positive endorsement of IMMS scales indicated that the use of graded readers and the online evaluation system appealed cognitively to learners in a manner that supported motivational engagement. The open-ended items supported these findings with learners expressing satisfaction with the improvement they achieved in the course, greater confidence from using self-selected readers according to perceived proficiency levels, increased perceived relevance derived from the selection of content congruent with personal interests and learning style preferences, and heightened attention due to a combination of factors including the novelty of learning and engaging with English in new manner. Combined, these findings suggest that graded readers and autonomous online evaluation provided this sample of Japanese engineering students with a motivating EFL learning experience.

Despite these positive findings, the limitations of this study need to be acknowledged. The situation-specific nature of evaluating learners' motivational orientations toward a particular set of instructional materials or a specific course design may limit the generalizability of the results. For more generalizable findings, a broad multi-institutional study would need to be conducted. Those interested in examining how their own learners might respond to a similar course would be urged to pilot a course and conduct an independent retrospective evaluation of the materials and course design used.

The benefits of using graded readers and autonomous online evaluation systems such as the Moodle Reader Module provide a ray of hope for those in search of curricular alternatives for reluctant EFL learners such as the Japanese engineering students studied here. Through expanded use and further empirical inquiry it is hoped that these materials and approaches will demonstrate their potential as a source for motivating EFL learners.

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# 21 A Contrastive and Acoustic Analysis of Japanese EFL Learners' Pronunciation of English Consonants

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## Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to present some important facts for assessing Japanese EFL learners' pronunciation of English consonants using the method of contrastive analysis, and to give useful clues for English pronunciation instruction. It deals with English consonants which are hard for Japanese learners of English to articulate because their Japanese pronunciation habits interfere with acquisition of English pronunciation. In order to confirm the results of the analysis, three Japanese learners' productions of English consonants were acoustically analyzed.

First I will show how English consonants are incorrectly pronounced in terms of manner and place of articulation, which is often the case with language transfer from Japanese to English. Secondly I will pick up English sound sequences which are extremely hard for Japanese learners to produce. This is due to the fact that such sequences do not exist in the Japanese sound system and the phonation mechanism is different between English consonants and Japanese ones. Lastly I will point out how the notion of "mora" in Japanese leads to Japanese learners' incorrect pronunciation of English consonants. It will be made clear through this research that phonation of Japanese consonants is quite different from that of English consonants and that the mora-timed rhythm of the Japanese language affects learners' pronunciation of English.

In order to confirm the aforementioned points, the readings of five English sentences by three talkers (all Japanese university students) were acoustically analyzed. The results of the analysis show that the talkers' mispronunciation of English consonants appears inconsistently.

## Introduction

In most English classes in Japan, learners would say that the contrast of /l/ and /r/ is very hard to make. The main reason for this difficulty is that the Japanese language does not have phonemic contrast of these phonetic segments. It is proven that a Japanese baby of six to eight months can

discriminate the speech sounds / l / and / r /, but that of 10 to 12 months cannot (Kohno, 2001). This fact implies that the baby begins to acquire the Japanese sound system as he/she grows and accordingly gets bound by the system.

The English speech sounds / f /, / v /, / θ / and / ð / do not exist in the Japanese sound system, so they should be naturally hard for Japanese learners to articulate. As a result, some learners find it difficult to distinguish between “berry” and “very”, “sink” and “think”, or “Zen” and “then”.

The points mentioned above are widely recognized among English teachers in Japan, so the pronunciation of the above sounds is properly taught in classrooms. However, there exist some other English sounds which are actually difficult to pronounce for Japanese learners and are seldom or never taught because they are not overt and hard to notice.

The purpose of this paper is to show how these English sounds are pronounced by Japanese learners, using the method of contrastive analysis, and to present useful clues for English pronunciation instruction.

(See Appendix to refer to English consonants and Japanese consonants.)

### **Interference of Japanese Articulation Habit**

One of the features of Japanese consonants is that closure and narrowing for articulating them is very weak and they quickly move to the following vowel (Fujii, 1986). Japanese voiceless consonants are very weakly pronounced, so the difference of intensity between voiceless and voiced consonants is not as distinctive as is observed in Indo-European languages (Joo, 1998). We must also notice that Japanese sounds are produced with little movements of lips or mouth compared to English sounds. These points are reflected in Japanese learners' incorrect pronunciation of English consonants as is shown below.

#### ***Plosives***

It is well known that Japanese plosives / p /, / t /, / k / have much shorter voice onset time (VOT) than their English counterparts (Nakashima, 1996). In other words, Japanese plosives are pronounced with weak aspiration or sometimes even loosely. This may lead to Japanese learners' mispronunciation of English plosives.



### **/b/**

The Japanese consonant /b/ is occasionally realized as [β] (voiced bilabial fricative) between vowels: for example the Japanese word “abunai”(dangerous) is pronounced like [aβunai]. So in English the word “subway” might be pronounced like [saβuɛi] with [β] followed by [ɥ] (voiced velar approximant, close to a vowel [ɯ]). Japanese learners will not notice that their Japanese pronunciation habits result in this kind of phenomenon because this is a natural phonetic process.

### **/g/**

The Japanese consonant /g/ is often realized as [ɣ] (voiced velar fricative) between vowels, so the English word “again” is occasionally pronounced with [ɣ]. This phonetic change is also natural in Japanese, so it is hard for Japanese learners to keep the quality of the English consonant /g/ during the phonation.

### ***Fricatives***

The difference between English and Japanese phonemic systems causes the following incorrect pronunciation of English consonants: English fricatives /z/ and /ʒ/ become affricates /dz/ and /dʒ/ respectively in Japanese learners' pronunciation of English (Fujii, 1986).

### **/z/**

The Japanese consonants /z/ and /dz/ do not make a phonemic contrast, so Japanese people usually do not notice the difference of these sounds. In Japanese /z/ becomes [dz] in the word initial position and after [n]: for example, “kaze” (wind), “dzannen” (sorry), “sondzai” (existence), etc. So Japanese learners often pronounce the English word “zoo” like [dzu] instead of [zu].

### **/ʒ/**

Japanese learners of English (or even English teachers) often confuse /dʒ/ and /ʒ/ as in the pronunciation of words such as “judge” [dʒʌdʒ] and “usual” [juʒuəl] because these segments do not make a phonemic contrast in Japanese.

### **Sound Sequences Leading to Mispronunciation**

The following sound sequences are really hard for Japanese learners to articulate because they do not exist in the Japanese sound system.

### **/j/+ /i/ or /I/**

Words like “yes” or “young” are not so difficult for Japanese learners to pronounce, although they may not pronounce them perfectly. However, words like “yeast” or “year” are not easy for them to articulate because the sound sequence /j/+ /i/ or /I/ does not exist in Japanese and they cannot approximate the tongue closely enough to produce /j/ correctly. Thus, Japanese learners often cannot distinguish between “yeast” and “east”, or between “year” and “ear”. The /j/+ /i/ or /I/ sequence is probably the most difficult one for Japanese learners (Fujii, 1986).

### **/w/+ /u/ or /ʊ/**

Japanese learners tend to pronounce English approximant /w/ with very little lip rounding, so they often produce words like “wound” or “wolf” like [w:nd] or [wlf] omitting this approximant. Because the sound sequence /w/+ /u/ or /ʊ/ does not exist in Japanese, it is hard for them to correctly articulate it by strongly rounding their lips. This lack of lip rounding for /w/ also results in incorrect pronunciation of words like “queen” [kujin] and “square” [skuɛə].

### **/h/+ /i/ or /I/, /h/+ /u/ or /ʊ/**

It is usually not difficult for Japanese learners to pronounce the /h/ sound in words like “hat”, “hell”, or “hot”, because the phonetic feature of this sound is realized as a glottal fricative both in English and Japanese. However, when they try to produce words like “heel”, “hill”, “who” or “hood”, they usually articulate English /h/ incorrectly. The /h/ sound before the vowel /i/ is realized as a palatal fricative [ç] in Japanese, e.g. [çito] (“man”), and this habit is transferred to English pronunciation. The /h/ sound before the vowel /u/ is realized as a bilabial fricative [ɸ], and this habit is also transferred to English pronunciation.

### **/n/+ /i/ or /I/**

In Japanese the /n/ sound before the vowel /i/ becomes a palatal nasal /ɲ/, e.g. [ɲiku] (meat). As a result of language transfer Japanese learners pronounce the word “neat” as [ɲit] and the word “knit” as [ɲIt]. It is difficult for them to keep the point of articulation for /n/ during the phonation of these English words.

## **Mispronunciation Related to Japanese Mora**

As is known well, Japanese has syllable-timed rhythm and English has stress-timed rhythm (Kohno, 2001). The difference of rhythm between two languages will affect language acquisition in many ways, especially in the

case of learning pronunciation. This Japanese rhythm brings specific morae such as geminate stop / tt / and nasal / N / into the Japanese sound system, which sometimes affects Japanese learners' pronunciation of English.

### **/t/**

Japanese has specific timing-control rules. In minimal pairs such as “ite” and “itte” there is durational contrast between / t / and / tt / at the phonemic level. In Japanese, geminate stops are more than twice as long as their short counterparts (Toda, 2003). Influenced by this rule, Japanese learners of English tend to distinguish the word “butter” from “batter” using different lengths of consonants, i.e. a short / t / and a long / t / respectively, not using different vowels, i. e. / ʌ / for “butter” and / æ / for “batter”.

### **/n/**

The Japanese moraic phoneme / N / (voiced uvular nasal) has at least four allophones; [ m ] as in the word [ sambaN ] (“third”), [ n ] as in [ sandaN ] (“three steps”), / ŋ / as in [ sangai ] (“the third floor”), and [ N ] as in [ saN ] (“three”)(Joo, 1998). So it is not easy for Japanese learners to articulate the English / n / sound as an alveolar. In the minimal pairs such as “sin” and “sing” or “thin” and “thing” Japanese learners tend to pronounce these two words with the same consonant [ N ] at the end resulting in no word contrast.

## **Acoustic Analysis of the Learners' Consonant Pronunciation**

### ***Method***

Three Japanese college students were asked to read the following sentences which contain problematic consonants for them to pronounce. The underlined letters are equivalent to the target consonants for analysis. To compare their pronunciation to that of native speakers, one English native speaker's speech was acoustically analyzed.

- He was about to go out again.
- The woman usually goes to the zoo on Sundays.
- The batter hits many home runs every year.
- He needs the hook.
- He likes butter.
- His son likes the song.

Following are the list of errors expected to be committed by the learners.

(1) / b /	→	[ β ]
(2) / g /	→	[ γ ]
(3) / z /	→	[ z ] or [ dz ]
(4) / ʒ /	→	[ ʒ ] or [ dʒ ]
(5) / j /+ / i / or / I /	→	[ i ] or [ I ]
(6) / w /+ / u / or / ʊ /	→	[ ʊ ] or [ ɯ ]
(7) / h /+ / i / or / I /	→	[ ç ]+ [ i ] or [ I ]
(8) / h /+ / u / or / ʊ /	→	[ φ ] + [ u ] or [ ʊ ]
(9) / n /+ / i / or / I /	→	[ ɲ ]+ [ i ] or [ I ]
(10) / t /	→	[ tt ]
(11) / n /, / ŋ /	→	[ N ]

## **Results**

Through an acoustic analysis and auditory check by the author, some errors described above were confirmed.

The numbers (2), (3), (4), (6), (7), (10) were confirmed, but the rest were not. This fact shows that above errors are not always committed by the learners, and that each learner does not always make errors like above. In this sense, the learners tend to make pronunciation errors inconsistently, i.e. their pronunciation of English is unstable.

## **Conclusions**

Underlying the phenomena described above is the fact that Japanese consonants are phonated weakly compared to English counterparts. This pronunciation habit is transferred to the production of English consonants to result in different quality of sounds. Another thing to point out is that Japanese phonetic segments are generally produced with little movement of lips and mouth: we can observe that Japanese people do not open their mouth widely or they do not move their lips actively when they speak their mother tongue. I believe this pronunciation habit strongly controls their utterance when they speak English.

We need to notice that sound sequences of the target language affect language learners' speech as is shown in the case of / j /+ / i /, / w /+ / u /, and / n /+ / i /. In relation to sound sequences, we need to add that the English language with complicated syllable structures puzzles Japanese learners because the Japanese language has a very simple syllable structure of CV (Consonant + Vowel).

The rhythm rules of Japanese, which are related to CV structure, also affect the production of English sounds. It is important to notice that the existence of specific moraic stops / tt / and / N / in Japanese leads to incorrect pronunciation of English sounds.

The acoustic analysis of three Japanese students shows that the expected errors in the list are realized inconsistently depending on the speaker, which means their English pronunciation is unstable.

To summarize the phonetic changes caused by Japanese learners' mispronunciation of English, I will list them below.

- |                           |   |                        |
|---------------------------|---|------------------------|
| (1) / b /                 | → | [ β ]                  |
| (2) / g /                 | → | [ γ ]                  |
| (3) / z /                 | → | [ z ] or [ dz ]        |
| (4) / ʒ /                 | → | [ ʒ ] or [ dʒ ]        |
| (5) / j /+ / i / or / I / | → | [ i ] or [ I ]         |
| (6) / w /+ / u / or / U / | → | [ ʍ ] or [ ʉ ]         |
| (7) / h /+ / i / or / I / | → | [ ç ]+ [ i ] or [ I ]  |
| (8) / h /+ / u / or / U / | → | [ φ ] + [ u ] or [ ʊ ] |
| (9) / n /+ / i / or / I / | → | [ ɲ ]+ [ i ] or [ I ]  |
| (10) / t /                | → | [ tt ]                 |
| (11) / n /, / ŋ /         | → | [ N ]                  |

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## Appendix

### *English Consonants:*

plosives:	/ p /, / b /, / t /, / d /, / k /, / g /
fricatives:	/ f /, / v /, / θ /, / ð /, / s /, / z /, / ʃ /, / ʒ /, / h /
affricates:	/ tʃ /, / dʒ /
nasals:	/ m /, / n /, / ŋ /
lateral:	/ l /
approximants:	/ r /, / j /, / w /

### *Japanese Consonants:*

plosives:	/ p /, / b /, / t /, / d /, / k /, / g /
fricatives:	/ ɸ /, / s /, / ɕ /, / ʃ /, / h /
affricates:	/ ts /, / dz /, / tɕ /, / dʑ /
flap:	/ ɾ /
nasals:	/ m /, / n /, / ŋ /, / ɲ /, / N /
approximants:	/ w / (/ ɰ /), / j /

# 22

## Early English Language Learning in Cyprus: Parental Perceptions of Identity and Intelligibility

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### Introduction

Early Language Learning (ELL) has become a global trend in recent years. Parents and politicians favour an early start for foreign language instruction in schools (Enever, 2011). This particularly concerns the English language, for which language policy makers around the world seem to follow the truism “earlier is better”.

Looking at Europe specifically, the European Commission states that ‘[b]ringing very young children to contact with foreign languages may result in faster language learning’ (Commission Staff Working Paper, 2011). It also states that ‘[e]arly language learning influences attitudes towards other languages and cultures’ (Commission Staff Working Paper, 2011). Staying in the context of Europe, the *Ellie* study (Early Language Learning in Europe) has attracted a lot of attention. One of the main conclusions of this study was that ‘[f]or young learners in Europe [...] new agendas are already emerging with the need for fluency in English becoming increasingly important’ (Enever, 2011: 151).

But why is there the tendency to introduce foreign language instruction earlier? According to Enever (2011), ‘the global economic benefits of being able to communicate in English’ (10) is a priority for the future of children. However, there is no clear evidence in the literature supporting ELL, only arguments based on the experiences of children growing up in bilingual contexts. Furthermore, having reviewed the ELL literature, it becomes clear that the arguments in support of ELL have counterarguments. The first argument is related to the age factor. According to Lennenberg’s (1964) *Critical Period Hypothesis*, there is a certain period of time during which young children should be exposed to language in order to be able to acquire that language. However, a counterargument to this is that older learners are

in a better position to develop learning strategies (Johnstone, 1994), irrespective of whether they are first or second language learners. The second argument favouring ELL is related to length of exposure, as an early start provides longer periods for learning (Donato et al., 2000). As Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006) argue however, this does not guarantee better outcomes. Finally, there is the argument related to motivation. Younger learners seem to be more enthusiastic and motivated about learning a new language (Tierney & Gallastegi, 2005). Nevertheless, a possible failure at such a young age could lead to demotivation in regard to language learning (Graddol, 2006: 89).

Our research into ELL focuses on instrumental and identity issues. The following quote by Nikolov and Mihaljević Djigunović (2006) captures this relationship well and provides a firm ground on which our study develops:

Besides overwhelming enthusiasm, more recently critical voices can also be heard. On the one hand, early exposure is often seen as a key to success and a solution to all problems in language education; on the other hand, it may be perceived as a threat to first language development and identity (234).

It seems that while ELL can be perceived as beneficial for language education, it can also be perceived as a threat to first language development and identity formation.

In the present paper, we examine these two perspectives of ELL through an investigation of parents' attitudes in Cyprus.

### **Context of the study**

The study took place in state primary schools in Nicosia, Republic of Cyprus, in January 2013. Standard Modern Greek is officially the language of instruction and the language of teaching material, but teachers and students also widely use the Cypriot-Greek dialect, since it is the first language variety of Greek-Cypriots. It should be mentioned however that there is a growing number of students (approximately 12% in our study) who come from immigrant families and speak a different home language (e.g. Romanian, Bulgarian, Russian).

The first foreign language taught in state primary schools is English. Until 2011, English was introduced in Grade 4 (9-year-old students) and was taught twice per week for forty minutes. The teachers who teach English are



general teachers, who usually hold a BA in Primary Education. It is interesting to note here that the majority of students start taking English lessons in the afternoon at least one year before English is introduced in school. These take place either in private classes or at language institutes. It seems likely that parents in Cyprus have traditionally sent their children to afternoon classes because they consider English instruction in state schools to be inadequate.

Since 2011, a new language-in-education policy has been introduced. According to this policy, the English language was introduced as a subject at Grade 1 of primary education (6-year-old students), instead of Grade 4, for one forty-minute period per week. In addition, since September 2012, English has been introduced in pre-primary education in some schools. This involves a ten-minute instruction every day through the CLIL approach. CLIL training is mandatory for pre-primary school teachers, but voluntary for primary school teachers. According to the *New National Curriculum* prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture in Cyprus (2010), the aims of these changes include developing positive attitudes towards English and foreign languages, fostering basic communicative skills for using English in a creative manner, and offering mobility and professional benefits.

### **Focus of study**

The focus of the study is on parents' attitudes. The reason we think that parents' beliefs are worth investigating is captured by the European Commission in the following quote:

Parents are the most important stakeholders in ensuring success with early language learning. Parents have a strong voice when it comes to influencing decision makers, both on the provision of ELL and on the choice of the target language (Commission staff working paper, 2011).

Keeping in mind the important role that parents play in the success of early language learning, we viewed the educational reform as an opportunity for a funded research project to explore a fresh testing-group in order to investigate parents' attitudes towards this new language policy aimed at English ELL.

### **Research Questions**

In order to investigate the issues raised above, three research questions were developed. These are the following:

1. Do parents agree with the new English ELL policy?
2. What are the opinions of parents about English ELL from a utilitarian perspective?
3. What are the opinions of parents about English ELL from an ideological perspective?

## Methodology

A questionnaire-based study was conducted in January 2013. Eight primary schools and eight pre-primary state schools in Nicosia, Cyprus, participated in the study. These schools were selected on the basis of whether the pre-primary school offered English in their curriculum.

Questionnaires were given to three groups of parents in these schools. These were pre-primary school parents, Grade 1 primary school parents and Grade 2 primary school parents. From the 977 questionnaires distributed to the parents of these schools, 660 were completed and returned.

The questionnaires consisted of 59 five-point Likert scale items. They also included space for comments in case some parents wanted to elaborate on an idea or provide their own ideas. At the end of the questionnaire, there was a section designed to elicit data on the socioeconomic status of the family, as it is considered to be a variable of great influence in this field of research.

All data from the questionnaires were entered into SPSS and analysed quantitatively.

## Results

### *Research Question 1*

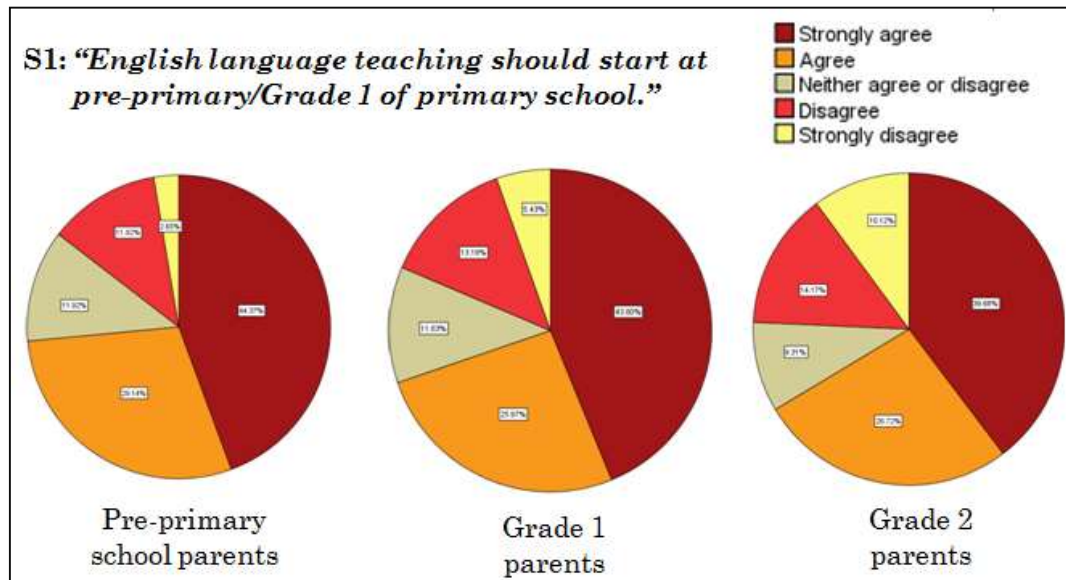
The first research question investigated whether parents agreed overall with the new English ELL policy. Three items from the questionnaire were able to provide a relevant answer to this question. These are the following:

Statement 1 (S1): *“English language teaching should start at pre-primary/ Grade 1 primary school.”*

Statement 2 (S2): *“English language teaching should start at Grade 4 of primary school (as it was the case before the new policy).”*

Statement 3 (S3): *“It is early for my child to learn English at pre-primary/Grade 1.”*

As these statements contradict each other, parents who agreed with the first statement were expected to disagree with the other two statements and vice versa. The pie charts below show how the parents of each grade responded to the first item separately.



**Figure 1: Pie Charts for S1**

Based on the pie charts, it is clear that the majority of the parents of all grades (more than 65%) either strongly agree or agree with the new ELL policy. This indicates that overall parents are in favour of an early start to English instruction.

The parents' responses for this item were then correlated with the responses given for the other two relevant items. As the Likert scale data were treated as ordinal, the Spearman's  $r$  correlation was chosen as the most appropriate test. Table 1 below presents the results of the correlations.

Correlations between the following statements	Spearman's $r$
S1-S2	-.63**
S1-S3	-.73**
S2-S3	-.62**

**Table 1: Correlations for RQ1**  
Significant at  $p > .01$  level

The correlations confirm that the parents responded consistently on the questionnaire. The parents who agreed with S1, which supported ELL, disagreed with S2 and S3, which did not support ELL. Similarly, parents

who agreed with S2, which rejected ELL, disagreed with S3 as well, which also rejected ELL.

In response to the first research question therefore, it can be said that parents are in favour of English ELL in Cyprus.

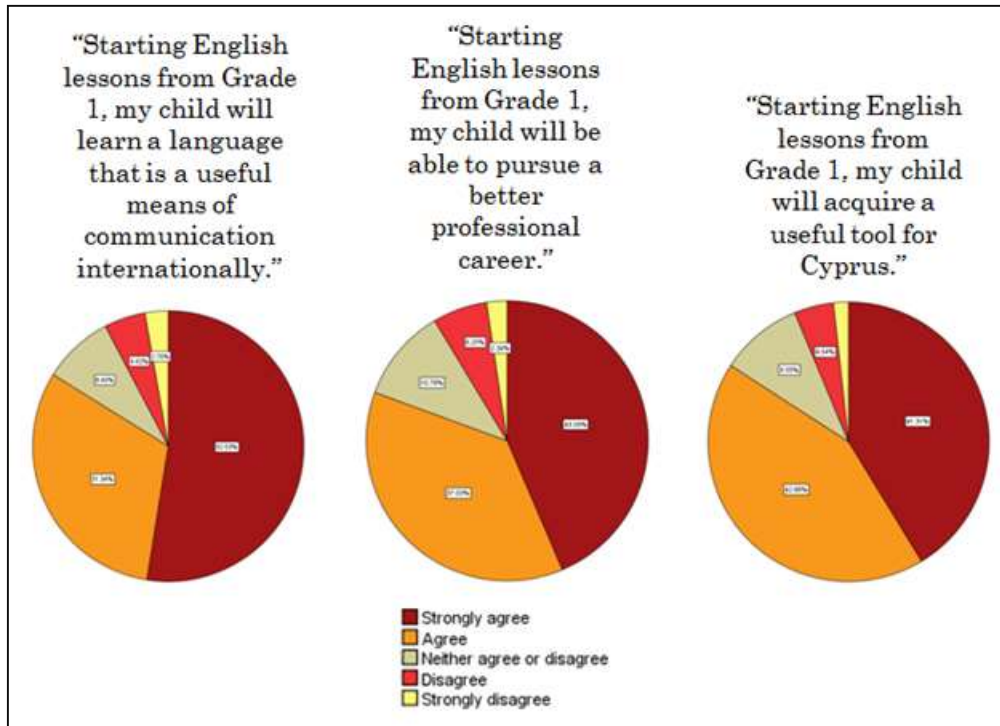
### ***Research Question 2***

The second research question aimed to explore the opinions of parents about English ELL from a utilitarian perspective. Eleven items on the questionnaire (showed in Figure 2 below) addressed the issue from this perspective and were considered for the analysis.

- "Starting English lessons from pre-primary/Grade 1, my child will:**
- 1) learn a language that is a useful means of communication internationally.**
  - 2) learn a language in which most scientific developments are written and published.**
  - 3) acquire a useful tool for Cyprus.**
  - 4) be able to comprehend texts and information from the internet.**
  - 5) be able to follow English-speaking news reports on the television.**
  - 6) be able to watch English-speaking cinema without Greek subtitles.**
  - 7) be able to understand the lyrics of English songs.**
  - 8) be able to move and be active outside Cyprus.**
  - 9) be able to pursue a better professional career.**
  - 10) be able to move upwards socially.**
  - 11) be able to complete his/her higher education studies at English-speaking universities easier."**

**Figure 2: Items considered for utilitarian perspective**

As can be seen in Figure 2, all 11 items expressed positive views about the utilitarian aspect of English ELL. The descriptive results of three of these items are presented in Figure 3 below.



**Figure 3: Pie charts for statements addressing the utilitarian perspective**

The pie charts show that more than 80% of the respondents either strongly agree or agree with the statements asking about the utilitarian role of ELL. In order to investigate the extent to which the responses to these three items agree with the responses to the remaining of the 11 items, correlations were run. Table 2 below presents the results.

	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11
S1	.80**	.61**	.62**	.51**	.53**	.56**	.60**	.59**	.45**	.60**
S2		.56**	.59**	.50**	.51**	.53**	.53**	.53**	.41**	.52**
S3			.60**	.55*	.59**	.60**	.60**	.59**	.47**	.59**
S4				.69**	.72**	.76**	.79**	.77**	.55**	.73**
S5					.81**	.78**	.68**	.64**	.58**	.60**
S6						.91**	.75**	.68**	.55**	.68**
S7							.79**	.74**	.59**	.71**
S8								.86**	.55**	.79**
S9									.62**	.79**
S10										.56**

**Table 2: Correlations between items of utilitarian perspective**

The significantly high positive correlations between all responses indicate that parents responded similarly to all items which addressed the utilitarian aspect of the issue. In particular, they agreed with all the relevant statements. In response to the second research question therefore, it can be said that English is seen as a useful tool with several functions.

### Research Question 3

The third research question aimed to examine the opinions of parents about English ELL from an ideological perspective.

Three different dimensions were set for enquiry. The first dimension referred to the significance of the use of English in Cyprus. The second dimension enquired about the potential political and cultural impact that increased teaching of English could have on Cyprus. The third dimension was concerned with whether English ELL could affect the identity of Cyprus: the Greek, the European or the multicultural identity.

For the first dimension, the statements and pie charts shown in Figure 4 below were considered for analysis.

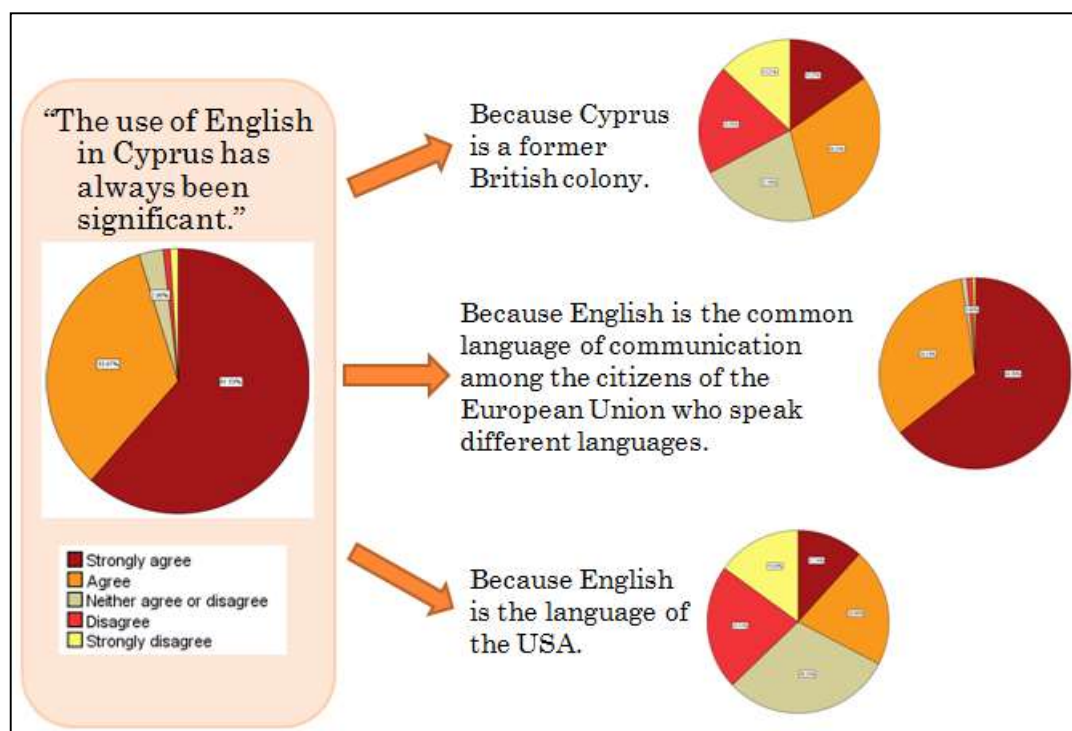
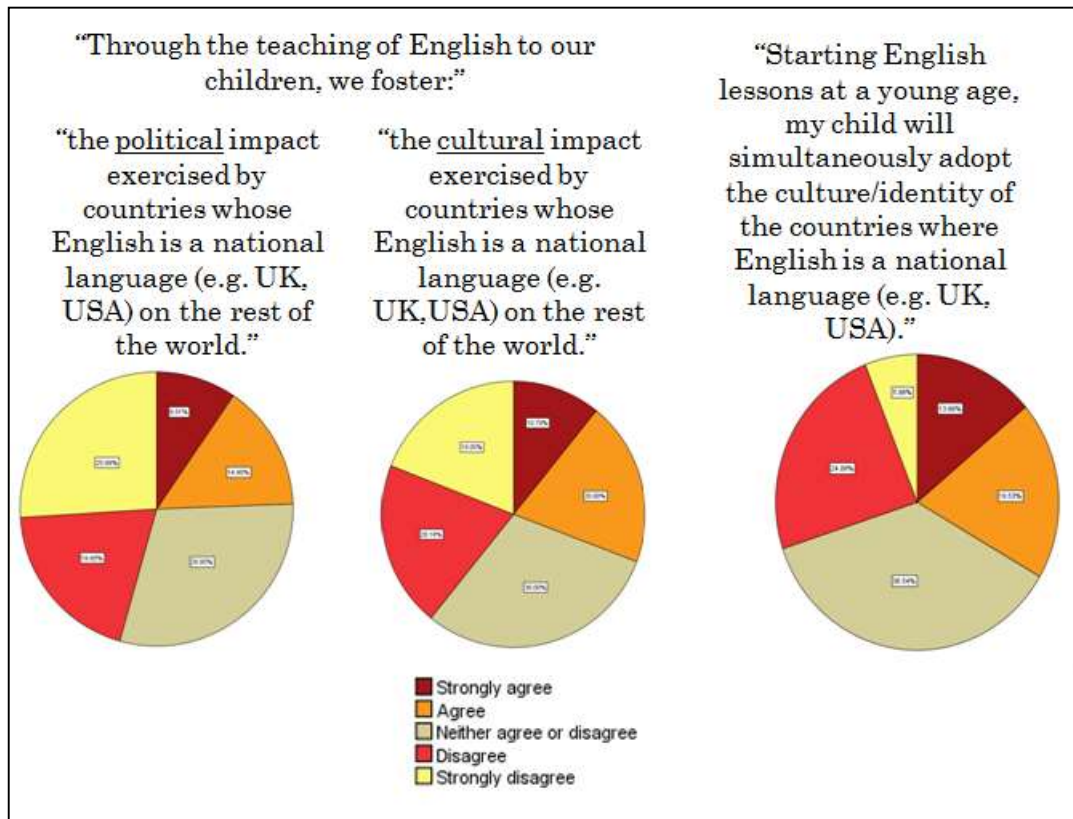


Figure 4: Parents' views on the significance of English in Cyprus

From the results shown in Figure 4, it seems that the vast majority of the parents (95.2%) believe that the use of English in Cyprus has always been significant. In an attempt to understand why parents find this use significant, three more items were explored. However, the pie charts provide clear results for only one of those reasons; that is because English is the common language of communication in the European Union. Mixed views were expressed for the other two reasons; those being because Cyprus is a former British colony and because English is the language of the USA, a country considered to be influential as a world power.



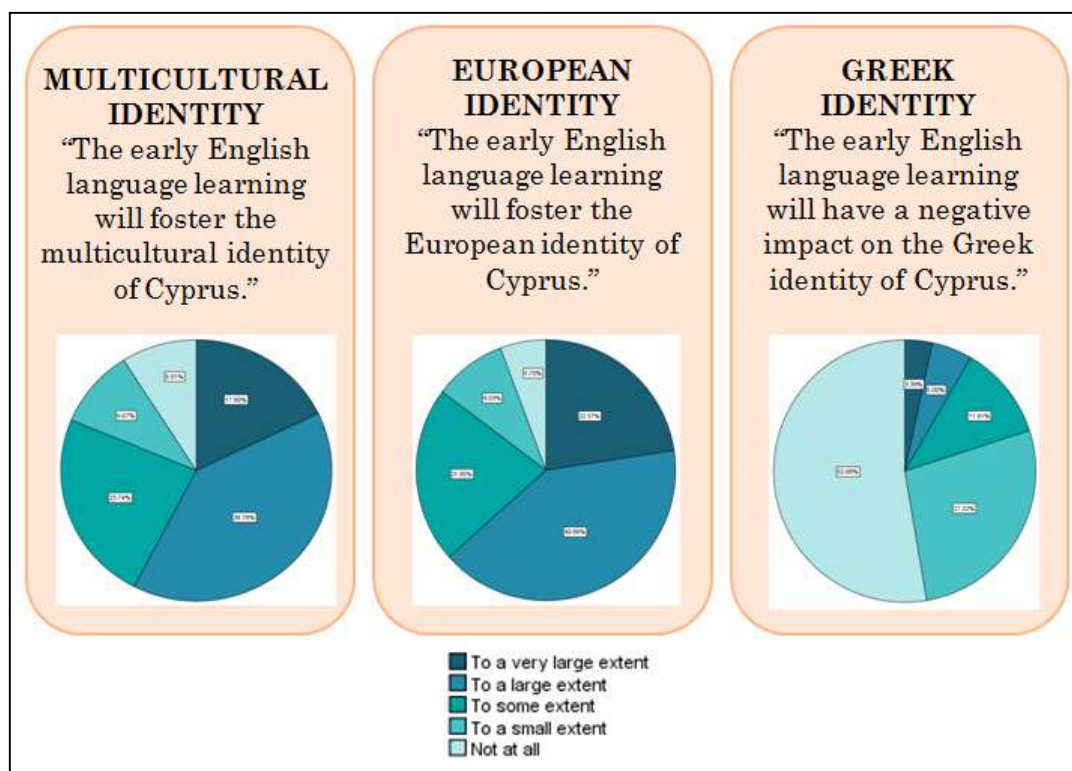
As for the second dimension which concerns the potential political and cultural impact of ELL, one item with three sub-items was considered. The items along with their descriptive results are presented in Figure 5 below.



**Figure 5: Parents' views about the potential political and cultural impact of English ELL in Cyprus**

Based on Figure 5, parents seem to have mixed views on this topic. It is still unclear to them whether English ELL can have political or cultural impact on Cyprus.

Finally, the third dimension of the ideological perspective considered whether English ELL can have an impact on the multicultural, European or Greek identity of Cyprus. Three items with a different scale ("To a very large extent", "To a large extent", "To some extent", "To a small extent", "Not at all") were considered for this dimension. Figure 6 below presents the items along with the results in pie charts.



**Figure 6** Parents' views on the potential impact of English ELL on identity

From the above, it seems that the majority of parents believe that English ELL will foster the multicultural and European identity of Cyprus (more than 57% on both questions agree either to a large or a very large extent). It is also clear that, while these identities can be fostered, parents believe that the Greek identity of Cyprus will not be affected (52.68%).

## Conclusions

Overall it seems that parents in Cyprus hold positive attitudes towards English ELL. This is probably because they see English as a useful tool serving several functions.

The exploration of the ideological perspective has revealed that parents believe that the use of English in Cyprus is significant because English is the language of communication across Europe. It has also revealed varied views about English ELL fostering the political and cultural impact of countries where English has the status of a national language. Finally, parents believe that English ELL will foster the European and multicultural identity of Cyprus without having a negative impact on the Greek identity.



In conclusion, parents clearly perceive English as an indispensable lingua franca, but opinions about English having a sociopolitical and identity role vary.

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# 23

## Effects of Reading Goal and L2 Reading Proficiency on Narrative Comprehension: Evidence from a Recall Task

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### Background

Narrative texts consist of various types of information such as *setting*, *goal*, *action*, and *outcome*. Among these, goal and outcome tend to be regarded as especially important elements, and are recalled better than information in other categories. Horiba et al. (1993) demonstrated that recall patterns are similar between first language (L1) and second language (L2) readers; in both L1 and L2 reading, goals and outcomes were recalled frequently, while actions were recalled only infrequently.

In addition to individual elements in a narrative passage, readers also comprehend the authors' overall message, called the *theme* (Graesser et al., 2002). Since narrative themes are not always stated explicitly, readers need to infer what the writer intends by reading context (i.e. *thematic inference*). Previous research has shown that for readers to comprehend the narrative theme, the protagonist's actions and their outcomes are especially necessary pieces of information (Dorfman & Brewer, 1994; Zhang & Hoosain, 2001). One possible question here is whether English as a foreign language learners focus on the action and outcome information in narrative texts when given strategic instructions for theme comprehension.

Strategic reading requires readers to adjust their cognitive processes and strategies to meet a given reading goal. Horiba (2000) compared the effects of a specific reading goal on L1 and L2 text comprehension. The results showed that it was more difficult for L2 readers than for L1 readers to change their reading strategy according to a particular reading goal, because L2 readers have to allot more limited cognitive resources to text comprehension and goal accomplishment.

The present study aims to investigate the effect of a reading goal (specifically, reading for narrative theme comprehension) on L2 reading comprehension,

focusing on post-reading recall performance. The research questions (RQs) are as follows:

RQ1: Does the reading goal of theme comprehension facilitate EFL readers' text recall performance?

RQ2: Does the effect of a reading goal of theme comprehension differ according to the learner's L2 reading proficiency?

According to previous studies reviewed above, it can be predicted that given a reading goal of theme comprehension, readers pay attention to elements that are important to achieving that goal, such as action and outcome in narrative passages. This leads to better text comprehension. However, it can be difficult for lower-proficiency learners to read in a way that is conducive to their goal. Therefore, the effects of a reading goal cannot appear in lower-proficiency readers.

## **Methods**

The participants in this study were 64 Japanese EFL learners (aged 18–22) majoring in engineering, psychology, education, or literature. They had studied English since the age of 13, and their English proficiency level seemed to range from intermediate to advanced. The data of six participants who did not complete the given tasks appropriately were excluded from the analysis, and so the data of 58 participants were ultimately analysed.

The experimental passages used were four short narrative passages adapted from Seifert, McKoon, Abelson, and Ratcliff (1986). The original passages were modified in order for the Japanese EFL learners to be able to understand them easily. Text length was 83.00 words on average. An example passage is shown in Figure 1. The original passage titles (e.g. “counting your chickens before they're hatched” which means “making definite plans based on some event or outcome that has not occurred yet”) were not presented to the participants, who therefore needed to infer an implicit theme from the passage.

First, the participants completed a 24-item reading proficiency test (Society for Testing English Proficiency, 1997, 2009) in 25 minutes. After that, they were randomly assigned one of the two reading conditions: reading for theme comprehension (the Theme condition) or reading for text comprehension (the Control condition). In the Theme condition, before reading the texts, participants were told that each text included a different narrative theme representing the writer's message or moral point, and that they were to think

about the theme of the story as they read it. In the Control condition, participants were told to read the passages in order to understand the content of the text; they were not told that each text included an implicit theme.

*Counting Your Chickens before They're Hatched*

Ernie was really encouraged about his interview for a security guard at the new factory in town. The interview was long, and Ernie thought he had done well. He assumed his employment as a guard was imminent. He went to the shopping mall and hunted around for a dark blue security guard uniform, and finally bought several. The next day he received a phone call from the factory personnel director saying he was not selected for a security guard position. Ernie was disappointed that he had wasted money on uniforms.

**Figure 1: An Example of an Experimental Passage**

*Note.* Four graduate students identified which information in the passage describes the main character's action and outcome. The underlined sentence describes the central action, while the double-underlined sentence describes the outcome.

Although the pre-reading instructions differed according to reading condition, the participants in both conditions completed the same procedure. That is, they read a text silently for one-and-a-half minutes and then completed an immediate written recall task in four-and-a-half minutes. This procedure was repeated for each of the four texts. The order of the four texts was counterbalanced to avoid any sequence effect on the recall task.

## **Results**

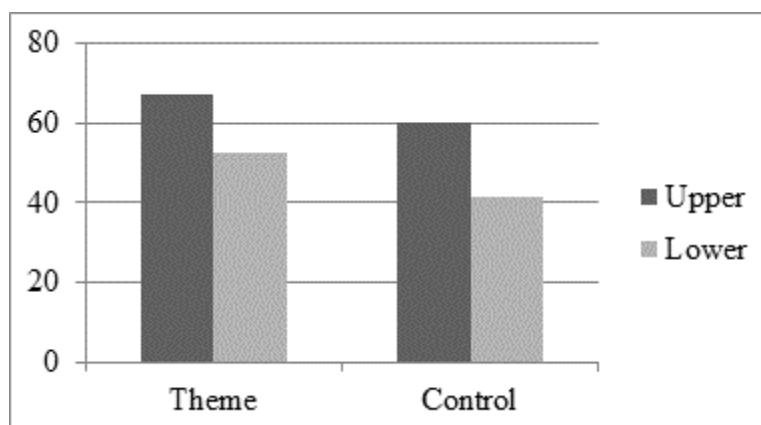
### ***Total Recall Production Rates***

First, in order to investigate how much of the overall text the readers recalled, the mean recall production rate was calculated (see Table 1). A 2 (Goal: Theme, Control)  $\times$  2 (Proficiency: Upper, Lower) two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the mean recall production rates. The result showed significant main effects of Goal and Proficiency ( $ps < .010$ ).

In contrast, the interaction between the two factors was not statistically significant,  $F(1, 54) = 0.37$ ,  $p = .546$ ,  $\eta^2 = .007$ . These results indicate that the learners in the Theme condition recalled the text as a whole better than those in the Control condition did. Further, the learners in the Upper group recalled the text better than those in the Lower group did.

	Proficiency	n	M	SD
Theme	Upper	15	67.13	7.05
	Lower	15	52.75	13.64
	Total	30	59.94	12.94
Control	Upper	14	59.99	12.40
	Lower	14	41.40	17.61
	Total	28	50.69	17.69

**Table 1: Recall Production Rates (%) of the Overall Passages**



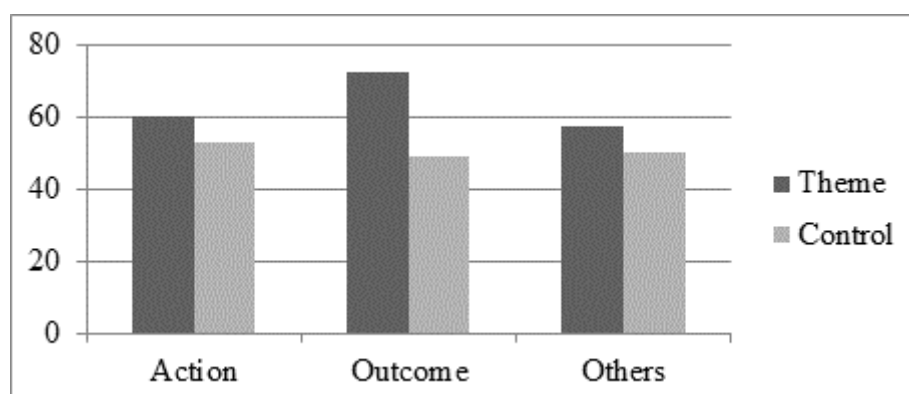
**Figure 2: Total recall production rates (Goal × Proficiency)**

### ***Recall Production Rates by Story Category***

To investigate why the Theme condition comprehended the text better than the Control condition, readers' recall protocols were further analysed. Specifically, what information they recalled better (and what information they did not) was examined. Recall production rates by story category (i.e. action, outcome, or others) are shown in Table 2.

		n	Action		Outcome		Others	
			M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Theme	Upper	15	67.62	11.09	77.33	14.38	65.06	8.19
	Lower	15	52.38	20.68	68.00	14.24	50.00	15.21
	Total	30	60.00	18.05	72.67	14.84	57.53	14.24
Control	Upper	14	62.24	15.71	62.14	19.29	58.99	13.84
	Lower	14	43.37	16.68	36.43	21.34	41.67	18.66
	Total	28	52.81	18.58	49.29	23.87	50.33	18.37

**Table 2: Recall Production Rates (%) for Action, Outcome, and Other**



**Figure 3: Recall production rates (Category × Goal)**

A 3 (Category: Action, Outcome, Others) × 2 (Goal: Theme, Control) × 2 (Proficiency: Upper, Lower) three-way ANOVA was conducted on the recall production rates. The results showed significant main effects of Category, Goal, and Proficiency ( $p < .010$ ).

Moreover, the interaction between Category and Goal was statistically significant,  $F(1, 54) = 10.03$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $\eta^2 = .157$ . Follow-up tests with Bonferroni correction revealed that the simple main effect of Category was significant for the Theme condition, indicating that Outcome information was recalled better than Action or Others ( $p < .001$ ). In addition, the simple main effect of Goal was also significant for Outcome information, indicating that the participants in the Theme condition recalled Outcome information better than those in the Control condition did ( $p < .001$ ). These results suggest that when given a reading goal of theme comprehension, readers focus on outcome as well as action information, leading to the construction of more coherent mental representations.

Previous studies have demonstrated that without any specific reading goal, L1 and L2 readers tend to recall outcome statements better than action statements (e.g. Horiba et al., 1993). The Theme condition in the present study also showed the presence of this pattern in learners' recall protocols. However, the most interesting finding of this study is that the recall rate for outcome information was significantly higher in the Theme condition than in the Control condition. In the Theme condition, readers needed to understand not only parts of the text but the text as a whole. Specifically, they needed to identify whether the outcome described in the text was consistent with the main character's actions (Dorfman & Brewer, 1994). Therefore, they focused on the key elements of action and outcome. In contrast, in the control condition, the participants processed each type of

information at the same level, leading to a lack of significant differences among story categories.

## Conclusion

The reading goal of theme comprehension facilitated both outcome and action information recall, leading to the construction of coherent mental representations (RQ1). This facilitation of recall was found regardless of readers' L2 reading proficiency (RQ2). Without any instructions, L2 learners sometimes tend to focus on comprehending each word and sentence and fail to adequately consider or understand the overall meaning of a text. Therefore, instructions such as those given in the present study to "read the text in order to find the author's message" can lead readers to read the text strategically in a top-down-processing manner.

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# 24

## **“Sorry! 對唔住呀,真係唔好意思...”: An Investigation of the Use of 對唔住 (Sorry) and 唔好意思 (Excuse me) and Strategies of Apology among Businessmen**

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to investigate and analyze how people use the two Cantonese utterances ‘對唔住’ (sorry) and ‘唔好意思’ (excuse me) in business contexts to express ideas about how people from Hong Kong use these two utterances for specific purposes, as well as the relationship between the selection of an utterance by a speaker in a specific social group and the social factors and background of the speaker. The two utterances have recently been used interchangeably and treated as the same by Cantonese speakers, especially by people from Hong Kong. Although these two utterances may share similar functions - conveying apology and humility - they should be used quite differently in terms of formality, especially in business workplaces. This research seeks to examine the correlation between social factors and a choice between the two utterances. The hypothesis of this research is that there is no free variation in people’s choice of utterance for apology; rather, the choice is influenced by some social and other general factors (e.g. Chung, Ko & Wong, 2011). The paper starts with an introduction to Chung, Ko & Wong’s (2011) research results, which serve as a motif for the present research. While Chung, Ko & Wong’s (2011) methodology is to conduct survey in a quantitative way by using the questionnaire (see the appendix) as the instrument, the methodology of the present research concerning the relationship between apology and society is recording. It is observed that there are generally four ways in which a person of a specific social group deliberately apologizes to specific businessmen, namely: emphatic apologies, compound apologies, apologies for tentative purpose and apologies with interjections and pause fillers.

In terms of applying these research results to business contexts, it is hoped that businessmen will come to understand that they can select the best apology strategy for specific groups of colleagues and/or clients.

## Introduction

This research aims to investigate and analyze how people use the two Cantonese utterances ‘對唔住’ (sorry) and ‘唔好意思’ (excuse me) in business contexts. The two utterances have recently been used interchangeably and treated as the same by Cantonese speakers, especially by people from Hong Kong. Although these two utterances may share similar functions – conveying apology and humility - they should be used quite differently in terms of formality.

One of the aims of the present research is to find out the correlation between social factors and a choice between the two Cantonese utterances, namely ‘對唔住’ (sorry) and ‘唔好意思’ (excuse me). Chung, Ko & Wong’s (2011) research results serve as a motif for the present research concerning the relationship between apology and society.

In Hong Kong, Macau and the vicinity of Canton (i.e., Guangzhou) in southern China, the regional dialect is Cantonese, and it is observed that most people in these areas use one of two utterances to apologize: either ‘對唔住’ or ‘唔好意思’ (Chung, Ko & Wong, 2011). In the pilot research of Chung, Ko & Wong (2011), 191 out of 220 respondents (about 87%) believed that the two Cantonese utterances ‘對唔住’ and ‘唔好意思’ should be used differently based on formality formality, while only 29 respondents (nearly 13%) believed that the two expressions were not associated with this difference. In other words, the majority of Hong Kong people agreed that the two Cantonese expressions were different. For instance, Chung, Ko & Wong’s (2011) research data analysis focused on the relationship between gender and ways of apologizing:

“One of the reasons behind [the different strategies of apology among people of different genders] may be [because] men think that using the ‘唔好意思’ will make them lose face [as] ‘唔好意思’ is an expression used for apology which [implies that they committed] some offence to others, thus using the [expression] would possibly imply shyness and shame. Because males, especially in Chinese society, are keen on face-saving, they try not [to] use ‘唔好意思’. However, for women, they are not that keen on face-saving compared with men. Although the equality of men and women is promoted in Hong Kong, women are still believed to be help[ed] by men in many circumstances, especially [when] carrying heavy objects. Therefore, [within this atmosphere,] they

will not feel too shy or shameful [to say ‘唔好意思’] when asking for help.”

In many cases and situations, the two utterances are used interchangeably and treated as the same. Generally, it is believed that people only randomly select one of the utterances to represent their apology, and that there are no regulations and specific guidelines leading them to decide to use one of these two utterances for apologies. However, it is not, and should not be, believed and assumed that choosing one of the two utterances for apology is free variation in sociolinguistics, whereas this point was the hypothesis of Chung, Ko & Wong’s (2011) sociolinguistic study that the two utterances, ‘對唔住’ (sorry) and ‘唔好意思’ (excuse me) are authentically used differently for specific formality (or purpose) to a large extent.

To conclude, although the two utterances, ‘對唔住’ and ‘唔好意思’, may have similar functions (for apology and humility), with this research the author has adopted a sociolinguistic perspective in order to investigate their differences; more specifically, it will seek to show that they are used strategically by businessman of specific social groups when interacting with specific hearers to achieve specific social effects.

### **Speech acts and appropriateness**

Six speech acts – namely apologies, complaints, compliments, refusals, requests, and thanking – have been listed by Cohen (2003) as all involving the notion of “appropriateness.” Sociolinguistic appropriateness was defined by Hymes (1972) as the distinguishing between what is possible, what is feasible, what is appropriate, and what is actually done in the use of communicative language. The concept of “sociolinguistic competence” was also proposed and can be defined as follows: sociolinguistic competence “addresses the extent to which utterances are produced and understood *appropriately* in different sociolinguistic contexts, depending on contextual factors such as topic, status of participants, and purposes of the interactions” (Swain, 1984:188). Furthermore, “[a]ppropriateness of utterances refers to both appropriateness of meaning and appropriateness of form” according to Swain (1984:188).

### **Functions and ways of apology**

Apologizing is an act of expressing sincerity; however, it is sometimes simultaneously also a way of compensating for some damage caused to the hearer(s). Apologizing thus helps to enhance mutual respect and to keep the relationship between colleagues stable (e.g., Chung, Ko & Wong, 2011). In

business communication, where stable partnership and mutual respect are especially significant, apologies can indeed be seen as playing a vital role.

An apology takes place only when someone admits having been at fault (cf. Chung, Ko & Wong, 2011). The speech act of apologizing aims at maintaining, restoring and enhancing interpersonal relationships. In order to achieve a successful apology, the wise selection of a proper apology strategy in a specific situation, context or circumstance is fundamentally important. Cohen (2003) lists five kinds of apologies: (1) expression of an apology (e.g. containing a verb “sorry”, “excuse”, etc.), (2) acknowledgement of responsibility (e.g. “It’s my fault.”), (3) explanation or account (e.g. “There is traffic congestion.”), (4) offer of repair (e.g. “I will pay for your dinner tonight.”), and (5) promise of non-recurrence (e.g. “I promise it will never happen again.”).

### **Review of literature on apology**

In conversation, we apologize, or are apologized to, under different conditions for different reasons and by different means. In the present research, the analysis will focus only on the spoken text and will not take written text and discourse analysis into consideration.

It has been found that there is not any significant difference between the native speaker (NS) and non-native speaker (NNS) in terms of apology utterances in “six of the eight situations of verbal discourse completion situations” (Linnell *et al.*, 1992). Fukushima & Iwata (1987) observed that there was no significant difference between the NS and the NSS in terms of the sequence of semantic formulas in request utterances, which was generally similar in Japanese and English. EFL learners’ proficiency did not seem to affect sociolinguistic competence.

In Chinese, ‘對唔住’ may be used as a general term for apologizing in either serious or casual situations; the use of ‘唔好意思’, on the other hand, seems to be relatively informal and normally used in a casual way. It may be inappropriate to use ‘唔好意思’ when an action undertaken by the speaker has hurt the listener deeply, or to use it in a situation or a place that is typically formal and serious. The ‘唔好意思’ may only be used to show or present a certain degree of politeness and respect towards an addressee, while expressing little to no dismay.

Making an English analogy, people would use “excuse me” in casual communication (李軍, 2007:11-19). Borkin & Reinhart (1978:57-69)

propose that the English word “sorry” expresses dismay or regret about a state of affairs viewed or delineated by the speakers, while the phrase “excuse me” is used when a social rule has been broken or is about to be broken and the speakers take responsibility for that state of affairs. It is interesting to note that in both Chinese and English, these apology ways seem to have merged together recently (Borkin & Reinhart, 1978; 易敏, 2005), and it is believed that there is no free variation in people’s choice of utterance for apology (cf. hypothesis of the Chung, Ko & Wong’s (2011) sociolinguistic research). The present research has been conducted to investigate how people from Hong Kong actually use the ‘對唔住’ and ‘唔好意思’.

In everyday life, people may cause others to lose face. An apology speech act can repair the relationship between the interlocutors (吳婉綺, 2010). The research conducted by 吳婉綺 (2010) investigated the pragmatic strategies and linguistic structures of apologies in Mandarin in Taiwan, while the collaborative research conducted by Chung, Ko and Wong (2011) selected Hong Kong as the research target.

Most of the existing studies of apology in different languages and cultures follow the approach proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987): apology was once described as a “negative politeness” strategy, and a great deal of research areas exist in relation to this negative politeness strategy. Anthropologists Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1987) identified two kinds of politeness, positive and negative politeness, in which the negative politeness is defined as: making a request less infringing, such as by saying “If you don’t mind...” or “If it isn’t too much trouble...” and respecting a person’s right to act freely.

Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) mention the speech act of apology in their research investigating a variety of speech acts. Later, Thomas (1995) follows Searle’s (1969) model of the speech act of promise and proposes the *felicity conditions* of apology. Brown & Levinson (1987) claim that the performance of the speech acts is influenced by certain social factors, namely: ranks of imposition, relative power and social distance between participants.

## Methodology

The present research will attempt to make use of Brown & Levinson’s (1987) proposed social factors as a framework for exploring the influence of these factors on the apologizer’s choice of apology strategy and the distribution of

the apology strategies. It will test if and how the apologizer tends to use more formal and more complicated combinations of apology strategies when the offence is more serious and the addressee is more powerful.

For the present research, the author deliberately participated in the Business internship programme organised by the Prudential company in Hong Kong. Participation in this programme allowed the researcher to collect a great deal of data from the conversations of the future businessmen attending, who were undergraduate students completing a degree in Bachelor of Business Administration in Hong Kong. The universities represented include the University of Hong Kong and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The author also participated in an interview conducted by the HK Fortune Worldwide Limited<sup>13</sup> in regard to the position of Clerk in the company, which led to the successful obtainment of this position. The researcher then acted as an employee in this “investment” company – which may be a “*bandits’ inn*” (‘黑店’ in Chinese)<sup>14</sup> – for three days, during which time the employment generated much misunderstanding between employer and employee (the investigator) and thus afforded many opportunities for these two actors to apologize differently to each other, therefore providing data for the present study based on the method of recording.

### **Aims of the present research**

The success of this research will generate ideas concerning both how Hong Kong businessmen currently use these two utterances for specific purposes, and the relationship between the selection of an utterance by a person in a specific social group and the identity of the speaker. Apart from potential benefit of this research to businessmen who may be better equipped to choose an apology strategy appropriate for the specific group of colleagues and clients, those who identify otherwise will hopefully also benefit from it by using the original data of the research as a reference for learning how to apologize “more” appropriately in their workplaces. In the following section, an outcome following each utterance of apology will be depicted so as to let readers witness the cause-and-effect of using a specific utterance involving the use of ‘對唔住’ or ‘唔好意思’ in a specific context or situation.

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<sup>13</sup> See the description of the company by the HK Fortune Worldwide Limited on <http://www.hkfw.hk/about.asp>.

<sup>14</sup> Source: <http://hk.search.yahoo.com/search?p=%E5%89%B5%E5%AF%8C%E7%92%B0%E7%90%83%E8%AB%8B%E6%96%87%E5%93%A1%E4%B8%80%E5%95%8F&fr=FP-tab-web-t&ei=UTF-8&meta=rst%3Dhk>.

The hypothesis of this research is that there is no free variation in people's choice of apology utterance. It is believed that the choice is influenced by certain social and other general factors. It is believed that the choice between the two utterances, ‘對唔住’ and ‘唔好意思’ when apologizing is impacted by some specific factors (e.g. contextual factor). In other words, there should be no free variation in selecting one of these two Cantonese utterances. As mentioned previously, the research focus will be on how people from Hong Kong and other Cantonese speakers use the two Cantonese utterances ‘對唔住’ (comparable to “sorry” in English) and ‘唔好意思’ (comparable to “excuse me” in English). In their research, Chung, Ko & Wong (2011) assumed that ‘對唔住’ was an equivalent of *sorry*, while ‘唔好意思’ was an equivalent of *excuse me*; thus ‘對唔住’ and ‘唔好意思’ manifest the typical semantic meanings of “apologizing [and] politely saying ‘no’ to [something]” and “interrupt[ion] [to] somebody,” respectively, according to Wehmeier (1998:321, 885-886). The above-mentioned assumption (Chung, Ko & Wong, 2011) maintained in the present research. The main focus here is specifically on **how** people from Hong Kong and other Cantonese speakers actually use these two utterances in business contexts.

### Discussion of the results

The present analysis focuses on two Cantonese expressions of explicit apologies, i.e. apologies with ‘對唔住’ (sorry) and ‘唔好意思’ (excuse me). The original Chinese transcription is not fully shown for analysis; instead an English translation of the Chinese spoken data is included in this section for illustration. For example, the result from the recording of a Chinese utterance involving the use of ‘對唔住’ (sorry) is presented as the follows:

(e.g.) 對唔住

I am very sorry for my mistake.

Again, I am very very sorry (對唔住).

### ***Four specific ways of apologizing used by specific kind of businessmen***

The investigation has revealed several specific ways of making apologies proposed by specific kinds of businessmen, findings which are similar to the ones proposed by Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė (2007).

### ***Patterns of emphatic apologies***

Emphatic apologies are based on the principle “maximum sincerity and

respect” (Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007): the degree of sincerity and respect is increased by using different linguistic means of intensification. Original data illustrating these apologies are provided in (1.1.) – (1.3.).

(1.1.) 對唔住

Er, *so* sorry, but you said you would employ me... to be a clerk...  
I would not participate in any investment activities.

(1.2.) 唔好意思

Mr Wong, *awfully* excuse me to interrupt you, I would like to discuss with you about my job.

(1.3.)

Mr Wong, I got an offer from the University of Wollongong, I think in short term I may not prefer to participate in any investment activities as you know, I don't want to start the career, and then I will quit suddenly, excuse me (唔好意思) but if you still want to hire me as a clerk, I will be very pleased to accept it... I am *so* sorry (對唔住).

The examples above show that an apology is most commonly preceded by an intensifier (e.g. *very* ‘很’, *so* ‘好’, *awfully* ‘非常’). In these cases, the speaker maximally increases the threat to his/her own positive face, but by doing so maximally reduces the threat to the hearer's face; such techniques thus allow the speaker to preserve the stability of the relationship (e.g. Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007).

More interestingly, tentative apologies (see section 3.2.3.), on the other hand, may not prevail in the collected data compared to emphatic apologies. This tendency suggests that speakers are more interested in maintaining a **stable relationship** and expressing positive attitudes to the interlocutors than in saving their own face (Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007).

### ***Compound apologies***

As described by Aijmer (1996), compound apologies are closely related to emphatic apologies since the repetition of an apology strengthens its effect, as seen in the following data:

(2.1.) 對唔住

First of all I'm sorry for the fact that I did not have time to correct



your assignment for the even as I was extremely busy last night.  
Again I’m sorry (對唔住) about that.

(2.2.) 唔好意思 對唔住

Oh excuse me I’m sorry I thought you said thoroughly right.

(2.3.) 唔好意思

Sorry (對唔住), excuse me, but is it appropriate for me to be arranged to sit here?

Two apologies can follow one another in the same utterance, as in (2.2.) – (2.3.), or they can occur in two subsequent utterances, as in (2.1.).

### ***Apologies for tentative purpose***

Tentative apologies, as has already been mentioned, are not as frequent as emphatic apologies and contain mitigating devices that lessen the strength of the apology and make it less sincere (Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007:73).

### ***Apologies with a self-justification***

In a great number of instances apologies are followed by a self-justification, and such self-justifications can be seen as special cases of face-saving and thus can be related to tentative apologies (Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007). An example from the data illustrating extended apologies with self-justifying arguments is provided in (3.1.).

(3.1.) 對唔住

Sorry, I’d like to apologize for... my... misunderstanding. I may misunderstand the nature of this job. I actually read the job description of your company, an advertisement in newspaper... the job duty is to manage the daily matters in the company, but it does not mention the candidate needs to have experience in investment.

The above response from the interview concerning a job in an investment company can be treated as case of face-repair, since the self-justifying explanations are the speakers’ attempts to shield themselves (Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007). The speaker in (3.1.) does apologize and admit his fault to demonstrate his sincerity, but simultaneously he also disclaims his fault or tries to lessen it by referring to some external circumstances that made his faults inevitable.

### ***Patterns with interjections and pause fillers***

In a number of cases of apology in the English language, the interjection *oh* precedes the apology *sorry*, e.g. Oh sorry (Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007). In Chinese, the interjection *er* usually precedes the apology with either *sorry* (對唔住) or *excuse me* (唔好意思), as shown in the following data:

(4.1.)

Er, sorry (對唔住) about my misunderstandings.

(4.2.) 唔好意思

Er excuse me, I may not be able to submit the next assignment for the second meeting of the internship, as I am quite busy at this moment.

Both examples (4.1.) and (4.2.) contain an interjection and a discourse marker in the utterance initial position.

Sometimes a pause filler precedes an apology:

(4.3.) 唔好意思

Thanks for your understandings... (pause) excuse me, I want to ask if I could leave without doing any additional application.

The use of a pause filler in (4.3.) allows the speaker to make a **delay** before uttering the apology which lets both speaker and listener sense that they will be discussing or talking about some more serious topic(s).

### ***Summary***

We should treat every daily matters as business matters, including regarding general apology as the one in business context. In this sense, the present research results can definitely enable people, not only businessmen, to gain knowledge that can be used in choosing the better apology strategy for specific groups of listeners or hearers.

Apologies can manifest different degrees of strength (Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007). Most of the time, the apologies are highly emphatic and others may be rather tentative (cf. intensified and downgraded apologies in Olshtain (1989)). Emphatic apologies (e.g. I am **very** sorry) are based on the principle of “maximum sincerity and respect” (Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007:72, 78), whereas tentative apologies are based on the principle of “minimum face-threat” (Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007:78) and encompass apologies with a

self-justification. Furthermore, based on my observation, it is notable that “excuse me” seems to be more relevant in the contexts of informal situations, whilst “sorry” would be used to express a more serious presentation of the speaker’s apology. This is consistent with some scholars’ ideas outlined in the literature review: ‘對唔住’ (*sorry*) can be used in both serious and casual situations while ‘唔好意思’ (*excuse me*) is only used in informal and casual situations (e.g. Chung, Ko & Wong, 2011). In contrast with Chung, Ko & Wong’s (2011) findings, the present paper’s data tend to be more authentic which are recorded in workplaces. In terms of business apologies, the following data suggest that when the *sorry* (對唔住) is employed in requests for information, the reply is likely to be clear and direct:

(a.i.) 對唔住

Mr. Ko: Er, sorry about my misunderstandings.  
(employee)

(a.ii.)

Mr. Wong: Okay, you may leave now.  
(employer)

However, when the *excuse me* (唔好意思) is employed in requesting information, the reply is more likely to be ambiguous, consider the following data:

(b.i.) 唔好意思

Mr. Ko: Excuse me, I want to ask if I could leave without doing any additional application.  
(employee)

(b.ii.)

Mr. Wong: You may possibly ask someone... someone at the counter... entrance.  
(employer)

Last but not least, an interesting category of apologies includes those cases when an apology is followed by a but-explanation, which Olshtain (1989:158) refers to as downgraded apologies which raise “the question whether an apology was even necessary”. It is clear that such apologies attempt to minimize the seriousness of the violation. Consider the context in Figure 1 below. On the one hand, the young man did something “wrong” to his

girlfriend, hence he knelt down in front of her and made an apology in the street; on the other, however, the apology was followed by a but-explanation attempting to minimize the seriousness of the violation.



**Figure 1** A screenshot from the video retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OK1aZD7o9yE>. Accessed October 15, 2013

## Conclusion

The data have revealed that different types of apologies are adopted for different purposes, both personal and general, in business communication.

The present investigation has shown that apologies are highly routinized and follow a largely predictable pattern, and that the apologies can have a different degree of force, meaning that several main types of apologies can be distinguished (cf. Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007). While apologies can be emphatic (and thus serve primarily to express the speaker's sincerity and contain different intensifiers or double apologies), *tentative apologies* are primarily face-oriented and contain different mitigating devices (Čubajevaitė & Ruzaitė, 2007); nonetheless, apologies with self-justifications are a balanced type of apologies since they both meet the requirement of sincerity and address the speaker's need for face-repair.

In terms of applying these research results to business contexts, it is hoped that businessmen will come to understand that they can select the best apology strategy for specific groups of colleagues and/or clients.

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## Appendix

### ‘對唔住’ (Sorry) and ‘唔好意思’ (excuse me) questionnaire

(Adapted from J. K. Y. Chung, C. K. S. Ko & T. C. K. Wong, (2011). *The use of Cantonese words ‘對唔住’ (Sorry) and ‘唔好意思’ (excuse me) among Hong Kong people*. Unpublished thesis, Open University of Hong Kong.)

我們現正進行一個研究關於香港人使用「對唔住」和「唔好意思」與他/她的背景有否關聯。我們衷心希望你能夠用數分鐘的時間完成以下的問卷。謝謝！

1. 你的母語是：

<input type="checkbox"/> 廣東話	<input type="checkbox"/> 普通話	<input type="checkbox"/> 英文	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他
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2. 你的性別是：

<input type="checkbox"/> 男	<input type="checkbox"/> 女
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3. 你同意廣東話中「對唔住」(對不起)與「唔好意思」(不好意思)有分別嗎？

<input type="checkbox"/> 有 (請到 Q4)	<input type="checkbox"/> 沒有 (請到 Q15)
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於 4-14 題，請從「對唔住」及「唔好意思」中，選擇哪一個你認為最合適。

4. 當你弄髒了你朋友的物件時，你會說：

<input type="checkbox"/> 對唔住	<input type="checkbox"/> 唔好意思	<input type="checkbox"/> 甚麼也不說	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他：_____
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5. 當你約會朋友吃晚飯，因事遲到15分鐘，你會說：

<input type="checkbox"/> 對唔住	<input type="checkbox"/> 唔好意思	<input type="checkbox"/> 甚麼也不說	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他：_____
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6. 當你約會你的上司或老師出席的會議，你因事遲到15分鐘，你會說：

<input type="checkbox"/> 對唔住	<input type="checkbox"/> 唔好意思	<input type="checkbox"/> 甚麼也不說	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他：_____
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7. 當你打噴嚏時，身旁有人，你會說：

<input type="checkbox"/> 對唔住	<input type="checkbox"/> 唔好意思	<input type="checkbox"/> 甚麼也不說	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他：_____
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8. 當你乘搭地鐵時，需要在下車，但有很多其他乘客在前面阻擋你的去路，你會說：

<input type="checkbox"/> 對唔住	<input type="checkbox"/> 唔好意思	<input type="checkbox"/> 甚麼也不說	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他：_____
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9. 當你致電查詢某事時，接線生請你等等，你會期望他/她對你說：

<input type="checkbox"/> 對唔住，請你	<input type="checkbox"/> 唔好意思，請	<input type="checkbox"/> 請等一等	<input type="checkbox"/> 其 他 ：
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等一陣...	你等一等...		
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10. 當你拿著很重的物件時，看見你的親戚長輩時，想請他幫忙，你會對他說：

<input type="checkbox"/> 對唔住，可以幫我一下嗎？	<input type="checkbox"/> 唔好意思，可以幫我一下嗎？	<input type="checkbox"/> 幫一幫我吧！	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他： _____
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11. 當你拿著很重的物件時，看見你的好朋友時，想請他幫忙，你會對他說：

<input type="checkbox"/> 對唔住，可以幫我一下嗎？	<input type="checkbox"/> 唔好意思，可以幫我一下嗎？	<input type="checkbox"/> 幫一幫我吧！	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他： _____
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12. 當你拿著很重的物件時，看見你認識的人時，想請他幫忙，你會對他說：

<input type="checkbox"/> 對唔住，可以幫我一下嗎？	<input type="checkbox"/> 唔好意思，可以幫我一下嗎？	<input type="checkbox"/> 幫一幫我吧！	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他： _____
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13. 當你在困難中(如：迷路或問路)，看見一個陌生人時，你必須請他幫忙，你會對他說：

<input type="checkbox"/> 對唔住，可以幫我嗎？	<input type="checkbox"/> 唔好意思，可以幫我嗎？	<input type="checkbox"/> 幫一幫我吧！	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他： _____
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14. 當你不小心踩到別人的腳時，你會說：

<input type="checkbox"/> 對唔住	<input type="checkbox"/> 唔好意思	<input type="checkbox"/> 甚麼也不說	<input type="checkbox"/> 其他：_____
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15. 你的教育程度為

<input type="checkbox"/> 小學程度或以下
<input type="checkbox"/> 初中 (正修讀或畢業)
<input type="checkbox"/> 高中 (正修讀或畢業)
<input type="checkbox"/> 預科 (正修讀或畢業)
<input type="checkbox"/> 大專 (正修讀或畢業)
<input type="checkbox"/> 學士 (正修讀或畢業)
<input type="checkbox"/> 研究生 (正修讀或畢業)

16. 你家庭的每月總收入約為

<input type="checkbox"/> \$8000 以下
<input type="checkbox"/> \$8000 - \$14999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$15000 - \$24999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25000 - \$39999

<input type="checkbox"/> \$40000 - \$59999
--

<input type="checkbox"/> \$60000 或以上
--------------------------------------

17. 你已在香港居住了：

<input type="checkbox"/> 本人在香港出生
----------------------------------

<input type="checkbox"/> 已來港居住了_____年
---------------------------------------

18. 你的年齡為：

<input type="checkbox"/> 15 歲或以下
----------------------------------

<input type="checkbox"/> 16 – 25 歲
------------------------------------

<input type="checkbox"/> 26 – 35 歲
------------------------------------

<input type="checkbox"/> 36 – 45 歲
------------------------------------

<input type="checkbox"/> 46 – 55 歲
------------------------------------

<input type="checkbox"/> 56 – 65 歲
------------------------------------

<input type="checkbox"/> 65 歲或以上
----------------------------------

問卷已完成，謝謝

所有提供的資料將會保密處理！

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# 25

## Language and Tourism in Sabah, Malaysia and Edinburgh, Scotland

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One of the newest areas of study in applied linguistics is within the tourism industry. Despite the centrality of language to tours (Cohen 1982, 1985; Coupland et al. 2005), tourism commodities (Pietikäinen & Kelly-Holmes 2001, Heller 2010), and place promotion (Coupland et al. 2005; Heller 2003), insights from linguistics have not had great impact on tourism research, practice, or policy (see Hall-Lew & Lew, 2014). This study presents a comparative analysis of language attitudes in two very different tourism contexts: Sabah, Malaysia and Edinburgh, Scotland. Both sites feature a thriving tourism industry, attracting large numbers of domestic and international visitors annually. The question for both locations is to what extent spoken linguistic variation might be considered a ‘heritage commodity’ (MacCannell 1999[1976]).

In 2012, we conducted qualitative and quantitative interviews and surveys with tourists and tourism providers in Malaysia and Scotland in an effort to ascertain the role of language in a tourist’s travel experience. We found that language – specifically, the exposure of a tourist to local linguistic variation – is an important and overall positive element of a tourist’s experience.

### Data Collection

The Malaysian state of Sabah provides an informative case example of this: due to the complexity of its language situation, located on the island of Borneo, it has over 50 linguistic varieties (cf. [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)), 32 officially recognized ethnic groups, documented and undocumented migrants, and large numbers of Asian and non-Asian tourists. Of the nearly three million tourists that arrive in Sabah yearly, two-thirds are domestic, mostly from the much more populated Peninsula (or East) Malaysia. Of the international visitors, approximately 40% are from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, about 33% are from Australia, and 18% are from Japan. (These figures largely reflect international airline connections.) Bahasa Malaysian

is widely spoken to varying degrees by all Malaysians, though it is more likely to be a second language for Sabahans. Hakka and Cantonese are spoken by many Chinese Sabahans, with Mandarin being a popular third language for many school children. English is common in cities, but is far less spoken in rural areas where local languages are dominant. In addition, about 25% of Sabah's population of four million are undocumented migrants, including so called "sea gypsies", mostly traced back to the southern Philippines, with some from Indonesia.

The first author conducted 20 formal interviews with members of the tourism industry in Sabah, Malaysia, in March to April 2012, to assess their views of language use in tourism and the broader Sabahan society. Respondents included local Sabahans, and non-Sabahans. The interviews covered the political economy of the local linguistic landscape as it creates a context to the tourism industry and tourist activities, and the degree and form of expressed interests in local languages and dialects by different types of tourists. The tourism professionals were asked about language endangerment and preservation effects and their perceptions of tourists' linguistic preferences with respect to tour guides and travel experiences (e.g., whether they were interested in learning local varieties).

The second and third authors conducted data collection in Edinburgh, Scotland, in August-September 2012 and June-September 2013. Scotland might be considered, in a very general sense, to stand in linguistic contrast with England in a similar way that Malaysian Borneo stands in contrast with Peninsular Malaysia. In both instances there is a broader 'national' (although that idea is complicated in both the Scotland/UK and Sabah/Malaysia cases) linguistic standard that contrasts very saliently with the local linguistic variety (Scottish English or Sabahan Malaysian).

In contrast to Sabah, only three linguistic varieties characterize Scotland: English, Scots, and Scottish Gaelic. The vast majority of inhabitants speak English and/or Scots, with very few proficient in Gaelic. The linguistic background of tourists to Edinburgh has some parallels with the Sabahan context, in that the majority are domestic: 42% from England and 16% from other parts of Scotland<sup>15</sup>. Less than 4% come from Wales or Northern Ireland, Resulting in almost two-thirds of visitors being from a domestic market. Less

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15 Edinburgh by Numbers, p21:  
[https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/4130/edinburgh\\_by\\_numbers\\_201112](https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/4130/edinburgh_by_numbers_201112) (Date accessed 22 December 2013)

than 20% of tourists come from other parts of Europe ('regional' tourists), and 6% come from the United States ('international' tourists).

Data collection in Edinburgh in 2013 paralleled that in Sabah, consisting of interviews with 38 tour guides from a range of tour types and sociolinguistic backgrounds. Guides were asked the same sorts of questions as were asked in Sabah, with less emphasis on language preservation. We found that Edinburgh tour guides, while often quite outspoken about the positive and important role of Scots and Scottish English in their tours, had little to say about the role of Scottish Gaelic.

Also in contrast to the Sabah fieldwork, in Edinburgh data collection included a study of tourists' language attitudes using a written survey and word clouds (Figs. 1, 2). In total, 49 tourists responded to the survey, from a range of sociolinguistic backgrounds. More details are provided in Hall-Lew, Fairs and Lew (to appear 2014).



**Figure 1: Scottish Tourism Language Attitudes Word Cloud**



**Figure 2: Scottish Tourism Linguistic Commodity Word Cloud**

## Analysis

A content analysis of the Sabah interviews revealed four types of tourists in terms of the way they relate linguistically to Sabah as a destination (Table 1). Local Sabahans (indigenous to Sabah), which may also include others from the former British North Borneo region, have a high awareness and sensitivity to the state's linguistic varieties, but do not have a significant interest in this as a motivation for tourist travel. At the other end of the scale, international tourists (from beyond Malaysia's immediate regional neighbours who share its linguistic heritage) usually know little at all about Sabah's tremendous linguistic diversity, though they will often express great interest in this as they come to know and experience the ethnic diversity of the state. In terms of the tourism marketing potential of Sabah's language variation, this appeared to be highest among domestic tourists from Peninsular Malaysia, for whom Sabah is seen as exotically different, yet also familiar (similar to Hawai'i for mainland Americans).

<b>LANGUAGE VARIATION</b>	<b>Local Tourist</b>	<b>Domestic Tourists</b>	<b>Regional Tourists</b>	<b>International Tourists</b>
<b>Tourist Awareness</b>	High	Moderate	Low	Minimal
<b>Tourist Interest</b>	Minimal	Low	Moderate*	High*
<b>Marketing Potential</b>	Low	High	Moderate	Minimal

**Table 1: Tourist Types and their Engagement with Language Variation in Sabah, Malaysia. (Note: \* = can vary considerably by market)**

Because Peninsular Malaysia is the most important tourism market for Sabah, the social, political and economic relationship between these two geographically disparate places underlies the linguistic marketing of the state. In particular, there is a fine political line between being different in an exotic way and being different with irredentist or separatist overtones. "Borneo", as a distinct cultural and linguistic place, is emphasized to the degree that Sabah competes for Peninsular Malaysian travel interests with destinations such as Bali in Indonesia. On the other hand, one guide interviewee pointed out that government promotional literature will also emphasize that Sabah is "Malaysian Borneo" to ease the sometimes underlying tensions that exist between the country's center and its periphery. For the greater Chinese market (China, Hong Kong and Taiwan), on the other hand, language issues are centred more on basic communication, with Mandarin skills, in particular, being a form of cultural capital for employment purposes.

Given the similar domination of Edinburgh's tourism market by domestic tourists, we found parallel results to those in Sabah, in that most tourists surveyed in Edinburgh valued hearing local linguistic variation. Among the 49 tourists surveyed, 27 were English (24 of whom self-described as British, possibly expressing a political or social identification with Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland). In contrast to the Sabah context, however, there were fewer marked differences between local (within Scotland), domestic (within the UK), regional (European), and international tourists (outside of Europe). One possible reason for this was a skew in the representation of each group in our study sample (N=3 local, N=8 or 7 regional, depending on the definition, and N=1 international).

Further research is necessary to see if the regional differences for tourists in Malaysia do hold for tourists in Scotland, particularly with an emphasis on exploring the diversity within the 'international' category of tourists. Malaysian is not widely circulated internationally, but English is the exemplar of a globalised linguistic variety. Attitudes towards English (and other linguistic) variation in Scotland are expected to vary with respect to an international visitors' relationship to the English language. For example, drawing on Kachru's (1988) 'circle' model of English, we expect the language attitudes towards local linguistic variation in Edinburgh to vary according to whether the tourist is from the Inner Circle (e.g., Canada, New Zealand), the Outer Circle (e.g., Ghana, Singapore) or the Extending Circle (e.g., China, Egypt). For this reason, all categories in the last column of Table 2 are 'Variable', in contrast to the more stable parallel column for the Sabahan context.

<b>LANGUAGE VARIATION</b>	<b>Local Tourist</b>	<b>Domestic Tourists</b>	<b>Regional Tourists</b>	<b>International Tourists</b>
<b>Tourist Awareness</b>	High	High	Moderate	<i>Variable*</i>
<b>Tourist Interest</b>	Moderate*	High*	Moderate*	<i>Variable*</i>
<b>Marketing Potential</b>	Moderate	High	High	<i>Variable*</i>

**Table 2: Tourist Types and their Engagement with Language Variation in Edinburgh, Scotland. (Note: \* = can vary considerably by market.)**

The nature of 'language variation' in the Edinburgh context is also different for the 'local' tourist than for the 'domestic' tourist. For example, tourists

who visit the city from other areas of Scotland might be interested in hearing accents they associate with the city itself, while tourists who visit from other parts of the UK outside of Scotland may not be as attuned to (or interested in) regional differences within Scotland. For this reason, the exact variety that the tourist might be more or less aware of, or have more or less interest in, is left intentionally vague.

Across all Edinburgh tourist participants (as opposed to the guide participants), we found that the overwhelming accent preference for a tour guide was ‘a light Scottish accent’ and that the vast majority of adjectives circled for that accent were positive. We also found that most tour guides, regardless of their personal linguistic background, considered local linguistic variation to be a valuable tourism resource. The extent to which an individual tourist showed interest in experiencing local linguistic variation seemed more predictive of their motivations for travelling to Edinburgh, rather than their linguistic background (see Hall-Lew et al., to appear 2014); this variation is represented by the asterisks in Table 2.

In contrast to the Malaysian results, in Edinburgh we found a more complex attitude profile for what we called ‘a heavy Scottish accent’. This descriptor was chosen less often than ‘a light Scottish accent’ in the commodity scenarios, and received far more negative evaluations (mostly *unclear* and *unintelligible*). These quantitative results were often accompanied by qualitative statements about the unintelligibility of some Scottish varieties, or specific travel contexts where Scottish accents would be less preferred. Further details can be found in Hall-Lew et al. (under review).

## Summary

In both Sabah, Malaysia and Edinburgh, Scotland, hearing local accents (Sabahan Malaysian or Scottish English) was framed positively for their principal tourism markets, suggesting that tourism professionals in both sites may benefit from paying more attention to linguistic variation as a heritage resource. However, the two locations do differ in this respect, with tourists in Edinburgh more likely to complain of communication difficulties than tourists in Sabah, and with ‘heavy’ Scottish accents rated more negatively than ‘light’ accents. A possible corollary to this in Sabah, where English is more of a lingua franca for diverse multi-language nationalities and ethnicities, is reflected in the political sensitivities involved the way Sabah is presented as being exotic, but not too different, for Peninsular Malaysian tourists. Sabah also more clearly demonstrates how the linguistic and geographical background of the tourists themselves, as well as different

motivations for travel and needs while travelling, resulted in a greater complexity of responses in comparison to a relatively more homogenous tourist market for Edinburgh, at least for our survey population. Overall, these results join a newly flourishing area of work in language and tourism (Heller 2003, 2010; Jaworski & Pritchard 2005) and point to new directions of communication and social relations for applied linguistics.

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# 26

## Investigating the empirical validity of Conceptual Metaphor Theory: Corpus-based analysis of the metaphorical uses of time

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### Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) was initially introduced by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). It proposes from the cognitive perspective that metaphor is “a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system” (Lakoff 1993: 203) which in essence means to understand and talk about a more abstract concept (target domain) in terms of concrete concept (source domain). This phenomenon of conceptualising one domain in terms of another is called conceptual metaphor (Kövecses 2010), and the linguistic expressions which realise the conceptual metaphor are referred to as linguistic metaphors.

### Rationale of this study

Although the proposition by CMT has strongly influenced the perception of metaphor and has motivated a major revolution in the study of metaphor (see Kövecses 2010), this cognitive model (CMT) has inevitably faced many challenges. Some linguists (e.g. Barcelona 2003) have raised questions in terms of the dichotomic distinction between metaphor and metonymy and its theories of constraints on metaphor. Yet many of these challenges have derived from the theoretical perspective, and only a few studies (e.g. Deignan 2005) have attempted to examine to what degree CMT can be used to explain real language use. Therefore, this study aims to further investigate the empirical validity of CMT, with a large quantity of attested data and a detailed focus on metaphors associated with the item *time*.

### Methodology

The corpus used for this study is the Bank of English (BoE), a general English corpus consisting of 450 million tokens. The focus of the present study is on the use of the frequently-occurring linguistic expressions of *time* which are associated with the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY. The main motivation for analysing the word *time* as the starting point for approaching metaphor is the methodological efficiency of such an approach.

This method, compared to other corpus-based methods (e.g. manually extracting linguistic metaphors throughout texts in the corpus), is “superior in terms of data coverage” (Stefanowitsch 2006: 63) because it allows the researcher to focus on the retrieved data of one representative lexical item (*time*) from the target domain (TIME). Additionally, the concept of time is frequently used as the topic to exemplify the existence of conceptual metaphor in CMT, which further indicates the value of analysing the word *time* in order to evaluate the claims made by CMT.

### TIME IS MONEY reflected in the corpus

To illustrate the existence of the conceptual metaphor TIME IS MONEY, Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 7-8) provided many linguistic examples to show how time is often associated with money (see Table 1). They explained that this everyday association was mainly based on the cultural background of people often being paid in terms of the time they work. Also related to this first conceptualisation of time – that is, to perceive time in terms of money – is the conceptualisation of time as a limited resource: TIME IS A RESOURCE, or as a valuable commodity: TIME IS A COMMODITY (ibid.: 9).

<i>You're wasting my time.</i>	<i>You need to budget your time.</i>
<i>I don't have the time to give you.</i>	<i>Put aside some time for ping pong.</i>
<i>How do you spend your time these days?</i>	<i>Do you have much time left?</i>
<i>I've invested a lot of time in her.</i>	<i>He's living on borrowed time.</i>
<i>I don't have enough time to spare for that.</i>	<i>You don't use your time profitably.</i>
<i>You're running out of time.</i>	<i>I lost a lot of time when I got sick.</i>

**Table 1: Linguistic metaphors for TIME IS MONEY  
(Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 7-8)**

Based on the definition of metaphor (two-domain mappings) given by CMT, the frequently-occurring linguistic expressions of *time* in the BoE which are associated with TIME IS MONEY and its two related metaphors are extracted and listed in Table 2. The frequency of the linguistic expressions which contain verbs has also taken into consideration two aspects of the verb-noun collocations: the lemma form of these verbs; and the varied positions of these verbs when co-occurring with *time*: allowing zero to two slots between the verb and *time* (e.g. *spend time*, *spend more time*, and *spend too much time*).

	Linguistic expression			Freq.	Freq. Per mil.
1. TIME IS MONEY	<i>spend</i>	<i>time</i>	v+ing /with sb. /on sth.	12,589	27.98
	<i>waste</i>	<i>time</i>	on/in sth.	3,259	7.24
	<i>make</i>	<i>time</i>	for sth. / to-inf.	2,251	5.00
	<i>a waste of</i>	<i>time</i>		1,460	3.24
	<i>save</i>	<i>time</i>		1,274	2.83
	<i>lose</i>	<i>time</i>		1,218	2.71
2. TIME IS A RESOURCE	<i>take</i>	<i>time</i>	to-inf.	11,879	26.40
	<i>have</i>	<i>time</i>	to-inf. / for sth.	10,577	23.50
	<i>give</i>	<i>time</i>	to-inf.	3,443	7.65
	<i>find</i>	<i>time</i>	to-inf. / for sth.	1,746	3.88
	<i>get</i>	<i>time</i>	to-inf. / for sth.	1,493	3.32
	<i>there's/is no</i>	<i>time</i>	to-inf. / for sth.	795	1.77
3. TIME IS A COMMODITY		<i>time</i>	consuming	1,647	3.66
		<i>time</i>	is/'s/was running out	878	1.95
	<i>buy</i>	<i>time</i>		745	1.66

**Table 2: Frequently-occurring linguistic expressions which are associated with TIME IS MONEY / RESOURCE / COMMODITY in the BoE**

An initial comparison between the linguistic expressions in Table 2 and those examples in Table 1 seems to show that there may be a difference between the results generated from a corpus-based approach and those from a more traditional approach. Some frequently-occurring expressions found in the corpus were not mentioned by Lakoff and Johnson (1980); in particular, one such expression – *take time* – appears as the most frequent expression associated with TIME IS A RESOURCE (other expressions not mentioned by Lakoff and Johnson include: *make time for* n., *save time*, *time consuming*, *a waste of time*, etc.). Additionally, some examples Lakoff and Johnson used to illustrate the existence of conceptual metaphors appear to be unnatural. For instance, their invented expression *I don't have the time to give you* (Table 1) cannot be found in the BoE, and the example *budget your time* (Table 1) occurs only once in the 450-million-token corpus.

### **More complex linguistic features: the uses of *spend* and *make***

As suggested by CMT, metaphor at the linguistic level is understood as a mapping of lexical items from the source domain to the target domain

(Lakoff 1993; Lakoff and Johnson 1980). The two verbs *spend* and *make*, which can be perceived as items from the source domain (MONEY), are considered to realise the conceptual mapping of TIME IS MONEY when they are used in connection with the TIME domain. However, the corpus analysis of the uses of *spend* and *make* with time shows that these two verbs exhibit complex linguistic features which serve as more than simply the source of evidence for a one-to-one mapping from the source domain to the target domain.

As can be seen in Table 3 and Table 4, *spend* and *make* exhibit different tendencies to co-occur with time nouns in the BoE. The verb *spend* occurs more frequently with the nouns which are associated with the TIME domain (e.g. *time*, *years* and *hours*, see Table 3) than with other nouns which are associated with the MONEY domain (e.g. *money* and *pounds*). The verb *make*, on the other hand, tends to co-occur with the nouns which are associated with the MONEY domain (e.g. *money* and *profit*, see Table 4), and it is even more common for *make* to co-occur with other types of nouns which are not categorised under either the TIME or MONEY domain (e.g. *difference* and *decision*, Table 4).

	TIME	Freq.	TIME	Freq.	MONEY	Freq.
spend	time	12,589	weeks	1,354	money	5,041
	years	5,852	minutes	916	pounds	1,879
	hours	3,819	weekend	887	millions	788
	days	2,701	Christmas	547	dollars	525

Table 3: Frequent nominal collocates of the lemma SPEND in the BoE

	TIME	Freq.	MONEY	Freq.	Other	Freq.
make	time	2,251	money	7,785	difference	9,569
			profit	2,563	decision	8,071
			fortune	1,328	mistake	5,639
			pounds	954	debut	5,213

Table 4: Frequent nominal collocates of the lemma MAKE in the BoE

These differing tendencies of *spend* and *make* to co-occur with time, however, cannot be accounted for by the simple one-to-one conceptual mapping suggested by CMT. Rather, from the corpus-linguistic point of view, these features of *spend* and *make* reflect their unique collocational behaviour: that is, the tendency of a lexical item to co-occur with certain collocates or certain groups of collocates (also see Sinclair 1991, 2004).

## The uses of *have* with *time*

Similarly, based on the suggestion from CMT that lexical items are semantically mapped from the source domain to the target domain (also see Deignan 2005), it may be assumed that when the verb *have* is used within the TIME domain, it realises the conceptual mapping of TIME IS A RESOURCE. However, some linguistic examples of the co-occurrence of *have* and *time* show that the uses of *have* with *time* can be more phraseological rather than realising a metaphorical mapping.

For instance, expressions like *have a good time*, *have a hard time* and *have a great time* are different from the verbal phrase *have time*. Each expression is used more as one “unit of meaning” (Sinclair 2004) than as a metaphorical expression which reflects the conceptual mapping of MONEY to TIME. These expressions fit the pattern ‘HAVE a ADJ *time*’, and the words which appear in the adjectival position mainly denote an evaluative sense (*good*, *hard* and *great*, see Table 5). The sequences which fit this pattern may refer to an experience being regarded as good, bad or difficult in the text (see concordance lines 1 to 5). Those sequences with the adjectives which are associated with negative senses (*hard*, *tough* and *difficult*) are also found in the corpus to demonstrate a tendency to precede the gerund, as in *have a hard time understanding ...* (line 2) and *have a tough time figuring out ...* (line 4).

HAVE + a + adj. + time					Freq.
HAVE	a	good	time	/	1,524
		hard		V-ing	988
		great		/	758
		tough		V-ing	306
		difficult		V-ing	273
		wonderful		/	253

Table 5: The pattern ‘HAVE a ADJ time’ in the BoE

1	just basically want them to have a good	time	, and we're teaching our
2	together," says Hill. People have a hard	time	understanding how important a
3	a small party, and everyone had a great	time	. In fact, since Wednesday,
4	can handle it, but they will have a tough	time	figuring out the process in
5	agreement, one would have a difficult	time	coming up with a good

Table 6: Concordance line examples from Table 5

## Implications of the Corpus Analysis to CMT

### *The model of conceptual metaphors and linguistic metaphors*

Conceptual metaphor theorists usually present metaphor as a hierarchical construction of a conceptual metaphor and its associated linguistic metaphors, but this framework is largely based on invented language examples and thus requires further substantiation with empirical evidence (McEnery and Hardie 2012). This study, therefore, demonstrates that the corpus-based approach can complement the traditional cognitive approach in the process of constructing or developing a conceptual model for metaphor. For instance, the corpus-based approach generates more easily the frequency data of linguistic metaphors. These data could highlight the linguistic metaphors that are more likely to be 'typical' or frequent for their associated conceptual metaphor, which to some extent helps to avoid the cases where some linguistic metaphors chosen for the model are rare expressions (e.g. *I don't have the time to give you*).

### *The mapping of lexical items from the source domain to the target domain*

Implicit in CMT is the suggestion that there is a one-to-one mapping of lexical items from the source domain to the target domain. However, based on the results from this study, it can be argued that the one-to-one conceptual mapping is an oversimplified explanation for what is really exhibited by these lexical items at the linguistic level. As illustrated above, the lexical items which are involved in the conceptual mapping can show more dynamic linguistic uses in the target domain. Both *spend* and *make* are considered to realise the mapping of MONEY to TIME when they co-occur with *time*, yet their co-occurrences with *time* cannot be predicted using the conceptual mapping theory. Another verb (*have*) which is generally considered to belong to the RESOURCE domain, can form more fixed phrases which exhibit different linguistic uses when it co-occurs with *time*.

## Conclusion

This study has provided naturally-occurring linguistic examples as the grounds for challenging the validity of the explanatory role of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). Firstly, some language examples used by traditional metaphor theorists to support the existence of conceptual metaphors raise questions regarding their rare occurrences in real language use. Secondly, CMT does not seem to be able to account for more complex features of language (e.g. collocational behaviour or phraseological features of lexical items).

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# 27

## Coarticulation effect on L1-Mandarin speakers' perception of English /s/-/z/

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### Introduction

Coarticulation in speech production refers to the articulatory influence of one sound on its adjacent segments of the same utterance (Nittrouer & Studdert-Kennedy, 1987; Pickett, 1999), which results in the change of both the articulatory gestures (Davenport & Hannahs, 2010) and the acoustic properties (Balley & Summerfield, 1980) of a target speech sound. Consequently, instead of being realized identically in all phonetic environments, a phonological segment may vary in different phonetic environments and sound like its nearby segment (Kühnert & Nolan, 1999). Coarticulation displays in the form of anticipatory (right-to left) and retentive/ carryover (left-to-right) effect. In terms of the perception of fricatives, anticipatory coarticulation effect is found more likely to affect the later portion of the adjacent fricative noise than its earlier portion (Bondarko, 1969).

Given the fact that speech perception and production are reported to be closely tied together (Williams & McReynolds, 1975; Jamieson & Rvacheew, 1992), or even innately linked together (Liberman et al., 1967; Liberman & Mattingly, 1985), one might be able to predict that the accurate perception of a coarticulated speech sound would require the perceiver to recover both the articulatory and/or acoustic feature of a target speech sound and that of its adjacent speech segments. Though it is still an openly debated topic whether speech perception takes places through the identification of articulatory/ intended articulatory gestures (Best et al., 1994; Cooper, Delattre, Liberman, Borst, & Gerstman, 1952; Flower, 1986) or acoustic features (Stevens & Blumstein, 1981; Diehl & Kluender, 1989), neither way can be considered independent from the effect of coarticulation. On the other hand, some acoustic and/or articulatory features of the adjacent segment(s) can help or inhibit the identification of a target speech sound. Coarticulation of speech production, therefore, is predicted to be parallel with speech perception in terms of obscuring (Stevens & Keyser, 2010) or enhancing the

perceptually useful acoustic codes (Beddor, McGowan, Boland, Coetzee, & Brasher, 2013).

For instance, in Mann & Repp (1981), the subjects' perception of synthesized stops and consonants in four different conditions was tested: the temporal separation of the fricative noise and the CV portion, as well as the presence and absence of a vowel preceding the fricative. According to the results, (1) the context effect is hardly changed with the extension of the duration of fricative noise; (2) the introduction of a silent interval between the fricative noise and periodic portion can reduce, or even eliminate, context effect; (3) in the case of no silent interval being introduced between noise and periodic portion, the differentiation of two consonants (/ʃ/-/s/) depends on vowel quality, formant transitions and speaker differences.

Inspired by the study in Mann & Repp (1981), this study investigates those who have difficulty with the perception of /s/-/z/ to examine: (1) whether vocalic context facilitates or inhibits their perception of the target consonant contrast; and (2) which acoustic cue(s) is/are essential for the facilitation and/or inhibition of the subjects' perception of the target contrast.

The voiced /z/ does not exist in Mandarin phonetic inventory, while voiceless /s/ does. According to Best's (1994) PAM, perceivers may assimilate unfamiliar non-native speech sounds to the most articulatorily-similar sounds of their L1 phonetic inventory. Given that both /s/ and /z/ are alveolar fricatives, it is possible that L1-Mandarin speakers may assimilate /z/ to /s/. Furthermore, according to the findings from previous studies, the acoustic characteristics of the two sounds, as shown in table 1 below, are very similar to each other in terms of frequency range, strongest frequencies, amplitude, relative intensity as well as relative effective spectrum length. However, /s/ shows much higher inherent duration than /z/ – 125 ms for /s/ vs. 75 ms for /z/. Since /s/-/z/ are similar to each other both in terms of articulatory gestures and acoustic characters, L1-Mandarin speakers may have difficulty perceiving them. Informal observations based on my own experiences indicate that some native Mandarin speakers from North China have difficulty in the differentiation of /s/ from /z/. Nevertheless, as discussed above, the influence of coarticulation may either facilitate or inhibit the perception of a speech sound. For those who have difficulty in the identification of the two speech sounds, vocalic context may help their accurate perception of them.

	Frequency range	Strongest in frequencies	Amplitude range	Inherent duration	Relative intensity (b)	Relative Effective Spectrum Length (b)
/z/	4-6 kHz (d)	at and above 4 kHz (e)	70 dB (b)	75 ms (f)	high	short
/s/	above 4 kHz (a); 4-6 k Hz (d)	at and above 4 kHz (e)	65 dB (b); 57—68dB (c)	125ms (f)	high	short

**Table 1: Acoustic characters of /s/-/z/.**

(a. Hughes & Halle (1956); b. Jongman (1989); c. Behrens & Blumstein (1988); d. Bitar (1993); e. Pickett (1999: 140); f. Kent & Read (2002: 182))

## Experiments

Given that an individual phoneme is more likely to be affected by the nearest adjacent phoneme(s), and the lip-rounding effect is found more likely to take place in anticipatory environment (Bondarko, 1969), four experiments were carried out to explore which acoustic cue(s) would display the most significant effect on the subjects' perception of /s/-/z/.

### *Experiment 1*

This experiment was designed to detect the subjects' perception of /s/-/z/ without the influence of neighbouring speech segments.

**Subjects:** 10 L1-Mandarin speakers of L2-English (5 female, 5 male; mean age = 22.30; English proficiency level: inter-mediate). Each of them was paid 30 yuan to join this study. All of them reported having normal language, listening, and intelligence ability.

**Stimuli and recording:** 20 “minimal pairs” of /s/-/z/ (see Appendix 1): 10 with /s/-/z/ followed by /i/ and another 10 with /s/-/z/ followed by /u/ were coded in the initial position of each word, so as to avoid anticipatory influence from the preceding segment(s).

The stimuli were produced by a male and a female RP (Received Pronunciation) speaker in a random sequence. A high quality recorder (Roland-06) was used for the recording, with a setting of 16-bit mono channel and 44.1 KHz for sampling frequency. The Praat programme (Boersma & Weenink, 2013) was used for the synthesizing of stimuli used in the study. The recorded stimulus words were cut and merged according to the needs of the 4 experiments of the present study, and were saved in wav format without further synthesizing.

Figures 1 and 2 below present the segmentation of two minimal pair examples (*sick-zick* and *soo-zoo*). The stimuli used in Experiment 1 only included the fricative noise portion of /s/ and /z/ in each stimulus word. The “new” minimal-pairs were then coded into a 2AF task and presented by the Praat programme (Boersma & Weenink, 2013) with an equal and randomized order of AB, BA. ISI (interstimulus interval) = 1,000ms; ITI (intertrial interval) = 1,500ms. Each trial was repeated twice, yielding 80 trials for /s/-/z/ cut from the /i/ context, and 80 trials for /s/-/z/ cut from the /u/ context.

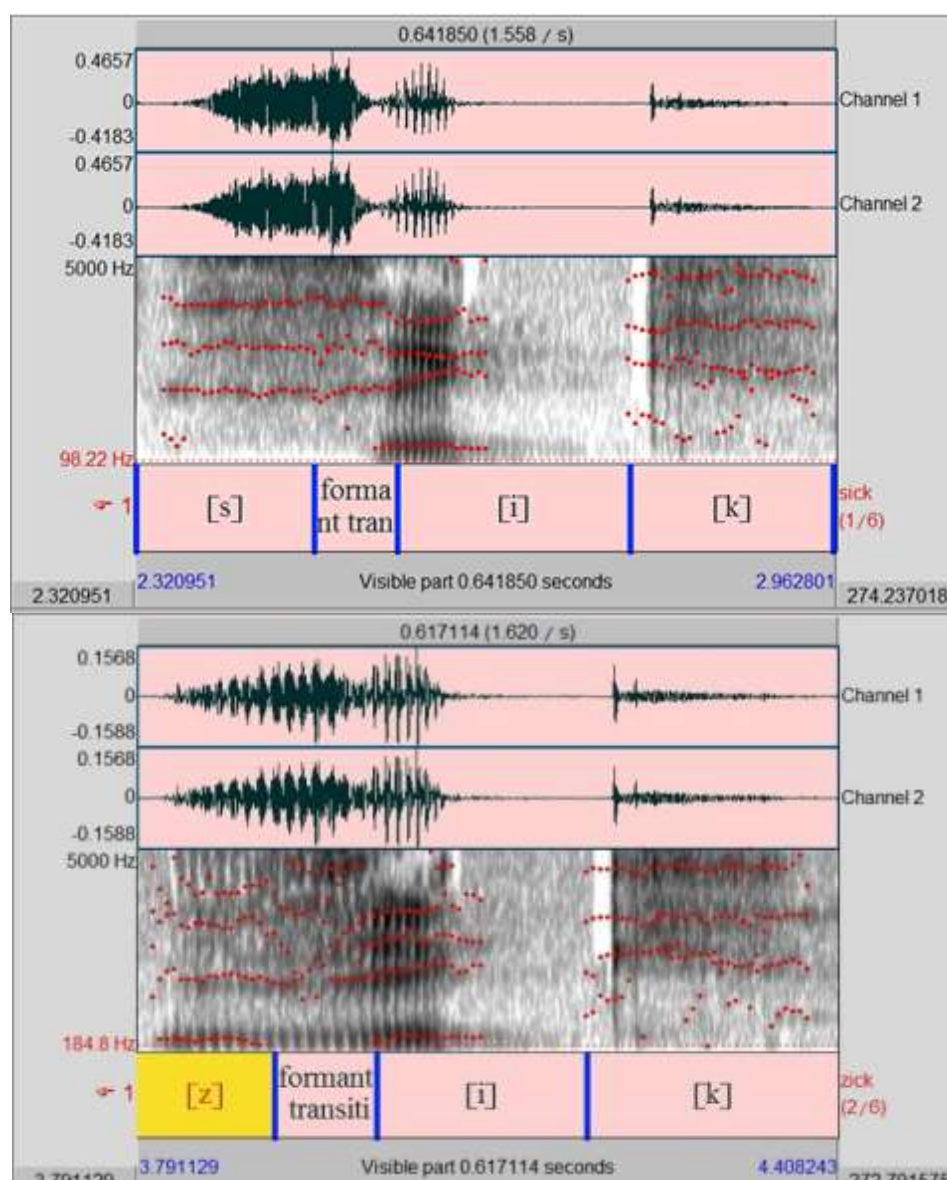


Figure 1: Spectra of a minimal pair *sick-zick* produced by the male RP speaker  
(View range: 0-5kHz; window length: 5ms)

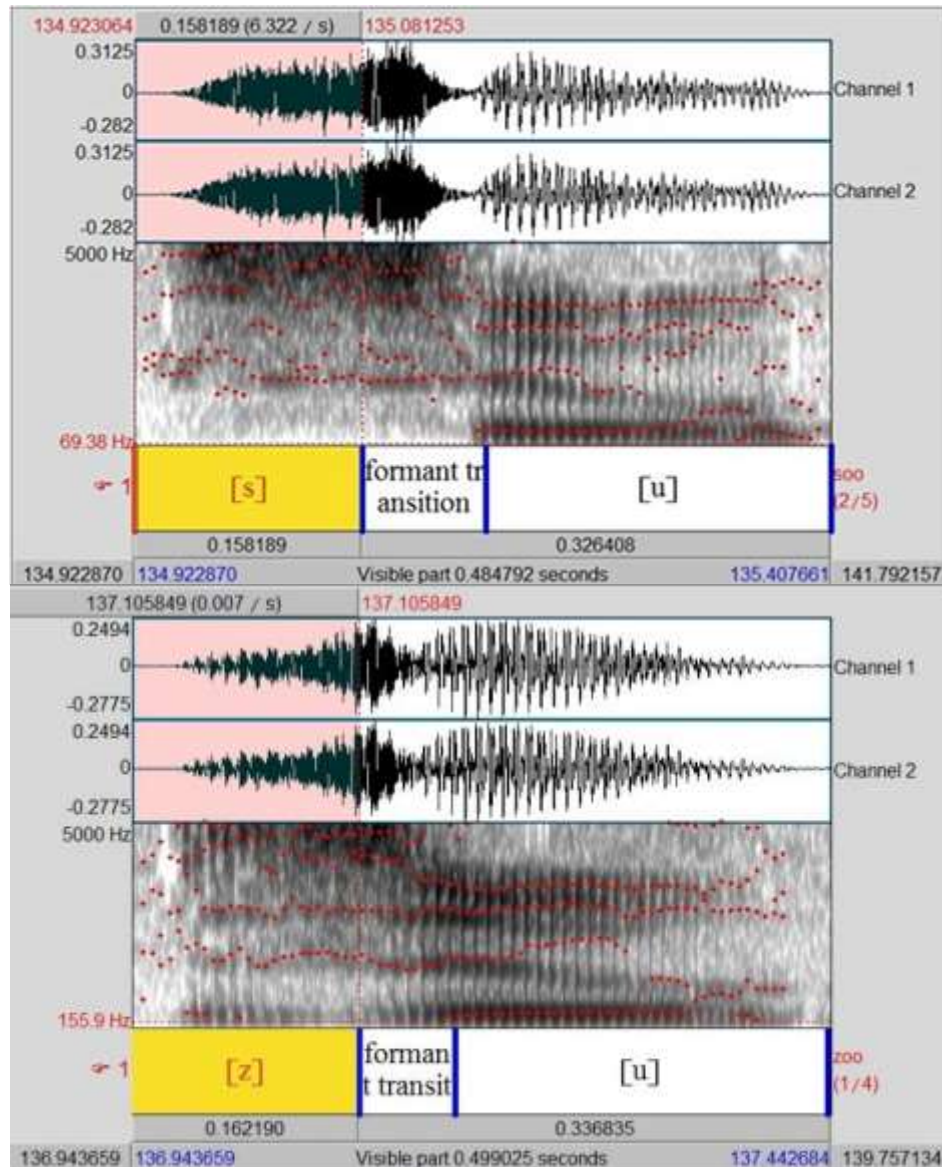


Figure 2: Spectra of a minimal pair *soo-zoo* produced by the male RP speaker  
(View range: 0-5kHz; window length: 5ms)

**Procedure:** The subjects were asked to do a 2AF task, in which they were asked to choose whether it was /s/ or /z/ displayed first in each trial. The stimuli were displayed and randomized by the Praat programme (Boersma & Weenink, 2013).

**Results:** The subjects' perceptual performance in Experiment 1 was not satisfactory. For the perception of the fricative portion cut from the /i/ context, the minimum and maximum accuracy were 63.13% and 81.25% respectively, with a mean percentage of correctness of 70.81% for the perception of /s/-/z/ cut from this context. For the perception of /s/-/z/ cut from the /u/ context, the subjects' accuracy ranged from and 63.75%

to 81.88%, with a mean accuracy of 73.19%. There was no substantial difference in accuracy across different subjects.

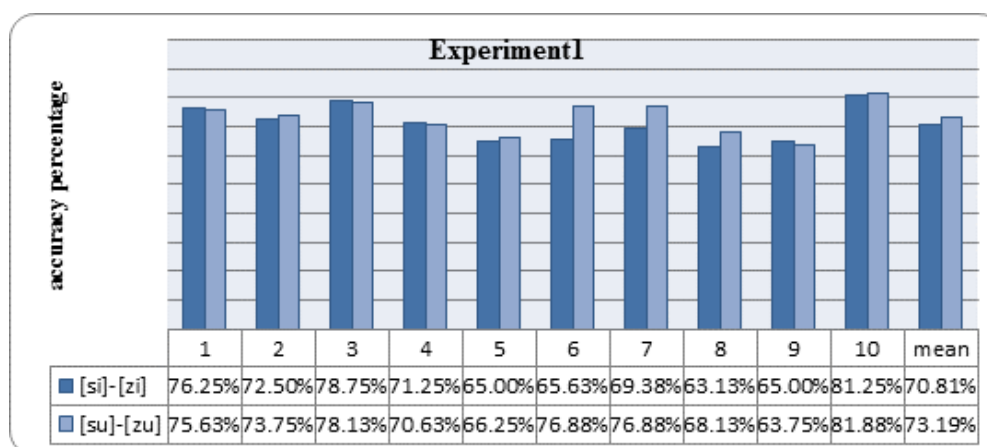


Figure 3: The subjects' accuracy for the perception of /s/-/z/ Experiment 1.

In order to exclude bias, the subjects' accuracy was converted into d-prime value, as shown in figure 4 below.

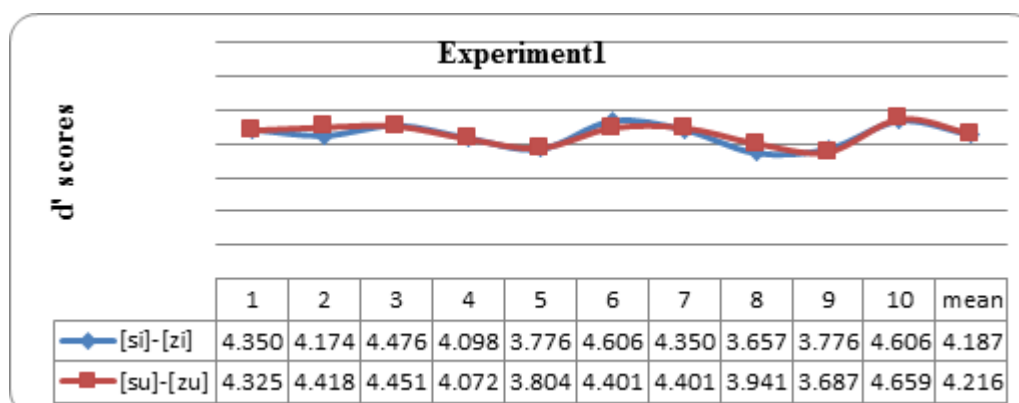


Figure 4: Individual subjects' d-prime scores for the perception of /s/-/z/ in Experiment 1

For the perception of the fricative portion of /s/-/z/ cut from the /i/ context, the subject's d-prime scores ranged from 3.657 to 4.606 ( $mean = 4.187$ ;  $SD = 0.352$ ). For the perception of the fricative portion cut from the /u/ context, the minimum and maximum d-prime scores were 3.687 and 4.659 respectively ( $mean = 4.216$ ;  $SD = 0.319$ ). In order to detect whether vowel context displayed any significant influence on the subjects' perceptual performance, the converted d-prime scores were coded into *repeated-measures ANOVA*. As expected, there was no observed significant influence of vowel context on the subjects' perceptual performance in Experiment 1 ( $F(1, 18) = 4.825$ ,  $p = 0.849$ ). Moreover, the subjects' age ( $F(1, 6) = 2.504$ ,  $p = 0.156$ ), gender ( $F(1, 2) = 0.0057$ ,  $p = 0.833$ ), and duration of English

learning ( $F(1, 7) = 4.455, p = 0.056$ ) all did not have a significant effect on their perceptual performance. The interaction between these factors and the vowel context also not did play significant effect on the subjects' perceptual performance ( $p > 0.05$ ).

According to these test results, the subjects displayed some difficulty in the perception of /s/-/z/ when they were "separated" from the adjacent speech segment(s). This may due to the similarity between /s/ and /z/ in terms of articulatory and acoustic features, as well as the lack of /z/ in the Mandarin phonetic inventory; both factors could contribute to the L1-Mandain subjects encountering difficulties in differentiating /s/ from /z/. Such results are in accordance with the prediction of PAM (Best, 1994). However, it was also predicted that synthesized speech sounds could be misleading in terms of the listeners' perception of them (Logan et al., 1991). Given that the stimuli used in Experiment 1 were only the fricative noise, which was cut from stimulus words, the test results can hardly tell the whole story of whether the subjects had difficulty in the perception of the target contrast.

### ***Experiment 2***

This experiment examined whether the transitional portion of the following vowel influences the subjects' perception of /s/-/z/.

**Subjects:** The same subjects from Experiment 1.

**Stimuli:** The stimuli for this experiment were synthesized from the minimal pairs originally recorded, which included the fricative portion of the target contrast /s/-/z/, followed by the transitional portion of the following vowel, then followed by the segment which followed the vowel. That is, the stable periodic portion of the vowel was excluded from the stimuli.

**Procedure:** The same as that in Experiment 1.

**Results:** The subjects' perceptual performance in Experiment 2 was comparatively better than that in Experiment 1. For the perception of /s/-/z/ cut from the /i/ context, the minimum and maximum accuracy were 85.00% and 93.75% respectively (mean = 89.50%). For the perception of /s/-/z/ cut from the /u/ context, the subjects' accuracy ranged from and 85.63% to 99.38% (mean = 91.25%).



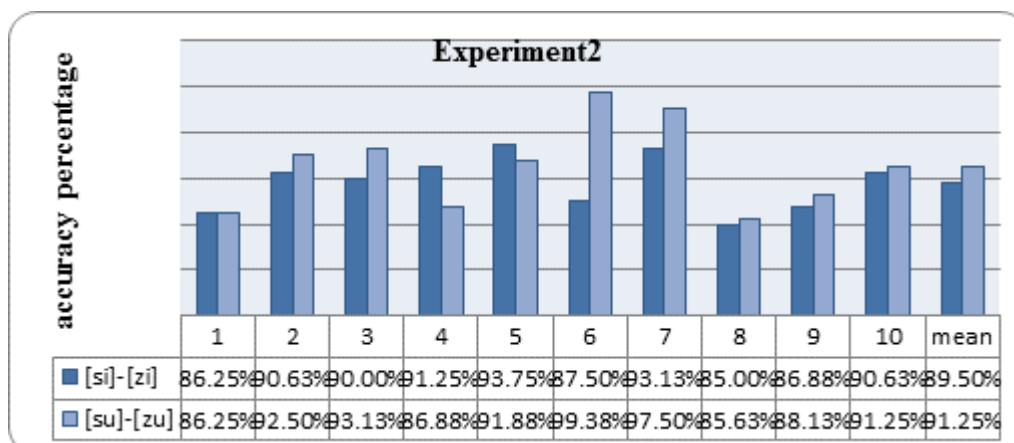


Figure 5: The subjects' accuracy for the perception of /s/-/z/ in Experiment 2

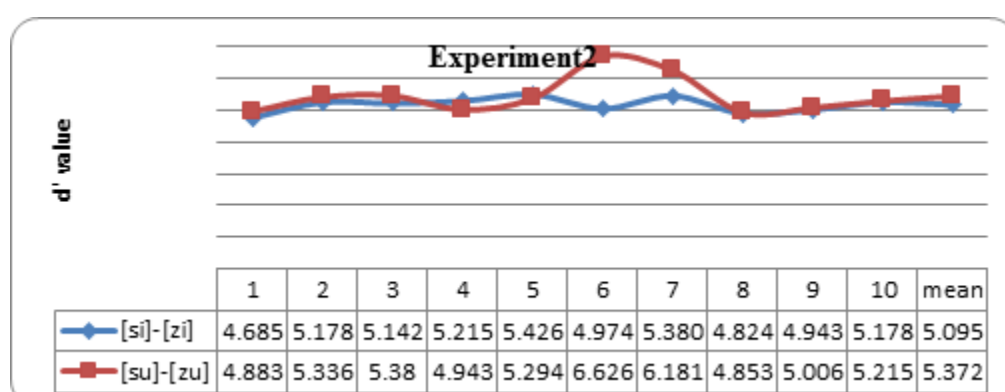


Figure 6: Individual subjects' *d-prime* scores for the perception of /s/-/z/ in Experiment 2

For the perception of /s/-/z/ cut from the /i/ context, the subjects' *d-prime* scores ranged from 4.685 to 5.426 (mean = 5.095; SD = 0.236). For the perception of /s/-/z/ cut from the /u/ context, the minimum and maximum *d-prime* scores were 4.853 and 6.626, respectively (mean = 5.372; SD = 0.586). *Repeated-measures ANOVA* indicated the same result as that in Experiment 1, that there was no significant influence of age ( $F(1, 6) = 0.671, p = 0.0.600$ ), gender ( $F(1, 8) = 0.568, p = 0.473$ ), or duration of English learning ( $F(1, 7) = 0.0.823, p = 0.477$ ). Moreover, the interaction between these factors and the vowel context did not display a significant effect on the subjects' perceptual performance either ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, vowel context (the portion of vowel transition) did display a significant influence on the subjects' perceptual performance ( $F(1, 18) = 45.903, p < 0.001$ ).

The subjects demonstrated higher accuracy for the perception of /s/-/z/ in Experiment 2 compared with in Experiment 1. *Repeated-measures ANOVA* revealed that the vowel contexts (formant transitional portion) displayed a significant effect on the subjects' perceptual performance. This result is in



accordance with the findings reported by Stevens & Keyser (2010) and Mann & Repp (1981); that is, that the transitional portion of a vowel context plays a critical role in terms of the listeners' perception of its adjacent segment, particularly the following one. Nevertheless, the subjects' accuracy was still not perfect, with a mean percentage of around 90% for the perception of the target contrast in both the [i] and [u] contexts. This finding may further illustrate that the subjects had difficulty in the discrimination of [s]-[z].

Regarding the influence of vowel quality on the perception of the target contrast, although the subjects showed a slightly higher mean accuracy for the perception of [u] trials than [i] trials, *ANOVA* failed to illustrate a significant effect of vowel difference on the subjects' perceptual performance. This finding is at odds with that in Mann & Repp (1981). In their study, vowel quality showed a significant effect on the listeners' perceptual performance. This might be explained by the fact that the lip rounding effect is more likely to affect the later portion of its neighbouring fricative noise than the earlier portion of i (Bondarko, 1969). The target contrasts of the present study, however, were embedded in the initial position only and were followed by either [i] or [u]. As the later portion, the rounded vowel [u] did not demonstrate a significant influence on the subjects' perceptual performance.

### ***Experiment 3***

This experiment was designed to detect the influence of the whole vowel context (formant transition and the stable portion of the vowel) on the subjects' perception of the target contrast.

**Subjects:** The same subjects that participated in the first two experiments.

**Stimuli:** The originally recorded stimulus words without synthesizing.

**Procedure:** The same as that in Experiment 1 and 2.

**Results:** The subjects' perceptual performance in Experiment 3 was similar to, but a little bit better than, their performance in Experiment 2. As presented in figure 7, for the perception of the target /s/-/z/ contrast embedded in the /i/ context, the minimum and maximum accuracy were 87.50% and 96.88%, respectively (*mean* = 92.31%). For the perception of /s/-/z/ embedded in the /u/ context, the subjects' accuracy ranged from and 88.13% to 96.88% (*mean* = 93.38%).

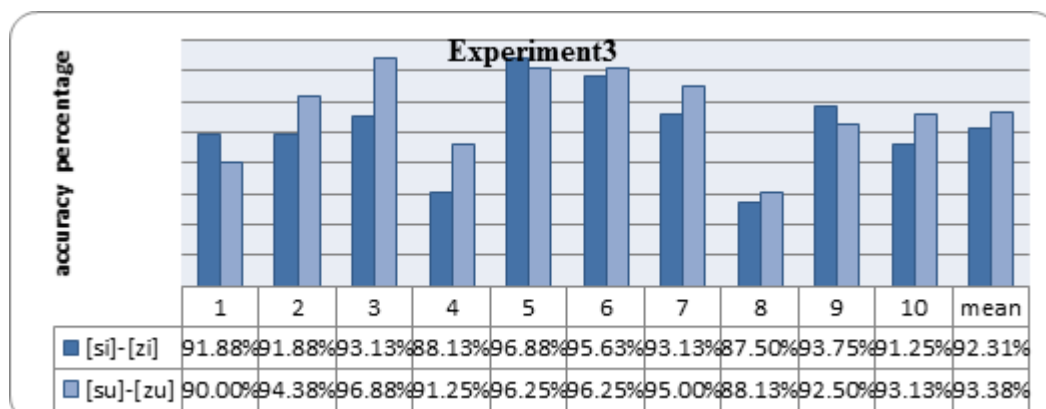


Figure 7: The subjects' accuracy for the perception of /s/-/z/ in Experiment 3

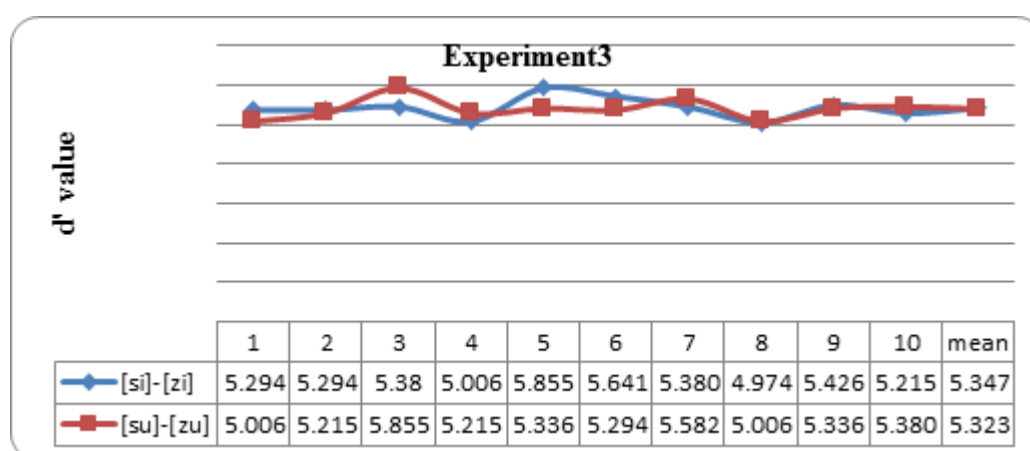


Figure 8: The subject's *d-prime* scores for the perception of /s/-/z/ in Experiment 3

For the perception of /s/-/z/ embedded in the /i/ context, as shown in figure 8 above, individual subjects' *d-prime* scores ranged from 4.974 to 5.855 (*mean* = 5.347; *SD* = 0.265). As in Experiment 2, there was an observed difference between the *d-prime* scores obtained from their perceptual performance in the /u/ context and in /i/ context—the minimum and maximum *d-prime* scores were 5.006 and 5.855, respectively (*mean* = 5.323; *SD* = 0.254).

As in the prior two experiments, results from *repeated-measures ANOVA* failed to show any significant effect of age ( $F(1, 6) = 0.215, p = 0.882$ ), gender ( $F(1, 8) = 0.025, p = 0.879$ ), or duration of English learning ( $F(1, 7) = 0.617, p = 0.567$ ), or of the interaction between these factors and the vowel context, on the subject's perceptual performance. However, the influence of the vowel context itself was observed as statistically significant for the subjects' perceptual performance ( $F(1, 18) = 63.776, p < 0.001$ ).

At first glance, the subjects' perceptual performance in this experiment was similar to that in Experiment 2. Nevertheless, none of the subjects achieved

the accuracy of 100%. These findings may further illustrate the hypothesis of PAM/PAM-L2 (Best 1994); that is, speech listeners may have difficulty in perceiving unfamiliar non-native speech sounds. However, compared to Experiment 1, the subjects' accuracy improved substantially. *Repeated-measures ANOVA* illustrated a significant effect of the vowel context on their perceptual performance.

### Experiment 4

This experiment further examined the influence, if any, of the vowel transitional portion on the subjects' perception of the target contrast.

**Subjects:** The same subjects is in the previous experiments.

**Stimuli:** The portion of formant transition in the "minimal pairs" used in Experiment 3 was excluded from the stimuli. Therefore, each stimulus word included the fricative noise of /s/-/z/, followed by the stable periodic portion of the following vowel, then followed by the rest part of the word. This method was adopted from Mann & Repp (1981).

**Procedure:** The same as that in Experiments 1, 2 and 3.

**Results:** For the perception of the target /s/-/z/ contrast cut from the /i/ context, the subjects' accuracy ranged from 65.00 to 84.38% (*mean* = 72.94%). For the perception of /s/-/z/ cut from the /u/ context, their accuracy ranged from 70.00% to 83.75% (*mean* = 77.19%).

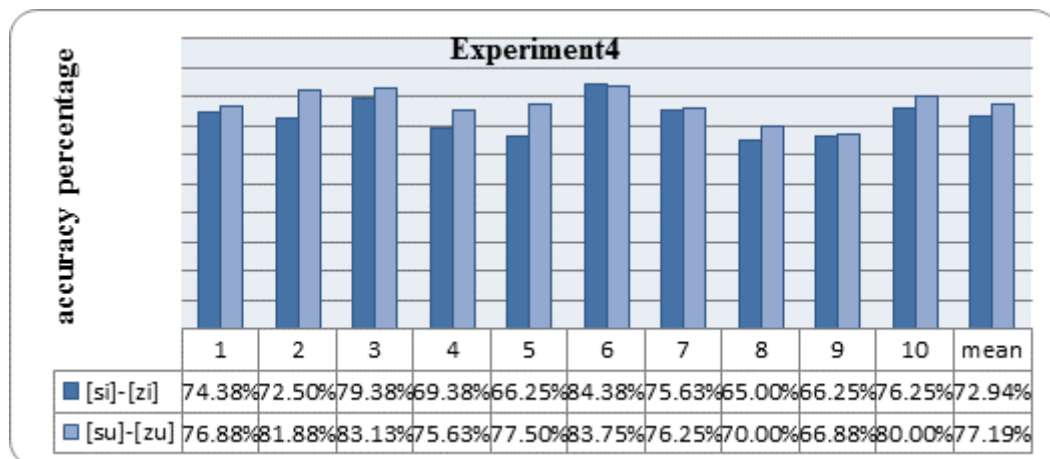
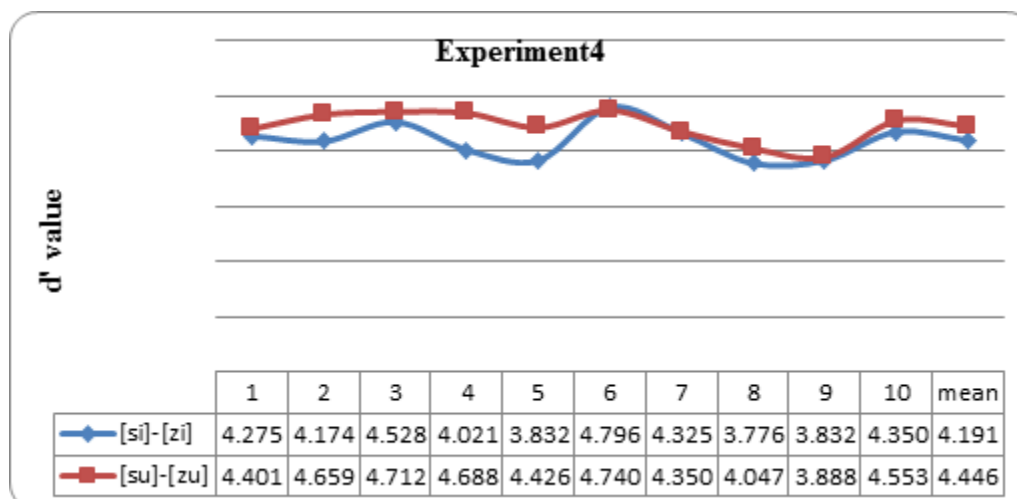


Figure 9: The subjects' accuracy for the perception of /s/-/z/ in Experiment 4

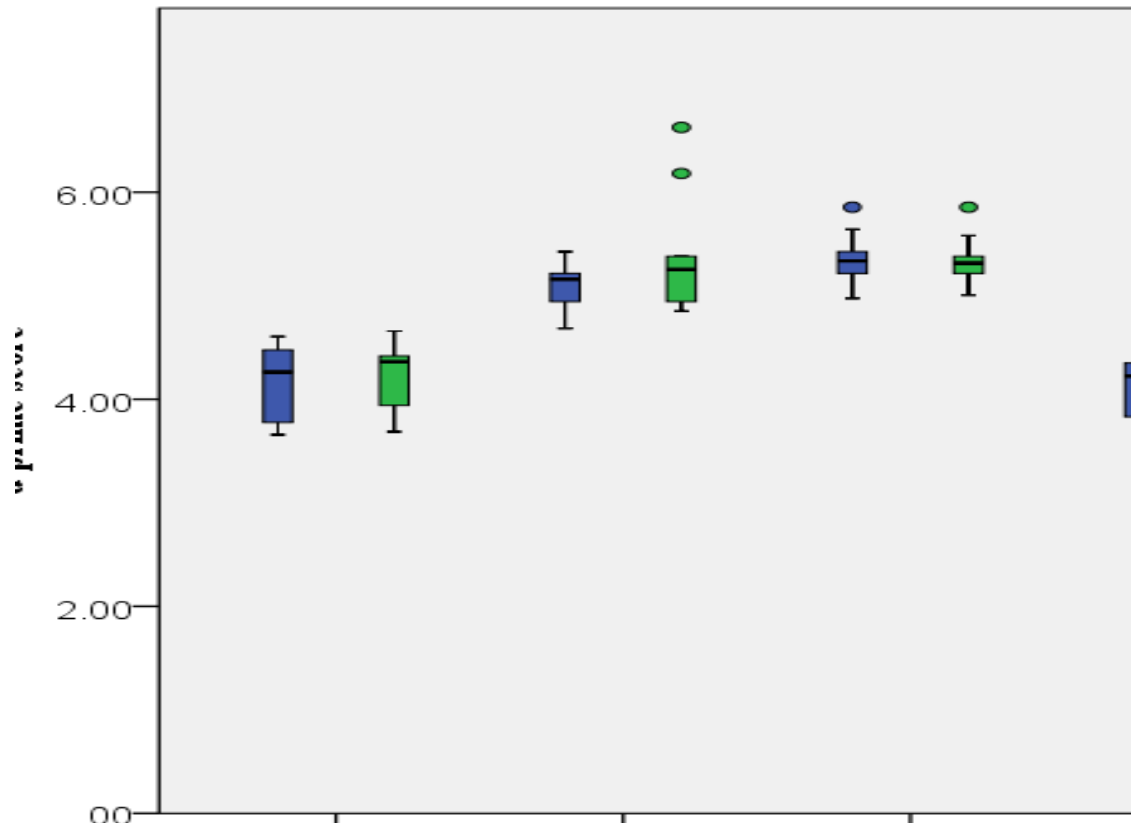


**Figure 10: The subject's *d-prime* scores for the perception of /s/-/z/ in Experiment 4**

For the perception of /s/-/z/ cut from /i/ context, as shown in Figure 10 above, individual subjects' *d-prime* scores ranged from 3.776 to 4.796 (*mean* = 4.191; *SD* = 0.332). For the perception of /s/-/z/ cut from the /u/ context, their *d-prime* scores ranged from 3.888 to 4.740 (*mean* = 4.446; *SD* = 0.290). *Repeated-measures ANOVA* was conducted with the subjects' *d-prime* scores. The results were similar to those found in the previous 3 experiments: the subjects' age ( $F(1, 6) = 2.532, p = 0.153$ ), gender ( $F(1, 8) = 0.318, p = 0.588$ ), duration of English study ( $F(1, 7) = 1.996, p = 0.206$ ), as well as their interaction with the vowel context, were observed as statistically insignificant. Meanwhile, the vowel context (the stable formant portion of the vowel) failed to demonstrate a significant influence on the subjects' perceptual performance  $F(1, 18) = 0.001, p = 0.979$ .

The results in Experiment 4 further illustrated the critical role of the transitional portion of vowel context on the listeners' perception of the preceding fricative. The stimuli used in this study were different from those in Experiment 3 only in terms of their lack of the formant transitional portion. The subjects' accuracy in perceiving the target contrast, however, was substantially lower than that in Experiment 3. Thus it can be surmised that due to the lack of the vowel transitional portion in the stimulus words, the subjects' displayed poor perceptual performance.

## Summary and conclusion



**Figure 11: Boxplots of the subjects' *d-prime* scores obtained from the four experiments**

Figure 11 displays a direct image of the subjects' perceptual performance in the four experiments. The mean *d-prime* scores were around 4.0 in Experiments 1 and 4, in which the portion of vowel formant transition was excluded from the stimuli. In comparison, in Experiments 2 and 3, in which the portion of vowel formant transition was included in the stimuli, the subjects' *d-prime* scores were much higher. As illustrated by *repeated-measures ANOVA*, only when the vowel contexts included the portion of formant transition were they observed to be statistically significant for the subjects' perceptual performance. Therefore, one can conclude that the formant transitional portion of the vowel context facilitated the subjects' perception of the target contrast.

Overall, the findings of the present study are consistent with that of both Stevens & Keyser, 2010) and Mann & Repp (1981); that is, the formant transitional portion of vowel context plays a crucial role in the listener's perception of the adjacent speech sound. The subjects' age, gender, and duration of English study proved to be statistically insignificant for their perceptual performance. This may be the case because there was not a

notable difference among the subjects in terms of these variables (see Appendix 2).

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### Appendix 1: Stimulus words

sick-zick sig-zig silver-zilver sift-zift seep-zip sit-zit similar-zimilar  
sippy-zippy silk-zilk simple-zimple  
soo-zoo soom-zoom soon-zoon soup-zoup sooth-zooth sooty-zooty  
sooming-zooming soot-zoot sook-zook soology-zoology

### Appendix 2: Information of the subjects' gender, age, length of English study

Subject	Gender	Age	Length of English study
1	female	20	6 years
2	female	21	7 years
3	female	20	6 years
4	female	23	8 years
5	female	22	7 years
6	male	20	6 years
7	male	21	6 years
8	male	22	7 years
9	male	23	8 years
10	male	23	8 years



# 28

## **Triple Literacy: benefit or befuddlement? A study of the experiences of trainee language teachers in a Welsh language context**

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### **Introduction**

The changing political and linguistic landscape of Wales brings unique challenges and opportunities to the languages classroom. Set against the Welsh Government's priority of improving literacy, the Triple Literacy initiative seeks to support and develop literacy and language skills in Welsh schools. This initiative builds upon learners' language experience and prior learning and is especially relevant in the bilingual context of Welsh medium schools. This study explored the experiences of modern foreign languages trainee teachers who undertake their training in the Welsh medium school sector. It sought to reach an understanding of how bilingualism affects their professional experience and understanding of pedagogy. The social, cultural and linguistic changes that are taking place in Wales provide a useful backdrop to this study. Different versions of Welsh coexist in education and wider society, ranging from a strong first language Welsh tradition to the more cosmopolitan and pragmatic version of the language that can be found in larger towns and cities. In schools, a blend of Welsh has developed to meet the needs of the large numbers of pupils who come from a non-Welsh speaking family environment. This linguistic setting provided a fertile and dynamic environment for this study, which sought to identify connections that are made between languages and ways that they can be exploited to reinforce linguistic skills and understanding. Trainee language teachers are well placed to reflect on these complex relationships between language and society, and this study aimed to develop a closer understanding of interlinking languages and their impact on pedagogy.

### **Background**

Although many minority languages have established an uneasy truce with their majority language neighbours, the position of the Welsh language is

particularly interesting, given the global linguistic clout of its neighbour, English. The British tend to think of themselves as confirmed monoglots, yet in Wales, many take bilingualism for granted and it forms a well-integrated part of their daily lives. Moreover, for those in the Welsh population who are not Welsh speakers, many choose to have their children educated in Welsh medium schools, as a way of satisfying their own linguistic aspirations. Educational provision for the Welsh language is mainly through English medium schools, where Welsh is taught as a discrete subject in much the same way as a foreign language. However, there is a significant provision by means of Welsh medium schools, where the curriculum is delivered through the Welsh language and the teaching, social interaction and management of the school is also through the medium of Welsh. In some of these schools, in excess of 90% of pupils come from English speaking homes, where no Welsh is spoken. This is especially true in the south east of Wales, where the concentration of population is high but the incidence of the Welsh language is lower than the rest of Wales, for complex historical, economic and political reasons. Such schools play a pivotal role in promoting the Welsh language, which the Welsh Government hopes will expand through those pupils who continue to use Welsh in their daily lives once they have left school.

Education is devolved to the Welsh Government, who in 2012 launched the Triple Literacy policy (Wales. Welsh Government, 2011), recognising that in language learning, Welsh and foreign languages could function in a mutually supportive and beneficial way. The aims of the policy were: to increase the trilingual ability of the population; to improve outcomes in modern foreign languages; to improve literacy skills; and to enhance employability and mobility. Implicit in this policy is the belief that knowledge of a second language will improve prospects of learning further languages.

## **Bilingualism**

Before exploring the interrelationship between three languages, it is useful to define terms and to put them into a Welsh context. Bilinguals are “people who know and use two languages” (De Groot, 2011:11). She expands this statement by pointing out that there are different types of bilinguals, namely *balanced bilinguals*, who have similar degrees of proficiency in both languages and *dominant bilinguals*, who have higher degrees of proficiency in one language. Further division can be made into categories of age. *Early bilinguals* will have either acquired their languages simultaneously or consecutively. *Later bilinguals* acquire the second language either as

adolescents, when they still retain some plasticity of the brain, or as adults. Another key factor worth considering, particularly in the context of Wales, is the social status of languages. Within the lifespan of much of the older sectors of the population, the status of Welsh has changed radically. In the 1950s, for example, many Welsh speaking families made the decision not to bring up their children in the home language, as they felt that having English as a first language would improve their children's life prospects. Only a few decades later, this attitude had completely reversed, and many families felt that being fluent in Welsh would be central to their children's success in life. This has been one of the main reasons for the expansion of the Welsh medium education sector, and many pupils come from homes where the Welsh language has been lost because of family decisions made by the previous generation. De Groot (2011) refers to these attitudes as *additive bilingualism* (both languages are valued) and *subtractive bilingualism* (the native language is devalued and there is social pressure not to use it).

According to De Groot (2011: 5), the brains of bilinguals function in a highly complex way. Their memories are organised in ways that are either *compound* (two words form a pair and map onto the same meaning representation), *coordinate* (each word from a pair maps onto a separate meaning representation) or *subordinate* (the weaker language maps via the stronger language). Bilinguals have substantial linguistic capacity. When they speak,

...the mental system that stores the other language is not completely at rest... Yet when witnessing bilinguals partaking in conversations that are intended to be unilingual, it is obvious that they are quite successful at coping with this extra fierce mental rivalry.

(De Groot, 2011, 279)

In social situations in Wales when English is being used, if speakers want to know whether their interlocutors speak Welsh, they would usually need to ask as there will be few, if any, verbal clues in the quality of their English.

So how can prior knowledge of another language help the learning of additional languages? Butzkamm and Caldwell point out that “no child starts a second language with a clean slate. It's already been written on” (2009:67). There are common elements between languages, so it is helpful to attempt to identify parallels that can be exploited to make optimum use of prior language knowledge. According to Butzkamm and Caldwell, “our first

language lays the foundation for all other languages we might want to learn” (2009:67). De Groot extends this idea:

...new languages do not develop in a vacuum, independently of those already acquired, but prior vocabulary about other languages is exploited during, and accelerates, the acquisition of vocabulary in a new language.

*(De Groot, 2011:340)*

This suggests that bilinguals have an advantage. In learning a further language, existing skills can be built upon. The bilingual has a wider range of skills and more extensive vocabularies to call upon, when learning additional languages. However, the influence of the first language might not always be positive. Mitchell and Myers (2004:19) observe that there are specific errors that are characteristic of certain language learners, in the relation between their first language and the language that they wish to acquire. Moreover, learners will need to work hard if they wish to minimise the ‘foreignness’ of their accent and adults may never lose traces of their first language accent, no matter how long they live in their host countries. These advantages and disadvantages are well documented and researched. This study considers these matters in the bilingual setting of Wales.

## Context

This study took place in a one-year post degree course in a teacher training establishment in Wales, with a focus on Welsh speaking trainee teachers of foreign languages who were undertaking their training in Welsh medium secondary schools (pupils aged 11 – 18). As already noted, the school population in Welsh medium schools is complex, many pupils coming from homes where no Welsh is spoken. Interviews were undertaken with three trainee teachers (one balanced bilingual and two dominant bilinguals) and a Welsh speaking language teacher who is responsible for teacher training in his school (known as a *subject mentor*). In addition, an expert witness was also interviewed, the director of a language support agency, based in Wales. The aim of the study was to explore the relationships between languages in the Welsh medium foreign languages classroom and to attempt to understand the similarities and differences between the languages and the ways in which they could be exploited. The study also sought to identify the advantages and disadvantages of learning languages in a triple language context.

In recent decades, there has been a shift in pedagogy and the ways in which language learning is undertaken. There is currently a trend to move away

from the monolingual, uniquely target language delivery that is associated with the communicative approach to language learning. This monolingual approach, “the sunburn model of language learning,” is dismissed by Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009:51) as an attempt to imitate first language acquisition without properly understanding ways in which second language acquisition differs. In recent years, pedagogy has moved towards recognising the benefits of limited and careful bilingual delivery, using the first language to support second language learning. This allows learners to engage with more sophisticated language and concepts and facilitates language manipulation, which is essential for access to higher levels of language learning (Butzkamm and Caldwell, 2009). By understanding language components, learners can recycle them in different and personalised contexts. The judicious use of more than one language allows parallels to be drawn between languages, hence the relevance of the Triple Literacy Policy of the Welsh Government, which seeks to use Welsh, English and foreign languages to support each other in language learning. De Groot comments that:

Many studies ... have shown that bilinguals and multilinguals have not mentally compartmentalized their languages in neatly separated sections with solid firewalls between them, but that all of the languages known interact with one another, both during acquisition and use.

(De Groot, 2011:339)

By using this interaction between languages to support the acquisition of new languages, the learning experience can be enhanced for both teachers and learners by making use of existing skills and prior knowledge.

## Findings

Interviews took place over a period of approximately one month towards the end of the academic year. In addition, visits were made to students' placement schools in order to add context to the findings.

### ***Common experiences of participants suggested that many opportunities exist to use the similarities and differences between languages to support language learning***

Many classroom activities centred around identifying similarities and differences between languages, as a means of helping memorisation and the internalisation of new language. This was done by using individual words or longer chunks of text (such as extracts from novels), mostly as a reading

activity which would then be used as a springboard for discussion. Interviewees were asked how easy it was to find opportunities to draw parallels between languages. The following observations, relating to Welsh and French, were made:

- Both languages have masculine and feminine forms for inanimate objects;
- The position of adjectives is similar in both languages;
- Adjectives agree in both languages (though in Welsh, agreement is in the form of mutations);
- Both languages have different forms for the second person singular and plural and they operate in largely similar ways;
- There are many cognates and near cognates (e.g. *pont*; *fenêtre* / *fenestr*; *école* / *ysgol*; *église* / *eglwys*; *triste* / *trist*);
- There are many parallels in the use and function of tenses. One interviewee reported that he used the compound past tense in Welsh to explain compound past tenses in French.

On the whole, bilinguals felt that they had an advantage over monolinguals in new language learning in that they had a wider range of language to draw upon in order to explain new language features. When encountering new lexical items, they were able to use their knowledge to infer meaning. One trainee recounted her friends' amazement when she was able to guess the Catalan word for a rabbit because it is similar to the Welsh word *cwningen*. They were also able to find common syntactical patterns between languages, cutting down on the time they needed to devote to learning new grammar rules by simply adapting or using rules that they already knew in other languages. Knowledge of language, therefore, could be used as a shortcut and an aid to memory. Even where there were distinct differences between the languages, these could be used to support language memorisation. Once the differences had been noted, they were highlighted in the learners' memories and given extra attention and prominence.

### ***Bilinguals interviewed felt that they had an advantage over monolinguals in learning new languages***

Many of those interviewed noted that they were used to extensive code switching and that this was a significant help in learning languages. This is a highly developed facility in bilinguals and they can move swiftly between languages, a skill that helps them to access language items with more ease. One interviewee, brought up with French as her first language and learning Welsh when she started school, recalled singing along to a Disney song in

French with her school friends and being surprised when they pointed out to her that they knew the song in English and were wondering why she was singing it in French. Having learned French, Welsh and English to a native speaker standard, she was able to code switch smoothly, seamlessly and almost unconsciously. This gave her significant advantages as a language teacher and made her a valuable role model for her pupils. Moreover, those interviewed felt that they had a more open attitude to language differences and had an acute awareness that one item of vocabulary does not always have an exact equivalent. They also had an increased awareness of the role played by idioms, as they were able to draw parallels between both languages that they were already using. All those interviewed felt that their bilingual status afforded them substantial additional skills and insights and that they were able to use their experience of languages to enhance their teaching. Interestingly, all those interviewed reported that the process of learning to become a language teacher had strengthened not only their knowledge of the foreign language but had improved their understanding of their first languages.

***Bilinguals were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences and ability to use prior language knowledge in new learning and teaching***

The expert witness pointed out that because bilingual speakers start learning languages earlier, they take the interrelationship of languages in their stride. When respondents were questioned about difficulties that they might have experienced because of their bilingualism, they all struggled to think of examples or incidents. When prompted, they cited occasions when they might have needed to go from one language to another via a third language, if they could not think of the correct word. For example, one of the dominant bilinguals (where English is the dominant language) observed that if he wanted to go from Welsh to French, he sometimes had to pass via English if he could not find the correct expression. However, he noted that these occasions were few and far between. Another respondent, the balanced bilingual, said that she usually needed a period of adjustment when moving from a French to a Spanish lesson. However, French and Welsh were her first languages, and she had noted that she needed no such period of adjustment between them. Another respondent noted some difficulties with false cognates. It should be noted, however, that most of the above difficulties apply to all language learners and are not specific to bilingual learners.

### ***An incidental yet interesting finding related to the type of Welsh used in Welsh medium schools***

Many of the participants observed that there were often differences in the quality of Welsh spoken by those pupils coming from homes where Welsh was spoken and those pupils who did not. Moreover, there were regional differences in accent and vocabulary in Welsh, and where teachers came from a wide geographical area (which is generally the case, particularly in secondary schools), these differences were present in the Welsh spoken in schools. This means, in practice, that pupils of differing standards of Welsh were exposed to a wide range of Welsh accents and vocabulary. Consequently, schools made a substantial effort to establish a standard form of Welsh that was adapted to pupils' needs. This form of Welsh is a correct version that sometimes contrasts with the nature of Welsh language found in wider social settings. This has parallels, of course, in the versions of foreign languages that are taught in schools that do not always relate closely to the language that pupils meet in the street when they visit the target language country. This disconnect between school language and social language is to some extent inevitable, but for those pupils who come from English speaking homes, it means that it is sometimes difficult to maintain their use of the Welsh language outside school, particularly once they have left. Participants recognised these differences, and this had an impact on their reflections on the nature of language in society and the development of language skills beyond the classroom.

### **Conclusion**

Bilingual trainee language teachers are well placed to explore ways in which prior knowledge of languages can support pedagogy in that they are at a stage of their professional development where reflective practice is strongly encouraged by their tutors and mentors. In exploring language links, trainees were able to recognise the complexity and interrelation between languages and to understand that, to a certain extent, language has a cultural loading. Word families are frequently used in the classroom to encourage an understanding of patterns and links, and where foreign languages are taught to learners who already know both Welsh and English, there is an increased probability of identifying connections between languages. In more advanced classrooms, historical word changes might be discussed and explored, as a means of adding further depth to the learning experience. There are many evident benefits in linking new language to prior learning. Current pedagogy encourages learners to seek patterns and to avoid seeing languages as isolated phenomena, instead advocating the building of bridges between first and additional languages. This collaborative and cohesive approach to



language learning is already well established in the Welsh education sector, born from necessity, the close geographical proximity between Welsh and English and the need to provide a framework within which both can coexist. This approach is now being extended to foreign language learning, under the Triple Literacy initiative, and is beginning to bear fruit in classrooms across Wales.

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# 29

## Will Classroom Code-Switching be a Solution for Transition of Medium of Instruction? (A Case Study of a Malaysian Classroom)

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### Background

Located in Southeast Asia, Malaysia, a multi-ethnic country, was once colonised by the British. During the British colonisation period, English was the official language, and the number of English schools increased rapidly across the nation, and especially in urban areas. After Malaysia gained independence in 1957, Malay was chosen as the national language instead of English in order to unite all ethnic groups in Malaysia with one common language. This was due to the fact that nationalists during that time felt that as the colonial language, English was not the ideal choice for the national language (Chan and Tan, 2006). Moreover, the first Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman commented that “as a developing nation we should want to have a language of our own... (a nation without a national language is) a nation without a soul and without a life” (as cited in Wong & Ee, 1975, p. 79). According to Asmah (2003, p.103), Malay was chosen as the national language because: i) it was widely spoken among all different ethnic groups; ii) it had a high volume of literature; and iii) it was once the major language of administration and diplomacy in the Malay archipeligo. With the implementation of the National Language Act in 1963, the medium of instruction in schools was changed from English to Malay. English was even demoted to the position of second language in the education system, and this situation lasted for almost 40 years.

In 2002, the then Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, announced that starting from year 2003, English was to be used as the MOI for the mathematics and science subjects in national schools. Under the recommendation of the Ministry of Education, *PPSMI (Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Sains dan Matematik Dalam Bahasa Inggeris*, ‘English for the Teaching of Mathematics and Science’) would be implemented starting with Standard One (first year of primary school), Form One (first year of secondary school) and Lower Six (first year of Sixth Form) and subsequently

at all other level (Mahathir, 2002). This change came as a surprise to the teachers, parents and lecturers in universities, but many welcomed such implementation. However, this process did not take place without problems (for detailed discussion, please see Chan and Tan, 2006; Gill, 2004; Gill, 2005). As a result, the government decided to reverse the policy in 2009. Despite this decision, the government understood that the need to improve Malaysian students' proficiency in English should be prioritised. Hence, it was proposed that English lessons be increased in schools, and the Education Ministry aims to recruit some 13,000 English language teachers to ensure that students received all needed help in improving their fluency in English. Following this decision, a new policy, *MBMMBI* (*Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia & Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris*, 'To uphold Bahasa Malaysia and to strengthen English language') was introduced in 2010 to replace the *PPSMI*. This policy has two main objectives: to propel the nation towards the goal of 1Malaysia<sup>16</sup> and to enable the country to compete nationally and globally (Malaysian Education Ministry, 2010).

### Statement of Problem

During the transitional period between abolishing *PPSMI* and implementing *MBMMBI*, schools have been given the authority to decide on which language of instruction they want to adopt. They can either: (i) dive straight into using Malay; (ii) continue using English for those who have started learning under *PPSMI*; or (iii) use both English and Malay to teach mathematics and science. However, such changes do not affect the Form Six students, who will continue their syllabus in English. Although we are unable to know the immediate effect of such changes, it is forecasted that should this policy remain and continue, our Form Six students may be struggle when they enter Form Six education. The following tables explain such predicament:

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<sup>16</sup> Pronounced as One Malaysia: a concept proposed by Prime Minister Najib Razak to emphasise ethnic harmony, national unity, and efficient governance.

Primary School							
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Standard 1	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Standard 2	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
Standard 3	O	O	O	X	X	X	X
Standard 4	O	O	O	O	X	X	X
Standard 5	O	O	O	O	O	X	X
Standard 6	O	O	O	O	O	O	X

**Table 1: MOI for Science in Primary School (2010-2016)**

O: Mathematics and Science in English; X: Mathematics and Science in Malay

Secondary School							
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Form 1	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Form 2	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
Form 3	O	O	O	X	X	X	X
Form 4	O	O	O	O	X	X	X
Form 5	O	O	O	O	O	X	X
Form 6	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

**Table 2: MOI for Science in Secondary school (2016-2022)**

O: Mathematics and Science in English; X: Mathematics and Science in Malay

From the above tables, it can be seen that students who complete their Form 5 study in 2021 will be the first cohort who started the *MBMMBI* policy in 2011 i.e. learn mathematics and science in Malay. If they continue their secondary education in national school (*Sekolah Kebangsaan*), they will have learned mathematics and science in Malay for 11 years before entering Form Six, where the mathematics and science subjects are (and will continue to be) taught in English. By 2022, these students are expected to encounter great difficulty in Form Six, as they will have to go through the transition of learning mathematics and science in Malay to learning them in English.

## CS as a Tool for Multilingual Science Classroom

Research on code-switching in bilingual classrooms now spans almost three decades. Martin-Jones (1995) shows that the research on code-switching has

been cross-disciplinary in nature, including educational research on classroom interaction, conversational analysis, pragmatics and the ethnography of communication. Geographically, early studies were carried out in the United States, but research has now expanded to other bilingual and multilingual settings such as Canada, South America, Europe, Africa and South East Asia.

Although classroom code-switching is very common worldwide, official attitudes are mainly negative. Some educational authorities believe that languages should not contaminate each other and that students will not be able to learn a language well if they keep mixing them. They even see code-switching as a dysfunctional form of speech behaviour (Ferguson, 2009). In Hong Kong, there have been repeated official calls for teachers to refrain from what is called 'mixed code' teaching (Lin, 1996).

However, applied linguists take a quite different view. Most see classroom code-switching as a useful communicative resource, particularly when students lack proficiency in the official MOI; as put by Adendorff (142), "code-switching is...highly functional, though mostly subconscious. It is a communicative resource which enables teachers and pupils to accomplish a considerable number and range of social and educational objectives" (Adendorff, 1993:142). In other word, the main aim of classroom code-switching is for students to understand the content taught in a language with which they are not familiar. If code-switching does help students to better grasp the idea, then it should be encouraged. This is especially the case for subject classroom but not for language classroom.

Ferguson (2003) proposes three broad functional categories of code-switching (CS) in subject classrooms. First, CS is for constructing and transmitting knowledge. It is difficult for the students to understand the lessons and grasp the different concepts that are being taught if the texts are in a language in which they are not proficient. Hence, CS plays an important role in this situation, as teachers can then explain the written texts and instruction in a language with which students are familiar. The second pedagogic function of CS is for the management of classroom discourse. This includes showing a change of footing during lesson to managing students' behaviour in class. Third and finally, the classroom is not only a place of formal learning, but also a social and affective environment in which teachers and students negotiate relationships and identities. Therefore, code-switching is used for interpersonal relations and to humanise the classroom climate.

Given the advantages of classroom code-switching given above, it seems highly likely that classroom code-switching should theoretically be able to help the Form 6 students during their transition period from learning mathematics and science in Malay to learning them in English. This research has been carried out to investigate the possibility of CS being a solution for the above-mentioned dilemma.

## Research Methodology

The research questions for this study were as follows:

1. Do science teachers code-switch in class?
2. How frequently do science teachers code-switch in class?
3. In what context and for what purpose do science teachers code-switch in class?
4. How does CS impact on the lessons and what are the students' views towards teacher's CS?
5. What are the factors affecting school policy on the language of instruction (LOI) for science?
6. What are science teachers' attitudes towards the school policy on LOI for science?
7. What are the views of teachers on the abolition of *PPSMI*?

The present study was designed as a predominantly qualitative study of naturalistic classroom interaction in different language of instruction (LOI) settings (Malay, English or both) for science. It aims to uncover practices of language use in these classrooms, with particular focus given to CS. The data for this research was obtained from three schools in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia. This paper will only report on the preliminary data gathered from one teacher and his students within one of the three participating schools.

## Participants

For the purpose of this study, three schools were chosen as the main sites for data collection. These schools were chosen based on the language(s) that they had decided would be used for the teaching of science. Furthermore, these schools were considered 'good schools' in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur. School A and School B were awarded the 'Cluster School of Excellence'<sup>17</sup> (*Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia*, n.d.), whereas School C

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<sup>17</sup> The Cluster School of Excellence is a merit system granted to high achieving schools in Malaysia, which are given wider autonomy in their administration and extra funding for the advancement of their niche areas including academic or extra-curricular activities.

received several awards from the Federal District Education Department of Kuala Lumpur for its excellent performance in the *PMR* (Lower Secondary Assessment) in 2012 (SMK Cochrane, 2013).

Two teachers who teach Form 1 (secondary one, 13-year-old) science classes were observed. The teachers chosen for observation were first nominated by either the school principal or the head of science subjects in the school. Form 1 science teachers were chosen to be observed primarily because their students all came from different primary education backgrounds. Form 1 can thus be seen as a transition period for these students when they enter secondary education. This scenario is similar to that of the Form 6 students and teachers, the stakeholders in the results of this research, who are predicted to go through a transition period when they enter pre-university education. Furthermore, Form 1 classes have no major national examination at the end of the year; therefore, it was easier to gain access to these classes for observation. Apart from the teachers and students who were observed, the principal of each school and a few other science teachers who volunteered formed the samples for this research.

The table below shows a summary of all the subjects for this study:

School		Observed teacher(s)	Number of students in each class	Number of interviews
A (has both English and bilingual stream, uses English textbook)		A1 – teaches in English	24	1 school principal, 5 science teachers (including A1 and A2)
		A2 – teaches in bilingual	24	
B (English as MOI for better performing classes, uses English textbook)		B1 – teaches in English	31	1 school principal, 4 science teachers (including B1 and B2)
		B2 – teaches in English	30	
C (uses both English and Malay as MOI, uses English textbook)		C1 – teaches in bilingual	26	1 school principal, C1 and C2
		C2 – teaches in bilingual	24	
<b>Total:</b>	<b>3 schools</b>	<b>6 observed teachers</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>3 school principals, 11 science teachers (including those whom are observed)</b>

**Table 3: Summary of all participants for this study**

## Research instruments

In order to address the research questions of this study, the following instruments were employed to generate data and evidence:



- a) Classroom observation and audio recording
- b) Interviews
- c) Questionnaires
- d) Other materials/documents

Through classroom observation and audio recording, I was able to gather 'live' data as it was taking place *in situ* (Patton, 1990). This research instrument played an important role of the data collection in this study as it offered in-depth insights to how and why the teachers CS during science lessons. Unstructured observation was adopted in this study to ensure that the data collected was "honest to the situation which it finds" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:306). An explanation of the classroom code-switching phenomenon will only be provided after analysing the unstructured observational data. The semi-structured interviews were used to explore teachers' training and teaching experience, their perceptions of classroom CS, their views on the abolishment of *PPSMI* and the rationale behind the decision on the choice of MOI for science subjects by school principals. Interviewees were encouraged to further elaborate on the issues discussed, which allowed the interview process to be more systematic and increased the comprehensiveness of the data. Post-observational interviews were conducted in order to obtain further clarification from the teacher on why he/she code-switched in class, based on the brief transcription from the previous lesson. A questionnaire was used to investigate and collect data on students' attitudes towards their teachers' CS in class. Through this questionnaire, it was possible to find out how students' first language or the MOI used in primary school affected their attitudes towards code-switching by their current science teachers. Finally, further material such as additional field notes made during observations, teaching materials used and official documents concerning the language of instruction for science produced by schools and education authorities were collected to complement the evidence gathered from the interviews and observations.

## Results and discussion

As mentioned earlier, this paper will only report preliminary results based on data collected from one teacher, Mr Ahmad (pseudonym) and his students. Mr Ahmad was teaching in school A which had both English and bilingual streams for Form 1 science lessons (refer to Table 3), and he was assigned to teach science to Form 1 students in English. He completed a degree in pure Chemistry in the United Kingdom and has been teaching for three years.

During the interview which was conducted in English, Mr Ahmad expressed that if given a choice, he would not abolish *PPSMI* and not agree with the decision his school made to have two streams for Form 1 science lessons. He thought that by separating the students into two streams, it tended to make those who were in the English stream think that they had higher standards than their peers who are learning science in a bilingual context. In his view, it would have been preferable for the school to have settled on teaching science in English to all Form 1 students. However, when pointed out that it would be inevitable for schools to teach science fully in Malay in near future, he admitted that it would be difficult for the students to prepare for the national examinations, as the questions prepared by the Education Ministry would be in Malay instead of English. However, he did stress that teaching science in English was the best way to prepare students for Form 6 and university education, as it would be time consuming to translate from Malay to English.

Speaking of Form 6 education, Mr Ahmad thought that under the current *MBMMBI* policy, Form 6 teachers might face greater challenges than the students who will have learnt science in Malay from primary one to Form 5 in 10 years' time. He reasoned that based on his own experience, language may not be a big problem for the students if they are hard-working and have the willingness to learn. However, the teachers will have great difficulties in explaining the scientific terms in English to students who are only familiar with Malay terminology.

It is also revealed through the interview that Mr Ahmad thought that classroom CS was actually beneficial, especially if English was not the mother tongue of the students, which is the case in Malaysia. He further explained that if the students did not understand the language well, teachers would need to find an easy way for them to better understand, which in this case could be CS into Malay. Besides using Malay to elaborate difficult scientific terms, he also used CS to get students' attention while telling jokes or talking about non-subject-related topics.

The data collected from the questionnaire was briefly analysed and could reveal insights into students' perceptions of Mr Ahmad's CS in class. Out of 24 students, 14 of them spoke Malay as the main language at home and 7 of them spoke English. There was only 1 student who spoke Mandarin at home, and 1 spoke another language.

Although 19 students had gone to national schools for primary education, three had gone to Chinese schools and 2 had gone to Tamil schools, there were a total of 16 students who were taught in English by their science teachers. This shows that a majority of the students were more comfortable with learning science in English. Also, the fact that 18 students were conscious that Mr Ahmad used more English than Malay in the class confirmed that he did indeed conduct the lessons mainly in English and only used Malay occasionally.

On the scale of 1 to 10, although 7 students (29%) preferred to have Mr Ahmad use Malay and English equally in class (scale 6, with English slightly more often), there were 6 students (25%) who would have preferred for him to teach solely in English. Only three students opted for Malay and English used equally (scale 5) and none wanted more Malay to be spoken in class (scale 1-4). This showed that on the whole, students would like the science lessons to be taught more in English and less in Malay. The main reason for this is that when the lessons were taught in English, students saw it as an opportunity to improve their English (22%). 19 students thought that when the teacher taught in English, it gave them more chances to listen to the language, and 15 students felt that it helped them to pay attention during the lesson. As most students spoke Malay as their first language at home, it was rather surprising to learn that 19 students thought that a science lesson taught mostly in English could actually help them to better understand the teacher. This was further reinforced by 14 students who thought that they did not get confused when the teacher used two languages while teaching. 9 students tended to get a little confused, and only 1 student felt lost in the class when the teacher code-switched during the lessons.

## Conclusion

Although it is impossible to make any generalisation at this stage of the study, the results gained do provide some promising discussions. It can be concluded in this paper that if given the chance, teachers would not abolish *PPSMI*, and it is agreed that both Form 6 teachers and students may face challenges in 10 years' time. Also, using code-switching in the teaching of science is thought to be beneficial to both teachers and students, and the latter are actually responding well to the teacher's CS in class. It is hoped that with further investigation, teachers will be encouraged to CS in science lessons, and a CS training programme could be designed to the benefit of teachers.

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# 30

## A Fresh Approach to Teaching Lexical Phrases and Collocations

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The poster on which this extended abstract is based was awarded the Poster Competition Prize at BAAL 2013.

### Assumptions

This paper is based on the following assumptions:

1. What has been broadly called the lexical approach, with its emphasis on multi-word awareness, offers important new possibilities in mainstream language teaching;
2. It is possible to create, through corpus analysis, useful lists of multi-word items for syllabus design and focused teaching (O'Keefe, McCarthy, Carter 2007);
3. Such lists can only be of limited value, as when focused on a particular professional need, because everyday English contains an overwhelming number of such items (Swan 2006);
4. Teachers need to find ways to develop in themselves and their students a multi-word mindset with regard to the language. This mindset is one that would transcend and at the same time integrate the current pervasive consciousness of lists and discrete items to be learned;
5. It is hopelessly over-optimistic to expect ordinary teachers to themselves identify the multi-word items and collocational knowledge that their learners need;
6. Materials and task design needs to be more thorough and "recycle" familiar language, exposing learners to the same things in a variety of ways, without them consciously feeling that they are being drilled;
7. Teachers need support from materials that focus on form in ways that allow them more time to observe what is happening with their learners and minimises the need for explanation;
8. Over the course of many years of exploratory practice (Allwright, 2005, Allwright & Hanks 2009), consulting with and responding closely to learners, I have discovered and gradually refined software that enables

an approach to multi-word teaching that seems to meet the above criteria and to offer possibilities beyond my own situation.

### **The Junks+ Technique: A Basic Example**

*Junks Plus* (Jumbled Chunks of increasing length) is a software program I have developed with Filemaker Pro Advanced, as a tool for processing various types of text for creating self- and peer-study worksheets that develop fluency, awareness raising and vocabulary development. Typically, a passage of 250-300 words is taken as a starting point. It allows the teacher to see strings of 2 to 15 words in length from the passage, in this way (See also the upper portion of Exercise 1, appendix I):

It allows  
It allows the  
It allows the teacher  
It allows the teacher to  
It allows the teacher to see  
It allows the teacher to see strings ...

The teacher surveys the list, and selects those strings that seem to be appropriate for jumbling, such as this:

**It** the allows see teacher to **strings**

The first and last (bold underlined) words are always in the correct position, with the middle words scrambled, but occasionally (since the computer randomly positions the words), in the correct order. The teacher goes through the whole passage in this way, selecting strings of varying length. Strings of medium length automatically show two words in the correct positions at the beginning and end, while longer strings show three.

Some degree of skill is required from the teacher. First, it is best that there should be only one possible unscrambled combination. This is because the software is not currently capable of handling more than one correct version, and the purpose is to produce self-study worksheets that enable self- or peer-correction. The teacher also needs to have a sense of the well-roundedness of chunks. Thus, from the sentence above, "words in length from the" would not be a good candidate, while "2 to 15 words in length" would be. This is because the former has a "unitary meaning", the criterion deemed critical by O'Keefe, McCarthy and Carter (2007) for a string of words to qualify as a chunk, while the latter would not have any meaning and could therefore pose



too much of a meaningless puzzle, even for a native speaker. The combined string "2 to 15 words in length from the passage" would be a judgement call. It is important that the unscrambling effort should be just enough to allow the student to notice areas of weakness (indicated by incorrectness or hesitation), but not pose too much of a puzzle. It is desirable for the students to go through the list of scrambled chunks as speedily as possible. Indeed, the worksheets can be used so as to emphasise speed as much as correctness.

Exercises 1 and 2 (see appendix I) illustrate two stages of practice. For the sake of illustration, a very short and simple passage is used. In this case it is an authentic learner diary entry that was rewritten by myself ("original", shown at the bottom of Exercise 2). A reading passage of 350 words in length typically generates from 60 to 100 chunks, much more than is the case here.

One feature of Junks+ worksheets is that learners encounter the same chunks repeatedly in a single worksheet, but always in a different form. I have asterisked chunks 4, 5, 12 and 19 in the right column of Exercise 1, in order to highlight this. This amounts to a kind of repetitive drill that has the virtue of not appearing to the learner to be a drill.

The software also automatically (almost, that is, since minor manual adjustment is necessary) generates a version of the entire passage, with blanks of varying length according to the words they replace (Exercise 2). If the exercise were on its own the number of blanks would create an impossible puzzle, even for a native speaker. In practice, students whose ability might appear to ill-equip them for the task are able to complete it, often surprisingly quickly, through referring to the chunks that they have unscrambled.

This is of course, an extreme form of guided or controlled writing. However, while it does not call on the student's creative input, it seems to be engaging and satisfying for many. It is also "learner-friendly" in the sense that it does not impose a particular teaching point on a learner. Rather, it assumes that since learners will, in the process of completing the task, have to be attentive to form, they will learn what they are ready to learn. Contrast this with Ellis's comments:

But can text-creation activities work without corrective feedback? This takes us back to a problem we noted, namely that focused tasks, even when cleverly designed, do not always elicit the linguistic features they were intended to elicit. This is why they often require corrective feedback (and/or

metalinguistic explanation) to induce students to use the target features. Sometimes, however, text-creation activities do work as designed.

*(Ellis 2012, Ch.10)*

In this case, we can certainly say that the text-creation (albeit not "creative creation") works without corrective feedback. It also has the advantage of not requiring particularly "clever design", and it certainly, in my experience, can be depended on for a high success rate in engaging students. I should add, incidentally, that this could be a promising technique for the teaching of specialised academic writing as much as for use with mainstream textbooks.

### **Depth and Thoroughness of Processing**

It should also be borne in mind that students rarely use these worksheets without encountering the language in another form. Thus, the student in the (uncharacteristically short) example above, had already experienced the scrambled chunks of language "naturally", in the form of his own writing and his reading of my rewritten version.

I have found Junks+ to work well in other multidimensional ways. One such way is for students to work with a passage containing a third person narrative account of a scene with dialogue from a film. Students can refer to the dialogue in its complete form while completing exercises 1 and 2, in which, for example, "I love you" has been transformed into "He tells her he loves her."

Similarly, students can refer to the complete text of a picture story, and work on Exercise 1 and 2 versions of language talking about each picture. So a story containing the words, "I spent four hours talking on the phone to my friend" would have a corresponding picture of the author talking on the phone. So the chunked language for study would be, for example, "In Picture 1 we see the author talking on the phone. He seems to be watching television at the same time."

Sets of questions and answers about a particular topic can be handled in the same way, with scrambled chunk and blank versions of the questions being supported by reference to complete versions of the answers, and vice versa.

Another way is for discussion of a reading passage to precede work with the chunks and blanks, and, in yet another layer of practice, there is the option for computerised dictation practice using (unscrambled) chunks from the passage.

It seems reasonable to claim, then, that the exercises outlined above can go a long way towards meeting Nation's injunctions (Nation, 2001, p.624):

- Make sure that high frequency target vocabulary occurs in all the four strands of meaning focused input, language focused learning, meaning focused output, and fluency development.
- Provide opportunity for spaced, repeated, generative retrieval of words to ensure cumulative growth.
- Use depth of processing activities.

### The Slippery Nature of Chunks

In this section the following aspects of chunks or multi-word lexical items are discussed:

1. The difficulty of tying them down, otherwise expressed as the arbitrariness with which they can be identified;
2. Their dependence on co-text and situational context for identification;
3. The variation with which they can be generative —the degree to which they offer slots to be filled and the range of items that can fill these slots.
4. The ways in which they are often nested within each other as "wholes within wholes".

Lewis talks about Fixed and Semi-fixed Expressions, and takes the widely shared view that it is the latter that deserve the most attention in language pedagogy:

Several linguists who have studied and classified Expressions have come to the conclusion that they consist of between two and seven words and, most interestingly, they do not normally exceed seven words. Here are some examples:

*I'll see you soon.*

*It takes two to tango.*

*It wasn't my fault.*

*If you take my advice, you'll have nothing to do with it.*

As we saw in Chapter 1, the last looks like an exception until we recognise it as two lexical items juxtaposed: *if you take my advice* and *you'll have nothing to do with it*. Research on short term memory bears out this limit, which remains speculative, on the length of individual lexical items.

*Lewis (2009, pp. 33-34)*

For native speakers all of the above are recognisable chunks of a semi-fixed type. In the first example, we can easily think of filling the slot following "see you" with a time or place adverbial.

*I'll see you later tonight.*

*I'll see you in Tokyo.*

However recognisable it may be as a semi-fixed expression, Lewis's second example is slightly odd, in that it is used to make a particular kind of pithy comment about something. It is close to *it takes two to make a quarrel*, but its particular associations mean that it is not particularly generative. But a more traditional, grammatical way of looking at it, ignoring *two*, could be more generative:

*It took a lot of guts to do that.*

*It will take you a long time to get there.*

*What will it take to make you change your mind?*

Lewis's third example is decidedly situationally-dependent. O'Keefe, McCarthy and Carter (2007) refer to this as "pragmatic integrity". In other words, the identification of the words *it was my fault* as a chunk depends on our being able to easily imagine a situation in which it is being used. It is also structurally generative in a more simple way than Lewis's second example:

*It was my fault.*

*It wasn't their fault.*

*It is her fault that we are late.*

Without the situational dependency we would be in the absurd position of having to say that simple sentences such as *it was my wallet* represent fixed expressions.

Lewis's fourth example is the most illustrative of the three points being made in this section. His assertion that semi-fixed expressions almost always consist of no more than seven words, and that the seven-word group *you'll have nothing to do with it* is an independent semi-fixed expression within the larger *if you take my advice, you'll have nothing to do with it* simultaneously draws attention to and obscures a far more important (and neglected) fact: namely that chunks or fixed expressions can be seen as "wholes within wholes". Thus *to do with* can be seen as a self-contained unit

that is part of the larger unit *nothing to do with* or, to go further, *have nothing to do with*. And so on. It could even be argued that *to do* is the smallest multi-word expression here. Another important point to be made here is to do with the identification of units as being dependent on co-text. Thus, given the presence of *with*, it would not be useful to look at *nothing to do* as an independent unit. But in another context, such as *I'm afraid you'll have nothing to do when you get there*, it certainly would constitute a distinct unit.

## A Less Technical Approach

The difficulty in tying down the nature of chunks is an obstacle to a lexical approach becoming mainstream. More important than the particular examples is a general willingness to look at the target language from a multi-word point of view, and a simpler approach can help. The list below, generated from possible multi-word chunks that could be generated by the multi-word group "In order to be privatized", attempts to illustrate the kind of processing by the learner that is required in order to complete tasks such as the Junks+ Exercise 1 above. It also attempts to illustrate a less technical approach to doing so.

A native speaker is able to see clearly here a number of word combinations that are devoid of meaning and at the same time highly unlikely to occur. These are marked with an X. Those with a question mark are devoid of meaning in themselves, but could conceivably be combined. Those that are underlined in bold represent meaningful chunks that can be combined into larger chunks.

**In order for an airport to be privatized** under the Pilot Program,  
the lease agreement must receive the approval of both (1) 65% of  
the airlines that provide scheduled service at the airport, and ...

*<http://reason.org/news/show/apr-2013-airport-privatization#sthash.AwByc7pk.dpuf>*

- |    |                             |   |
|----|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. | <b><u>an airport</u></b>    |   |
| 2. | <b><u>be privatized</u></b> |   |
| 3. | in an                       |   |
| 4. | <b><u>in order</u></b>      |   |
| 5. | in airport                  | ? |
| 6. | in be                       | X |
| 7. | <b><u>to be</u></b>         |   |
| 8. | <b><u>in an airport</u></b> |   |

9.	in airport be	X
10.	in airport to	X
11.	in an be	X
12.	in an to	X
13.	in for airport	?
14.	in for an	?
15.	in for to	X
16.	<b><u>in order for</u></b>	
17.	in order an	X
18.	in order airport	X
19.	in order be	X
20.	in order privatized	X
21.	in to privatized	X
22.	<b><u>to be privatized</u></b>	
23.	<u>an airport to be</u>	?
24.	<b><u>for an airport to</u></b>	
25.	in order for airport	?
26.	in order for be	X
27.	<b><u>in order for</u></b> an	
28.	in order for to	X
29.	<b><u>in order to be</u></b>	
30.	in order to privatized	X
31.	<b><u>in order for an airport</u></b>	
32.	<u>in an airport to be</u>	
33.	<b><u>in order for an airport</u></b> to	
34.	<b><u>in order for an airport to be</u></b>	
35.	<b><u>in order for an airport to</u></b> privatized	X
36.	<b><u>in order for an airport to be privatized</u></b>	

Hopefully this is suggestive that there is no need, for a multi-word mindset to take root, for expertise in distinguishing different types of multi-word unit and their functions. The lexical approach does not need to be perceived by ordinary teachers as yet another professional burden.

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## Appendix I – The Exercises

### Exercise 1

Selected chunks (Teacher prepares these. The student only sees these when peer or self-correcting.)

Jumbled chunks, in order of increasing length

[1] I had three classes on Wednesday,	[1] <u>I</u> on had classes three <u>Wednesday</u> .
[2] I went to bed at 12	[2] <u>I</u> at went to bed <u>12</u>
[3] I worked there for four hours.	[3] <u>I</u> for there worked four <u>hours</u> .
[4] On Tuesday I had morning classes	[4] <u>had</u> to go classes morning <u>to</u> . *
[5] had morning classes to go to.	[5] <u>On</u> Tuesday I had morning <u>classes</u> **
[6] and didn't finish work there until midnight.	[6] <u>and</u> didn't work there finish until <u>midnight</u> .
[7] On Thursday I was able to enjoy	[7] <u>On</u> was to I Thursday able <u>enjoy</u>
[8] able to enjoy playing futsal with my club	[8] <u>able</u> futsal enjoy my to playing with <u>club</u>
[9] I had lunch at home on my own.	[9] <u>I</u> home on my at lunch had <u>own</u> .
[10] Last Monday I did not have any classes,	[10] <u>Last</u> I not did have any Monday <u>classes</u> .
[11] so I was able to sleep in late	[11] <u>so</u> to sleep able in was I <u>late</u>
[12] On Tuesday I had morning classes to go to,	[12] <u>On</u> I morning had Tuesday classes to go <u>to</u> . ***
[13] I attended an Anthropology lecture, and found it interesting.	[13] <u>I</u> it and attended found lecture, Anthropology an <u>interesting</u> .
[14] I had to go to my part-time job,	[14] <u>I</u> to my to had part- time go <u>job</u> .
[15] Then I left to go to my part-time job.	[15] <u>Then</u> I to part- time to go my left <u>job</u> .
[16] I had three classes on Wednesday, so it was pretty tiring.	[16] <u>I had</u> Wednesday, on was classes three it so <u>pretty tiring</u> .
[17] I went to bed at 12, and got up at noon.	[17] <u>I went</u> and to bed got up at 12, <u>at noon</u> .
[18] Despite feeling so tired, I had to go to my part-time job,	[18] <u>Despite feeling so</u> had to I tired, to go <u>my part- time job</u> .
[19] On Tuesday I had morning classes to go to, so I got up at 7:30.	[19] <u>On Tuesday I</u> had to, morning I to go got so classes <u>up at 7:30</u> . ****

### Exercise 2

Last \_\_\_\_\_ classes so \_\_\_\_\_ late. I \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ noon. I \_\_\_\_\_ own. Then \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ job. I \_\_\_\_\_ hours. On \_\_\_\_\_ classes to \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 7:30. I \_\_\_\_\_ lecture and \_\_\_\_\_ interesting. Then  
 \_\_\_\_\_ class. I \_\_\_\_\_ Wednesday so \_\_\_\_\_ tiring. Despite  
 \_\_\_\_\_ job and \_\_\_\_\_  
 midnight. On \_\_\_\_\_ club.

(original)

Last Monday I did not have any classes, so I was able to sleep in late. I went to bed at 12, and got up at noon. I had lunch at home on my own. Then I left to go to my part-time job. I worked there for four hours. **On Tuesday I had morning classes to go to, so I got up at 7:30.** I attended an Anthropology lecture, and found it interesting. Then I had a Chinese class. I had three classes on Wednesday, so it was pretty tiring. Despite feeling so tired, I had to go to my part-time job, and didn't finish work there until midnight. On Thursday I was able to enjoy playing futsal with my club.



## Appendix II – Junks+ in action

16

214 words in passage

2 I've been  
3 I've been attending  
4 I've been attending  
5 I've been attending a class  
6 I've been attending a class on  
7 I've been attending a class on "soft  
8 I've been attending a class on "soft power  
9 I've been attending a class on "soft power theory",  
10 I've been attending a class on "soft power theory", in  
11 power theory", in which  
12 power theory", in which we

Using back and forward arrows, the user can view all possible strings of 2 to 12 words in a given passage.

○ AVIATION  
○ AUTO INDUSTRY  
○ COMPUTER INDUSTRY  
○ FINANCE

○ WOMEN  
● LEADERSHIP

The program is a database of passages on given topics

Clicking on a chosen string will add it the list of chunks from the passage in the chunks exercise you are making.

1

Edit List

[1] but none of them have  
[2] in 50 or even 100 years  
[3] but to be called a vision  
[4] I've been attending a class  
[5] In the process of discussing  
[6] Each of the political parties  
[7] we concluded that he needs to  
[8] a class on "soft power theory"  
[9] a vision of how Japan will look  
[10] he needs to articulate a vision  
[11] I would like to make a study of  
[12] the fact that there is a change  
[13] as often as once or twice a year  
[14] Shinzo Abe says that he wants to  
[15] needs to do in order to establish  
[16] the direction Japan is heading in  
[17] a study of how Japanese leadership  
[18] in order to establish and maintain

The list is automatically ordered, with the shortest (5-word) chunks at the top, longest at the end. Chunks of 2 to 4 words are listed separately, as they are not suitable for "jumbling"

"Junks +" Program,  
developed by the author, using Filemaker Pro Advanced

ft power theory", in which  
ft power theory", in which we

1

Edit List

Average Length: 7.77

[1] but none them of have  
[2] in 50 100 or even years  
[3] but be a called to vision  
[4] I've been a attending class  
[5] In process the of discussing  
[6] Each the political of parties  
[7] we concluded that needs he to  
[8] a power "soft class on theory"  
[9] a vision will how of Japan look  
[10] he articulate to a needs vision  
[11] I study a to make like would of  
[12] the fact is there that a change  
[13] as once or often a twice as year  
[14] Shinzo he says Abe wants that to  
[15] needs order to to in do establish  
[16] the heading direction Japan is in  
[17] a how of study Japanese leadership  
[18] in and to establish order maintain

47 phrases

Numbering ON

Jumble

When the list has been made you click the "Jumble" button, and each line is processed. The first and last words are left in their original positions, underlined. The list is then copied to a word processor.



# 31

## The Influence of a Self-Assessment and Co-Assessment task in Written Production in a CLIL Science classroom

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### Introduction

The English language has today become a global language and is used as the primary medium of contemporary communication. It is worth noting that language learners are members of a society that needs citizens capable of working cooperatively and communicating appropriately. Therefore, students are expected to become competent individuals capable of adjusting to these societal needs, and the teacher's role is to help them develop the skills needed to achieve this objective. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR. Council of Europe, 2001) has put special emphasis on *language awareness* and has introduced the notion of self-assessment of language skills.

*Self-regulated learning* (Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989), described as the process by which learners become responsible for conducting their own learning, is one way of achieving this language awareness, as this process enables learners to become aware of their approach to learning through setting goals, planning, organizing, and assessing their knowledge at several stages of the acquisition process. Several researchers have pointed out the importance of self-assessment, since it can facilitate learning and content acquisition, promote interaction and foster learner's autonomy (Black & William, 1998; Astolfi, 1999; Giné & Parcerisa, 2000; Jorba et al., 2000; Santos Guerra, 2003). This study investigates self-assessment and co-assessment as tools to improve student's written production in a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Science classroom.

### Data and context

This research was conducted in the context of the New English-Medium Degree on Primary Education, a pioneering degree launched by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona at the beginning of Bologna's internationalization process in Higher Education. The study took place in a class of 78 students during their Science lessons in the first year of this

Degree. These students had been studying the Sun-Earth system, and they were asked to write about the Earth's movements. The task that was proposed was divided into three phases. During phase 1, students were asked to give a reasoned explanation of why it is hot in summer and cold in winter, and why it is summer in the Southern Hemisphere when it is winter in the Northern Hemisphere. After writing this text once, they were split into three groups during phase 2: two experimental groups and a control group. The first experimental group was given an assessment checklist and asked to do a co-assessment activity in which they had to conduct a peer-discussion on both the assessment criteria in the checklist and the marks that they awarded themselves. Students in the second experimental group were asked to self-assess themselves using the same checklist. The third group, the control group, did not conduct any assessment task. Finally, during phase 3 all the students rewrote their texts.

## **Methodology**

Data was collected throughout all three phases. During the first phase, the students' first written productions were collected to determine what students could produce at that stage. During phase 2, the pair-discussions that the second group had carried out were video recorded and the recordings were gathered in order to identify which topics arose during the discussion of the checklist items and how they solved each others' questions. Finally, during the third phase, the students' second productions were collected to examine what students could produce after the task and to check their progress.

After selecting a subset of data according to the quality of the video and the participation of the students throughout all the phases, a quantitative analysis and a qualitative analysis were carried out. In terms of the quantitative analysis, all the students who had written both texts were taken into account, and three statistical analyses were executed to observe the influence of the conversation and the assessment rubric in the different groups.

As for the qualitative analysis, a pair of students from the group that conducted the co-assessment were chosen. Their texts and interaction (a 34-minute video recording) were closely examined according to the Qualitative Content Analysis proposed by Zhang & Wildermuth (2009). First the data was prepared: the discussion was transcribed and the students' test typed. Then the unit of analysis was defined, taking into account both textual and cognitive elements, and afterwards several categories and a coding scheme were developed. Next, the coding scheme with a sample of written

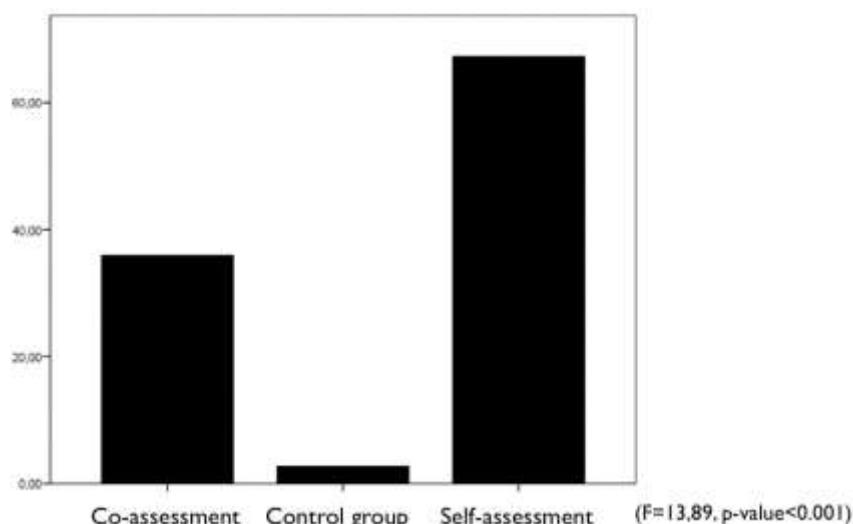
productions was tested and modified, and finally all the text was coded (the 4 written productions and the discussion).

## **Analysis**

Turning first to the quantitative analysis, it was conducted in order to trace the students' improvement through three different sources of data: the transcription, the criteria from the assessment rubric, and the students' essays. The aim of the analysis was to compare the students' first and second essays so as to identify modifications. Afterwards, the transcript was analysed in order to observe if the modifications had been discussed during the co-assessment task. The initial analysis identified several modifications: an increase in the number of words; the addition of cohesive devices, such as "so" and "also" to express result or consequence and reinforcement, respectively; an addition of items of information, that is, the inclusion of technical terms as "tilt", "Sun beams", "orbit" and "Earth's axis"; and an amelioration of items of information, for example the substitution of the term "Sun lights" for "Sun's rays". Once these modifications were identified, the discussions were examined, which allowed us to track down the moment at which the students talked about the aforementioned changes and tried to solve each other's doubts while reflecting together on each other's texts and class notes. It was observed that most of the modifications that were identified in the texts had been tackled during the task.

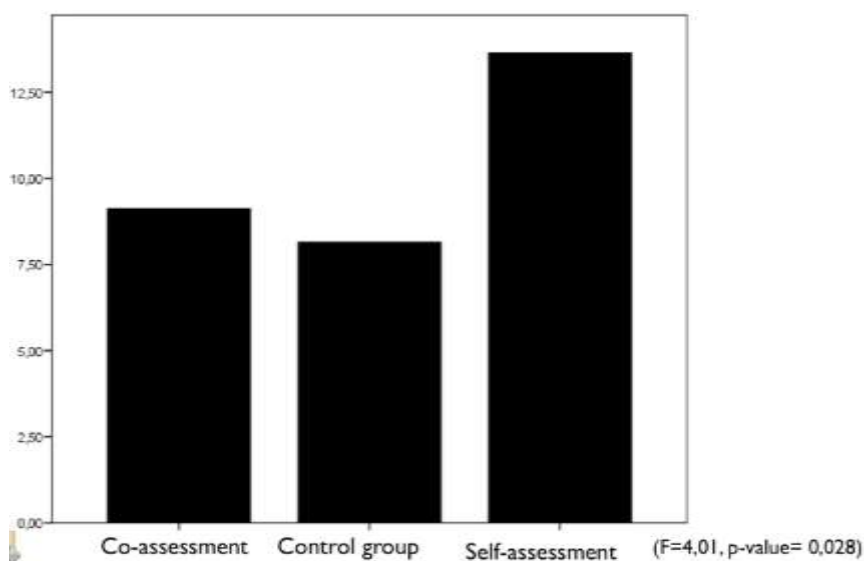
As for the quantitative analysis, three statistical analyses were performed in order to measure the influence of the co-assessment and self-assessment, as well as of the assessment rubric, on the different groups. All statistical analyses were carried out using ANCOVA and ANOVA tests, and Tukey post-hoc tests were performed afterwards. The dependent variables analyzed were the number of new concepts, the linguistic mark, the mark obtained in the subject, the number of words, the amount of concepts used well, the mark given by the professor, and the tests' score increase considering the first and second texts. The dependent variables that were statistically significant were the number of words, the number of concepts used well and the tests' score increase. Although we found numerous examples confirming that throughout the discussion students checked, revised and acquired concepts that they had not understood before, in this case the statistical analysis that was applied showed that the results of the self-assessment group were slightly better than those of the peer-assessment. However, there was a difference between the experimental groups and the control group.

Figure 1 reveals that, in terms of the number of words used, the self-assessment group had the highest value, followed by the co-assessment group and then the control group. In this case the dependable variable was measured using an ANOVA test in which the three groups were the factor.



**Figure 1: Number of words**

An ANCOVA test was performed to test the differences between the groups in terms of the concepts that students used correctly and the checklist score. In these analyses the considered co-variable was the mark that students had obtained in the subject. Once more, as it can be seen in Figure 2, results for the number of concepts used well showed that the group that carried out the self-assessment obtained higher results than the other two groups. It should be mentioned that the subject mark presented a positive significant relation with the dependent variable.



**Figure 2: Concepts well used**

Lastly, the score given to the texts using the checklist was again higher in the self-assessment group, and the subject mark also showed a positive significant relation with the dependent variable.

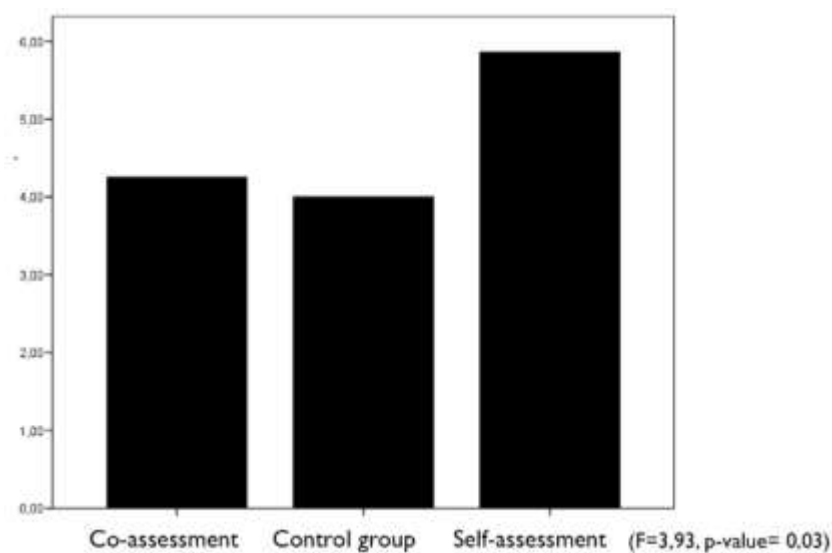


Figure 3: Tests' score increase

## Discussion and Conclusion

These findings suggest that the assessment task helped students improve their productions, both qualitatively and quantitatively. There is qualitative evidence of the students' improvement in their written productions. It can be seen that the topics that the students addressed during the assessment task were mostly solved during the peer-discussion and, as a consequence, their texts improved. However, it can also be observed through the quantitative analysis that the group that conducted the self-assessment activity obtained better results than the other two groups. Nevertheless, further research should consider the differences between the group that carried out the self-assessment task and the one that implemented the co-assessment task. It should be also taken into account that this work is an exploratory study and that the results cannot be generalized.

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# 32

## A Parallel Corpus Approach to Japanese Learners' Causality in Argumentative Writing

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### Introduction

This corpus-based research aims to discover the characteristics of the uses of causality made by Japanese learners in comparison with those of English native speakers. Xuelan and Kennedy (1992) indicate that causality is one of the most important items in the notional syllabus. It is instrumental to know which causative devices should be prioritized in teaching and to not use an intuition-based list of these devices. In order to provide feedback about students' argumentative writing, it benefits teachers of English writing to know how causality is conceived and used by learners. This is all the more important for Japanese learners because many Japanese learners are unpractised in logical argumentation (Oi, 2002).

However, previous studies of Japanese learners' English treat *because* and *so* as discourse markers (i.e., transition markers) instead of investigating the whole picture of their causality. For example, Kobayashi (2009) has found that *because* is one of the top three transitions for Japanese learners, who often use it in the sentence-initial position or in a fragment. In contrast to his form-focus analysis, the present research will also look at Japanese learners' semantic misuse of *because* and *so*, making the most of a parallel corpus which has direct correspondence between Japanese learners' essays and those corrected by native English speakers. More specifically, it addresses the research questions below:

1. What is characteristic of the causative devices used by Japanese learners?
2. What are the differences in the use of causative devices by Japanese learners and by English native speakers?

### Methodology

For this study, I employed NICE (the Nagoya Interlanguage Corpus of English), which was developed by Nagoya University (Sugiura, 2011) and

consists of argumentative essays about particular but general topics written by Japanese university students and native English speakers. Since NICE does not comprehensively encompass proficiency information such as the TOEIC score in the data on the Japanese students, I asked three English native speakers to rate essays based on the scoring guide for writing in ETS and summarized the scores thus obtained in three levels (Table 1), so as to observe different linguistic behaviours according to the students' levels of writing skill.

	Low JPN	Middle JPN	High JPN
<b>Tokens</b>	31,605	77,772	5,583
<b>Types</b>	2,551	4,194	1,183
<b>STTR</b>	31.91	32.92	36.60
<b>No. of texts</b>	112	218	12

**Table 1: Classification of the data into three levels**

In order to investigate the misuse and different uses of Japanese learners, I conducted a parallel corpus analysis as well as a conventional corpus-based analysis. In a parallel corpus approach, the Japanese learners' corpus is cross-referenced with a corpus which includes their essays corrected by English native speakers. I call this type of reference corpus the Native Speaker's Rewriting Corpus (henceforth, the NS Rewriting Corpus). To conduct this element of the study, I employed 62 professional editors of different nationalities with MA/PhD degrees and considerable experience in working for a proofreading company.

In order to make one-to-one correspondence between the Japanese learners' corpus and the NS Rewriting Corpus, I saved texts sentence by sentence, followed by rewritten texts and editors' comments, if any. A special software program, *ParacConc* (Barlow, 2004) was employed to search the NS Rewriting Corpus for particular words in parallel lines.

The quantitative analysis was carried out in two directions. First, the Japanese learners' corpus was used as a set of source data in *ParacConc* and as a target set of data in the NS Rewriting Corpus. Then the corresponding words were manually obtained and investigated in order to find any changes in relation to the Japanese learners' original expressions. This allowed us to see what learners' English should be, based on the rewriting by English native speakers'. For example, we can see that *so* in the JPN Corpus corresponds to *and so* in the NS Rewriting Corpus. Conversely, we could also use the NS Rewriting Corpus as a source text and the learners' corpus

as a target text. This enabled us to see the uses by English native speakers of causative devices that were not paralleled by Japanese learners.

Editors were instructed to follow my rewriting policy—to keep learners' original wording as long as it sounded “grammatical” and “natural”. As a result, the standard type token ratio of the NS Rewriting Corpus (34.77) is closer to that of Japanese learners (32.8) in comparison to the native speakers' original writing corpus (the NS Corpus) (41.89). Given this result, I employed the NS Corpus to examine overuse and underuse and the NS Rewriting Corpus to conduct the error analysis.

I searched for 60 causative devices, based on Flowerdew (1998) and McCarthy and O'Dell (2002, 2005), and manually investigated the results.

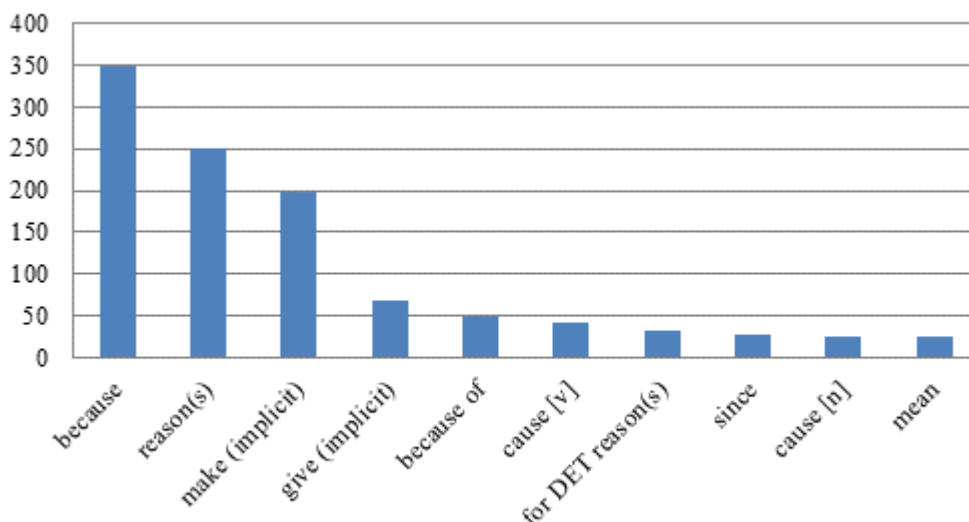
Causative devices (40 items)	Resultative devices (20 items)
(nouns) <i>reason, cause</i>	(nouns) <i>consequence(s), effect(s), impact(s), influence, outcome(s), result(s)</i>
(conjunctives) <i>as, because, for, since</i>	
(complex prepositions) <i>because of, due to, for DET. reason(s), in (the) light of, in view of</i>	(conjunctives) <i>so (that) ..., so that ...</i>
(preposition) <i>given</i>	(complex prepositions) <i>as a result of</i>
(verbs) <i>account for, attract, arouse, bring (about), cause, contribute to, create, drive, generate, give, induce, lead to, lie behind, make, mean, pose, precipitate, present, produce, provoke, result in, set off, stir up, spark off, trigger (off), underlie</i>	(adverbials) <i>as a consequence, as a result, consequently, so, therefore, thus</i>
(adjectival phrases) <i>responsible for</i>	(verbs) <i>arise from, ascribe to, attribute to, come from, result from, spring from</i>
(others) <i>that/this is why</i>	

**Table 2: Linguistic devices of causality**

Log-likelihood was chosen for the statistical comparison of significant causative/resultative devices.

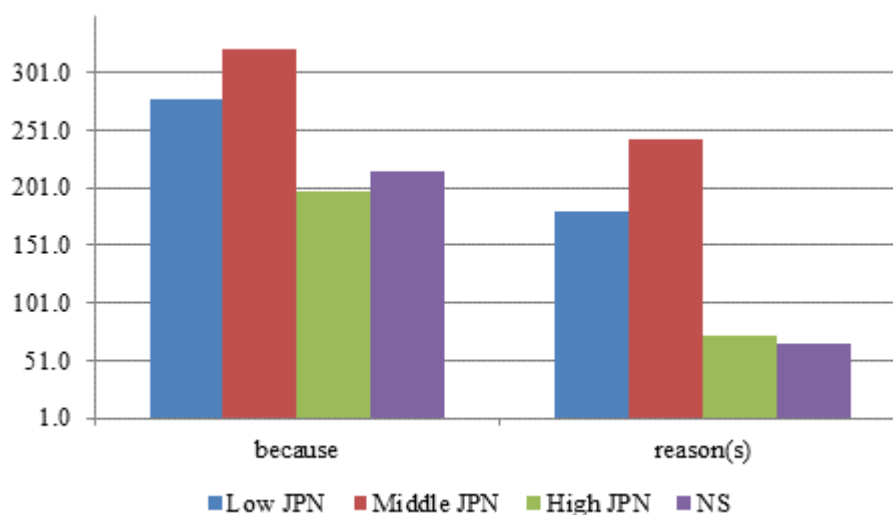
## Results

Figure 1 shows that the most frequent causative device used by Japanese learners is *because*, followed by *reason(s)*.



**Figure 1: 10 most frequent causative devices in JPN**

The findings from normalized frequencies (NF) of *because* and *reason(s)* indicated that the use of these items by Japanese learners at a high level and by native speakers is less frequent than the use made by low and middle level learners.



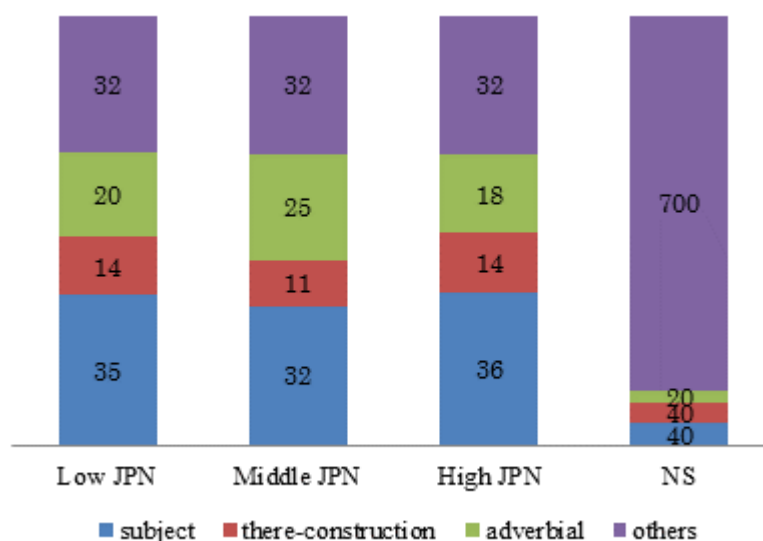
**Figure 2: Distribution of *because* and *reason(s)* (NF per 100,000)**

The statistical comparison based on the log-likelihood ratios supports these findings and indicates the underuse of *as* and causative verbs, as seen in the case of Hong Kong learners (Flowerdew, 1998).

	Overuse	Underuse
$p < .0001$	<i>reason(s)</i> , <i>give</i> (implicit), <i>make</i> (implicit), <i>because</i>	<i>as</i> , <i>create</i> , <i>generate</i>
$p < .001$	<i>mean</i> (implicit)	<i>as a result of</i> , <i>bring</i> (implicit), <i>lead to</i> , <i>in (the) light of</i> , <i>pose</i>
$p < .01$		<i>result in</i> , <i>attract</i> , <i>provoke</i> , <i>underlie</i> , <i>due to</i>
$p < .05$	<i>cause</i> [v], <i>because of</i> , <i>that/this</i> <i>is why</i> ...	

**Table 3: Statistical comparison of CAUSE between the JPN Corpus and the NS Corpus**

Qualitative analyses of the most frequent causative devices, *reason(s)* and *because*, were also conducted. The frequency of *reason(s)* is higher among low and middle level Japanese learners than among high level Japanese learners and native speakers. A thorough analysis of *reason(s)* reveals that the most common position of *reason(s)* among learners, in contrast to native speakers, is as subject.



**Figure 3: Percentages of the most common position of *reason(s)***

Most of the sentence-initial uses of *reason(s)* as a subject include the frame markers employed to sequence the text, such as *first* and *second* (*The **second reason** is that it would be no meaning for low intelligence people* [the JPN Corpus; Low-level].)

Hoey (1996) indicates that there are three functions of *reason(s)* when the structure “x. The reason is y” is chosen instead of “x because y”. The first

function is to make evaluations such as importance or relevance. The second is to sequence reasons. The third is to emphasize a particular item by thematizing it. Interestingly, Flowerdew (1998: 336) also indicates that the sentence-initial subject position is the most common one among Hong Kong learners but sees the unnatural emphasis as resulting from thematization (cf. Altenberg & Tapper, 1990: 80). Our parallel corpus reveals this to be considered misuse: the instance where *reasons* is a sentence-initial subject is rewritten as *because*.

- (1) a. ***The reasons*** I go to Nagoya Uni is famous and brand school and good for get a job. [the JPN Corpus; Middle-level]  
b. Thus, I go to Nagoya Uni ***because*** it is a famous and reputed school, and good for getting a job. [the NS Rewriting Corpus]

Now, I will discuss the findings concerning another of the most frequent causative markers, *because*. The parallel corpus research revealed that 12 instances of sentence-initial *because* were rephrased with resultative devices such as *and therefore* as in (2).

- (2) a. ***Because*** these classes are important for study of high school and university, students study so hard! [The JPN Corpus; Low-level]  
b. These classes are important for high school and university study, ***and therefore*** students so hard! [the NS Rewriting Corpus]

This pair of examples below relates to the ambiguity of *because*, which many previous studies have indicated. Compare (3a) and (3b).

- (3) a. The ground is wet because it has rained.  
b. It has rained, because the ground is wet.

In (3a), there is a direct causal relationship: the rain causes the wet ground. Sweetser (1990) calls this relation “Content Domain”, Crombie (1985) calls it “Reason-Result”, and Schiffrin (1985) calls it “Fact-based”. Meanwhile, in (3b), the speaker constructs an inferential relation between the two clauses: the speaker infers from the wet ground that it has rained. This interpretation of *because* is called the “Epistemic Domain” by Sweetser (1990), “Ground-Conclusion” by Crombie (1985), and the “Speaker-oriented” relation by Schiffrin (1985). Hirose (1991) and Schourup and Waida (1998) indicate that *because* in a Content Domain relation cannot occur in the sentence-initial position.

- (4) a. Because it has rained, the ground is wet.  
 b. \*Because the ground is wet, it has rained.

Similarly, in Example (2), the Japanese learners formed the Reason-Result relation with *because*, whereas to native English speakers this would actually be Ground-Conclusion. To put it another way, to some extent Japanese learners' concept of direct causal relation requires inference on the part of readers. Consequently, their *because* in the sentence-initial position is removed and is replaced by a resultative expression such as *and therefore*.

Finally, I come to resultative devices, with a focus on *so*. *So* is statistically outstanding, irrespective of its position, as a causative device for Japanese learners, as illustrated in Figure 4:

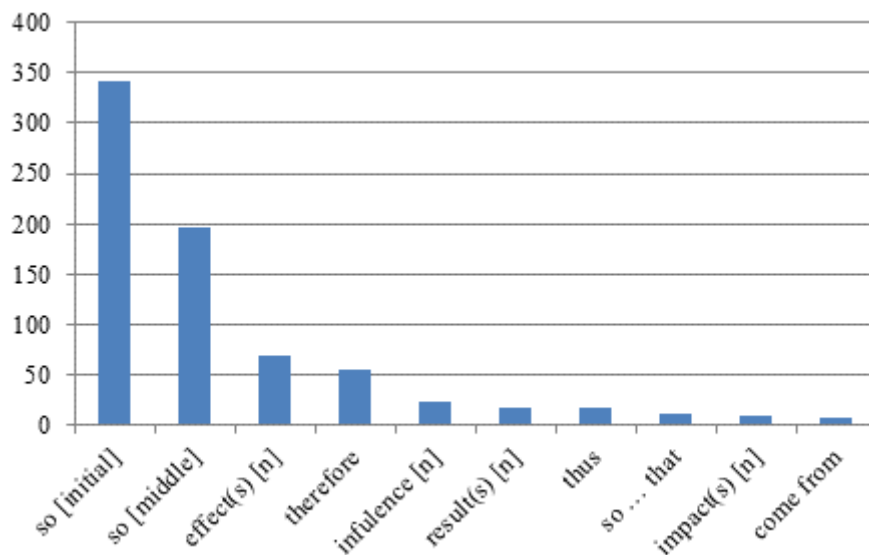


Figure 4: 10 most frequent resultative devices in JPN

As indicated in Figure 5, the frequency of *so* decreases proportionally as the writing levels go up.

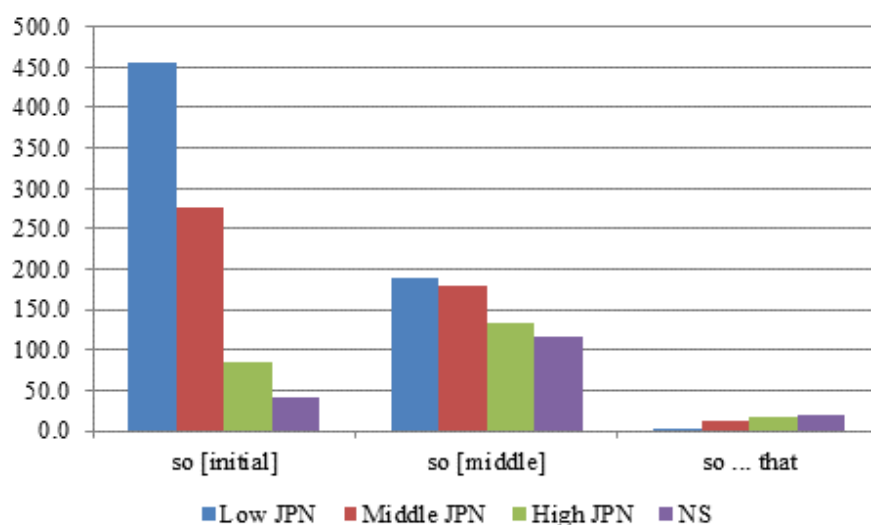


Figure 5: NF of *so* per 100,000 according to writing levels

These statistical findings suggest the overuse of *so* and *therefore* in contrast to the underuse of *as a result*. Overall, these findings agree with the research by Ying (2007) on learners in Hong Kong.

Overuse	Underuse
$p < .0001$ <i>so</i> [initial position], <i>therefore</i> , <i>as a result</i> <i>so (that)</i> [middle position]	
$p < .001$	<i>consequence(s)</i> , <i>arise from</i>
$p < .01$	
$p < .05$ <i>impact</i> [v], <i>effect(s)</i> [n]	<i>so ... that</i> , <i>influence</i> [v]

Table 4: Statistical comparison of RESULT from the JPN Corpus and the NS Corpus

The parallel corpus approach indicates that 79.8% of the replacements were the formal expression *therefore*, suggesting stylistic problem on the part of the learners. By contrast, the sentence-middle examples of *so* were replaced with *and so* (44.1%) or *and therefore* (10.2%), as seen in Examples (5-6). This means that the English native editors changed the learners' conjunction, *so*, into an adverb. In fact, *and therefore* is the second most frequent replacement.

- (5) a. Working part-time job has many good things, *so* I think students in university should work part-time job. (the JPN Corpus; Low-level)
- b. Working part time has many advantages, *and so* I think that students in the university should work part-time. (the NS Rewriting Corpus)



- (6) a. I want to get a lot of money *so* I work hard on September. (the JPN Corpus; Low-level)  
b. I want to earn a lot, *and therefore*, I work hard in September. (the NS Rewriting Corpus)

This change in the part of speech is significant. Compare the following two sentences (Fraser, 1993):

- (7) a. John was sick. *So* don't expect him.  
b. John was sick, *so* he went to bed.

According to Fraser (1993: 6), the adverb *so* in (7a) functions as a discourse marker to indicate a “consequent relationship”: the advice not to expect John is understood on the grounds that John is sick. In contrast, the conjunction *so*, in (7b) forms the “compound propositional content”: John was sick, which caused him to go to bed. This distinction is the same as that between Epistemic Domain and Content Domain, which we observed in regard to *because*. *So* as a conjunction does not completely exclude an interpretation of Ground-Conclusion (Epistemic Domain), but *so* as an adverb allows us to form a Ground-Conclusion relation more easily. The problem is that Japanese learners formed a direct cause-result relation with *so* where the epistemic reasoning was more appropriate, as the native rewriting indicated. In fact, when the English native editors rewrote a conjunction *so* as an adverb, they added epistemic, evaluative expressions such as *I think* and *I enjoy* following *and so*.

## Conclusions

Our research found that Japanese learners overuse *reason(s)*, *because*, and *so*. The qualitative analyses indicated that the most common position of *reason(s)* was as the subject, especially as sequencing markers, which occasionally resulted in an inappropriate thematic emphasis. The analysis of our parallel texts revealed the removal of certain *because*-clauses, leading to resultative manifestation and the change of part of speech for *so* from a conjunction to an adverb—from the Reason-Result relation to Ground-Conclusion, which is supported by the preceding *and* and its replacement, such as *therefore*. Thus, Japanese learners face a challenge with epistemic reasoning.

The findings reveal not only the differences between Japanese learners and English native speakers, but also the former's similarities to Hong Kong and

mainland Chinese students. We should consider whether our findings are a general feature of interlanguage or can be attributed to L1 transfer, as there are similar equivalent expressions of *so* in Japanese and Chinese speech. Moreover, our methodology offers a new approach to learners' English. The traditional corpus approach tells us what learner English is like, or what is non-native-like in learners' English. In contrast, our parallel corpus approach tells us how learners' English mistakes are corrected and inform us of learners' errors in detail.

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# 33

## Exploring social patterns of actions in yes/no questions-responses: From practice of form to real-life consequences

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### Introduction

‘Interaction’ has been a buzzword in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research, communicative based language teaching and institutional talk of various kinds for many years. Despite widespread acknowledgment of its importance in accomplishing talk, institutional practitioners (e.g., doctors, interviewers and teachers) still seek ideas to enhance two-way communication between themselves and their co-participants (e.g., patients, clients, students).

What should help to improve spoken interactional discourse practice is the study of the sequential organization of orderly turn taking. By examining samples of talk on a turn by turn basis, we begin to see how questions are designed for the recipients to provide information. The form of the inquiry sets up expectations. At the same time, actions taken display a speaker’s orientation and stance to the topic-in-progress. Related actions are located in ensuing turns. For example, the institutional use of yes/no interrogatives is sequentially tied to anticipated conformity of the grammatical form of the response. Here is a potentially rich site for exploring a social pattern of action, both the form and the consequence.

The purpose of this study is to add an interactional dimension to understanding language use in an EFL setting (Japan) and also to connect classroom interactions to other types of institutional talk that share a similar conversational use of yes/no questions. Co-accomplishment of such talk depends to a large extent on how recipients respond. So not the question alone, but also the response to it connects turns and moves the interaction forward.

This attention to the interactional ties between turns stands in sharp contrast with the tidy pedagogic illustrations of the question-answer pattern traditionally presented to language learners in textbooks and in class. In real-

life situations, responses do not necessarily follow the form of the question. Thus, the value of examining this commonly used social pattern of action is in looking beyond the presentation of grammar and the practice of the form.

Instead of viewing language learning as separate from language use, this paper, through the application of conversation analysis (CA), will highlight some of the features of talk-in-interaction that are shared across institutional discourse contexts. I build on previous work done by CA informed language educators such as Wong (2000), Richards (2006), Kasper (2009) and Firth (2009) who delve into the details of second language use in social interactions. Seen from this perspective, CA can contribute as ‘an analytical tool’ to professional development of teacher-researchers by pointing out how prior turns in both content and form shape possible choices for next turn actions.

The growing literature in CA shows similar use of yes/no questions in a variety of institutional settings that includes classroom discourse. The connection between classroom interactions and other institutional interactions was established early on with one of the landmark studies in discourse analysis being the study of classroom interactions by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975). Put further in perspective, Peräkylä (2011) mentions a link between classroom actions taken to move the talk forward and performances of institutional tasks that occur in other fields such as research interviews and psychoanalysis.

Second language users have studied the grammar of matching the form of the answer with the question, but they have far less knowledge of whether respondents in non-pedagogic settings always provide answers that conform to the grammatical form of the question. I will refer to basic turn organizational concepts from CA such as ‘adjacency pairs’, ‘recipient design’ and ‘preference’ to examine how participants co-construct talk through yes/no questions *and* responses. (See Wong and Waring, 2010, for an introduction to CA for language teachers and Raymond, 2003, for the seminal study on yes/no interrogatives and responses).

In many EFL classrooms in Japan (and possibly elsewhere) textbooks and classroom activities primarily focus on grammatical patterns which will be tested. However, greater attention is now being paid to ‘globalization’ and people who can communicate in English<sup>18</sup>. There is interest in how the target

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<sup>18</sup> In Japan, this national initiative to re-invigorate the educational system in universities is referred to as ‘*Global Jinzai*’ or human resources with global communicative skills.

language is actually used to co-accomplish tasks and talk. When thinking of practical application and a shift away from solely studying *about* the language, the following questions emerge.

- (1) How can the forms studied in school actually be put to practical use (i.e., to accomplish something)?
- (2) What are some of the considerations and consequences of the actions taken (e.g., questions and answers) for developing the talk-in-interaction?
- (3) What can teacher-analysts learn about the organization of interactions from student talk?
- (4) Most fundamentally, is there still something to be learned by re-examining yes/no questions?

### Data and analysis

I revisit one of the most basic forms taught and practiced in junior high school (yes/no questions) because there is little mention of the interactional features and implications. For example, students learn that the form of the answer (e.g., ‘Yes, I am’.) not only answers the question, but also acknowledges the form of the question (‘Are you a student?’). This matching or conjugation of forms (subject pronouns and verbs) is strictly observed on tests and in class. With respect for this background, I use the adjacency pairing of a yes/no question and response as a jumping off point to examine form *and* interaction in a class activity and then in two other institutional settings – doctor-patient talk and a U.S. congressional hearing. All these examples of ‘naturally occurring’ yes/no questions and responses draw attention to how form shapes meaning and response. The form of the subsequent action can have social consequences far beyond compliance with the prescribed response pattern.

### Junior High School English

In the first setting, junior high school students practice yes/no questions in a game, ‘20 Questions’, by asking a person a series of questions (up to 20) to find out what kind of animal he/she is. An illustration based on the grammatical patterns used in the typical playing of the game is shown below<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> The sentences are a composite sample based on my observations and notes of students playing the game and also on examples in the *New Horizon* textbook series at the time when I was teaching junior high school students.

Can you run fast? Yes, I can.  
Are you big? No, I'm not.  
Are you from Africa? No, I'm not.  
Do you have long ears? Yes, I do.  
Do you eat carrots? Yes, I do.  
Are you a rabbit? Yes, I am.

When teaching, learning and practicing yes/no questions-answers, clear grammatical alignment of verbs and subject is emphasized. Rules for making questions and answering them are reinforced through class activities and error correction. In a past junior high school textbook, once the form is presented in a dialogue, the pattern is practiced through examples where the content and situation are unrelated.

Are you good at English?  
Do you like hamburgers?  
Can you play the guitar?

In contrast, in '20 Questions' question and answer pairs are context specific as they build on each other and develop logically and sequentially toward an outcome. Furthermore, the questions in the game are recipient designed to elicit the 'preferred' answer, 'yes', which serves as feedback in thinking of the next question or making a guess.

### **University students playing '20 questions'**

In a second related setting which grew out of the first one, university students play the same game, but this time to practice extending talk through question-answer pairs of turns. The teacher's hope is that this activity helps students speak more fluently in interactions with others by providing a clear structure for turn taking as well as giving a clear purpose for talking to each other: gather enough information to make an educated guess at the answer. The excerpt below comes from a collection of 15 recordings of seminar students (in a discussion skills class) who played this game as a weekly warm-up activity. In this case, speaker A is thinking of a food. (NB: Transcript symbols are explained at the end of this paper).

- 1 Q: People do people in Kansai eat (.) eat you?
- 2 A: °Eh:h° mm ((hands on head)) ah: yes.
- 3 ((Laughter/repetition from audience/players))
- 4 (5.5)
- 5 Q: Do your taste (2.5) do your taste vary (.) from



- 6        each to area (1.0) fro[m each area?  
7     A:                                  [Ah: ((shaking head))  
8        maybe same ((covers mouth)).

Spoken segments are intertwined with pauses and marked body language (lines 2, 7 and 8). Other actions noticed throughout the collection include looking away, tightening of muscles and shifting posture. The recipients of questions often displayed hesitation to commit to a clear-cut answer. As for the inquirers, there were delays in asking and completing the next question (lines 4, 5 and 6). Possibly there is concern and peer pressure not only on respondents to give 'helpful' answers (not misleading ones), but also on those who ask questions to elicit enough 'yes' answers to find the answer.

Yes/no questions *and* responses may seem ‘easy’ when only form is considered. However, once real consequences are considered in terms of what to say next, the practice immediately becomes more complicated. There is a general pragmatic rule that ‘yes’ is said without delay while ‘no’ is often delayed. Although these students possess sufficient knowledge of the target language to play the game and have experience in extended talk in other classes, they show hesitation and delay in both asking and answering yes/no questions. So besides knowing enough language, learners face other problems.

One way to explore this issue is to first take notice of some details of how talk outside the classroom occurs. Then once some features are identified we can discuss how awareness of them can contribute to professional development of practitioners.

## Doctor-patient talk

In a third setting, a conversation between a doctor and patient shows how yes/no questions can be designed to pursue a particular agenda, getting enough information to make a diagnosis. Raymond (2003) points out that yes/no interrogatives are the most common form of inquiry in doctor-patient primary care talk. What connects the game to the consultation below is not only the grammatical pattern, but also the inquirer's pursuit of information to draw conclusions based on yes/no answers.

- 1 D: Does that hurt right there,  
2 (0.5)  
3 P: Mm: It doesn't uhm I can feel it. [But it's not real=  
4 D: [An-

- 5 P: =painful  
6 D: Can I reproduce your pain by pushing.  
7 (0.5)  
8 D: Is there any spot here that when I: push on it bo:y that just  
9 rea:lly kills ya.  
10 P: No.  
11 (0.2)  
12 D: Deeper?

*Shoulder Pain (Raymond, 2003/2006, p. 953/p. 124-125)*

An ever present interactional challenge for doctors is to follow a standard protocol to gather the same ‘range of information’ for all patients without sacrificing individual ‘rapport’ (Raymond, 2006). What is further revealed is the conversational work recipients of the question do. They have to wait for the question (and its form) before choosing ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Patients (as we see above in lines 3 and 5) have their own concerns and questions (not to mention their own way to describe their discomfort), but they defer to the doctor’s questions and only speak when spoken to.

Keeping in mind that the form of the question can set boundaries for the response, we look at a final example where yes/no questions are used to determine the suitability of a political candidate for a powerful position.

### **U.S. Senate Hearing**

This fourth setting uncovers further interactional complexity. Yes/no questions are commonly used to bring an issue to the surface by pursuing an explicit yes/no answer. In turn, recipients may resist conforming to the grammatical form of the question.

Earlier in the exchange below, John McCain, a member of the hearing committee asked Chuck Hagel, nominee for the position of U.S. Secretary of Defense, if he ever made a remark comparing the invasion of Iraq with (the mistake of) going into Vietnam. Hagel does not answer the question with either ‘yes’ or ‘no’. Then McCain (after further unsuccessful attempts to get such an answer) states for the record Hagel’s refusal. At this point, McCain invites Hagel to say whatever he wants.

- 1 McCain: Now please go ahead  
2 Hagel: Well eh if you um would like me to explain (.) ah  
3 why:=  
4 McCain: =I would actually like an answer yes or no.

- 5 Hagel: Well I'm not going to give you yes or no. I think  
6 McCain: Okay  
7 Hagel: it's far more complicated than that as I've already said  
8 my answer is (.) I'll defer that judgment to history.

In a political hearing like the medical encounter and other types of institutional talk such as broadcast news interviews where these interactions 'are very largely done as responses to questioning' (Heritage and Roth, 1995, p. 1), the recipient of the questions must wait for the question before speaking. McCain asks (in an earlier portion of the talk) what he terms 'a pretty straightforward question'; just say 'yes' or 'no'. Considering the way the question is worded, a clear cut answer could be incriminating without additional explanation. There are ramifications for the country's standing and reputation as well as for his career by how he chooses to respond. As Hagel puts it, 'I'm not going to answer yes or no; it's more complicated than that'.

His explanation nicely summarizes my main argument about the potential sensitivity of answering a yes/no question once we see possible options and consequences. Despite the seemingly simple and straightforward proposition the form of yes/no questions makes (i.e., just choose one or the other), what is actually being sought is often more complicated. The recipient design of the question for 'preferred' agreement may be seen as ill-fitted for what the respondent wants to say and how to say it. There is awareness that a 'yes' or 'no' is open to speculation as well as further questioning.

## Conclusion

Even though the examples of talk outside the classroom were fluent in turn taking and articulation, both the doctor and senator did not obtain the confirmation sought. In the classroom example, the turn-taking cycle of 'question, answer and then next question' was drawn out, but eventually the players guessed correctly. What ultimately connect these examples to each other are the common use of yes/no questions in an attempt to accomplish the purpose of the talk: getting information to make an informed decision. So while a gloss conclusion may focus on how the student talk is much less fluent (and thus in need of more practice and instruction), a deeper conclusion would recognize regardless of language proficiency, yes/no questions restrict responses in a similar way. Such questions are recipient designed for a 'pretty straightforward' answer. However, the issue remains whether simply answering the question in a matching form accurately represents what respondents truly know or are willing to disclose.

What we begin to notice is that answering ‘yes’ or ‘no’ alone does not provide all the information needed to make a decision. It typically confirms or disconfirms the question asked. However, yes/no questions can also be recipient designed to elicit further information. See Nakamura (2010) for examples that link teacher-student talk to other types of institutional talk such as counseling (Hutchby, 2007) where elicitation techniques are important. Yes/no questions across types of institutional talk can serve as prompts and ‘exploratory probes’ (Heritage, 1985) when recipients are encouraged to elaborate.

Respondents in all of the examples above experience firsthand how yes/no questions not only ask for answers that conform to the form of the question, but also ask the recipients to take an epistemic stance which is open to judgment. Regardless of whether they are guessing what animal or food the student is, trying to find out the location and type of pain or trying to force the nominee to acknowledge a past remark, these inquirers are in pursuit of a certain answer so they can make an informed decision.

Forms of the interactions are not only available for studying for tests, but also for using in our daily social encounters. Ultimately the true value of a study of a discourse practice comes from its practical application and usefulness to speakers in future encounters. So what can we say about yes/no questions and responses? While the forms of yes/no questions-responses seem simple and straightforward, the real-life use of this form can have far reaching consequences beyond agreeing or disagreeing with the proposal put forward. Questions have a form (often with a preferred reply in mind), but the answers might not follow it. The reason may be due to the inadequacy or inappropriateness of the question to provide a platform for the answer that the recipient of the question wants to give. It should be mentioned that once an answer is given, it is publicly available for interpretation beyond what the respondent may have intended.

By looking at how yes/no questions and answers were used in ‘20 Questions’, the doctor-patient talk and the senate hearing in terms of the co-management of talk-in-interaction and features noticed, we can make a list of some observations. These notes can serve as talking points for further discussion for professional development.

- (1) A distinct feature of yes/no questions is that the bulk of the conversational work is done by the inquirer: Hypothesis building that

seeks confirmation. Complications can and do arise when a quick and simple 'yes' is not given.

- (2) Yes/no questions are generally designed for recipients to give some form of 'yes'. This is the 'preferred' form as it agrees with the question content. On the other hand, 'dispreferred' responses can range from keeping to form, but giving a negative reply to giving an answer that does not make a choice between 'yes' or 'no'.
- (3) The students in '20 Questions' did not generally follow the normative pattern of saying 'yes' without delay. In the data, 'yes' *and* 'no' answers were preceded by similar embodied actions suggesting hesitation to make a choice.
- (4) The McCain-Hagel talk encounters a conversational roadblock: The inquirer insists on 'yes' or 'no', however, the respondent refuses to choose. He would rather explain on his own terms. What should be done to mediate this impasse?
- (5) There can be a difference between giving an answer in a form that confirms the question or proposition and giving an explanation that adds more than what was asked. What does the asker want to know? What does the respondent want to say? Sequentially and contextually co-participants face an ongoing task to establish mutually understood orientation of what they are talking about and how they will accomplish it.
- (6) With heightened awareness of the inferential power of responses to yes/no questions, greater agency in social actions should be possible. The recipient is not necessarily bound to only saying 'yes' or 'no' as we saw in the senate hearing example. There is a real danger that the choice made can lead others to oversimplify or even misunderstand one's intended idea.

Speakers in different settings face a common spoken discourse challenge of matching forms of questions and answers while also trying to co-accomplish the purpose of the talk. Checking and obtaining information to make a decision is only part of the social interaction. The other part involves recipients making a choice. These choices can go beyond expected conformity to the grammar. Once we decide to change the form, we also change the action.

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## Transcript symbols

(See Wong and Waring, 2010, for a more complete list).

- |        |   |
|--------|---|
| (.)    | a micro pause   |
| ◦Eh:h◦ | relatively softer in volume than usual talk                     |
| ah:    | stretched sound   |
| (2.5)  | silence of 2.5 seconds  |
| [      | overlap or simultaneous speech                                  |
| Mm:    | stretched sound with flat intonation                            |
| =      | latched with another turn without the usual pause between turns |
| An-    | cut off   |
| (( ))  | additional information  |

# 34

## Children's understandings of different writing systems and scripts: Korean written in the Hangul alphabet, and English written in the Roman alphabet

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### Introduction

Although many children become literate within an environment in which different language systems exist, there is still little research on what children know about different writing systems and how they understand and develop them when they are learning more than one alongside each other. This paper investigates how Korean EFL children understand two different scripts: The Korean alphabet Hangul and the Roman alphabet used for English.

Both Hangul and English are written using alphabetic scripts and share some characteristics, but they have different orthographic rules. One of the unique features of Hangul is the fact that Hangul is the alphabet in which the shapes of symbols reflect the articulation of sounds. Twenty-four alphabet letters: 14 consonants and 10 vowels were not designed separately but most letters were created based on a number of basic letters which represent the shape of the articulators pronouncing the consonants (Lee & Ramsey, 2000). These basic letters include ‘ㄱ’ /g/, ‘ㄴ’ /n/, ‘ㄷ’ /s/, ‘ㅁ’ /m/, ‘ㅇ’ /ng/, and Hangul starts with these five basic symbols to represent 14 single and 5 double consonants. For example, ‘ㄱ’ represents the shape of the root of the tongue blocking the throat pronouncing /g/ while ‘ㅁ’, which looks like a small square, was created in imitation of a closed mouth pronouncing /m/ (Lee & Ramsey, 2000).

Hangul is a phonemically based alphabetic script consisting of vowels and consonants, but it has always been written in syllable blocks with the same size as a Chinese character, unlike other alphabetic orthographies which are written in a row and side by side. For instance, three alphabetic symbols of a consonant, ‘ㄷ’ /s/, another consonant ‘ㄴ’ /n/ and a vowel, ‘ㅏ’ /a/ are arranged together within the syllable ‘산’ /san/, (which means ‘mountain’).

Individual alphabet letters are never used alone rather, between two and four alphabet symbols are combined together to form a block, which represents a syllable (Sohn, 1999; Taylor & Taylor, 1983).

Another characteristic of Hangul is that there is a close match between letters and sounds (i.e. shallow orthography) whereas English has a phonologically irregular orthography, sometimes referred to as ‘deep’ orthography (Koda, 1999). In Hangul, 14 basic consonants and 10 basic vowels are represented unambiguously as Table 1 shows. Either singly or in combination, these basic letters represent 40 distinctive sounds of Hangul including 8 simple vowels, 19 consonants, and 13 diphthongs (Lee, 2001).

14 basic consonants	ㄱ	ㄴ	ㄷ	ㄹ	ㅁ	ㅂ	ㅅ	ㅇ	ㄺ	ㄻ	ㅋ	ㅌ	ㅍ	ㅎ
	/g/	/n/	/d/	/l/	/m/	/b/	/s/	/ng/	/dʒ/	/tʃ/	/k/	/t/	/p/	/h/
10 basic vowels	ㅏ	ㅑ	ㅓ	ㅕ	ㅡ	ㅣ	ㅗ	ㅛ	ㅜ	ㅠ				
	/a/	/ə/	/o/	/u/	/eu/	/i/	/ya/	/yə/	/yo/	/yu/				

**Table 1: 14 basic consonants and 10 basic vowels in Hangul**

Although “the unique feature of the Korean Hangul orthographic system forms an excellent comparison with other Roman alphabetic systems in studying bilingual literacy acquisition” (Wang, Park & Lee, 2006, p.150), no in-depth study has yet examined whether Korean young children who are learning Hangul and English simultaneously understand orthographic similarities and differences between the two scripts. Therefore, this study aims to explore literacy knowledge and skills in Hangul and English demonstrated by Korean EFL children, and to find out whether they understand orthographic principles between two different writing systems. This includes exploring comparisons between writing in Hangul and in English, and finding out which features of each script children consider to be important. My research questions are:

- What knowledge of literacy do children demonstrate in Hangul and English?
- What literacy skills do they demonstrate in Hangul and English?
- Do children have an understanding of the similarities and differences between Hangul and English?
  - If so, what understandings do they have?
  - Do children make comparisons between the two scripts?
  - Which features of each script are considered to be important by children?



## Methodology

I used a peer teaching method in which tutor-children taught literacy in both Hangul and English to tutee-children. The aim was to provide a child-directed context in which children could display and express their knowledge, skills, experiences, and thinking about different writing systems whilst engaged in literacy activities. 10 Korean preschool children who were studying English as a foreign language at a private English preschool located in Seoul, South Korea participated. 5 pairs (pair A, B, C, D, E) were formed, with each pair having a tutor child aged 6, and a pupil aged 5. The oldest children who had the maximum experiences of learning Hangul and English in the preschool were chosen as tutor children, and the tutee children were the youngest children who had the minimum experiences of learning both languages in order to give the tutor children the maximum need to explain when teaching Hangul and English.

Each tutor child led three different peer-teaching sessions, and each session lasted 20 minutes on average. Tutor children used separate materials for Hangul and English, and they chose their own texts brought from their homes or classrooms as a teaching resource. Each pair of children had a chance to meet and discuss their teaching and learning before each session began, and all aspects of their teaching and learning were encouraged and considered significant. Both tutor and tutee children were allowed to speak in Korean or English during peer teaching, in order not to restrict their ability to communicate. I observed the whole process of each session, including tutor children's verbal explanation on each script, their expressions in their own words, and written texts produced by children during the session, which may convey their interpretation. The sessions were recorded with a hand-held digital video camera.

After each session, I interviewed the tutor children to elicit observable data, and to collect other data that could not be gathered from observing the sessions. All the teaching materials they used and the written texts produced during the peer teaching were displayed on the table so that the materials could remind each tutor child of their teaching. The interviews lasted approximately 10 minutes, and each session was also video recorded. Their L1 (Korean) was used to avoid any confusion caused by language barriers for the interviews.

## Findings

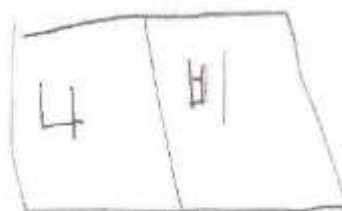
The analysis shows a variety of ways in which children understood the principles underlying Hangul and English. The key characteristic of Hangul,

which differentiates it from English, is its visual feature, and the data revealed that the participant children seemed to understand this difference. For example, KH (pseudonym) who acted as a tutor in pair A demonstrated her understanding of an orthographic difference between two languages with the use of boxes. When she asked her tutee, YJ to write ‘나비’ (butterfly) during the peer teaching, she gave YJ two blocks on the paper as Extract 1 and Figure 1 present below.

KH	(draws one rectangle on the paper, and then draws the vertical line to split the rectangle in half, to make two squares) Can you write 나비 (butterfly) here? 나비 (butterfly)?
YJ	(nods)
KH	(points at the first block) 나, (points at the second block) 비. Write this way. One blank is for 나, and the other one is for 비.

(in Korean)

**Extract 1: Observation data from pair A (the use of boxes)**



**Figure 1: Written text produced by YJ**

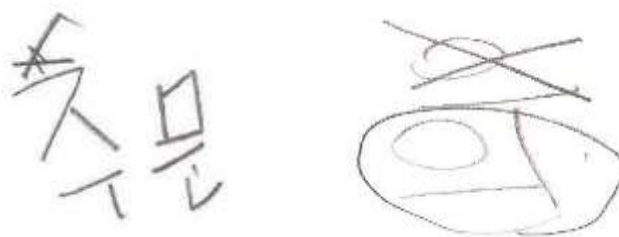
As the examples show, KH’s use of boxes when teaching Hangul writing may illustrate two points: the fact that Hangul is box-shaped, and each box itself is a syllable. In the case of ‘나비’ (butterfly), two different syllable blocks, ‘나’ and ‘비’ make the word, ‘나비’. KH showed her awareness of its syllabic feature by saying ‘one blank is for 나, and the other one is for 비’ along with her awareness of the visual aspect of Hangul by using blocks. During the interview session, when she was asked about her use of boxes only for Hangul, she explained further about the difference between Hangul and English by saying ‘for English, I need to use (each box) for each letter...but for Hangul... I need only a few boxes’. It seems likely that KH was aware that English alphabet letters cannot be put together in one box like Hangul alphabets. Similarly, HB who was a tutor child in pair C was able to compare the length of words between Hangul and English, showing her understanding of Roman alphabet English which is written in a row, and the formation of a syllable block in Hangul. As Figure 2 shows, she illustrated that Hangul has fewer longer words by comparing an English word

‘elementary school’ to a Hangul word ‘똥’, which means ‘poo’. She wrote these two words alongside each other and said ‘Hangul is easier... because it doesn’t have many long words’.



**Figure 2: Written text produced by HB**

One of the characteristics of Hangul is that a small stroke can change a word into a different one which stands for a different meaning. This is also found in a logographic script such as Chinese. For example, a word ‘자다’ (sleep) can be ‘차다’ (cold) with a small stroke, ‘ ’. Regarding this feature of Hangul, a tutor child, SB in pair D expressed her idea during the interview session by saying ‘when we write Hangul, we need to write well’. Children’s teaching of Hangul writing involves their attention to an individual stroke, and it was occasionally demonstrated when they were teaching similar looking words. For example, when KH was showing how to write ‘주’, she explained that it is different from ‘추’, which is visually similar to ‘주’ with an emphasis on a small stroke. She added a stroke ‘ ’ onto ‘ㅈ’ and crossed it out by saying, ‘you should not put this here’. In a similar way, when she was teaching ‘의’ as in ‘의자’ (chair), she also showed a similar looking letter, ‘으’ along with ‘의’. After she showed how to write ‘의’, she wrote ‘으’ above and crossed it out, saying ‘not 으 but 의’. Figure 3 below shows the examples of KH’s written texts when teaching ‘주’ and ‘의’, which seem to demonstrate her perception of a difference derived from a small stroke.



**Figure 3: Written text produced by KH**

Another finding was that the children recognized the irregular sound-letter relationship in English. When I asked the tutor children about their experiences in learning Hangul and English so far during the interview sessions, some of the children answered that English is more difficult than

Hangul because of its pronunciation. For example, a tutor child, YE in pair E wrote 'fairy' on the paper as one example of difficult English words. She pointed at 'y' as in 'fairy', saying 'y made me difficult'. Another tutor child SB in pair D also said she had some difficult English words which had to be carefully pronounced. She gave me an example word 'sky' by saying 'i sometimes becomes y', which means that the letter 'y' has two different sounds such as 'y' /ai/ as in 'sky' and 'y' /i/ as in 'heavy'.

Children's literacy knowledge and skills in each script were also presented in their peer teaching sessions. When KH in pair A taught English in her first session, she asked her tutee not to forget to write a full stop and a comma although she didn't seem to know the names of each mark exactly. For example, KH called a full stop as 'dot' when asking her tutee to add it at the end of a sentence. Her teaching of a comma was shown on many occasions in her second session when she read aloud a story written in Hangul. She often pointed out a comma, and let her tutee YJ notice it by saying 'take a break'. Along with a full stop and a comma, her teaching also focused on a question mark as shown in the extract below.

<i>KH</i>	<i>(draws a circle around a question mark on the page) Do you know what this is? (writes a question mark on the paper)</i>
<i>YJ</i>	<i>I don't know.</i>
<i>KH</i>	<i>Hmm.. when you ask "do you have this?" to your friend, Sally..</i>
<i>YJ</i>	<i>Yes.</i>
<i>KH</i>	<i>(writes a question mark again on the paper) then you do like this here. Do you understand?</i>

(in Korean)

**Extract 2: Observation data from pair A (punctuation marks)**

As the extract shows above, KH explained when a question mark is used in a sentence by giving her tutee an example sentence. When she was asked about the punctuation marks in the following interview session, she explained further about a quotation mark as Extract 3 shows.

<i>R</i>	<i>(points at the full stop) What is this?</i>
<i>KH</i>	<i>The thing we use to end (a sentence).</i>
<i>R</i>	<i>A full stop at the end (of a sentence). And?</i>
<i>KH</i>	<i>(points at the comma) this one?</i>
<i>R</i>	<i>Yes.</i>
<i>KH</i>	<i>The thing we use to take a break.</i>

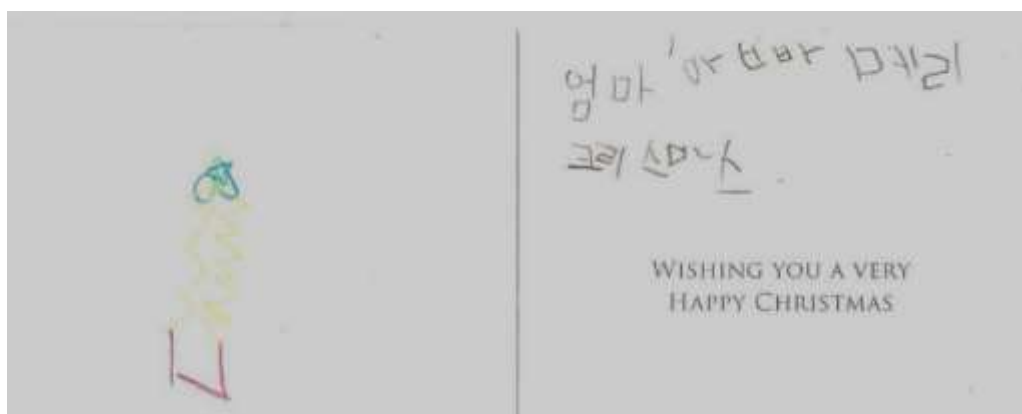
R	<i>A comma, which is used when taking a break. Anything else?</i>
KH	<i>Hmm... (points at the quotation marks) when we say</i>
R	<i>The quotation marks, which are used when saying.</i>

(in Korean)

**Extract 3: Interview data from pair A (punctuation marks)**

These examples derived from KH's teaching of punctuations marks indicate that she was trying to explain the roles of punctuation marks whilst pointing out each mark in a sentence at certain necessary points. Her use of the expressions, 'take a break', 'the thing we use to end', 'when we say' seemed to show her literacy knowledge of the punctuation marks and her interpretation of their roles in a sentence, although she didn't give me the exact names of each mark.

The data also showed that the children were aware of different types of text, and that they were able to identify the main points in a text. YE in pair E used a Christmas card for her Hangul teaching, and she explained to her tutee HH what a card is by saying, 'You can write some messages to your mom and dad here'. As Figure 4 shows, she asked HH to write a message in Hangul above the message written in English on the right page of the card, and then asked him to draw a picture on the left page. With YE's help, HH wrote his own Christmas message, '엄마 아빠 메리 크리스마스', which means 'Mom and Dad, merry Christmas' along with a picture of a Christmas tree. During the interview session, YE defined Christmas as 'it is the day when I can receive a gift', 'the day when Santa comes', and 'the day when the snow comes'. I found that she used her literacy knowledge and skills of text type differentiation (card) as well as her background knowledge of the topic (Christmas) during her teaching.



**Figure 4: Christmas card produced by HH**

Similarly, another tutor child, KH in pair A also demonstrated her knowledge of a text structure on a story page. After KH read a story with YJ, she asked YJ to choose one sentence in a story, and write it down on the piece of paper. When her tutee was about to begin her writing, KH asked YJ to draw a picture first on the paper by saying, 'firstly, draw a picture here' pointing to the bottom of the page. Then she said 'then you will write here' pointing to the top margin of the page, with the emphasis on the location. Figure 5 below shows the written text produced by YJ, following her tutor's instruction. This shows her knowledge of a text organization of a story page such as an appropriate amount of writing and an illustration underneath.



**Figure 5: Story page produced by YJ**

The findings from this paper related to children's literacy knowledge, skills, and understandings of scripts shed light on children's early script learning and the literacy development of EFL children who deal with different writing systems.

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# 35

## Making Sense of Foreign Language Teaching Policy for Japanese Senior High Schools from a Discourse-Ethnographic Critical Perspective

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### Background

Since 1989, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) has consistently tried to make ‘improvements’ to foreign language teaching in the school system, in which ‘English’ has predominated as the choice of target language. This strategy appears to be shifting the teaching approach from the traditional method of using Japanese translation (*yakudoku*) to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Despite these governmental efforts, the situation has remained largely unchanged for over twenty years, with *yakudoku* still being widely used in English language instruction, particularly in senior high schools (Kikuchi & Browne, 2009).

Previous research can be categorized into two strands. One group of researchers have censured the ‘out-of-date’ practices of Japanese English language teachers and given support to the stance of MEXT (Gorsuch, 2000; Sakui, 2004 etc.). Another group have focused on a more cultural aspect: they point out that although foreign language teaching promotes internationalisation (*kokusaika*), it is primarily linked with American middle-class culture. They argue that this implies an exclusive and blinkered view of Japanese society and culture (Borg, 2008; Kawai, 2007; Kubota, 2002)

This paper asks why MEXT has been unsuccessful in diffusing CLT for such a long period of time and examines whether the government’s proposed reforms are appropriate for Japanese senior high schools. In doing so, this paper intends to reveal ideological claims that are manifested in the MEXT policy towards language teaching. Therefore, the research question is: what ideologies does the government promote in the discourse of their policy documents, and how is language used to reinforce their validity claims in the policy?

## Methodology

In order to investigate the discourse of the policy, the strategies of discourse-oriented ethnography for studying organisations (Oberhuber & Krzyżanowski, 2008) were employed and applied to a range of data. The data collected and presented in this paper include government documents, semi-structured interviews conducted with MEXT officials and local government officials conducted in June 2012, and personal field notes.

The government documents used are:

- The Course of Study for upper secondary schools (MEXT, 2009a; MEXT, 2009b)
- A commentary on the course of study for upper secondary schools (MEXT, 2009c; MEXT, 2009d)
- Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication [hereafter Five Proposals] (Commission on the Development of Foreign Language Proficiency, 2011a; 2011b)

Other governmental documents are also considered when necessary.

Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992) was employed as the method for analysing discourse.

## Results of data analysis

### *Foreign Language to learn is almost exclusively English – ‘word meaning’*

In the discourse of written policy documents, the ‘foreign language’ to learn almost exclusively means ‘English’. According to Fairclough (1992), text producers must choose which words to use, but their choices are not always merely personal: ‘[T]he meanings of words...are matters which are socially variable and socially contested, and facets of wider social and cultural processes’ (p.185). Consider the excerpt below:

#### **[Excerpt 1]**

**A policy document title:** Five Proposals and Specific Measures for Developing Proficiency in English for International Communication

**Author:** Commission on the Development of Foreign Language Proficiency

(*underlining not in original*)

Based on its name, the commission seems to have discussed the development of foreign language proficiency in general; in reality, however, they have only focused on the development of English proficiency, which is reflected in the title.

**[Excerpt 2]**

Foreign language education from elementary school based on the new Courses of Study has started from April of this year. Foreign languages activities were newly introduced in elementary schools, while the number of English classes in junior high schools was increased by about 30 percent; as for senior high schools, classes conducted in English and other innovations were introduced.

*(Commission on the Development of Foreign Language Proficiency, 2011b, p. 4, underlining not in original)*

Excerpt 2 is from the Five Proposals. Here, ‘foreign language’ and ‘English’ are used interchangeably. From this excerpt, it can be argued that there is an ideological assumption that when studying a foreign language, students must exclusively study English.

***Make a Paradigm shift in education: modernising and Westernising the Japanese education – ‘word meaning’***

Fairclough (1992) states that ‘[t]he emphasis is upon ‘key words’ which are of general, or more local cultural significance’. When analysing the Course of Study, I paid particular attention to a repeatedly used phrase, namely *verbal activity*. Indeed, MEXT emphasised *verbal activity* as the most important revision point in this Course of Study (MEXT, 2012). It has been inserted into a top section of general rules, meaning that *verbal activity* should be introduced not only to language related subjects, such as Japanese and Foreign Languages, but to all subjects, including mathematics, science, or physical education.

I would argue that MEXT tries to create a paradigm shift in education, from positivist or Eastern-style to constructivist learning through *verbal activity*. In other words, it aims to modernize and Westernise the Japanese education.

According to ‘*Teaching examples for enhancement of verbal activities*’ (MEXT, 2012), *verbal activity* should involve two aspects: one related to intellectual (logic and thinking) activity and another related to communication and emotions. It argues thusly because language is the base

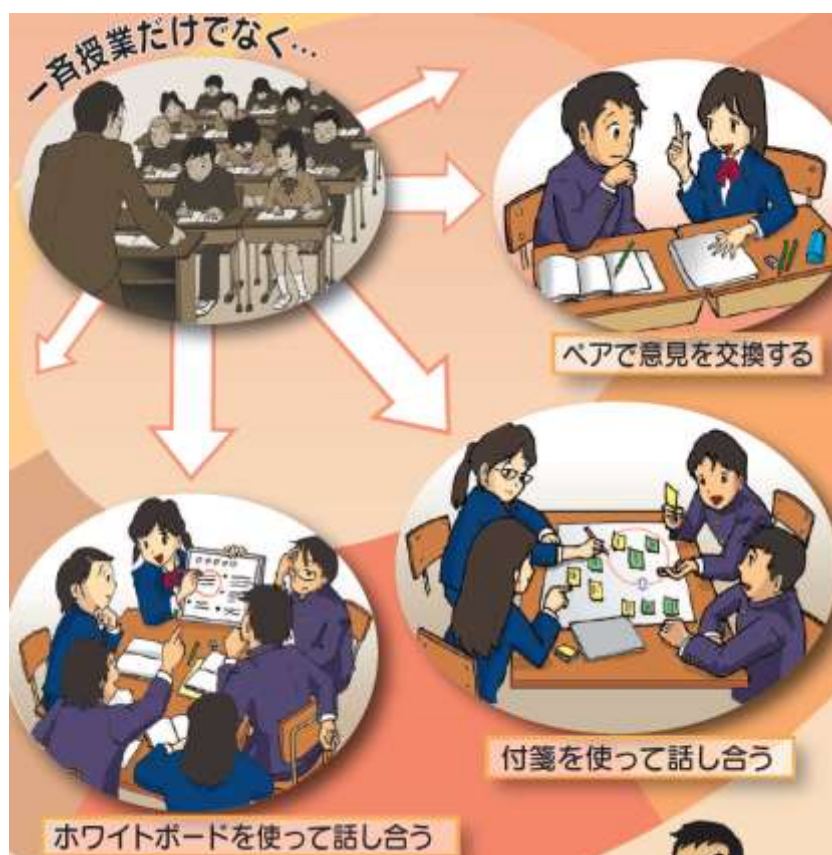
for both, as suggested by the report of the Central Education Committee [中央教育審議会], (2008). In summary, in verbal activities:

1. Students understand and interpret facts or others' opinions and explain them to others. By doing so, they deepen and develop their own ideas as well as groups' ones.
2. Students learn how to express their emotions, communicate with and respect others for better relation.

(Ibid., p.7-8)

These points, especially the first, resonate with constructivist learning. First of all, it is a student-centred classroom, and in the community of the classroom the learner dialogues with peers and develops his or her thinking through such interaction. He or she takes responsibility for communicating ideas through techniques such as defense, proof or justification (Fosnot, 1996, pp. 29-30).

Now let us have a look at another excerpt from *'Example images of improvements in classes through verbal activities'* (MEXT, n.d.).



**Figure 1. Scenes in which students deepen their ideas**  
(See Appendix 1 for English translation)

These images give readers the impression that the teacher-centred, lecture-style class is old-fashioned, as it is depicted in a grey color; in contrast, student-centred classes are presented as modern and superior through their portrayal in a variety of colours. From this evidence, it can be assumed that MEXT promotes constructivist learning in the classroom.

What does this change in the epistemology of learning mean for the subject ‘Foreign Languages’? MEXT has long promoted Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in foreign language instruction. Constructivism is a theoretical background for CLT. Therefore, through the reinforcement of constructivism in all subjects, the promotion of CLT in ‘Foreign Languages’ is further supported.

***Ban yakudoku; make the classroom an English-speaking space  
– ‘transitivity’***

The last ideology to be examined here is the banning of *yakudoku*, making the classroom an English-speaking space. Written policy discourse has reinforced a monolingual strategy for language teaching. I will analyse this ideology throughout the text in terms of ‘transitivity’. Fairclough (1992) defines ‘transitivity’ as ‘[t]he ideational dimension of the grammar of the clause’ (p.177) and relates it to ‘the type of processes which are coded in clauses, and the type of participant involved in them (‘participant’ here means elements in clauses)’ (p.178).

We shall thus now turn to the quote below, which has been emphasised in the Course of Study.

**[Excerpt 3]**

‘When taking into consideration the characteristics of each English subject, classes, in principle, should be conducted in English in order to enhance the opportunities for students to be exposed to English, transforming classes into real communication scenes.’

(MEXT, 2009b, p.7)

From the Critical Discourse Analytical perspective, the agent that conducts classes in English is left out in the underlined part of the text. Fairclough (1992) states that one of the reasons why the author omits an agent is ‘to obfuscate agency, and hence causality and responsibility’ (p.182).

I argue that the sentence has now been manipulatively interpreted in two ways by the MEXT government officials. In the case of the Course of Study, the Minister of MEXT prescribes to Japanese schools how they should organize the curriculum, what the aims of subjects should be and how they should conduct classes. The primary readers of the course were assumed to be teachers. Therefore, this sentence could be found:

**Interpretation 1 (general)**

**Teachers** conduct the class in English.

However, this caused a controversy when the monolingual strategy in the Course of Study was made public in 2008. The media reported teachers' anxieties concerning conducting classes exclusively in English (The Asahi Shimbun, 2008; The Mainichi Shimbun, 2008). In order to minimize the teachers' resistance, the MEXT government official now explains this sentence differently:

**[Interview extract 1] A: MEXT government official**

A: Senior high school teachers first misunderstood it. They thought, the classes of *yakudoku*, if they still do them, should all be done in English. And they thought that this was impossible. We agreed with them; of course it is impossible, as we do not require them to do a *yakudoku* class in English. We require teachers to make it central that students use English in class, making full use of all four skills. Therefore, of course teachers conduct classes in English as well as students. It is just that. Nobody is ordering teachers to speak English volubly for 50 minutes.

The government official A asserts that students would conduct *verbal activities* in English, and teachers would only support them. So, it is not teachers who would mainly speak English in the class, but the students. As illustrated below, their interpretation was therefore different from the general interpretation:

**Interpretation 2 (MEXT)**

**Students** conduct verbal activities in English. So, teachers should support them in English.

To further minimize teachers' resistance, it would appear that MEXT had to add a sentence in the Commentary on the Course of Study in the following year (2009), as shown below:

‘As long as verbal activities play a central part in classes, it can be considered classes are conducted mixed with Japanese.’ (MEXT, 2009c, p. 44, my translation)

However, according to a MEXT government official, this sentence should be interpreted in a very limited way.

**[Interview Extract 2] B: government official, R: author**

B: As long as language activities play a central part in classes, it *can be considered* that classes are conducted mixed with Japanese. Therefore, teachers should be persistent in using English. Here, there is no perspective on how to use Japanese effectively.

R: Not at all?

B: No, not at all. It is only when it becomes necessary.

(The italics indicate emphasis communicated by B)

The government official B emphasizes that the use of Japanese is allowed only when it is strictly necessary.

The MEXT government officials have tried to minimize teachers' resistance by suggesting an alternative interpretation of the Course of Study. They do not intend to allow teachers to use Japanese and want to make the classroom an environment like that of an English-speaking country, based on the conventional second language acquisition (SLA) theory. The ideology to ban *yakudoku* and promote a monolingual strategy has thus been reinforced in policy documentation.

### ***Conclusion***

The data presented here indicate that the Japanese government intends to bring about a fundamental change in education towards an accepted conception of pedagogic ‘modernisation’ in the new Course of Study. This change consequently plays a role in strengthening the theoretical authority of an ideologically prescribed communication-oriented approach to foreign language teaching, which is based on deference to mainstream SLA theory. I argue that the government's interpretations and explanations of the policy, as well as their arguments in favour of it, are inextricably linked with a

simplistic rejection of current 'yakudoku' practice on the part of Japanese English language teachers.

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## Appendix: English translation of Figure 1

[Clockwise from the top]:

Not only the class all together...

Exchange opinions in pairs

Discuss with tags

Discuss with white board



# 36

## **EFL Reading Instruction Based on Information Sharing among Multi-purpose Corpus System Users**

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### **Introduction**

This paper outlines a project devoted to the development of a new EFL reading instruction program based on a blended e-learning mode in which a sophisticated, interactive e-learning system named CHAPEL (corpus handling and analysis package for e-learning) plays a central role. The teaching materials offered on the e-learning system are statistically analyzed by a multi-purpose corpus system.

CHAPEL, built on RDBMS (relational database management system) technology, facilitates real-time information sharing, and consequently encourages better, flexible mutual communication not just between an EFL teacher and his/her students but also among students working on the same teaching material, which would lead to an ideal collaboration among all system users.

We will first sketch a general background for the development of a new e-learning system. The following section furnishes some technical aspects of a multi-purpose corpus analysis system on which CHAPEL is built. The next section describes the basic concept of a newly developed blended e-learning package, with reference to the actual performance of CHAPEL in an EFL reading instruction class. The final section refers to the present state of the system development and its further potential and overall impact on the EFL teaching.

### **Background of the system development: Unfortunate discrepancies (in language teaching)**

Though it is not limited to the field of language teaching, there is always the possibility that some unexpected discrepancy will arise between the teacher and the learners in a face-to-face classroom, mainly due to the lack of information sharing.

Well-trained teachers with many years of experience tend to believe that they can instinctively detect the points where their students have learning difficulties and therefore give appropriate instructions. Though many points are correctly detected and some other points that the teachers have overlooked can be revealed through interactions between their students, there still remains a possibility that unpredictable discrepancies between the teachers and the students will arise. In other words, what has been taught in the previous lessons does not necessarily coincide with what the students have learned. This would lead to the discrepancy between teacher's assumption on the learners' knowledge and the actual knowledge that the learners have acquired. The blended e-learning system illustrated in the present paper tries to overcome this discrepancy between the EFL teachers and the learners. The system is built on a multi-purpose corpus analysis technology that guarantees information sharing and collaboration among the system users.

### **A multi-purpose corpus system**

#### ***Corpus studies and EFL teaching***

Let us briefly outline the present state of the corpus studies where a number of corpora with various size and purposes are developed in independent formats and then analysed by each researcher in various 'original' ways. Each corpus tends to have its own compilation policy and is analysed in highly sophisticated, for example statistic, ways. However, what makes the situation complicated is the fact that there is very little compatibility among the types of data format, including annotation schemata such as POS or semantic tagging. As a result, each corpus turns into a 'black box', whose inside no other corpus researchers can look into. Since corpus researchers usually neither share their corpus data in a uniform format nor work together based on a common analysis procedure or criteria, the obtained results through their independent research cannot be duplicated or validated.

#### ***Information sharing and collaboration between/among system users***

This can also be applied to the field of EFL teaching. As mentioned earlier, there arise discrepancies between the EFL teacher and his/her learners, and even among teachers and learners. To make all the system users (eg. corpus researchers, EFL teachers and learners) work together with shared information, a multi-purpose corpus system built on the RDBMS technology plays an important role.

In a multi-purpose corpus analysing system, every corpus data is stored in a common format with a common annotation scheme. The corpus data stored in the relational database will be analysed in ways visible to other users. All raw documents are stored and managed with different sorts of attributions in the relational tables in the database. In each document table, constituents such as paragraphs, sentences, words, and POS (part-of-speech) tags, as well as diverse attributions given by the system users, are precisely described through internal links to other tables, reflecting their relationships.

In EFL reading instruction, every position of a particular part of reading materials which is highlighted by the teachers and the students is recorded in an attribution table with an appropriate index. This facilitates the real-time browsing of the highlighted parts of the same passage. For example, the location information of given parts of a passage marked up by a teacher is successfully expressed in an attribution table that has a relationship with its owner's ID. The students can highlight the positions of a passage that their teacher has highlighted by retrieving their positional information through the relational tables. In the design of CHAPEL, we call this function ARE (Allocation of Remarked Elements). To put it more precisely, the students are not actually browsing their teacher's window: they are browsing their own passage window which is overlaid with their teacher's attributive information, i.e. the positions marked up by the teacher. (For the further discussion on the design of the annotation system, see Okada and Sakamoto (2010).)

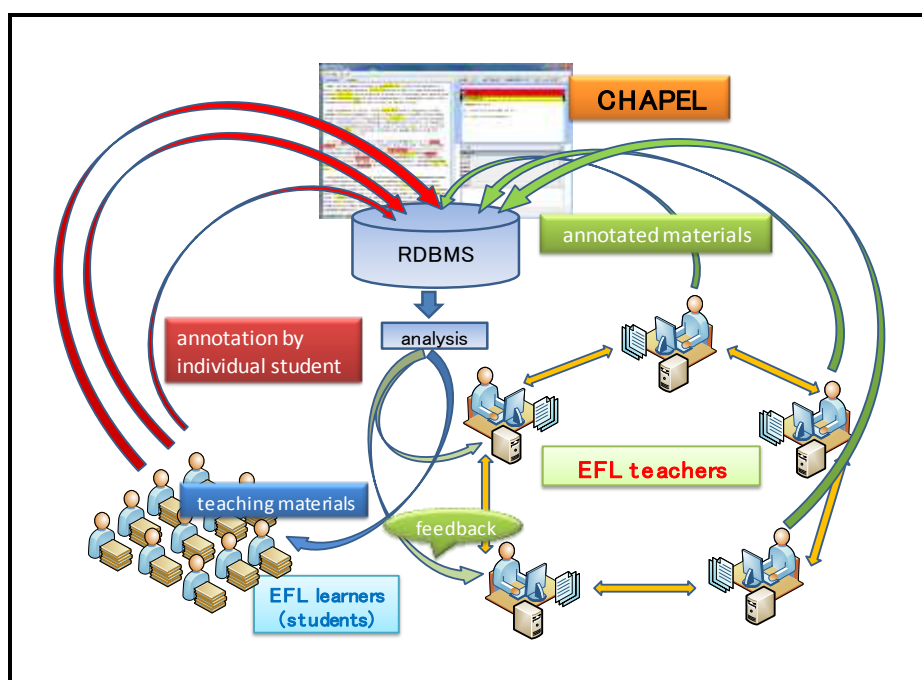


Figure 1: Involvement of system users

In the field of corpus studies and EFL reading instruction, English documents stored, attributed and analysed through the system can be used as target corpora for linguistic investigation and as eligible teaching materials. Much like in the field of corpus research, every document is analysed and then stored with the statistic information such as type/token ratio, lexical density and reading ease level. By paying attention to the statistic properties of each document, the EFL teachers may select reading materials suitable for their student's level, and the learners themselves also can choose appropriate materials with topics that attract their interest. In this way, one of the above-mentioned discrepancies is avoided if both EFL teachers and learners choose suitable teaching materials with appropriate quality from the database.

The next question is how to guarantee collaboration among teachers and learners working on the same reading instruction materials. The EFL teachers have to grasp correctly and accurately the parts in the reading materials that their students find difficult. In addition to this, an EFL teacher should be aware of his/her colleague's teaching methods or focused points in order to teach classes with common materials for unitary teaching. In EFL teaching, especially in Japanese university settings, each class tends to be a 'black box'; no other teachers can really know what and how things are actually taught, just like we observed in the field of recent corpus studies. All the EFL teachers working for the same institute with a common, concrete teaching objective at least have to share educational information on the materials adopted in their classes.

In individual EFL classes, where the teachers have to answer to various demands from their students, the real-time information sharing between them encourages smoother interaction and consequently results in the improvement of the teaching methods as well as the quality or level of the materials offered to the students. This necessity for a flexible transaction between teachers and students is also apparent in the field of corpus studies (between researchers and other researchers).

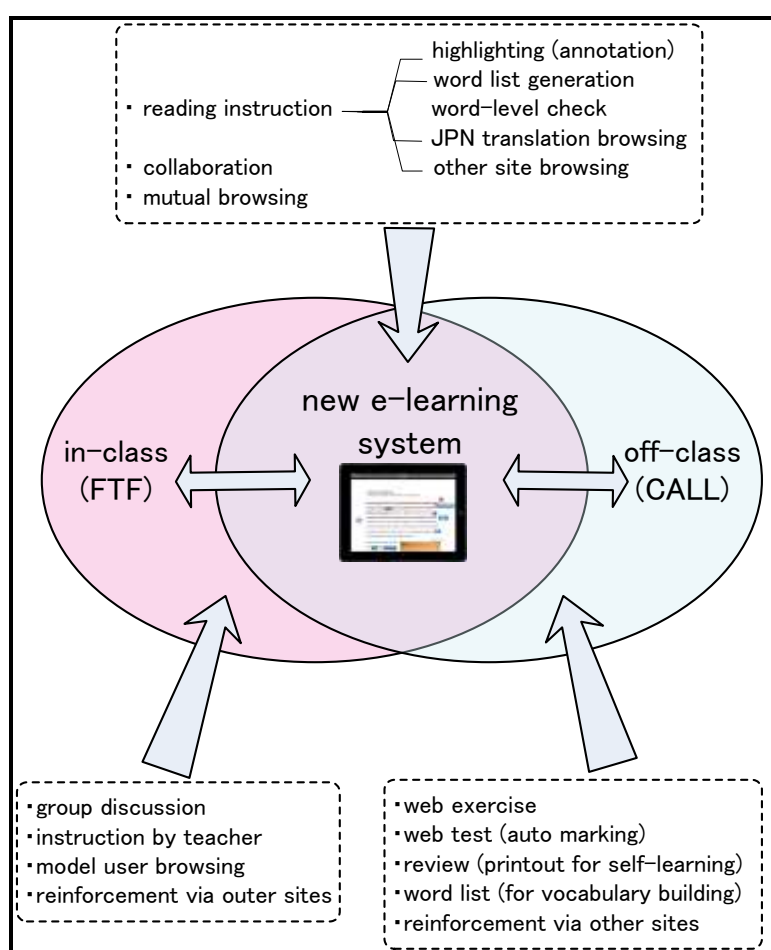
The students in EFL classes are also allowed to collaborate--work together--with their classmates. They can exchange information on the parts of the target reading material where they have difficulties, and they can engage in oral group discussions afterwards.

More importantly, what guarantees flexible, real-time information sharing among system users is a robust relational database outlined above in which the raw materials are well-formatted and stored.

## Blended e-learning package

### *Basic concept of a new blended e-learning package*

As illustrated in Figure 1, in the basic concept of the proposed blended e-learning package, a new e-learning system that runs on mobile devices plays a central role. More significantly, the e-learning system is used efficiently in a classroom in a traditional face-to-face mode through which a teacher and his/her students can orally interact, including direct questions-and-answers or discussions.



**Figure 2: New blended e-learning package**

In an EFL classroom in which mobile devices such as tablet PC's are used, those devices would work as ideal electronic textbooks that facilitate a real-time information sharing and transaction between/among their users, i.e., a teacher and his/her students. It is important to note that the active collaboration and information sharing is not just required in the field of corpus studies but also in EFL teaching classrooms. This function is realised by the RDBMS technology on which a multi-purpose corpus analysis system is built. In other words, all system users, i.e. corpus researchers and EFL

teacher/learners, would participate in the entire information flow illustrated in Figure 1.

As criticized in Schank (2005), ordinary blended learning sometimes simply consists of two separate modes, the in-class and off-class mode, which function independently. On the other hand our new blended e-learning package would unify these two modes by making an e-learning system play a central role. In other words, our new e-learning package tries to take advantage of both modes. In the in-class, face-to-face mode, a teacher can observe what his/her students are actually doing, and can give appropriate instructions, controlling the overall pace of the classroom activities; in the off-class, CALL mode, learners are free to visit auxiliary learning materials on the Internet or set the learning pace on their demand. However, the greatest problem of simple blended learning that consists of two independent modes is that teachers and learners may not share useful information about the teaching materials and cannot collaborate together. Our package tries to overcome the disadvantages that cause unpredictable gaps between the teacher and the learners.

Note that, as illustrated in Figure 2, we put a new e-learning system to bridge the gap between the face-to-face mode and the online CALL mode. This e-learning system is designed to operate on mobile devices which play a central role in a new blended e-learning package. When mobile devices are used in actual face-to-face classrooms, they are ideal electronic textbooks equipped with full communicative function, which avoids discrepancies between the teacher and the learners.

### **CHAPEL for the EFL teacher and the students**

Let us pay attention to the role played by a new e-learning system named CHAPEL. To ensure clarity, I will try to describe it from the teacher's point of view as well as that of learners.

By making CHAPEL play a central role in an EFL reading instruction class in face-to-face mode, teachers and their teaching assistants can work collaboratively on the same teaching materials. Each teaching group consists of a teacher and his/her TA. They can share information on the quality or level of teaching materials that are well-formatted and analysed statistically as corpus data. In other words they can choose eligible teaching materials which better suit the learner's level.



On the other hand, from the point of views of the learners, they can see quite objectively the level of the reading materials offered by their teacher. If they feel particular parts of the material are beyond their reading skills and therefore need to have appropriate instruction from their teacher or TA, they can highlight (mark up) those parts in the material, as shown in Figure 5 below. The location of the highlighted parts in the material is simultaneously transmitted to the teacher's tablet screen through the server machine. At the same time the teacher can send information on the particular points which he/she wants to stress in the reading instruction as shown in Figure 4. This guarantees real-time information sharing between the teacher and his/her students. Moreover, as they are allowed to browse their colleagues' windows, the students can work collaboratively on the identical reading materials. They can share information about their common difficulties. And by obtaining this sort of information simultaneously, the teacher would not overlook the points that should be focused on in his/her class.

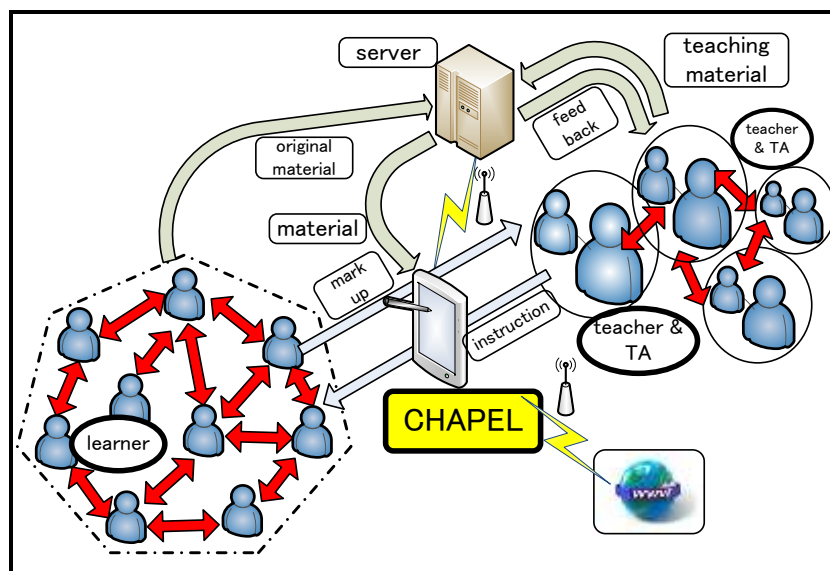


Figure 3: CHAPEL in a classroom

Since CHAPEL is an e-learning system connected to the network, it allows its users to use outer resources, such as online dictionaries or web pages. The system is designed to allow the teacher the authority to give permission to the learners to resort to outside resources such as online dictionaries or word lists prepared beforehand by the teacher. The teacher can also give permission to the learners to browse their peers' screens and the entire or partial translation of the target reading passages.

## Actual use of the system in an EFL classroom

Let us briefly see how CHAPEL actually works in an EFL classroom in a Japanese University.

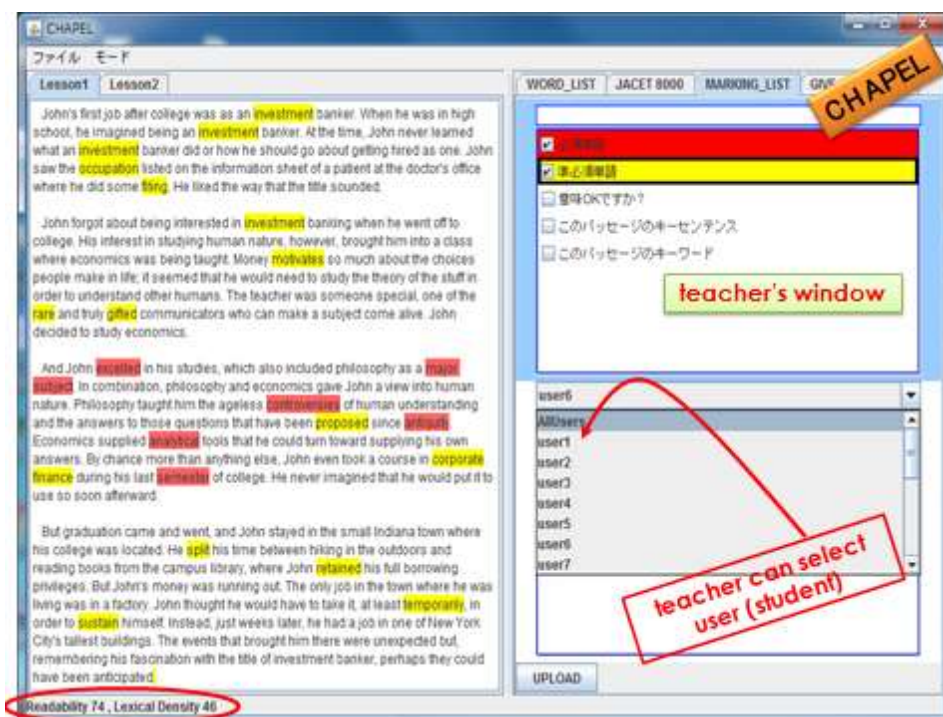


Figure 4: CHAPEL (teacher's window: highlighting particular parts)

Figure 4 illustrates the teacher's window in which he/she marks up specific parts of the target passage: for example, words or phrases to which the students should pay attention. On the left bottom corner of the window, the level of reading ease and the lexical density of the passage are shown. Though the lexical density is obtained by calculating the ratio of the number of content words against the number of total running words, our reading ease score is calculated in a slightly different way that is specifically designed for the Japanese EFL learners. The formula for this is cited below. Instead of counting the number of syllables in each sentence as in Flesche's calculation for the reading ease score, the average word-level score, according to the scale settled by JACET (Japan Association of College English Teachers) of every word is calculated and incorporated in the formula as  $\gamma$ .

$$206.836 - (1.015 * \alpha) - (84.6 * \gamma)$$

where,

$\alpha$  = average number of words per sentence

$\gamma$  = average JACET 8000 level score of words

*JACET: Japan Association of College English Teachers*

As illustrated in Figure 5, the teacher can choose and browse each student's window. This window appears on the left hand side where some parts of the same passage (where the student has learning difficulties) are highlighted.

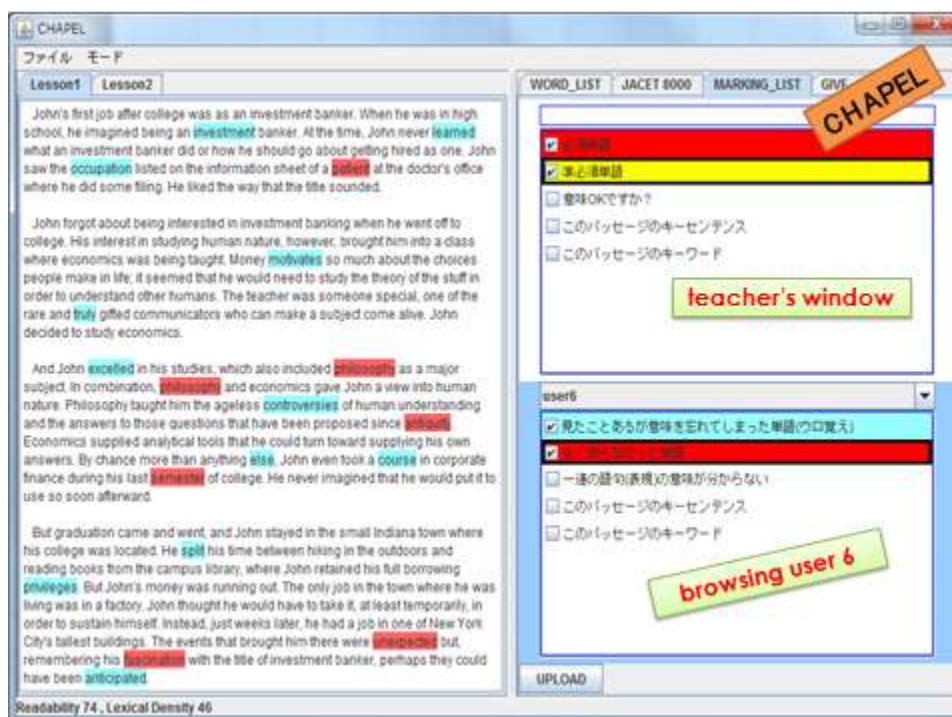


Figure 5: CHAPEL (teacher's window: browsing a student's window)

The function of CHAPEL to browse and collect information from all the students in a class about the parts of the passage where they have difficulty serves to reduce the discrepancies between the teacher and the students on a real-time basis. The teacher can simultaneously identify the points where they have to give appropriate instruction, or select some of them as discussion topics for the further face-to-face mode instruction.

At the same time, as shown in Figure 6, by browsing the parts of the passage that the teacher wants to focus on or parts that require extra attention, the students can compare those parts with the ones that they find difficult.

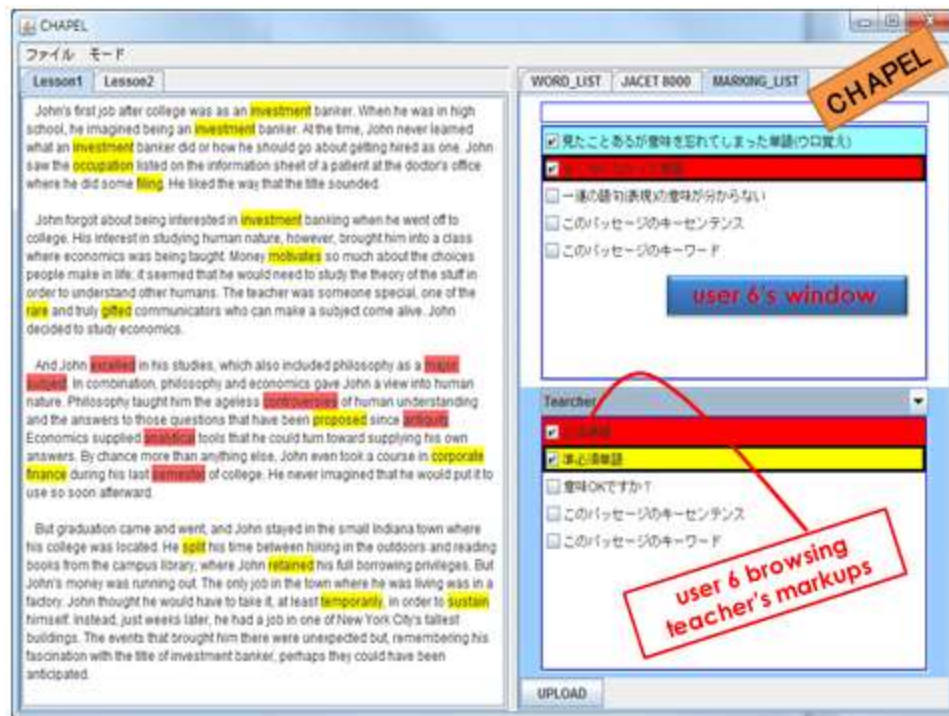


Figure 6: CHAPEL (student's window: browsing teachers highlights)

Figure 7 shows the window of a given student, say a student with user ID 6, who is browsing another student's window.

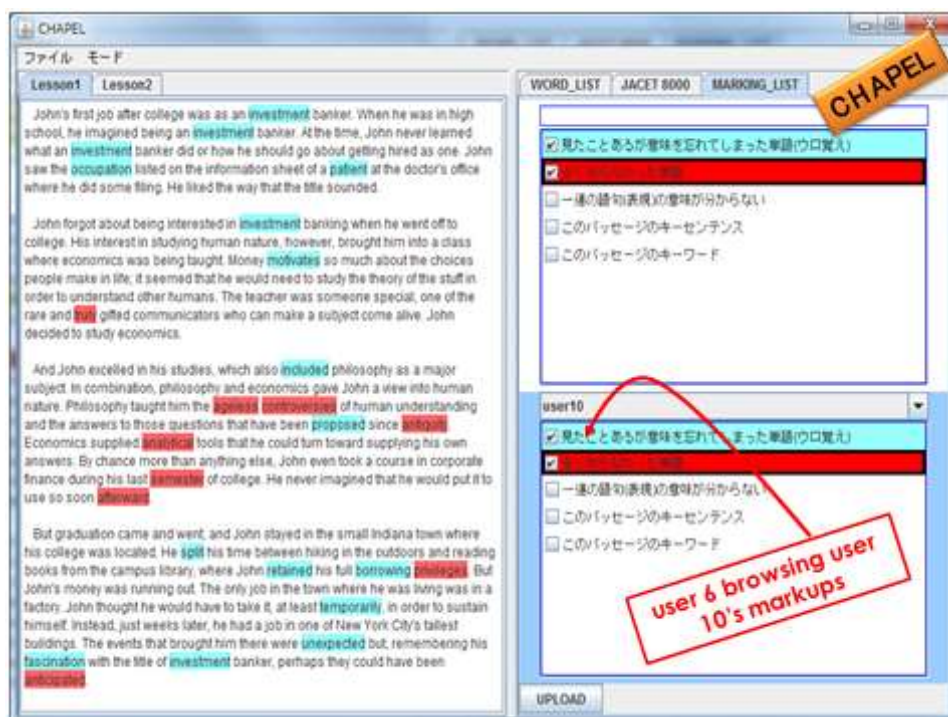


Figure 7: CHAPEL (student's window: mutual browsing)



In this way, all the students can browse each other's windows, and this leads to collaborative learning based on group discussions in EFL reading classrooms. In an actual face-to-face mode instruction such as questions-and-answers between the teacher and the students and group discussions, CHAPEL would not play a central role in the class but would be used just in auxiliary, portable electronic textbooks.

The following figures show an additional function of CHAPEL for vocabulary instruction. In the window illustrated in Figure 8, a user can automatically highlight words with different colours corresponding to their learning level determined by JACET (from Level 1 (basic) to Level 8 (advanced)). The learners can see the level of every word or phrase that they marked up and see where they have learning trouble.

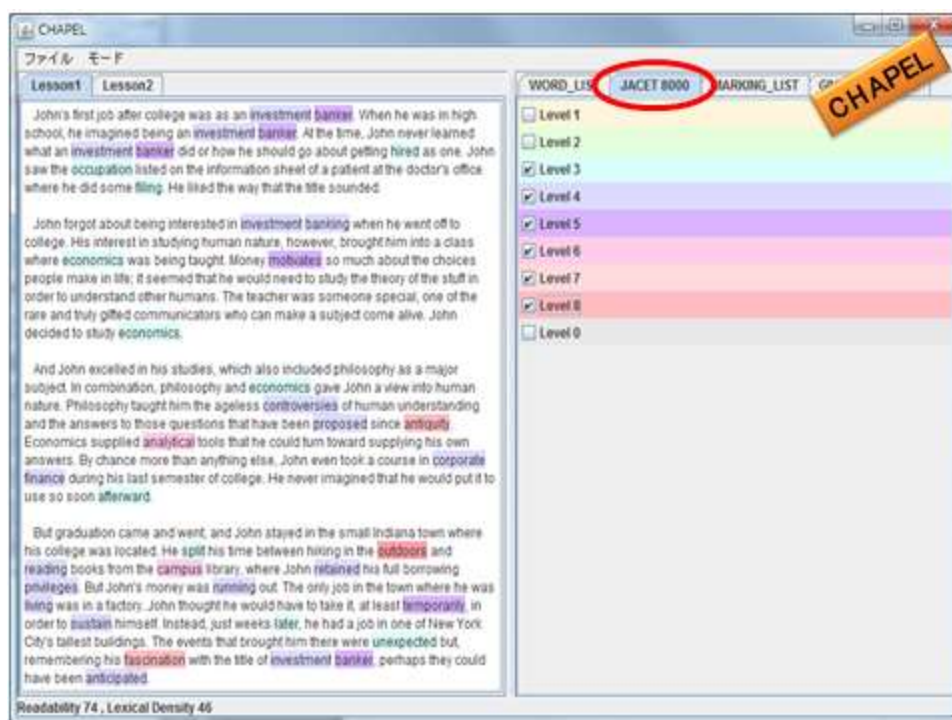


Figure 8: CHAPEL (word level (JACET 8000) highlighting)

The words that students have highlighted are subsequently generated into a word list with corresponding word level and a Japanese equivalent. This works as an efficient training tool for individual students in their autonomous learning. From the teacher's perspective, all the word lists generated by students are stored in the database and used as reliable data for the making of vocabulary quizzes or short tests which are offered in an off-class (CALL) setting.

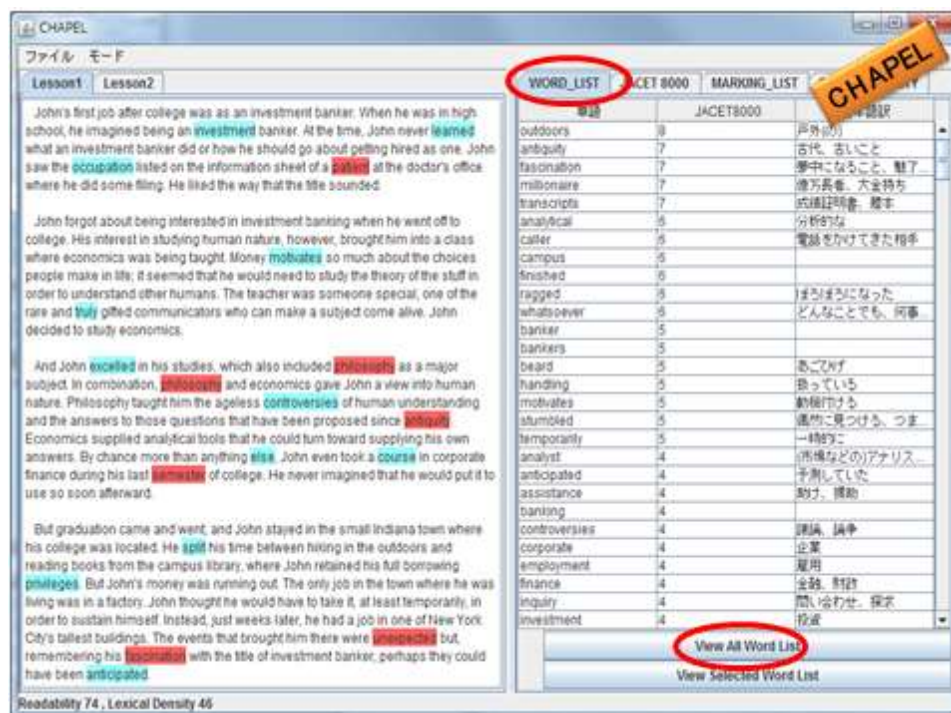


Figure 9: CHAPEL (teacher's window: browsing student's word list)

## Contents offered in new blended e-learning

As illustrated in Figure 3, both the teachers and learners can choose any raw documents and put them into the database. Here the documents are stored in a uniformed format. The documents are then offered as eligible materials for English reading instruction. Both teachers and students can give a wide range of additional, personal information, i.e. attribution to any parts of a given reading material through a flexible mark-up function equipped with CHAPEL.

The remaining problem is the copyright issue of raw materials. Our project is now negotiating with ETS (Educational Testing Service: <http://www.ets.org/>) to obtain genuine materials used for the reading section of TOEFL-ITP®. In addition to the TOEFL-ITP® materials, we are trying to obtain a large number of copyright-free materials in a wide range of academic disciplines offered by CK-12 Foundation (<http://www.ck12.org>). It is important to note that on-screen scripts accompanying movie clips in many MOOC lectures such as edX (<http://www.edx.org>) turn out to be new and attractive resource for the EFL reading training. Whilst academic English has been a long-term target for corpus researchers such as Biber et al (2004) and Biber (2006), there is no database that consists of spoken academic English data extracted from virtual, not actual, face-to-face university lectures. The scripts can be seen as ideal reading materials since they are by nature 'written to be spoken' and therefore contain few fragments

typically occurring in the actual, unscripted oral transaction, such as incomplete sentences, repetitions, stammers, undetectable reference and so on.

## Conclusion and further issues

We have discussed a newly designed e-learning package in which CHAPEL plays a central role. The data obtained through EFL reading instruction using CHAPEL can be reused as a personal electronic learning portfolio for individual students, which contains various information such as word lists, lists of browsed online resources, as well as the log in/out time and user ID. The learners and their teachers can use the information to trace the learning history in order to improve the overall quality of EFL reading instruction classes.

As CHAPEL is designed to run on mobile devices, our new blended e-learning package can be used in ordinary classrooms everywhere in the world where only wireless network connection is available. This means that CHAPEL relieves e-learning from expensive CALL classrooms in which a number of PC's still play a single, central role.

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# 37

## The how and why of co-supervision of PhD students: reported understandings of supervisors and supervisees

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### PhD co-supervision: our research context

The increasing numbers of students, largely *international* students, pursuing a PhD degree in UK universities (Cree 2012, Peelo 2011, Hockey 1997) has necessitated growing institutional and practitioner attention to supervision (see Pole (1998) for an analysis of the Harris (1996) report of postgraduate education). Accordingly, doctoral supervision has also received increasing attention of late in the academic literature. Studies have explored PhD supervision from the perspectives of what it is, what it involves and what it should ideally be within UK universities (Hockey, 1996, 1997), i.e. mostly focusing on current practices, but prescriptively rather than descriptively (Pearson and Brew, 2002; Green, 2005; Barnes and Austin, 2009). Most of this research, however, does not entail observational work in terms of supervision as a naturally-occurring speech event, but is rather conceptualised in terms of *understandings* of those involved: supervisors (in the USA: ‘advisors’) and/or supervisees (in the USA: ‘graduate students’). However, little research of *any* sort has been devoted to co- or joint supervision - understood as the supervision of a research student by two academics (see Pole, 1998) - and its role in doctoral research and the writing of the thesis. This is despite the fact that co-supervision ‘represents a significant proportion of supervisory practice’ in UK universities (Pole, 1998: 264) – although in the natural more than in the social sciences. If supervision with one supervisor has been observed to be complex due, for example, to personal, academic, ethical and/or cultural issues, doctoral supervision of a student research project involving *two* supervisors surely makes this process even more worthy of academic enquiry.

Our paper reports on the (often diverse) perceptions of supervisors and scholars who are currently participants in joint supervision in a department of Linguistics in a highly ranked University in the United Kingdom. More specifically, it reports part of a wider study which explores this practice.

## PhD supervision and co-supervision: research to date

The function of supervision as an academic institutional practice is to guide a student during his/her process of research and thesis writing up to its submission, the viva and usually beyond. Every case of supervision, however, is different: not only are no two student-supervisor combinations alike, with different supervisors taking different approaches with different students according to their perceived needs, personalities, topics and method (see Pole, 1998), but supervision is also a fluid, active process where “the needs and competencies of students and supervisors will change as the relationship progresses” (Pole, 1998: 263).

As indicated, much of the literature on PhD supervision provides guidance for supervisors. For example, Delamont *et al.* (1997), suggest that supervisors should design a manageable project where the expectations of both parties (supervisors and supervisees) are set out explicitly, e.g. what kind of support the supervisor(s) can offer, and the expected output of the supervisee. The design, they propose, should follow an agenda with clear working arrangements. Careful planning and design should allow and comprise quality time in meetings and a ‘good’ working relationship. Wisker (2005) also recommends clear expectations of supervisors and supervisees as a golden rule. Indeed, her golden rules mostly concern honest communication throughout the supervision process: difficulties might arise, but if good communication is maintained (in meetings and reports) and each party accepts their responsibilities, the supervision process should be successful. Wisker also acknowledges the case of co-supervision and here emphasises the clear division of responsibilities between supervisors (whom she sees as main and second supervisors) and ‘honest communication’ again as a golden rule, key to the whole process.

Some empirical studies do exist on PhD supervision in the UK. These include Wegener and Tanggaard’s (2013) interesting study of the process of the co-authorship of a research article by a PhD student-supervisor team. As regards the supervision process itself, Hockey (1997), who considers supervision to be an *operational craft* involving many functions (e.g., balancing, timing, guiding, foreseeing, critiquing and informing) provides data from qualitative interviews with supervisors in nine higher education institutions in the UK in his study of the ‘craft’ practices. His report covers two areas: the overall management of the student’s project, and the passing on of knowledge about the practicalities of research. His findings point to the importance of practice in and experience of the ‘operational craft’ as key to good supervision. Hence, he claims: ‘whilst PhD research supervision

involves knowledge which can be communicated in an abstract, formal fashion, it also contains much informal tacit knowledge which is rarely communicated explicitly' (p. 47); for example, the kind of knowledge a supervisor might need for supervising a student in a particular research field, or in the choice of an external examiner. Hockey also identifies potential conflicts between actual supervision and institutional regulations; for example, while the institution may decree that 'students' work must be both original and autonomous' (p.49), the decisions supervisors make in relation to *individual* supervisees about the originality, 'depth, volume, quality and specificity of knowledge imparted' are likely to vary hugely. These benefits and constraints are of course one reason for empirical research on (co-)supervision. In addition, Cree (2012) explores the expectations of international students pursuing doctoral degrees and their experiences of supervision, and Hein *et al.* (2011) look at 'triadic' supervision, i.e. when two supervisees are paired *together* with a supervisor.

We understand co- or joint supervision as the formally agreed supervision of a research student by two or more academics, which, like all supervision, aims to facilitate effective progress for the student in her or his research project. And while it is hardly unusual, as indicated, co-supervision and/or team supervision is rarely featured in the literature on doctoral study, and is often not even mentioned. Two exceptions are Pole (1998) and Lahenius and Ikavalko (2012). Pole (1998) studied supervision issues in relation to the disciplinary research environment (e.g., the social and natural sciences) and proposed joint-supervision arrangements in part in response to the Harris report of UK postgraduate education (1996) which saw 'joint supervision' as a 'safety net' and of value for aspiring higher education institutions (see Pole, 1998). More recently, Lahenius and Ikavalko have identified three types of co-supervision practices: *complementary*, *substitutive* and *diversified*, practices which suggest different supervisory roles in terms of expertise and support.

Institutions of Higher Education which award postgraduate degrees are likely to formulate their own rules for supervision within national guidelines; for example, that 'each student should have at least one main supervisor, who will normally be part of a supervisory team (with appropriate expertise), and there must always be one clearly identified point of contact for the student.' While the 'at least' suggests that co-supervision may be desirable, the 'normally' clearly allows variation. Furthermore, Faculties, Schools and Departments are likely to have their own guiding principles. Below is an example of an actual unofficial list of these principles (designed for students):

1. Use *cc.* with all relevant e-mail communications
2. After meetings with one supervisor, summarise and send a summary to both supervisors
3. You can consult the different supervisors about different things, individually
4. You are not entitled to more supervisor-contact time than students with one supervisor; both supervisors may not be present at all meetings.
5. The balance of contact with your supervisors may change, e.g. from year to year.

This list indexes possible problem areas, namely communication, expectations and practices as regards supervisory face-to-face time, and the likelihood of flux in the arrangements.

### Our study

As indicated in the literature, much of the academic focus on supervision has been on ‘ideal practices’ (Wisker, 2005; Delamont *et al.*, 1997; Phillips and Pugh, 1994), and while there is some empirical work (though none of it ethnographic) on supervision, there are only two studies (to our knowledge) of **co-supervision**, and these look mostly at **supervisees’** perspectives (Pole, 1998; Lahenius and Ikavalko, 2012). While empirical research is clearly needed on **what happens** in (co-)supervision, in this study we have the more modest aim of looking at **understandings** of co-supervisors as well as of their supervisees. To this end, we formulate the following research questions:

- How do PhD supervisors and supervisees perceive co-supervision?
- What are seen as the particular *contributions* of co-supervision (in terms of both research and thesis-writing)?
- What concerns are identified?

### Methodology

Our study follows a qualitative methodology entailing questionnaires with 18 doctoral supervisors in a UK University Department and 24 out of a total of 27 PhD supervisees who were currently being co-supervised. 16 of the 18 supervisors had co-supervised, and they had done so between one and seven times, three being the most frequent number. The questionnaire was followed by interviews with selected respondents (see below). The supervisees included campus-based and away students, and full- and part-time students.

Some of the co-supervisees were doing interdisciplinary research – that is, one of their supervisors was from a discipline other than Linguistics. They all had two supervisors (as opposed to more than two).

We designed the questionnaires to obtain: a) general factual information such as usual arrangements for supervisory meetings; b) practices and preferences regarding meetings, as well as reasons for, likes and dislikes concerning co-supervision; and c) online co-supervision experience. We designed the questionnaires for supervisors and supervisees slightly differently but with questions in parallel to gather comparable information and understandings.

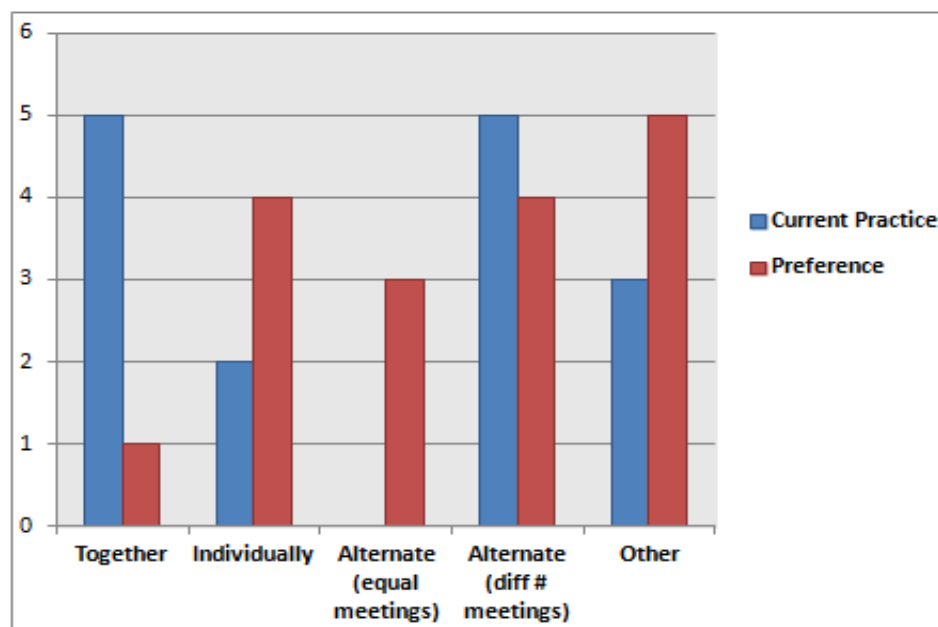
For the second stage, we interviewed elected participants: four supervisees and four supervisors. They were chosen on the basis of the questionnaire data: greatest experience of co-supervision (supervisors), and according to their liking or otherwise of co/supervision (co-supervisees, with two chosen for their enthusiasm for co-supervision and two for their lack thereof). The purpose of the interviews was mainly to probe the *reasons* for their likes/concerns as reported in their questionnaires.

At the time of writing, we had analysed the questionnaire data but analysis of the interviews was still in progress. We therefore present below some quantitative findings, with a few illustrative extracts from the interviews. In this paper we also present findings about face-to-face co-supervision only, rather than on-line co-supervision.

## Findings

The first section of the questionnaires gathered data concerning *actual* co-supervision practices and *preferences*. For example, a question in both questionnaires was: ‘On the whole, in your experience of being co-supervised, do you **usually ....**/ **prefer to do ....** (please tick **one**)’. The options in both questionnaires were: *together* (i.e., the two supervisors and the supervisee); *individually* (i.e., the supervisee with one supervisor at a time); *alternate* with the same number of meetings between the student and Supervisor A, the students and supervisor B, and together; *alternate* (with a different number of meetings with one or the other supervisor); and *other*.

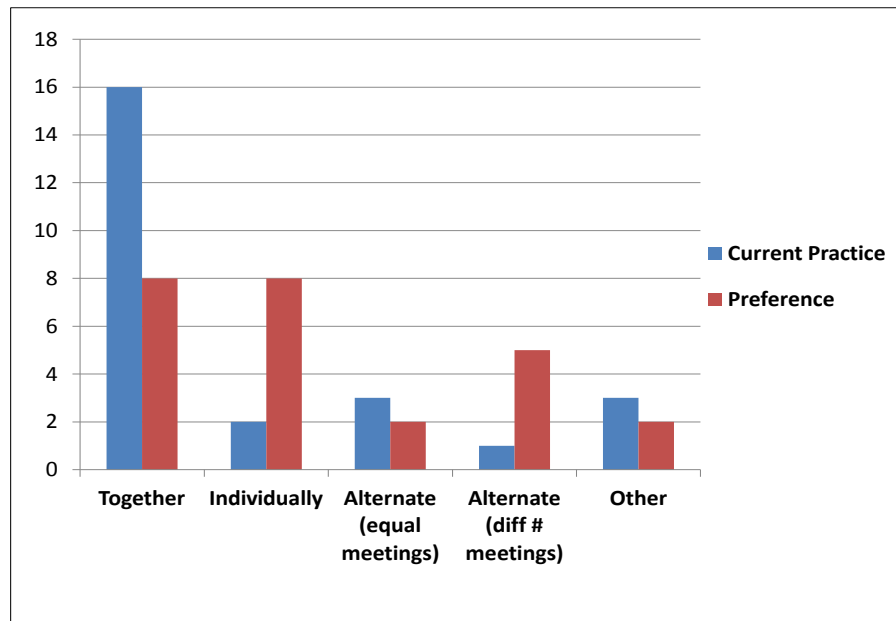
The findings for supervisors about their usual and preferred practices are shown in Figure 1. The numbers are small but may be indicative.



**Figure 1: Supervisors: practices and preferences for supervisory meetings**

While co-supervision together is reportedly one of the two most frequent practices for supervisors, it is the least preferred. Supervisors prefer meeting their students without the co-supervisor, i.e. having individual meetings, or alternating between such meetings and meetings for all three (with more of a preference for the latter if we total the third and fourth columns). ‘Other’, as the most popular preference suggests the complexity of the co-supervision, and indeed indicates that a questionnaire is not the sufficient method to address this.

In their responses to the questions about usual and preferred practices, supervisees also pointed to ‘together’ supervision as the most frequent current practice; however, if columns three and four are added together, comparable numbers preferred meeting their supervisors individually, together, and alternating between the two arrangements. (The motivation for alternating may be the different moments of the PhD process, as sometimes students need more support in one supervisor’s area than the other.) These findings are shown in Figure 2:



**Figure 2: Supervisees: practices and preferences**

In sum, the dominant co-supervision practice for all three was to meet together, although for many supervisors this was clearly not the preferred arrangement. The reasons for this apparent discrepancy are likely to be complex and related to the different needs and moments of the student's PhD trajectory, but not only to this.

In the second section of the questionnaires – that on perceived reasons for co-supervision, and likes and dislikes concerning co-supervision – the supervisees and supervisors responded similarly. The questions were:

Why do you think you are being co-supervised? Feel free to suggest different possible reasons.

Assuming that there are things you like and things you dislike about co-supervision....

- (a) What do you like about co-supervision? What do you see as its benefits?
- (b) What do you dislike about co-supervision?

Both supervisors and supervisees pointed to research which involved two areas/fields of expertise and thus the need for two supervisors to cover both. Secondly, both groups commented that not only the expertise but also the *experience* of the supervisors was crucial. While there was wide agreement on the part of the supervisors that in some cases, the research required knowledge and expertise from different areas/fields, it was also agreed that co-supervision was sometimes arranged as part of the training/mentoring of

new supervisors (as required by the University rules), so that the latter could learn from the more experienced supervisors. With less certainty, supervisees also pointed to the case of training/mentoring new supervisors, conscious that one of their supervisors was new to doctoral supervision and would benefit from the co-supervision. Other reasons for co-supervision given by both supervisors and co-supervisees were: sabbatical leave, retirement, and overload of one supervisor.

In terms of what they liked about co-supervision, supervisors seemed to have more varied reasons than students. Some (eight) supervisors said they valued the learning from other colleagues (about the topic area and about supervision itself); others (seven) suggested there might be better discussion when the student was benefitting from different areas of expertise. Still others (five) said that problems and responsibilities were shared. Two proposed that the different perspectives helped avoid supervision hang-ups. In terms of institutional benefits, one suggested that there were practical and beneficial results for the department – presumably these included being able to admit an applicant who could not have been admitted with the expertise of only one supervisor.

The supervisees' likes, on the other hand, tended to centre on benefitting from different perspectives, approaches and experiences in their research project; this was indicated by seventeen supervisees. Several (four) noted that if and when two people read their work, this makes them feel secure about their research since two 'experts' were involved. In a follow-up interview, one of the supervisees claimed: "having two supervisors contributes to my research. Both parts of the research are being reviewed by experts, so that gives you confidence about what you are doing" (*participant 11*). Another said:

I feel positive about being co-supervised. I know that both of them are great and I know that with their help and their suggestions my project will be sound, will be, will be strong.... I don't know if this is the correct adjective, but my PhD project, if I follow the advice, the pieces of advice of both supervisors, I know that my PhD will be ready to be published (*participant 4, interview*).

It is interesting that the confidence of this participant about his work was also expressed in terms of later publication.



*Concerns* about co-supervision tended to focus on issues of more work and of timing. Supervisors reported that co-supervision tended to increase their workload (e.g. two supervisors who in principle each had 50% supervision of a given student often both found it to be more than 50%). On a related note, two supervisors pointed to co-supervision as giving an unfair advantage to co-supervisees (over supervisees with one supervisor) in terms of time and attention. A different form of identified unfairness was co-supervisors who did not pull their weight (noted by three supervisors). Three pointed to cases where the co-supervisors' ideas might be conflicting (and hence confusing) for the supervisee, and to the possibility of related communication problems. Also related may be issues of personality, and clashes of personality between supervisors. In more practical terms, some supervisors cited difficulties in scheduling meetings with the other supervisor and the supervisee.

Supervisees' concerns were mostly related to time, at least for those who felt they had to report twice, be part of arrangements for two meetings, and pay attention to two types of (occasionally opposing) feedback. This concern was evident in several of the questionnaire responses:

It takes time to always report on meetings to update the supervisor who wasn't there. (*participant 2, questionnaire*)

If I want to meet both two of them at one meeting, it costs time before hand to balance their time. And I feel confused how to balance the proportion of time separately meeting with them. I feel like I have to work hard twice as my colleagues who have only one supervisor. Because I have to do two areas at the same time and have to learn how to communicate with two different people who have different characters and communication habits (*participant 7, questionnaire*)

Two supervisees also pointed to a lack of continuity: when working with two supervisors, each supervisor might pay attention only to the sections of his/her work to which his/her expertise was particularly relevant, so the supervisees experience their project as divided and have the feeling that neither supervisor is following his/her work fully. A relevant follow-up interview comment was: "it can be (...) challenging especially if the approaches, viewpoints and demands of the supervisors largely differ. This not only about the supervisors' character but also about the discipline they belong to" (*participant 1, questionnaire*). Sixteen supervisees expressed

concern about possible conflicts between supervisors because of differing research interests, questions of personality or professional competition.

While four supervisees reported feeling pressure from the attention from both supervisors and being put into a difficult situation of deciding between one supervisor's advice and the other's when these appeared contradictory, others reported receiving little or no attention from either supervisor as each might have thought the other supervisor was 'on the job'. The below quotations from the supervisees' illustrate these points:

"They can try to push you into their direction in terms of demands, and you can alienate to the work that you produce. You spend too much time to convince two people instead of one and this can be discouraging considering that convincing them is not always easy" (*participant 1, questionnaire*)

"I think it is very delicate if the supervisors do not like each other or if they look at things very differently or they do want to have 50/50..." (*participant 2, interview*)

Revealing a somewhat different concern:

It seems everything is fixed, everything is fine. I was expecting discussion; learn from both of them as they are experts, but no. There is absolute no discussion or criticism to each other. It is all too superficial, they agree with each other all the time. I mean, if I write something, and give it to them for reviewing, one reviews it and gives comments – very surface comments- and the other just agrees on those comments. There is no real interaction of their thinking, approaches. I was certainly expecting something more, deep of thought, criticism to my work from different angles, but it seems they are so respectful to each other that none says what they really think of the work, my work (*participant 1, interview*).

And

"Both supervisors felt observed by each other and then none of them dare to give me exact directions or explicit pieces of advice. It was as if each of them was afraid of telling me exactly which way to follow because his/her colleague may think that was not the right way to guide a student" (*participant 12, questionnaire*)

Concerns and likes were thus varied, among and across supervisors and supervisees. While a shared like of co-supervision was the quality of discussion – helpful to both supervisors as well as the supervisee – shared concerns related to time and the potential for conflict. An additional concern of some supervisors was unfairness (often compared to solo-supervised students, potentially to one of the co-supervisors). The supervisees expressed both a particular concern with the possibility of conflicting advice (and a possible clash between the two supervisors), and, occasionally but interestingly, a sense of disappointment that the three-way discussion was not more robust.

## Conclusions

The results not only point to the strengths of and concerns around co-supervision as a practice in doctoral education, but also suggest its influence in the writing of the doctoral thesis. We have noted co-supervision as potentially enhancing for supervisors and supervisees (a challenge to the ‘safety net’, arguably deficit model proposed by Pole (1998)). Our results also reveal problems of time, conflict of different sorts and possible inequity. Given the complexity of the relationships in co-supervision, as every co-supervision experience and trajectory is different, and as there can be no absolute rules on how it should be carried out, are there any practical implications of this study? We pose this question mainly with regard to supervisors, as they are likely to experience co-supervision again in the near future unlike the supervisees (although this is possible too), but also for current supervisees in that they may themselves become supervisors and possibly experience co-supervision practices. Hockey (1997) argued that co-supervision was itself insufficient ‘training’ for new supervisors, and he may be right (although these co-supervisors did not seem to find it so). Staff development sessions focusing co-supervision would do well to involve listening to the ‘co-supervisee experience’, and in particular to consider when a robust three-way discussion would be seen as productive and when it would be seen as unhelpful conflict. As regards the supervisor concern with inequity (with regard to solo-supervised students), it may be that little can be done about this, unless joint-supervision becomes the norm – which is a debate of a rather different sort.

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## What do adult L2 learners know about phonology after minimal exposure?

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### Introduction

A plethora of research on adult second language (L2) learning capacity often takes as its starting point stages where considerable L2 knowledge has already been accumulated. The present study instead probes the absolute earliest stages of learning and investigates the segmental and phonotactic knowledge of adult English speakers after ‘minimal exposure’ or ‘first exposure’ to a new language,<sup>20</sup> *viz* (Syrian) Arabic and Russian, doing so along the lines of Carroll (2004; 2013) and Gullberg et al. (2010; 2012). Research shows that babies demonstrate sensitivity to linguistic patterns in the ambient input from early on, even before they comprehend their first words (Jusczyk 1997). However, adult L2 learners are assumed to be far less able. With few exceptions, this assumption has not been put to the test under real learning conditions. The current study explores this issue in the context of an actual language course which used a listening comprehension approach, with no focus on forms. English-speaking adults learning either Arabic or Russian were exposed to aural input with the support of pictures in 20-minute classes for 10 weeks. The study reveals that first-exposure learners of Arabic and Russian show some of the same early sensitivity to the phonetic and phonotactic properties of a new language as babies do.

Following this introduction, this paper will proceed to review the relevant literature about first-exposure studies, identify the research question in this study, present the phonologies of the three languages in question (i.e. English, Syrian Arabic and Russian), and finally present the study methodology, results and discussion.

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<sup>20</sup> In this paper, ‘minimal exposure’ and ‘first exposure’ are used interchangeably to refer to the manner in which learners are exposed to a new language on the basis of minimal input.

## Literature review

Sensitivity to language-specific segmental and phonotactic constraints has been investigated in both L1 and L2 acquisition research. There is a general consensus in L1 acquisition research that babies incrementally perceive more and more in the speech stream in their first year of life, before they start comprehending or producing their first words (Juszyk 1997). Specifically, by the age of around 7 months, babies can pick out words from the speech stream using phonotactic cues relevant to the language they are hearing. The situation is not completely clear regarding what adult L2 learners come to know early on about the phonotactics of a new language with only aural exposure. Some L2 research (see Gullberg et al. 2010, 2012; also Carroll in press) suggests that the learning mechanisms enabling learners to respond to frequency, prosody as well as gestural cues remain more powerful in adulthood than typically assumed in the second language acquisition (SLA) literature, and that adults even demonstrate such sensitivity after only minimal (aural) exposure.

Although L2 studies of minimal or first exposure to an unknown language have contributed enormously to our understanding of how L2 learners might segment the speech stream, these studies nevertheless leave open questions. First, some studies focusing on first contact have involved artificial language learning and statistical language learning studies (e.g. Onishi et al. 2002; Chambers et al. 2003; Saffran et al. 1996), where stimuli are either artificial or involve an extremely simplified natural language. Another set of studies (Gullberg et al. 2010, 2012) examines the acquisition of natural languages, but looks specifically at implicit/incidental learning outside a classroom context or ‘in the wild’; that is under circumstances similar to how an untutored learner immersed in a new language context encounters it. Finally, other studies focus on minimal exposure to natural, phonotactically simple languages such as Mandarin Chinese (e.g. Gullberg et al. 2010, 2012).

Drawing inspiration from first-exposure studies in real classroom settings (see Rast 2008; Rast & Dommergues 2003; Shoemaker & Rast 2013), the present study aims to contribute to our understanding of minimal exposure to previously unstudied languages, such as Syrian Arabic and Russian under real learning conditions.

The study aimed to answer the following research question:

Do adult learners, after minimal exposure to aural input in Arabic or Russian languages identify those phonetic and phonotactic characteristics of these languages which are different from English more accurately than controls with no such exposure?

### English, Arabic and Russian phonotactics

Phonotactic constraints place restrictions on the adjacency of particular segment types. These arrangements define allowable syllable structures in terms of consonant and vowel sequences in a given language. For instance, English language allows the initial consonant cluster /spr/, whereas it does not allow /smp/ to appear word- or syllable-initially (Crystal 1995). Traditionally, phonotactics are seen not only in terms of their legality but also in terms of their probability. Phonotactic probability deals with the frequency with which legal phonological segments and sequences of segments occur in a given language. A phonological unit (such as a syllable) can be seen as either legal or illegal depending on whether it is an existing phonological unit in a given language. A number of constraints, such as the Sonority Sequencing Principle (SSP) (Selkirk 1984) as well as Minimal Sonority Distance (MSD) (Selkirk 1984) further define what segments may appear in onset or coda clusters.

Consonant clusters are subject to the SSP, which universally defines the preferred order of consonants in a syllable. The SSP presupposes that the edge of a syllable must be occupied by the least sonorous segment, whereas the syllable nucleus must be occupied by the most sonorous segment. Selkirk (1984) provides the following scale or hierarchy:

<i>The sonority hierarchy</i>						
High sonority			Low sonority			
vowels	>	glides	>	liquids	>	nasals > obstruents
Example segments	[ɪ, e]	[j, w]	[l, r]	[m, n]	[s, p]	

**Figure 1: The Sonority Sequencing Principle**

The MSD states that for a specific language, the consonants within a syllable must have a certain distance between each other; the position of these segments is explained on the basis of their relative distance on the sonority scale above. Broselow and Finer (1991) suggest that every class of sounds is assigned a sonority index, as described in Figure 2, which varies by intervals

of one.<sup>21</sup> Languages differ in their indexes. That is to say, if a language, for example Syrian Arabic has such onset clusters as /kt/ or /kb/ or Russian has /pt/ or /kt/ clusters, the MSD of these languages is 0, because their two member onsets can have obstruent + obstruent combinations. Moreover, the occurrence of such clusters entails that a language can have all other combinations described below in Figure 2, i.e. indexes up to 4. However, if a language, for example English, has such clusters as /pl/ or /kr/ (MSD=2), it allows MSD 3 and 4 only, but not 0 and 1.

Segments	Sonority Index
Obstruents	0
Nasals	1
Liquids	2
Glides	3
Vowels	4

**Figure 2: Minimal Sonority Distance**

In the next subsection, we describe the phonotactics of English, Arabic and Russian as regards syllable onsets. This is in part what we want to know about the effect of minimal exposure.

### ***English phonotactics***

English onsets can contain between zero and three positions. Firstly, English allows onsetless syllables, e.g. <eye>. Secondly, it allows CV (consonant + vowel) syllables where any consonant can appear in the C position except for phoneme /ŋ/ (as its occurrence is restricted to the coda in English) e.g. <pie>. Thirdly, English also allows two consonants where if the first consonant is an obstruent, then it should be followed by either a liquid /l, r/, e.g. <play> or a glide /w, j/, e.g. <twin>. However, if the first consonant is a voiceless fricative /s/, then it should be followed by either a nasal, except /ŋ/, e.g. <smile> or a voiceless stop, e.g. <speak>, or an approximant, e.g. <slim>. Fourthly, English even permits three member consonants in the onset, but

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<sup>21</sup> The sonority scales in Figure 1 and 2, make no distinctions between segment types within the major classes vowels, liquids, and obstruents (but see Parker 2002).



the first consonant of such clusters must be /s/, which should be followed by a voiceless oral stop and a liquid or a glide, e.g. <sprout> or <stew>.<sup>22</sup>

The other important fact to consider is that consonant clusters in English must rise in sonority as they approach the syllable nucleus, the vowel (with the exception of the three member cluster beginning with /s/ noted above). That is, the syllable structure of English follows the SSP, e.g. <plant>. Additionally, the Minimal Sonority Distance between elements in English is 2, as noted above. Therefore, clusters such as stop + nasal, fricative (except /s/) + nasal (MSD = 1), and stop + stop or nasal + nasal, (MSD = 0) etc., are not permissible in English, as described in Ostapenko (2005: 142).

### ***Arabic phonotactics***

In Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and its varieties (including Syrian Arabic), an onset is obligatory in that no syllable or word starts with a vowel. MSA normally does not allow complex onsets. However, the Syrian Arabic (SA) variety allows onset consonant clusters. Similar to English, an onset in SA can contain a single consonant, e.g. <bab> ‘door’. In addition, an onset can contain two consonants with a variety of phonotactic constraints that are different from (or illegal in) English. For example, in SA one can find the following onset clusters, which are all illegal (not allowed) in English, such as /kt/ in <kteer> ‘much’, /rf/ in <rfoof> ‘shelves’, /nz/ in <nzilna> ‘we descended’. Moreover, SA allows complex onsets regardless of whether the resulting consonant cluster obeys or flouts the Sonority Sequencing Principle. For example, <trab> ‘soil’ obeys the SSP: /r/ is more sonorant than /t/, whereas in <rfu:f> ‘shelves’ the /f/ is less sonorant and this flouts the SSP. Finally, MSD in Syrian Arabic can be zero, for example, the /kt/ in <ktab> ‘a book’ is a combination of an obstruent followed by another obstruent.

### ***Russian phonotactics***

Ostapenko (2005: 143) gives a detailed account of Russian onsets. They can contain between zero and four positions. Firstly, similar to English, Russian allows onsetless syllables, e.g. <iz> ‘south’. Secondly, any consonant can stand alone at the beginning of the word, e.g. <dom> ‘house’. Thirdly, two member clusters similar to English can start with an obstruent + approximant, e.g. <brot> ‘for’ and/or voiceless fricative /s/ which can be followed by voiceless stops, nasal and approximants e.g. <spasibo> ‘thank you’, <snova> ‘again’, <sleva> ‘left’. Additionally, Russian tolerates a wider range of consonant clusters in onset positions than does English. For instance, two

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<sup>22</sup> The word <stew> has a 3 member cluster [stj] in British English, but it has only two in American English.

member clusters tolerate a MSD of 1, that is to say a stop (obstruent) + nasal, e.g. /pn-, kn-, tm-, gn-/; etc.; fricative (obstruent), except /s/ + nasal, e.g. /vn, vm, zn, zm/; and even a MSD of 0, such as stop + stop, e.g. /pt, tk, kt/; and nasal + nasal, e.g. /mn/. Fourthly, Russian also allows three member clusters in the onset, the same as English /s/ + stop + approximant, e.g. <sprava> ‘on the right’; as well as the following combinations as described in Chew (2000) and Trapman (2007):

- a) /f/ or /v/ + /s/ or /z/ + sonorant, e.g. <vsryv> ‘explosion’
- b) /f/ or /v/ + /s/ or /z/ + stop, e.g. <vskore> ‘soon’
- c) /f/, /v/ or /s/, /z/ + stop + liquid or /v/, e.g. <zdravstvujte> ‘hello’.

Fifthly, Russian even allows four member onset clusters. They all begin with /fs/ or /vz/, a regressive voicing assimilation. As Trapman (2007) describes the majority of CCCC onsets have a stop in the third and a liquid in the fourth position in the onset, e.g. <vzbros> ‘upthrust’, <fstrecha> ‘meeting’. Last but not least, Russian two member onsets flout the SSP in allowing sonorant + obstruent clusters, e.g. /rt/ and /lb/ as in <rta> ‘mouth’ (gen. sg.) and <lba> ‘forehead’ (gen.sg.)

## Methodology

### *Participants*

The study involved two groups of participants: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group comprised 20 participants, with 10 for each language (i.e. 10 for Arabic, 10 for Russian). Participants were first exposure learners who were never exposed to the target language before the treatment. A control group comprised 20 English monolingual participants: 10 for Arabic and 10 for Russian who did not receive any exposure to the language in question.

### *Treatment*

Treatment for the experimental groups consisted of 20-minute classes offered over a 10-week course advertised as ‘Language Lunch Bites’ for Arabic or Russian as a second language.<sup>23</sup> The L2 Arabic experimental group was taught by a native speaker of Syrian Arabic. The L2 Russian experimental group was taught by a native speaker of Russian. These classes were created on the basis of the comprehension-based approach adopted from the *Learnables* (Winitz 1981). Each lesson introduced about 6-7 slides (see Figure 3). Each slide contained about 10 pictures which were gradually

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<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that we are not making a distinction between second and foreign language here. Second language is taken to refer to any language learnt subsequent to participants’ acquisition of their native tongue irrespective of the specific context.

introduced by the native speaking teachers. Learners listened to words and short phrases while they looked at accompanying pictures. These short words and phrases represented the phonetics and phonotactics with various MSD parameter settings for each of the target languages. The meaning was grasped from the context the pictures provided.

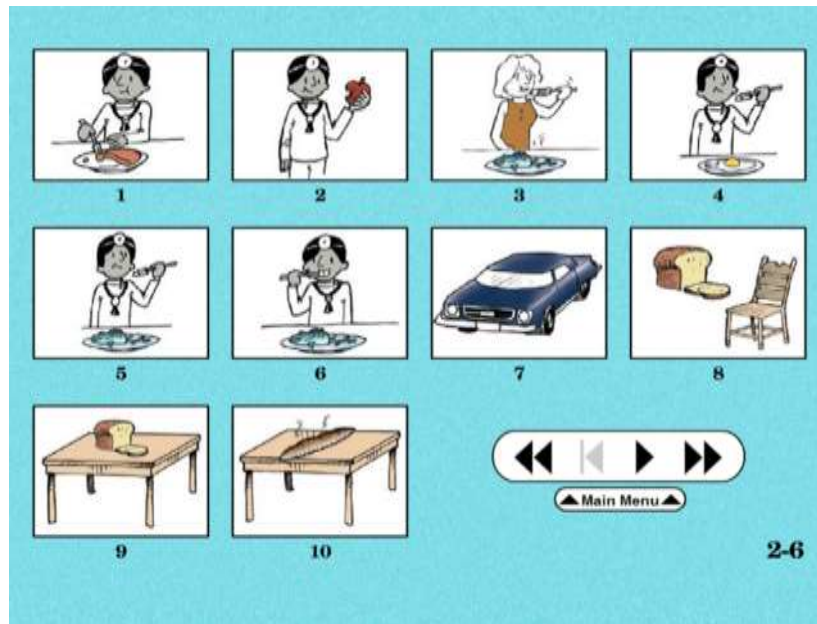


Figure 3: A sample slide from *The Learnables* (Winitz 1981)

The learners were asked to respond in some way, though not necessarily verbally. For example, they could point to the picture as it was described or provide ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answers which are respectively [i:] and [læ] in Arabic and [dæ] and [njet] in Russian to closed questions. Oral production was allowed if the learners wanted to say certain words, but it was controlled by teachers, and according to their impressions this constituted about 15% of what occurred during each class session. No written forms of these languages were presented. Also, no attention was directed to the phonotactics of either language or to pronunciation, so that participants were not made aware of the main purpose of the course.

### **Testing**

An aural judgment task, adopted from Altenberg (2005), was used to see what knowledge the participants had acquired of Arabic or Russian phonetic and phonotactic characteristics. Both experimental and control groups of each language (i.e. Arabic or Russian) had to listen to aurally presented items and their task was to decide if they heard a possible Arabic/Russian word. The participants had to choose either ‘yes’ or ‘no’ after an interval of 1.8 seconds. The immediate response required thus forced participants to

respond without having time to recruit metalinguistic knowledge, i.e. it drew on the participants' (implicit) phonological knowledge of the languages heard. No pre-test was carried out before the treatment to avoid directing learners' attention to the study's focus.

This task consisted of 40 monosyllabic items each for Arabic and Russian of which 30 items were non-words and 10 items were real words. All words were created with non-branching codas. They were divided to form four different experimental conditions. The 30 non-words comprised conditions (a) – (c), and condition (d) represented the 10 real words (see Appendix):

- a) EA/R: 10 items that conform to phonetics and phonotactics of English and Arabic/Russian, for example: /mɑ:ʒ/ and /snæʒ/ for Arabic, and /ʒum/ and /stum/ for Russian.
- b) E\*A/R: 10 items that conform to phonetics and phonotactics of English but violate those of Arabic/Russian, for example: /pɔ:ʒ/ and /skrɑ:d/ for Arabic, and /θeb/ and /dweʒ/ for Russian.
- c) \*E\*A/R: 10 items that violate phonetics and phonotactics of English and Arabic/Russian, but conformed to the phonetics and phonotactics of other world languages, for example: /çɔɪk/ and /ndzaʊd/ for Arabic, and /ʏvrtɔl/ for Russian.
- d) \*EA/R: 10 items which were real words that learners were not exposed to. They conformed to phonetics and phonotactics of Arabic/Russian, but violated phonetics and phonotactics of English, for example: /htər/ and /ndʕi:f/ for Arabic, and /vzʲatʲ/ and /fstʲietʲ/ for Russian.

All items were recorded by the respective native speakers of Arabic and Russian with a stimuli interval of 1.8 seconds. The test was administered during classes in the last week of the course.

## Results

The aim of the aural judgment task was to see whether participants in Arabic and Russian experimental groups had acquired Arabic and Russian phonetic and phonotactic knowledge respectively. For the analyses of the results of this experiment, firstly the mean percentages of correct responses were calculated for each experimental condition. The dependent variable was the mean of correct responses of experimental and control groups on the 4 experimental conditions, i.e. the EA/R, E\*A/R, \*E\*A/R and \*EA/R

conditions, and the independent variable was whether participants were in the experimental or control group.

Independent - samples Mann - Whitney U Test was used for the analysis of the results. The data was considered significant if  $p \leq 0.05$ . Data obtained for Arabic showed no statistically significant difference between the performance of experimental and control groups in the EA ( $p = .506$ ), E\*A ( $p = .563$ ) and \*E\*A ( $p = .337$ ) conditions, but a significant difference was found in the last condition \*EA ( $p = .001$ ). No statistically significant difference was found in the performance of experimental and control groups in the Russian testing in the first two conditions: ER ( $p = .119$ ), E\*R ( $p = .101$ ), but statistically significant differences were found in the last two conditions: \*E\*R ( $p = .035$ ), \*ER ( $p = .000$ ).

Figures 4 and 5 present the detailed results in the form of the mean percentages of correct responses in the Arabic and Russian tests for the control and experimental groups. Under correct responses we mean that participants were able to identify Arabic/Russian phonotactics, i.e. choosing answer 'yes' in the conditions EA/R and \*EA/R and not to identify them in the conditions E\*A/R and \*E\*A/R, i.e. choosing an answer 'no'. Statistically significant results are highlighted by circles.

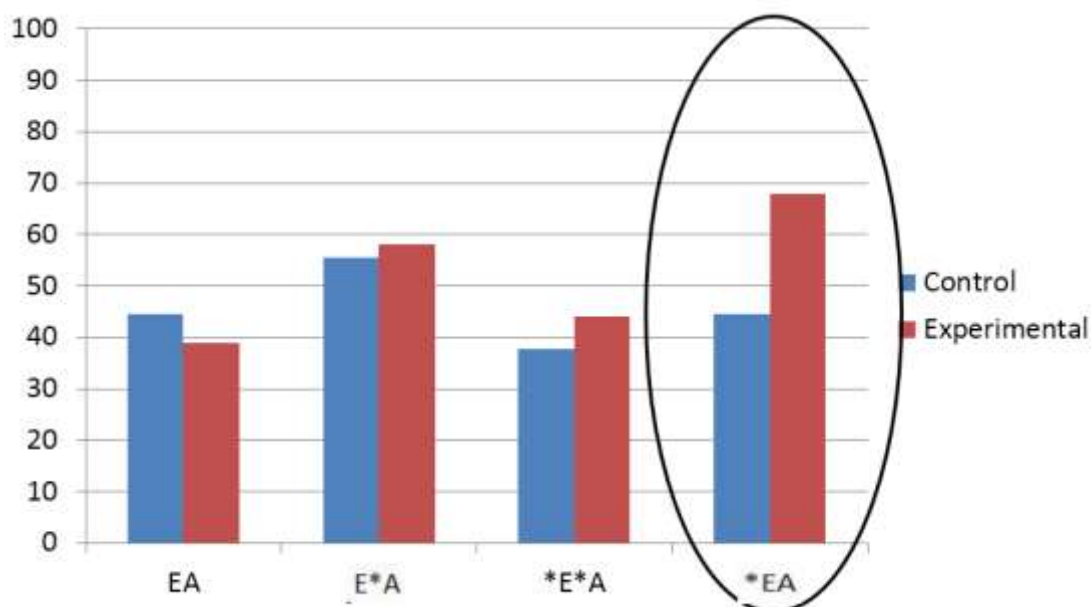
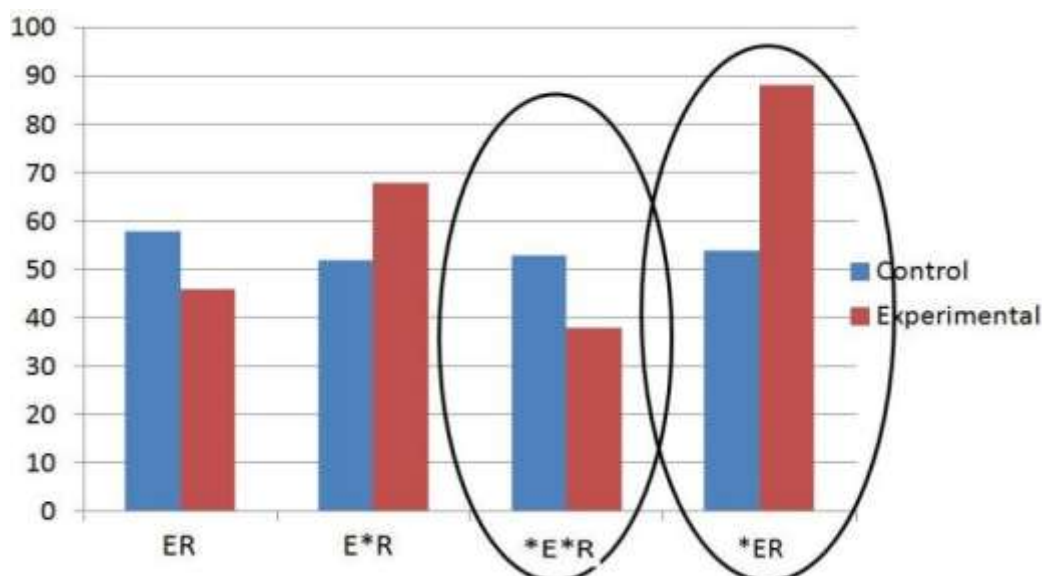


Figure 4: The mean percentages of correct responses in Arabic testing



**Figure 5: The mean percentages of correct responses in Russian testing**

As we can see from both figures, participants in the experimental groups in both tests outperformed participants in the control groups on the last condition - \*EA/R. We can see more correct responses in the final condition of the experimental groups in both Arabic and Russian tests, which are 68% and 89% respectively higher than the amount of correct responses given by the control groups.

Additionally, an interesting observation emerges from the behaviour of the control group in the Russian test where they outperform the experimental group in the \*E\*R condition by about 15%. Lastly, we can see fluctuations in the behaviour of the experimental groups across the four conditions in both tests, whereas the behaviour of the control group in the same conditions remains roughly stable.

## Discussion

Recall that this research attempted to investigate if adult learners, after minimal aural exposure to input in a new language, in this case Syrian Arabic or Russian, can identify the phonetic and phonotactic characteristics of these languages more accurately than controls. An aural judgement task was designed to test participants' knowledge in four conditions to answer this research question.

As was described in the section above, the only statistically significant difference in the four experimental conditions between experimental and control groups participating in Arabic test was found on the last condition \*EA. A similar pattern on the same condition (\*ER) was found in the

behaviour of the experimental and control groups in the Russian test. Recall that this condition consisted of real words which conformed to the phonetics and phonotactics of Syrian Arabic/ Russian but violated those of English. These results indicate that minimal aural exposure to Arabic and Russian was sufficient for experimental group to be able to spot real words which contained phonotactics of these languages more accurately than controls who did not receive such treatment.

The other striking results emerged from the Russian data on the \*E\*R condition. The control group provided more correct answers where they identified the test items conforming to the phonetics and phonotactics of other world languages as not being possible in Russian; the opposite was true for the experimental group. Such behaviour might seem to be surprising. However, if we recall the items used, which are shown in Table 6, we see clusters maximally occupying five positions were employed, with SSP violations and MSD = 0. Russian phonotactics, as described above, are of a similar nature, and they are more complex than Syrian Arabic which maximally allows only two member onset clusters. Consequently, one of the likely reasons why the experimental group thought of the test items \*E\*R as possible Russian words could be because of the phonotactic similarities between Russian and the clusters of other world languages selected for that part of the test. This makes sense when we consider that no statistically significant difference on the same condition was found between the two groups on the Arabic test.

Provided that the only input participants received in the experimental group came from the treatment in the form of the lessons, this seems to be sufficient evidence to suggest that minimal aural or first exposure to a new language is enough for the participants to develop awareness of the phonotactics of Syrian Arabic or Russian. Additionally, there seems to be greater sensitivity to the language which is typologically more complex than English, namely Russian.

### **Limitations**

The present study was a pilot study and as such had its limitations. Firstly, the sample size was restricted. Ideally, a further study with more participants should be conducted. Secondly, it should be borne in mind that the last condition comprised real words which not only demonstrated the phonetics and phonotactics of Syrian Arabic and Russian, but also favoured segmental processes such as pharyngealisation (for Syrian Arabic) and palatalisation (for Russian). These processes could have been involved in affecting the

participants' judgements. Therefore, future research could try to investigate this by separating these variables. Thirdly, in order to have a clear understanding of why the experimental group treated the items of phonotactically complex world languages as possible Russian words, a future study could choose test items with consideration of a more detailed version of the sonority hierarchy (see Parker 2002). Additionally, it is worth quantifying the frequency of phonotactic patterns presented during the lessons, as it is likely that complex phonotactics are more frequent in Russian than in Arabic, which could also serve as an explanation for the pattern which emerged in the \*E\*R, but not \*E\*A condition. Last but not least, another study could test if comprehension-based approach is beneficial for new learners' phonotactic awareness, by comparing it to a different method of teaching, for example the communicative approach; see Rast (2008).

## Conclusion

It is clear from the judgment task that learners had more accurate knowledge of which word-initial clusters are possible in Arabic/Russian than the control group, especially regarding the fourth condition (\*EA/R). That is, learners appear to have some correct information regarding the phonotactic characteristics of the language to which they were exposed (Arabic and Russian). Learners show sensitivity to sonority violations in Syrian Arabic and Russian, and to the Minimal Sonority Distance of zero in Russian. However, it is still worth pursuing the role segmental inventories play in learners' judgments of a new phonology.

Further, given that learners scored fairly high on the fourth condition in the judgment task, we may assume that these correct judgments must be based on the minimal input or first exposure to a new language that they have received in the treatment, which would have given learners an edge over the control group. From a pedagogical viewpoint, this may highlight adult L2 learners' use of subconscious mechanisms akin to those babies use and, indicate that the comprehension-based approach is beneficial to learners' recognition of phonetics and phonotactics at the outset of language acquisition.

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## Appendix

### Condition (a): EA/R

1	zu:d	6	smɔ:f
2	mɑ:ʒ	7	snæʒ
3	ʃɪm	8	gret
4	rɔɪk	9	flɒθ
5	laʊl	10	kri:f

**Table 1: 10 items that conform to phonetics and phonotactics of English and Arabic (EA)**

1	/gæɪl/	6	/smæk/
2	/nɒl/	7	/blɒt/
3	/ʒum/	8	/stum/
4	/tʃɪʃ/	9	/glɪl/
5	/zetʃ/	10	/sles/

**Table 2: 10 items that conform to phonetics and phonotactics of English and Russian (ER)**

**Condition (b): E\*A/R**

1	paɪð	6	prɪʃ
2	tʃaʊm	7	θlæɜ
3	pɔ:ɜ	8	skra:d
4	vu:r	9	pwi:l
5	vɒʃ	10	strɔɪf

**Table 3: 10 items that conform to phonetics and phonotactics of English but violate those of Arabic (E\*A)**

1	/wu:g/	6	/twi:m/
2	/hi:ŋ/	7	/prub/
3	/θeb/	8	/dweɜ/
4	/ðæg/	9	/skwɒl/
5	/ɪa:v/	10	/stra:ŋ/

**Table 4: 10 items that conform to phonetics and phonotactics of English but violate those of Russian (E\*R)**

**Condition (c): \*E\*A/R**

1	βa:z	6	mpi:r
2	ɲæt	7	gbɪn
3	çɔɪk	8	ngbaɪʃ
4	ræɪs	9	ndzaʊd
5	zu:m	10	βræl

**Table 5: 10 items that violate phonetics and phonotactics of English and Arabic, but conformed to the phonetics/ phonotactics of other world languages (\*E\*A)**

1	/eivŋ/	6	/gbuk /
2	/kiz/	7	/mpær/
3	/qel/	8	/nkil/
4	/çiatʃ /	9	/ndzev /
5	/ʏab/	10	/ʃtvrɔl/

**Table 6: 10 items that violate phonetics and phonotactics of English and Russian, but conformed to the phonetics/ phonotactics of other world languages (\*E\*R)**

**Condition (d): \*EA/R**

1	slæħ	6	blɑ:tʃ
2	ʒdi:d	7	rɸu:f
3	ħtər	8	ndʃi:f
4	ktæb	9	nzɔ:l
5	nkɪb	10	ʃlu:n

**Table 7: 10 items that are real words that learners are not exposed to. They conform to phonetics and phonotactics of Arabic but violate phonetics and phonotactics of English (\*EA)**

1	/stvɔl/	6	/gvɔstʃ/
2	/sv ʲet/	7	/rt ʲyt ʲj/
3	/hlat/	8	/zdraf/
4	/vzʲatʲ/	9	/fprɔk/
5	/ktɪr/	10	/fstlʲetʲ/

**Table 8: 10 items that are real words that learners are not exposed to. They conform to phonetics and phonotactics of Russian, but violate phonetics and phonotactics of English (\*ER)**

# 39 English as a global language: where to for pronunciation teaching?

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## Abstract

As the English language has been caught up in the processes of globalisation, both driving and resulting from the emergence of a language for use as a lingua franca in local and international, multilingual and multicultural contexts (Graddol, 2006), profound questions have been raised for teachers of English' beliefs and assumptions about language teaching and learning. Examining how English is used today challenges the 'native-speaker' norms and 'language base' of what we teach as well as how we can best support our learners to become effective communicators in a range of contexts. It is argued that variation in pronunciation gives rise to more communication difficulties than grammatical or lexical variation; English worldwide encompasses considerable phonetic and phonological variation, and this raises the question of whether and how to teach pronunciation, and what, if any, 'core' or model(s) to use (Jenkins, 2002).

This study explored attitudes towards the teaching of pronunciation and its goals among three different groups of BESs (Bilingual English Speakers, expert users of English as either L1 or L2 (Jenkins, 2000, p. 9)): modern language undergraduates, students on an MA in ELT and their lecturers in English and Modern Languages. All have a stake in the issue of whether and how to teach pronunciation to avoid miscommunication, as well as attitudes to 'norms' and how these may be changing. It is hoped that the results of this study and the discussion in the session will contribute, in a small way, to the ongoing debate.

## English as a global language

"How English develops in the world is no business whatever of native speakers in England, the United States, or anywhere else ... The very fact that English is an international language means that no nation can have custody over it." (Widdowson, 1994 p.385)

Various estimates for the number of English speakers worldwide are extant. It has been suggested (Graddol, 2006) that around 80% of communication in

English is among non-native speakers. Consequently it is widely argued that this fact should have an impact on English language teaching, and suggested that ELT should 'apply an L2 user model' (Cook, 1999, p. 185).

It is easy to get caught up in a debate about terminology (English as an International Language or EIL, English as a Lingua Franca or ELF, World Englishes or WE) and who is or is not included: are Expanding Circle Englishes still to be regarded as norm-dependent? Is a lingua franca inclusive or exclusive of native speakers? Yet as a teacher one's primary interest is likely to be what to teach. Everywhere in the world this may be coming into question, not only in former British colonies. In Europe English has traditionally been taught as a foreign language - based previously largely on British English norms but now often on American English - but here too it is now widely employed as a lingua franca between non-native speakers ((Modiano, 2009; Dombi 2011). Wherever we teach, we need to review the language models we use, but like any proposed change, it cannot happen on the word of a handful of experts: both classroom teachers and students clearly have a great deal to say about what is learned in the language classroom.

### **Pronunciation of English**

Jenkins (1998) suggests that the widespread use of EIL meant that for many learners the goal was no longer to interact with, or indeed therefore to sound like, native speakers. She proposed a phonological core, mastery of which was necessary for effective international communication in English, and which omitted those phonological features she felt did not greatly contribute to intelligibility. As she pointed out, in order for this model to be accepted, considerable change in teacher training and teacher attitudes would be required. However, there is also evidence that not all students of English would welcome pronunciation teaching which focused on intelligibility over native speaker norms.

Both language teachers and students may be conservative in views and expectations. Timmis' study of the opinions of nearly 600 teachers and students of English from over 45 countries found that of the students, a two-thirds majority would prefer to have NS-like pronunciation. Fewer than 30% of the teachers, by contrast, agreed with this, some considering 'accented intelligibility' as more desirable, though some merely felt it to be more realistic, and still regarded 'native speaker' (NS) competence as 'the benchmark of perfection' (Timmis, 2002).

In Jenkins' (2007) questionnaire study with specifically Expanding Circle English speakers, respondents showed positive attitudes to, for example, a Swedish accent and negative ones to China English, Japanese English, Russian English and even their own L1. In interviews, however, a more complex situation was revealed, with most participants recognising that effective communication did not depend on the imitation of a NS model. These views are, perhaps unsurprisingly, partly dependent on the cultural background of the participants; a survey of Asian university students' attitudes to pronunciation of English found that while Malaysian students valued their own accented variety, Koreans and especially Japanese 'disapproved of their own varieties of English and indicated their preference for native English pronunciation' (Tokumoto and Shibata, 2011, p.392).

As recently as 2012, a Croatian study surveying 52 undergraduate English majors in a Croatian university found that while respondents agreed on the importance of learning several varieties, with EIL ranked slightly higher than British and American English, nonetheless in the classroom they wanted BE or AE, and perceived some varieties as 'more authentic', with half claiming that BE was 'most appealing to me' (Vodopija-Krstanoviae and Brala-Vukanoviae, 2012).

All of this suggests that attitudes are not changing as rapidly as globalisation is progressing. Yet one would expect the academic debate to be filtering through to language teachers, and experience of speaking English in the world to be moulding the view of learners. Within a university context this study therefore attempted to address the following questions:

- 1 How much importance do language learners / teachers ascribe to pronunciation?
- 2 How much importance do language learners / teachers ascribe to pronunciation teaching?
- 3 What models do they prefer in speaking an L2?
- 4 What models do they feel are appropriate for English?

## **Methodology**

Since the study was situated in the School of Languages and ELT at a post-92 university, there was a good opportunity to tap into the views of both students and tutors, and of those studying or teaching both English and other languages. Our principal research tool was an online questionnaire (see appendix 1), which was followed up by three individual semi-structured interviews which provided both triangulation and more qualitative data.

The link for the questionnaire was sent to three specific cohorts: second-year language undergraduates who had just completed an optional module in phonetics and phonology, and many of whom were about to embark on a year abroad as language assistants (10 responses); students on an MA in ELT (10 responses); and university tutors in Languages and English Language Teaching (27 responses). It was hoped to interview one respondent from each cohort, but in practice the interviewees were: an EAP tutor (L1 English: Interviewee 1), a French tutor (L1 French: Interviewee 2) and an MA student (L1 English: Interviewee 3).

The questionnaire (using Survey Monkey) was analysed comparing: tutors with students; age bands; L1 English with L1 other; and much versus little experience of teaching a second language. The interviews explored some of the questions in greater depth (see appendix 2 for interview schedule), looking for example at the context in which the interviewees learned and used different languages, and the interplay of language and identity, and also followed up points which arose from the particular discussion, such as the perceptions of French as used internationally.

### **Findings and Implications**

The questionnaire covered three areas, namely: the respondents' profile; pronunciation in general language learning (i.e. not specifically English); and pronunciation models for English. The 47 respondents were split 60-40 as regards L1 being English or other, with a spread across the three cohorts although the ratio of English first language speakers was highest among the undergraduates. There was a good spread across the five age bands although slightly more in the over-50 bracket than the others. Eighty per cent claimed to have a wide or very wide experience of speaking a second language, 90% of listening to others speaking their own first language and of language learning, although 20% (largely the undergraduates) acknowledged 'little or none' teaching experience.

Many of our findings were predictable and/ or in line with those of other studies. As regards pronunciation in general language learning, there was majority agreement that 'Pronunciation causes more misunderstandings than vocabulary or grammar when communicating in another language' (83% agree strongly, agree or not sure), which agrees with Jennifer Jenkins' empirical studies of actual communication failures (Jenkins, 2000). Three questions (9, 10 and 20) related to whether pronunciation should be taught in the language classroom, and these elicited agreement of between 80 and 90%. There was also general agreement on wanting to sound like a 'native



speaker' in a second language, although the figures here were lower for those whose L1 was NOT English (61% as opposed to 70%).

Sixty three per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed that they found communication easier with other 'non-native' speakers than with 'native speakers'. This is not necessarily supported by the findings of others and was further explored in the interviews. Here it was suggested that it is "easier to speak to [NS], but not easier to understand them" (Interviewee 1); interviewee 3 said talking with friends "for fun" was easier than with NS "because they exaggerated everything ... we'd all be using like basic language as well". Interviewees 2 and 3 both expressed difficulties understanding some regional NS accents. For example, Interviewee 2 recounted having asked a student from Newcastle who was "brilliant" at French to use only French and stop talking to her in English as she couldn't understand him.

Looking specifically at pronunciation models, 77% agreed or strongly agreed that they tried to imitate an 'ideal speaker', 78% that 'the teacher should be a model for student pronunciation', 93% that it is not important to sound like a 'native' as long as you are intelligible, and 84% that it is important for English to listen to a wide range of accents (question 21). Conversely 84% disagreed (29.5% strongly, the highest number by far in that category) that 'Because there are so many different varieties of English / World Englishes, there is no point in trying to teach English pronunciation.' However, there was a range of opinions on the value of RP as a model, and whether models should be 'native speakers'. These questions are therefore examined below.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the answers to our first two questions were:

- 1 How much importance do language learners / teachers ascribe to pronunciation?
- 2 How much importance do language learners / teachers ascribe to pronunciation teaching?

Answer: a good deal to both, judging by the questionnaire data. Two of the interviewees made a distinction between pronunciation and accent. Interviewee 2 (L1 French) tells students "your English accent will sound lovely in France ... but think of your pronunciation and intonation, these are the important things". Interviewee 1 agreed that accent was not important but there had to be a degree of clarity and consistency of students' pronunciation "so everyone understands what they mean." Thus they felt that while

pronunciation was important, what was important was to be clear and comprehensible rather than necessarily sounding like a NS.

Interviewee 3 suggested pronunciation teaching should "Maybe just focus on things that impede intelligibility ... rather than spending time on things that may not be particularly important to those learners in that context." In the classroom Interviewee 2 practises French sounds that don't exist in English, e.g. front rounded vowels, and thinks moreover that this needs to go hand in hand with teaching intonation because it's "not just a matter of do you sound French, it affects communication ... how people understand what you want to say." She felt the same was true of French people speaking English, that intonation was a key element in intelligibility.

Interviewee 3 also commented that the importance of pronunciation may vary with different contexts. She had lived in Indonesia, a multilingual context, where many people have a local L1, then Indonesian, and are learning other languages on top of that, giving rise to a wide variety of accents and degrees of proficiency. When she was learning Indonesian "accent wasn't really an issue", the important thing being that she was trying. She further pointed out that we all accommodate how we speak, accent as well as, often, grammar and vocabulary, depending on context. "People adjust their accent and the way they speak depending where they are and who they are speaking to."

Looking specifically at the view that pronunciation causes more misunderstandings than either grammar or vocabulary, as maintained by Jenkins, our respondents' views were correlated with teaching experience: 64% of those with 'much experience' of language teaching agreed or strongly agreed with this, 22% were not sure, whereas of those with 'little experience' of language teaching, there was a 40-20-40 profile agree-not sure-disagree, though in neither group did anyone strongly disagree.

The questions where opinions were divided were:

- Q 16      The best model for British English pronunciation is RP;
- Q 17      Pronunciation models should be 'native speakers';
- Q 18      Pronunciation models don't need to be 'native speakers'
- Q 19      It doesn't matter if speakers don't sound like a 'native' as long as other people can understand them.

Figures 1-4 show a comparison of the views of English first language speakers with those of respondents with other first languages. As can be seen, the profiles of response were quite different for these two groups, with the L1 English speakers in general disagreeing with the value of RP, the importance of NS models, and the desirability of sounding like a 'native', whereas speakers of other languages were more in favour of RP, of NS models and of the value of sounding like a 'native'. Interviewee 1 described studying Persian at the university of study, using very traditional methods with a great focus on grammar and accuracy, which seems to suggest that these teachers of other languages than English may tend to favour more traditional methodologies and goals. This is of course a complex situation; respondents with other L1s were in many cases people who have invested a great deal of time and effort in learning English and using it in their professional environment, and may feel, rightly or wrongly, their professional credibility depends on their approaching NS norms and proficiency.

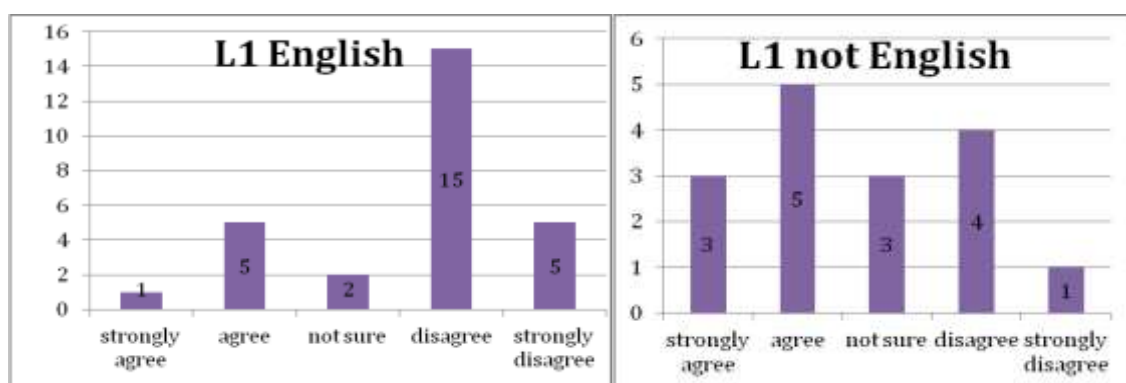


Figure 1: The best model for British English pronunciation is RP

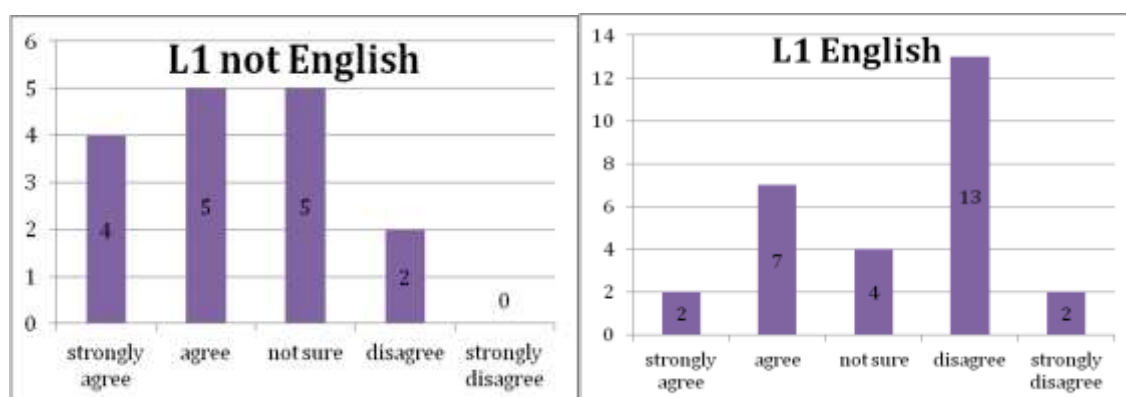
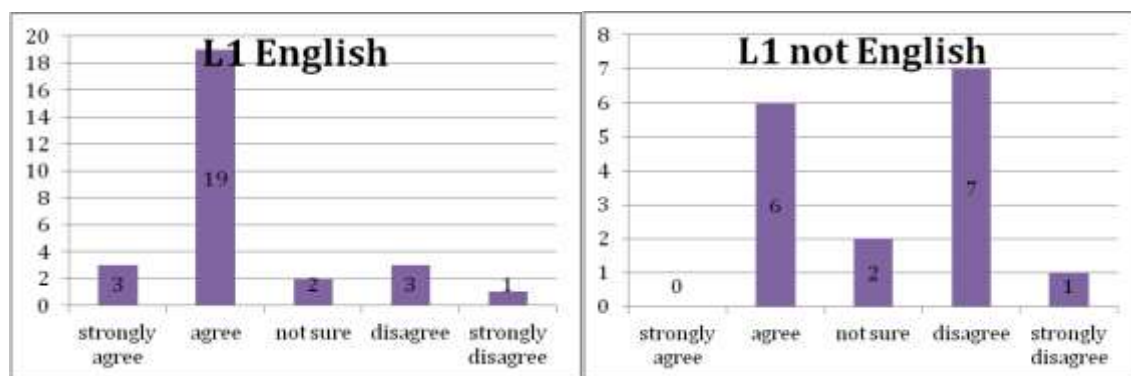
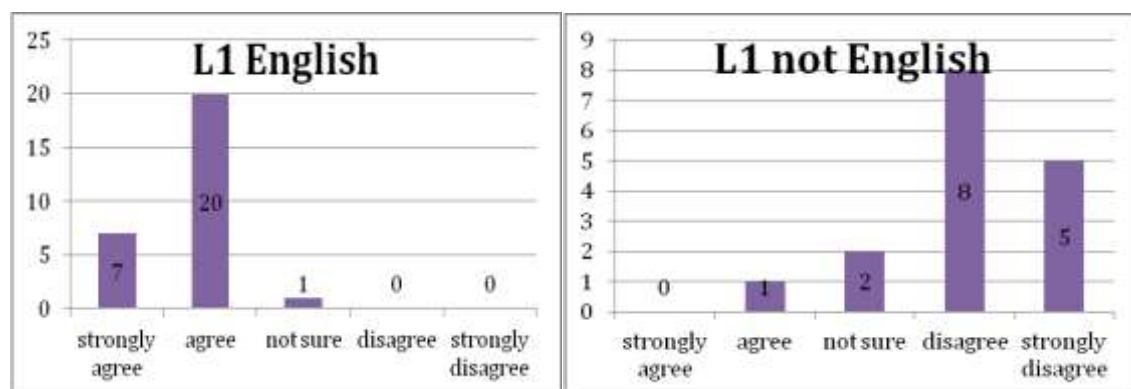


Figure 2: Pronunciation models should be 'native speakers'



**Figure 3: Pronunciation models don't need to be 'native speakers'**



**Figure 4: It doesn't matter if speakers don't sound like a 'native' as long as other people can understand them.**

As a Croatian study (Vodopija-Krstanovia & Brala-Vukanovia, 2012) found, English majors, while in theory in favour of learning EIL, which is de-linked from 'native speaker' norms, in practice showed an "absolute preference" for BE / AE 'native speaker' norms in the classroom. This preference seems to be revealed also in those of our respondents whose first language was not English in the response profiles in figures 1-4. There seems to be a conflict between idealised theory (we don't need a native speaker model; it doesn't matter if we don't sound like a native as long as we are intelligible) and ideal practice (but *I* want to sound like a native speaker). This also agrees with Timmis' (2002) findings that there was a desire for NS norms even among those who did not anticipate using English with 'native speakers'. A further point to be noted as regards questions 17 and 18 is that, whereas logically everyone who agreed with the former should have disagreed with the latter, and vice versa, in fact this was not entirely the case, suggesting some respondents were a little unclear in their opinions. This may also be due to the conflict outlined above; some people may genuinely feel that BOTH statements are true, in some sense.

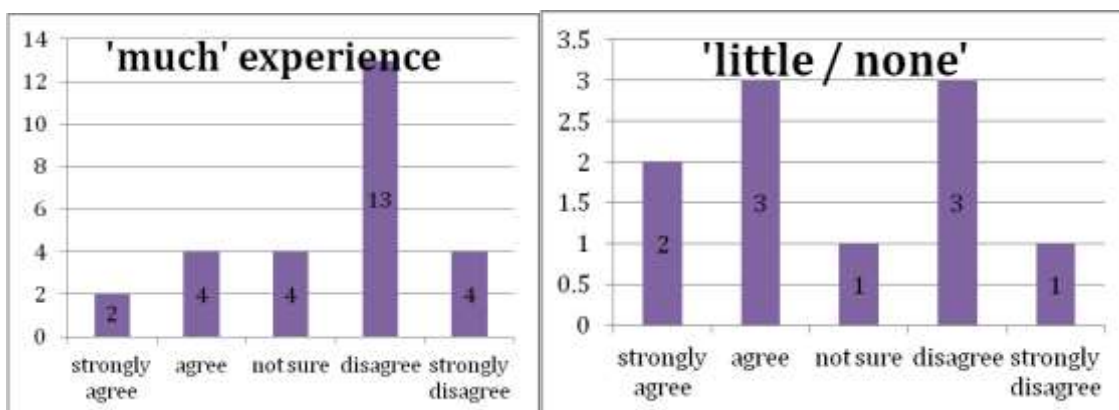
In our interviews we were able to explore the significance of identity in retention or otherwise of a degree of L1 accent in speaking an L2. Jenkins' (2009; 2007) questionnaire study of L2 speakers found 'an attachment to ... native-speaker models remains firmly in place ... despite the fact that they no longer learn English to communicate primarily with its native speakers' but in an interview study of young teachers of English 'more ambivalence and even conflicted feelings' were revealed. Her interviewees felt an 'obligation' to acquire a near-NS accent 'in order to be seen - and to see themselves - as successful English speakers and teachers', and this was in conflict with a 'desire to project their own local identity in their English' and feel 'part of a community of lingua franca English speakers'. Our interviewee 2, an L2 speaker of English, said that she wanted to sound as like a BE native as possible because it facilitates communication (in the UK), but that if she were to move to, say, Australia she would want to sound Australian. Our L1 English speakers, interviewees 1 and 3, however, were more in favour of keeping one's own accent. "It breaks the ice ... when I meet people from abroad here, I like it that they have an accent, you know, it kind of ... sets them apart" (Int. 1); "when you go to the country and speak French with an English accent they, they respond strangely [laugh]" but learning Indonesian "accent wasn't really an issue" (Int. 3).

With Interviewee 2 the question arose as to whether, in view of France's colonial history, there is argument as to "which French is correct" (Interviewer). This interviewee seemed to think that it was not really an issue. The Académie Française rules on correct usage but not, she thought, as regards accent or pronunciation. She did not believe that different accents were stigmatised and suggested that someone from a tiny village may be more difficult to understand than, for instance, someone from Quebec or Montreal. On the other hand, speakers from francophone Canada do generally see the way they speak as part of their national identity, just as many English speakers, from Inner, Outer and Expanding Circles, do.

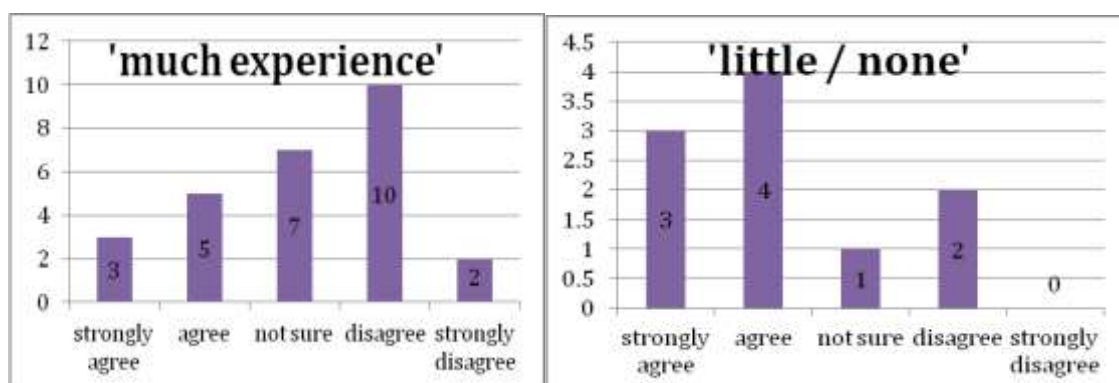
Other studies have found a correlation between age and opinions on the desirability of NS models, and RP in particular, with younger respondents being more open to other varieties of English; for example Jenkins (2009, p.205) found a 'divide between younger ... English users and those from older generations'. In our survey there was no clear correlation between age and agreement or disagreement with the four statements. Our study suggested that context may be a more important factor than age; the relative importance of pronunciation is perhaps lower in multilingual contexts, for instance. The goals of the individual speaker, the desire to fit in or stand out, to facilitate

communication, to demonstrate professional competence probably all play a role in determining the weight attached to pronunciation and the choice of models.

Are attitudes changing? It seems that they are changing more among teachers of English than among learners. Figures 5 and 6 show the different profiles for those with 'much' teaching experience as compared with 'little or none' for questions 16 and 17.



**Figure 5: The best model for British English pronunciation is RP**



**Figure 6: Pronunciation models should be 'native speakers'**

While linguists argue about the definitions and relative values of EIL, ELF, EGL and other acronyms, it seems that many practitioners on the shop-floor, so to speak, of English learning and teaching retain values inculcated perhaps decades ago and, despite some recognition of the many recent changes in our world, continue to aim for native-like pronunciation. There may be a conflict between these goals and one's sense of identity, there may be a nod in the direction of a global world, but NS models retain some of their power and glamour.

## Implications: what should we teach?

It would be nice to have a clear and easy answer to this question. Failing that, it seems that the best we can do is to make ourselves aware of the issues and attempt to respond sensitively to the needs and aspirations of our particular students in their particular context. Awareness-raising activities among both teachers and students may be profitable: for example, when English Language undergraduates indicated a desire to achieve NS-like pronunciation, in addition to guiding them to suitable resources the authors have also responded with a discussion session on pronunciation models and the function of English in the world and in their lives.

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## Appendix 1 – Questionnaire: Attitudes to pronunciation and pronunciation teaching

*(this questionnaire was presented online using Survey Monkey)*

About you

1 Please tick ALL THAT APPLY for Q1:

*English is my first language*

*I am proficient in English and another language(s)*

*I am multilingual and English is one of my languages*

*I am quite clear what my first language is.*

Please tick ONE answer for all other questions:

2 I am:

*an undergraduate on the Phonology module*

*a student on the MA ELT*

*a Language / English Language tutor*

3 I am

*18-22 23-30*

*31-40*

*41-50*

*over 50*

4 I would categorise my experience of speaking a second language as:

*very wide (many occasions with many different people and situations)*

*wide*

*rather limited*

*very limited*

*classroom only*

5 I would categorise my experience of listening to people speaking my first language(s) as

*very wide*

*wide*

*rather limited*

*very limited*

*classroom only*

6 I would categorise my teaching/ learning experience as regards languages as

*much experience of both teaching and learning*

*a little experience of both teaching and learning*

*much experience of teaching but little of learning*

*much experience of learning but little/none of teaching*

Pronunciation in general language learning

7 Pronunciation causes more misunderstandings than vocabulary or grammar when communicating in another language

*strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree*



8 If you get the individual sounds right, it's not so important if connected speech processes like linking and weak forms, and intonation, are not like a native speaker's  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

9 Pronunciation teaching needs to happen in the language classroom.  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

10 Most people will pick up pronunciation naturally; the teacher's job is just to help them if they are not clear to others  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

**If your L1 is English, answer question 11.**

11 I would like to sound like a 'native speaker' in the language(s) I learn.

**If your L1 is not English, answer question 12.**

12 I would like to sound like a 'native speaker' in English, e.g. British or American.  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

13 I find spoken communication easier with other 'non-native' speakers than with 'native speakers'.  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

What pronunciation models?

14 I try to imitate an 'ideal speaker' pronunciation model when speaking another language.  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

15 The teacher should be a model for student pronunciation.  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

16 The best model to use for British English pronunciation is RP (Received Pronunciation, also known as BBC English, the Queen's English)  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

17 Pronunciation models should be 'native speakers'.  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

18 Pronunciation models don't need to be 'native speakers'.  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

19 It doesn't matter if speakers don't sound like a native, as long as other people can understand them.  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

20 Because there are so many different varieties of English / World Englishes, there is no point in trying to teach English pronunciation.  
***strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree***

21 The teacher needs to provide classroom practice in listening to a wide range of varieties of English.

*strongly agree/ agree/ not sure / disagree / strongly disagree*

## **Appendix 2 – Semi-structured interview schedule**

### **Interviewee profile:**

Are you clear on your first language?

What is it?

Talk about your language teaching / learning experience

### **General language learning:**

How important is pronunciation?

What is the role of a teacher, in your view?

Could you expand on that based on own learning / teaching experience?

### **Expectations and models:**

When speaking another language, what models do you choose?

Do you want to be identified by your accent? Is it part of who you are?

Who do you normally talk to?

NS / NNS interlocutors?

In L1, speaking to 'NNS' what is the effect of their pronunciation on:

- understanding
- judgements of e.g. general language level, intelligence, character ....

English is very important globally - whose English?

How do/ will your views on that inform your teaching?

# 40

## Constructing intercultural communication: Task-based English for Medical Purposes in Cuba

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### Introduction

The aim of this paper is to describe the theoretical and methodological framework underpinning the English for Medical Purposes (EMP) course in the discrete context of the University of Medical Sciences (UMS) Manuel Fajardo in Havana, Cuba. Firstly, the paper illustrates the educational context, the course organisation, and the EMP social and academic goals within the framework of UMS. It also introduces the Doctor-Patient Consultation (D-PC) as the communicative task holistically scaffolding linguistic knowledge-building activities with theoretical and practical medical knowledge. The task is pursued both in L1 (first language: Spanish) and in EMP courses, with the primary aim to avoid the negative effects of iatrogenesis. The second part demonstrates how EMP underpins its pedagogy on Vygotskian (1978) sociocultural ideas of learning, whereby the D-PC represents a problem-solving activity within the category of experiential learning, characteristic of higher educational goals for the medical profession (Barnett, 1994; Corbett, 2003). Moreover, the D-PC provides meaningful scope, authenticity, cognitive processes and contextual embedding to realise both linguistic and medical successful outcomes. The paper concludes with examples of pedagogical practices of EMP aimed at developing intercultural communication within the D-PC task.

The study contributes to current English for Specific Purposes (ESP) theory and practice, laying the foundations for future investigation and exchanges within multicultural and intercultural theoretical and practical paradigms.

### The sociocultural context

The ELT Department at the *School of Medicine Manuel Fajardo* is the sole provider of EMP for UMS students. It is also the sole provider of pre-service training and professional development for ESP teachers. As such it plays a significant role, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, in

determining the development of medical education in Cuba. The medical career consists of five years. A generic English course is taught to medical students during the first three years of their medical studies. The ESP programme explored in this article is taken by 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year medical students. During these two years, pre-service EMP teachers are trained alongside medical students in preparation to teach English for Medical Purposes at the University of Havana. In addressing intercultural competence, the outline of the D-PC constitutes the central task around which both EMP teacher training and EMP course are structured. It is important therefore to define by means of ongoing research the degree of competence expected from the EMP teachers and from the medical students.

EMP at UMS, Havana, Cuba, is used for two purposes: 1) as a task-based communicative course to train medical doctor students in intercultural communication, and 2) as part of ELT training; to promote future EMP student teachers' own language proficiency in parallel with the development of teaching techniques that student teachers can later adopt in their classroom contexts. The course responded firstly to the need to integrate a focus on developing EMP students' spoken and EMP teachers' spoken and written communication, and grammar in use.

### **The theoretical background**

The D-PC task was chosen to address content relevant to both EMP students and EMP pre-service student teachers. It represents the communicative task holistically scaffolding linguistic knowledge-building activities with theoretical and practical medical knowledge, preparing clinicians to deal with cultural diversity and the impact with divergent beliefs, values and behaviours of fellow clinicians, patients and relatives. The task is pursued both in the Spanish and the EMP courses, with the primary aim to avoid the negative effects of iatrogenesis. During the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year of medical studies, EMP is delivered through CLIL, a bilingual content-based approach (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011), seeing both Cuban and international students sharing EMP and ward-based contents. This task is conceptualised within a strong version of Communicative Approach, aiming to deliver content exclusively through the TL (Target Language: English), comprising both unfocused and focused language pedagogy. The D-PC task has been chosen for addressing a) meaning-focused language use, b) both students' and teachers' goals, c) its pedagogical and contextual authenticity, d) the selection of targeted linguistic and metalinguistic skills to combine and frame both students' courses and pre-service teachers' training, e) the cognitive processes and contextual embedding to realise linguistic and

medical successful outcomes, and pursue pre-service training course design, methodology and testing (Ellis, 2003).

This task has been chosen also to respond to ecologic needs to sustain theoretical, methodological and teaching resources for both EMP courses and EMP pre-service and in-service teacher training. It has ideal characteristics to underpin the desired future increment of international student intake, and the consequent need to embed the course in multicultural theory and practice and intercultural communication. It also aspires to be the piloting ground to gather information for future developments in the use of technology in Higher Education English Language Teaching (ELT).

This paper looks at how medical, linguistic and pedagogical contents were integrated with activities promoting language development, and at how this approach could usefully be transferred to the teacher-training contexts, where it is fundamental to develop pre-service student teachers' language proficiency in parallel with promoting their teaching skills. Multicultural theory underpins the research rationale guiding all aspects of the design of this specific intercultural language teaching methodology, its practice and its assessment. Intercultural theory frames the attempt to incorporate linguistic and medical subject content in the learning materials; and to foster native and non-native pre-service teachers' ability to 'move between the home and target cultures' (Corbett, 2003, p. 4)

Trainee teachers are expected to possess both linguistic and pedagogical content knowledge. Their linguistic knowledge consists of all communicative competencies (Canale, 1983), namely: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic. During the first three years of medical studies, EMP students consolidate their knowledge of English, where EMP teachers impart features of grammar, generic and EMP microlinguistic vocabulary, pronunciation, discourse and comprehension-oriented language goals. The skills pursued will be integrative of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Content goals will focus on acquiring and demonstrating medical content knowledge relevant and building up to the D-PC task that is pursued in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year of medical school.

Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge will be articulated following the components of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Lu & Corbett, 2012). EMP teachers' principle is to teach English as a Lingua Franca, responding to the need for teaching and communicating with people of different cultural backgrounds. Teachers' pedagogical content knowledge

must be embedded in an intercultural language pedagogy pursuing knowledge and skills that allow the effective negotiation of varying cultural attitudes and behaviours, and the mediation of students' medical knowledge. EMP teachers will aim to fully engage their students 'by seeking to promote an enriching encounter with otherness' (Lu & Corbett, 2012; p. 18). Intercultural learning in the EMP classrooms and wards follows Byriam's (2008) model of intercultural English language teaching, and aims to include the '*savoirs*' constituting Intercultural Communicative Competence:

- 1) *Savoir être*: Attitudes, curiosity and openness readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own.
- 2) *Savoirs*: Knowledge of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and one's interlocutor's country and the general processes of societal and individual interaction.
- 3) *Savoir comprendre*: Skills of interpreting and relating: the ability to interpret and document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own.
- 4) *Savoir apprendre/faire*: Skills of discovery and interaction: the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communications and interactions.
- 5) *Savoir s'engager*: an ability to evaluate critically on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries.

(Lu & Corbett, 2012, p. 20)

Byriam's model will enable the design of a D-PC task that integrates two fundamental aspects: Firstly, the disparities in medical provision between members of different cultural communities; secondly, 'the promotion of shared decision making about treatment' (Corbett, 2003, p. 26).

### **Problem-Based Learning**

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is an approach that follows from the Task-Based Learning (TBL) theoretical position, but which does not assume that acquisition of linguistic and medical knowledge is triggered naturally by accomplishing meaningful medical tasks in classroom or ward environments. PBL assumes that 'students learn complex content and skills most effectively, not when they are subject to information-rich lectures, supplemented by personal reading, but rather when 'supported by a facilitator, they are engaged in problem-solving activities towards a particular end' (Lu & Corbett, 2012, p. 37). PBL falls into the broad category of 'experiential

learning' that Barnett (1994) theorised for professional-oriented higher education settings.

The team is currently addressing how to integrate the assessment of intercultural communicative competence and medical knowledge. Whilst eager to learn and adopt the exhaustive and detailed inventory and questionnaire for the assessment of cultural competence training in medical schools (Tool for Assessing Cultural Competence Training - TACCT; Association of American Medical Colleges, 2005, 2006), it remains to be seen whether its integration will be feasible in the discreet socio-political Cuban context.

The following sections will describe the methodological premises and a selection of examples of current EMP practices.

## Methodology

EMP pedagogical practices aim to develop intercultural communication within the D-PC task. PBL focuses on the use of authentic tasks using the target language; for example reporting a patient's gathered data, or writing a referral letter to a specialist. Assessment is evaluated by both linguistic and medical tutors, but primarily based on task outcome rather than simply accuracy of language forms. Thus, tasks provide a purpose for the use and learning of language other than simply learning language items for their own sake. The idea is to give learners tasks to transact and to provide an environment which best promotes the natural language learning process. By engaging in meaningful activities, the learner's interlanguage system is stretched and encouraged to develop (Skehan, 2003).

A practical framework has been produced, which includes mainly three phases of the task cycle: (a) pre-task activities, with some language input and clear instructions or illustrations of what to do and role definition; (b) while-task activities, with learners actively carrying out certain actions and procedures to get to the outcome, besides planning and agreeing upon presenting results; and (c) post-task activities that include analysis and practice through exercises to focus on language forms (Skehan, 1996).

The types of tasks have been classified on *pedagogic grounds*, i.e. in terms of their potential to effectively structure classroom interaction processes and generate negotiation, and on *psycholinguistic grounds*, i.e. in terms of their potential to stimulate internal processes of acquisition. A distinction is also

made between target or real world tasks and classroom learning tasks (Skehan, 1998).

The pedagogical tasks that proved to be communicatively productive are: information gap, problem solving, and decision making tasks. Other notable tasks are jigsaw, role-plays, discussions, simulations and projects. In task design we should consider that two-way tasks are considered more effective than one-way tasks. In the latter, one participant simply responds to the other's information, while in the former, each participant in an interaction has information to transmit. Convergent tasks, where one answer must be agreed upon, are found to generate more language than divergent tasks, as different viewpoints are accepted (Skehan, 1998). Moreover, finding clear criteria for the selection and grading of tasks is a problematic area. This is because several factors are involved in determining task difficulty: the cognitive difficulty, the amount of language the learner needs to process and produce, the psychological stress involved in carrying out the task, time pressure, and the amount and type of background knowledge involved. The intention of these tasks is to give the students the knowledge, skills, and intercultural awareness that allow them to work effectively with patients and their relatives, and other medical professionals. Whilst stereotyping is avoided, TBL encompasses awareness of cultural values and codes that can influence health assistance. Teachers are formed to provide medical students with guidance and feedback on how to approach intercultural issues. The tasks lead students' appreciation of the importance of empathy, respect, positive attitudes when dealing with patients and colleagues of different cultures, traditions, family orientation, sex and genre. Medical students are guided to gradually approach and negotiate cultural influences, effectively communicating while practicing quality health care whilst challenged by the impact that social and cultural factors have on their clinical decision-making.

The implemented PBL tasks aim to prepare medical students to communicate effectively and appropriately in English, in view of potential service provision overseas and their future academic development. The spiral process of EMP learning in terms of the language previously learnt, the medicine content already acquired, and the graded difficulty of the tasks when implementing them in their courses is considered. Emphasis is put on real-world tasks (Nunan, 1988), so that students gradually achieve higher language proficiency, integrating language skills, expanding and consolidating the necessary lexis and structures in professional contexts. Students have to order, classify, compare, summarize information, solve



problems or make decisions; they also carry out more creative tasks and long-term projects that involve some academic and research skills.

Jigsaw is a task that can be carried out in pairs or small groups, for listening and speaking, or for reading and writing. For instance, the different lines of a doctor-patient interview are written on slips of paper and learners must order them logically. Then they contrast their version with a recorded model dialogue as they listen to it. Variations in the order of the questions and answers are discussed. For reading and writing, two mixed up sections of a paper are given. Learners have to find wrong statements in their text and compare results with a partner who has a different text. The pairs collaboratively work out the correct information for each section and rewrite both texts correctly.

Problem solving can be combined with decision making in choosing right ways of managing a certain patient or solving an ethical dilemma, for example. This would be a convergent task since consensus must be reached upon the best therapy after having debated valid treatment alternatives.

Another task with a similar level of difficulty is the ‘differential diagnoses’, which medical students practise in the 5<sup>th</sup> year rather than the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

Along the line of role-plays and discussions, round tables, panels or mini-conferences provide an opportunity to play roles in academic context, and to develop oral presentation and discussion skills.

A typical EMP lesson in our school comprises the pre-service clinical training in health services. It involves multi-teaching for it is coordinated with the medical specialist tutor to conduct a ward round or a case study. Although classified as simulation, it is the most real-world type task. If all participants are well prepared and the teaching physician has a good command of English, the only difference from their daily activity is communicating in English rather than in Spanish. For ethical reasons, the patient, (and their relatives, if necessary), are informed of the purpose of the activity in English, and their consent requested. No physical examination is carried out; the data in the record is the one to be reported (ESRC, 2010).

Task-based learning is advantageous to learners as it is more student-centred. Although some language input may be given in the pre-task, learners are free to use any linguistic or medical resources. This allows them to use all the languages they know and are learning, rather than a single construct. This

means that students are more likely to be engaged. Nevertheless, there has been criticism of how this approach might encourage learners to prioritize a focus on meaning over a focus on form, and thus being led to use fluent but unchallenging or inaccurate language. Others consider that learners are only exposed to certain forms of language, neglecting others. The challenge is to choose, sequence, and implement tasks in ways that will combine a focus on meaning with a focus on form. The authors have accepted the challenge in their teaching practice; learners have shown a positive attitude and are aware of the benefit of the authentic tasks. Learning tasks must provide opportunities for interaction and negotiation so that students accomplish a functional and social professional communication in English.

The following are three examples of pedagogical tasks.

**Task 1: Pre-service clinical training in English with 4<sup>th</sup> year students (ward round)**

- a) Pre-task: Review of case report format and language. Groups of 3-4 students share a case to report. The task is set two or three days before the actual round in the hospital ward. According to class size and the hospitalized patients at the moment of the ward round, EMP and Medical tutors select the cases to be included in the activity. Studied medical topics in the EMP course are considered in selecting the cases.
- b) While-task: On the day of the ward round, the groups of students are given their corresponding clinical record and they must take down notes to present their cases. After the group reports, or at certain points, the medical tutor asks questions on diagnosis, further tests and/or management. All students are invited to answer.
- c) Post-task: All participants leave the ward and in a nearby room the EMP tutor conducts an analysis and feedback on students' linguistic and communicative performance. Both EMP and Medical tutors assess students' performance for communication and medical content respectively. Self-assessment is also encouraged.

**Task 2: Examples of tasks exploring the issue of 'Personal space':**

- A) In small groups, students are invited to reflect on the following criteria:
  - a) Think about the moment of the medical interview.
  - b) Has personal space influenced your communication with

- patients? Give details in relation to how far should doctors sit from their patients.
- c) Find similar aspects to the ones you mentioned occurring in different moments of the doctor patient relationship. Write them down.
  - d) Share your experiences with your classmates, and be ready to tell the rest of the class.
- B) In pairs, students read texts describing culture practices within certain ethnic groups, and subsequently are asked to:
- a) Find similarities between these texts.
  - b) Write a brief report about the topic including information given by the teacher and your own or others experiences. Exchange reports.
  - c) Be ready to report to the class your classmates' written accounts.

### Task 3: Working with a patient's record

In pairs: You have a new patient in your ward; an Indian patient who has lived in a family with a long tradition of wine production.

Take time to read the information on the clinical record:

<b>Notes from the clinical history:</b>	
Surname: Samirah	First names: Machuts Gad
Age: 57	Sex: male
Marital status: Single	Occupation: wine taster
<b>Reason for admission:</b> Refers frontal headaches, dizziness, epigastric pain, nausea. O/E: HS normal P 78/min BP 175/100	
<b>Immediate past history:</b> Suffered from hepatitis when younger. Mother died of liver cancer.	

- List all the cultural events that have damaged the patient's health. Consult other sources of information.

- Comment on what you would tell this patient to influence his recovery and to avoid damaging your relation with him.
- Tell the class about your suggestions.

## **Conclusion**

The team believes that it is vital for the future evolution of ESP and Cuban HE to embrace multicultural solutions to ELT research and practice. The UMS in Havana has already a discrete multicultural student population from both Hispanic and non-Hispanic speaking countries across the Northern, Central and Southern American Continent, the African continent and Europe. This is because the Medical School is renowned worldwide for its excellence, despite years of economic and cultural isolation. It is believed that the course would provide a platform to cater for students from all over the world, a foundation on which to start building an intercultural approach to communication, and ultimately to multicultural research and practice.

The main problem that UMS faces is linked with the historical social, economic and political isolation that has distinguished Cuba from the rest of the Central and Latin American Countries. There is urgent need to address the lack of access to current ELT research and practice and the lack of opportunities to actively participate in academic activity. The Cuban language learning scene has kept a fervid and prolific tradition of ELT and Foreign Language teaching and learning, with regular and well attended conferences exploring both theoretical and methodological issues; opportunities to exchange successful teaching practices; produce both it-based and text-based ELT material; divulge locally-produced literature; publish in national linguistic journals; and support local colloquia within linguistic associations. Whilst this has kept alive fervid traditions of academic and practical literacy, there is a growing sense that in order to cater for both national and international students, the UMS need to gain access to current research, ongoing academic and methodological debates and current materials. This project hopes to address ecologic and sustainability issues that would see UMS pursuing intercultural and multicultural approaches to research and practice, extending intercultural communication research methods to other disciplines such as medicine, business and management, information technologies, engineering and the arts.

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## Keywords

English for medical purposes; sociocultural theory; intercultural Problem-Based Learning; multicultural and intercultural theory and practice.



# 41

## **Greek-Alphabet English: vernacular transliterations of English in social media**

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### **‘English’ and Multilingualism on the Internet**

In the early days of Internet communication, English appeared as the dominant language online. Regardless of Internet users’ first languages, English has been found to be used as the ‘vehicular language’ (Leppänen and Peuronen 2012: 385) among members of online communities. The reasons for this dominance of English were partly technological, as the first character encoding set (ASCII) included only 128 characters based on the English alphabet and writing system, and partly social, as the participation structure favoured languages shared by majority of users.

Nevertheless, even in the early stages of English linguistic and ‘typographic imperialism’ online (Pargman and Palme 2004, cited in Danet and Herring 2007: 9), other languages made their appearance on the Internet beginning in the mid-1990s. As for non-Latin script languages, users have been found to improvise with available graphic resources and transliterate local language forms with Latin (or Roman) characters. In the early 2000s, and particularly after the development of Unicode affording the encoding of numerous scripts, the linguistic diversification of the Internet became a truism.

The study of multilingualism on the Internet has explored two distinct but inter-related phenomena: (a) the choice and diversity of languages on the Internet, with a focus on their relative visibility, accessibility and status; and (b) the multilingual practices of Internet users, with a focus on languages as resources that people draw on and use in their online activities. Both research areas, however, remain preoccupied with uses of ‘English’ in the study of multilingual phenomena online: for instance, studies of linguistic diversity engage with tensions arising from the relative status of local or minority languages and globally powerful languages, particularly English, while research on users’ multilingual practices beyond Anglo-American contexts investigates online texts documenting instances of code-switching or mixing of English with other languages.

This study shares a similar preoccupation with uses of ‘English’ in social media practices among Greek Internet users. But rather than presupposing the relative status of global vs. local languages (as often postulated from a ‘global English’ perspective), the aim here is to investigate English-related forms as part of local and situated mixed-language practices. Indeed, recent research approaching the Internet as a ‘translocal affinity space’ (Leppanen and Peuronen 2012: 389) has already shifted scholars’ attention to the ways in which English is incorporated into a wider semiotic mix of communicative practices online (cf. Seargeant and Tagg 2011). This paper is designed to contribute to this line of research by investigating the new phenomenon of Greek-Alphabet English (GAE, or ‘Engreek’), i.e. vernacular transliterations of English into the Greek script. After a brief overview of the meanings associated with different languages and scripts in the Greek mediascape, the paper will focus on specific instances of GAE arising in social media interaction and will analyse the varying functions and meanings of such transliterations in the specific local and situated contexts.

### **Greek-Alphabet English and Latin-Alphabet Greek: vernacular transliterations in context**

Greek-Alphabet English (or GAE) refers to English words and phrases written with Greek characters that increasingly appear in different forms of vernacular writing in Greece. Although such words and phrases appear graph(em)ically assimilated into the Greek writing system, they do not constitute English loans, and Greek speakers do not identify them as lexical items belonging to the Modern Greek vocabulary. Although my informants in Greece could describe and provide examples for this phenomenon, they could not come up with a single term to refer to the use of GAE. For lack of a better term, one of my informants used the neologism *ελληνοαλαμπουρνεζικά* (‘Greekogibberish’, my translation), foregrounding the absurdity and markedness of this phenomenon. Nevertheless, the term ‘Engreek’ for Greek-Alphabet English can be found in the online user-generated dictionary *slang.gr*. The specific entry has been listed since August 2008 and describes the use of Greek characters for writing English as ‘an Internet language, the opposite of greeklish. [...] It is not very widely used, but when it appears, it’s very funny and a good craic’ (my translation).<sup>24</sup>

It is particularly interesting that the new phenomenon of GAE appears to be defined in relation to ‘greeklish’ or Latin-Alphabet Greek (LAG), i.e.

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<sup>24</sup> The relevant entry is available online at: [http://www.slang.gr/lemma/show/engreek\\_5869/](http://www.slang.gr/lemma/show/engreek_5869/) (last accessed 30 December 2013).



instances of vernacular transliterations of Greek. With regard to the official status of the two main languages we focus on, Greek is declared the official language of the state, whereas English is not officially recognised as either a first or a second language. Due to technological factors, vernacular transliterations of the official Greek language appeared in digital communication among Greek-speaking Internet users in the 1980s (Androutsopoulos 2009). Despite the introduction of Unicode, LAG persisted as a script choice throughout the 1990s and 2000s, leading to a state of ‘computer-mediated digraphia’. According to Androutsopoulos (2009: 227), LAG is restricted to contexts of computer-mediated interaction, such as echats and discussion forums, and primarily used in transnational communication both within the Greek diaspora and between Greece and abroad. At the same time, LAG also appears in other media contexts (e.g. advertising or lifestyle press), imbued with symbolic values associated with computer-mediated communication, such as ‘future orientation, technological competence and international outlook’ (Androutsopoulos 2009: 228).

In a more recent study by Koutsogiannis (2012), the use of LAG among Greek teenagers has been found to correlate with socio-economic variables. Students attending private schools and coming from middle and upper social class families report higher use of Greeklish in online communication, while they often recycle their parents’ views about the significance of ‘global literacies’ associated with digital media and English as a global language. In this context, the connotational significance of LAG again evokes discourses of translocal/transnational orientation and elite cosmopolitanism. Similar associations are also evident in public debates about ‘Greeklish’ or LAG, where it is often juxtaposed with the Greek script. In the majority of press publications on this issue in early 2000, such juxtapositions resulted in the representation of the Greek script “as a paramount national symbol” (Androutsopoulos 2009: 225), invoking tensions between competing socio-ideological discourses (i.e. translocal/transnational vs. local/national orientations). As it will be argued below, the rise of GAE in online environments and its local uses often need to be understood in relation to the wider competing discourses associated with the use of multiple languages and scripts in the Greek mediascape.

### **Functions and Meanings of GAE or ‘Engreek’**

This section provides a preliminary analysis of a sample of social media texts in which Greek-Alphabet English has been found to be used by online writers in a range of contexts. The sample includes social networking pages that

explicitly address this phenomenon (e.g. the Facebook page of ‘Engreek’ or its entry on *slang.gr*), together with instances of GAE occurring in the everyday interactions of online writers on public or semi-public social network sites, such as YouTube and Facebook. The aim of this section is to provide a snapshot of the range of functions such vernacular transliterations fulfil in such contexts and to discuss the social meanings that GAE acquires in relation to the other languages and scripts it co-occurs with.

### Slang.gr: representing Greek-accented English

The preliminary analysis of GAE instances starts with its oldest use in the sample (August 2008), which is included in the aforementioned *slang.gr* entry of the term ‘Engreek’. According to the user who updated the entry, the example allegedly appeared in a webchat exchange on Windows Live Messenger. The example is provided in Table 1 and is followed by two types of transliteration into English, based on (i) a simplified system of phonetic symbols<sup>25</sup> and (ii) a more standardised transliteration following the English writing system. Although we can never be certain about the authenticity or ‘naturalness’ of such examples, such illustrations do shed light onto what users perceive as representative or typical of a given phenomenon.

Greek-Alphabet English	Phonetic Transliteration	Standardised Transliteration
- Σόου, χάου ντου γιου ντού; - Αι έμ φάιν, άι τζάστ χέντ ε μπάθ. - Αααα, νάις, άι ντιντ του. Γουάτ πέρφιουμ ντου γιου πουτ; - Αι ντοντ. - ... Οοου. Οκέη. Γουίλ γιου καμ του δε πάρτυ τουνάιτ; - Νόου, μεν, αι χεβ εν ινγκλις λέσον. Ιτ σαξ, μπατ άι χεβ του γκόου. - Γκάτ-ντέμιτ! Γιού αρ μίσιν δε τάιμ οβ γιούρ λάιφ, μπρο!!	- σού, χάου du ju dú ?  - άι έμ fáin, άι tzást zéd e báθ. - αααα, náis, άι did tu. γυάτ pérfjum du ju put?  - άι dod. - ...ού. okéi. γυíl ju kám tu δε párti tunáit?  - nóu, men, άι çev en inglis léson. it saks, bat άι çev tu góu. - gát-démit! jú ar mísin δε táim ov júr láif, bro!!	- So, how do you do?  - I am fine, I just had a bath. - Ahhh, nice, I did too. What perfume do you put? - I don't. - ... Oh. Ok. Will you come to the party tonight?  - No, man, I have an English lesson. It sucks, but I have to go. - Goddammit! You are missing the time of your life, bro!!

Table 1: Example of GAE or Engreek on *slang.gr*

<sup>25</sup> The simplified system of phonetic symbols for transcribing Modern Greek conversations, used by Georgakopoulou & Goutsos (1998) and Georgakopoulou (2001), is employed here to shed light on the acoustic effect that the specific text would have if read aloud.

On the basis of the phonetic transliteration, we observe that the use of Greek characters impacts upon the ways in which a Greek-literate person would read the specific text. Aspects of Greek pronunciation become prevalent, including, among others, the conflation of the English vowel system into the Greek equivalent of five overall phonemes and the dropping of any distinction between alveolar and palatoalveolar fricatives (see /inglis/ for ‘English’ vs. /leson/ for ‘lesson’, l. 6). Such features are considered as ‘typical’ of Greek speakers of English and have also been identified in Canakis’s (2004) study of English used in Greek public transport announcements. In this context, the Greek script indexes a range of pronunciation features associated with Greek learners/speakers of English as a second language. This claim is further reinforced by the occurrence of word-for-word translations of Greek lexico-grammatical constructions (see ‘what perfume do you put’, l. 3) and the fact that one of the interlocutors is portrayed as a person who receives formal tuition in the English language. The attitudes echoed in this extract, especially the learning of English as a necessity today (see ‘I have to go’ l. 6), are reminiscent of findings in Koutsogiannis & Adampa’s (2012) study in which the development of ICT skills and English language competence were considered paramount, especially in discourse among teenagers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.

Thus far, ‘Engreek’ or Greek-Alphabet English appears as another case in which the graph(em)ic mode is manipulated to “enhance readers’ and writers’ ability to experience the words as if they were spoken” (Danet 2001: 17). But an approach to ‘Engreek’ as a mere representation of Greek-accented English would provide a rather restricted understanding of the phenomenon. In fact, it would limit the discussion to what Street (1984) has coined as an ‘autonomous’ perspective to writing. An autonomous perspective approaches spelling, punctuation, etc., as neutral technologies for representing spoken language and overlooks the social and cultural contexts in which writing practices take place.

### **YouTube: play and discrimination**

Although user-generated dictionary entries are created by online writers, the aim of an example in such entries is to provide a rather idealised – and often decontextualized – instantiation of a given phenomenon. In order to gain a better understanding of how GAE is used in social media interactions, we will now shift our focus to YouTube comments and the co-deployment of linguistic and script resources in such naturally-occurring public interactions. In the sample, GAE has been found to be deployed as a resource in comments

targeting people who are again perceived as speaking ‘bad English’ or English with a Greek accent. This is illustrated in the comments of a YouTube video, featuring a Greek singer doing a cover of the song ‘Breathless’.<sup>26</sup> The top comment with 105 likes is written in Greek and reads as follows: ‘Are you working at a job where you have to speak English? Are you taking an English oral exam? Are you concerned about your accent? Listen to this and build some confidence :D’ (my translation).

Within a context of play and banter, the messages following and commenting on the video target the singer’s performance and particularly his accent while singing the English song. As shown in example 1 (translation/transliteration is provided in brackets), GAE is used for writing the English words heard in the video, with quotation marks demarcating this part of the post from the following representation of laughter. In this context, representing English in the Greek script allows the commenter to assume the ‘voice’ of the singer, while maintaining distance from and evaluating this voice as laughable and a source for ridicule.

### **Example 1**

“γίου λιβ μι μπρεεεεεθλες εν αλον” χαχαχαχαχαχαχα  
(‘you leave me breaaaaathless and alone’ hahahahahahaha)

Kytölä (2012: 120), who studied Finnish football forums, also found that deliberately non-Standard English ways of writing were playfully used in order to ridicule those who used any ‘bad English’ unintentionally. Therefore, computer-mediated environments can serve as spaces where varying competences of English become foregrounded and vernacular ways of writing English are used as a resource for targeting and ridiculing people who are perceived to be ‘bad English’ speakers, especially in the translocal public settings of web 2.0.

### **Facebook: play and indexing ‘Greek-ness’**

In more private settings, such as Facebook communication among friends, Greek-Alphabet English has been found in posts where users negotiate and invoke their ‘Greek-ness’. Example 2 is a sequence of Facebook wall posts (22 February 2013), starting with a Facebook update from Ioanna who contemplates ‘when’s the right time to start packing for a transatlantic journey’ in English (the ‘vehicular language’). It generates a number of responses from non-Greek (Aisha and Amy) and Greek (Manos, Dimitris,

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<sup>26</sup> The video was uploaded on Mar 29, 2011 and is available at:  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytZ\\_amr55PU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytZ_amr55PU) (last accessed 30 December 2013).

Manolis, Margarita and Eleni) Facebook friends of the user. In terms of linguistic resources, English appears to be the preferred code in all responses.

### Example 2

1. Ioanna: when's the right time to start packing for a transatlantic journey?
2. Aisha: The night before ;)
3. Amy: As soon as you like; it's part of the fun, no? Have a great trip.
4. Manolis: Any time bab..
5. Dimitris: no more than an hour before leaving for the airport, thats two hours before the plane is scheduled to depart.
6. Manolis: today
7. Margarita: νέβερ (never)
8. Eleni: Λαστ μίνιτ! Γουάτ κάϊντ οβ Γκρικ αρ γιου;;; :P  
(Last minute! What kind of Greek are you??? :P)
9. Ioanna: I'm glad you're all in agreement :P

What is notable is the switch to the Greek script in posts 7 and 8. The switch to a different script does not co-occur with code-switching: English remains the main linguistic resource for interaction in this sequence. GAE, however, indexes a shift to a more jocular frame, further reinforced by the use of multiple punctuation marks and emoticons. In line with previous examples, such vernacular transliterations abound in playful contexts.

In addition to play and banter, Greek-Alphabet English also invokes features stereotypically associated with the 'Greeks'; not necessarily a Greek accent (as in example 1) but the behavioural trait of doing everything at the last minute (see post 8). The use of GAE in contexts where Greek cultural stereotypes prevail (e.g. Greek accent, lack of organisation) suggests that this type of vernacular transliteration becomes gradually imbued with symbolic values associated with assumed local values, in contrast with the values of 'future orientation, technological competence and international outlook' that are associated with the use of LAG in the Greek mediascape.

### Facebook page: ideological meanings of GAE

A discussion of GAE or 'Engreek' cannot overlook the eponymous Facebook profile page. The page, albeit not vastly popular (only 20 likes), was created anonymously in January 2012 and attests to the spread of GAE in diverse social and cultural contexts. In the 'about' section of this profile,

the Greek script is used to encode the following English words: ‘This page had been made, to oppose the bad habit of writing the Greek words with Latin characters’. Otherwise put, Greek-Alphabet English is found to be widely used on a profile page with a clear anti-LAG stance.



**Figure 1: Facebook page of ‘Engreek’**

Such uses of GAE suggest that vernacular transliterations of English are gradually gaining a more ideological meaning, indexing an oppositional stance to LAG and, perhaps, to discourses of the translocal orientation and elite cosmopolitanism it is associated with. As a result, the previous state of ‘computer-mediated digraphia’ (Androutsopoulos, 2009) and the relative tension between Latin-Alphabet and Greek scripts have now become intertwined with playful appropriations of English, while evoking ongoing discourses about language and wider ideologies in Greece.

## Conclusion

This paper has focused on a new form of vernacular transliterations of English found primarily in social media environments. The mixing of English-related forms with other languages in computer-mediated communication has been previously documented, but, to my knowledge, limited attention has been given thus far to instances in which such English-related forms are mixed with a script associated with another language. The study of Greek-Alphabet English in diverse social media contexts brought to the fore the local functions and complex meanings assigned to such English-related forms, ranging from playful uses with a discriminatory effect against speakers of ‘bad English’ to creative means for indexing ideological positions vis-à-vis the presence of different languages and scripts in the Greek social mediascape.

Reflecting on the theme of the conference – ‘opening new lines of communication in applied linguistics’ – it is worth pointing out some of the challenges as well as opportunities such phenomena present for the field of applied linguistics. First and foremost, they do challenge the very assumption of languages as distinct entities. Although terms like ‘Latin-Alphabet Greek’ or ‘Greek-Alphabet English’ aptly describe such phenomena, such categorisations may appear problematic as they still presuppose distinct boundaries between languages and privilege a specific linguistic code. The uses of ‘English’ this paper focused on beg the question ‘English to whom?’, as such English-related forms are certainly unintelligible to any social media user unfamiliar with the Greek alphabet.

In a similar vein, the mixing of English-related forms with local languages in media contexts has often been approached from a global English perspective. But how can we use a similar perspective here when the graphemic manipulation of such words strips them from any ‘global’ recognition, addressing primarily or exclusively the local Greek audience? For this reason, voices have already been multiplying in arguing for a paradigm shift that moves away from theorising languages as distinct systems or varieties (Jørgensen et al 2011; Seargeant and Tagg, 2011). Research on social media and other instances of translanguaging or ‘trans-scripting’ (Androutsopoulos, 2013: 4) can certainly play a role in such reconceptualisations, as groups with rather diverse positionings and ideological agendas aggregate online (as well as offline) and profusely experiment with scripts, styles and languages.

It seems that a superdiversity framework, as outlined by Blommaert and Rampton (2011), paves the way for such reconceptualisations and foregrounds key areas for future developments in applied linguistics that include, among others:

- (a) attention to multimodal meaning and graphic resources, in particular. As shown in my sample, normative associations between scripts and linguistic codes are often transgressed, with graphic resources (such as orthography and spelling) pointing to socio-cultural associations distinct from those associated with the language of the verbal content.
- (b) focus on the connotational significance of signs and indexicality. It is hard to assign a specific and stable symbolic meaning to vernacular transliterations of English. Their functions and social meanings are multiple, locally emergent and indexically motivated, linking with

previous discourse and indexing varying positions vis-à-vis other social groups and domains of use.

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# 42

## Language pattern and Judgement

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### Introduction

One of the major findings of corpus linguistic research is that form and meaning are linked; for instance, Sinclair points out that “there is a strong tendency for sense and syntax to be associated” (Sinclair, 1991: 65). Echoing Sinclair’s thoughts, Hunston and Francis (2000) provide convincing evidence to show that patterns and meanings are associated. However, it is noted that while studies have confirmed and illustrated the hypothesis that pattern and meaning are associated, the exact nature of the connection has not been explored (Hunston, 2003). Undoubtedly, identifying the full extent of the connection is too great a task to be undertaken by any individual piece of research. Therefore, this study proposes as its objective to explore the association between a specific type of pattern - the adjective complementation pattern - and a specific type of meaning - the Judgement meaning.

### Corpus

The corpus consulted in this study is the Corpus of Biography (noted hereafter as the BC corpus<sup>27</sup>), which has been compiled by drawing texts from the British National Corpus (BNC) and accessed by using the BNCweb interface (the CQP edition) (see Hoffman *et al*, 2008). It is believed that biographical discourse is particularly rich in evaluative expressions that are associated with Judgement meanings because a biography not only portrays the subject’s life experience, but also evaluates his/her character, behaviour, accomplishments, etc.

### Adjective complementation pattern

The patterns are confined to adjective complementation patterns (see Hunston & Francis, 2000), as adjectives are the word class most frequently associated with evaluative meanings (see Hunston, 2011: 129). An adjective complementation pattern is formed by any adjective followed by a given preposition, e.g., *ADJ at*, *ADJ about*, etc. Otherwise put, a complementation

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<sup>27</sup> The frequency data and instances presented in this paper unless otherwise stated are based on the BC corpus.

pattern is a configuration that links the different elements involved in a semantic category. For instance, an adjective complementation pattern associated with Judgement is typically a configuration of “Target + Judgement + Scope” (see Table 1).

Target		Judgement	Scope
n	v-link	ADJ	prep.
she	was	really good	at baking

**Table 1: Target +Judgement +Scope configuration**

This association between pattern and evaluative meaning strongly drew our attention.

The lexical items occurring in the adjective complementation patterns were semi-automatically extracted from the BC corpus by performing a number of queries that produced lists of adjectives occurring with each preposition. The lists were then manually scrutinised in order to eliminate the items that were not associated with the assessment of human beings or were not actually instantiating the pattern, which guaranteed that all the remaining lexical items in the lists were relevant to the current study. Lexical items occurring fewer than two times in a given pattern were also excluded so as to avoid creative or analogical uses.

### **The JUDGEMENT system in Appraisal Theory**

According to Martin and White (2005), semantic categories in the system of JUDGEMENT:

can be divided into those dealing with ‘social esteem’ and those oriented to ‘social sanction’, both of which are further regionalized into more delicate meaning categories. Judgements of esteem have to do with ‘normality’ (how unusual someone is), ‘capacity’ (how capable they are), and ‘tenacity’ (how resolute they are); judgements of sanction have to do with ‘veracity’ (how truthful someone is) and ‘propriety’ (how ethical someone is) (Martin & White, 2005: 52).

In short, Judgement is primarily concerned with two broad categories - judgement of social esteem and judgement of social sanction - and the Judgement meanings are systematised into five subcategories in the current system of JUDGEMENT presented, with illustrative examples, in Figure 1:

J U D G E M E N T	Social Esteem	<b>Normality:</b> how special (lucky, fortunate, etc.) <i>he was lucky to escape with relatively minor punishment</i>
		<b>Capacity:</b> how capable (powerful, fit, etc.) <i>I was rather naive about such matters</i>
	Social Sanction	<b>Tenacity:</b> how dependable (brave, reliable, etc.) <i>he was very brave about the whole thing</i>
		<b>Veracity:</b> how honest (truthful, frank, etc.) <i>he was extremely honest about his feelings</i>
		<b>Propriety:</b> how far beyond reproach (good, moral, etc.) <i>it is kind of you to be so understanding about...</i>

Figure 1: The JUDGEMENT system (cf. Martin & White, 2005: 53)

In the following sections, the association between adjective complementation patterns and Judgement meanings will be explored.

### Data analysis

It must be noted that the lexical items associated with the evaluation of human beings construe either an emotional reaction (realising Affect in terms of appraisal theory) or a judgement of a person's character or behaviour (realising Judgement in terms of appraisal theory). Therefore, these lexical items were first classified into AFFECT and JUDGEMENT classes. The number of the types of lexical items in each class was counted. The results are presented in Table 2 below.

Pattern	Types	AFFECT		JUDGEMENT	
		No.	%	No.	%
ADJ by	50	50	100.00%	/	/
ADJ at	45	32	71.11%	13	28.89%
ADJ with	50	31	62.00%	19	38.00%
ADJ of	42	29	69.05%	13	30.95%
ADJ about	60	35	58.33%	25	41.67%
ADJ for	36	15	41.67%	21	58.33%
ADJ on	12	3	25.00%	9	75.00%
ADJ in	73	14	19.19%	59	80.81%
ADJ to n	54	7	12.96%	47	87.04%

Table 2: Lexical items realising AFFECT and JUDGEMENT

It can be inferred from Table 2 that some patterns are more likely to be used to express Affect meanings, such as *ADJ by/at*, while others are more likely to be used to express Judgement meanings, like *ADJ in/to n*. More importantly, in terms of appraisal theory, it is demonstrated that all the

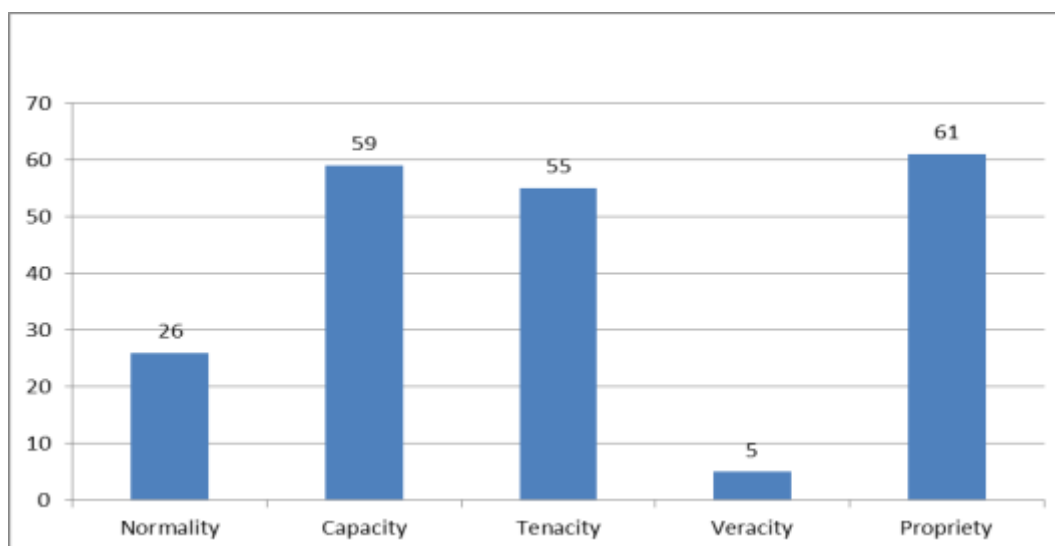
lexical items occurring in the pattern *ADJ by* realise affective meaning, which indicates that the pattern is of diagnostic value for distinguishing Affect from Judgement (cf. Martin & White, 2005: 58 - 59).

The analysis above has demonstrated that there indeed is a link between pattern and meaning. In the following section, we go a step further to explore the nature of the association between the adjective complementation patterns and the Judgement meanings. The lexical items realising Judgement are classified accordingly into the JUDGEMENT system (see Table 3).

Category	Types	Normality		Capacity		Tenacity		Veracity		Propriety	
Pattern		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
ADJ at	13	0	/	13	100	0	/	0	/	0	/
ADJ with	19	1	5.26	5	26.32	2	10.53	1	5.26	10	52.63
ADJ of	13	0	/	3	23.08	4	30.78	0	/	6	46.14
ADJ about	25	0	/	7	28.00	11	44.00	1	4.00	6	24.00
ADJ for	21	9	42.86	4	19.05	7	33.33	0	/	1	4.76
ADJ on	9	0	/	2	22.22	3	33.34	0	/	4	44.44
ADJ in	59	7	11.87	20	33.90	15	25.42	2	3.39	15	25.42
ADJ to n	47	9	19.15	5	10.64	13	27.66	1	2.13	19	40.42

**Table 3: Distribution of the lexical items realising the Judgement meanings**

The figure below shows an overall view of the correlation between the adjective complementation patterns and Judgement meanings (see Figure 2).



**Figure 2: The overall correlation between adjective complementation patterns and Judgement meanings**

## Discussion and conclusion

Based on the above analyses, it is now possible to draw several conclusions. It has been demonstrated that patterns and meanings are closely connected,

in the sense that: 1) pattern may be of diagnostic value for distinguishing different types of evaluative meanings (e.g., *ADJ by* can be used to distinguish Affect from Judgement); 2) some patterns seem to be more frequently associated with a specific meaning category than another (e.g., *ADJ at* with Capacity; *ADJ in* and *ADJ with* with Propriety); 3) some meanings (e.g., Propriety and Tenacity) are more likely to be expressed by adjective complementation pattern whereas it is less the case for other meanings (Veracity in particular).

Apart from the above findings, it has also been noted that patterns can function as the ‘limiter’ or ‘specifier’ of the evaluative meaning and sometimes even change the nature of the evaluative meaning of a lexical item. An illustrative example of the first case is the adjective *good*. The meaning of *good* is very broad. It can be used to evaluate almost everything. However, the meaning of *good* is rather specific when it occurs in a given pattern. For example,

He was	good	at acting the part ...
He was	very good	to me in those difficult days

The concordance analysis above shows that the pattern *ADJ at* limits the evaluative meaning of *good* to an indication of capacity, while the pattern *ADJ to n* limits the meaning to an evaluation of specific behaviour. In fact, it appears that one could argue that the more general the meaning of a lexical item is, the more likely its meaning will be limited or specified in a specific pattern.

In addition, it has been observed that patterns can change the nature of the evaluative meaning attached to a lexical item; for example, *guilty* in *ADJ about* and *ADJ of*:

I feel mildly	guilty about	accepting such hospitality
I feel tremendously	guilty about	what we did to Shaun.
she has been	guilty of	intellectual sin in failing to believe
they were both	guilty of	a criminal offence

The meaning of *guilty of* is different from *guilty about* (and *guilty for*). The meaning of *guilty of* has legal associations: someone is legally responsible for a crime or offence. The meaning of *guilty about*, however, is emotionally associated: someone is unhappy about something. In terms of the present study, *guilty in ADJ about* is realising Affect whereas *guilty in ADJ of* is

realising Judgement, which suggests that patterns can change the evaluative meaning embedded in a lexical item.

In summary, this study has explored the correlation between adjective complementation patterns and Judgement meanings. It has been illustrated that patterns and meanings are associated, which further highlights that form and meaning are interrelated rather than isolated.

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# 43

## **Building bridges between content and language: CLIL investigated with a focus on academic language skills**

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### **Introduction**

Knowledge of languages beyond mere conversational skills is required by individuals in today's increasingly international networks of personal contacts, business and trade. Such knowledge is of particular importance among the citizens of Europe, which consists of a number of countries of various sizes, each with its own national language. A large amount of trade and business is inevitably international. In order for things to run smoothly, Europeans need to know more languages than their first language (L1). As an acknowledgement of this fact on an official level, the European Commission in 1995 launched the 1+2 idea (European Commission, 1995), intending for all European citizens to aim at mastering their first language plus two other European languages. The 1+2 was a recommendation to each member state of the EU to enable its citizens to gain this knowledge. However, no funding accompanied this recommendation. This, in combination with other factors, helps explain the fact that the actual enactment of the recommendation varies greatly across Europe.

At about the same time as the European Commission published its White Paper on Education, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) started to expand in several European countries (Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Nixon, 2000). In some countries, CLIL was a direct response to the 1+2 recommendation and was seen as a way of increasing the amount of time that learners are exposed to a target language (TL) (Casal & Moore, 2009; Ruiz de Zarobe & Lasagabaster, 2010). The underlying idea of CLIL is that by using the TL as a medium of instruction in subjects such as mathematics, geography and biology, the students not only learn the subject content but also, at the same time, get enhanced opportunities to receive input and produce output in the TL. Thereby, it is hypothesized that the learning potential increases exponentially as compared to studying the TL only in language arts class which normally is limited to 2-3 hours per week.

The purpose of this paper is to account for research into some of the effects of CLIL specifically on academic language skills as evidenced in a longitudinal research project among upper secondary students in Sweden. First, a brief account is given of research conducted on CLIL in various European contexts of relevance to the specific domains covered in this contribution. Second, the large-scale, longitudinal research project, *Content and Language in Swedish Schools*, CLISS, is presented. Thirdly, results obtained on receptive vocabulary proficiency, writing proficiency, and reading comprehension tests administered at the outset of the research project, which are to be seen and used as baseline data, are offered. Finally, the paper discusses the findings per se and also vis-à-vis previous research.

### Previous research

As mentioned in the introduction, CLIL as an educational approach has been around for more than two decades in Europe. Yet, the bulk of research into CLIL is fairly recent. This section starts with a brief overview of the main findings in CLIL related research in general, and then continues with an account of research into the relationship of CLIL and the areas of particular interest to this paper, i.e., vocabulary proficiency, writing proficiency, and reading comprehension.

Ever since Hymes (1966) introduced the concept of communicative competence, it has gained in importance and become the prime target of second/foreign (L2) language learning in many of today's educational systems (cf., e.g., Skolverket 2011). The communicative abilities seem to benefit greatly from CLIL. This has been shown by, among others, Dalton-Puffer (2007) in the Austrian context where she illustrates how the sociocultural basis of CLIL leads to a positive communicative climate in the classroom. In Finland, Nikula (2005) studied both CLIL and English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms, and concluded from her observations that CLIL students seem to use English in a natural way in the content classroom, in contrast to the EFL classroom, where they take on the role as learners. Lim Falk (2008) also studied the classroom, in the Swedish context, and her findings indicate that there is less interaction in the CLIL classroom as compared to non-CLIL classrooms. Regarding visible effects on proficiency in the TL, English, Navés and Victori (2010) report clear evidence of this among CLIL students in Spain. Similar findings have also been reported elsewhere (Klippel, 2003; Zydatiss, 2007). Järvinen (2010) studied 14-year old CLIL students' history assignments, and her conclusions were that for CLIL to be effective, there is a need for more focus on linguistic aspects also in the content classes. Studies on CLIL and language gains in

the Swedish context have been unable to show any significant effects among CLIL students as regards their proficiency in English (Sylvén, 2004/2010; Washburn, 1997) .

Of specific interest to the present article is research into receptive vocabulary knowledge, writing proficiency and reading comprehension. Lorenzo & Moore (2010:32), in the Spanish context, showed that texts written by CLIL students display a highly sophisticated language, even though accuracy seems to pose problems. Jexenflicker and Dalton-Puffer (2010) examined several aspects of written language competence among upper secondary CLIL and EFL students in Austria. Their findings showed that CLIL students clearly outperform their EFL peers both in general language ability and writing skills, and most markedly concerning grammar and vocabulary. However, as an important caveat Jexenflicker & Dalton-Puffer (2010:183) admit that no baseline data on the students initial, pre-CLIL, level of proficiency were available, which makes it difficult to say anything about the actual effects of CLIL. In the same vein, Ruiz de Zarobe (2010) reported a highly significant increase in CLIL students writing proficiency (especially as regards vocabulary), and concluded that “there is a positive relationship between the amount of exposure to English and the linguistic outcomes” (p. 206). The study compares CLIL and non-CLIL students’ essays in three grade levels (upper secondary 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, and pre-university), and the CLIL students consistently outperform the non-CLIL students. When looking at these results, though, it should be noted that the study is synchronic and not longitudinal. Several other studies also show an upper edge among CLIL students in written proficiency (see, e.g., Haunold, 2006, cited in Jexenflicker & Dalton-Puffer, 2010:171, and Lasagabaster, 2008).

Thus, the relationship between CLIL and writing proficiency seems to be fairly well covered in various research studies. The same cannot be said about CLIL and reading comprehension. The study by Hellekjær (2004) is one exception, where Norwegian CLIL students show a higher degree of academic English reading skills than the non-CLIL students. Hellekjær concludes that CLIL students are better prepared for studies in higher education where the medium of instruction often is English.

To sum up this section on previous research on CLIL, it seems a great deal has been done as regards its relationship to communicative competence and writing proficiency. However, as pointed out by Jexenflicker & Dalton-Puffer (2010:183), in order to know more about the effects of CLIL on language proficiency “a more broadly-based longitudinal study” is needed.

Longitudinal studies are necessary if we wish to rule out the impact of pre-existing conditions on results, and thereby with some certainty actually be able to confirm certain effects of CLIL. Broadly-based studies are required in order for more far-reaching conclusions to be made about the effects of CLIL. In addition, any study focusing on the outcomes of CLIL need to take a number of factors into account, not least as regards the local/national context (Sylvén, 2013). A project fulfilling all of these three prerequisites is the CLISS project.

### **The CLISS project**

Research into the effects of CLIL in the Swedish context is relatively scarce (but see Edlund, 2011; Lim Falk, 2002, 2008; Sylvén, 2004/2010, 2006a, 2006b, 2007; Washburn, 1997). In an attempt to remedy this lack of knowledge to some extent, and to fill an apparent gap in the CLIL research at large (cf. above), the longitudinal research project CLISS was launched in 2011<sup>28</sup>. CLISS is an acronym for *Content and Language Integration in Swedish Schools*, and the project aims at shedding further light primarily on the effects of CLIL on students' receptive and productive proficiency in their L1, Swedish, and in English, the TL of the majority of CLIL classes in Sweden. At the core of the project are the following research questions:

- How does students' proficiency, productive and receptive, in written, academic Swedish and English progress during their three years at upper secondary level?
- How well do students master subject specific terminology in the social and the natural sciences respectively, in both Swedish and English?
- Are there differences between students with Swedish as L1 and students with another L1?
- Are there gender differences?

A total of more than 220 students at three different schools in both CLIL and non-CLIL groups are followed during their full three years of upper secondary level and are subject to a number of various tests and assignments during this period. The focus of the project, written academic language, is reflected in these tests and assignments. Parallel tests are given in both Swedish and English in order to enable cross-language comparisons. Questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations are also vital parts of the empirical data collected within the project.

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<sup>28</sup> The CLISS project is funded by the Swedish Research Council, project nbr: 721-2010-5376

The CLISS research team includes senior as well as junior members, each with their own area of expertise within the broad framework of language learning. Thus, multi-perspective analyses of CLIL at large in the Swedish context will be possible to make. For more detailed information about the project, see Sylvé & Ohlander (accepted for publication), or visit the project's web page:  
<http://www.ips.gu.se/forskning/forskningsprojekt/cliss/>.

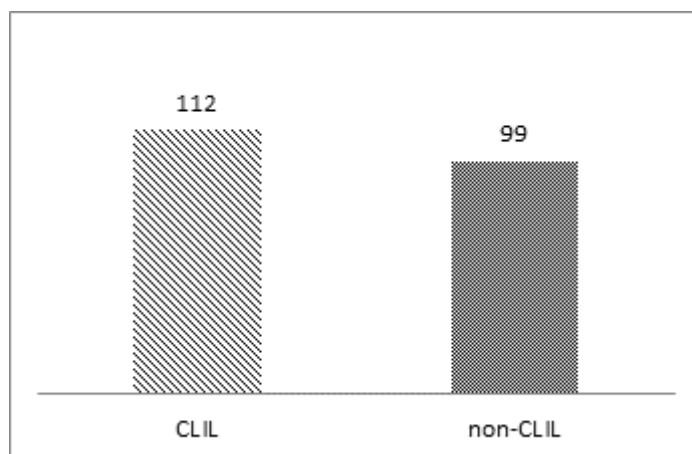
### **Baseline results**

At the very outset of the CLISS project, a number of tests and assignments were administered to the informants. Thus, all of the data compiled at the very beginning of the project, which coincides with the start of upper secondary level and CLIL (for the CLIL students), are to be seen as baseline data against which subsequent empirical data will be compared. In this paper, these initial data are the ones reported on. The reader is reminded of the fact that these results mirror the proficiency levels of the students before CLIL has begun. Therefore, any significant differences found already at this point are of great importance for the analyses of ensuing data collected later in the project, as it enables more correct conclusions to be drawn about the actual effects of CLIL.

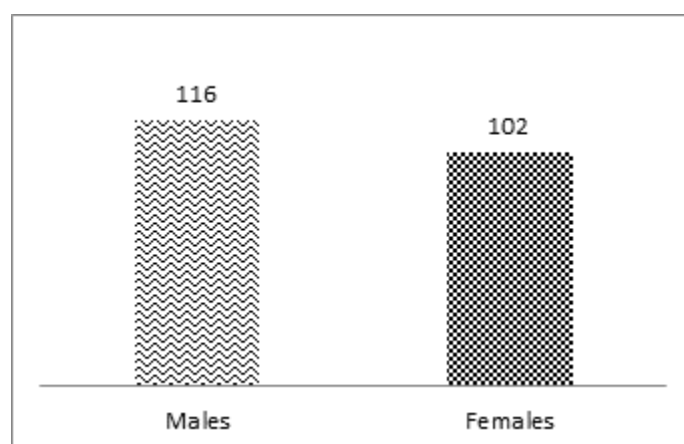
### **Receptive English vocabulary proficiency**

The very first test to be administered was one that taps into students' receptive proficiency in English vocabulary, the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) (Nation, 1990). The VLT is a frequency based vocabulary test, and in the particular format administered in the CLISS project, it consists of 30 items from the 2 000 level, 30 from the 3 000 level, 27 from the 5 000 level and 21 from the 10 000 level. In addition to these frequency levels, 39 items are retrieved from the Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000). As students' proficiency and progress in academic language is in focus in the project at large, this section of the VLT is of particular interest.

Table 1 illustrates the results for CLIL and non-CLIL students, and table 2 those for male and female students.



**Table 1: Mean results VLT, CLIL vs non-CLIL**



**Table 2: Mean results VLT, males vs females**

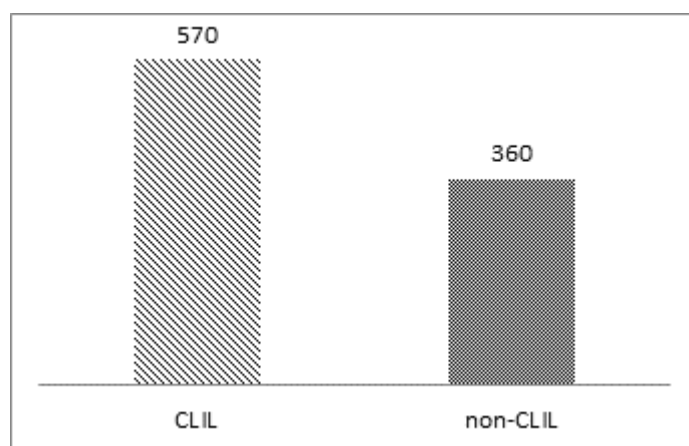
As is shown in tables 1 and 2, the overall results, as measured by an independent sample t-test using SPSS 20 software, on the VLT indicate that the CLIL students statistically significantly outperform the non-CLIL students (CLIL,  $N=119$ , mean: 112; non-CLIL,  $N=76$ , mean: 99;  $p<.001$ ). Furthermore, the male students outperform the females (males,  $N=63$ , mean: 116; females,  $N=132$ , mean: 102;  $p=.01$ ).

Looking into the details of the different frequency levels, the CLIL males are in the lead throughout the entire test, followed by the CLIL females and the non-CLIL males who perform similarly in the different levels. The lowest results are obtained by the non-CLIL females consistently throughout the test. The results in the AWL segment of the test are in line with the different frequency levels. For a more detailed account of the results obtained on the VLT, see Sylvén and Ohlander (accepted for publication).

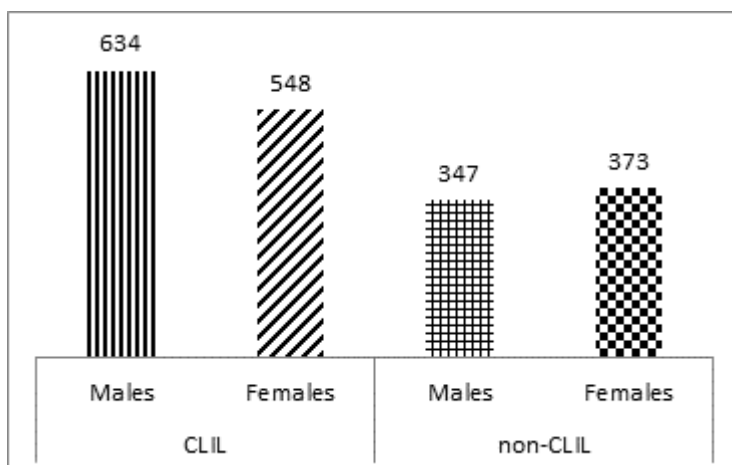
## English written production

Students' productive proficiency in English is measured by several writing assignments. Throughout the entire project, the students are asked to complete four text assignments. They touch on topics related to the social and the natural sciences, and are either expository or argumentative text types. The specific topics are: *For or against nuclear power* (argumentative), *Matters of gender and equality* (expository), *Ways to Political and Social Change – Violence or Nonviolence?* (argumentative), and *Biodiversity for a Sustainable Society* (expository). Here, some quantitative results from the first of these texts are accounted for.

In table 3, the total number of words is illustrated by group, and in table 4 by group and gender.



**Table 3: Mean results, words per text by group**



**Table 4: Mean results, words per text by group and gender**

On average, the CLIL students (N=94) produce statistically significantly ( $p=.000$ ) longer texts with a total mean number of words of 570, compared

to the non-CLIL students' (N=55) 360. Among the CLIL students, the males wrote the longest texts, with an average length of 634 words, to be compared to the females' 548 words ( $p=.08$ ). In the non-CLIL group, there was only a small gender difference in the number of words, but the males wrote the shortest texts with an average of 347 words, to be compared with the females' texts of 373 ( $p=.55$ ).

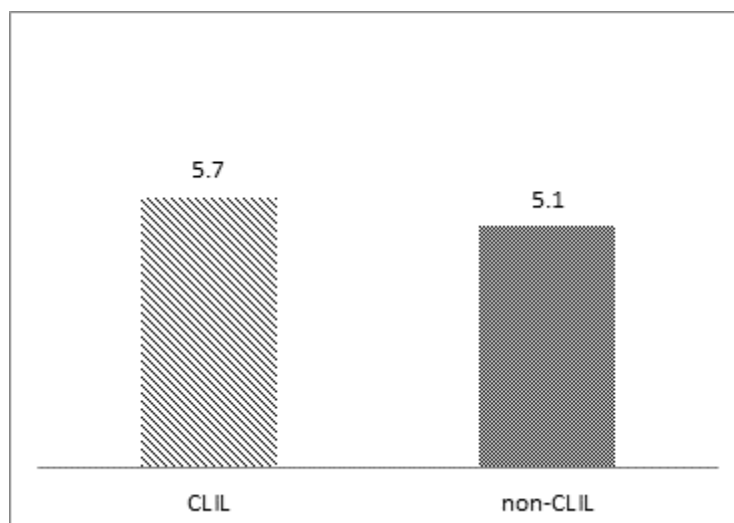
Another quantitative measurement used for written texts is the type/token ratio, which accounts for the number of unique words used compared to the total amount of words in the text. Again, there is a statistically significant difference between CLIL and non-CLIL students, with the CLIL student showing a type/token ratio of .4002 and the non-CLIL .4345 ( $p=.003$ ).

### **English reading comprehension**

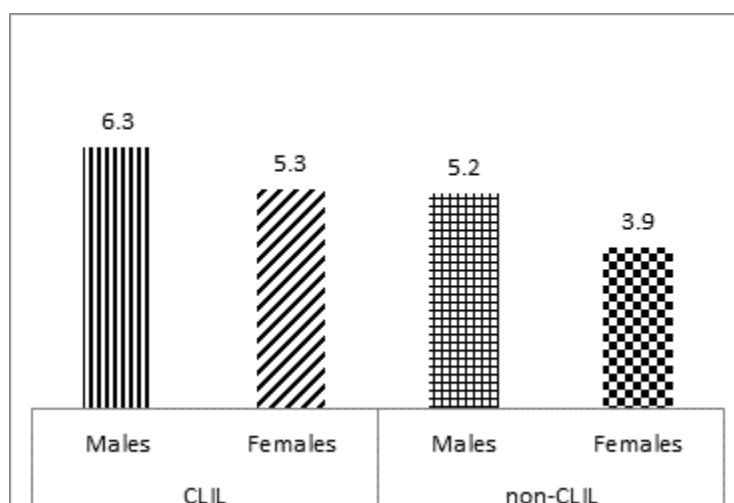
In order to test students' reading comprehension in English, two cloze-tests were administered during the first term of the CLISS project. These cloze-tests are of the type that is used in the Swedish Scholastic Assessment Test (SSAT), a test used for many individuals seeking entrance into Swedish higher education as a second chance when school grades in themselves are not enough to guarantee admission (Reuterberg, 2002). The cloze-test is one of several test types used in the part of the SSAT tapping into English reading comprehension proficiency, and has proven to be an efficient way of testing this ability (Reuterberg & Ohlander, 1999). The texts are short, typically approximately 300 words, and each text normally contains 4-5 selected gaps (see, e.g., Alderson (2000) for details on cloze tests). In the process of selecting valid and reliable tests for the high stake SSAT, large amounts of try-out tests are administered. Some of these exhibit high levels of reliability and validity, but are slightly too easy for inclusion in a high stake SSAT. It is among these that the CLISS project has found suitable cloze tests; in other words, tests that are not too difficult for the test takers, but tests that at the same time have shown to be both reliable and valid.

Two of these tests were administered during the first term of the CLISS project, one entitled *The Healthier Sex* and the other *Tomorrow's Consumers*. A total of 9 cloze items were tested in the two tests. Tables 5 and 6 illustrate the results divided by group and gender.





**Table 5: Mean results, reading comprehension by group**



**Table 6: Mean results, reading comprehension by group and gender**

As is illustrated in table 5, the CLIL group (N=121) is in the lead with an average result of 5.7, to be compared to the non-CLIL group (N=73) where the average result was 5.1. The between-group results almost reach statistical significance at the .05 level with a  $p$ -value of .051. However, when looking into the gender differences within the two groups, there are statistically significant differences with the males scoring highest in both groups. The CLIL males score 6.3 and the CLIL females 5.3 ( $p=.001$ ). The non-CLIL males show an average of 5.2 compared to the non-CLIL females' 3.9 ( $p=.03$ ), as is seen in table 6.

## Discussion

This article has in brief given an account of the ongoing CLISS research project, looking into the academic language proficiency among CLIL and non-CLIL students at upper secondary level in Sweden. Results have been

presented for some of the English tests administered during the students' first term of upper secondary school, which is also the first term of CLIL in English for the CLIL students. As is evident from what has been shown above, the CLIL students outperform their non-CLIL peers on receptive vocabulary proficiency, writing proficiency and reading comprehension, in line with what has been shown in previous research (Hellekjær, 2004; Jexenflücker & Dalton-Puffer, 2010; Lasagabaster, 2008; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2010). The CLISS project at large has a specific focus on academic language, and therefore, it is of special interest to look at the AWL-segment of the VLT, where, again, the CLIL students are more proficient than the non-CLIL ones. However, the findings reported on here are obtained at the outset of CLIL, thus they cannot result from an impact of English medium instruction.

Based on these results, we seem to be able to draw certain conclusions. In the Swedish context, CLIL is an optional choice and as evidenced above, CLIL attracts certain students, namely those who are already fairly proficient in English. Furthermore, another sub-study within the CLISS project (Sylvén & Thompson, under review) indicates that students opting for CLIL have a higher level of motivation. Yet, the fact that the gender differences are significant in both groups certainly merits attention. This will be done by careful analysis of background data and by collecting information about students' extramural exposure to English (cf., Olsson, 2011; Sundqvist, 2009; Sylvén, 2004/2010).

In order to be able to say anything about the effects of CLIL, these baseline data are invaluable. It seems as though the bridge between content and language seems already to be in place even before CLIL begins. What remains to be seen is whether or not it will get stronger during three years of CLIL. In addition, the development in the non-CLIL groups will be interesting to follow, and to see how it relates to that of the CLIL groups. Last, but certainly not least, the gender differences will need to be carefully analyzed and evaluated.

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# 44

## Discourse Competence of Japanese Junior High School Students: Their Understanding and Awareness of Coherence

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### Introduction

Since April 2012, junior high school education in Japan has been based on the revised course of study introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. The revised course of study states that, in particular, teachers should be committed to enhancing students' ability 'to think', 'to make decisions', and 'to express themselves'. It further states that the focus should be on developing the language skills necessary for learners to think logically and express ideas and feelings effectively in every school subject. English language education is no exception.

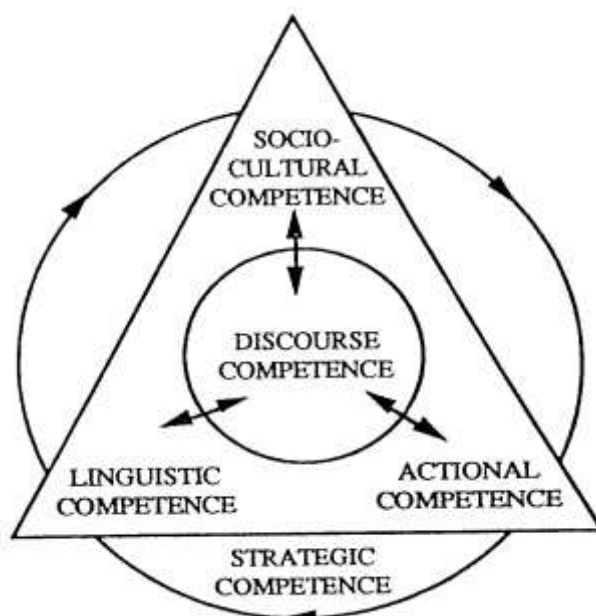
### Language ability and language skills

As people think, make decisions, and express themselves, they use languages. Unfortunately, quite a few educational reports, including the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) survey conducted by OECD, have said that more care should be provided in Japanese school education to foster students' ability to think, to make decisions, to express themselves and other abilities that are necessary to solve problems by using acquired knowledge and skills. Therefore, the course of study encourages teachers to enhance students' language ability so as to foster 'a zest for life.' In the context of foreign language teaching, teachers are expected not only to improve learners' L2 ability but also to enhance their fundamental ability to use language for logical thinking and to express their ideas and feelings effectively.

### Fostering logical thinking and improving discourse competence

The sub-components comprising one's foreign language ability have long been discussed. There is agreement that they consist of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences. Of these sub-components, discourse competence has the most to do with logical thinking ability, as it is the ability to combine pieces of information together beyond

the ‘sentence level’. According to Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell (1995), discourse competence is very important and plays a central part in language ability (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Schematic Representation of Communicative Competence  
by Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei & Thurrell (1995)**

There are two aspects to consider when discussing discourse competence, namely ‘cohesion’ and ‘coherence’. However, the latter should be afforded more attention when it comes to understanding and producing a certain stretch of spoken or written discourse. In keeping with the general policies stated in the revised course of study above, students are expected to understand and be aware of coherence in English conversations or passages.

### **Developing a diagnostic test to evaluate discourse competence**

To evaluate learners’ discourse competence in English, especially in relation to coherence, a diagnostic test was developed. Tanaka (1994) suggests six different types of test items to assess learners’ discourse competence. Four of these were used, with one other type added, to create a diagnostic test to evaluate students’ awareness and understanding of coherence. Table 1 shows what tasks the test consists of:



Section	Questions	Point	# of Qs	Sec. Point
A	Choose appropriate connectives	1	4	4
B	Predict what comes next	2	10	20
C	Guessing what connectives miss and translate two sentences	2	3	6
D	Add two appropriate sentences	4	4	16
E	Put sentences in correct order	4	1	4
Total				50

**Table 1: Contents of Diagnostic Test for J.H.S. in Japan**

## The Study

The developed test was given to 498 junior high school students in one of 47 prefectures in Japan. The students were from 14 classes of 9 different junior high schools. The survey was conducted from November 2012 to January 2013. The participants worked on the test for 25 minutes. The following five points were examined in this study:

- (1) whether students can choose appropriate connectives to combine two sentences,
- (2) whether they can understand the context of a passage and predict what comes next,
- (3) whether they can understand the relationship between two sentences without a connective,
- (4) how well they can produce a coherent passage,
- (5) whether they can arrange sentences in the correct order.

## Result and Discussion

### *Overall review*

Table 2 shows the descriptive data of the survey. The average score was 29.31 out of 50, or 58.62% of correct answers.

	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Points	(4)	(20)	(6)	(16)	(4)	(50)
Mean	2.86	12.49	3.71	7.93	2.31	29.31
S.D.	1.39	5.33	2.15	5.30	1.98	13.10
Max.	4	20	6	16	4	50
Min.	0	0	0	0	0	2

**Table 2: Descriptive Data of Diagnostic Test for J.H.S. of Japan**

It is often said that participants will get around 60% correct or more in good diagnostic tests. The average score was 58.62%, so we could probably say that the test has the appropriate level of difficulty. However, as is shown later in Table 5, in Section D only one-fourth or one-fifth of the students added two appropriate pieces of information to each given sentence, and the standard deviation is rather large (5.30 in a total score of 16). One reason for this result may be that students are just not used to the format of these types of questions.

### ***Section A***

Section A examines whether students can choose appropriate connectives to combine two sentences. There were four multiple-choice questions, but there were five choices to choose from as the author wanted to maintain the reliability of the survey. More than two-thirds of students got right answers to each question. However, a little more than 14% could not understand the relationship between cause and effect properly in Questions (2) and (4) (see Table 3):

- (2) I don't like him (     ) he is not friendly.  
(4) She is always nice to everybody, (     ) she has many friends.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
when	7.8	2.8	80.5	6.0
or	5.8	5.2	3.2	5.0
because	7.4	69.7	4.4	14.1
but	69.5	7.2	4.2	7.2
so	8.8	14.5	7.0	66.5
others	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.2

**Table 3: Percentages for choices in Section A**

It sounds illogical if the reason why “she is always nice to everybody” is “she has many friends.” The fact that “she is always nice to everybody” should be the reason itself. It would seem that the students need more chances to practice thinking logically not only in their L2 but also in their L1.

### ***Section B***

Section B tries to assess whether students can understand the context of a passage and predict what comes next. The questions in this section were all multiple-choice type questions. Most of the question items were made by

modifying the ones developed in Mikulecky and Jeffries (1997). Table 4 shows the percentages for choices of each question item. Here, let us discuss two questions in which more than half of the participants made wrong choices.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
a	7.6	7.2	65.5	12.4	12.7	14.5	13.7	12.0	4.0	14.3
b	25.9	12.4	17.1	64.5	13.5	12.0	4.2	71.1	68.1	47.8
c	52.2	7.4	10.0	13.1	11.2	46.4	73.9	8.0	16.1	21.7
d	13.9	72.9	7.2	9.6	62.2	26.5	7.4	8.4	11.2	15.5
others	0.4	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.6	0.8

**Table 4: Percentages for choices in Section B**

First, the test items dealing with ‘contradictory development of a passage,’ namely Questions (5) & (6), seemed to be difficult for students to understand. In particular, the correct rate for (6) was the lowest of all the questions (46.4%).

- (6) What happened to Lisa yesterday? She wasn’t in class. Bill told me she had some family problem. Do you know about it? I called Lisa’s home, but ...
- (a) she was at home. (14.5%)
  - (b) Bill doesn’t know. (12.0%)
  - (c) there was no answer. (46.4%)
  - (d) she has no telephone. (26.5%)

There are three people in the passage, Liza, Bill, and me. So it can be a little complicated to understand the whole idea of the passage. Those students who selected choice (d) should have noticed logically “If she has no telephone, I cannot call Liza’s house.” However, more than one-fourth wrongly made this choice.

Second, more than half of the students made wrong choices in Question (10). Only 47.8% of them chose the correct answer.

- (10) We are going to have the autumn festival soon. It’s one of the biggest events in our town. It has a history of more than 100 years, so everybody is now very
- (a) healthy. (14.3%)
  - (b) excited. (47.8%)

- (c) old. (21.7%)  
 (d) lucky. (15.5%)

About one-fifth of all students (21.7%) answered the choice “old.” Those students read the preceding sentence and might have thought everybody was also “old.” They should have understood that a big event was coming and guessed everybody’s excited feelings, but they could not. If we want to predict what comes next, we need to understand not only the preceding information but also the whole passage.

### ***Section C***

Since more than 70% of the students appropriately answered Questions (1) & (2), let us examine Question (3), in which only one-third of the students (34.7%) interpreted the information logically. The two given sentences were:

- (3) My best friend Aya moved to Tokyo last month. We can send e-mail to each other every day.

If we want to put an appropriate connective so as to reach the correct interpretation, we need to add some contradictory phrase (equivalent to, e.g., ‘but,’ ‘however,’ or ‘still’) in the L1: “My best friend Aya moved to Tokyo last month, but we can send e-mail to each other every day.” However, a lot of students interpreted the information as follows: “My best friend Aya moved to Tokyo last month, so we can send e-mail to each other every day.” They should have noticed that we can send e-mail to each other wherever we are.

### ***Section D***

This section asks students to add two sentences to the given information and tries to determine how well they can produce a coherent passage. If they write one correct coherent sentence, they get two points. Table 5 shows the results of section D.

Score					(%)
Score	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
4	25.1	26.3	20.9	21.3	
3	15.5	14.5	14.7	15.7	
2	26.5	24.3	19.3	25.5	
1	11.6	10.6	14.1	10.8	
0	21.3	24.3	31.1	26.7	

**Table 5: Scores of Section D**

The mean score was 7.93 and the standard deviation was 5.30, which was rather large. Japanese junior high school students are familiar with translation work from Japanese to English, but it is often the case that they are not given enough opportunities to express their ideas freely in the target language. In fact, there were quite a few students who wrote only one sentence or no sentence at all.

However, a lot of students tried to produce their unique ideas in English. Some good examples written by students on the answer sheets were:

- (1) I am very sleepy, but ...  
I must study now. It's very hard for me.
- (2) I like tennis very much, so ...  
I went to see a tennis game. It was very interesting.
- (3) I want to be a cook, because ...  
I like to make dinner with my mother. It's very fun.
- (4) I like music very much. ...  
And I like children. So I want to be a music teacher.

It is probable that few Japanese students will have difficulty writing correct English if they are given the information shown in the examples above in the L1 and asked to translate it into English. However, in this study around 20 to 30 percent of the students got no points in any task, which should be considered as a big problem. It seems that they are not accustomed to tasks of this kind and are not given enough opportunities to practice so that they can be creative enough to add logical or coherent information.

### ***Section E***

Section E is the task in which students have to arrange the given four sentences so that the mail sounds logical.

Hi, Mary,  
I have big news.  
( ① ) → ( ② ) → ( ③ ) → ( ④ )  
I hope you can come to the festival.  
See you soon.  
Naoko

- (a) She is my best friend in my class.
- (b) Can you come to watch us sing on stage?
- (c) My friend Yumi is singing together with me.
- (d) I am going to sing on stage at the summer festival.

A little more than a half of the students (57.8%) arranged the given pieces of information in the correct order. There are three interesting observations to be made about the findings. First, we usually introduce the global or general idea before providing more local or specific information, especially in written discourse. Sentence (d) has the most global information, which explains what the big news is in this mail. Two-thirds of the students (67.7%, 337 students) thought that (d) should come first, as it has new and the most important information.

Secondly, let us examine the relationship between sentences (a) and (c). Sentence (a) should come after (c), because 'she' in (a) refers to 'Yumi.' This has a lot to do with understanding 'cohesion,' and 381 students (75.5%) put (c) just before (a). Three-fourths of the students probably understood correctly that 'she' indicates 'Yumi'; this kind of interpretation may not be so demanding for junior high school students.

Thirdly, 372 students (74.7%) put sentence (b) last, which means just before the given sentence "I hope you can come to the festival." These two sentences are closely related and considered a kind of 'adjacency pair'. More than two-thirds of the students (67.7%, 75.5% and 74.7%) noticed these three points when deciding the order of the four sentences, but only 57.8% could integrate their decisions.

### Correlation between Question Sections and Total Score

Table 6 shows the correlation between each question section and the total score.

	A	B	C	D	E	Total
Section A	1	.557**	.363**	.506**	.443**	.664**
Section B		1	.458**	.668**	.568**	.897**
Section C			1	.448**	.343**	.622**
Section D				1	.521**	.883**
Section E					1	.696**
Total						1

\*\*  $p < .01$

**Table 6: Correlation between Question Sections and Total Score  
(Pearson correlation coefficient)**

The correlation between Section B and the total score and also that between Section D and the total score are extremely strong (.897 and .883). We can

say that when we want to know how much learners are aware of and understand the ‘coherence’ of passages, we can have them predict what comes next or add a couple of following sentences (or utterances). In other words, good students of English can guess the logical development of passages and are creative enough to add appropriate information. Also, the correlation between Section B and D is rather strong (.668). This indicates that if learners can make a logical prediction about information after reading a passage, they can also add logical information to a given key sentence, or vice versa.

### Conclusion (Pedagogical Implications)

The results of this study, especially the figures showing correlations between question types and the total score, indicate that both prediction tasks, which ask students to guess what comes next, and information-adding tasks, which ask students to put in additional information, would be beneficial in helping students understand the process of logical thinking and what ‘coherence’ is like.

Students should be given more exercises to be aware of ‘coherence’ in and out of class and to develop their logical thinking and language skills. The test items used in the diagnostic test of this study will give foreign language teachers some ideas about what exercises or tasks they can use and develop when helping students become better communicators in the L2.

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## Emotional Intelligence and Second/Foreign Language Learning: A Study in Higher Education

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### Theoretical Background: Emotional Intelligence

Broadly defined, emotional intelligence (EI) encompasses individual differences in the perception, processing, understanding and managing of self and other-relevant emotions (Zeidner, Matthews & Roberts 2009). Originally conceived as a form of intelligence (Salovey and Mayer 1990), EI draws on the notion of ‘social’ intelligence, the ability to understand and manage people and to act wisely in human relations (see Landy 2005 for a review). EI is also closely related to Gardner’s (1985) work on ‘multiple intelligences’, which argues for an expansion of the traditional taxonomy of human cognitive abilities to include additional areas of competency. In his original conception, Gardner describes seven intelligences, among which the most closely aligned to EI are the ‘interpersonal’ intelligences (ability to understand others and communicate effectively) and the ‘intrapersonal’ ones (capacity for self-reflection in order to understand one’s emotions, goals and motivations).

Since its emergence in 1990, the notion of emotional intelligence has generated considerable interest in the media and academic research alike. A variety of models have come to the fore, each offering divergent perspectives on the relative components of EI. More specifically, it has been suggested that EI covers at least four explanatory constructs: *temperament*, *information processing*, *emotional self-regulation*, and *emotional knowledge and skills* (also called *emotional competence*) (Matthews et al. 2002).

Such competing and sometimes conflicting components existing under the same umbrella have strengthened the support for a ‘dual-faceted’ conceptualization of EI, leading to a ‘schism’ in the field. The *ability* perspective treats EI as a distinct form of intelligence for reasoning about emotion, identified by a number of interactive cognitive abilities which facilitate complex emotional information processing (Mayer & Salovey 1997). In particular, Mayer and Salovey (1997) define EI as a set of mental

abilities springing from four areas: a) accurately perceiving emotion, b) using emotion to facilitate thought, c) understanding emotion and d) managing emotion. A distinction is made between ‘basic’ skills (such as the ability of the child to recognize basic emotions in faces) and the more complicated regulatory capacities essential for the successful management of emotions (e.g. the use of emotions in problem solving).

On the other side of the spectrum, the *trait* perspective views EI as “a cluster of emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions” partially influenced by, yet differentiated from, higher-order personality dimensions (Petrides et al. 2007: 273). Trait EI manifests itself in self-perceived emotional functioning and emotional preferences and demonstrates traits such as empathy, assertiveness, adaptability and expression of emotion. Therefore, trait EI generally follows personality theory and is thought to involve lower-level personality traits unrelated to general cognitive ability (Petrides 2011). In the present study we follow Mayer and Salovey’s (1997) more focused definition of EI as broader definitions are likely to overlap with basic personality traits, something that would yield research findings that are difficult to interpret.

The positive effect of emotional intelligence on academic success has been examined in a number of studies which reported that EI skills were significant predictors of academic achievement (e.g. Elias & Arnold 2006; Parker et al. 2004). Moreover, a recent meta-analysis of over 300 studies showed that “programs designed to enhance social and emotional learning significantly improve students’ social and emotional competencies as well as academic performance” (Brackett & Katulak 2006: 1).

In a second/foreign language context, only passing reference was made until recently to intelligence as a factor belonging to the individual differences taxonomy (Dornyei 2006) but there has been an increasing interest lately, especially in relation to emotional intelligence in language teaching/learning, which has paved the way for more fruitful discussions on the topic (Williams & Burden 1997; Murray & Christison 2012). Based, then, on the recent interest regarding the construct of emotional intelligence and drawing on the relevant theory proposed by Salovey and Mayer (1990) the present study attempts to investigate the existence of a relationship between emotional intelligence and L2 language learning, with a particular focus on the use of language learning strategies. More specifically, the following research question was addressed:

*Is there a relationship between emotional intelligence and language learning strategy use?*

As a secondary question the study also sought to determine the existence of a possible relationship between emotional intelligence and vocabulary knowledge (vocabulary size).

### **EI and Second/Foreign Language Learning**

Research on EI in a second/foreign language context is still limited and is often inconclusive. A number of studies have reported positive correlations between EI, academic success and foreign language anxiety (Chao 2003, Tzoannopoulou 2014). Similarly, Pishghadam (2009) examined the relationship between EI, end-of-year grade point average, and the four language skills of 508 Iranian learners of English at university and found that second language learning and academic success were strongly associated with several EI dimensions. On the other hand, Prieto (2010), in a study of 114 American college-level students of L2 Spanish, found no significant relationship between EI and course achievement but did report a positive correlation between some EI subdomains and types of motivational orientations. Mohammadi and Bagheri (2011) found no significant relationship between overall EI, motivation and vocabulary size in a study of 100 students majoring in English translation. Rastegar and Karami (2013) reported a significant positive correlation between EI and affective/social strategy use among a group of 106 EFL students. In the same vein, Akbari and Hosseini (2008), drawing on the theory of multiple intelligences, found a significant link between students' IQ scores and the use of language learning strategies.

### **Language Learning Strategies**

Language learning strategies are defined by Cohen (1998: 68) as “the conscious thoughts and behaviours used by learners with the explicit goal of improving their knowledge of a target language”. Language learning strategies are usually contrasted with learning styles as they are mainly problem-oriented. Strategies are employed when a learner faces a specific learning problem, and his/her treatment of the difficulty may change in accordance to the nature of the problem. On the contrary, styles are considered to be relatively permanent features and do not readily change from one task to the next one (Brown 1994).

There are various classification systems for language learning strategies (O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Cohen 1998; Oxford 1990). Oxford's taxonomy

distinguishes two broad categories of language learning strategies, direct and indirect strategies. Oxford defines the first type of L2 strategies as those that directly involve the language being learnt. Memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies fall under this category. Indirect L2 learning strategies are considered to be necessary or helpful in learning the target language; however, they do not directly involve the language being learnt. Subsumed under indirect strategies are metacognitive, affective, and social strategies.

Since both the model of emotional intelligence proposed by Salovey and Mayer and the strategy use concept involve problem solving, and taking into account the recent interest in the application of EI to educational contexts, we hypothesize the existence of a relationship between student's EI scores and their use of language learning strategies.

## **The Study**

### ***Participants and Instruments***

The participants were 73 first-year students (20 male and 53 female) who were native speakers of Greek, aged 18 years old, and attending an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course at the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

The first instrument used in the present study was the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Scale (SSREI) developed by Schutte et al. (1998). The SSREI is based on Salovey and Mayer's theory of emotional intelligence (1990) and assesses overall EI as well as the following four EI subfactors: the ability to adaptively recognize emotions, express emotions, regulate emotions, and harness emotions in the self and in others. The SSREI consists of 33 items each accompanied by 5-point Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). The sum of all items constitutes the total scale score, which can range from 33 to 165 (higher scores indicate higher emotional intelligence). Schutte et al. (1998) reported internal consistency of between .87 and .90 and a two-week test-retest reliability of .78 in a community sample of 328 participants. The internal consistency of the scale in the present study was .85. Schutte et al. (1998) found a strong first factor encompassing all the dimensions of the Mayer and Salovey model and recommended using a single total score for this scale. Following their recommendation we report a single average score ranging from 1 to 5.

The second instrument was the revised version of the Vocabulary Levels Test, VLT (Schmitt et al. 2001). This test measures passive vocabulary

knowledge (vocabulary size) at four word frequency levels (2,000, 3,000, 5,000, 10,000 words) and also includes an academic vocabulary section (AVS). Schmitt et al. (2001) have provided validity and reliability evidence for the VLT which has been extensively used in L2 vocabulary research. Following Schmitt's recommendations, the criterion mastery was set at 26 correct answers out of 30 for each section. In the present study participants were divided into four mastery levels: at the 10,000 and 5,000 WL, 3,000 and 2,000 WL, 2,000 WL and those who had not yet mastered the 2,000 WL. Mastery of the academic vocabulary section was analysed separately. This section was positioned between the 3,000 and 5,000 word levels.

The final instrument was Oxford's (1990) ESL/EFL version of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The SILL includes 50 items followed by a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Never or almost never true of me) to 5 (Always or always true of me). Higher scores indicate higher use of learning strategies.

The three instruments were administered separately during the last three classes of the ESP course during the spring semester 2013.

### ***Results and Discussion***

The emotional intelligence scale was analysed through factor analysis in order to detect potential relationships among the items and to identify those components that best define the scale. The factor analysis of the SSREI yielded two main factors accounting for 28.5 of the total variance. Table 1 features the factor loadings for each factor. A loading of over .50 was used as a criterion of salience (Hatch et al. 1991). The items loading on factor one (19.8 of the total variance) represented all sections of the conceptual model of Salovey and Mayer (1990) and thus factor one was termed: *appraisal and expression of emotion in the self and others, regulation of emotion in the self and others, and utilization of emotions in solving problems*. The items loading on factor two (8.8 of the total variance) were not recognized as conceptually different from the items loading on factor one.

	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Comm- unality</b>
31. I use good moods to help myself keep trying in the face of obstacles	.640	-.307	.504
18. By looking at their facial expressions, I recognize the emotions people are experiencing	.633	.403	.563
12. When I experience a positive emotion, I know how to make it last	.632	-.250	.463

	<b>Factor 1</b>	<b>Factor 2</b>	<b>Comm- unality</b>
30. I help other people feel better when they are down	.591	.100	.359
2. When I am faced with obstacles, I remember times I faced similar obstacles and overcame them	.566	.050	.323
20. When I am in a positive mood, I am able to come up with new ideas	.562	-.300	.406
13. I arrange events others enjoy	.543	-.001	.295
29. I know what other people are feeling just by looking at them	.531	.439	.475
24. I compliment others when they have done something well	.527	-.341	.394
17. When I am in a positive mood, solving problems is easy for me	.508	.042	.260
25. I am aware of the non-verbal messages other people send	.496	.320	.348
9. I am aware of my emotions as I experience them	.492	.221	.291
22. I easily recognize my emotions as I experience them	.470	.231	.274
14. I seek out activities that make me happy	.470	-.088	.228
23. I motivate myself by imagining a good outcome to tasks I take on	.469	-.407	.386
7. When my mood changes, I see new possibilities	.459	-.321	.314
32. I can tell how people are feeling by listening to the tone of their voice	.434	.295	.275
8. Emotions are one of the things that make my life worth living	.419	.326	.282
16. I present myself in a way that makes a good impression on others	.417	.303	.266
19. I know why my emotions change	.403	.297	.250
15. I am aware of the non-verbal messages I send to others	.391	.399	.312
10. I expect good things to happen	.387	-.334	.261
26. When another person tells me about an important event in his or her life, I almost feel as though I have experienced this event myself	.364	-.026	.133
6. Some of the major events of my life have led me to re-evaluate what is important and not important	.355	-.467	.344
28. When I am faced with a challenge, I give up because I believe I will fail	.348	-.047	.124
21. I have control over my emotions	.344	.407	.284
4. Other people find it easy to confide in me	.339	.090	.123
5. I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people	.275	.099	.086
11. I like to share my emotions with others	.220	-.432	.235

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Comm- unality
1. I know when to speak about my personal problems to others	.205	-.407	.207
3. I expect that I will do well on most things I try	.180	.233	.087
27. When I feel a change in emotions, I tend to come up with new ideas	.158	-.364	.157
33. It is difficult for me to understand why people feel the way they do	.108	.315	.111
Percentage of variance accounted for by factor	19.8	8.8	

**Table 1: Factor analysis of the Emotional Intelligence Scale**

The descriptive statistics for the SSREI show that the students exhibit medium to high levels of emotional intelligence, as all mean values are over 3.0 (individual mean scores range from 3.15 SD=1.3 to 4.33 SD=0.85, total mean score 3.6).

Analysis of the SILL results reveals that, on a global level, the students' responses range between 2.5 and 3.4, a finding which shows a medium use of learning strategies (Table 2). Metacognitive and cognitive strategies exhibit the highest mean values, followed by social and compensation strategies. Affective strategies together with memory strategies have the lowest mean scores.

Part	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Range
Memory	73	2.86	0.56	1.2	4.4	3.2
Cognitive	73	3.32	0.57	2.1	4.7	2.6
Compensation	73	3.14	0.59	2.0	4.6	2.6
Metacognitive	73	3.35	0.66	2.1	4.8	2.7
Affective	73	2.64	0.70	1.0	4.6	3.6
Social	73	3.25	0.70	1.5	4.8	3.3

**Table 2: SILL mean values**

To address the main research question – that is, whether there is a relationship between the students' EI scores and language learning strategy use – Pearson's correlations were used in order to establish potential relationships between the SSREI items and the SILL categories. According to the pair-wise Pearson's correlation coefficients that were computed, and considering only values  $\geq 0.30$  at a 0.01 probability level of significance, we found a number of significant relationships. More specifically, memory strategies correlate positively with SSREI items 30 ( $r=.43$ ) and 31 ( $r=.36$ ), while cognitive strategies correlate positively with items 7 ( $r=.31$ ), 9 ( $r=.31$ )

and 20 ( $r=.35$ ). Compensation strategies exhibit significant correlations with items 10 ( $r=.31$ ), 13 ( $r=.35$ ), 20 ( $r=.38$ ), 23 ( $r=.33$ ), 24 ( $r=.34$ ), and 30 ( $r=.30$ ). In addition, affective strategies correlate positively with items 13 ( $r=.36$ ) and 30 ( $r=.35$ ). Finally, social strategies exhibit significant correlations with items 9 ( $r=.31$ ), 20 ( $r=.32$ ) and 24 ( $r=.30$ ). All the above SSREI items exhibit medium to high factor loadings as can be seen from Table 1, something which lends support to the saliency of these items. Based on the above findings, we may reach the conclusion that the main research question is only partially confirmed, as significant relationships were identified between individual SSREI items and the SILL categories and not between overall EI scores and the SILL categories. However, since significant positive correlations did emerge from the results we could argue that certain aspects of emotional intelligence (e.g. the interpersonal aspect) correspond to certain aspects of language use, such as social and communication skills. In addition, it could be further argued that both emotional intelligence and strategy use involve some aspects of problem solving (as defined in their constructs), hence the individual positive correlations. Previous research, although limited, reported positive correlations between total EI scores and L2 language learning strategies in university settings (Hasanzadeh & Shahmohamadi 2011; Rastegar and Karami 2013).

With respect to the performance of the students on the vocabulary levels test, Table 3 shows that only 16.4% of the students were below the 2,000 word level, followed by 30.1% of the students who passed the 2,000 word level and 35.6% of the students, the biggest group, who achieved mastery of vocabulary at the 2,000 and 3,000 word levels. The most advanced group, those who had mastered the 5,000 and 10,000 word levels, included 17.8% of the students. In relation to their performance in the academic vocabulary section, students were almost equally divided into two groups, 47.9% did not master it, while 52.1% achieved mastery, the majority of those who did achieve mastery belonging to the more advanced levels as expected.

	<i>n</i>	Below 2,000	2,000	2,000 3,000	5,000 10,000	AVS_not mastered yet	AVS_ mastered
All participants	73	16.4%	30.1%	35.6%	17.8%	47.9%	52.1%
Female	53	18.8%	28.3%	39.6%	13.2%	49%	50.9%
Male	20	10%	35%	25%	30%	45%	55%

**Table 3: Vocabulary Levels Test: percentages by mastery level**



In regard to the secondary research question – that is, the existence of a potential relationship between emotional intelligence and vocabulary knowledge – we ran a series of independent-samples t-tests in order to compare the scores between the EI scale and the vocabulary level bands. The results indicate that there are no significant differences between the EI scores and the vocabulary level results, a finding which indicates that there is no apparent relationship between emotional intelligence and L2 vocabulary knowledge. The results coincide with those of Mohammadi and Bagheri (2011) and Prieto (2010), who reported no positive correlations between EI and vocabulary size or EI and L2 course achievement. However, as this is a relatively new area of research and not many relevant studies have been conducted thus far, more research would be needed, possibly not with self-report measures such as the SSREI used in the present study but with performance measures of emotional intelligence (e.g. the MSCEIT, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, Mayer 2002) which require the participants to complete tasks associated with emotional intelligence and which might yield more interesting findings.

## Conclusion

The present study focused on the investigation of a possible relationship between emotional intelligence and L2 language learning strategy use. The findings only partially confirmed the hypothesis, showing significant correlations between individual items of the emotional intelligence scale and L2 language learning strategies. No significant relationship was found, however, between emotional intelligence and L2 vocabulary knowledge. The findings of this study should be treated with caution, as the partial confirmation of the research questions does not enable us to draw a definite conclusion regarding the effect of emotional intelligence on second/foreign language learning. Further research would be needed to explore the link between emotional intelligence and second/foreign language learning, preferably involving learners with different L1 and cultural backgrounds.

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# 46

## 'I have no idea of British humour': How 39 Chinese students accounted for their incomprehension of humour in British academic lectures

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### Introduction

Britain is one of the most popular destinations for international students, and China produces more international students than any other country. As a result, almost a quarter of all the non-EU domiciled students in England in 2010/11 were from China (HESA, 2012). Many British academic institutes have investigated and reported on the difficulties Chinese students face in their daily and academic lives (Table 1). Across these investigations, issues including understanding lectures, developing different studying skills and a lack of intercultural interaction with native and other overseas students were consistently raised as the biggest problems experienced by the subjects.

	Partic- ipants	Academic	Pastoral
Edwards & Ran 2006	S/T	Teacher-student relationships, study skills, plagiarism, group work and English competence	Adjustment problems, isolation and health
Edwards et al. 2007	S/T	English competence	English competence
Gu 2009	S/T	Learning shock	Loneliness and intercultural interaction
Liu 2009	S	Learning skills including understanding lectures, participating in group work and classroom-based activities etc.	
Spencer Oatey & Xiong 2006	S	Academic writing, expressing ideas in class, understanding lectures etc.	intercultural interaction
Tian & Lowe 2009	S	Language problems, understanding lecture and group work	intercultural interaction
Turner 2006	S	Different approaches to education and learning including language challenges	
Zhou & Todman 2008	S/T	Differences between teaching and learning traditions and practices	

**Table 1: Studies of Chinese students in the UK**

T = teacher; S = student

In all these studies, inadequate English competence was consistently mentioned, both by the Chinese students and sometimes by their teachers, as a major issue. In Tian and Lowe's (2009) study, all 27 participants commented on their inadequate initial command of English and its influence on their academic learning. Liu (2009) noticed "a general lack of confidence among Chinese students in participating in English". Furthermore, inadequate language was considered to underlie many issues related to the students' UK experience. The students often attributed their difficulty understanding lectures to language problems. Their concern over language also inhibited them from participating in classroom activities. One student in Liu's research made the following comment: "I don't feel my English is good enough to speak out in front of the whole class".

Across academic departments, there is concern among staff over Chinese students' inadequate levels of English competence for academic study in the UK. This inadequacy is said to be manifested in poor grammar in writing (Edwards et al. 2007), and ongoing language support was regarded as important by the departments studied in Robson and Turner (2007). In this sense, Chinese students' English is acknowledged both by the students themselves and by their tutors to be problematic. However, the elements contributing to language problems are complex and require further detailed investigation. All Chinese students in the UK have taken at least one accredited English test, e.g. IELTS, as proof of their English competence. Edwards et al. (2007), however, reject the idea of measuring language competence based on only such tests: not only is it a matter of vocabulary and grammar, but there is also a cultural dimension.

In these studies, it appeared that the students were willing to admit when they faced the problem of insufficient understanding during lectures, group work and social communication in the UK classroom. They were seriously worried about the issue. However, there is little discussion in terms of how these language problems are defined, and how these problems cause insufficient understanding in communication. My study investigates Chinese students' understanding of academic lectures in the UK with a focus on humour in this context, examines how the participants account for problems that arose and questions the validity of these accounts.

## **Methodology**

I audio-recorded nine academic lectures in two university departments in England. From each of these lectures, at least two Chinese students were recruited. Each of them attended one playback and discussion session in

groups of two to six. During the session, participants listened to humour episodes (HEs) - i.e., instances of humour - selected from the lecture(s) they had attended. Afterwards, they were asked to answer questions individually on a respondent's report (RR) form. The questions were mainly designed to elicit the participants' accounts of humour. After completing the RR forms, the participants were interviewed. If there were more than two participants, they discussed their answers on the RR forms amongst themselves as a group before the interviews. The lecturers, who all spoke English as their first language, were also interviewed individually about the same HEs commented on by their Chinese students. All interviews and group discussions were audio recorded.

Additionally, I talked to some native British students and students who used English as a second language. Their accounts of the HEs were compared with those of the Chinese participants' to reveal differences. Their accounts also provided much information that was unfamiliar to me as a learner of English myself. These participants are referred to as 'informants' in my research.

## The lectures

Table 2 below shows the nine lectures recorded. On-site notes were taken to record paralinguistic features and events that the audio recorders could not pick up, e.g. latecomers entering the classroom.

Code	Discipline	Lecture title
<b>Andy1</b>	Applied linguistics	Writing
<b>Andy2</b>	Applied linguistics	Conversation analysis
<b>Amy1</b>	Applied linguistics	Autonomy & motivation
<b>John1</b>	Applied linguistics	Speaking
<b>Deep1</b>	Business	Business systems of Japan, Korea and Overseas Chinese networks
<b>Eric1</b>	Business	Culture: its influence on business
<b>Eric2</b>	Business	Eclectic theory & critique of diamond theory
<b>Lynn1</b>	Business	Marketing communication
<b>Paul1</b>	Business	The international environment of corporate strategies

**Table 2: Lectures recorded**

## Identification of humour instances

The identification of humour in the nine lectures was informed by a review of data from the British Academic Spoken English (BASE) corpus. BASE provided a large amount of lecture data for initial scrutiny for the purpose of this study. Analysis of identified humour episodes (HEs) revealed that humour is a versatile means of enhancing self-image, tackling potential face loss, mitigating face-threatening acts, and enhancing solidarity with students. There are frequent examples of the lecturer teasing other people, joking about someone who is absent, or self-deprecating; story-telling is also frequent. The study of humour in the nine lectures I collected was focused on these functions and forms of humour. Seventeen HEs were identified and selected for further research with the student and lecturer participants.

## Results and analysis

The tables below summarize the student participants' answers in response to the question in the RR form question asking 'did you notice any instances of humour in what the lecturer said or did'.

Ext no.	Type of humour	Lecture	Yes	No
ext 5*	Teasing	Andy1	3	0
ext 4	Teasing	Andy1	1	2
ext 3	Teasing	Amy1	1	2
ext 2*	Story-telling	Amy1	3	0

**Table 3: Group A (three participants)**

Ext no.	Type of humour	Lecture	Yes	No
ext 7*	Self-deprecation	Andy2	5	0
ext 6*	Teasing	Andy2	6	0
ext 3	Teasing	Amy1	0	6
ext 1*	Story-telling	Amy1	6	0
ext 14*	Teasing	John1	5	1
ext 15	Joking about someone; Story-telling	John1	1	5

**Table 4: Group B (six participants)**

(One participant was late for the self-deprecation session and missed the first audio extract)



Ext no.	Type of humour	Lecture	Yes	No
ext 7*	Self-deprecation	Andy2	5	0
ext 6*	Teasing	Andy2	5	0
ext 3	Teasing	Amy1	1	4
ext 1*	Story-telling	Amy1	5	0
ext 14*	Teasing	John1	0	5
ext 15	Joking about someone; Story-telling	John1	0	5

**Table 5: Group C (five participants)**

Ext no.	Type of humour	Lecture	Yes	No
ext 8	Joking about someone; Story-telling	Eric1	3	3
ext 10	Teasing	Eric1	3	3
ext 9	Teasing	Eric1	0	6

**Table 6: Group D (six participants)**

Ext no.	Type of humour	Lecture	Yes	No
ext 11*	Teasing	Eric2	4	0
ext 12	Joking about someone	Eric2	1	3
ext 13	Self-deprecation	Eric2	0	4

**Table 7: Group E (four participants)**

Ext no.	Type of humour	Lecture	Yes	No
ext 12	Joking about someone	Eric2	0	2
ext 13	Self-deprecation	Eric2	0	2

**Table 8: Group F (three participants; 1 form missing)**

Ext no.	Type of humour	Lecture	Yes	No
ext 11*	Teasing	Eric2	1	1
ext 12	Joking about someone	Eric2	1	1
ext 13	Self-deprecation	Eric2	0	2

**Table 9: Group G (two participants)**

Ext no.	Type of humour	Lecture	Yes	No
Ext 11*	Teasing	Eric2	1	4
ext 12	Joking about someone	Eric2	1	4
ext 13	Self-deprecation	Eric2	0	5

**Table 10: Group H (five participants)**

Ext no.	Type of humour	Lecture	Yes	No
ext 16	Joking about someone	Lynn1	0	2
ext 17 *	Story-telling	Lynn1	1	1

**Table 11: Group I (two participants)**

The data analysis revealed that many of the Chinese participants encountered various levels of difficulty in understanding humour during the lectures. In many cases, they attributed the lack of comprehension to their language problems in a conventional sense (e.g. problems in relation to vocabulary, speech speed and accents), but seldom did they refer to difficulty deriving from the cultural allusions involved in the humour. Some participants claimed that ‘British humour’ was particularly perplexing, but there was recurring evidence in my data that illustrated similarities between the lecturers’ and the Chinese participants’ humour, thus challenging the latter group’s accounts of the inherent difference between humour in the two cultures.

### **Self-perceived language problems**

In the lecture preceding Ext. 4, the lecturer Andy asked the students to mark a short article written by an imaginary student, and after finishing the students shared their marking. In the extract, Andy is commenting on the activity by referring to research on ways of giving feedback to students’ writing.

#### **Ext. 4 – mutator**

- 1     Andy:     I mean, these are just things I got very quickly and  
2                   if you combine them you  
3                   get a massively rich set of potential ways of giving  
4                   feedback, so, what I ask you to  
5                   do was of course completely unfair, I gave you a  
6                   text and said mark it and nobody  
7                   was going to sit there and say no, so you had to do  
8                   it, and of course what we’ve  
9                   learned through research is that really you need to  
10                  use your options, and this is from  
11                  Furneaux et al.’s research, some feedback options,  
12                  “the teacher could be an initiator  
13                  a supporter an adviser a suggester a provider and a  
14                  mutator”, changer, I like the  
15                  mutator, I don’t know if I ever mutated a student in  
16                  my life but you know I am

- 9 prepared to try it so there you go so what's  
happened in terms of writing research is  
that, feedback has become embodied in the process  
10 and the teacher's role has been  
rethought in all sorts of ways students have been  
11 much involved in that by the way  
the website is okay now I checked it all out and  
12 today this week's lecture is already  
13 up on it

*Andy1-HE44*

In the first half part of this extract (L#1-6), Andy focuses on the teaching content. He starts reading out a quotation from a PowerPoint slide projected on the whiteboard. His reading is then interrupted when he gets to the word 'mutator'. The idea of mutating a student in the sense Andy 'makes up' is unusual and absurd. Nonetheless, the mutation of human beings can of course happen in imaginary worlds, e.g. in science fiction. This was pointed out by several of my personal informants who associated Andy's remark with scenes in Sci-Fi, TV shows or films. Moreover, this notion was suggested by Andy himself:

you know [...] usually it's used intransitively isn't it, [...] you don't mutate something, at least not to my knowledge I've never checked it up, maybe there is a transitive use, but even so, I associate it with mutant [...] it's associated with non-human things, or if it's human then human but in a sinister sense, so you know mutated into an alien, we usually would plan sort of things like that

For people who are aware of Sci-Fi culture, and who can thus make similar associations, Andy's utterance recontextualises (Bauman and Briggs, 1990) plots that can be found in many Sci-Fi stories, which is a popular literary genre in British culture. This humorous aside is therefore culture-laden. It might not be comprehended by international students. However, its incongruity at a formal level - i.e., it departs from the previous teaching flow structurally and paralinguistically - should be comparatively easy for everyone, including international students, to perceive.

Only one participant in this session, Ping, identified humour. The two other students, Lin and Su, missed the humour, most likely because they did not hear or understand the word 'mutator' or because the aside itself was too

brief and thus not perceived. These two possibilities can be classified as language problems in the traditional sense. Problems of language were pointed out by Lin in the group discussion and by Su in our conversation after the playback and discussion session.

During the interview, Ping tried to explain her understanding of the humour but could not explain what exactly it was that Andy had not done in his life. Her comprehension of what was said was therefore limited, but it is likely that she noticed some cues and thus perceived the utterance as humorous. She was able to construct an account of what the humour might be:

Ping: I think he's saying I have never done that in my life, and then shall I do it now, I think it's quite funny, I think, if teachers or other people say I have never done something in my life, I think that is exaggeration, it is quite funny

*Interview (Group A)*

The student responses to Ext 4 showed that none of them had fully comprehended Andy's aside about 'mutator'. Lin and Su, who missed all cues of humour in Ext. 4, considered their low language proficiency to be the reason for their miscomprehension. None of the participants alluded to culture-related aspects.

### **Stereotyping Britishness**

This extract is from the beginning of a lecture on international business taught by Eric. Carla is his colleague.

#### **Ext. 11 – good news and better news**

- Some of you might have been thinking it was Carla
- 1 Eric: this morning on, Economics,  
well the good news is, you get Carla next week, and
- 2 the better news is, ready for  
the- i will listen for the cheers, this is the last formal
- 3 lecture you get from me on this
- 4 subject
- 5 SF: woo-hoo::
- 6 Eric: You cheered
- 7 SL: [<laughter>
- 8 SF: [(inaudible)
- 9 Eric: Oh dear <clears throat>
- 10 S?: (inaudible)

- black mark? you're joking, that's twenty percent off
- 11 Eric: her essay
- 12 SF: [oh::
- 13 SS: [<laughter>  
<laugh> # five percent for optimism <laugh> right
- 14 Eric: okay

*Eric2-HE02*

In this extract, Eric delivers two primary messages – Carla is teaching next week, and this is his last lecture. He introduces these messages as 'good news' and even 'better news'. Why they are good news is not clearly explained. But through the juxtaposition of his exit with the arrival of a new lecturer, one can infer that Eric is suggesting that the students do not like his lectures. This is a self-deprecating evaluation of his level of popularity with the students. The self-deprecation signals a play frame (Bateson, 1953). Eric then invites the students to participate in the play frame in L#3. This is immediately picked up on by one British student SF, who then responds by cheering. This triggers laughter from the audience. Soon afterwards, other students join in. The audience's active participation and laughter indicate that they are enjoying the game. Eric's account of this extract in the interview stressed its playfulness:

Laugh at me, urm, it's towards the end, there's a sense of relief that it's done, there's a sense of release of tension [...] they can laugh at me it doesn't matter, they will be happy about that ... it's playing a game, it's just playing a game.

Eleven Chinese students, divided into three groups, took part in the research. Six of them noticed humour in this extract and showed good comprehension of what was said. However, the matter of self-deprecation was not explicit in their accounts of the humour. I asked one group of participants: what was the good news Eric spoke of, and why did he say it was good news? Their answers are reproduced below:

- 1 Bee: I think he is saying the opposite, actually for students, it is not good news to have the last lecture, but he puts it as good news, so I feel
- 2 R: you think he's saying the opposite [...]
- 3 Bee: Yes
- 4 R: why did he say it's good news?
- 5 Bee: cuz- <laugh>

- 6 Alin: Cuz students don't like having lectures, then we heard  
it's the last lecture, I don't think it's good news  
7 Bee: yeah, from students' perspective, having more lectures  
is not a bad thing

*Interview (Group E)*

*(The numbers represent turns of speech, which are referred to as 'T'  
hereafter; R stands for Researcher.)*

Interestingly, Alin and Bee believed that what Eric meant by 'good news' was that the students would have no more lectures. This was different from what Eric intended to imply. The self-deprecation, as pointed out by Eric himself, was lost in Alin and Bee's interpretations of 'the good news'. A similar problem occurred in Group G. Most of the members did not notice humour in the episode. Their comments, as shown below, suggest that misidentification of the target of the face act can be detrimental to rapport.

The participants in this latter group had evident difficulty in understanding the audio extract. One member of this group, Gao, appeared to understand very little of it. Nevertheless, he still detected humour in it due to the laughter – 'there must be humour ... because many people are laughing'. Later, he attributed his incomprehension to unfamiliarity with 'British humour':

- 8 Gao: I really know nothing about British humour, what did  
he say in the first one?

Later, I asked the group the same questions: what was the good news Eric spoke of, and why did he say it was good news? Below is part of their discussion.

- 9 Fei: good news means this is the last lecture  
10 Fan: yeah, he's telling us this is the last lesson  
11 Han: you call that good news? <laugh>  
12 Fan: then he puts you off by saying this is not the last  
lecture, someone else's going to teach us  
13 [...]  
14 R: why is it good news?  
15 Fei: because to us students, this is his last lecture, maybe  
he thinks we would see it as good news  
16 Gao: maybe he thinks students don't like having lessons, if  
this is the last lecture[...] for example, it's the last  
lecture, if one does not want to have lectures, then you

have no more, that gives you a hope, then he gives you  
a set-back, something like that

*Interview (Group G)*

Fei, Fan, and Gao conjectured that Eric believed that the students did not like having lectures. This coincided with the opinions of Alin and Bee's, which made the students the target of Eric's evaluation. To find out what they thought about Eric's evaluation as they had just constructed it, I asked the question below.

- 17 R: he said it's good news, do you think so?  
18 Fan: of course not  
19 Gao: of course not  
20 R: why?  
21 [...]  
22 Jun: no lectures means exams are coming  
23 [...]  
24 R: do you think the lecturer himself thinks it's good  
news?  
25 Gao: with regards to the lecturer, I think because the British  
people are generally lazier, and if he doesn't need to  
work  
26 Fan: no money  
27 Fei: pretty good  
28 Gao: they don't get paid according to working time,  
otherwise they all work twenty four hours[...]  
29 Jun: he doesn't depend on these to make money from you  
Chinese people (inaudible)

*Interview (Group G)*

They unanimously rejected the idea that not having any more lectures was good news to them. When I proceeded to ask them if the lecturer thought it was good news (T24), Gao's response surprised me as he made a somewhat derogatory claim about British people. Other participants, including Fan, Fei and Jun, seemed to immediately buy into Gao's opinion. Eric considered his humour to be 'playing a game', whereas the Chinese participants interpreted it as more of an oppositional encounter. Later, I asked the students in this group to comment on Eric's humour in general:

- 30 Gao: actually sometimes we just don't know if he's being  
humorous or not  
31 Fan: yeah  
32 Fei: don't understand it  
33 Fan: everyone's laughing, and we laugh <laughter>  
34 R: sometimes you don't understand it right?  
35 Fan: cuz he's laughing there himself, we just watch him  
laugh  
36 Gao: and if you're with a crowd of foreigners, and  
everyone's laughing, you can only follow and laugh  
37 <laughter>

*Interview (Group G)*

Group G's discussion, as shown above, indicated what they perceive to be Britishness: British humour that is unknown to Chinese students (T8); British people being generally lazier; and the lecturer not wishing to teach while the Chinese wanted more lectures (T17-29).

## **Discussion**

The Chinese participants encountered many problems in comprehending the HEs. When the participants reflected on their HE-related comprehension difficulties, their accounts embodied the conventional dichotomy between 'language' and 'culture'.

### ***'My English is not good enough'***

Some participants attributed their misunderstanding of humour in the lectures to language problems in a narrow sense. In Group A, Su believed that her shrinking vocabulary was a major barrier to her comprehension of lectures.

As far as I'm concerned, I think maybe I had left school for too long, so my vocabulary is shrinking. I've been [in Britain] for quite a while, but maybe it's the environment, homesickness, etc. [...] I didn't feel settled down. So although I was here for some time last year, I didn't work very hard.

Lin, commenting on another extract from Andy, suggested that Andy's rapid speech and his accent had affected her comprehension. In addition, participants frequently mentioned in the interviews that their English was not good enough. In some cases, there were signs of participants' unfamiliarity with certain vocabulary, which in the conventional sense is considered to be



a language problem, e.g. 'mutator' in Ext. 4. This word is not included in the College English Syllabus (2000). But the cultural allusion that it bears, i.e. to the Sci-fi culture in British media, is also problematic for international students.

The students displayed a tendency to blame their incomprehension of humour on their language proficiency. This is in line with how the participants in the series of studies introduced at the beginning of this paper accounted for their insufficient understanding in the UK classroom. My data also indicates that what the students consider to be a language problem is often a matter of vocabulary, pronunciation, speed etc., which are related to language in a narrow sense. In addition, there appears to be a common idea among the Chinese students that there is 'the English' they did not learn in China. As one student in Edwards et al. (2007) puts it below

I feel there is some problem with the content of teaching in China.  
It is far removed from those things that are often used in everyday life.

These self-perceived language problems are questionable. For example, on the one hand, it is debatable in Ext. 4 whether it is necessary for English learners to know 'mutator', a word that is not included in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. On the other hand, it is impossible for an English learner to exhaustively study the sociocultural uses of words/phrases that they may come across overseas. 'The English' that was not learnt in China can be learnt if the student has the opportunity to pursue it as it occurs in study and life overseas. However, Chinese students' concern over language often inhibits them from interacting in English, as remarked by one Chinese student in Liu's (2009) research: 'I don't feel my English is good enough to speak out in front of the whole class'.

### ***'I have no idea of British humour'***

Some participants did mention cultural differences as a factor in their lack of understanding of humour. In such instances, the participants often referred to 'British humour' and its perplexing nature, e.g. Gao in Group G (T8). As the members in this group proceeded to discuss British humour, they made the following comments:

- 1 Fan: this may be British humour, can't understand it
- 2 All: <laughter>  
[...]

3 Han: no, it's because Britain is boring, I don't feel anything funny

4 Fei: no entertainment

5 Han: yeah no entertainment, can only (make fun of these)

*Group discussion (Group G)*

The three participants co-constructed an explanation of why British humour was difficult for them to understand, commenting that British life was so boring that British people had to make fun of uninteresting things. In this way, they were themselves joking about British people. This illustrated Crithley's (2002:68-69) observation that 'ethnic humour', i.e. humour about a race other than one's own, often manifests the idea that 'foreigners' do not have a sense of humour. Another instance is Fon and Jin in Group I, who both agreed that 'Chinese humour' and 'British humour' were different.

However, if we look at the Chinese participants' discourse in the group discussions, we can find many instances of humour that would resonate with their British lecturer's humour. The remark above concerning boring British life functions in a similar way to the lecturers' interpersonal humour frequently found in the nine lectures. The similarities challenge the students' accounts of the inherent difference between humour in the two cultures.

### **Conclusion and implications**

Various studies have reported a particular pattern of socialisation for Chinese students in the U.K.: Chinese students experience much less intercultural interaction with British people than they expect, and they easily resort to the habit of stereotyping British people (Edwards and An, 2006; Gu, 2009; Robson and Turner, 2007; Spencer-Oatey and Xiong, 2006) and auto-stereotyping (Tian and Lowe, 2009). In Tian and Lowe's study, the vast majority of their Chinese respondents failed to interact meaningfully with British people and socialised mainly with Chinese friends throughout their stay in Britain. In my study, the Chinese students' discrimination between two national categories of humour, may also be seen as stereotyping British people and auto-stereotyping. This way of stereotyping has a clear pitfall: by perceiving 'British humour' and 'Chinese humour' to be inherently different, understanding the former becomes impossible for the Chinese students, so they can give up on making an effort to understand it. This may be associated with a more widespread lack of communication with British people. Based on my observations in the field, Chinese students in the recorded lectures tended to stick together wherever they went. In this respect, my participants' stereotypical accounts in the research context reflect a widely reported

socialising pattern of Chinese students in the U.K. The students' tendency to stereotype and auto-stereotype is thus an issue requiring further academic attention.

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## Transcription conventions

*For transcripts of BASE and AHC data, interviews, and group discussions*

(inaudible)

Inaudible recording

(text)

Uncertain transcription

<movement> text </>

start and finish of kinesic movements and other nonverbal events

<laugh>

non-iterated laughter

<laughter>

Iterated laughter

[text

Overlapping speech

#

Hesitation or filler sounds

<name>

Anonymous name of a person or organization

text-

Truncated words

:

prolonged sound

<laughing/angry/mimicking  
another's voice> text </>

speaker changes vocal quality

,

brief pause

*For transcripts of Interview and group discussion only*

,

punctuation comma

[...]

content omitted

?

rise of tone at the end of a question

# 47

## **Detecting patterns of sequences by coding scheme and transcribed utterance information: An analysis of English and Japanese reactive tokens as non-primary speaker's role**

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### **Introduction**

This study aims to present a preliminary analysis of English and Japanese 'reactive tokens' (Clancy et al. 1996) in dialogue through a move-structure coding scheme and transcribed utterance information. In accordance with Carletta et al.'s (1997) coding system called 'moves', two aspects of dialogue processes are investigated: the function of reactive tokens and their patterns of move sequences, which represent how the participants control their shared information and negotiate to achieve their collaborative task purpose, i.e. to reach their respective goals.

### **Definition of Reactive Tokens (RTs)**

Reactive Tokens (RTs) are defined as "short utterances produced by interlocutors who are playing the listener's role during the other interlocutors' speakership" (Clancy et al. 1996). RTs "will normally not disrupt the primary speaker's speakership, and do not in themselves claim the floor" (Clancy et al. 1996). Our question: what do RTs do in constructing a common ground as non-primary speaker's role? How can RT affect the collaborative interaction of structuring dialogue processes?

Classification of 'reactive tokens' is introduced as comprising five types in Clancy et al. (1996): backchannels, reactive expressions, collaborative finishes, repetitions, and resumptive openers. Other varieties include those proposed by Gardner (2001) – continuers, acknowledgments, change-of-activity tokens, assessments, and non-verbal responses (5 types) – and, more recently, Den et al. (2012)'s 'response tokens' – responsive interjections, expressive interjections, lexical reactive expressions, evaluative expressions,

(partial) repetitions, (collaborative) completion (6 types). Based on these classifications, we propose the following forms and function of RTs:

1. Backchannels (+ Reactive expressions)
2. Repetitions
3. Paraphrase
4. Collaborative finishes

## Method

In considering the reactive tokens with respect to the levels of dialogue structure based on interaction, we introduce the move-structure coding scheme designed by Carletta et al. (1997), which is schematized as follows:

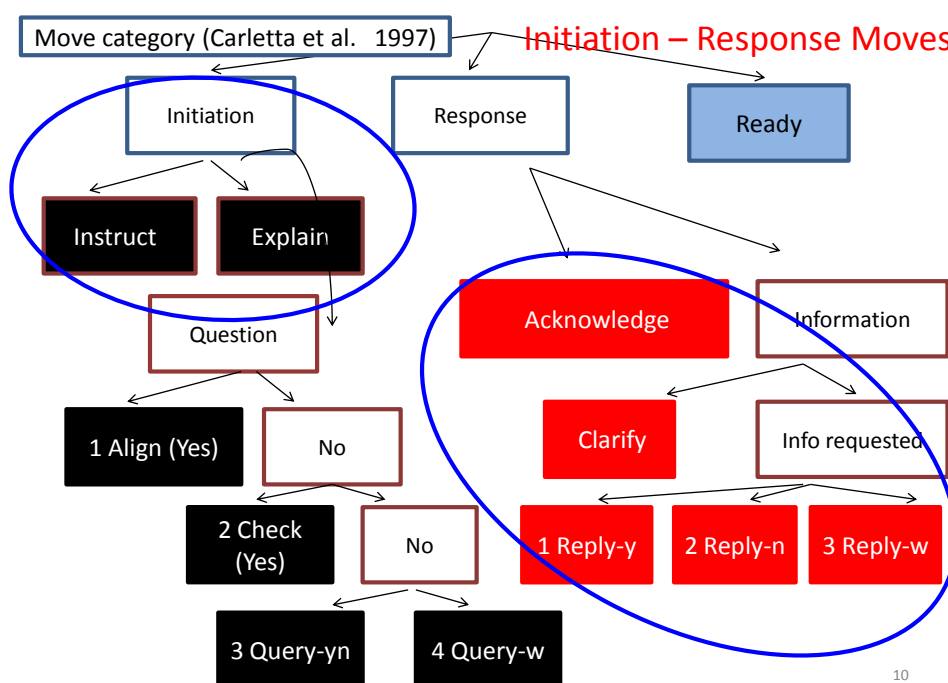


Figure 1: Move category (Carletta et al. 1997)

“An ACKNOWLEDGE move is a verbal response which minimally shows that the speaker has heard the move to which it responds, and often also demonstrates that the move was understood and accepted” (Carletta et al. 1997).

(1)

G: Ehm. If you ... you're heading southwards.

F: Mmhmm.

(2)

G: Do you have a stone circle at the bottom?

F: No.

G: No, you don't.

Carletta et al. (1997)

## Data

The data to be examined here are from the task-oriented dialogue corpus of English and Japanese based on the maps, and we examine four types of reactive tokens occurring in both sets of data: backchannels (including reactive expressions), repetitions, paraphrase, and collaborative finishes.

The sample examples of the interaction and the move structure of each data set are shown as follows:

(3)

- |        |   |               |
|--------|---|---------------|
| *TA 1  | {m um} Can you go west.   | (Instruct)    |
| *TB 2  | <b>Okay.</b> How far west?  | (Acknowledge) |
|        |   | (Query-w)     |
| *TA 3  | About three centimetres {n laugh}   | (Reply-w)     |
| *TB 4  | <b>Three centimetres.</b>   | (Acknowledge) |
| *TA 5  | <b>Yeah.</b>  | (Acknowledge) |
| *TB 6  | < To the west,/   | (Clarify)     |
| *TA 7  | <b>Yeah.</b>  | (Acknowledge) |
| *TB 8  | <b>Right.&gt;</b>   | (Ready)       |
| *TA 9  | < And then, sort of, go diagonally {n laugh} sort of {n laugh} from right to left / | (Instruct)    |
| *TB 10 | <b>Okay</b>   | (Acknowledge) |

(4)

- |          |   |               |
|----------|---|---------------|
| 42-44→G: | ここからあ<400+>ん<400+><br>もうすこしまだしたにいくん<br>ですけどお: ,+                      | (Instruct)    |
| 45→F:    | +はい   | (Acknowledge) |
|          |   | ----- (I)     |
| 46-47 G: | まっすぐう<230>じゃなくて<br><400+>ちょっとだ<290>けか<br>一ぶする ようなさっ*きから<br>つづいていくと: , | (Explain)     |

- 48-49 F: \*ん<400+>ん (Acknowledge)  
----- (2)
- 50 G: ゆるやかなえすじ\*みたいに  
なるぐらい:, (Explain)
- 51 F: \*んっ (Acknowledge)  
----- (2)
- 52 G: \*えすまではいかないですけ  
ど:,+ (Explain)
- 53-54 F: \*はい<400+>+はい (Acknowledge)  
----- (2)
- 55-56 G: まっすぐじゃなく<400+>ちょ  
っとだけかーぶしているかん  
じで:,+ (Explain)
- 57 F: +はい (Acknowledge)  
----- (2)
- 58 G: もうすこししたのほうまで (Explain)
- 59→F: っとこれはあのすたーとちて (Check)  
んからその一<310> \*つぎに  
いく
- 60→G: \*はい (Acknowledge)  
----- (3)
- 61 F: ところまで:, (Check)
- 62 G: はい (Acknowledge)  
----- (3)
- 63 F: あのせいかくにる一とをあの  
かかなかきゃいけないんです  
か<400+> (Check)
- 64-67→F: あの<400+>せん<400+>あ (Explain)  
<400+>で:,わたしがはじめに  
いたところは:,
- 68→G: はい (Acknowledge)  
----- (4)
- 69-70 F: んっこれ<400+>おんなじです (Check)  
よねかいてあるえは
- 71 G: \*は:,
- 72 F: \*どちらもち\*ず (Explain)
- 73 G: \*ちがうー{\*ざっし[?]} (Explain)
- 74 F: \*ちがう?



75 F:	えすじで<330>*なんか	( <i>Explain</i> )
76 G:	*えすえすまでいかないんで すけ*ど:,	( <i>Explain</i> )
77-78 F:	*んっうん	( <i>Acknowledge</i> )
	<400+> えつつぎに<300>せん をひくところまで:,	( <i>Explain</i> )
79 G:	はい+	( <i>Acknowledge</i> )
80-81→F:	+なんか<400+>つりばしみた いに<400+>なってます:?	( <i>Check</i> )
82 G:	あつつりばしは:,*そのすた 一とちてんからみたら:,*あ	( <i>Explain</i> ) ----- (5)
84-85→F:	*はい<400+>*はい	( <i>Acknowledge</i> )
86→F:	*ひだりっかわですよ*ね	( <i>Acknowledge</i> ) ----- (5)
87-89G:	*ほく<400+> *ほくせ い?<400+>でそ	( <i>Explain</i> )

Figure 2 illustrates the sample map of the giver and the follower:

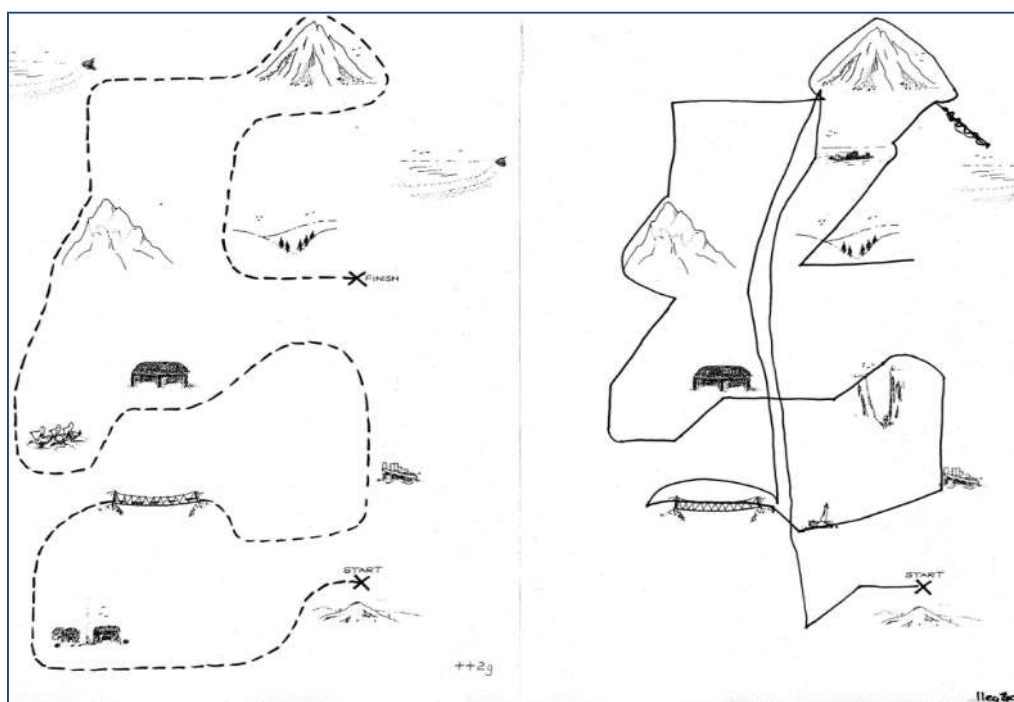


Figure 2: Sample map of the giver (left) and the follower (right)

## Analysis and Results

Figure 3 below displays the results of analyzing the frequency of 4 types of RTs in English and Japanese. The findings show that instruction followers use reactive tokens more frequently than instruction givers, typically coded as acknowledge moves, and, interestingly, the frequency gap between the participants in the English data is smaller than that of participants in the Japanese one. However, the overall frequency shows that the use of backchannels is dominant compared to the other types, and Japanese interlocutors use repetitions more frequently than English interlocutors.

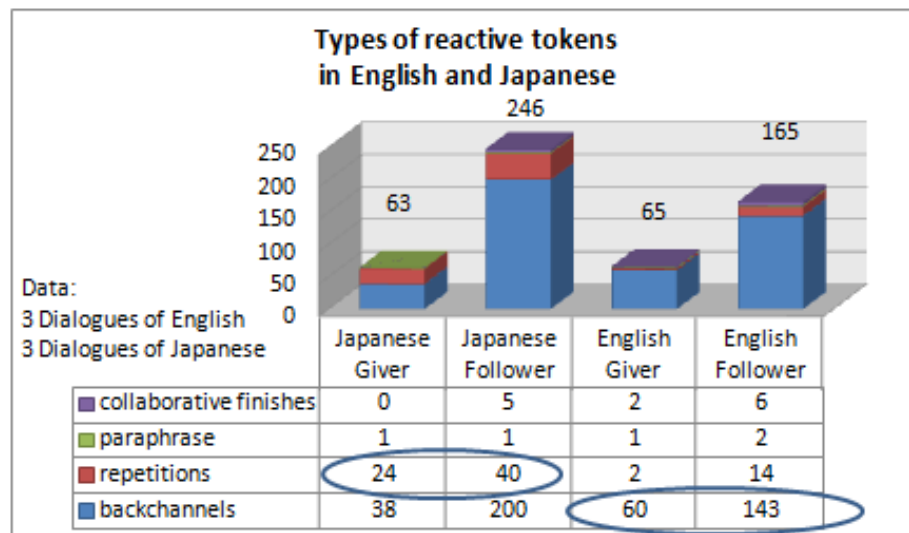


Figure 3: Frequency of 4 types of RTs

## Move sequences of each participant in Japanese example

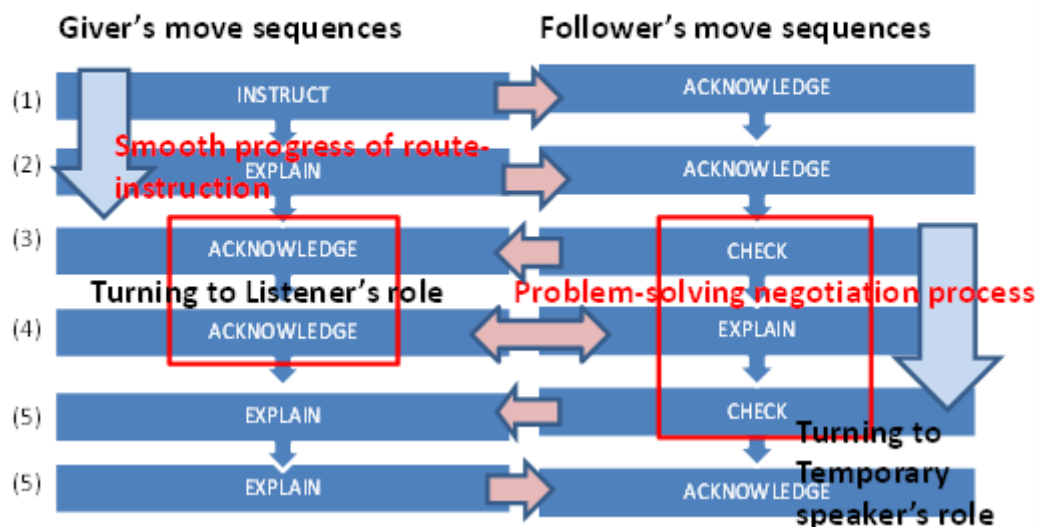


Figure 4: Move sequences of each participant in example (4)

## Conclusion

These findings can suggest that the initial utterances tend to carry heavier loads of planning, thus reflecting the speaker's intention to shape a move structure of Initiation, which requires more frequent use of RTs in Response moves. Meanwhile, the utterances in the later stages tend to be more interactional and fragmented. The results also indicate that RTs as the non-primary speaker's role can affect collaborative interaction in a more dynamic way of structuring dialogue processes, which can provide us with a significant clue for clarifying communicative and cognitive aspects of dialogue processing from a language learning perspective.

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# 48

## **New Lines of Intercultural Business Communication in the ESP Domain. Entrepreneurs' Oratorical Skills across the Borders**

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The adoption of English as a common language in business communication is becoming a rule, which implies that research concerning global English needs new ways of studying the language, as well as renewed theoretical and methodological approaches to the classification of spoken and written varieties. This contribution proposes a sociolinguistic approach to the study of global English in public speaking in an extremely movable and non-localized context – that is, the international business context. Increased mobility and the absence of fixed locality are among the most striking characteristics of the varieties of English used in international business communication. The approach to the interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary of public speaking in business communication presented here is characterized by a specific focus on the role of intercultural interaction and exchange, and it seeks to provide an insight into the implications of using English across borders and sectors.

In particular, the research addresses the implications of introducing public speaking as a specific ESP (English for specific purposes) domain. Background literature on this topic provides a useful frame for understanding the origins of this subject and the arena in which studies on public speaking in business English later emerged. Oral communication in English in the workplace and in public contexts is a subject for which limited research is available. Although professional public speaking has been common topic for conversation in many blogs and websites in recent years due to the particular relevance of this subject for the growing number of entrepreneurs, nothing scientifically relevant emerges in these sites, apart from general attention given to the description of emotions and fears in women's and men's approach to public contexts (Bodie 2010, Egloff, Weck & Schmukle 2008, Hofmann and Di Bartolo 2000, Osório, Crippa & Loureiro 2013). Despite public speaking having been extensively studied from a rhetorical point of view as well as from a political and law perspective (Coopman and Lull 2008;

Esenwein and Carnegie 1915; Kumar 2005; Lucas 1998; Strike 1994) or from the conversation analysis angle (Atkinson 1984; Hammond 1993; Nielsen 2004), this issue has received limited attention in the ESP context (in business contexts, in Crosling and Ward 2002; Freihat and Machzoomi 2012; in legal contexts, Charnock 2002). The contiguous areas which have been explored in the last decades are related to the 'conference presentation' genre (Carter-Thomas and Rowley-Jolivet 2003; Webber 1997) or the 'presidential debate' (Bendinelli 2011).

This contribution illustrates what existing literature suggests about public speaking, particularly with regard to the influence of language on international and global business communication in English. It concludes by raising concerns about the developing literature, confirming the significant role of public speaking effectiveness in the business workplace.

### **Background literature on public speaking in English for Business**

Modern public speaking derives its origins from the British school of Elocutionists, amongst whom we underline the importance of Sheridan (1762). By using two types of language (the 'language of ideas' and the 'language of emotions'), in Sheridan's view, the office of a public speaker is to instruct, to please and to move. The British school used those principles of elocution in investigative treaties, as well as for writing manuals for technical elocution (e.g., clerical elocution) and illustrative anthologies, often designed for lawyers and negotiators. The power of oratory, eloquence and effective speech came to be viewed as fundamental at the beginning of the twentieth century thanks to the efforts of the American Elocutionary Movement (Barber 1830, Behnke 1898, Bell 1859, Bernstein 1974, Burgh 1761, Chapman 1821, Comstock 1844, Mason 1748, Rush 1893). Within the American tradition, the relevance of effective speech expanded to the fields of medicine, entertainment and commerce or business. Desire for education and the wish to become good mediators contributed to the American elocutionists' success. Many people, often trained for professions such as medicine or law, became 'teachers of elocution' in response to a growing demand for training in this field.

The importance of public speaking in the training of a business expert has been referenced ever since English for Business became recognised as an identifiable domain. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the newly-developed specialised domain of Business English showed its independent status in some manuals, which were conceived for people interested in 'practical business'.

The importance of exercises for the practice of public speaking in professional contexts was often highlighted in Business English manuals from the first decades of the twentieth century (Esenwein 1902, Esenwein and Carnegie 1915, Lewis 1918). While some authors of Business English books give priority to practicing written skills (Hammond and Herzberg 1918), the vast majority devote pages to oral skills for the workplace and consider public speaking to be a special sub-topic. Effectiveness and efficiency in oral performances in business English were a priority for certain early-twentieth-century authors (Webster 1916), who often underlined one of the most prevalent commonplaces of contemporary public speaking courses: 'Building speaker confidence', or otherwise put 'Fear of Public Speaking' (which is also a common issue in the most recent studies in the field) (Egloff, Weck & Schmukle 2008, Grice and Skinner 2007: 42-49, Osborn and Osborn 2006: 29-47, Osório, Crippa & Loureiro 2013). Moreover, all of these manuals were concerned with preparation for public speaking at different levels, on topics such as: adapting to the audience and the situation (Hatfield 1921); finding the right topic (Webster 1916); researching and studying the topic (Webster 1916); supporting one's ideas (Gallagher and Moulton 1918); structuring the speech (Hatfield 1921); or outlining the speech (Hotchkiss and Drew 1916). The new specialised identity of the Business English speaker was addressed in these books, which often considered whether the learner was able to argue in the specific way required by his/her profession (Gallagher and Moulton 1918: 105).

Public speaking builds on the basic communication skills we originally develop as we acquire language and learn how to make conversation. As expanded conversation, it should preserve the natural directness and spontaneity of good conversation. And like conversation, it should be attuned to the reactions of listeners. In a business context, speakers and listeners participating in this 'conversation' are usually highly motivated business people, seeking oral effectiveness and efficiency.

### **Public speaking as a basic workplace skill**

The strategic importance of oral communication skills in today's workplace has been amply documented in the literature on organizational leadership (Carnevale, Gainer & Meltzer 1990). In particular, it has been demonstrated that successful oral communication reflects the specific internal and external influences on the particular company (Carnevale, Gainer & Meltzer 1990: 34-35).

In ESP teaching and learning contexts, business graduates should be equipped with an understanding of the real communicative needs of their future workplace. Van Horn (1995), reporting on a survey of employees in New Jersey, claims that oral communication is seen as vital by employers but that interestingly enough, it is an area for which graduates lack preparation. Scollon, Wong Scollon & Jones (2012: 78, 84) find that most business graduate employees' communication is more informal in nature, which seems to run counter to the goal-oriented nature of corporate discourse.

Drawing on these considerations, the real challenge is how to define the needs of internal and external corporate oral communication in English. Such communication is integral to the workplace, but it is shaped by factors such as a company's external and internal environments, which in turn influence management approaches and modes of work organization. Within the workplace, oral communication is influenced by the status of the parties, the purpose of communication, and the medium. Furthermore, successful communication depends on the parties sharing background knowledge and assumptions, as well as their linguistic and cultural identities.

Despite all these complex issues, the urgent need for skills in the field of public speaking in business workplace contexts deserves serious consideration in ESP research.

### **Business workplace requirements and ESP practice**

Disciplinary variation in English for Business teaching has received considerable attention in the theoretical as well as practical aspects of designing, implementing and teaching programmes in English for specific groups of learners (Bhatia and Bremner 2012). Nevertheless, it is claimed that, in the context of English as a global language of international business, "multinational corporations need ways of ensuring that the workplace English demands of their operations in non-English speaking situations are being met" (Hamp-Lyons and Lockwood 2009:150). Moreover, according to recent research, Bhatia and Bremner (2012) confirm that dissatisfaction on the part of the student is also signaled, as most learners "needed help in handling generic realizations of professionally driven discourses, some of which have an academic orientation, others being related to workplace contexts" (2012: 419); moreover, the perception of business teachers generally reinforced and complemented this statement.

At a more pedagogical level, the corresponding challenge is to handle the tension between workplace requirements and ESP practice. A survey



conducted by Crosling and Ward (2002) identified public presentations as one of the most common forms of oral communication expected of business graduates; the two authors thus underline that this should be “a top priority in university business/commerce education” (2002:53) and decry the lack of academic attention paid to this issue.

This situation has led to the inclusion of formal presentation practice as a requirement for workplace assessment in some university curricula (Kimberley and Crosling 2012). Such programmes have produced excellent results in terms of both natives' and non-natives' oral communication performances during their career, first as university students and then during their professional experience (Crosling 2000). Experience in using English for Business in public speaking contexts would thus appear to be very beneficial for any student of business and for any business expert.

### **Public speaking areas of application in English for Business**

As Lucas (1998: 75) points out, public speaking has for the past few decades been the bedrock of a variety of undergraduate curricula in the US, and for a good reason: according to a survey of nearly 500 companies and public organizations, public speaking was ranked as one of the most important personal qualities sought by employers (Lucas 1998: 5). However, what is currently required of the employee as far as public speaking is concerned seems to be limited to effectiveness in the following areas: delivering persuasive speeches in sales presentations, making proposals, and promoting motivational sessions (O'Hair, Friedrich & Dixon 2011). In fact, Beebe and Beebe (2003: 289) also highlighted the importance of informative speaking in business communication, which includes speeches where a new product is presented, the manufacturing process is described, or people or ideas are introduced to the audience. Both persuasive and informative speeches seem to be part of the daily routine for some categories of business people, namely the entrepreneurial ones, that have been selected in recent research on public speaking in ESP as an interesting context for analyzing the relevance of oral effectiveness in business communication by non-native speakers of English (Zanola 2012).

### **The entrepreneurs' point of view**

The research on entrepreneurs' public speaking in English offers a limited range of specific contributions. Studies in the field tend to highlight either the technical skills required for successful public speaking in business, or the symbolic aspects that entrepreneurs evoke to render their speeches persuasive. Studies that reflect the former trend focus on the nature of

oratorical skills and on the possibility of transferring those skills from political oratory to the management community to which entrepreneurs are loosely associated by this tradition. Within this stream Greatbatch and Clark (2005) stated how “oratorical skills are universal regardless of the context within which a speech is given” (Greatbatch and Clark 2005: 12).

Notwithstanding the attention paid to the role of public speech when looking at entrepreneurs, extant research does not clarify how entrepreneurs interpret the actual speaking in public and whether, by using this form of communication, they only aim to achieve support and legitimacy or to portray other aspects of their profession. With this in mind, in 2010 we conducted research (Zanola 2012: 36-57) seeking to address the following research question: what meaning do entrepreneurs attribute to speaking in public within the context of their roles, and with what implications? Our interdisciplinary reflections on the data corpus demonstrated that the uniqueness of individuals’ social contexts was an influential factor in the creation and development of entrepreneurs. The key aspects shown in our data suggested that for our sample of participants, public speaking was about getting a point across, sharing a rhythm, showing a path to others, creating a feeling, persuading, welcoming, and transferring passion for one’s profession. At first glance, these points could be seen as consistent with the general canons associated with the role of a public speaker. However, we adopted a different perspective in arguing that, if linked to the entrepreneur, each of these key aspects reflected the passion and the emotional component embedded in this role. Rather than exclusively considering entrepreneurs’ use of oratorical skills (Cienki, Cornelissen and Clarke 2008, Cornelissen and Clarke 2010) and the importance they attribute to the normative component of a text - which we still acknowledged as important – we suggested reflecting on how the simple fact of being an entrepreneur gave a specific pathos to public speaking which is different from that that any other speaker in a different role would give to this type of communication. The emotion that may drive the entrepreneur as a risk-taker, as a person in control, as a person with a strong creative tendency, and as a person in need for autonomy was reflected in his/her interpretation of public speaking, thus turning this type of communication into a medium for sharing a path, a rhythm and ultimately a passion.

In fact, in addition to the components of public speech (e.g., argumentation, delivery), our research highlighted a second set of elements entrepreneurs highlighted as important to their way of addressing an audience, namely: sense of welcoming, emotions and emotion transfer, emphasis on people, spontaneity, self-confidence, and the search for audience's confirmation.

This view can suggest that, for entrepreneurs, public speaking may not only be about transferring a message or legitimizing one's position; rather, it can also be about transferring to the audience the same feeling that animates them. The latter may not be a mere means to the end of winning the interlocutors' trust and understanding, but a way of sharing the entrepreneurial passion 'per se'.

### **New challenges and suggestions for future research**

There are two implications that emerge from this reflection. The first one is that, within the wide arena of business, the speaker's professional role influences the pathos associated with the performance of public speaking. In turn, this sets the emotional antecedent of the process of construction of meaning between the speaker and his/her audience during a speech. This delicate but relevant aspect should be taken into consideration when the ESP academic or practitioner arranges a public speaking course (Cyphert 2010). Drawing from the professional role, we believe that this type of antecedent is different from both the actual emotion that the speaker feels right before beginning a speech, which may influence the outcome of it,<sup>29</sup> and the traditional rhetorical appeal to emotion that speakers use to win over their audience. In particular, we would argue that - whether it is deliberate or not on the part of the speaker - the emotional antecedent we are referring to relates to experiencing together with the audience the interpretation of one's professional role.

The second implication that emerges from our reflection has a more pragmatic angle and is addressed to public speaking trainers. Traditionally, the main aspects of training people in public speaking have tended to focus on managing visual contact, managing the speaker's emotions, structuring the message effectively, developing personal charisma, and using gestures and non-verbal behaviour coherently (Ekman 2003; Lucas 1998; Osborn, Osborn & Osborn 2007). Targeting those strategies in light of trainees' professional roles can increase the salience of the training outcomes making the benefits of the training activity fit for purpose (Basturkmen 2003).

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<sup>29</sup> On this matter, extant literature has widely explored the issue of public speaking as a fearful social situation, as well as the issue of emotion regulation behaviours aimed at reducing anxiety and the occurrence of fearful thoughts experienced by the speaker while performing the speech (Bodie 2010; Egloff, Weck & Schmukle 2008; Hofmann and DiBartolo 2000; Osório, Crippa & Loureiro 2013; Pertaub, Slater & Barker 2002).

## Conclusion

Earlier studies on the field of public speaking have already supported our work in providing evidence of the significant importance of this domain to the field of business communication. Furthermore, an overview of the business workplace skills currently required by corporate communities demonstrates that public speaking in the teaching and learning of English for Business Purposes cannot be ignored any longer. In summary, a more focused reflection on the impact of good oratorical skills in business communication in English is needed in the context of ESP research. Due to the varied and complex nature of business communication, however, public speaking studies and programmes should be tailored to the audience, and not standardized or copied from models suitable for non-business contexts, such as politics or law. The reflections that emerge from our paper may suggest investigating the ways in which the pathos of public speaking varies according to other business roles (e.g. sales person, buyer, consultant, etc.). Moreover, identifying the implications of aspects such as gender, age, family background would also require further research.

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