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Foreword

Dear Readers,

Welcome to this Special Issue of the Asian EFL Journal, December 2010. The production of this special issue marks the successful culmination of a year-long laborious process involving negotiation prior to the conference, conference planning and organizing, screening of presentation proposals, the very successful Asian EFL Journal 2010 Conference itself held at Providence University, Taiwan in April, and, eventually, the preparation of this year’s refereed proceedings. First of all, on behalf of Providence University, we would like to thank Paul Robertson and Dr. Roger Nunn for giving us this opportunity to host this conference. We are also grateful to the conference review committee which provided valuable feedback during the review process. We would like to express our special gratitude, as well, to all of our staff members, including our volunteer students whose work was behind the scene and often unrecognized. Without your devotion to this conference, this annual academic meeting would not have been possible and successful.

This year’s 2010 Asian EFL Conference was surely another success in what has come to be recognized as the finest annual meeting in the TLT field in Asia. Our conference theme, “Innovation and Integration of English Language, Literature, and Linguistics” includes a variety of English teaching and research issues, thus attracting a significant number of submissions throughout Asia and beyond. In addition to our five plenary speakers (Roger Nunn, James Dear Brown, Claire Bradin Siskin, Roland Sussex, and Michael Thomas), we had 100 very well received oral presentations and 60 posters in a wide range of English related topics plus more than 100 local and international participants. These participants were privy not only to the stimulating keynote
addresses by the above mentioned leading figures in SLA but also to the important ELT work being done by presenters from such countries as Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippine, Indonesia, Thailand, Iran, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, the U.S., China, the U.K., Australia, etc. For many of the paper and poster presenters who shared their research, approaches, materials and ideas with participants and peers, the conference was a springboard for gathering the initial feedback and comments needed for later revision of the manuscripts for formal publication. It is indeed a very stimulating and important process, and we have taken great pleasure in seeing it through to fruition as this year’s Proceedings guest editors.

For the 2010 AEJ Special Issue, we are proud to present twelve papers in this December quarterly issue. Because this issue accepted a wide range of papers related to the topic “Innovation and Integration of English Language, Literature, and Linguistics,” the selected and invited works do not focus on a single or specific issue. However, one common trait of the selected papers is that all the papers are of high quality, and were subjected to a thorough, two-stage, rigorous, blind review processes with an acceptance rate of only 20%. We hope that all the papers will help our readers broaden their view in their research endeavors and in their English language teaching.

In the first paper, Roger Nunn and John Thurman discuss program assessment in the context of EFL instruction. They argue that holistic assessment requires careful design of assessment tools and that such assessment should be designed internally to the EFL program, with faculty and students participating, as opposed to external entities determining assessment criteria. The authors offer recommendations for tasks and rating designs that support teaching. Such discussion is important because the overall
goal of assessment should be program improvement, as opposed to evaluation leading to punishment or reward of the faculty and program.

The second paper, by Ai Chen Yen, describes a learning environment in which students studied Shakespeare using participatory read-and-think-and-feel-aloud methods that drew on constructivist concepts. Reading Shakespeare can be difficult for native speaking students, much less for EFL learners, but the author presents an instructional design in which the students were engaged and collaborated actively to make meaning. Traditional lecture-memorization methodology has been shown, again and again, to be ineffective, especially when the subject matter is complex and difficult to grasp. The author shows the benefits of actively engaging students to deconstruct a text from a contemporary point of view.

Lu-Fang Lin examines how video-based computer assisted language learning affects language acquisition of the learners in the next paper. The study used video-based lessons from the 2006 CNN news archive and found that such lessons facilitate incidental vocabulary acquisition. The importance of this paper, however, is the author’s discussion of the vital roles reading and listening proficiency play in vocabulary acquisition via video-based multimedia material, and the resulting important pedagogical implications. The resulting CALL program provides a roadmap for a concrete and meaningful context that enhances the confidence and comprehension of the students.

The fourth paper examines content-based instruction (CBI), which is widely used in ESL programs but not as often for EFL, and tests two models of CBI, one content-
driven and the other language-driven. The authors, Michael C. Cheng, Chang Jui-Chuan, Chen Yi-Chen, and Liao Ying-shu, found that students generally do not like courses which integrate language-skills training into literature, linguistics, and TESOL content courses, preferring language-based content. This understanding of student perceptions has important implications for curriculum development in EFL programs.

Researchers Ying-Chieh Chiang & Lu-Chun Lin examined the Mandarin and English oral narratives of preschoolers in Taiwan in the next paper to examine their EFL morphological and syntactical abilities. They found more variety of morphological error patterns in the childrens’ English stories and more diverse syntactic structures in the childrens’ Mandarin stories, despite the fact that they had studied English since young ages. This paper is intriguing, not only for the actual findings, but because the authors presents an analysis model that could be applied to test morphology and syntactical accuracy at all ages.

The sixth paper, by Chine-Ying Lee, considers lexical pragmatics, the processes by which linguistically specified word meanings are modified in use, an interaction often too advanced for L2 learners, and describes how pragmatic meanings in near synonyms can be derived from contextual usage data. The author examines verbs like cause and commit, and identifies nearby words with which they are most often used. This form of analysis is valuable because EFL learners typically use abstract definitions in dictionaries making it difficult to achieve a native speaker’s feel for which of many closely-related words is best used in any given situation.
Research done by Gary Fogal addresses the important role of authentic literature in university and college English as a Foreign Language syllabi by examining student reactions to three teaching methodologies that incorporate authentic literature in the classroom. The qualitative data reveals learner preferences for material that engages meta-cognitive awareness, and demonstrates that this awareness leads to improved performance and higher levels of work-related student satisfaction. This paper also makes suggestions and recommendations for both further research and classroom methodology.

The paper entitled “Research Trends in Selected M. A. TESOL Programs in Taiwan” examines the research trends in selected master’s programs of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) with a meta-analysis of the contents of master’s theses. The authors found that the two most common contexts were secondary education in high school and undergraduate education in universities and the most frequently investigated topics were language skills, teaching methods or approaches, and materials or curriculum and computer assisted language learning (CALL). The findings of this study will not only serve as a guide for current research trends in TESOL programs in Taiwan but also provide new directions and ideas for both future researchers and TESOL master’s as they consider research topics to explore.

Mei-jung Wang and Ka I Ip report their reflections on experiences in negotiating and facilitating international telecollaboration to bring to light “tasks and challenges faced by teachers in handling an online project.” Through the two instructors’ email exchange, their learning processes and challenges emerging at different phases were
examined to gain insights into implementation and management of the telecollaborative partnership. The pedagogic implications can optimize the use of online projects.

Takeshi Sato and Akio Suzuki attempt to examine the potential of multimedia materials as tools for language learning by comparing the effectiveness of traditional paper-based two-dimensional glossy images, which have been shown to enhance learning, compared to three-dimensional images in multimedia (which they define as multimedia glossy images. Their research experiment used the two different types of glosses in the English–Japanese dictionary as the basis for learning seven spatial prepositions. Contrary to the theoretical principles of image schemata and noticing, they found no difference between 3D visual aids and planar images in learning the meaning of spatial prepositions. Vocabulary acquisition, they conclude, requires more than dictionaries functioning as a reference tool.

The study of Waseema Tasneen discusses teachers’ and students’ views of literary texts in the language class. Teachers and students generally were aware of the benefits of literary texts in language teaching. Their imaginative properties can foster the students’ academic literary skills. While the importance of literature as a language teaching resource is recognized, teachers need to face the challenge of the students’ linguistic level and cultural unfamiliarity, which hinder their comprehension of literature such as novels, plays, and poetry. Tasneen further discusses the compatibility of classroom activities and teachers’ preferences about ELT materials to suggest approaches for using literary texts in the language classroom.
The motivation of students is another major concern of the effectiveness of English teaching-and-learning. Differing from those who examine what students do to increase learning motivation, Lisa Hsu focuses on teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors in relation to the motivation of students for learning English. Findings suggest that student motivation for learning English is likely enhanced when the teacher utilizes smiles and gestures, has a relaxed body position, and uses a variety of vocal expression and a monotone voice while teaching.

Finally, we would like to, again, thank all the 2010 Asian EFL Conference presenters and participants as well as the authors and the reviewers of this special issue. Hopefully all the contributions contained in this special issue will help provide new insights into conducting future studies for researchers, and will trigger fresh ideas about innovative English pedagogy for practitioners of the EFL field, both of whom will, accordingly, contribute to the ever-changing nature of English language instruction.

Wen-chi Vivian Wu and Yu-chaun Joni Chao

Guest editors
The Benefits and Challenges of Holistic In-house Task-based Language Learning and Assessment

Roger Nunn & John Thurman

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Abstract
In this paper, insights from the specialized learning and assessment literature are used to outline some important challenges and the proposed solutions in one academic context in which holistic in-house tasks and rating scales that support teaching were designed. The first challenge is to ensure that the design of tasks and rating scales is not just task-based but also construct-based. (Bachman, 2002, p.470). In this respect, holistic learning and the holistic nature of academic competence are key constructs. Secondly designers need to make sure the design is fully sensitive to all aspects of their own context (context validity, Weir 2005). Thirdly, specific areas of atomistic language ability that are relevant to the course need to be identified and included. (Bachman, 2002, pp. 470-471). Yet another challenge is to provide an adequate and varied sample of task responses through a variety of procedures. Arguably the most important challenge is to make sure that in-house assessment design enhances learning. In this respect, fully involving students in their own assessment can make an important contribution. In relation to construct validity one important holistic solution is to use “complex, skills-integrative and goal-oriented” assessment tasks (Norris et al., 2003, p.397) that match the teaching. Other relevant solutions involve designs of tasks that are sensitive to the relationship between academic competence and task performance and the relationship between task difficulty and task performance.

Introduction
Assessment literature is not frequently evoked in support of learning, but this paper will consider that learning and assessment are part of one holistic activity aimed at improving competence in any in-house context. Those institutions that have implemented some form of holistic teaching approach involving skills integration, project-based, task-based or content-based learning face concurrent challenges in the implementation of a more holistic form of assessment. Following the lead provided by Byrnes (2002), who addresses task-based assessment in relation to a content-oriented collegiate foreign language curriculum, this paper will therefore focus on the
challenges of designing learning and assessment tasks for holistic in-house instruction.

The paper has two main purposes:

- to use insights from the specialized testing literature to outline the challenges that need to be addressed when designing in-house learning and assessment;
- to provide examples of how these challenges were provisionally addressed in one context to facilitate both the development and assessment of competent academic performance within a holistic project-based/task-based approach.

In the communication department of the Petroleum Institute in Abu Dhabi, a holistic project-based course has been designed for engineering undergraduate freshman students to cover a broad variety of different tasks that integrate not only language skills but also academic processes such as critical reading, basic research skills, cognitive processing, the ability to contribute to a team and to develop individually from a team process. A semester-long team-based project acts as a holistic task-based framework for learning study and research skills and developing academic communication and language ability. A variety of spoken and written tasks based on the needs of engineering students are assessed at different stages of the communication course. These vary from short drafts of meeting minutes to a full research report, and from individual- to team-drafted tasks.

Rather than reporting one experimental research project, my study addresses different local research episodes in the spirit of action research, as an attempt to find workable and above all relevant solutions to local in-house challenges. Relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995) has long been an important construct for my research into curriculum planning. (See Nunn 2006b for a full discussion of relevance, teaching and learning.) It will be referred to throughout this paper at different levels of application. According to Sperber and Wilson (1995) well-supported arguments or information can influence audiences to modify or even abandon former assumptions. At a macro-level, insights from specialist testers need to be adjusted to be relevant to in-house learning. At a micro-level, in the case of task-based learning, task fulfillment is assessed by determining that all parts of the task response are relevant and that all relevant aspects of the task as specified have been addressed.

**Background Discussion: Teaching and Assessing Holistically**

Samuda and Bygate (2008) suggest that the use of holistic tasks “has been one of the major focuses of educational debate over the last century” (p.5). For Samuda and
Bygate a task is holistic in the sense that “it requires learners to decide on potentially relevant meanings, and use the phonology, grammar, vocabulary and discourse structures of the language to convey these in order to carry out the task” (p.13). A holistic context-relevant approach is in harmony with ecological approaches to SLA. Within this approach, Toolan (2003) emphasizes the more general need to take the context into account in the following terms:

An ecology of anything has to be as holistic and inclusive an account of that thing as possible, rather than an account that must continually acknowledge post hoc the influence of factors previously denominated as ‘external’ or ‘contextual’ (p.123).

Fettes (2003) summarizes the ecological vision of linguistic activity as being in “active communication with its neighbours in the biological, social and human sciences, sharing and developing a holistic understanding of human thought, action, and ecological integration” (p.44).

Viewed holistically, a language is a living organism that cannot be reduced to a fixed code to be acquired by a learner. Toolan (2003) differentiates between a code and codification, which he defines as an “after-the-fact assigning of value” (p.125). There may be some value in codification for educational purposes, but integrationists hold that “our experience in […] various language tasks not only exposes us to variation, difference, fluidity and continual adjustment, but requires us to engage with and exploit this inherent variability, indeterminacy, and scope for refashioning” (pp. 126-127).

We take this view to have implications for assessment that supports learning as it negates views of a person’s linguistic competence as something finite or static. Competence is never a reified given entity waiting to be objectively measured, but more a negotiable potential that may lead to achievement at different levels according to relevant aspects of the environment.

At the same time that some in-house teaching has taken up more holistic paradigms, a similar more holistic trend can be found in recent testing frameworks that do not specifically focus on in-house assessment. Weir (2005), for example, provides a comprehensive socio-cognitive framework creating inclusive superordinates such as ‘context validity’ within which atomistic notions may be considered both
independently and in connection to other interrelated factors. This moves away from the traditional and rather unproductive validity-reliability binary opposition. (Within Weir’s model reliability is subsumed under scoring validity.) It is this symbiotic relationship between the whole and the parts that can lead to some useful cross-fertilization between specialist assessment practice in high-profile international tests and local in-house practices that focus on learning but may be under-developed in assessment. This holistic framework underlines the view that far more is relevant to assessment validity than was previously assumed.

Figure 1 An Outline of the Socio-Cognitive Test Validation Framework (Weir 2005, p.2)

**Scoring Validity**

Scoring validity is used by Weir and Shaw (2005) as a super-ordinate for “all aspects of reliability” (p.5).

Scoring validity accounts for the extent to which test scores are based on appropriate criteria, exhibit consensual agreement in their marking, are as free as possible from measurement error, stable over time. Consistent in terms of their content sampling and engender confidence as reliable decision making indicators. (Weir and Shaw, p.5)

Naturally, design features do influence both inter- and intra-rater reliability. The number of categories and the number of levels, the complexity of the concepts
involved, the clarity of the wording, the distinctions between categories, for example, all influence the raters’ ability to be consistent.

Henning (1987) suggests using a Rasch model in the language assessment field partly because of the ease of interpretation of the results and the low number of participants needed for the model to be operative (p. 116). To support in-house assessment, a simple Rasch model is preferred as the best means of considering atomistic traits of measurement within a holistic framework.

The Rasch approach is simple, not simplistic: The aim is to develop fundamental measures that can be used across similar appropriate measurement situations, not merely to describe the data produced by administering Test a to Sample b on Day c. Rasch modeling addresses itself to estimating properties of persons and tests that go beyond the particular observations made during any testing situation (Bond and Fox, 2007, p.143).

According to Yang and Kramer (2007), the Rasch model is a “mathematical probability model that allows for the investigation of dimensionality and the ordering of items on a measurement continuum” (p. 163). In this model, items and persons are measured on a common interval scale, and the estimates of persons and items are independent of one another, which makes for less subjective measurement.

The Rasch model transforms raw data into equal-interval scales through log transformations of raw data odds and probabilistic equations (Bond and Fox 2001, p.7). Through this, the measure of a person is separated from the scale to which he or she is measured. The person measure, called the ability estimate, is reported in logits. The entire sample is placed on a logit scale, which is an interval scale where the interval between two and three, for example, is the same distance as that between three and four. An important assumption of most Rasch models is that the data are fundamentally unidimensional. One way in which this assumption is often checked is through the inspection of Rasch fit indices. An item that does not fit the Rasch model may not be measuring the primary trait (Yang & Kramer, 2007, p. 163).

Bond and Fox (2001, p. 77) point out that items in a Likert response format are likely to vary in their difficulty, and the items are also unlikely to contribute to the construct equally (p. 85), an assumption of Likert scaling. In this case, data are
regarded as ordinal data and the Rasch model is used to transform the ordered Likert categories into interval scales. Linacre (2004) suggested guidelines for the validation of rating scale categories. While not all guidelines are relevant for all data analyses (p. 276), the guidelines most important for verifying the validity of the rating scale for this study are (a) the outfit mean squares, (b) the frequency of the observations for each response category, and (c) minimum and maximum step distances between the categories.

When doing multi-faceted assessment only the Rasch model is mathematically available (McNamara, 1996, p. 257). Multi-faceted assessment has been chosen as the most appropriate theoretical tool for considering rater reliability: it can be used to examine the interaction between judges, students and each of four traits on the rating scales. According to McNamara, “this measure of the candidate’s ability results from an automatic adjustment of the candidate’s raw score to take account of what is known about the influence of these facets” (p. 128). Advantages of using a multifaceted analysis are that the effects the facet has on the raw score given to a candidate can be rated, that we can examine the bias between facets, and that fit statistics, which show scores that significantly depart from the expected responses.

The Challenges of Holistic Task-based Design – Assessment and Learning
Bachman (2002, pp. 470-471) discusses four aspects of test-design that represent the most relevant challenges. In my view, these are equally relevant to learning. Firstly (challenge 1), Bachman recommends that we should "ensure that test-design is both construct-based and task-based" (p.470). Bachman argues that focusing only on task specifications results in intractable problems of generalizability and extrapolation. Fulfillment of a task by achieving the stated purpose in terms of an outcome or final product is open to over-interpretation unless it can be demonstrated that facets of the test are based on valid pedagogical constructs. There are many ways at arriving at a competent-looking product, so factors such as the amount of modeling provided also needs to be considered. In the worst case scenarios assessed responses may even have been rote-learnt.

Bachman next refers to task characteristics "that are uniquely attributable to facets of the particular assessment being designed" (p. 470). In this respect,
Bachman (*challenge 2*) warns against adopting an external framework, encouraging in-house designers to "select those characteristics that are most relevant to their own particular testing situation".

A third point (*challenge 3*) underlined by Bachman is the need to define "specific areas of language ability to be assessed" (pp. 470-471). In relation to challenge 2 above, we might also underline that this challenge involves defining the most relevant aspects relating to holistic rather than atomistic concepts such as the systemic characterization of modality. Modality has linguistic realizations that help express the important holistic academic function of expressing an academic author’s level of commitment to the truth of claims. Such claims need to be based on the strength of evidence provided.

Finally Bachman recommends using a "variety of procedures to collect information about test performance" (p.471). Norris et al. (2003, p.397) suggest that assessment tasks that “require language use for their accomplishment” should be (1) “complex, skills-integrative and goal-oriented.” They also state that specific criteria for task accomplishment should be determined by specialist informants. But they also argue that, in addition to task-specific criteria, a different set of more global “criteria for holistic examinee abilities” (p.397) are also required across performances. Relevant examinee abilities can only then be determined with respect to both “particular tasks” and “a domain of tasks” (p.397) (*challenge 4*).

Norris et al.(2003) consider that the most relevant focus is on the construct of task performance and that we need to consider the relationship between task difficulty in terms of cognitive processing and task performance (*challenge 5*). Bachman (2002, p.466) makes an essential link between task difficulty and context, in particular the test-taker’s ability. Both Bachman and Norris et. al. (2003) consider the three aspects of difficulty proposed by Skehan (1998, p.88): code complexity, cognitive complexity and communicative stress involved in the demands of processing and accomplishing the task components. It can be noted that in any assessment, these three factors are not directly attributable to tasks per se. For Bachman, code complexity “is uniquely a characteristic of test tasks themselves” (p.466). Bachman goes on to argue that cognitive complexity and communicative stress are not characteristics that can be unilaterally assigned to task. They are rather “functions of the interaction
between the test-taker and the task” (p. 466).

However, as even code complexity involves predicting the language needed to accomplish the task, we might also suggest that task participants may find ways of compensating for gaps in their language ability, so even code complexity is not uniquely a feature of the task. Difficulty therefore has to be assessed holistically by considering the interactions between all of the components involved in the task. Task conditions and the personal characteristics of test-takers inevitably intervene.

**Task design: Covering an Adequate Sample (Solution 1)**

One implication of these challenges is that the potential for extrapolation from one task is limited because it lacks content validity. Davies et al. (1999) characterize content validity as “a conceptual or non-statistical validity, based on a systematic analysis of its test content” (p.34). The purpose of such an analysis - “to determine whether it includes an adequate sample of the target domain to be measured” (p.34) – is clearly important when a holistic view of language and language learning is a central tenet. Leather and van Dam (2003) underpin the holistic nature of an ‘ecological approach’ stating the following premise:

The premise that most clearly characterizes an ecological approach to language acquisition is that language behavior always involves more than can be captured in a single frame or script (p.13).

Course assessment needs to be applied to a comprehensive and varied sample of students’ work. Selecting a broad range of related tasks within the domain allows students to exercise choices from a broad range of knowledge and skills in relation to both the tasks themselves and their own competence.

Robinson and Gilabert (2007) make a “fundamental pedagogic claim” based on their cognition hypothesis: “that pedagogic tasks should be designed and then sequenced for learners on the basis of increases in their cognitive complexity” (p.162). Robinson and Gilabert (2007, p.164) provide a detailed rationale of task classification. While the outcome of our background discussion leads to the premise that perceptions of task difficulty and complexity will vary across individual performers and task-performance contexts, the following simplified list of criteria has been considered most relevant for task design in our context. (See also column 4 in figure 2 below.)
Cognitive complexity
- Number of skills needed
- Evaluative, inferential reasoning demands
- Integration of skills
- Familiarity with the task
- Predictability and fixity of the task structure

Level of language sophistication needed
- Specific language requirements that cannot be avoided
- Stylistic, or genre considerations

Task conditions
- Time allowed for the task
- Size of the deliverable
- Team or individual work
- Support given to complete it
- Communicative stress potentially caused by the task (such as spontaneous public spoken performance)
- Importance of the results

Different but inter-related genres of academic communication need taking into consideration. In the Petroleum Institute context, an initial task specification was drafted for a semester-long project for each of eight written and spoken deliverables that led to the production of a full research report and presentation. These have been classified in order of difficulty (figure 2 below), 1 being the most difficult, 8 the least by all five teachers and by six students. For each group the total figures were used to make an average score. For example, three teachers chose the source evaluation as most difficult, one as second most difficult and one as third most difficult. This was therefore the most difficult with a total of 8 and an average of 1.6. In agreement with Bachman’s (2002) view of perceptions of task difficulty, the students had very different perceptions to the four instructors. There was also a range of answers within each group, but students tended to agree more, with unanimous agreement on the most difficult task, for example.
### Task Deliverables

**In order of use**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team-written unless stated</th>
<th>Order of Difficulty as assessed by 6 students</th>
<th>Order of Difficulty as assessed by 5 teachers</th>
<th>Relevant Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minutes of Meetings</td>
<td>8 (7.5)</td>
<td>7 (6.8)</td>
<td>Short and relatively simple, low grade weighting, 2nd draft graded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
<td>5 (5.66)</td>
<td>6 (4.83)</td>
<td>Unfamiliar, but relatively short and simple, low grade weighting, 2nd draft graded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source Evaluation (individual task)</td>
<td>7 (6)</td>
<td>1 (1.6)</td>
<td>Requires critical reading and evaluative reasoning, sophisticated use of modality. Individually written. Awarded grades lowest of all tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal</td>
<td>2 (2.66)</td>
<td>5 (4.2)</td>
<td>Proposal for a semester-long project, some time pressure, synthesis skills in background reading section, research knowledge and organization needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress Discussion</td>
<td>6 (5.83)</td>
<td>8 (7.4)</td>
<td>Format familiar, spoken and informal, support from teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Written Research Report</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>2= (3.4)</td>
<td>Longest, most complex document requiring multiple skills, sophisticated language and reasoning, good organization and genre awareness. High grade weighting on first draft.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Storyboard</td>
<td>3 (2.83)</td>
<td>2= (3.4)</td>
<td>New and unfamiliar task, requiring a combination of media creativity and planning, visual and verbal skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multi-media Research Presentation</td>
<td>4 (4)</td>
<td>2= (3.4)</td>
<td>Communicative stress of public performance, complex task requiring multiple skills, sophisticated speaking ability, but some familiarity with presenting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 2 Providing Adequate Coverage – 8 Research Project Tasks

We can note from this micro-investigation that an activity like the source evaluation can be identified as one extremely relevant focus for the next course, given the low grades obtained and the difference in perceptions between students and teachers. It appears that students under-perform because they remain unaware of the difficulty. In contrast, grades awarded for the most difficult task according to students, the full team-written report, were high. Another point that arises here is that a source evaluation task is needed early in terms of the research project, but in terms of cognitive complexity studies (Robinson and Gilabert, 2007), it should be introduced later. The fact that the order of use conflicts with the order of difficulty has pedagogic implications in terms of the amount of support provided by the
teacher and the need to modify the task itself.

In addition to these team-based research tasks, several non-research related individual tasks are learnt and assessed at different stages of the course, with the expectation that a team process will also impact on individual performance. Only one of these, the source evaluation to support the team’s literature review, is directly linked to the research project. All other individual tasks are essay-style, single-drafted free-writing questions performed under time restrictions. (Approximately one hour.) These include a diagnostic writing reflecting on teamwork in the previous course, a mid-semester test answering a question on a seminar topic such as effective listening, a reflective writing task, repeating the diagnostic task, in which students reflect on teamwork at the end of the current course and a final test repeating the mid-semester task on a different seminar topic. It is assumed that students’ holistic competence cannot be fully assessed by any of these tasks alone. In combination, they provide an adequate sample from which holistic competence can be developed and within which teachers and students can identify the most relevant individual focus for this course.

**Providing a Holistic Definition of Academic Competence (Solution 2)**

As a construct “is generally defined in terms of a theory” (Davies et. al. 1999, p.31), the view of competence that underlies the learning and its assessment needs to be made as explicit as possible. The construct validity of a test is defined by Davies et al. as “an indication of how representative it is of an underlying theory of language learning” (p.31), in this case, a holistic task-based approach that aims to develop academic competence.

There are so many areas related to academic competence that are holistic in nature that ‘holism’ itself can be usefully viewed as a guiding philosophy of education. (For an earlier discussion of holism in relation to designing integrated task-based units of learning, see Nunn, 2006, 2007.) Constructs to consider are (1) the holistic nature of language use itself, as expressed in fields such as systemic linguistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis (2) the holistic nature of competence, (3) the interlocking nature of SLA principles (See for example the ten SLA principles of instructed language learning in Ellis, 2005), (4) the range of genres that students need to be familiar with and the frequent need to integrate a broad range of linguistic and extra-linguistic skills (5).
Competence is always re-negotiated in every context where it is evoked (challenge 2), but assessment is more transparent when an effort is made to specify as explicitly as possible the view of competence that underlies the assessment rubrics. One important aspect of holistic academic competence proposed in Nunn (2007) is that it is only partially available to any individual, and only partially exploited in any single context.

1. Competence in academic communication encompasses various interlocking components of usable knowledge and the skills and abilities needed to put these into practice within an academic community. The main components are generic, pragmatic, discoursal, strategic, interpersonal and linguistic. Competence includes skills in areas related to both written and spoken language and certain adaptive, cognitive and strategic skills such as the ability to read a text critically in order to extract relevant information that is supported by adequate evidence (an important critical thinking skill) to support and inform original research. Creativity is also a characteristic of competence. The sum of these and other components amounts to something very large and only certain aspects will be called upon in any one context.

2. Individual competence is always partial and subject to compensation and development both for local and global use. Total competence is beyond the range of any individual, group of individuals, or indeed of any single community, but competent users and members of communities will legitimately compensate for weakness in one area with skill or knowledge in another.

Figure 3 Aspects of Holistic Academic Competence (modified from Nunn, 2007)

Allowing for Compensation (Solution 3)

Fettes (2003) argues, “individuals never really ‘acquire a language’ in the sense of being able to reproduce the whole system in all its dynamic complexity” (p.37). Coping with partial elements of a larger system that is “pre-existent and external to any individual agent” (p.37) is therefore the norm. Languages only exist within and between people so this larger system is not to be seen as a fixed entity.

The problem with atomistic assessment is that any particular atomistic test may identify a (rare) gap in the knowledge of a competent student who is able to compensate when engaged in a holistic task. Less competent students may also be able to score highly in an atomistic test without having the ability to apply this knowledge to a holistic task in combination with other aspects of competence. A holistic view therefore implies that to produce relevant and applicable results in any assessment context, students need to be given a range of tasks that provides the opportunities to both display all aspects of their competence and to compensate for
those aspects they do not possess.

**Providing Task-familiarity (Solution 4)**

It has already been pointed out that some tasks are required early within a particular course, where they would be best introduced later in terms of familiarity and complexity. Task familiarity is important because students doing a new task are confronted with too many cognitive and organizational demands to function at their optimum level. Students are therefore rarely assessed on a completely unfamiliar task, but neither are they overly primed on a limited number of tasks, as they need to demonstrate that they can transfer their competence across tasks and genres. In our context, each research-related task is supported by a task specification document. A task specification needs to find a balance between supporting students with useful guidelines for tasks, in relation to a genre that might be new to some students, without providing an inflexible format that must be followed blindly by all teams regardless of particular characteristics of their own project.

Task familiarity is also addressed by using some previous examples of student-drafted documents, which are not models to imitate, but rather examples of similar documents produced for a different project for students to engage with and improve upon. Such reconstructive modeling activities are used to provide scaffolding for the least familiar tasks. Exercises are designed from competent examples of previous students’ project work, which both practice language and create familiarity with the task type.

**Designing Rating Scales to Highlight a Holistic Task-Category (Solution 5)**

Having briefly considered the design of tasks, the second purpose of this study is to consider the design of rating scales to assess performance on these tasks. Hyland, (2004) provides a scoring rubric for an argumentative essay which illustrates a three-part classification: format and content (40%), organization and coherence (20%), sentence construction and vocabulary (40%). The highest level for format and content is worded as follows:

*Fulfills task fully; correct convention for the assignment task; features of target genre mostly adhered to; good ideas/good use of relevant information; substantial concept use; properly developed ideas; good sense of audience*
Given our current focus on holistic tasks, a separate category is proposed for holistic task fulfillment to avoid overloading one category and to allow for both a holistic overview of the task addressed and a separate evaluation of detailed argumentation within and between sentences at paragraph level. One category is holistic in scope looking at the whole piece, the other focuses more atomistically on detailed argumentation, on the expression and support of particular arguments within sub-sections. The example below contrasts the two categories at the ‘excellent’ level of the scales for a research report written in small teams.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holistic task fulfillment</th>
<th>Content: Detailed argumentation within paragraphs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task fully understood. The writers demonstrate full awareness of the holistic task requirements, as outlined in the task specification but also clearly define the task in terms of their own research project.</td>
<td>Paragraphs contain an adequate quantity of relevant and accurate information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtually all parts of the task are fully addressed.</td>
<td>Virtually all statements are consistently and qualitatively well supported with evidence and/or sound argumentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtually all of what is addressed is relevant.</td>
<td>‘Evidence’ can include: examples, facts, primary and secondary data, reference to, quotation from, authoritative sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All references to source reading is fully acknowledged and used appropriately.</td>
<td>The writers demonstrate the ability to express a fully appropriate level of confidence in the evidence using modality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 4 Holistic Task Fulfillment Opposed to Content as Detailed Argumentation*

While it is highly relevant to highlight task-fulfillment within a task-based approach, it is important to emphasize that practising 'holism' is not an excuse for neglecting detailed content or linguistic knowledge, as expressed in *challenge 4*. (See Nunn, 2006 for a detailed description of the design of task-based units as an attempt to address this issue and Nunn 2010 for a previous version of rationale for combining holistic and atomistic rubrics.)

The pyramid (figure 5 below) expresses the relationship between categories. The broader macro-structural elements are rated in the first two categories, rating (1) the extent to which the different components and generic aspects of the task are fully addressed and the extent to which all sections are relevant to the task, and (2) the overall organization of the report including the development of the argumentation and the coherence of the macro-structure between sections such as the discussion of
methodology and the results.

Figure 5 The Assessed Components of Holistic Task Fulfillment

The more detailed argumentation within subsections (paragraphs) and the linguistic choices within and between utterances are rated in the third and fourth categories (figure 6 below). In the task/genre category a whole paragraph or section may be irrelevant to the task. In the content category, which emphasizes argumentation at paragraph level, a sentence may be irrelevant although the subsection is highly relevant to the overall task. Different areas of competence are thus identified within the task framework to provide usable feedback both in detail and in relation to the whole task. This responds to challenge 3, the solution being to provide descriptions of particular language and content areas highlighted for a course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content : Detailed Argumentation Within Paragraphs</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraphs contain an adequate quantity of relevant and accurate information.</td>
<td>Style and expression highly developed and engaging, with a consistent level of formality fully appropriate to the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtually all statements are consistently and qualitatively well supported with evidence and/or sound argumentation.</td>
<td>Sophisticated and appropriate use of a broad repertoire of grammar and vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘Evidence’ can include: examples, facts, primary and secondary data, reference to, quotation from, authoritative sources.</td>
<td>Excellent coordination between sentences within paragraphs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The writers demonstrate the ability to express a fully appropriate level of confidence in the evidence using modality.</td>
<td>Clarity and accuracy are of a high standard. Evidence of thorough, careful proofreading. Correct spelling and punctuation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6 Atomistic Content within a Holistic Writing Task
The four-part framework used above remains constant across task assessments to provide stability and comparability, but the wording of the rubrics varies according to the specified focus of the task. For example, the content and language scales (figure 7 below) are used for a multi-media spoken presentation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content : Detailed Argumentation Within Presentation Sections</th>
<th>Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information is fully adequate in quantity, relevance and accuracy.</td>
<td>Very good pronunciation and delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtually all statements are consistently and qualitatively well supported with evidence and/or persuasive argumentation.</td>
<td>Fluency and clarity are combined to make the talk enjoyable to listen to. Excellent use of non-verbal communication (eye contact, gesture, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(“Evidence” can include: examples, facts, primary and secondary data, reference to, quotation from, authoritative sources but may also be in the form of visuals such as charts, images.)</td>
<td>Sophisticated and appropriate use of a broad repertoire of grammar and vocabulary. Excellent coordination between utterances.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Text in slides/images/graphics are readable and error free.

*Figure 7* Rewording According to Task – A multi-media Presentation Task

**Providing Students (and Teachers) with Common and Relevant Goals (Solution 6)**

A rating scale provides students with a realistic goal by describing the performance just above their present level. It is reasonable to assume that in graded courses in institutional learning, in subjects which draw on so many different aspects of competence, what is seen to be emphasized for evaluation is more likely to be learnt. To be seen as relevant, in-house holistic assessment criteria need to be perceived as a central part of the learning process. Rating scales cannot provide a complete description of the competence criteria highlighted for particular courses. They can only act as a summary of the skills and knowledge that underlie competent performance in relation to a particular theoretical and practical framework. They help provide meaningful reports of all assessed deliverables to stakeholders alongside task descriptions and recorded samples of work produced. They also guide the teaching process as they are based on task specifications of both assessment tasks and pedagogical tasks, providing teachers (and students) with descriptions of the criteria used to define competence in relation to particular tasks. By summarizing different levels of competent performance, they also help teachers and students set themselves achievable goals. This can create a kind of solidarity between teachers and students who share the goal of developing the competence that can lead to improved
performance. By training students in the use of rating scales, it is possible to involve them in both peer- and self-assessment. The scales discussed above have been extensively trialed with students as well as being used by instructors.

**Results for Scoring Validity in One In-house Context (Challenge 6)**

A team of three student raters were employed and trained to rate six writers on a simple 50-minute free-writing essay task. An important focus of this study is the separate use of a task category. It was noted that total agreement was reached by all three raters in the task category on all of the scripts except one, in which only one rater was one point apart. The results of the Rasch analysis indicate that there are large gaps between the items, Language, Content, Organization, and Task (Figure 8). This is usually not the case in standard testing situations as the items might normally be expected to group around the midpoint, but it is consistent with the situation in this context. For example, Language has a logit score of 2.53. This means that the item is very difficult for the students. Assuming that all items are weighted equally, this item is having the most serious consequences for the final score in comparison with the other items.

In the trait measurement report, Task is almost a mirror of Language and is rated as very easy, with a logit score of -2.72, suggesting that students have fulfilled the holistic task requirement better than the language requirement. Again, more samples may help even the scores out and possibly center them on the scale. Assuming it is a rating rather than an achievement issue, this is possible as the raters become more familiar with the rating scales. For the rating overall, the rating scale itself was reliable with a score of .93 (figure 8).

| Obsvd | Obsvd | Obsvd | Fair-M| Model | Infit | Outfit | Estim.| |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|---
| Score | Count | Average | Average | Measure | S.E. | MnSq ZStd | MnSq ZStd|Discrm| N Traits |
| 59 | 18 | 3.3 | 3.25 | 2.53 | .45 | .71 | -.9 | .72 | -.8 | 1.33 | 4 Language |
| 69 | 18 | 3.8 | 3.84 | .54 | .46 | 1.31 | .9 | 1.31 | .9 | .66 | 3 Content |
| 73 | 18 | 4.1 | 4.08 | -.35 | .48 | .99 | .0 | .88 | -.1 | 1.06 | 2 Organiz. |
| 82 | 18 | 4.6 | 4.71 | -2.72 | .57 | .58 | -1.0 | .48 | -.3 | 1.34 | 1 Task |
| 70.8 | 18.0 | 3.9 | 3.97 | .00 | .49 | .90 | -.2 | .85 | -.1 | | Mean Count:4 |
| 8.3 | .0 | .5 | .52 | 1.88 | .05 | .28 | .8 | .30 | .7 | | S.D. |

**Figure 8 Traits Measurement Report**

RMSE (Model) .49 Adj S.D. 1.82 Separation 3.67 Reliability .93 Fixed (all same) chi-square: 54.2 d.f.: 3 significance: .00

**Inter-rater Reliability**

Using Rasch Analysis, the raters were grouped together in the minus logit area
(Figure 9). However, the number of scripts in this sample is small and it is reasonable to assume that the raters would even out more with a larger sample. While rater reliability remains a major challenge in this and other holistic assessments, according to Wright (2001), this does not mean that the scale is unreliable but rather that, with all its potential for assessing various levels of proficiency, it is not being fully utilized with the participants in this study. Wright also suggests that there is a correction available using the logit scores and the standard errors. In fact, rather than being unreliable, the raters fit the model well and there was no misfitting rater.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obsvd Score</th>
<th>Obsvd Count</th>
<th>Obsvd Average</th>
<th>Fair-M</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Infit</th>
<th>Outfit</th>
<th></th>
<th>Estim.</th>
<th>Exact Agree.</th>
<th>Obs %</th>
<th>Exp %</th>
<th>N Raters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>-1.16</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>-1.85</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>-1.5</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>-.9</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>-2.21</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>-.7</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>-.3</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>58.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>-1.74</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>-.3</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>-.2</td>
<td>1 Mean (Count: 3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.1</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>S.D.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 9 Raters Measurement Report**

RMSE (Model) .42 Adj S.D. .10 Separation .23 Reliability .05

Using classical test theory to assess inter-rater reliability (figure 10), the results confirm that there was an acceptable rate of agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rater1</th>
<th>Rater2</th>
<th>Rater3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rater1</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1.000</td>
<td>.865(*)</td>
<td>.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed) .</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N 6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater2</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation .865(*)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed) .026</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N 6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater3</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation .805</td>
<td>.799</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed) .053</td>
<td>.057</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N 6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Figure 10 Rater Reliability – Classical Test Theory**

The writers (figure 11 below) separated well in this sample, as did the items. As with the raters, there were no misfitting items or participants. This indicates that the rating scale is working well in this study. As for the rating scale, Linacre (2004) suggests that no category should be more than five logits distant from a neighboring category, but that there be at least one logit of a step distance between the categories for a rating
scale with five categories. For this data set, there were no occurrences where a category was more than five logits apart from the neighboring category and where there was less than one logit between the ratings. This shows that the rating scale separated the writers efficiently.

| Obsvd Score | Obsvd Count | Obsvd Average Score | Fair-M | Obsvd Average Fair-M | Model | Infit | Outfit | |Estim.| Discrm| N Writers |
|-------------|-------------|---------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|-------|-------| | | | |
| 56          | 12          | 4.7                 | 4.79  | 3.10                 | .71   | 1.30  | .75   | .95 | .76 | 4 |
| 55          | 12          | 4.6                 | 4.69  | 2.62                 | .67   | .43   | -1.4  | .34 | -6  | 1.58 | 2 |
| 48          | 12          | 4.0                 | 4.00  | 0.7                  | .57   | 1.56  | 1.2   | 1.57 | 1.2 | .45 | 3 |
| 47          | 12          | 3.9                 | 3.92  | -.24                 | .56   | 1.21  | .6    | 1.19 | .5  | .77 | 5 |
| 39          | 12          | 3.3                 | 3.23  | -2.62                | .55   | .45   | -1.6  | .43 | -1.6 | 1.59 | 1 |
| 38          | 12          | 3.2                 | 3.14  | -2.93                | .56   | .63   | -.8   | .63 | -.8  | 1.38 | 6 |
| 47.2        | 12.0        | 3.9                 | 3.96  | .00                  | .60   | .93   | -.2   | .85 | -.2  | Mean (Count: 6) |
| 7.0         | 0.0         | .6                  | .64   | 2.31                 | .06   | .44   | 1.1   | .43 | 1.0  | S.D. |

**Figure 11** Writers Measurement Report

RMSE (Model) .61  Adj S.D. 2.23  Separation 3.66  Reliability .93
Fixed (all same) chi-square: 81.4  d.f.: 5  significance: .00

**Conclusions**

It has been argued in this paper that a holistic approach requires awareness of a broad range of potentially relevant aspects of learning and assessment before selecting the most relevant to focus on in local contexts. In contrast to external examining, in many in-house university assessment contexts, highly qualified subject teachers have the ultimate and exclusive right to determine their own grading. Ideally, participants, including students, will have been given the opportunity to influence and modify the description of these criteria. The criteria are a developmental tool and periodical modifications should be seen as a normal part of the process.

In our context, once a holistic framework has been established, it becomes possible to focus on more atomistic aspects of the system for more detailed investigation, such as rating scale design, task difficulty and scoring validity. An atomistic focus is not an end in itself, it is not opposed to holism, it is rather included within a holistic focus. The most relevant foci for particular learners at a particular stage of learning will always vary. No holistic course can focus on all aspects of competence, but attention to atomistic detail may be a very relevant focus at certain stages of the course. One aspect identified in our context is the need to regularly address language ability throughout the course. Once the more holistic categories of the framework have been established with learners, it is then possible to focus in detail on particular weaknesses for special attention as a regular feature of a holistic course.
References


Our Languages Clicked: Shakespeare in EFL Classes

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Dr. Ai Chun Yen is an Assistant Professor in the faculty of English Literature and Comparative Literature, National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan. Her research concerns theories of constructivist learning environments and applications of technologies for students of Humanities. Her research interests in a broad sense are: (1) Literature Teaching (2) Literature in Language Education (3) Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning in Literary Studies

Abstract
This research differs from the literature-based Shakespeare class for EFL students in two main ways. First, the researcher focuses on students’ development of language awareness, culture awareness, text awareness and intertext awareness. Second, the researcher invites students to incorporate some elements of actor training, not for acting but for feeling and echoing the figurative language, especially the frequently cited quotes. The research concludes that if the students can collaboratively read-and-think-and-feel-aloud the texts with ease, Shakespeare’s texts will stop being dead literary texts in black and white and become alive for EFL students.

Key Words: Shakespeare, language awareness, culture awareness, text awareness, intertextual awareness, thinking tools

Introduction
This paper describes a Shakespeare module for English majors in Taiwan employing participatory schemes with strong purposes to make the plays accessible for students and to help students overcome their fear of the language via the use of “thinking tools,” concept maps and mind maps. A Shakespeare teacher may ask, “What is the purpose of studying Shakespeare at University in an EFL country?” The answer for the researcher is for language’s sake first, then the literary knowledge’s sake. For the teacher of literature, then, there can or should be no question of teaching for the university or graduate exams and letting the language art come later. The first time EFL students of Shakespeare confront the texts, they are confusing and hard to be literally and culturally translated because of his word choices, the Elizabethan...
sentence wording order, puns, usage, and pronunciation.

Murray (1985) points out that “[a] teacher [might have fired] students’ enthusiasm to give them the energy to attack the biggest difficulty with Shakespeare for a newcomer: the language” (p. 46) and Crystal (2003) claims that by studying the texts of Shakespeare, students “learn how it is possible to explore and exploit the resource of language in original ways, displaying its range and variety in the service of the poetic imagination” (p.77). These two viewpoints framed the research model, “Read-and-Think-and-Feel-aloud Shakespeare” (please see Fig. 1).

Figure 1 Research Model, “Read-and-Think-and-Feel-aloud Shakespeare”

It is important for students to understand that Shakespeare did indeed write in English, just a different version of what people consider to be modern. To arouse or extend the students’ interest in a great and widely-performed dramatist, to the extent that for the rest of their lives they will find pleasure and satisfaction in reading and seeing Shakespeare’s plays, are the results of breaking the language barrier.

Literature Review

Memory Techniques

Martin Tarr’s (2007) research on study memory has shown that, during the learning process, the human brain primarily remembers:

1. items from the beginning of the learning period,
2. items from the end of the learning period,
3. items that are associated with ideas or patterns already stored, or linked to other aspects of what is being learned,
4. items that are emphasized as being in some way outstanding or unique,
5. items that appeal particularly strongly to one of the five senses (or sometimes to the sense of humor), and
6. items that, for some reason, are of particular interest to the learner.

These findings are illustrated graphically in Figure 2. In this figure, A, B and C indicate the improved recall of items which are associated or linked, and O the even higher recall of something which is outstanding or unique.

![Figure 2: Graph predicting the high and low points of recall during a learning period](image)

In cognitive psychology, memory is usually divided into three storage systems: sensory, short-term, and long-term (Costa-Mattioli et al., 2007). The sensory memories act as buffers for stimuli received through the senses. Information is passed from sensory memory into short-term memory by attention, which acts as a scratch-pad for temporary recall of the information under process. Long-term memory is intended for storage of information over a long time via different memory activities. Mastropieri and Scruggs (1991, p. 271) have identified eight guidelines for improving memorization using conscious strategies:

1. Increase attention
2. Promote external memory such as in using a student calendar
3. Enhance meaningfulness (make it personal)
4. Use pictures
5. Minimize interference
6. Promote active manipulation
7. Promote active reasoning (ask questions), and...
8. Increase the amount of practice

Therefore, concept mapping and mind mapping were chosen in this research to help carry out the research model. The primary application of memory processing with concept mapping and mind mapping were the verbal learning settings.

**Concept Maps and Mind Maps**

“Concept mapping” was developed at Cornell University in the 1970s, but the version that spread all over the world was invented in the 1980s. Novak and Gowin (1984) made it very popular among science educators. They point out that the characteristic of concept maps is that they are represented in a hierarchical fashion with the most general concepts at the top of a map and the more specific, less general concepts arranged hierarchically below (1984, pp.14, 22, 52). Visual learning is a proven method by which concepts, data and information are associated with images and represented graphically (Bellanca, 1990; Bromley, 1996; Jonassen, 1996; Tarquin & Walker, 1997; Thornburg, 1998). The same scheme is used for many different types of graphic knowledge representation techniques. Concept mapping is used in this module to help students create graphic organizers as they brainstorm ideas, organize plots and identify connections in reading Shakespeare’s plays (please see Fig. 3).
Developed by Tony Buzan (2000) in the early 1970s, “mind maps” are used as a way to help students make notes with key words and images. This visually-oriented knowledge management technique is non-linear and reflects the nature of mind maps because memory is naturally associative, not linear. This skill is used in this module as a visual knowledge management tool that enables students to structure, organize, arrange, brainstorm, learn and memorize information in a highly organized way and also to help students provoke logic and inspiration for skilled thinking practices involving the 5 “wh” and 1 “h” questions (please see Fig. 4).

Figure 3 Concept Map from Draft to Finalized

Figure 4 Mind Map Sample
Intertextuality

The concept of intertextuality is important for understanding the difference between the notions of “meaning potential” and “referential meaning” in language. According to Irwin’s study (2004) on literature and philosophy, Kristeva’s coinage of “intertextuality” represents an attempt to synthesise De Saussure’s structuralist semiotics with Bakhtin’s dialogism. De Saussure’s structuralist semiotics studies how signs derive their meaning within the structure of a text, while Bakhtin’s dialogism examines the multiple meanings, or “heteroglossia,” in each text (especially novels) and each word (p. 228). This intertextual view of a text, as shown in Barthes’ (1977) “Death of the Author”, supports the concept that the meaning of a text does not reside in itself, but within its viewers. Thus, the words “text” and “reader” can be used in a broader sense to refer to all kinds of teaching materials and the learners using them, all of which imply the figurative language or the meaning potential intertwined in a text.

For Kristeva (1980), “the notion of intertextuality replaces that of intersubjectivity” (p. 66) when readers realise that meaning is not transferred directly from writer to reader but instead is mediated through, or filtered by, “codes” imparted to the writer and reader by other texts. Whitehead (1929) says “[i]magination is a contagious disease. It cannot be measured by the yard, or weighed by the pound, and then delivered to the students by members of the faculty. It can only be communicated by a faculty whose members themselves wear their learning with imagination” (p. 145). This implies “a move towards interpretative space” and, at the same time, “an immediate and vital necessity for text awareness” (McRae, 1996, p. 20).

Research Methodology

Research Question and Hypothesis

The research took place at National Dong Hwa University, Taiwan. It involved 15 English majors from Year 4 who took the module of Shakespeare over a semester beginning in September 2009 and ending in January 2010. The body of participants is complicated because the members were trained to be English teachers for their first three years in the university. They had comparatively less literature knowledge than regular English majors. A Shakespeare study for them is just like Shakespeare in an EFL classroom instead of Shakespeare for English Majors. Therefore, the researcher initiated this project with three objectives: 1) Students will develop the skills
necessary to read and understand selected plays of Shakespeare via collaborative reading with thinking tools, concept maps and mind maps; 2) Students will be able to use appropriate modes of inquiry, including identifying and framing problems, investigating and supplying evidence, and conceptualizing via collaborative reading with thinking tools, concept maps and mind maps; and 3) Students will know the contents, categories, and boundaries of the Shakespeare canon via collaborative reading with thinking tools, concept maps and mind maps.

That is, the module objectives were to build up students’ awareness of language, culture, text and intertext with the integration of teaching methods of read-aloud, think-aloud and feel-aloud via collaborative reading with thinking tools, concept maps and mind maps. Assuming students’ emotional responses can inform literary analysis, this research featured a scaffolding intervention that involved modeling both cognitive and affective reading processes through the research model with thinking tools. However, are the students willing to team up? The research question is how to maximize the heuristic potentials of the research model in scaffolding students’ skills in reading-and-thinking-and-feeling-aloud Shakespeare’s plays via collaborative reading with thinking tools, concept maps and mind maps. The research is to test if the students would have more confidence in reading Shakespeare’s language with the research model in a collaborative way. The research variables used in this study included (1) the subject’s learning styles (N=15), (2) pedagogy of collaborative read-aloud, think-aloud, and feel-aloud, and (3) the subjects’ learning performance and satisfaction.

**Research Process**

The hypothesis in this research aims to test whether taking Shakespeare’s plays as representational materials at a university level will be accepted more in reality than in theory with the treatment of the research model. Various experiments were described which attempt to engage students immediately with the plays: *A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, Othello, King Lear*, a modern play entitled *When Shakespeare’s Ladies Meet* and *Shakespeare Retold* filmed by BBC. A series of core exercises in basic emotions ran through the semester like a backbone. The students were asked to incorporate some elements of actor training into the class, not for acting but for echoing the emotions in frequently cited quotes in order to think-and-feel aloud the literary value of the plays.
Stage 1 Reword Shakespeare

Modern people commonly use the subject-verb-object (SVO) order in sentences as Standard English, whereas Shakespeare employed the object-subject-verb (OSV) order as Standard English in Elizabethan time (see Table 1). Students were asked to resentence the OSV to SVO order and to create other simple sentences or phrases and change the word order in groups, then discuss the changes in inference. For this reason, translation from Elizabethan English into modern English and “rewording” Shakespeare’s words into a modern and more understandable way are practiced (see Table 2).

Table 1 Worksheet Excerpt of OSV to SVO Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From object-subject-verb (OSV) to subject-verb-object (SVO) order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Angelina walked her Barbie!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“My mother will water the flowers.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I bought a nice dress.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Worksheet Excerpt of Reword Shakespeare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reword Shakespeare: How do we speak English? (A Midsummer Night’s Dream)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elizabethan Standard English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince: A glooming peace this morning with it brings. (Romeo and Juliet, V.iii, 315)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Othello: That handkerchief/Did an Egyptian to my mother give. (Othello, III.iv, 56-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prospero: Thy shape invisible retain thou still. (The Tempest, IV.i, 200)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage 2 Reveal the Emotions Piece by Piece

Read-aloud either by the teacher or the students was necessary in class. This provided chances for students to “play” with the emotions and employ their speaking styles when reading-aloud the lines first, then the often cited quotations and finally the soliloquies. Students were asked to tell the difference between “surface and hidden emotions” and make a list under these two headings. Before taking this exercise, students needed to sensitize their levels of perception. Students were asked to read aloud the soliloquies many times, stressing a different sense each time. What might the character smell/see/hear/touch/taste from the soliloquy? (please see Table 3). Concept mapping was introduced for students to present the relationships among a set of connected emotions they proposed with the concepts and ideas Shakespeare might
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seem to put forward in the plays.

Table 3 Worksheet Excerpt of Five-Sense the “Lines”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five-Sense the “Lines” (Othello)</th>
<th>5 senses</th>
<th>5 senses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 OTHELLO IN SOLILOQUY</td>
<td>This fellow’s of exceeding honesty, And knows all qualities with a learned spirit Of human dealings. (III.i, 288-290 )</td>
<td>Trifles light as air Are to the jealous, confirmations strong As proofs of holy writ. “Othello”, (III.i, 358-360)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotion Collage and Relay (Othello)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List</td>
<td>Favorite lines with emotions</td>
<td>Do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must</td>
<td>Spontaneous arrangement of emotions</td>
<td>Think</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage 3 Figurative Language Now and Then

Shakespeare wrote in a formal manner with his poetic, metaphoric and imagery-filled language by comparing something to other things or personifications and allusions. The class, further, guided students to understand figurative meanings via the use of context clues and making inferences through concept mapping after they found a similar use in today’s language (please see Table 4). It is a tangible way to display how students’ minds saw a particular expression or allegory; they needed to organize a final group version. By constructing a concept map, students reflected upon what they knew and what they did not know between lines.

Table 4 Worksheet Excerpt of Symphony of Meanings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Did He Say? And What Do I Say? (Much Ado about Nothing)</th>
<th>Meaning via concept mapping</th>
<th>My language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shakespeare’s language</td>
<td>#4 BENEDICK: What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living? (I.i, 81)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#10 BENEDICK: Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher. (I.i, 94)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#13 BEATRICE: You always end with a jade’s trick: I know you of old. (I.i, 98)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since students had gained some knowledge of figurative language in their other modules (personification, alliteration, metaphors, imageries, similes, ironies, puns, idioms, onomatopoeias or hyperboles), students could somehow comprehend the texts that contain metaphorical and lexical meanings. This also aroused students’ sensibility of intertextualy because Shakespeare’s plays were informed by other texts which the students had read, taught by the teacher or even drawn from their own cultural context. The simplest approach to involve students in the intertextuality of Shakespeare’s
plays is to read the footnotes that indicate source materials to which a given text is alluding, or which are known to have influenced Shakespeare.

Encouraging students to create tableaux or concept maps to figure out the possible meanings of the lines (please see Table 5) prepared students to familiarize the texts and study literary analysis. “Picture the Lines” was practiced all through the semester in order to help students clarify themes and motifs. After the work of concept maps, a mind-mapping technique for literary analysis was introduced. Haverkamp (1993) says, “there is no better ‘souvenir,’ it seems, than the self-made photographic picture, which is meant to preserve individual memories from individual moments of an individual life” (258). Parallel to this idea of class note-taking and literary analysis, the universal success of this literary analysis, memory-storing activity has, in the manner of a supplement, supplanted what it is supposed to subserve, memory as well as its content, knowledge learned. This correlates to Costa-Mattioli’s theory on sensory, short-term, and long-term memories, and Mastropieri and Scruggs’s guidelines for improving memorization using conscious strategies.

Table 5 Worksheet Excerpt of Picture the Lines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Picture the Lines: Say it in a different way! (Romeo and Juliet)</th>
<th>My way</th>
<th>Picture the Lines (Mind Maps)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>#1 Romeo</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope’s ear (I.iv, 162-3)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>#2 Romeo</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My bounty is as boundless as the sea, My love as deep; the more I give to thee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The more I have, for both are infinite (II.i, 185-7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shakespeare’s tragedies convey dialogues with strong anger not only to advance the immediate scenes, but also to advance the themes and continue to unfold characters. An exercise of approaching characters’ anguish language was carried out. The students were asked to translate the selected lines of the plays in two ways: 1) Shakespeare’s English into a literal version of Modern English; and 2) a gossip version as if the students were saying this to their friends (please see Table 6).
Table 6 Excerpt of Who Needs Manners Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who Needs Manners: Will you insult people this way? (King Lear)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shakespeare’s way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 KING LEAR (King Lear) How sharper than a serpent's tooth it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is/To have a thankless child! (I.iv, 236-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let Me Tell You This….. (Translate into Modern English)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3 KING LEAR (King Lear) Th’untented woundings of a father’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>course/ Pierce every sense about thee! (I.iv, 8-10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The intertextuality in this class included the social and cultural context which included the reading, seeing, speaking, writing, thinking, concept mapping and, indeed, Shakespeare’s language itself. The intertextual space is not limited in Elizabethan time; instead, it includes infinite and communicable sources for the interpretive communities. Culler says (2001)

for a discussion to be significant it must stand in a relationship to a body of discourse, an enterprise, which is already in place, other projects and thoughts which it implicitly or explicitly takes up, prolongs, cites, refutes, transforms -- the presuppositions of a piece of writing. (pp. 100-101)

A new differently intertextual text was established via the excise of translations of selected lines. The students read the translations and gossips aloud in groups first and selected the best 10 to share in class. When they finished reading, the students started to have an insult conversation in their style and later in Shakespeare’s style.

In order to help students produce modern translation, BBC’s productions of The Taming of the Shrew and Macbeth were played before they started working on the “mental image” translations. Since media images are perceived before accompanying text, it is necessary to focus on the adequacy and suitability of media images in relation to the original text. In the context of text analysis prior to translation, it is therefore important to include image analysis as an important issue regarding the adequacy of an image in terms of a catalyst of the function and focus of Shakespeare’s plays. Furthermore, as students’ eyes meet the visual information before the textual one, processing information through motion picture input might well condition the later understanding of the meaning and information contained in the text. Metaphoric and figurative mappings have been recognized as central to
Shakespearean text analysis, not only as a means to make cryptic concepts accessible to the non-expert in Shakespeare, but, most importantly, as a resource to conceptualize new Shakespearean textual realities.

**Research Results**
Grasha and Reichmann developed the Grasha-Reichmann Learning Style Scales in 1974 to affect college students’ classroom participation. The Grasha-Reichmann model focuses on student attitudes toward learning, classroom activities, teachers, and peers rather than studying the relationships among methods, student style, and achievement. In addition, a teacher who clearly understands the prospects and limits of his or her teaching style can make more consistent judgments about how best to use this medium (Grasha, 1996). Failure to do so may result in less learning, which conflicts with the objectives for both the teacher and the student. Instructors are advised to be aware of learning differences and to use a variety of teaching strategies to reach a cross-section of the classes (Filbeck and Webb, 2000.)

The starting point of the research echoes the purpose on learning and teaching styles mentioned above. This is the first research variable that needs to be taken care of when setting a collaborative framework for a literature class in order not to frustrate both teacher and students (please see Fig. 5).

The results of Grasha-Reichmann Learning Style Scales showed that most participants were collaborative and participant learners (scaled 7 and 4 respectively). The collaborative learning was theoretically workable for this class. However, the research hypothesis was further confronted by the results of Grasha-Reichmann Teaching Style Scales. Participants’ preferred teaching styles ranked from expert, personal model, facilitator and delegator (please see Fig. 6).
One third of the students might be willing to work with peers for rewards and recognition and become frustrated when facing new challenges. However, this does not alter the research hypothesis because their preferred learning styles are facilitator and delegator (both scaled 3 and 2). It implies that though the participants are instructor-oriented, they are open to be learner-oriented as well. Thus, Daniel’s (1994) literature circles and Aronson et al’s (1978) jigsaw classroom were chosen for the teaching strategies in preparation for their mind mapping activities.

The participants were assessed through the semester for evidence of improved understanding, recall of information and quantity and quality of concept maps and mind maps produced. The ability to apply the awareness acquired in one context of the plays to a series of different concepts is an important ingredient for creativity. Student interpretations were very different which led to a discussion about how students approached Shakespeare’s figurative language. They would even quote while they talked either in Chinese or in English. And of course, they would not ask, “Why didn’t Shakespeare use plain English?” any more because the students also speak his language. A read-aloud activity of When Shakespeare’s Ladies Meet ended up the class with a lot fun. Students figured out puns of this modern play without any help. This play reading turned to a more specific focus of language, text and culture awareness.

This confirms that if the students can read-and-think-and-feel-aloud the texts with ease, Shakespeare’s texts will stop being dead literary texts in black and white and become alive. The research hypothesis was proved significant before the semester ended. The model helped students release doubts and fears about Shakespeare’s language and build up confidence in reading it. The data from their
writing log and discussion forum suggests that students improved in the areas identified. These are:

- improved language focus in the texts;
- more concentration on academic tasks with their team members;
- improved questioning and answering during class discussions on concept maps and mind maps;
- more self-reliance regarding resources; and
- improved thinking independence.

These evaluations indicate that apart from the language, text and culture awareness development, the intertextual awareness helped students build an understanding of the many dimensions (emotional, philosophical, aesthetic, etc.) of human experience which led students to work on other pieces of literature with this research model. The most remarkable success is that students applied various strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts with confidence. They drew on their prior experience, their interactions with other classmates, their knowledge of word meanings nowadays and of that in Shakespeare’s time, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features. The developed awareness does not make students Shakespeare experts, but allows them to participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

Although not central to this research, students’ official end-of-semester evaluations from the university scored 4.6 (5 is the maximum). It showed that the teacher recognized that there were a variety of preferred learning styles among students in the class. The language of Shakespeare is not the only core issue for the teacher to solve. Teaching strategies are also of central importance. The data suggested that the teacher was more likely to reach even the most unenthusiastic student after employing the teaching treatments of DVDs, visual aids via PPTs, mind mapping and thinking tools, discussions, e-Learning platforms, cooperative learning activities and creative activities (please see Figs. 7 and 8).
Limitations and Recommendations

Final evaluations indicate that the experimental elements, however, change the tone of the class of Shakespeare. There seems to be a general feeling that, given the opportunity, the greater use of Shakespeare’s language is desirable for students (please see Fig. 8). The research sample size is rather small; furthermore, the study may not be long enough to shed light on how this model could help students deal with insights of Shakespeare’s works. However, it is speculated that, because of the limited research on literature teaching of EFL students, the result of the research is at present sufficient as a prior study. The investigation also influences the researcher’s module design. This research argues that teaching an EFL Shakespeare module calls not only for different syllabuses from those used in other forms of teaching but also for a modification of the concepts of syllabus. A key recommendation on this issue is to
increase the investment in strategies that enhance awareness of language, text, culture and intertext.

Conclusion
Teaching Shakespeare to EFL students in Taiwan raises the issues of “what to teach” and “how to teach,” and, in fact, these are the most complex and problematic debates going on within EFL countries. This paper focuses on the students’ enjoyment in understanding Shakespeare’s language art from a contemporary point of view.

Barthes (1977) declares that “it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is... to reach the point where only language acts, ‘performs’, and not ‘me’” (p. 143) and that “a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination” (p. 148). In order to make sense of this idea, this class is developed to make students understand that texts provide contexts within which other texts may be created and interpreted.

The students were involved in an interaction with each other and with the text. All texts are necessarily figurative and intertextualized because, wittingly or unwittingly, they all allow multiple interpretations, discussion, reflection and consideration of meaning. Being able to use newly learned tools to interpret and understand Shakespeare’s language might even seem like learning a secret language code. Indeed, the interplay of codes in the class is particularly revealing of representational meanings which allow the students to deconstruct the text from different angles. By learning about some of the word meanings of Shakespeare’s sentence structure, figurative language, and puns, students are able to appreciate and enjoy the genius and humour in Shakespeare’s work and relate these to their own lives.

References


Whitehead, A. N. (1929). *The Aims of Educ*
English Learners’ Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition in the Video-based CALL Program

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Bio Data
Lu-Fang Lin received her Ph. D. degree in 2004 at the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria, B.C., Canada. She currently is an assistant professor in the Institute of Applied English, National Taiwan Ocean University, Taiwan. She is presently involved in research into English reading comprehension instruction and Multimedia English teaching and learning.

Abstract
This study investigated the effects of video-based computer assisted language learning (VBCALL) program on English learners’ incidental vocabulary acquisition and further explored the differences in vocabulary learning between English learners with high and low English reading and listening proficiency. The participants in this study were 82 university freshmen. Based on the results of an English proficiency test, three English proficiency groups were set up: (1) 44 participants with high reading and high listening English proficiency (the RHLH group), (2) 20 participants with high reading and low listening English proficiency the RHLL group), and (3) 18 participants with low reading and high listening English proficiency (the RLLH group). All participants completed five practice sessions, five vocabulary follow-up tests, and vocabulary pre- and post-tests. Quantitative analysis was conducted in terms of three proficiency groups. The results demonstrated that RHLH, RHLL, and RLLH groups’ vocabulary post-tests were both higher than those of their pre-tests. Paired t-test results show that RHLH and RHLL groups respectively performed significantly better in the vocabulary posttest. One-way ANOVA results demonstrate that in the vocabulary follow-up tests, the total scores revealed significant differences between the RHLH and RLLH groups. The qualitative interpretation was presented in terms of the participants’ one-on-one interview response.

Key Words: English listening proficiency, English reading proficiency, incidental vocabulary acquisition

Introduction
Current development in information technologies has resulted in rapid advances in the application of instructional and educational technology. In an instructional situation,
instructors cannot just rely on advanced educational technology to conduct teaching effectively; they still need efficient multimedia materials. By using effective materials, the materials can meet the wants and needs of learners of different backgrounds in different settings (Tomlinson, 1998). To develop efficient multimedia materials, some features that can facilitate language learning should be integrated into materials. These may include multimedia presentation formats and learner target language proficiency. This study will focus on how to deduce these features. What is new about the present study is that the learner’s reading and listening proficiency is considered simultaneously to examine the effect of video-based CALL program.

The Development of CALL Programs
Technological advancements have deeply affected the methodology of education in general and foreign/second language in particular in which computers are at the heart of this process. Computers have been used for language teaching since the 1960s, and nowadays this advanced technological equipment has become widespread in schools and language institutions; moreover, their uses dramatically change the way of foreign/second language learning and teaching (Warchauer, 1996).

The development of CALL can be divided into three main stages: behavioristic CALL; communicative CALL; and integrative CALL (Warchauer & Healey, 1998; Candlin & Hall, 2005). Behavioristic CALL was developed in the 1950s and implemented in the 1960s and 1970s. CALL in this stage was viewed as a “mechanical tutor, which never grew tired or judgmental and allowed students to work at an individual pace” (Warchauer & Healey, 1998, p. 57). The second stage, communicative CALL, emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s focusing on the communicative activities of languages. At this time, teachers tended to focus on pedagogical implication, i.e. meaning was stressed over form. Also, grammar teaching shifted to implicit instruction, in contrast to explicit instruction which was the previous norm. In the classroom instructional activity, the teacher encouraged students to generate sentences rather than just imitate prefabricated language. The concept of CALL is that the computerized programs do not provide language material but enable the learners to understand and use the language (Warchauer & Healey, 1998). The third stage, integrative CALL, began from the late 1980s and early 1990s. CALL was applied to integrate the various skills of language learning and use, such as communication in the social context, and task-based, project-based, and content-based
instruction in an authentic environment (Warchauer & Healy, 1998). More recently, CALL allows for a combination of sound, graphics, text, and video presented in one computerized program and further facilitates efforts to teach four language skills, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Multimedia researchers emphasized that the mixture of on-screen text, sound, and still and dynamic images improved language acquisition (Hubbard, 2009; Erben, Ban, & Castañeda, 2009; Jones, 2004). In this way, language learners have access to various sources of verbal and nonverbal information and use it for academic and communicative purposes.

**Video Instruction**

The inclusion of video clips in teaching is becoming increasingly dominant in the second language (L2) learning curriculum. This reform reflects the acknowledgement that audio and visual information aids language learning. For the past two decades, Mayer and his colleagues have been investigating the nature of multimedia learning with a goal of building a research-based theory of how people learn from words and pictures (Mayer & Anderson, 1992; Mayer & Gallini, 1990; Mayer, 2005). They received fruitful results and provided solid evidence that multimedia materials can be used to facilitate learners’ text comprehension effectively, especially in science education (Mayer & Moreno, 1998; Moreno & Mayer, 1999).

Video, a kind of multimedia material, consists of verbal and nonverbal presentations displaying simultaneous images, narration and, on-screen text (Mayer, 2002). Comparing video with traditional English teaching materials such as paper-printed textbooks and listening dominant materials, it can be found that animation and picture-like dynamic images represent the essential difference between video and traditional English materials. From a learning perspective, video so far has been examined to see whether it can improve learning. The research on video yields mixed and contradictory results, with actual effects of video ranking from highly beneficial to detrimental to learning.

As Mayer and Gallini (1990) emphasized, an illustration can be worth ten thousand words. Canning-Wilson and Wallace (2000) claimed that video can be a communicative media contributing to the understanding of the target language culture by providing authentic language input and increasing contact in various ways with native speakers of the target language through video viewing. Native speakers’ oral
communication in authentic target language contexts can be introduced into the classroom. The benefits of using video in second language educational settings have also been described (Çakir, 2006; Hemei, 1997; Rhodes & Puhfahl, 2003).

In contrast, some studies showed the disadvantages of video as an instructional tool. For example, research findings that are related to the effectiveness of narrative instructional video are ambiguous (Fisch, 2000). In addition, Caspi, Gorsky, and Privman (2005) reported that students might feel frustrated by using videos as a learning tool because the tasks involved in video instruction include hearing, watching and writing; these tasks were too demanding and thus resulted in students’ negative feelings toward the medium. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a study systematically examining the effects of video on English learning.

**L2 Vocabulary Acquisition**

The fact that individuals differ in their vocabulary knowledge may result in successful and unsuccessful text comprehension. Researchers in L2 vocabulary acquisition and use may agree that L2 vocabulary knowledge is essential in L2 text comprehension (Laufer, 1997; Nassji, 2003; Nation, 2001; Read, 2000). L2 learners who have limited vocabulary knowledge are less likely to be able to develop advanced levels of reading, listening, writing and speaking skills in the target language. Given the important role of vocabulary in language learning, researchers now investigate efficient ways and ideal environments to enhance vocabulary learning.

One such environment is offered in CALL programs where multimedia makes it possible for students to learn vocabulary aided by sounds, pictures, and even video. A number of researchers have discussed the effects of presenting information using multimedia on L2 vocabulary acquisition (Akbulut, 2007; Kim & Gilman, 2008). In general, the results of these studies show that text along with video, pictures, and graphics fosters L2 vocabulary acquisition. For example, Akbulut (2007) investigated immediate and delayed effects of different hypermedia glosses on Turkish students’ incidental vocabulary acquisition. The results showed that students having access to word definitions along with pictures and short video clips achieved significantly higher vocabulary scores than those assigned to the definition only groups. In a study of 172 Korean students, Kim and Gilman (2008) reported that information presented
with visual text and supplementary graphics, or with visual text supplemented by spoken text and graphics could facilitate students’ vocabulary acquisition the best.

Earlier research also shows that the material combining words and pictures makes it much easier for learners to remember the words. Jones (2004) investigated L2 vocabulary recognition and recall from one control group and three treatment groups that provided written, pictorial, or both written and pictorial annotations while listening. She found that the pictorial and written annotations group recalled more vocabulary than those without access to written annotations. Vocabulary recognition and recall would be more effective if new words were placed in a context, using sound and image combination. Furthermore, Hu and Deng (2007) indicated that multimedia could improve students’ ability to memorize words because multimedia transmitting information through auditory and visual modalities attracted learners’ attention, and accordingly improve their word retention.

For the past decades, video has been applied as a teaching resource to enhance English learners’ vocabulary learning. In such a video-based environment, the learner is required to process information presented in visual and audio modes. To learn vocabulary successfully, it is assumed that the learner should be skilled at reading and listening. If the learner cannot process visual and audio information effectively, the achievement of multimedia instruction can be quite limited. The learner’s reading and listening ability plays an important role and has great potential for successful vocabulary learning. However, there is little research pertaining to examining its effect on English learners whose reading and listening abilities differ. The results of the study contribute to knowledge of vocabulary learning through a video-based CALL program and better guide instructional practice for visually and aurally diverse learners.

This study will firstly investigate the effects of video-based computer assisted language learning (VBCALL) program on L2 learners’ incidental vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, it will explore how authentic video clips foster incidental vocabulary acquisition of L2 learners with high and low English proficiency in reading and listening. The following research questions guided the study:

1. Are there significant differences between the participants with different English reading and listening abilities in incidental vocabulary acquisition?
2. How does the VBCALL program facilitate vocabulary acquisition for learners with different English reading and listening abilities?
Method

Participants
To conduct a comparison study of different English proficiency groups, sampling was conducted with 82 university participants who registered on the compulsory Freshman English course. A simulated General English Proficiency Test (GEPT) at Intermediate level was used to assess students’ reading and listening proficiency at the beginning of the study. The GEPT is a five-level criterion-referenced EFL testing system administered in Taiwan to measure the general English proficiency of EFL learners (Wu, 2008, p. 45). The GEPT-Intermediate level refers to the ability to use basic English to conduct daily life communication and is roughly equivalent to the ability of a high school graduate in Taiwan (LTTC, 2007, cited from Wu, 2008). Based on the results of GEPT test, three English proficiency groups were set up: (1) 44 RHLH participants with high reading and high listening English proficiency, (2) 20 RHLL participants with high reading and low listening English proficiency, and (3) 18 RLLH participants with low reading and high listening English proficiency. These participants’ primary language spoken at school was Mandarin.

Instruments

Vocabulary pre- and post- tests
The pre- and post-tests were group tests featuring the same text, which measured the participant’s ability to recognize English words. The pre-test contained 15 multiple-choice items measuring recognition of 15 words. The 15 target words were selected from the words used in five vocabulary followed-up tests. The maximum score for the pre-test and post-test was 15 respectively, with each correct response worth one point.

Vocabulary follow-up tests
Vocabulary follow-up tests were in cloze format. The twelve blank-filling questions were designed according to the content of the assigned video segment. Each blank was filled with one word. The total score of each test was 12 points, with one correct response worth one point. The possible maximum score of five tests was 60, containing 60 words.

One-on-one interviews
The interview was to explore how the participant successfully acquired vocabulary. Twelve participants took turns attending the one-on-one interviews. All interviews took place within a two-week period. Participants were selected who achieved the
highest and the lowest total scores in vocabulary follow-up tests respectively from three proficiency groups. In total nine participants (five males and four females) joined the interview.

**Video clips**

This study used five English video-based lessons selected from the 2006 CNN news archive. These lessons are an online language learning program of the magazine, *Live ABC* Interactive Corporation (2007) issued in Taiwan. The lesson selection is based on the following criteria. They are similar in the length and topic interests. The length of the films is around 3 to 4 minutes.

**Data Collection Procedure**

There were eight periods for data collection with a period of fifty minutes per week. In the beginning of the study, all participants took the GEPT-Intermediate simulated test and were then divided into three English proficiency groups according to the GEPT test results. In the second period, participants responded to a vocabulary pre-test. From the third to the seventh period, the researcher assigned thirty minutes for participants freely to access the Internet to study the video lesson. Participants viewed one lesson in one class meeting. The participants in each group were tested for vocabulary acquisition immediately after viewing one video lesson. This study applied five video lessons and thus administered five vocabulary follow-up tests. In the last period, all participants completed a vocabulary post-test. One month after the VBCALL, one-on-one interviews were conducted with the participants selected from each proficiency group.

**Results and Discussion**

*Paired t*-tests and one-way ANOVA tests were performed on the dependent variables: the mean scores of pre-and post-tests and vocabulary follow-up tests. Numerous main effects and interactions were calculated. All interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. The interview data were analyzed qualitatively. Descriptive results of the three English proficiency groups’ scores of vocabulary tests were summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

**Vocabulary Incidental Acquisition in Vocabulary Pre- and Post-tests**

The data in Table 1 demonstrates that mean scores of RHLH, RHLL, and RLLH
groups’ vocabulary post-tests are both higher than those of their pre-tests. The increased percentage score ranged from 1.12% (RLLH) to 3.4% (RHLH). The result reveals positive effects of the VBCALL program for different proficiency groups’ incidental vocabulary learning. The findings that the students of the present study gained higher scores in the vocabulary post-test supported the conclusion from previous research that text along with video may help the learner to remember the words well (Hu, & Deng, 2007; Jones, 2004). This result is also consistent with that of earlier multimedia research which concluded that integrating text and video can enhance learners to visualize the meanings of words in a way that fosters meaningful learning outcomes (Akbulut, 2007; Kim & Gilman, 2008). The present study provided further evidence for Smidt and Hegelheimer’s (2004) perspective that incidental vocabulary acquisition occurs through involvement in the CALL activity.

The paired sample t-tests show two statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-tests respectively (RHLH Group, $t = 3.4, p < .01$; RHLL Group, $t = 2.43, p < .05$). RHLL and RHLL groups respectively showed significant improvement in the vocabulary posttest. There is no significant difference between RLLH group’s mean scores of pre-test and its post-test. RLLH Group did not make significant progress as those of RHLL and RHLH groups. Taken together, these pre- and post-test comparison results demonstrate that the video-based CALL activity actually fosters vocabulary acquisition across three proficiency groups. The findings of the current study suggest that the participants proficient in reading make significant progress in incidental vocabulary acquisition through completion of the video-based CALL activity.

Table 1 Paired t-tests of significance for three proficiency groups based on vocabulary pre-and post-test means

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Post/Pre t</th>
<th>$p$.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RHLH</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>60.88</td>
<td>10.15</td>
<td>67.30</td>
<td>9.98</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.00**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHLL</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>57.64</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>64.68</td>
<td>8.30</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLLH</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54.62</td>
<td>8.51</td>
<td>56.88</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. 1. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. 2. Mean score represents correct percentage score.
**Vocabulary Incidental Acquisition in Vocabulary Follow-up Tests**

The results of follow-up vocabulary tests can further explain the effects of this activity. Descriptive statistics for the five vocabulary tests by three English proficiency groups in Table 2 show that RHLH Group (48.57) outperformed the other English proficiency groups in general vocabulary tests. The other two groups’ total scores for the entire vocabulary were as follows: RHLL Group (43.35), and RLLH Group (39.05). Regarding 60 words throughout the five tests, RHLH Group scored the highest and achieved 81% correctness, whereas RLLH Group scored the lowest and achieved 65% correctness. Table 2 also reveals that the scores of the three proficiency groups from the first to the fifth test are presented in ascending order. For each group, their scores at the fifth test were respectively higher than those of their first tests. These results further demonstrate that the video-based CALL program can foster the three groups’ vocabulary acquisition incidentally.

Table 2 Correct response in five vocabulary follow-up tests by three proficiency groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary Test</th>
<th>RHLH</th>
<th>RHLL</th>
<th>RLLH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VT1</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT2</td>
<td>9.89</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>7.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT3</td>
<td>10.07</td>
<td>8.75</td>
<td>7.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT4</td>
<td>10.75</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>8.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT5</td>
<td>10.66</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>48.57</td>
<td>43.35</td>
<td>39.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. 1. VT 1, VT 2, VT 3, VT 4, and VT 5 represent the vocabulary tests for Videos 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively.*

In addition, the results of one-way ANOVA in Table 3 show that in the five vocabulary tests, the total scores revealed significant differences between RHLH Group and RLLH Group (p < .05). That is, the score of RHLH Group is significantly higher than that of RLLH Group. This indicates that participants who are proficient in reading and listening may acquire more vocabulary than those who only have good listening skills. The results in Table 3 showing no significant difference between RHLH Group and RHLL Group further suggest that participants who are proficient only in reading receive scores quite similar to those of participants who are proficient
in both reading and listening. The data in Table 3 reveal that there was no significant difference between RHLL and RLLH Groups. However, the data in Table 2 show that RHLL Group’s total score (43.35) is higher than that of RLLH Group (39.05), although comparisons between RHLL and RLLH Groups show no statistical significance in Table 3.

Table 3 ANOVA comparisons for the three proficiency groups’ vocabulary acquisition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Group</th>
<th>(J) Group</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RHLH</td>
<td>RLLH</td>
<td>9.51(*)</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHLH</td>
<td>RHLL</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHLL</td>
<td>RLLH</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RHLL</td>
<td>RHLL</td>
<td>-5.22</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLLH</td>
<td>RHLL</td>
<td>-4.29</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLLH</td>
<td>RHLL</td>
<td>-9.51(*)</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.00*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. * p < .05.

**Interview Interpretation of Vocabulary Acquisition**

Table 4 shows that the highest scores ranged from 53 to 60; four participants received the maximum scores of 60. The lowest scores ranged from 23 to 32. Additionally, all four participants receiving the lowest scores were males. In the interviews, the participants with the highest scores (hereafter successful participants) from RHLH, RHLL, and RLLH Groups were able and willing to report a greater amount of content than their counterparts who received the lowest scores (hereafter unsuccessful participants). The interpretation was presented in terms of the participants’ affective response and after-class practice effect.

Table 4 The information for the participants joining the interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>After-class practice (hour/week)</th>
<th>Total score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest</td>
<td>RHLH</td>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>John</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RHLL</td>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RLLH</td>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Jack</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>RHLH</td>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RLLH</td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The interview reports demonstrate affective effects on both successful and unsuccessful participants. All of them had great interest in such video-based lessons. Furthermore, successful participants confirmed that video actually fostered their imagination of English text and also assisted their memory significantly. For example, the participant (Jane) noted: “I could understand the content better when I see people’s facial expressions and body gestures.” The participant (John) elaborated on this by stating that when he selected words to fill in the blank in the test, he read through the sentence and a visual image from the video lesson flashed through his mind. The participant (Mary) mentioned that she remembered images better than words, and liked to view video and listen to annotation simultaneously. Another successful participant (Helen) mentioned that she liked video-based lessons and replayed the lesson to practice the vocabulary. She also said that she learned words from written subtitles and translation, oral annotation, and video images.

In addition, the interviews reveal after-class practice effects on these participants. I asked them whether they continued to use this program to practice English after class, and how many hours in a week they spent learning English through this program. All successful participants replied that they continued to use this CALL program to practice English listening after class and also tried to memorize some words. For unsuccessful participants, the situation was different. Two out of four participants said that during the period of the study they did not use this program after class.

Some unsuccessful participants’ extracts may further offer insights into the effect of the program. First, incidental learning of words likely occurred when unsuccessful participants were provided with access to written translations on screen. The participant (Robert) said that he read the Chinese translation when he listened to oral annotation. However, he could not recall anything from the video lesson when taking the vocabulary test, and he just filled in the blanks by reading the sentences in the test. Second, video-based lessons may have provided too much information. The participant (Tom) felt exhausted when he read Chinese and English subtitles at the bottom and watched video at the top of the screen; furthermore, he mentioned that it was hard to connect words and images. Third, video viewing is for learning, not for testing. The participant (Jack) enjoyed viewing videos, but he said that watching the video lesson was one thing; to take the test was another. He thought that it was necessary to master a testing skill to achieve high scores in a test. Another participant
(Kevin) expressed the same opinion that he focused on listening to the conversation and viewing the video to catch the overall gist of the clip. He explained that he did not pay attention to the words so he was not able to recognize vocabulary well in the test.

In general, participants proficient in only one area could not acquire significantly more vocabulary than those proficient in both reading and listening. The results show that English reading and listening proficiency plays a role in incidental acquisition of general vocabulary. RHLH participants scored significantly more points than RLLH participants in the recognition of total vocabulary. Furthermore, the results show that the difference between RHLH and RHLL participants in vocabulary tests was not significant. These findings suggest that participants proficient only in listening do not perform better than their counterparts proficient in reading, as reading skills are essential to video comprehension. This is likely due to the fact that most students did not have much experience using video clips to learn English before participating in this study. In class, the English textbooks lacked images; information was conveyed primarily through printed words. Therefore, students were trained primarily in reading. In this study, RHLL Group’s English reading ability is statistically equivalent to that of RHLH Group. When viewing video clips, they relied heavily on reading the verbal messages. As a result, some participants highly proficient in reading (RHLL participants) likely achieved high scores and were not significantly different from RHLH participants. With the knowledge of the differences in vocabulary acquisition among different proficiency groups and how learners acquire and retain vocabulary successfully, instructors may take practical steps and design multimedia teaching activities to improve L2 learners’ vocabulary.

Interview data show that successful participants were more likely to adjust themselves and spent more time in acquainting themselves with the new learning material. The adage of “practice makes perfect” appears to have been prevalent among such participants. Qualitative data also account for positive effects of video on vocabulary learning. However, the interpretation of findings from a small number of participants cannot be generalized to the wider population. It is necessary to conduct further quantitative studies to examine the impact of video in more detail.

**Conclusion**

The question of what effect the video-based CALL program has on L2 learners’ vocabulary learning was answered in this study. In summary, these findings suggest
that first, the video-based CALL program facilitates vocabulary incidental acquisition of students with different English proficiency abilities. Second, when viewing the video-based CALL program, students with proficient English reading and listening skills outperform those who are not proficient in the two skills in vocabulary learning. Moreover, if students are proficient in only one of these skills, reading skills contribute more to their vocabulary acquisition than listening skills. In general, the findings exhibit the essential role of English reading and listening proficiency in incidental vocabulary acquisition by means of video-based multimedia material. Thus, it should be noted that the absence of proficient English reading or listening ability may lead to the failure of comprehending video-based lessons and even worse the washout of vocabulary acquisition.

Findings of the study suggest important pedagogical implications for the use of video in L2 vocabulary acquisition. In video-based CALL environments, learners should be trained with skilled reading and listening abilities. According to the results in this study, it may be assumed that as both reading and listening proficiency increases, the outcome of incidental vocabulary learning may increase. In a CALL environment, interaction between the learners and the text provides individualized learning and promotes learning autonomy. More specifically, learners can have control over their learning process and plan to learn at their own will and pace. Therefore, learners proficient in only one area can make use of such computerized environments to strengthen their deficient reading or listening skills efficiently because of the written and spoken text that video-based CALL programs provide. Another implication of the integration of news video in English instruction is that the presentation of authentic input is made more comprehensible with authentic images and settings of the world in the program. Learners are not only presented with real English, but also with original means to deal with the authentic language.

Finally, vocabulary learning is more than individual word learning. By learning words in context, the learner acquires not only linguistic knowledge of a word, such as phonetic, syntactic and semantic rules, but also the knowledge of how to use the word properly in a context. To foster meaningful L2 vocabulary learning, multimedia presentation should present video that effectively integrates visual and auditory messages. This study provides a practical CALL program designed to meet the students’ language learning needs in class or out of the class, and to achieve the goal
of multimedia language education – learning in a concrete and meaningful context, with confidence, and for comprehension.

Acknowledgements
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Cambridge University Press.


“Do They Want the Same Thing?” Learner Perspectives on Two Content-Based Course Designs in the Context of English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

The notion of content-based instruction (CBI) has been widely applied to English as a second language (ESL) classrooms with satisfactory learning outcomes in the last two decades. Although it has been intensively explored in the field of applied linguistics, the empirical research provides only indirect implications for CBI curriculum development (Stoller, 2004). By definition, CBI has a dual commitment to both language- and content-learning objectives. Therefore, most courses offered at the tertiary level in Taiwan, either in English departments or with English instruction, are content-based in nature because content knowledge and language proficiency are highly required elements in such an academic setting. To add to current CBI literature
perspectives on English as a foreign language (EFL), this research presented two models of content-based courses, one content-driven and the other language-driven, with a questionnaire to elicit English majors’ opinions on the two course designs. The results showed that they preferred the language-driven course and that they aspired for more language-skills training. It is therefore argued that there are differences in student beliefs concerning their needs and expectations between the EFL and ESL settings.

**Key Words**: content-based instruction, student attitude, course design, English as a foreign language, higher education in Taiwan

**Introduction**

Content-based language teaching is seen as a curriculum design that can lead to positive gains in the learners of a second or foreign language. A number of case studies support the idea that content-based instruction (CBI) is beneficial (Stoller, 2004; Wesche & Skehan, 2002). Heo (2006) emphasizes that the most important point about CBI is that “CBI is believed to better reflect learners’ needs in terms of preparation for academic courses and helps the learners access the content of academic learning” (p. 30).

CBI can be seen as having weak and strong forms. Specifically, Stoller (2004) writes:

[... ] At one end of the continuum are “content-driven” approaches with strong commitments to content-learning objectives (immersion, partial immersion, sheltered subject-area courses); at the other end of the continuum are “language driven” approaches with strong commitments to language learning objectives, using content mainly as a springboard for language practice. (p. 268)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Driven</th>
<th>Language Driven</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Immersion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjunct</td>
<td>Theme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1 Courses along the content-based instruction continuum

Continuum adapted from Met (1998, p. 41; 1999, p. 7) and Stoller (2004)*

However, even though Stoller (2004) states that CBI has attracted global attention, the common goal of the models she reviewed was to bridge the gap between English as a second language (ESL) classes and regular academic work in English. In
English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, where no native speaker models are available, and little cultural input occurs outside class, CBI is seen to be less effective (Heo, 2006; Pally, 1999; Wesche & Skehan, 2002). In addition, there is recognition that there can be a "sudden jump" (Bragger & Rice, 1999, as cited in Stoller, 2004, p. 266) in difficulty when foreign language students move from language instruction to literature classes or other academic topics taught in a foreign language. Therefore, it should not be assumed that transferring the design of a CBI course that is effective in an ESL setting to an EFL setting will result in a course that is equally effective.

**Theme-Based Model**
A popular implementation of CBI in EFL settings is through theme-based courses. According to Duenas (2004), theme-based courses are the most commonly used model in CBI. Theme-based courses “have explicit language aims which are usually more important than the content learning objectives” (p. 4). Thus, “[theme-based] courses would constitute the weakest representation of CBI models” (p. 4).

Kavaliauskiene (2004) conducted research in Lithuania to show that the integration of content-based instruction into the ESP classroom results in a positive difference in promoting learner autonomy as well as progress in vocabulary, writing, making presentations, and project work. Kavaliauskiene cites Rivers (1992, p. 41) in concluding that this research supports four major empirical research findings that emphasize the benefits of CBI: (1) thematically organized materials are easier to learn and remember; (2) coherent and meaningful information is deeper and better processed; (3) the common outcome of CBI is a link between learner motivation and interest; (4) developing expertise in a topic through a sequence of complex tasks.

**Sheltered Model**
Another CBI model is one of combining content and language into one course, which would make the course more akin to sheltered subject-matter instruction. Duenas (2004) notes that “the overall purpose of [sheltered] courses is content learning rather than language learning, so this model constitutes one of the ‘strong’ paradigms within the general framework of CBI” (p. 6). Sheltered models are more often used with advanced students. However, the readiness of EFL students to participate in a sheltered class where instruction is primarily in the target language (L2) is a concern, given their presumed lower proficiency.
Chapple (1998) researched the readiness of students in Hong Kong through a sheltered course on film, with English as the medium of instruction. She notes that student responses on an end-of-course evaluation were quite positive with regard to content knowledge and language proficiency gains, as well as the sheer enjoyment of the course, which is in line with previous findings on CBI in that it leads to “successful subject matter learning, [...] language development superior to that achieved otherwise in school or academia, and positive attitude changes” (Wesche & Skehan, 2002, p. 225). Chapple and Curtis (2000) do acknowledge that the small-scale study does not provide any conclusive evidence for language learning, and cite Wesche's (1993) assertion that “more longitudinal studies of content-based approaches would elucidate the appropriateness of these models for EFL teaching, particularly in Asian contexts” (p. 430).

Criticisms of CBI

A criticism of CBI by Master (2003) is that “the efficacy of sustained CBI” is supported “with (barring one or two exceptions) little other than anecdotal proof” (p. 427). Stoller (2004) concurs, indicating that “additional empirical research on content-based instruction is needed” (p. 275).

Though an advocate of CBI, Dickey (2004) offered a cautious view of CBI due to the potential for cognitive imbalance, acknowledging the possibility and danger of cognitive overload, which occurs when either (or both) the language intensity or content intensity is too difficult. The opposite extreme may also occur, where the language or content intensity may be too minimal, resulting in boredom. Thus, the challenge is to determine the root causes of cognitive overload or under-load. Yet, to identify the heart of the problem may be difficult, according to Stoller (2004), who cites Short (1999) and Gottlieb (1999) in acknowledging the difficulty of determining and identifying “if students are unable to demonstrate knowledge because of a language barrier or because of a lack of understanding of content material” (p. 275-76).

Wesche and Skehan (2002) also list other obstacles to successful implementation of a CBI curriculum as: a lack of teacher preparation, inadequate curricular definitions to integrate content and language objectives, a mismatch between course demands and language proficiency leading to frustration and loss of motivation, unrealistic expectations, inappropriate assessment methods, lack of administrative support, and
the need for cross disciplinary cooperation.

Even taking the criticisms of CBI into account, the overall positive reports from previous case studies in CBI seem to show clearly that students can benefit from course designs that place greater emphasis on CBI, but what type of content-based instruction model would be most beneficial for students enrolled in the English department of a university in Taiwan?

**Current Development of English Language Education in Taiwan**

The challenge that students have in adapting to content-based instruction in a foreign language setting is especially pertinent in Taiwan. Although English is a foreign language in Taiwan, the students who reach the university level have had a depth of training and exposure to English that is far greater than American students of a foreign language like Russian or German. High school students are expected to develop a 7000-word vocabulary and be familiar with the full spectrum of grammatical patterns. Reading passages cover a variety of academic topics and can include literary topics as well (The Education Resource Center of Senior High School, 2007).

One caveat is that these expectations for English proficiency are not always met by graduating high school students who wish to continue studying at the university level. Students that score well enough to enter the prestigious national universities could well meet the expectations for high school graduates, but average students have vocabularies of less than 2000 English words (Chen, 1999, as cited in Lin, 2006). Given the wide variation in English proficiency among students entering universities in Taiwan, it is appropriate to profile the students and the English department that will be investigated in this research.

**Profile of the English Department under research**

The department targeted in this study was an English department at one of the top ranked national universities in Taiwan. The Department Chair stated that many students scored at the top of the first tier of students (Lai, 2008). Students can be characterized as having already reached the high-intermediate to advanced level upon entering the department.

First-year students are required to take 12 hours of language-training classes, including a two-semester oral training and listening course and a two-semester
reading and composition course. Sophomore students are also required to take 12 hours of language training courses, which include a two-semester oral training and reading course and a two-semester reading and composition course.

In order to improve the proficiency level of students, the department has considered a number of plans to revise its language training curriculum. These potential revisions looked into greater incorporation of CBI.

**New Content-Based Course Designs Proposed by the Department**

One proposed course design (referred to hereafter as Design 1) can be characterized as a content-driven sheltered model. In this proposal, the language training program would be subsumed into the content courses. Students, given their high test scores, would be assumed to have the ability to competently participate in classes conducted completely in English. Further gains in their English proficiency would result from daily exposure to English in their lectures and readings and the need to use English productively during class discussions and when completing written homework assignments. The authentic input and output could be supplemented by some direct focus on form if needed. This is a strong version of CBI in which the focus is on teaching content and students are expected to improve through exposure to language used in a natural setting. In this model, courses would be similar to English departments in native English speaking countries where students are assumed to have adequate proficiency in English allowing them to focus directly on content mastery.

Another proposal for curriculum change would be more in line with a language-driven theme-based or sustained content-based instruction model (referred to hereafter as Design 2). In this model, students would enroll in writing and oral training classes that focused on one of the three fields offered by the department: literature, linguistics, or TESOL. These classes would still be designed to enhance the writing and speaking skills of students, but all topics for writing or discussion would revolve around the class’s area of fields.

As these proposals raised some controversy among faculty, another issue to consider was how the students would react to major changes in the curriculum of this nature. Curriculum changes that have occurred in Asia are normally top-down processes that are the result of administrative decisions. Students may be consulted in terms of the topics that they are interested in for English language-training courses, but otherwise, they have little say in the development of a language-training
What are Students’ Perceptions?

Since a potentially major curriculum change was being considered, this was thought to be an optimal time to survey students to gather objective data on their opinions concerning the overall current language training program. This data could not be attained from the normal end of course surveys. Not only would this research focus on opinions about the current program, it would also provide insight on the students’ beliefs about their own language-training needs and what their attitudes would be on moving from language training that had a stronger emphasis on skills development to a training program that was more strongly content-driven.

This could provide important information for the discussion on CBI since besides typical end-of-course evaluations and despite all the proclaimed and professed benefits of CBI, little research exists that examines student needs in a CBI setting. Valentine and Repath-Martos (1992) have undertaken research on student needs, with feedback revealing that “skills-based ESL courses in content areas of high general interest, in which instructors emphasize the relevance of materials and tasks, can do much to enhance student motivation and academic achievement” (p. 25).

The paper hopes to add to the literature on student attitudes toward CBI by focusing on their attitudes toward course designs that fall on either end of Met’s continuum (Figure 1), a proposed theme-based course design and a proposed sheltered course design. Based on this background, the researchers focused on the following research questions for the study:

1. What are the English majors’ attitudes and opinions toward a more content-driven curriculum versus the design of a more language-driven curriculum?
2. Why do they have these attitudes toward the two proposed curriculum designs?

Methodology

Informants

The English department required language-training classes for freshmen and sophomores. Students who were sophomores or above were targeted as the informants since they had completed or were close to completing both years of the courses. 96 English majors (or approximately 35% of the target population) participated in this curriculum.
study.

Instrument, Data Collection, and Analysis

The questions on the survey were designed in consultation with four experts and then piloted twice to establish validity and reliability. The final questionnaire was distributed to students taking two sections of a required literature class during a class break. 96 completed questionnaires were returned. Key survey questions analyzed for this paper were:

1. Generally, do you feel the need to increase or decrease the frequency of using English in class?
2. Do you agree that the overall language training courses have equipped you well with the language skills you need for your future career or advanced study?
3. Do you feel that more Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing classes should be added or cut?
4. Has your proficiency been upgraded by taking language training classes?
5. Should these language training classes be made more challenging?
6. What score did you get in this language training class?
7. What is your future career plan?
8. If the department combines the skills classes with content classes and does not have separate skills classes, would you agree?
9. Different from the previous question, if the skills classes are kept and taught with topics of literature, linguistics, or TESOL, would you agree?

Questions 1 to 6 were to examine the informants’ attitudes toward the current language training programs. Question 7 was used to understand the influence that their future plans would have on their attitudes toward the curriculum revision. Question 8 asked for the informants’ attitudes toward the first course design, while question 9 queried their opinion toward the second proposal. In addition to these closed-ended questions, which used Likert scales to quantify student attitudes, the informants were also asked to provide any additional insights or opinions that they had on the two proposed course designs in questions 8 and 9. The closed-ended questions were analyzed by using SPSS. The comments from the open-ended question were coded using a system devised by the researchers.
Results of the Study
First, the students’ attitudes toward the current language training program were examined. Second, their attitudes toward the proposals about course designs were investigated. Variation in the students’ career intentions immediately after graduation was taken into consideration as well.

Students’ Attitudes toward the Current Program
In order to better evaluate the attitudes of students toward the proposals for new curricula with a stronger content-driven focus, it was deemed necessary to first determine the students’ attitudes toward the present language training program. In general, the students in the department were satisfied with the current language training programs, including all four language skills classes, although a significant minority of approximately one third (34.4%) of the students was dissatisfied with the classes. The dissatisfaction was mostly centered in a desire to enhance the difficulty levels of these classes, so that the classes could be more challenging. They also demanded more frequent English use in all classes; almost all students wanted to increase the number of hours of language-skills classes.

Students’ Attitudes toward the New Course Designs
When the students were asked if they would like to eliminate all present language-training classes, they showed a strong tendency (1.26 on a 5-point Likert scale) to disagree with the idea. However, when surveyed about their attitudes toward the two proposed course designs, they seem to be more positive about the alternative idea of keeping language-skills courses but integrating content topics of literature, linguistics, or TESOL into them (Design 2: theme-based model) than to the idea of combining the skills and content classes and no longer having separate skills class (Design 1: sheltered model). Table 1 shows that the proposal for a theme-based model that fell on the language-driven end of the CBI continuum was favored.
Table 1 Students’ Attitudes towards Proposed Designs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer key</th>
<th>Design 1: Combine the skills and content classes (do not have separate skills classes)</th>
<th>Design 2: Keep the skills classes and teach with literature, linguistics, or TESOL topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Frequency)</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe not</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean*</td>
<td>2.4/5.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*5-point Likert scale

When asked about adopting Design 1 (sheltered/content-driven) in each language class separately, students showed much stronger disagreement than when queried about this concept in general. Table 2 shows that more than 80% of the students were against the proposal in spite of what language-skills class was being considered.

Table 2 Students’ Attitudes toward Design 1 (Content-Driven Sheltered Model)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer key</th>
<th>First-year Oral Training</th>
<th>First-year Writing</th>
<th>Second-year Oral Training</th>
<th>Second-year Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(frequency)%</td>
<td>(frequency)%</td>
<td>(frequency)%</td>
<td>(frequency)%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>(20) 21.5</td>
<td>(24) 25.8</td>
<td>(20) 21.7</td>
<td>(21) 22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>(21) 22.6</td>
<td>(21) 22.6</td>
<td>(18) 19.6</td>
<td>(23) 24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modestly disagree</td>
<td>(39) 41.9</td>
<td>(3) 33.3</td>
<td>(38) 41.3</td>
<td>(34) 36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modestly agree</td>
<td>(9) 9.7</td>
<td>(9) 9.7</td>
<td>(9) 9.8</td>
<td>(11) 11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>(1) 1.1</td>
<td>(7) 7.5</td>
<td>(4) 4.3</td>
<td>(2) 2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>(3) 3.2</td>
<td>(1) 1.1</td>
<td>(3) 3.3</td>
<td>(2) 2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>(93) 100.0</td>
<td>(93) 100.0</td>
<td>(93) 100.0</td>
<td>(93) 100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean**</td>
<td>2.6/6.0</td>
<td>2.5/6.0</td>
<td>2.7/6.0</td>
<td>2.5/6.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6-point Likert scale

As for Design 2 (theme-based/language-driven), the students showed no strong consensus when asked about each class separately. Table 3 displays the informants’ strongest disagreement on the application of Design 2 into the second-year writing class. However, a calculation of the means for each question demonstrates no clear opinion for the first-year classes, but a slight agreement for turning second-year writing into a topic-based class. This result may show that EFL learners believe they need more time to develop writing abilities, compared to other skills.
Table 3 Students’ Attitudes toward Design 2 (Language Driven Theme-Based Model)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer key</th>
<th>First-year Oral Training</th>
<th>First-year Writing</th>
<th>Second-year Oral Training</th>
<th>Second-year Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(frequency)%</td>
<td>(frequency)%</td>
<td>(frequency)%</td>
<td>(frequency)%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>24.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modestly disagree</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modestly agree</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean**</td>
<td>3.5/6.0</td>
<td>3.4/6.0</td>
<td>3.3/6.0</td>
<td>3.7/6.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**6-point Likert scale

Attitudes of Students with Different Future Plans

In order to determine the effect of students’ future plans on their responses to the curriculum change proposals, Table 4 provides some additional information about the future career aspirations of the students. Overall, almost 59% of the students indicated that they intend to go on to graduate school, although not necessarily in a field related to their undergraduate major.

Table 4 Survey of Students’ Future Career Intentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year at school</th>
<th>Future plans</th>
<th>(Frequency)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced Study</td>
<td>Employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomores %</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors %</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors %</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total %</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows that the students who intend to go to graduate school were consistent with overall survey results in that they (62.5%) were against merging content and language-training courses (Design 1), although there is a sizable minority that finds this idea acceptable (29.1%). On the other hand, they showed a strong tendency (62.5%) to agree with the idea of the thematic content-based skills classes (Design 2). In terms of students who intend to seek jobs upon graduation, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (82.3%) disliked the idea of content-driven integration (Design 1), with none of them believing the idea of content-driven integration was completely acceptable. However, half of them (50%) could accept the idea of specialized language-driven content-based skills classes (Design 2).
Table 5 Attitudes toward Course Designs from Students Who Want to Pursue Graduate Study and Who Want to Enter the Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer key</th>
<th>Plan for advanced study (frequency)%</th>
<th>Plan for Employment (frequency)%</th>
<th>Plan for advanced study (frequency)%</th>
<th>Plan for Employment (frequency)%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>( 10) 20.8 ( 8) 23.5 ( 1) 2.1 ( 2) 5.9</td>
<td>( 10) 20.8 ( 8) 23.5 ( 1) 2.1 ( 2) 5.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe not</td>
<td>( 20) 41.7 (20) 58.8 ( 6) 12.5 ( 8) 23.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No comments</td>
<td>( 4) 8.3 ( 3) 8.8 (11) 22.9 ( 7) 20.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe yes</td>
<td>( 10) 20.8 ( 3) 8.8 (25) 52.1 (16) 47.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>( 4) 8.3 ( 0) 0.0 ( 5) 10.4 ( 1) 2.9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>( 48) 100.0 ( 34) 100.0 (48) 100.0 ( 34) 100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings and Discussion

Based on the data above, the researchers answered the research questions by presenting two major claims: first, students disliked the idea of adopting language-skills training classes based on a sheltered model that is strongly content-driven; second, the respondents actually felt that the number of language-skills training courses was insufficient and desired an increase in their number.

The Content-Driven Design

Regarding the English majors’ attitude toward the two proposed designs, the researchers observed that the students disliked the content-driven design (Design 1), which eliminates language-skills courses and incorporates language-skills training into literature, linguistics, and TESOL content courses (Table 5). Over 70 percent of the students preferred language-skills courses that are not integrated in such a manner. In contrast, over 55 percent of the students were at least somewhat agreeable to Design 2 (more language-driven), which maintains separate language-skills courses while covering specialized topics or themes in literature, linguistics, and TESOL (Table 5).

There are several possible explanations for these English majors’ dislike of the content-driven design. First, the correlation analysis on the relationship between students’ future career intentions and their attitudes toward the two course designs substantiates that fact that the students disapprove of the content-driven design because they think that they need more training on language skills.

Of the 41 percent who planned to seek employment, an overwhelming majority of respondents (82%) disliked the idea of content-driven design (Design 1). This
finding shows a practical concern. It could be deduced that employment bound students believe that language skills will provide them with an edge in the tight job market and do not want the courses to be confined to limited theme-based topics of literature, linguistics, and TESOL.

In contrast, half of the employment bound students (50%) perceived the notion of language-driven courses (Design 2) as acceptable. Nevertheless, fewer employment-seeking students (50%) than graduate-school bound students (62%) accept having specialized topics in their language-skills training courses (Design 2). On the other hand, of those who intended to pursue graduate school, 62 percent were against Design 1 while the same percentage was in favor of Design 2 (Table 5). These findings indicate that graduate-school bound students felt they needed more academic knowledge. Therefore, they preferred specialized topics in their language-skills training courses.

Second, the research findings indicate that students are generally satisfied with the current curriculum system, which is very language-driven. They responded positively about the usefulness of the current language-training courses in equipping them well for their future plans and enhancing their language skills. They were also positive about the importance of language-training courses. Hence, students may have the perception that combining language-training courses with content course results in less language training. Thus their perception of CBI was negative because they thought it would reduce their language training.

Finally, students in this study may not understand what CBI is. This idea of CBI is mostly used for ESL, but not for EFL. It is designed mostly for the purposes of ESL learners, but is not a well-known concept for EFL learners who may be uncertain about the proposal.

**More Language-Skills Training**

Next, the researchers contend that the respondents demanded more language-skills training courses because they felt a need for more explicit instruction on skills and more opportunities to practice those skills. A great majority of the respondents opposed Design 1 (content-driven, with language-skills courses eliminated) and the elimination of language-skills courses regardless of the course design. Over 70% of the respondents found the current language-skills courses insufficient in number and were eager for more classes to develop their language skills (informed by their
comments). Also, more respondents (56%) appeared agreeable to Design 2 (language-driven), in which maintaining (though not increasing) separate language-skills courses is probably a factor that convinced them that such a course design might still be helpful. Furthermore, the one-third who responded negatively indicated a need for a significant increase of language-skills courses. Although dissatisfied with their personal experiences in their courses, these informants still wanted more language-skills training in general.

Such an argument is grounded on two observable facts. First, in a country where English is spoken as a foreign language, students generally do not receive great amounts of natural English linguistic input in their daily lives. In other words, the amount of natural linguistic input is not sufficient to facilitate the learning of English (Krashen, 1985), and it may take longer for an EFL learner than an ESL learner to master the same skill or acquire the same competence level. This contextual difference easily distinguishes them from ESL students who have constant access to the target language. Therefore, when they cannot obtain the natural immersion required for language learning, they see the institutionalized curriculum as a major source of language input.

Second, students are still heavily dependent upon skills-based instruction (SBI). When Taiwanese EFL learners are at their beginning level (e.g., elementary or high school) of learning English, most instructors seem to prefer SBI since they can address language skills explicitly and intensively. SBI does not require the teacher and the students to have a specific in-depth knowledge base of any content area, and the “content” in the language learning activities used in those courses is usually bits and pieces of information—mostly non-contextualized—that help learners comprehend discrete language skills. Content knowledge is rarely tested in those skills-based courses. Such reliance on specific skills instruction can also explain why the language-driven course design seems acceptable to the majority of the respondents while the strong CBI model without separate skills instruction is rejected by more than 70 percent of the respondents.

Although the students’ aspiration for the increase of language-skills courses is perceivable, it should be noted that relevant and well-arranged content in effect may help the learning of language skills (Stoller, 2004; Wesche & Skehan, 2002). A course design of relatively more content-driven instruction may further serve as a transitional course to help those EFL students move from the skills-based courses in high school
to academic skills and content courses in higher education that are taught in English (Bragger and Rice, 1999, as cited in Stoller, 2004, p. 266). Nonetheless, control over the quality and quantity of input in a content-based course is nothing less than a challenging task for EFL instructors.

**Conclusion**

This study explored the attitudes of students toward two course-design proposals to modify the language training curriculum for English majors at a top-tier university in Taiwan. The first proposal, strongly content-driven, would integrate language training into content classes, taking a sheltered approach to language training. The second proposal, although language-driven, moved from the status quo toward the content-driven end of the continuum; it took a thematic approach by proposing that the language training classes be built around topics related to the major content disciplines of the department: literature, linguistics, and TESOL.

The first major finding of the study was that the students had a strongly negative view of the proposal to adopt a stronger version of content-based instruction. The content-driven sheltered approach was rejected by the majority of the students, while the students’ opinions concerning the language-driven thematic approach were inconclusive.

The second finding was that the students desire more language-skills training courses. Over 70% of the respondents found the current language-skills courses insufficient in quantity and were eager for more credit hours spent on developing their language skills. In addition, the students who were most dissatisfied with the language-training program and considered it least effective for equipping them for their future careers actually wanted to have *more* language-skills courses instead of *fewer* language-skills ones.

**Limitations**

There are a number of limitations to this study. First, there were inconsistencies in the survey technique. One group of students filled in the questionnaire during their break between classes, but when the other group was surveyed, the instructor stopped the class and instructed the students to complete the survey. The comment section of the second group was richer, implying that the students filled out the survey more conscientiously. However, when the statistical analysis of the questionnaire was done,
these two groups were not differentiated.

Also, as alluded to in the previous limitation, the informants could have been probed more deeply for their opinions. The questionnaire survey technique used for this study can provide insight into the general opinion trends that exist within the department that was studied; however, the specific reasons underlying these trends are unavailable. There were a number of open-ended questions on the questionnaire that elicited comments, but it was beyond the scope of the present paper to delve into a qualitative analysis of the student comments. Those comments given by the respondents, nevertheless, would provide a wealth of material that could be valuable for further research on this subject.

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Morphological and Syntactic Abilities in Taiwanese EFL Preschoolers’ Oral Narratives

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National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan

Bio Data
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Abstract
Children’s morphological and syntactic abilities have often been used to understand their language development. One common method of assessing children’s morphological and syntactic level is to analyze their oral narratives. The present study, therefore, examined the morphological and syntactical abilities of preschool children learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Taiwan. Their Mandarin and English oral narratives were elicited by a wordless picture book, *Frog, where are you?* (Mayer, 1969). The children’s language productivity was also measured to determine whether there was a significant language effect on the children’s language productivity. Results showed a significant language effect on language productivity measures. Analyses of morphological errors suggested that the children had more morphological error patterns in English, while relatively fewer children made morphological errors in Mandarin. For measures of syntactic structures, the children used more diverse syntactic structures in Mandarin than in English. The findings from this work provide EFL practitioners with useful insights into the morphological and syntactic abilities evidenced in EFL preschoolers’ oral narratives in both languages.

Key Words: morphological abilities, syntactic abilities, children’s oral narratives, EFL, Taiwan

Introduction
Morphological and syntactic processing are the two basic processes involved in
acquiring language skills for young children. Children’s morphological and syntactic knowledge has been used to understand the level of language development (e.g., Baayen, Feldman, & Schreuder, 2006; Reilly, Losh, Bellugi, & Wulfeck, 2004). One challenge for achieving this understanding is that a large number of studies have measured children’s morphological and syntactic knowledge on standardized language assessments (e.g., Barnett, Yarosz, Thomas, Jung, & Blanco, 2007; Yamashita, 2008), but these measures may have limited validity and may fail to reflect children’s actual abilities. Oral narratives, on the other hand, provide an excellent quasi-naturalistic measure of children’s spontaneous languages, and reveal distinctive structural and linguistic knowledge (Reilly et al., 2004). This study, therefore, examined the morphological and syntactical abilities in a group of preschool children learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Taiwan. Examination of children’s oral narratives in both their native and second language provides valuable information about these language learners’ advancing language skills.

Most studies which analyzed children’s oral narratives to gauge children’s morphological and syntactic development worked primarily with typically-developing children (e.g., Fiestas & Pena, 2004; Gutierrez-Clellen, 2002; Gutierrez-Clellen & Hofstetter, 1994; Hell, Verhoeven, Tak, & Oosterhout, 2005; Miller et al., 2006; Pearson, 2002), atypically-developing children, such as children with specific language impairment (SLI), early focal brain injury, Williams syndrome, or autism (e.g., Reilly et al., 2004; Tsou & Cheung, 2007; Wulfeck, Bates, Krupa-Kwiatkowski, & Saltzman, 2004), or children with low school achievement (e.g., Chi, 2001; 2003; Gutierrez-Clellen, 1998). Few studies examined EFL children’s morphological and syntactic abilities observed in their oral narratives in both English and native languages.

**Literature Review**

Several researchers suggested that children’s oral narrative production can reveal their academic readiness (e.g., Gutierrez-Clellen, 2002). Narrative development at preschool level can predict children’s later literacy development (Griffin, Hemphill, Camp, & Wolf, 2004; Snow & Dickinson, 1990; Torrance & Olson, 1984). In addition, oral narratives provide a rich context for researchers to examine children’s syntactic structures that serve narrative functions (Reilly et al., 1998).
Different measures have been developed to assess children’s language productivity. For example, the mean length of utterance (MLU) has been widely used to evaluate syntactic complexity (Brown, 1973; Klee, 1992; Miller & Chapman, 1981). The number of total words (NTW) is used to represent overall language facility (Watkins, Kelly, Harbers and Hollis, 1995). The number of different words (NDW) is used to tap into children’s vocabulary diversity (Miller et al. 2006). The present study used the same two productivity measures (i.e., NTW and NDW) but further adapted Loban’s (1976) communication units (C-unit) to calculate the number of modified communication units (NMC) and the mean length of modified C-unit in words (MLMCW). Such an adaptation was made to achieve an equivalent comparison of EFL children’s language productivity in Mandarin and English. Craig et al. (1998) suggested that when working with older children from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, the average number of C-units is useful as a quantitative index of language ability. Miller et al. (2006) modified Loban’s C-unit rules for segmenting utterances in their cross-language study with Spanish-speaking ESL children. Following the same line of reasoning and considering the inherent linguistic differences between Mandarin and English, the present study adapted Loban’s original C-unit rules. There are two major differences. First, when two clauses are connected by a linking element (Li & Thompson, 1981), they are considered to have two modified C-units, instead of one. For example, there are two C-units in the utterance, “The boy slept and the frog went away”. Second, given that pronouns are often omitted in Mandarin (i.e., pro-drop) when they are semantically inferable from the linguistic context, a linked clause with a long modifier and a co-referential subject deleted is also regarded as having two C-units. For example, the utterance, “A boy wakes up and sees no frog”, is treated as having two modified C-units; however, the utterance, “A boy wakes up and cries”, is considered consisting of one modified C-unit. The same modified C-unit rules were applied across both English and Mandarin in the present study. Therefore, instead of using number of C-units and MLU, the present study calculated NMC and MLMCW to provide equivalent measures of story and utterance length in both Mandarin and English.

In addition to measuring children’s language productivity, the present study also examined children’s morphological error patterns and syntactic structures evidenced in their oral narratives in the two languages to help understand the processes and the outcomes of acquiring more than one language (Miller et al., 2006). Morphological
knowledge is defined as the knowledge “of the internal structure of words and, of the rules by which words are formed” (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2003, p. 76). Syntactic knowledge refers to the knowledge “of sentences and their structures” (Fromkin et al., 2003, p. 118). Morphological and syntactic knowledge (which together comprise grammar) has been regarded as one of the reliable measures of second language proficiency (Komarova, Niyogi, & Nowak, 2001; Marinova-Todd, 2003). A number of studies have analyzed children’s oral narratives and examined their morphological errors and syntactic structures to reveal their language abilities (Chen, 2007; Chi, 2001; 2003; Fiestas & Pena, 2004; Reilly et al., 2004; Tsou & Cheung, 2007). Morphological errors involve all errors of commission or omission (Reilly et al., 2004). For example, one child made a morphological error in the sentence: “The dog looks in the jar.” This is a commission of preposition error. The preposition “in” should be “into” because the dog looks into the jar to check if the frog is there. Syntactic structures refer to various syntactic structures used. For instance, in the sentence with two linked clauses: “The boy is angry because the dog falls down”, the main clause is “The boy is angry” and the dependent clause is “because the dog falls down.”

Fiestas and Pena (2004) used a wordless picture book, Frog, where are you? (Mayer, 1969), to elicit Spanish-speaking ESL children’s story retelling in both Spanish and English. The children’s retellings were then used to examine their morphological knowledge. Specifically, the participants’ use of pronouns, verb auxiliaries, determiners, verb tenses, number marking and prepositions, and production of noun and verb phrases were analyzed. The results showed that the ESL children demonstrated comparable proportions of grammatical utterances in both languages with a slightly higher percentage of grammatically-correct utterances in their first language. Therefore, it could be inferred that their rate of morphological acquisition in each language was slightly different. Gutierrez-Clellen (1998) compared the syntactic skills of two groups of Spanish-speaking monolingual children from kindergarten to fifth grade, one group with low school achievement and another exhibiting average school achievement. She also used Mayer’s picture book and a film to elicit the children’s story retellings in Spanish. Syntactic structures such as relative clauses, noun clauses, and adverbial clauses were analyzed. The finding indicated that the children with low school achievement exhibited limited use of syntactic structures and found greater difficulty in formulating their narratives than
their peers. Thus, it can be concluded that children’s morphological and syntactical abilities evidenced in their oral narratives are closely related to their general language competence and may predict later school achievement.

Based on the reviewed studies, three research questions were proposed as follows:

1. Do Mandarin-speaking EFL children have differential language productivity in their Mandarin and English narratives?
2. What types of Mandarin and English morphological errors do Mandarin-speaking EFL children make in their oral narratives?
3. What types of Mandarin and English syntactic structures do Mandarin-speaking EFL children use in their oral narratives?

Method

Participants
A total of 22 Taiwanese EFL children (10 boys and 12 girls) with a mean age of 5 years and 10 months old (rang = 4;10-6;10) participated in this study. The children were recruited from two different programs in the same kindergarten in Tainan, a southern city in Taiwan. One of the two programs was an English immersion program (19 students) and the other was a bilingual program (3 students) in which the children studied in the English immersion course in the morning and learned in Mandarin in the afternoon. They were from similar socioeconomic backgrounds.

Procedures
All narratives were elicited from the children using the 24-page wordless picture book, *Frog, where are you?*. This storybook is about a boy and his dog, and their search for their missing pet frog. The data collection period lasted approximately 5 weeks. Prior to data collection, school and parental permission were first obtained, and parents also completed a brief demographic questionnaire about their children. In order to ensure that the data collection procedures were feasible in this kindergarten, a pilot study was conducted beforehand. Next, a 2-week classroom observation was conducted by the first author to familiarize herself with the children. The classroom observation was followed by two major data collection sessions: a Mandarin narrative task and an English narrative task. All sessions were administered during the children’s break time.
For both Mandarin and English narrative tasks, each child was invited to tell a story starting with browsing through the wordless picture book in the presence of the researcher. The researcher then encouraged the child to narrate a story. The child used the pictures in the book as an aid in the narration. Each child spent around 5 to 15 minutes telling the story. To obtain best narrative samples, the children were asked to tell a Mandarin story first. By telling the same story in Mandarin, their stronger language first, students were given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with their following English narration (Miller et al., 2006). In addition, there was a more than 4-day time interval between the two narrative sessions to avoid the practice effect and create independent performance for each language. At the end of each task, the children were rewarded with praises and stickers.

Transcriptions and Coding Procedures
All narratives were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The first author transcribed the English oral narratives into computer text files based on the conventions from the Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts (SALT, Miller et al., 2006). The Mandarin oral narratives were manually transcribed by the same researcher into Microsoft Word files. Both Mandarin and English narrative samples were segmented into the modified C-units. Once transcribed, the results of language productivity measures in each language were first calculated. English productivity measures were generated from SALT. Since the current version of SALT only allows language sample transcriptions and coding in alphabetical languages such as English and Spanish, and not in logographic languages such as Mandarin, Mandarin measures of the present study were calculated manually. Following Au’s (2002) procedures for oral language analysis, mazes (e.g., false starts, repetitions, reformulations, and unfinished attempts), comments, habitual starter, and place-fillers irreverent to the narratives were excluded from the word counts for the calculation of language productivity. Next, linguistics structures, such as morphological error patterns and types of syntactic structure in both languages were coded.

Transcription and Coding Reliability
Approximately 20% of the narrative samples in each language were independently transcribed by another trained first-year graduate student in the Graduate Institute of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). A point-to-point
comparison at the word level was high, 87% in Mandarin stories and 88% in English stories. A trained second-year graduate student in TESOL also independently coded 20% of the transcripts in each language. Coding reliabilities were established at 89% agreement in Mandarin stories and 88% in English stories. The remaining percentages of disagreements in transcription and coding were resolved between the researchers for final 100% agreement.

**Measures of Language Productivity**

Language productivity measures included the number of modified communication units (NMC), the mean length of modified communication unit in words (MLMCW), the number of total words (NTW), and the number of different words (NDW). The number of the children’s utterances defined by modified C-units was calculated. The number of total words was divided by the total number of modified C-units to calculate MLMCW. The NTW provided a measure of story length. Each word in the story was calculated. The NDW measured vocabulary diversity. The NDW was calculated by counting the number of different lexemes, specifically their word roots without inflection.

**Measures of Linguistic Structures**

Morphological errors and syntactic structures in both languages were identified, tallied, and categorized. For morphological errors, all errors of commission or omission were counted. Morphological errors were categorized and limited to only certain types in Mandarin and English narratives respectively. The number of students making each type of morphological errors was calculated. For measures of syntactic structures, the present study limited analyses to only certain types of syntactic structures in Mandarin and English stories respectively. The number of students using each type of syntactic structures was counted. Unlike the morphological errors, using various syntactic structures is a rhetorical choice the narrator makes when telling a story. Hence, the children’s uses of various syntactic types rather than their syntactic errors were examined. Categories of morphological errors and syntactic structures were listed below.

Mandarin morphological errors consist of the erroneous usage of the following (Tse et al., 1991):

1. A deictic expression refers to the interpretation of a unit depending on the
context of the utterance. A deictic expression could be (1) demonstrative such as *zhe4ge0* ‘this’, (2) temporal, *jin1tian1* ‘today’, or (3) spatial, *na4li3* ‘there’.

2. Particles serve various functions, such as *ma1* used to form a typical question sentence.

3. Aspect markers refer to how the situation itself is being viewed with respect to its own internal makeup, such as *le0* as the perfective marker.

4. Adverbs express speaker’s attitude, manner of action, frequency or qualification.

5. Classifiers occur with numbers, demonstratives or certain quantifiers, such as *ge0*.

6. Modal auxiliaries are not full-fledged verbs such as *hui4* ‘know how’ or ‘will.’

7. Personal pronouns are used to substitute the person or people mentioned previously.

8. Coverbs introduce a noun or noun phrase, such as *gen1* ‘with’, *cong2* ‘from’, *zai4* ‘at’, *bei4*, the marker of the passive construction, and *ba3* the marker of the ba construction (Li & Thompson, 1981). The ba-construction, similar to the passive construction, is associated with the SOV structure.

9. Connectors are units used to connect two utterances, such as *ke3shi4* ‘but.’

English morphological errors include the erroneous usage of (1) pronouns, (2) verb auxiliaries, (3) determiners, (4) noun plurals, (5) verb tenses, (6) number marking, and (7) prepositions (Reilly et al., 2004).

Mandarin syntactic structures analyzed contain the following types (Li and Thompson, 1981; Tse et al., 1991; Tsou and Cheung, 2007):

1. The serial verb construction is a sentence consisting of two or more verb phrases or clauses juxtaposed without any marker signifying what the relationship is between them.

2. Sentence linking is a structure including at least two linked clauses containing linking elements. The meaning completion of each clause depends on the other clause.

3. The ba-construction has the basic sentence structure that the direct object is placed immediately after *ba3* and before the verb.

4. The bei-construction refers to the passive voice. It has the sentences
structure such as this, NP Bei (NP) verb, where NP represents noun phrase.

English syntactic structures were categorized into the following four types adopted from Reilly et al.’s (2004) and Gutierrez-Clellen’s (1998) studies. They are (1) noun clauses, (2) clauses connected by conjunctives which are connective words, especially a conjunction or conjunctive adverb (e.g., a temporal adverb), (3) relative clauses, and (4) passive sentences.

**Results and Discussion**

**Language Productivity in Mandarin and English Narratives**

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the language productivity measures. The effect of language on productivity measures was explored using paired sample *t*-tests with scores (NMC, MLMCW, NTW, and NDW) as dependent variables and languages as the independent variable (Mandarin and English). Pearson-Product Moment correlational analysis was further conducted to investigate whether NMC, MLMCW, NTW, and NDW in their Mandarin stories correlated with the same measures in their English stories. Correlations between Mandarin and English productivity measures are reported in Table 2. Results demonstrated that NMC in their Mandarin stories was slightly higher than that in their English stories. However, the difference was not significant (*t* (21) = 1.34, *p* = 0.20). In addition, the children produced a slightly larger NTW in their Mandarin rather than English stories but the difference was also not significant (*t* (21) = 0.07, *p* = 0.94). This finding is consistent with that of Fiestas and Pena (2004). In their study, the children primarily spoke their native language at home and learned English at school. They indicated that the children’s expectations about story length in a specific storytelling task in each language were interrelated. In the present study, the children primarily spoke Mandarin at home and studied English at school. As observed in their narratives, the story lengths in terms of NTW in both languages were comparable.

On the other hand, for the measure of MLMCW, the children produced shorter utterances in Mandarin than in English and the difference was significant (*t* (21) = -4.25, *p* = 0.00). A moderate, but still positive and significant, correlation exists between the children’s MLMCW in Mandarin and English stories (*r* = 0.48, *p* < 0.05). A significant difference of *t*(21) = 5.93, *p* < 0.00 was also observed for NDW. In other words, the children used more different words in their Mandarin stories than in their English stories. Although the children might have been expected to have better
language productivity in Mandarin than in English, here, the children tended to produce significantly longer MLMCW in English than in Mandarin. One possible explanation is that English has a strict Subject-Verb-Object word order and in nearly all cases, pronominal subjects or objects cannot be omitted. In contrast, Mandarin is a pro-drop language (Gelman & Tardif, 1998); that is, pronouns can be omitted when they are pragmatically inferable from the context. This is further complicated by the fact that pronouns are expressed more frequently in English than in Mandarin (Gelman & Tardif, 1998). Thus, the children in the present study tended to express pronouns more frequently in their English stories, but drop pronouns in their Mandarin stories. This may have increased the children’s MLMCW in English.

Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranges for Mandarin and English Productivity Measures (N = 22)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>English</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMC</td>
<td>38.73</td>
<td>10.13</td>
<td>26-69</td>
<td>35.64</td>
<td>8.94</td>
<td>20-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLMCW</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>3.94-5.6</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>4.27-6.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTW</td>
<td>185.27</td>
<td>50.92</td>
<td>126-315</td>
<td>184.32</td>
<td>54.13</td>
<td>105-281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDW</td>
<td>92.14</td>
<td>22.10</td>
<td>64-141</td>
<td>61.64</td>
<td>13.29</td>
<td>42-95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p < .05; NMC= number of modified C-units, MLMCW = mean length of modified communication unit in words, NTW = number of total words, NDW = number of different words.

Table 2 Correlations between Mandarin and English Productivity Measures (N = 22)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Mandarin</th>
<th>NMC</th>
<th>MLMCW</th>
<th>NTW</th>
<th>NDW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMC</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLMCW</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.48*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDW</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * p < .05, NMC= number of modified C-units, MLMCW = mean length of modified communication unit in words, NTW = number of total words, NDW = number of different words.

Further, the children’s vocabulary diversity in their Mandarin stories was significantly higher than that found in their English counterparts. There are two possible reasons. First, the children’s tendency to use significantly fewer different words in their English stories may be related to the fact that Mandarin was their dominant language. Secondly, when the data were being collected, all of the children were taking a 2-week intensive Mandarin course in which they learned how to pronounce and recognize Mandarin vocabulary. Intensive instruction can improve
students’ academic achievement to a large extent (Hardman & Dawson, 2008). The children’s intensive Mandarin course may have enlarged their Mandarin vocabulary in a short period of time when the story samples were being collected.

**Morphological Errors in Mandarin and English Narratives**

The present study limited analyses to nine predetermined types of morphological errors in Mandarin stories and seven types in English stories. The analyses revealed that Mandarin morphological errors identified included erroneous uses of adverbs ($n = 2, 9\%$ of total students), personal pronouns ($n = 1, 5\%$), coverbs ($n = 3, 14\%$), and connectors ($n = 1, 5\%$). The number of children making each type of error was small. Given that Mandarin is the children’s native and dominant language, the children were expected to make few Mandarin morphological errors. For English morphological errors, the most common errors which almost all children made were number marking ($n = 22, 100\%$), prepositions ($n = 21, 95\%$), and determiners ($n = 21, 95\%$). More than half of the children ($n = 13, 59\%$) produced errors in noun plurals as well as verb tenses, and 12 out of the 22 children (55\%) had errors in verb auxiliaries, while 7 out of the 22 children (31\%) used inaccurate pronouns. These results were partially consistent with the findings of Reilly et al. (2004), which also showed that monolingual children made English morphological errors in the aforementioned seven types. These types of morphological error seemed to be typical in language development for both monolingual English-speaking and EFL children.

**Syntactic Structures in Mandarin and English Narratives**

The analyses of the children’s Mandarin syntactic skills demonstrated that all of the children (100\%) told stories using the serial verb construction and sentence linking, 15 of them (68\%) used the ba-construction, and 7 (32\%) made sentences with the bei-construction.

All the 22 children used the serial verb construction and sentence linking in their stories. This finding was partially consistent with that of Au’s (2002) study, which reported that all 100 Cantonese-speaking children in her study used the serial verb construction in their story-retelling task. The possible explanation for the children’s frequent use of the serial verb construction and sentence linking is that they can use them to make sentences longer. In comparison to the serial verb construction and sentence linking, a smaller number of the children used the ba- and bei-
constructions. One possible reason for this may be that the ba- and bei-constructions have a unique structure and function (Tse et al., 1991); therefore, these two sentence structures do not frequently appear in children’s naturalistic language samples.

For the analyses of the children’s English syntactic skills, the results demonstrated that all the 22 children (100%) connected sentences with conjunctives, 12 (55%) embedded noun clauses into sentences, 4 (18%) used the passive construction to describe the action of story characters, but none (0%) produced relative clauses. All the children produced stories with conjunctives, which help to enhance semantic complexity of the stories. Twelve of the 22 children embedded noun clauses into sentences. One possible explanation for this finding was that the children had not yet mastered the structure of noun clauses. By the age of 3, most English-speaking monolingual children begin to produce embedded clauses (Fromkin et al., 2003). Although the Taiwanese EFL children in the present study were older than 3 years old, they possibly lagged behind their English-speaking monolingual peers in acquiring noun clauses.

Four of the children incorporated the passive constructions into their English stories. Yet, the children’s abilities to use the passive construction at this stage were doubted for two reasons. First, all of them produced the passive structure as the auxiliary verb “be” together with the past participle “broken” (e.g., The glass is broken). However, “broken” can also function as an adjective in the predicate, like the auxiliary verb “be” together with an adjective (e.g., The bee’s house is beautiful.). Therefore, when a child uttered, “The jar is broken,” it was difficult to determine whether the word “broken” was used as a past participle or simply as an adjective. Secondly, there was a high possibility that the children had not yet mastered the passive construction at the mean age of 5;10. According to Beilin (1975, as cited in Elliot, 1981), it was not until the age of 7 years that children understood the relation between active and passive constructions. Thus, the children in the present study might still be in the process of acquiring the passive construction.

With respect to the children’s performance on relative clauses, none of the 22 children was observed to embed relative clauses in sentences. This result was partially consistent with that of Ingram (1989), who found that there was a lack of relative clauses in spontaneous speech of English-speaking children between 2 and 5 years old. In light of the phenomenon that ESL children often lag behind their English-speaking monolingual peers in acquiring complex English syntax, similarly, the Taiwanese
EFL children in this study may also lag behind their English-speaking monolingual peers in acquiring relative clauses.

**Conclusions**

The present study was designed to examine Taiwanese EFL children’s morphological and syntactic abilities observed in their Mandarin and English narratives. The findings showed that these preschool children produced more modified communication units, greater number of total words and different words in their Mandarin narratives than in English ones. Analyses of morphological errors indicated that the children had more variety of English morphological error patterns, while only a few children in the study produced morphological errors in Mandarin. For measures of syntactic structures, more diverse syntactic structures were found in the children’s Mandarin stories than in the English stories. These findings were consistent with the observation that Mandarin was these preschool children’s stronger and more proficient language despite the fact that they had studied English since young ages.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

Several limitations of this study are noteworthy. For one, the study limited analyses to only certain types of morphological errors and syntactic structures in Mandarin and English narratives respectively. Further research could address other types of morphological errors and syntactic structures shown in Taiwanese EFL children’s narratives in Mandarin and English. In addition, the small sample size and the inclusion of only one age group of the Taiwanese EFL children did not provide sufficient evidence to chart the process of acquiring morphological and syntactic knowledge. It would be of future interest to include a larger number of Mandarin-speaking EFL preschoolers of a wider age range. Finally, the present study used SALT to analyze the children’s English productivity measures. The analyses of Mandarin productivity measures, however, were carried out manually because SALT cannot analyze Mandarin language samples. Other studies (e.g., Au, 2002) used the CHAT format from the Children’s Data Exchange System (CHILDES, MacWhinney, 1994) to analyze children’s Mandarin language samples. It would be of particular importance to use other computerized language sample analysis tools to calculate children’s language productivity measures in their English as well as Mandarin narratives and to see whether the results of language productivity measures are
comparable.

Note
1. All examples for modified C-units were taken from the children’s narrative samples in the present study.

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A Study of Collocation Behaviors on Lexical Pragmatics

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Abstract
Lexical pragmatics explores the meaning conveyed by a word underdetermined by its semantics, and the process of bridging the encoded and communicated meaning of words. Due to complication of word interpretations and pragmatic felicities, lexical pragmatics is considerably sophisticated. In other words, it examines “the processes by which linguistically specified word meanings are modified in use” (Blutner, 1998, p.115; Wilson & Carston, 2007, p.1560). The interaction between lexicon and pragmatics is often overlooked by most L2 learners because they rely on dictionaries and thesauri to provide denotational meaning of a lexical item which lack ample collocational information. The purpose of the study is to describe how collocational behaviors of near synonyms can be recognized from contextual usage data in corpora to improve L2 lexical learning. It also emphasizes that pragmatic misuse of near synonyms in the L2 context calls for more attention and treatment. The present study used computational techniques to identify target words which typically co-occur with a lexical item under investigation. Further, it generally expanded with software that elicited usage data within a corpus and matched it with statistical information for the purpose of analysis. The findings suggested that it could be beneficial for L2 learners to observe the collocates of near synonyms so that recognition of pragmatic characteristics help improve their lexical usage.

Key Words: collocational behaviors, corpus analysis, lexical pragmatics, near-synonym
Introduction
To most native speakers, variability is inherent in their language production of native speakers and they can perform different language uses such as in lexical choice and speech acts. In general, they maintain the equilibrium of syntax, semantics and pragmatics. However, it is relatively difficult for L2 learners to make appropriate adaptations and to juggle with these sophisticated fields of language use. In particular when L2 learners do not develop pragmatic awareness, their pragmatic infelicities often cause misunderstanding. To attain appropriate communication, L2 learners need to develop the awareness of linguistic variability, flexibility and the interaction between lexicon and its pragmatic functions. The problems of appropriate lexical choice and near-synonym distinction are especially daunting for second language learners (Mackay, 1980, p.17). The majority of lexical misuses made by advanced language learners reflect learners’ confusion among similar lexical items in the second language. Even for native speakers, it is extremely difficult to discriminate the near-synonyms that dictionaries of synonyms are compiled to reveal and describe the nuances. For instance, *Merriam Webster’s New Dictionary of Synonyms* provides approximately 2500 entries of English synonymous words. *Choose the Right Word* (Hayakawa, 1994) contains approximately 900 clusters of more than 5000 near-synonyms of English. The language of explanations in dictionaries is somewhat arcane for second language learners such that it becomes limited in accessibility and practical usefulness in the L2 context.

Some recent studies on lexical pragmatics (Stubb, 2001, pp.153-154; Dam-Jensen & Zethsen, 2007, p.1608) have shown that acquiring the evaluative pragmatic meanings of building blocks and lexemes helped appropriate lexical usage. The interaction between lexicon and pragmatics here refers to the context-dependent lexical meaning which is constructed in an interpretive process by language users. In brief, lexical pragmatics is to examine “the processes by which linguistically specified word meanings are modified in use” (Blutner, 1998. p.115; Wilson & Carston, 2007, p.1560). The purpose of the study is to describe how pragmatic meanings in near synonyms can be derived from contextual usage data in corpora. It also emphasizes that pragmatic misuse of near synonyms calls for more attention and treatment. Typically, near synonyms operate in different contexts and...
are not collocationally interchangeable (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001, p.34). For example, while *announce* and *express* are considered as synonyms, the collocates of the two words cannot be mutually changed in the following contexts – “Mr. Smith *announced* his candidacy for governor.” and “Mr. Johnson *expressed* some concerns about the plan.” It is helpful to compare collocates of synonyms in context so that pragmatic characteristics can be more concise and comprehensible for L2 learning.

**Literature Review**

According to Levinson (1983, p. 226), it is of great significance to notice who said what and in what situation in dynamic language behaviors. This is echoed by Barron’s (2003, p.10) notion that “knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular languages’ resources” is a crucial part of pragmatic competence. L2 learners often face difficulties in understanding subtle and elusive nuances of appropriateness (Dewaele, 2008, p.248). They thus need both linguistic and pragmatic competence to perform grammatical utterances and sociocultural norms for appropriate expressions. In this respect, appropriateness becomes one of the primary concerns. In addition, recent research (Simon-Vandenbergen, 2008, p.1533) indicates that core lexical competence is characterized by appropriateness of word choices. As such, research of lexical pragmatics is of significance to provide a systematic and descriptive interpretation of pragmatic phenomena concerning the semantic underspecification of words. Blutner (2004) elaborates, suggesting that ‘lexical pragmatics is a particular account of the division of labor between lexical semantics and pragmatics. It connects the notion of semantic underspecification in lexicon with a theory of pragmatic strengthening (i.e. conversational implicature)’ (p.3). The mechanisms have been undergone in a bidirectional type of optimality theory that combines expressive and interpretive optimization (Blutner, 2004, p.21).

Lexical pragmatics can be drawn through a general mechanism of conceptual interpretation. It is grounded on two simple principles: (1) “An adequate representation of lexical items has to be given in a semantically underspecified format, and (2) their actual interpretation has to be derived by a pragmatic strengthening mechanism” (Blutner, 2004, p.17). Such a basic pragmatic mechanism allows a clear explication of notions such as conversational implicature. The concept of Gricean implicature can be used to account for the divergences between
meaning and natural language interpretation of lexical units. This also provides the rationale to analyze the words with conceptual and contextual settings and to go beyond the aspects of meaning investigated by a collocational analysis of lexemes in pragmatics.

Recent studies on collocation (Yeh, et al., 2007, pp.131-135; Chang, et al., 2008, pp. 283-289) has exploited concordance and collocation for advising L2 learners in lexical choice. The collocational information is interpreted through the proximity of a consistent series of collocates. Its main function is to convey speaker or writer’s attitude or evaluation (Louw, 2000, p.49). Many lexical items carrying pragmatic meanings are often negative, with a relatively small portion of them bearing affectively positive meanings (Channell, 2000, p.38). In this regard, Blutner (2004, p.25) shows how the bidirectional optimality theory accounts for the effects of negative strengthening. They construe the possible states of happiness. For instance, there are still gradual nuances between the two sentences, “I’m not happy.” and “I’m unhappy.” The latter indicates a stronger negative strengthening. As for pedagogical research, Martin (1984, p.131) discussed instructional approaches to synonym teaching and suggested the importance of providing common collocates to students.

Methodology
With concordancing and computational techniques, over decades empirical studies have attested that pragmatic phenomena can be revealed by analyzing collocates in corpora. Corpora have generally expanded with computational techniques and software to elicit usage data and to match them with statistical information for the purpose of analysis. Recent development in concordancing tools has advanced to web-based systems that provide online access to query and results. Research issues concerning lexical behavior, collocational pattern, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics can all be facilitated by the language data access capability and the statistical summarization functions of these state-of-the-art concordancing tools.

For pragmatic grounding, the present study used British National Corpus (BNC) (Burnard, 1995) and Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies, 2008) to explore the potential of lexical collocation information. The procedures included collocational patterning, listing, sorting, counting, etc.,
conducted to search and categorize information as well as displaying the relations between the target word and adjacent words in contexts. In this study collocates were grouped by POS categories and graded by association strength with target words. There were a number of statistical tests used to measure collocate association strength, for example, the MI (mutual information), z, t, log-likelihood scores. The statistical measure chosen to gauge association strength was the mutual information (MI) measure (Church & Hanks, 1990). The profile was compiled to describe three transitive verbs (cause, promote and commit) and was then analyzed to observe their collocational behaviors and pragmatic implications.

**Analysis and Discussion**

The focus of the data analysis is on corpus evidence for the existence of the inherent evaluative meaning and pragmatic evaluative meaning. Moreover, it attempted to incorporate the analysis done by some researchers (Sinclair, 1987; Louw, 1993; Partington, 1998; Tognini-Bonelli, 2001; Stubbs, 1995, 2001) to describe the phenomenon of lexical pragmatics. The researcher examined whether significant collocates in different preference helped reveal evaluative orientation inherent in the target words and verified the results with the evaluative meanings suggested in previous literature.

Stubbs (1996, pp.138-141) provides evidence, based on manual analysis on the *Cobuild Corpus*, of the strongly unfavorable prosody of the lemma, *cause*. The collocates are distinctly unpleasant, including accident, concern, damage, death, trouble. By contrast, the word, *provide*, shows a favorable prosody with collocating words of care, food, help, money, and shelter. For this study, three target words, *cause*, *promote* and *commit* all transitive verbs, were chosen, based on the degree of difficulty for L2 learners and their fitness in serving as a representative lexical semantics learning task. Instead of repeating the analysis on, *cause*, a similar activity verb, *promote*, was chosen to serve as a complementary comparison. A third word, *commit*, was analyzed to strengthen the evidence on evaluative examination. The definitions given by both Merriam-Webster Dictionary and Webster’s New Dictionary of Synonyms were adopted in contrast with collocational analysis in the following.

*Cause:* The definition of *cause* (as a transitive verb) given by the *Merriam-Webster*
*Dictionary* is: (1) to serve as a cause or occasion of *<cause an accident>*; (2) to compel by command, authority, or force *<caused him to resign>*. The denotational meaning of *cause* is lightly sketched and its evaluative orientation is obscure. To examine the collocation profile of *cause*, POS categories and graded association strength of collocates were prepared. However, the lists of subject and adjective collocates exhibited only weak association and provided little indication. Only object collocates were distinct. In each corpus column, two lists of lemma in the decreasing sequence of occurrence frequency and MI score were displayed. The analysis was done as follows:

(1) The two object collocates lists of *cause* were largely consistent between the two corpora. 70% (14 out of 20) of collocates were shared, and 60% (6 out of 10) of the top 10 frequency lists and the top 10 MI lists were common.

(2) The five collocates manually identified by Stubbs (2001, pp.163-165), *accident, concern, damage, death, trouble*, were covered in the BNC list, and only *accident* was not included in the COCA list.

(3) The collocating word *damage* ranked highest at the 2nd in the frequency list and at the 1st in the MI list of COCA corpus. The lowest ranked of the five previously identified collocates in COCA corpus was *concern* at the 15th both in the frequency and MI lists.

Table 1 Object Collocates of *cause* (as transitive verb)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BNC</th>
<th>lexis</th>
<th>freq</th>
<th>lexis</th>
<th>MI</th>
<th>lexis</th>
<th>freq</th>
<th>lexis</th>
<th>MI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>problem</td>
<td>1001</td>
<td>distress</td>
<td>6.51</td>
<td>problem</td>
<td>2497</td>
<td>damage</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>damage</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>harm</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>damage</td>
<td>1592</td>
<td>harm</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>death</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>damage</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>death</td>
<td>1018</td>
<td>pain</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trouble</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>confusion</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>pain</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>injury</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>harm</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>injury</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>people</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>cancer</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>injury</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>trouble</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>trouble</td>
<td>848</td>
<td>illness</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>concern</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>delay</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>cancer</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>trouble</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>pain</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>disease</td>
<td>806</td>
<td>disease</td>
<td>4.33</td>
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<tr>
<td>change</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>cancer</td>
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<td>harm</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>stir</td>
<td>4.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>loss</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>death</td>
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<td>loss</td>
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<td>problem</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>people</td>
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<td>change</td>
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<td>reaction</td>
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</tr>
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<td>177</td>
<td>problem</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>injury</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>loss</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distress</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>concern</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>lot</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>death</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>136</td>
<td>accident</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>effect</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>blood</td>
<td>3.07</td>
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</tr>
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<td>disease</td>
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<td>concern</td>
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<td>118</td>
<td>loss</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>blood</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>effect</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disease</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>lot</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>stir</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>heart</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accident</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>increase</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td>heart</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>change</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lot</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>change</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>reaction</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>lot</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cancer</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>people</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>illness</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>people</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(dark area marks dominant collocates, shaded area indicates strong collocates)

Collocates ranked in the MI list were a better indication of pragmatic
meaning than those ranked in the frequency list of both corpora. Neutral words, such as *people, change, lot*, were ranked in the middle of the frequency list, but were downgraded to the bottom of the MI list. Dominant and strong collocates were highlighted and drew a vivid picture of strongly negative prosody. The list of dominant and strong collocates commonly appeared in both corpora included *harm, damage, injury, trouble, pain, cancer, death, disease, problem, loss*. The dominant collocates, *distress, harm, damage*, seemed to be especially indicative of the semantic features and the pragmatic implications of *cause*. Among them, only *damage* was previously identified by Stubbs (1996, pp.138-141).

The two lists of dominant and strong collocates provided obvious and convincing evidence of the negative evaluation of *cause*. The systematic process of identifying significant (dominant and strong) collocates was shown to be effective in revealing semantic features and pragmatic implications of the target word. In addition, the result seemed to be more complete than manual analysis of concordance lines by Stubbs (1996, pp.138-141).

*Promote*: The definition of *promote* given by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary is: (1) to help or encourage to exist or flourish; further <to promote world peace>; (2) to advance in rank, dignity, position, etc. (opposed to *demote*). The denotational meaning of *promote* is concisely indicated and its evaluative orientation seems to have a positive inclination. To examine the collocation profile of *promote*, four POS categories and graded association strength of collocates were prepared. Similarly, the lists of subject and adjective collocates exhibited only weak association and provided little indication. Only object collocates and adjective collocates were distinct and shown in tables.

Based on Table 2, the following observations are made as follows:

1. 50% (10 out of 20) of top 20 frequent object collocates were common in the two corpora, while 70% (7 out of 10) of the top 10 frequent lists and 60% (6 out of 10) of the top 10 MI lists were shared.

2. With respect to the two top 20 lists of adjective collocates, 70% (14 out of 20) were common. When the lists were reduced to top 10, 70% of frequency lists and 50% of MI lists overlapped.

3. There were seven and six strong object collocates, respectively, in the BNC and COCA. Among them, *growth, development, and understanding*, were mutual.
There was no dominant object collocate. The numbers of strong adjective collocates were reduced to two in BNC and three in COCA. The joint list included healthy and economic. There was no dominant adjective collocate, either.

The list of strong collocates that included awareness, efficiency, democracy, welfare, growth, development, understanding, learning, competition, peace as objects, suggested abundant semantic features of promote, and clearly indicated its positive evaluative orientation.

Object collocates provided a better indicative function of pragmatic meaning than adjective collocates. The result was consistent with that of the cause lemma. The overall strength of positive prosody of promote was not as significant as that of the negative prosody of cause.

Commit: To gather more evidence, this study examined another verb commit known to show strongly negative prosody. The number of frequent collocates was still 20, but to save space in the manuscript, the finding showed only the top 10 of the total number of significant collocates. Subject collocates and adverb collocates are not indicative. Table 3 only showed object collocates of commit. Most observations were similar to the previous results. 60% of the top 10 frequent object collocates were shared, and 70% of the top 10 MI scored object collocates were common. As for adjective collocates, the percentages of overlapping in the top 10 frequency lists and MI lists are 50% and 30%, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BNC</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>COCA</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lexis</td>
<td>freq</td>
<td>lexis</td>
<td>MI</td>
<td>lexis</td>
<td>freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>awareness</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>development</td>
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<tr>
<td>interest</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>efficiency</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>growth</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>96</td>
<td>welfare</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>health</td>
<td>385</td>
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<tr>
<td>use</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>growth</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>use</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>85</td>
<td>understanding</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>student</td>
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</tr>
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<td>education</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>competition</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>democracy</td>
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<td>idea</td>
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<td>3.68</td>
<td>interest</td>
<td>315</td>
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<td>people</td>
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<td>3.36</td>
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<td>3.08</td>
<td>idea</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.97</td>
<td>understanding</td>
<td>244</td>
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<td>product</td>
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<tr>
<td>change</td>
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<td>activity</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>book</td>
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<td>idea</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>peace</td>
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<td>school</td>
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<td>service</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>woman</td>
<td>217</td>
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<td>activity</td>
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<td>change</td>
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<td>work</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>value</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

( shaded area indicates strong collocates)

There were 12 significant object collocates in BNC and 13 in COCA. Among them,
suicide, adultery, crime, offence, sin, murder, act, were common. The numbers of adjective collocates were only 2 in the BNC and 3 in the COCA, none was shared. The list of dominant collocates included suicide, adultery, perjury, atrocity, crime, offence, sin, murder, fraud, as objects, and heinous, as adjective.

As revealed by the list of significant collocates, the evaluative orientation of commit was as negative as cause, if not more. These significant collocates also provided highly marked links to the evaluative meaning of commit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Object Collocates of commit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BNC</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lexis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>offence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>crime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>murder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>breach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(dark area marks dominant collocates, shaded area indicates strong collocates)

The examination of three lemma, cause, promote, commit, as transitive verbs, produces convincing evidence to support the use of collocation profile as an effective instrument in recognizing and learning semantic meaning and pragmatic implications of lexical items. With object collocates as primary and adjective collocates as secondary references, L2 learners were provided with abundant and obvious semantic cues to appreciate and underpin the evaluative orientation of the target item. Overall, we derived the following distinction based on collocational profile evidence. Commit implied mostly negative impact or disturbance caused by a strong stimulus. Promote assumed some entity that had a power to exert subtle control over the object and it overall indicates a positive evaluative meaning.

**Conclusion**

L2 learners are often briefed using abstract definitions and left with vague lexical comprehension when self-learning with dictionary consultation. In self-learning
with dictionary consultation, second language learners are frequently briefed using abstract definitions and close entries of near synonyms. Rather, they are also left with vague lexical comprehension, which causes misuse of near-synonyms especially when they lack of pragmatic awareness. Collocational profiles, together with denotational meaning in dictionaries, give a solid conceptual grounding of target word for L2 learners in getting fuller understanding of the lexical pragmatics. A categorized collocational profile with graded association strength can filter and organize salient pragmatic features. It serves as a guided process to help develop concrete conceptual links such that evaluative pragmatic meanings of lexical items become more easily accessible to L2 learners.

There is, however, a gap between L2 learners’ proficiency and the powerful investigative functions provided by these concordancing tools. It is suggested that the problem of how the linguistic resources and the computational functions, as provided by current concordancing tools, can be further built upon to support L2 near synonym learning. In addition, the process of constructing collocational profiles that we manually simulated on top of VIEW can be automated by a computer program and can be potentially developed as an online lexical query instrument for L2 learners in pedagogical and self-learning contexts. The development of such a software system, however, is not within the scope of the paper.

Evaluative pragmatic meaning of near synonyms has been an intriguing issue particularly in the field of corpus phraseology. Most L2 learners are unaware of the subtle pragmatic distinctions among near-synonyms. The approach proposed by this study can potentially fill the gap, improving L2 learners’ lexical recognition and reducing pragmatic infelicities. In addition, pedagogical instruction, as an enhancement to the use of a collocational profile, is beneficiary for L2 learning. Last, the boundary of lexical semantic and pragmatics is not clear cut as Levinson (1983) questions the soundness of the dichotomy. Stubbs (2001) depicts the main aspects of the problem, “Amongst the many dualisms which plague linguistics is the question of how much meaning is expressed in the text as opposed to how much is in the mind of the hearer or reader. How much do we get out of a text and how much do we read into it” (p.438)? He further elaborates, “Traditionally, semantics has often been seen as a theory of those aspects of meaning which are expressed by
sentences independent of context, whereas pragmatics is a theory of those aspects of meaning which are intended by speakers in context” (p.438). Evidently, it is potentially beneficial for L2 learners themselves to make pragmatic meanings from collocational information for near synonym learning.

References


EFL Literature Studies: Student Feedback on Teaching Methodology

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Kansai Gaidai University

Bio Data
Gary G Fogal is an assistant professor in the Faculty of Foreign Languages at Kansai Gaidai University, Japan. His research interests include the role of literary theory and authentic literature in foreign language acquisition, and the influence of music on English foreign language acquisition. He is currently working on an EAP textbook for Oxford University Press.

Abstract
Research indicates that authentic literature is more frequently finding itself placed on university and college English as a Foreign Language syllabi. This paper examines this growing pedagogical trend. As Paran (2008) notes, enough conclusive evidence that specifically analyzes student reaction to how literature is incorporated in the classroom is lacking. This paper attempts to help partially fill this void. The research herein examines student reactions to three teaching methodologies that incorporate authentic literature in the classroom. This research was carried out over the fall 2009 semester at a foreign language university in Japan. Students were asked to respond critically to three short works of fiction. Student feedback was obtained through questionnaires and one-on-one interviews with the instructor. Qualitative data confirms previous research (Kellem, 2009) that argued for the inclusion of multiple approaches to literary analysis. It also reveals learner preferences for material that engages meta-cognitive awareness, and demonstrates that this awareness leads to improved performance and higher levels of work-related student satisfaction. This paper will discuss some of these findings, and make suggestions and recommendations for both further research and classroom methodology.

Key Words: authentic literature; literary analysis; reader-response theory; stylistics; student feedback

Introduction
As learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) begin English studies at increasingly younger ages, tertiary level EFL instructors can expect to encounter students with greater levels of English proficiency in lecture halls. How best to confront this issue and the resulting debate is nothing new (Ajideh, 2006; Benesch,
The role that literature plays within this context has also received attention. Examining literature’s role in this trend, Hall (2005) noted the increasing tendency of introducing literature to facilitate language teaching since the latter part of the past century. Evidence (Ajideh, 2006; Paran, 2008) has since suggested that this is no longer a trend but has become the norm. However, as Paran (2008) duly noted, although much research has identified how best to utilize literature in the EFL classroom, little research exists on how learners react to classroom literature teaching practices. As Paran puts it, “findings in this area [learner perspectives on the methodology of literature instruction] are still quite rare, and it is extremely difficult to make any generalizations” (Paran, 2008, p. 477), a view shared by Green (1993) and Altan (2006). Instead, the majority of research has focused on how much a learner’s language skills have improved from a test-driven, quantitative perspective (i.e., have learner skills improved because of methodology X, and if so, to what degree), and has largely ignored a more qualitative perspective on student perceptions of classroom activities.

As Coxhead (2006) and Ajideh (2006) have argued, learners preparing to enroll in tertiary level studies in English speaking countries require support. However, how best to structure this support remains open to debate, as is the influence students have in determining the methodology instructors use in the classroom. This study finds its central focus in the latter, analyzing how students react to various forms of literature instruction. It examines the reaction of Japanese learners preparing to study overseas to three different approaches to integrating literature into a syllabus: (a) a “hands off” approach, used as a control, where neither scaffolding nor schema activating activities are used, and students are asked to explore a text with no support from the instructor; (b) a stylistics approach; and (c) an approach that combines stylistics with reader-response theory that is prefaced by a teacher-centered lecture on literary theory designed to promote meta-cognitive awareness. Data collected were qualitative and obtained from questionnaires as well as one-on-one interviews with the instructor.

Some of the questions guiding this research included the following: How beneficial is scaffolding from a student’s perspective? What are learner perspectives on being made aware of the theory behind the teaching methodology? How would students react to being placed in this position of meta-cognitive awareness? What is their attitude regarding how literature is discussed or analyzed in the classroom? This
study examines the answers to these questions and helps close the gap between learner and instructor perspectives on classroom methodology. This paper concludes with suggestions for EFL teachers and for further research in this area.

**Background**

Although previous work did much to outline the chasm that existed between the study of literature and language studies, or as Kramsch and Nolden (1994) described it, “the institutionalized dichotomy between literary studies and language training” (Kramsch & Nolden, 1994, p. 28), the academic community has since worked to erase this division. The EFL community is beginning to forge closer ties with literature studies and more frequent occurrences of their integration abound (see Carter, 2007 and Paran, 2008 for extensive reviews of such studies). However, a significant amount of the literature examines learner strategies and beliefs, but little research has discussed student views on literature teaching methodology in advanced-level tertiary EFL settings (Altan, 2006; Green, 1993; Paran, 2008).

Mori (1999) argued for teachers to concentrate more on student in-class assessments so as to match teaching methodologies with student beliefs. She focused her research on second language (L2) learner beliefs about learning in general and its relationship to L2 acquisition, arguing that learner beliefs cannot be reduced to a single theory. Her study, conducted at two American universities, used an exploratory factor analysis on a belief questionnaire administered to 187 language students. The results drew similarities to previous work (Schommer, 1990). She concluded that epistemological beliefs held by students are multi-dimensional and complex (specifically, that beliefs about L2 acquisition and learning in general are unrelated), and that instructors must be conscious of learner beliefs to facilitate effective classroom instruction.

Green’s 1993 study used quantitative data to research whether students enjoyed activities that emphasize language content (a style akin to a reader-response approach) or language correctness (a style akin to a stylistics approach), and how students react to unfamiliar teaching methodologies. Green concluded that students did not view the language correctness approach as more beneficial. Furthermore, his results suggested that students were open to new teaching styles. However, his data failed to reveal whether students linked enjoyable activities with effective learning. He concluded that his results were not categorical, but could aid future studies that
hope to identify both what instructors want to teach and what students find beneficial and enjoyable.

Matsuura, Chiba and Hilderbrandt (2001) examined feedback from Japanese university EFL students on classroom methodology. They concluded that despite EFL classroom trends toward a more student-centered environment, a significant amount of learners still preferred a more traditional EFL pedagogy that included a teacher-centered methodology (for a review of traditional and current EFL teaching practices, see Matsuura et al., 2001). Almost 81% of the 301 participants in their study supported a teacher-centered approach, with about a quarter of respondents specifically citing lectures as an effective way to learn English.

The conclusions of Matsuura et al. (2001) are open to debate. Liu R., Liu Y. and Qiao (2006) found that university level English as a Second Language (ESL) instructors in the United States were using a teacher-centered methodology despite extensive research that supported a student-centered approach (McCombs & Whistler, 1997; Pillay, 2002; Weimer, 2002). Liu et al. claimed that something must be wrong if instructors are using a teacher-centered approach and that an “awareness of this discrepancy may encourage universities to promote more training in the learner-centered approach” (Liu et al., 2006, p. 86). These two studies reveal a serious gap, then, between what students want and what research suggests instructors should be doing. Instructors, researchers and students have failed to agree on the best learning and teaching styles. This dichotomy presents a serious problem for researchers, instructors and learners alike.

Regarding approaches to literature instruction, positive responses to teaching methodology from student perspectives were found when instructors used a reader-response approach (Ali, 1993; Daniels, 1994; Davis, 1989; Hirvela, 1996). Hirvela (1996) drew attention to a comparison between a personal response approach (which favors a text-as-authority perspective) and a reader-response approach (which significantly reduces the reader-text dichotomy). He discussed how these two approaches overlap, but failed to comment on how the two could be integrated, favoring instead a more traditional single theory approach – here, reader-response theory. The studies of Davies (1998) and Zyngier (2001) produced similar data using a stylistics approach.

All of the aforementioned studies have examined a one-dimensional pedagogical approach to teaching literature. However, some researchers have begun
to stretch these traditional limits, incorporating multiple pedagogical theories into their investigations. Using an integrated approach to literature studies, Wang (2009) surveyed 162 non-English major university students in Taiwan. She reported that the majority of the participants found an integrated approach beneficial, citing proficiency gains in reading, translation, grammar, listening, speaking, writing and problem analysis. In addition, her work suggested that students enjoyed this approach. Wang’s study demonstrated that students support an integrated approach and firmly believe such an approach benefits L2 acquisition.

Baba (2008), Kellem (2009) and Timucin (2001) also noted that an integrated approach was something both students enjoyed and instructor’s found beneficial (Kellm combined a reader-response approach with a stylistics approach; Baba combined a personal-response approach and stylistics; Timucin combined a language-based approach with stylistics). The results of these studies suggested that an integrated approach is effective for literature studies at advanced EFL levels.

In these studies, learners reacted positively to a single methodology, and more recently, to approaches that combined theories of literary analysis. These responses are noteworthy because each methodology is supported by research that demonstrates improved language skills and learner satisfaction. However, the research remains inconclusive, as Paran (2008) noted, and suggests that student perceptions remain difficult to interpret.

Of the studies commented on thus far Kellem’s 2009 work resonates best with this study. In his work, Kellem argued for the inclusion of an integrated approach to teaching literature. He supports his argument with the foremeaning approach, claiming that the combined benefits of a stylistics and reader-response approach place “equal importance on the study of language elements and responding personally [to literature]” (Kellm, 2009, p. 12), asking instructors to “bridge the gap between aesthetic and stylistic reading approaches and to show how pleasure and understanding can coincide and feed off each other” (Kellm, 2009, p. 15). Kellem, Baba (2008) and Timucin (2001) extol the virtues of a fresh approach to EFL literature instruction, but what is not addressed is the reaction students have to such approaches. Accurately assessing how students feel about a teaching methodology is essential, as this perspective can help influence teaching strategies and aid curriculum development.

In summary, a review of the current literature suggests the following:
student beliefs and instructor beliefs about learning still vary greatly (specifically with regard to student-centered and teacher-centered methodologies);
positive responses to integrated teaching methods, stylistics and reader-response approaches, have all, to some degree, had positive feedback from students who thought their language skills were improving from these methods; but
this feedback is too orientated toward L2 performance; it is far from conclusive regarding student views on methodology and fails to allow both theorists and practitioners to draw conclusions about student perspectives on approaches to teaching.

It is within this context that this research finds its place.

Participants
This study examined 48 second year native Japanese speakers enrolled at Kansai Gaidai University, a private foreign language university in Japan. All of the participants were either social science or humanity majors. Students needed a minimum TOEFL paper-based test score of 500 to enroll. Of the 48 students enrolled, four had a score lower than 500 (490), yet were admitted regardless, and 36 had plans to study overseas in an English speaking country. Of those 36, 35 scored over 500 on the TOEFL PBT. As this research examines data from students preparing to go abroad, only the data collected from these 35 students were assessed.

Method
A significant portion of the course aimed to prepare students for instruction at English speaking, tertiary level institutions outside Japan. This study assessed their reaction to three different methodologies for teaching authentic literature. The data collected was qualitative and based on questionnaires and one-on-one interviews; these were administered after each section of the experiment. A fourth interview was administered to obtain the students’ overall reaction to the three different teaching methodologies. In each section students worked individually and in small groups. Both written and oral responses to the literature were required, as was a 500-word personal response essay to each story.

Section one provided students with no scaffolding and was designed to act as a
control. Students were given Anton Chekhov’s short story “A Wicked Boy” to read. In-class work was performed using the story, a dictionary, and a worksheet. The worksheet included factual questions (the who, what, where and when of the story), questions on stylistics and comprehension questions in the form of extended in-class group discussion questions that dealt with situations from the text (adapted from Gajdusek’s [1988] classroom model).

Section two used a different methodology. Asked to read John Steinbeck’s short story “Over the Hill”, students were given pre-reading, schema-activating activities that included context building, biographical information about the author, and they were introduced to basic literary devices such as hyperbole, mood, foreshadowing, juxtaposition and personification. This scaffolding was heavily student-centered. Activities were framed within a stylistics approach and also included lexical analysis. Adopting Hirvela’s (1996) suggestions, questions about stylistics were such that students were asked to discuss, for example, Steinbeck’s choice of vocabulary or metaphor. Although the questions were stylistic in nature, they did not restrict the students to right or wrong responses. The discussion questions required readers to produce personal responses to the text, discouraging objective style answers. The intent here was to engage students in a personal discourse with the story and its author.

Section three built on the stylistics response methodology used in section two, but also integrated a reader-response approach. Prior to reading students were introduced, in a teacher-centered lecture, to some of the main tenets of reader-response theory. The scaffolding here was exclusively teacher-centered. The lecture promoted one of this theory’s central themes, that one can approach literature as an experience instead of an object in need of examination: “The ways we interpret the words of the text are analogous to the way we make sense of personal experiences – interpretations are determined by the events we encounter and in the text by the words we read” (Davis, 1989, p. 421). Students were also exposed to Hirvela’s 1996 interpretation that discussed the reader and author as equally responsible for generating meaning from the text, thus dissolving the one way author-reader passive continuum (Hirvela, 1996). What was being promoted was an active literary experience where the author and reader are engaged in a dialectical relationship. (For a detailed outline of reader-response theory see Davis, 1989 and Hirvela, 1996.) Students were asked only to take notes during the lecture.
With only this lecture as support students were asked to read Shirley Jackson’s “The Lottery”. Section three did not include scaffolding and schema-related activities that were provided in section two. Instead, the scaffolding was presented only by way of the aforementioned lecture. This section combined a stylistics approach (that students were familiar with from section two) with a reader-response approach. The rationale for this integrated approach is provided by Baba (2008), Divsar & Tahriri (2009), Kellem (2009), Timucin (2001) and Wang (2009), all of whom argue that approaches to literary analysis need not be mutually exclusive. Regarding stylistics, instances of literary devices were no longer pointed out and explained. Instead, paragraph or page number references were used as a guide and students needed to create their own analyses. With this foundation in stylistics present, discussion questions were framed in the hue of a reader-response approach. Students were asked to interpret the text relative to their own experiences.

At the conclusion of section three a fourth interview was administered. Here, students were asked to reflect on all three sections of the experiment and to answer questions that were relative to the other sections.

**Results**

Of the three sections, 100% of the students were least pleased with section one. Stress levels were recorded highest here. They found the assignment too difficult, to the point of de-motivating them. Twenty-eight percent of students, however, commented that they were very motivated, believing literature classes in English speaking countries operated in such an extremely scaffold-less manner. Their motivation came from thinking that in the future they would be required to do such independent work.

Most students spent time trying to understand the plot and they could not move beyond that into a more in-depth literary analysis. Group work and conversations centered on factual events in the story. Hints of more in-depth analysis were present, but without any supporting material students were often left speculating. Answers to the questionnaire regarding stylistics were met with mixed responses. Sixty-three percent of respondents claimed that their lack of English abilities prevented them from answering the comprehension questions. Almost 29% of respondents blamed a lack of scaffolding, recognizing that it was not an issue of language skills, but a lack of schema that triggered problems. Comments recorded in group work included “it depends on when it was written”, “what do you know about
Russia?”, “I don’t understand this story” and off-topic discussion that did not contribute to the understanding of the story. Students had a difficult time focusing on the material, and those who were able to focus felt frustrated.

Comments in interviews echoed the data collected from the questionnaire. Thirty-one percent of students recognized that they did not understand the story to their satisfaction, citing that with more information a deeper understanding could have developed. One learner noted the following: “If we studied about more Russian culture in high school maybe problems in a [sic.] story could be more understand [sic.]” Students agreed overwhelmingly that this style of literary analysis did not make them want to study or read literature in the future. A third of the respondents believed that some form of scaffolding or schema-activating material would have made the story more interesting and understandable, but 94% of students put at least some of the blame for their lack of understanding on themselves. This scaffold-less approach, although motivating for a few, produced two significant results. One, that a significant number of students blamed themselves for their lack of understanding, and two, that their motivation to continue reading literature dropped significantly. When asked directly if they would be interested in studying another story using the same approach, 80% of students answered no.

Section two produced different results. Stress levels dropped while interest and motivation levels increased significantly. Almost 89% of students thought they understood the story more than in section one. They were able to clearly understand the plot and could relate to the story and discuss it in a more personal manner. Comments recorded during discussions included the following: “Why didn’t Steinbeck just write it like this?”; “That’s because the writer thinks…”; “I think I get it now – kind of”; “It’s not clear, but…”. Students were beginning to engage with the text critically and were making efforts to apply the meaning derived from the text to their own lives.

In interviews conducted after section two students mentioned being able to “see” what authors are doing and why they do these things. One student noted, “My English teacher last year had parents from Italy so I could understand why Mr. Steinbeck made Sligo have a strange Italian accent. I had [sic.] imagined this about my teacher’s parents”. Many noted that knowing about the time, place and ideology of the writer and the time he was writing in increased their learning experience. Seventy-one percent said they enjoyed the learning process. Asked again if they
would be interested in studying literature in this manner, 80% percent of students answered yes.

In section three stress levels again dropped significantly, and personal satisfaction with the learning experience measured highest. Motivation levels also measured highest here, as did student awareness of underlying textual meaning and its relation to their experiences. Regarding the stylistics approach, satisfaction levels dipped slightly below those of section two. Students claimed to have understood more from the text on a personal level, but less stylistically. When queried about this, 89% of students were, nonetheless, happier with this approach: “I think I’ll be doing more of this reader-response style things [sic.] when I get to America so this is good for me.” Another commented that “I’ve been doing the stylist [sic.] thing in high school sometimes. This new way was better.” Asked about continuing to study literature in the coming weeks, 86% of students asked that the instructor take this third approach. Further, 91% of students preferred that scaffolding be provided by a teacher-centered lecture. Overall, 88% of respondents also preferred the overall methodology of section three, and over 90% rated their personal satisfaction with this section as the highest.

Although the workload was heaviest in section three, most students favored this style of instruction. Regarding meta-cognition specifically, the following question was asked: “Was is it beneficial to have reader-response theory explained to you before the reading?” Ninety-four percent of respondents answered yes. Almost 69% mentioned having similar reader-response theory experiences with other work they had read, but none had understood why they were analyzing texts as they were. When queried specifically about the teacher-centered lecture, 88% of respondents said they preferred this teaching style. When asked why, almost 69% said it was because they thought classes are taught like this overseas. Twenty-nine percent said it was nice to get a break from a student-centered approach. Overall, regarding section three, students claimed to now have a better understanding of literary analysis, and more importantly (they highlighted), what is “going on”, or underlying, much of the work of good literature.

Lastly, in the fourth interview learners were asked whether they preferred scaffolding that was biographical in nature or scaffolding that dealt with literary theory. Eighty-eight percent preferred the latter. When asked why, 27% said because they believed overseas universities to be like this. Twenty-eight percent said they
preferred it because it was teacher-centered; 36% of respondents said the reader-
response approach allowed them to be part of the process of meaning building in a
more direct, personal manner. Eighty-three percent of respondents also claimed they
felt most comfortable talking about their ideas within the parameters set up by a
reader-response approach. Learners said it allowed them more freedom of expression
than at other times when they were asked to comment on literature.

**Limitations and Discussion**

This study lacks an in-depth statistical analysis, and further research in this area must
seek to include it. A larger sample size as well as a control group would also provide
more sound quantitative results. As mentioned at the outset, however, the goal of this
research was to produce qualitative data, and it sought to achieve an initial first glance
into advanced-level learner perspectives on how they prefer to perform literary
analyses.

Despite these flaws, results from this study support the view of Matsuura et al.
(2001) that teacher-centered methodologies, at least at this advanced level and within
the context of literary studies, have a place in the EFL classroom. The data also
supports Kellem’s position that instructors “can develop activities that help students
work with the language and engage with and personally respond to the material”
(Kellem, 2009, p. 16). These conclusions are supported by data collected in section
three of this study. Before discussing these in detail, it is worth commenting on
sections one and two.

The frustration noted by students in section one cannot legitimately be blamed
on their lack of English skills (as so many respondents claimed). Much of the
frustration may have come from learner awareness that literature provides something
more than just an analytical understanding of words on a page. Such awareness is
rightly frustrating for students. For instructors, however, it is motivating. This
frustration indicates that schema for literary analysis is already present, and by
changing classroom methodology instructors can provide learners with the necessary
tools to unearth the meaning they believe underlies great literature.

Section two failed to provide significant findings. Given the amount of
student-centered scaffolding and schema related activities provided by the instructor,
the data reflects other results that have used a stylistics approach. The data collected
here supports these studies (Davies, 1998 or Zyngier, 2001, for example).
Section three provides the most interesting data. A correlation between a heavy workload and high stress levels did not exist, suggesting that with increased meta-cognitive awareness, the correct scaffolding, or a combination of the two, learners accept heavier workloads if they are aware of the theory supporting their activities.

The results also show that students are more content with activities that challenge them to think about material relative to their own experiences. Even though the majority of students noted they understood less of the story in section three from an analytical perspective, an overwhelming majority (88%) still preferred this balanced reader-response approach that was initially supported by a stylistics analysis of the text. At this advanced-learner level students are prepared, or at least – and perhaps more importantly – are willing, to move beyond a language-centered methodology to one that asks them to develop a personal relationship with the text. This does not undermine the importance of the stylistics approach incorporated in section three. One reason for such a high percentage of positive responses to the reader-response approach is that students possessed a clear understanding of a stylistics analysis that the scaffolding of section two provided. Undoubtedly, much of that experience transferred to section three. How much this assistance influenced learner responses remains unclear. Further studies that include a student control group instead of a methodological one would help resolve these problems.

Students also reacted favorably to the introduction of literary theory. Literary theory, based on its reception here, certainly has a place in EFL instruction. It helps promote L2 discourse, and with it students do not have to follow instructions blindly. Instead they do so with meta-cognitive support. Having the link to an actual theory helps solidify much of their ideas, recognizing them now not so much as right or wrong, but as existing on a plane of subjectivity that is influenced by their own experiences and what they bring to a text. Students reported feeling that there is a foundation that now supports their interpretation, however eclectic it may be. For group oriented cultures where EFL is taught, the backing of an academic theory to boost an individual’s ideas provides support for those students apprehensive about expressing themselves. Doubt remains about whether the introduction of the theory behind a reader-response approach solidifies a learner’s understanding of the text or not, but it legitimizes a place for them inside the literary world. In this manner, the dichotomy between author and reader begins to disappear, and learners can find a
legitimate place for their voices to be heard.

The results also show strong support for teacher-centered lectures. As noted in the literature review, traditional theories of EFL pedagogy suggest a much more learner-friendly, student-centered approach. As this study notes, (and as Matsuura et al. [2001] also concluded), this is not always the approach favored by students. Despite Liu et al.’s (2006) claim, this research posits that there is room in EFL instruction for a teacher-centered classroom; moreover, as the evidence herein suggests, it is an approach favored by advanced-level EFL students within the context of literary studies.

Conclusion

These findings suggest that EFL students at more advanced levels preparing to study overseas are more comfortable analyzing literature when (a) they are presented with material in a teacher-centered manner, (b) the material they are presented with improves meta-cognitive awareness and provides the rationale behind classroom activities, and (c) when they have sufficient scaffolding (regardless of their awareness of it). Learners become actively involved in the learning process at multiple levels in this manner. They produce the target language discourse but are also doing so under clear and precise guidance that moves beyond the authority of the instructor and into the realm of academics – literary theory here – in a broader, yet more welcoming style. Results also indicate that methodologies reserved traditionally for native speakers, that is, teacher-centered lectures, can transfer over into EFL studies.

From a student’s perspective there is a place for scaffolding that engages their meta-cognitive awareness, for literary theory and for a teacher-centered methodology. This research supports putting students in a position that engages them as such. The implications of this positioning are students who are better prepared for literary analysis and, as is the case with reader-response theory, students who now have the justification – and more importantly an awareness of the justification – to position themselves inside a wider literary dialogue. This dialectical juxtaposition provides a solid foundation for L2 production that goes beyond what a purely stylistics analysis can provide for learners at this level. As one of the goals of literature is to take readers beyond this point, a teacher-centered methodology coupled with an integrated approach to literary analysis that incorporates meta-cognitive awareness has the overwhelming support of learners at this level.
More research is needed to support these claims, but the results described above suggest that further inquiry into the role literary theory plays – and the way it is presented to learners – in advanced level EFL literature classes may produce more detailed and elucidating results. Until such time, instructors should consider the benefits of an integrated approach to literature studies and should not reject presenting material to students preparing for overseas studies in a teacher-centered manner.

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Research Trends in Selected M.A. TESOL Programs in Taiwan: A Preliminary Content Analysis of Master’s Theses from 2003-2007

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Bio Data

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Abstract

This paper examines the research trends in selected master’s programs of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) by analyzing the master’s theses produced between 2003 and 2007. Seven TESOL graduate programs in different national universities, which also provide a secondary teacher education program, were selected. Data consisted of 493 thesis abstracts retrieved from the Electronic Theses and Dissertations System of National Digital Library. Using a content-analysis method, we identified the education levels of research contexts and research topics to present current research trends in Taiwan TESOL programs. The analysis of the research contexts showed that the two most common contexts were secondary education in high school and undergraduate education in universities. Although the nature of the master’s theses selected spans a wide range of research topics and varies across different programs, the preliminary analysis identified the four most frequently investigated topics were: (1) language skills, including research on listening, speaking, reading, writing, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar, (2) teaching methods or approaches, (3) materials or curriculum and computer assisted language learning (CALL) tying for third. The patterns of the research agenda on English education in Taiwan reflected in the thesis research are briefly discussed in relation to different graduate program characteristics, local English educational issues, and global research trends in TESOL. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide not only an overview of current research trends in TESOL programs in Taiwan but also new insights for future research directions and development for both TESOL master’s students and researchers as they consider research topics to explore.
Key Words: TESOL, research trends, master’s thesis, content analysis, and Taiwan

Introduction

Writing a thesis is an important endeavor for most, if not all, graduate students. The thesis is the end product and record of students’ years of academic training and research efforts. In Taiwan, as in many countries, the completion of thesis research in scholarly written form is expected for all master’s students. For most master’s students in Taiwan, the thesis project is often their first major piece of independent research they undertake. Currently, there are at least 34 colleges or universities offering master’s programs in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) or related fields in Taiwan. Hundreds of master’s theses are produced each year. There is, however, a paucity of research that systematically analyzes the content of the thesis projects and provides a general trend for reference. Information about the research trends in the TESOL graduate programs is essential for both novice student researchers as well as faculty advisors to be updated with the current state of affairs in English teaching in Taiwan. Such type of content analysis studies have been done in a number of professional fields (see review by Shih, Feng, & Tsai, 2008), such as psychology, science education, and instructional technology, management, communication studies, and engineering etc.

The present study originated from the first author’s experience of teaching a research method class in a TESOL master’s program and reading a recent article by Shih, Feng, and Tsai (2008) who conducted a content analysis of journal articles in the field of cognition in e-learning. Shih et al. presented the research trends in their field of interest by analyzing the participants, research setting, research design type, and examined methods used in articles published in five target professional journals between the years 2001 and 2005. They argued that knowledge about the publishing research trends in major journals of the field can assist educators as well as novice and senior researchers in recognizing research trends and influential studies in the field. In addition, the findings can serve as important references for policy makers in related fields when considering relevant issues.

In the field of TESOL, however, articles addressing research trends are mostly in the form of literature review instead of quantitative content analysis.
(Hakuta & Cancino, 1977; Ortega & Iberri-Shea, 2005). For example, Canagarajah (2006) in a state-of-the-art essay delineated three tendencies that characterize the TESOL professional practice in the 40th anniversary issue of TESOL Quarterly; these three tendencies described are: “a continuation along the earlier lines of progression” discussed in the 25th anniversary issue, “a radical reorientation along new paradigms”, and “unresolved debates and questions about the direction in certain domains” (p. 23-28). A few other studies in the field used quantitative method to analyze trends in research methodology, not research topics, in the field of TESOL or applied linguistics (e.g., Gao, Li, & Lu, 2001; Henning, 1986; Lazaraton, 2000; Ortega & Iberri-Shea, 2005). The present paper is interested in the nature and prevalence of specific research contexts and research topics in the TESOL master’s theses produced in selected TESOL graduate programs in Taiwan. This preliminary content analysis of the TESOL master’s theses may provide an overview of current research trends in TESOL programs in Taiwan. Specifically, the findings may further offer insight for future research directions and assistance to both TESOL master’s students and researchers when they consider research topics to explore.

In view of the potential significance and lack of information of the research trends observed in the selected TESOL master’s theses in Taiwan, four questions were addressed as follows:

1. What are the common research contexts examined in the TESOL master’s theses in Taiwan? How do the types of research contexts vary across different graduate programs?
2. What are the prevalent research topics investigated in the TESOL master’s theses in Taiwan? How do the prevalent topics vary across different graduate programs?
3. How did the frequently investigated research contexts and topics in the TESOL master’s theses change over these five years?

**Method**

**M.A. Theses for Analysis**

The present study was exploratory in nature and only selected master’s theses produced in seven TESOL graduate programs in Taiwan between 2003 and
2007 for a content analysis. The seven selected TESOL programs were in seven different national universities, including National Chung Cheng University (CCU), National Chengchi University (NCCU), National Chiao Tung University (NCTU), National Changhua University of Education (NCUE), National Kaohsiung Normal University (NKNU), National Tsing Hua University (NTHU), and National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU). These graduate programs are similar in that they all reside in national universities which also provide a secondary teacher education program. All TESOL programs, except one, produced master’s theses each year from 2003 to 2007. The TESOL graduate program in NCTU was established in 2003, and the first cohort of master’s theses was not completed until 2005, resulting in only 14 theses in total. The research sample includes 493 master’s thesis abstracts retrieved from the Electronic Theses and Dissertations System of the National Digital Library.

**Types of Research Contexts**

Research contexts refer to the educational levels of research participants or target research sites. Each thesis was classified into one of the following eight categories: (1) preschool (P), such as kindergartens; (2) elementary school (E); (3) high school (HS), including junior and senior high schools and vocational high schools; (4) Grade 1-9 Curriculum (G19); (5) higher education, including junior colleges, universities, and post-graduate levels (HE); (6) adults (A); (7) private institute (PI), including language schools and cram schools; and (8) mixed levels of participants (MIX).

**Categories of Research Topics**

The categorization for research topics was modified from the list of content areas specified in the TESOL 2009 convention proposal worksheet (TESOL, 2009). The researchers identified and classified the research topic of each thesis into one of the following 14 areas: (1) Affective Factors; (2) Computer Assisted Language Learning; (3) Culture, Social, or Gender Issues; (4) English for Specific Purposes; (5) Integrated Skills (IS); (6) Learner Development; (7) Linguistics; (8) Language Skills; (9) Materials or Curriculum Design and Evaluation; (10) Second Language Development; (11) Testing and Evaluation; (12) Teacher Factors; (13) Teaching Method; and (14)
Teacher Professional Development. The following list provides examples of some typical content areas in each category.

1. Affective Factors (AF): Learner’s motivation; anxiety; belief; need; self-perception.
2. Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL): Computers, multimedia, the use of technology in teaching or learning.
3. Culture, Social, or Gender Issues (CSG): Cross-cultural studies; cultural learning; multicultural or ethnic issues; gender differences; bilingualism; socioeconomic status; family factors.
4. English for Specific Purposes (ESP): ESP program; English for academic purpose; English for occupational purposes.
5. Integrated Skills (IS): Studies on the combination of two or more language skills.
6. Learner Factors (LF): Individual difference; prior learning; cognitive development; conception.
7. Linguistics (LIN): Studies related to phonetics; morphology; syntax; discourse analysis; pragmatics; sociolinguistics; psycholinguistics; neurolinguistics.
8. Language Skills (LS): Listening; speaking and communication (including pronunciation); reading (including phonological awareness, metalinguistic awareness, or phonic); writing (including spelling); vocabulary; grammar.
9. Materials or Curriculum Design and Evaluation (MC): Teaching or learning materials (including supplementary materials, projects, or tasks); curriculum design and/or evaluation.
11. Testing and Evaluation (TEVAL): Language tests; achievement tests; portfolio assessment; peer evaluation; GEPT test; college entrance exam.
12. Teacher Factors (TF): Teachers’ beliefs; personality; attitude; aptitude; pedagogical or content knowledge; teacher behaviors and strategies.
13. Teaching Method (TM): Teaching methods, such as communicative language teaching, audiolingual or direct method, task-based approach; the application of specific teaching activities, such as drama, jazz chants, storytelling, or debates.
14. Teacher Professional Development (TPD): Pre- or in-service English teacher
training or programs; team teaching; tour study program for teachers.

**Procedures**

The two researchers first randomly chose 20 thesis abstracts and independently conducted a preliminary coding based on the categories for *Content Area and Targeted Instructional Level* listed in TESOL convention proposal worksheet. Final coding categories were then discussed and adjusted to reflect the characteristics of master’s theses in Taiwan TESOL programs. For example, accreditation and AIDS education are not typical thesis topics, and so were deleted. In addition, more instructional levels (e.g., Grade 1-9 Curriculum, language school, and mixed levels) were added to better represent the actual English instructional contexts in Taiwan. Next, 20 per cent of the thesis abstracts (i.e., a total of 100 theses) were randomly chosen from each of the seven TESOL programs and independently coded by both researchers using the revised coding scheme. Inter-rater agreement in the coding of educational levels was 0.98, and 0.95 in the coding of research topics. The two researchers met again to discuss and resolve the disagreements. The remaining thesis abstracts were then categorized by the second author following the coding scheme.

**Results**

*Common Research Contexts Examined in TESOL Master’s Theses*

Table 1 presents both the numbers and percentages for each research context examined in the master’s theses completed between 2003 and 2007 in the selected TESOL programs. The analysis of the research contexts indicated that the three most common research contexts were high school (66%), higher education (17%), and elementary school (11%). Further analyses of the common research contexts across the seven TESOL programs, however, showed slight variations among these master’s programs (Figure 1). For example, while high school settings were the primary research context examined in the theses produced in most TESOL programs, ranging from 56% to 88%, the higher education context was the major context of research interest in NCTU and NTHU, constituting 79% and 61%, respectively. In addition, elementary school settings have also started gaining attention and ranked the
second most examined context in three programs, CCU (21%), NCCU (8%), and NKNU (14%).

Table 1 Numbers and percentages of research contexts in master’s theses in individual TESOL programs from 2003-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research context</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>CCU (47)</th>
<th>NCCU (73)</th>
<th>NCTU (14)</th>
<th>NCUE (58)</th>
<th>NKNU (203)</th>
<th>NTHU (41)</th>
<th>NTNU (57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preschool</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 (2.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elementary school</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10 (21.3%)</td>
<td>6 (8.2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28 (13.8%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high school</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>32 (66%)</td>
<td>64 (87.7%)</td>
<td>3 (21.4%)</td>
<td>39 (67.2%)</td>
<td>143 (70.4%)</td>
<td>12 (29.3%)</td>
<td>32 (56.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grade 1-9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2 (4.3%)</td>
<td>1 (1.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher education</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>2 (4.3%)</td>
<td>2 (2.7%)</td>
<td>11 (23%)</td>
<td>15 (22.2%)</td>
<td>13 (15.8%)</td>
<td>25 (37.9%)</td>
<td>15 (19.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adult English</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 (2.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8 (3.9%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private institute</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (2.4%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mixed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (3.4%)</td>
<td>8 (3.9%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (1.8%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *Total numbers of theses are in parentheses. †Research context was not specified in one thesis abstract and the full text is not available. ‡Top two research contexts.

Figure 1 Percentages of three common research contexts across the seven TESOL master’s program

Prevalent Research Topics Investigated in TESOL Master's Theses
The analysis of research topics examined in the TESOL master’s theses is
shown in Table 2. *Language Skills* were the most frequently investigated topics with 27%; topics related to *Teaching Method* ranked second with 20%, followed by *CALL* and *Materials and Curriculum*, both contributing about 12% of all thesis projects. As shown in Table 2, great variation in popular research topics was found across the seven TESOL programs. In particular, *Language Skills* and *Teaching Methods* together were the top two research topics addressed in more than or nearly half of all theses in four programs (i.e., CCU, NCCU, NCUE, and NKNU). On the other hand, *CALL* was the primary focus of thesis research in two TESOL programs (i.e., NCTU and NTHU), both of which reside in universities that are eminent in the fields of science and engineering. In contrast, the master’s theses produced in the other five programs (i.e., CCU, NCCU, NCUE, NKNU, and NTNU) appeared to have more diversity in their topics.

Table 2 Numbers and percentages of research topics in master’s theses in individual TESOL programs from 2003-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research topic</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>CCU (47)*</th>
<th>NCCU (73)</th>
<th>NCTU (14)</th>
<th>NCUE (58)</th>
<th>NKNU (203)</th>
<th>NTHU (41)</th>
<th>NTNU (57)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>(8.9%)</td>
<td>(6.8%)</td>
<td>(21.4%)*</td>
<td>(15.5%)</td>
<td>(8.4%)</td>
<td>(4.9%)</td>
<td>(10.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CALL</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>(12.0%)</td>
<td>(4.3%)</td>
<td>(4.1%)</td>
<td>(50.0%)*</td>
<td>(3.4%)</td>
<td>(11.8%)</td>
<td>(39.0%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSG</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(1.8%)</td>
<td>(4.3%)</td>
<td>(2.7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(1.2%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(1.6%)</td>
<td>(2.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LF</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(1.6%)</td>
<td>(2.1%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIN</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>(3.4%)</td>
<td>(10.6%)</td>
<td>(5.5%)</td>
<td>(7.1%)</td>
<td>(1.7%)</td>
<td>(1.5%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LS</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>(26.6%)*</td>
<td>(14.9%)*</td>
<td>(26.0%)*</td>
<td>(14.3%)*</td>
<td>(36.2%)*</td>
<td>(27.1%)*</td>
<td>(26.8%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>(12.4%)</td>
<td>(8.5%)</td>
<td>(9.6%)</td>
<td>(7.1%)</td>
<td>(3.4%)</td>
<td>(15.3%)</td>
<td>(12.2%)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLA</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(1.0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEVAL</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>(4.5%)</td>
<td>(8.5%)</td>
<td>(4.1%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TF</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>(4.1%)</td>
<td>(6.4%)</td>
<td>(12.3%)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TM</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>(19.9%)*</td>
<td>(34.0%)*</td>
<td>(24.7%)*</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>(1.0%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Note. *Total numbers of theses are in parentheses.
*Top two research contexts.

Trends in Frequently Investigated Research Contexts and Topics in TESOL
Master’s Theses
Percentage changes in the top three research contexts examined in TESOL master’s theses (i.e., high school, higher education, and elementary school) were used to demonstrate trends that occurred between 2003 and 2007. Across the five years, high school settings remained the primary research contexts examined in the TESOL master’s theses, with a marked decline from 80% to 57% in 2005 (Figure 2). Studies conducted in the higher education context rose by more than 10% in 2005 and 2006, from 12% to 25% and 23%, respectively, and then dropped back to 14% in 2007. The percentages of thesis research in the elementary school context had seen a relatively steady increase over the five years, from only 7% in 2003 to 18% in 2007.

Figure 2 Trends of frequently investigated research contexts in TESOL master’s theses from 2003 to 2007.

Percentage changes in the top four research topics, on the other hand, were not as pronounced as those observed in the frequently investigated contexts (Figure 3). The category Language Skills consistently ranked as the most frequently researched topic within these five years, with a small decrease from 29% to 24% during the first three years, a modest increase to 32% in 2006, and
finally dropping back to 22% in 2007. Another topic of high interest is Teaching Method, whose percentage changes were not prominent. On average, both Materials/Curriculum and CALL each contributed 12% to the total theses. While the proportions of thesis research that was geared towards Materials or Curriculum remained relatively constant across the years, CALL appeared to emerge as an important topic with a somewhat marked increase.

![Figure 3 Trends of frequently investigated research topics in TESOL master’s theses from 2003 to 2007](image)

**Figure 3** Trends of frequently investigated research topics in TESOL master’s theses from 2003 to 2007

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Even though the present study is descriptive in nature and limited in scope, the results still present an overall picture of the research trends in the TESOL master’s programs in Taiwan. In reviewing 493 master’s theses produced between 2003 and 2007, three research contexts and four research topics were identified as the most frequently investigated ones. By analyzing the percentage changes in the top research contexts and topics across these five years, several emerging trends were observed.

Our analysis of the research contexts showed that the majority of TESOL master’s theses were conducted in high school settings. This finding coincided with the general observation of the program characteristics and educational objectives of these TESOL programs. All these seven programs reside in universities which also provide secondary teacher education programs. Most
graduate students in these programs were either working on high school teacher certification or had completed the course requirements for teacher certification. Some were even in-service high school teachers seeking continuing education. Working with high school participants or considering issues related to high school education appears compatible with their career orientation and goals. On the other hand, the higher education context, including college, university, and post-graduate level, was the most commonly examined research context for two programs and ranked second for two other programs. For many novice student-researchers, the ease of access to research sites or participants can be the major concern. It is not surprising that college students were often included as convenient samples in thesis research. In addition to the issue of access, research interest of the student’s thesis advisor may also play a role in choosing the research context.

Research topic analysis indicated that the master theses examined in the present study undertook research in a range of TESOL areas with more emphasis placed on a few popular topics. As shown in the research topic trend analysis, the prominence of pedagogically oriented (e.g., Language Skills and Materials or Curriculum) and method-based research (e.g., Teaching Method and CALL) was observed in the TESOL master’s theses. Master’s students’ choice of a thesis topic can be affected by several factors or an interaction of these factors, such as personal interest, career aspiration, research training received, program characteristics, or advisor’s research interest. Research experience and practical value obtained from completing thesis research relevant to language pedagogy would benefit these student researchers if they ever embarked on teaching. Further studies, such as qualitative or survey research, are required to more accurately characterize factors affecting TESOL graduate students’ choice of research topics.

In contrast, several research topics, such as Culture, Social, or Gender Issues, English for Specific Purposes, Second Language Acquisition, Teacher Factors, and Teacher Professional Development, were rarely examined in the TESOL theses. It is likely that to conduct research on some of these topics requires more complex methodology design or relies on more extensive theoretical training, both of which could be difficult to achieve in a two- to three-year master’s program. Other research topics, such as English for Specific Purposes and Teacher Professional Development, might still be in their early stage of research development. It is interesting to note that
several least-frequently investigated topics resembled the new research direction for TESOL research proposed by Kumaravadivelu (2006) in the 40th anniversary issue of *TESOL Quarterly*. He advocated that the current research scope be extended from the microstructure inquiry (e.g., method-based pedagogies) to the macrostructures of social, cultural, political, and historical dynamics in language use. Specifically, he stated that “the vitality of macrostructures… [can help] shape and reshape the microstructures of our pedagogic enterprise” (p. 75). By pointing out the dearth of research on specific master thesis topics, we offer ideas for future research and suggestions for enriching the curriculum in the current TESOL master’s programs in Taiwan.

Although the number of TESOL programs in the present study is limited, several preliminary trends in research contexts and topics emerged from the selected master’s theses across the five years. The findings have implications for both TESOL graduate students and their graduate programs. For graduate students, the information of research trends can assist them in developing, implementing, and evaluating their thesis research. For graduate programs, attention to the trends provides direction for curriculum improvement and better thesis supervision.

**Acknowledgement**

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**References**


Tasks and Challenges Faced by Teachers in Handling an Online Project

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Institute for Tourism Studies, Macao

Bio Data
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IP, Ka I, Assistant Professor at the Institute for Tourism Studies, Macao, is a veteran teacher of English for hospitality and academic use. Her major research interests are in English learning motivation and strategies, curriculum design, teaching methodologies and discourse analysis.

Abstract
The learning process of teachers to integrate information communication technology tools and programs effectively and confidently can be frustrating (Richards, 2005) and social, cultural, and institutional affordances and constraints could shape the agency of online teachers in different ways (Belz & Muller-Hartmann, 2003). This paper presents the tasks and challenges the authors encountered when handling a project of international telecollaboration between Taiwan and Macau, in which students from hospitality colleges were required to first read three online articles featuring hospitality culture, then discuss the questions provided on the discussion board, and finally conduct an online project. The email exchange between the two instructors was examined to reveal the tasks for the instructors of the eight-week electronic negotiation, implementation, and management of the telecollaborative partnership. In particular, it details the challenges emerging from different phases such as the dilemma resulting from the misalignment of the academic calendars and the decreasing of motivation resulting from student workload. Finally, the instructors metacommented on the email messages to investigate the effects and problems of this international telecollaboration. By means of teachers’ reflections on their experiences in negotiating and facilitating international telecollaborations, suggestions are presented for future studies to maximize the educational outcomes of online learning.

Key Words: online learning, telecollaboration, electronic negotiation

Introduction
“Geographical/economic isolation” and “academic literacy in English” are two of the
major challenges limiting international students’ right of access to universal higher education (Morgan & Carey, 2009, p.1). Recent pervasive social, technological and economic changes have significantly influenced educational contexts, and thus require radical rethinking the delivery of higher education (Rigmor, et al. 2000). Currently, e-learning has been particularly attractive for educational purposes in recent years because of its world wide accessibility, multimedia capabilities, and interactive function (Li & Hart, 1996; Lin, 2006). Nevertheless, the above features bring about special challenges for teachers who are interested in integrating e-learning elements into their courses. Kern, Ware, and Warschauer (2004) pointed out that current research has turned the attention from focusing on the linguistic and affective characteristics of computer-assisted discussion in single classrooms to long-distance collaboration which is challenging to arrange, because it involves diverse learners with different cultural backgrounds, communicative expectations, and rhetorical frameworks.

However, most of the previous research focuses on students’ achievements resulting from telecollaboration instead of exploring the many complex tasks and challenges that teachers are confronted with to maximize the educational outcomes (Basharina, Guardado, & Morgan, 2008; O’Down & Eberbach, 2004). The roles teachers play in organizing telecollaboration to promote greater learner autonomy or intercultural competence has been generally neglected (O’Down & Eberbach, 2004). In fact, the learning process of teachers to integrate information communication technology (ICT) tools and programs effectively and confidently can be frustrating and often is not achieved without adequate support (Richards, 2005). This paper explores the tasks and challenges the authors encountered in handling a project of international telecollaboration between Taiwan and Macau. By means of informal interviews with the students and the teachers’ reflections on their experiences in negotiating and facilitating international telecollaborations, suggestions are presented for future studies to maximize the educational outcomes of online learning.

**Literature Review**

One information communication technology (ICT) for teaching and using foreign languages is telecollaboration. Kinginger (2002) defined telecollaboration as the application of global electronic networks to foreign language education. Belz (2003) defined it as Internet communication tools used by internationally dispersed learners.
to support social interaction, dialogue, debate, and intercultural exchanges and suggested that telecollaboration is an important and relevant component of network-based language teaching. Basharina, Guardado, and Morgan (2008) argued that international telecollaboration has great potential to promote students’ target language learning, intercultural awareness, and computer literacy. For such online learning to be successful, one major challenge educators faced is the creation of a critical community of inquiry within a virtual text-based environment (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2001).

Hara and Kling (1999) emphasized that successful skills and strategies for face-to-face learning will not suffice for online learning because learners need a basic-medium level of ICT competence. Pillay, Irving and Tones (2007) listed factors contributing to good or poor outcomes for students’ achievements in an online environment. They pointed out that social interaction, computer literacy, computer self-efficacy, and positive online learner qualities could result in good outcomes for students while a predetermined pace of learning, poorly functioning learner experiences, dissatisfaction, and negative online learner qualities brought about poor outcomes. They also stated that some of the above qualities are related to student skills and attitudes but some are related to educational design which teachers should take good care of in the process to create an interactive, collaborative, and successful learning experience for their students. A clear understanding of specific learning outcomes and ways to engage students is crucial to minimize two of the most common frustrations of online learning: confusing course organization (how course elements are structured within the course) and unclear navigation (what links or buttons are used to access these elements) (Faculty Focus, 2009).

Online intercultural interaction does not occur automatically. Johnson, Bishop, Holt, Stirling and Zane (2001) reported on an on-line course for student-teachers. They classified the on-line interaction into the categories of social exchanges, administrative posts, academic monologues and academic interaction and found that their students’ on-line interaction tended to be dominated by academic monologues. Bels and Muller-Hartmann’s (2003) study showed that a telecollaborative foreign language learning partnership was shaped by social, cultural, and institutional affordances and constraints because various aspects of schools and schooling impact upon the negotiation, execution, and management of the telecollaboration. They found four specific ways in which socioinstitutional affordances and constraints co-
construct teacher agency in their partnership: (1) the misalignment of academic calendars; (2) culture-specific learner assessment patterns; (3) the history and content of each teacher's academic socialization into the profession of language teaching and particular job responsibilities; and (4) differences in student contact hours and the physical organization of the universities.

Basharina, Guardado and Morgan’s (2008) study identified types of challenges experienced by instructors in an international telecollaboration, such as project structure and assessment, research versus pedagogical agenda, and ambiguity about instructor participation. They suggested that future practice of telecollaboration can be improved by making the competing visions of the project more transparent to the participating parties. Bender (2003) suggested that to successfully manage online education, teachers should: (1) acquire experience as an online instructor; (2) have been an online student at least once; and (3) help or guide students in acquiring skills and applying strategies as good online learners. Bender also emphasized that online instructors’ experience of online facilitators and online learners will help them to apply strategies suitable to an online learning environment and prevent frustration.

Likewise, O’Dowd and Eberbach’s (2004) stressed that teachers need to deal with different complicated tasks to make learners aware of intercultural learning and train them to interact effectively on-line. Moreover, teachers have to establish a successful working relationship with their teaching partner in the other classroom. O’Dowd and Eberbach emphasized the tasks and challenges for the teachers to make the exchange as rich an intercultural learning experience as possible including the following aspects:

1. Raising learners’ awareness of intercultural learning
2. Training learners to make effective contributions
3. Moving learners from monologues to dialogues
4. Establishing and maintaining an effective relationship with teaching partners (2004, p. 10)

Richards (2005, p.60) highlighted that teachers must approach the concept of an "ICT-supported learning activity" as "designers" of effective and integrated learning rather than mere "transmitters" of skills or information through an add-on use of ICTs. Currently, the affordance and constraints of ICT impinging on language learning from the teachers’ perspective have been underexplored (Belz, 2002). More studies of instructors’ reflections on their experiences in negotiating and facilitating
international telecollaborations are needed (Basharina, Guardado, & Morgan, 2008). This paper reports on a project of international telecollaboration between Taiwan and Macau and describes the tasks and challenges faced by teachers in handling online project.

The Study

The two instructors of this project are assistant professors who teach general English. Dr. Wang received her Ph.D. in the Department of English, majoring in computer assisted language learning. She had been conducting various online learning activities such as web-based reading strategy training and online hospitality project construction. The satisfying results of a previous study (Wang, 2009) encouraged her to invite a teacher from Macau to create a learning environment where students can understand and navigate the similarities and differences of hospitality cultures between these two regions. The other author, Ms Ip, holds a Master’s degree in English Studies. She has been teaching English for hospitality and tourism for more than a decade and has a research interest in language learning motivation and strategies. Dr. Wang’s invitation to carry out this online learning project allowed Ms. Ip to further explore the aspects of learner motivation and strategies as well as to widen her scope of studies in relation to learning English as a second language.

The authors met once in Macau in January (2009) to discuss the project. Afterwards, they emailed each other to negotiate and come up with an 8-week project of online collaborative learning as presented in Table 1.

Table 1 The contents of an 8-week project of online collaborative learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Week 1 (2/23-2/27) Orientation | a. Students (Ss) register and learn the process of the study.  
b. Ss answer pre-questionnaires online.  
c. Ss briefly introduce themselves and write a short description of their partner’s city by replying to their partner (Go to the interaction icon on the left). |
| Week 2 (3/2-3/6) | Ss read the first article and then do the online pair discussions  
Article 1: Food & Beverage Culture (For IFT) and Dining in Macau (For NKHC)  
Discussion question: What are the similarities and differences between Food & Beverage Culture in Macau and Kaohsiung? |
| Week 3 (3/9-3/13) | Ss read the second article and then do the online pair discussions  
Article 2: Night Market Snacks and Snacks in Macau.  
Discussion question: What are your favorite Night Market Snacks and why? |
| Week 4 (3/16-3/20) | Ss read the third article and then do the online pair discussions  
Article 3: The Top 10 Taiwan/Macau Destinations among Foreign Tourists and Top Tourists’ Destinations in Macau  
Discussion question: What are the scenic spots you will recommend to your friends from Taiwan? |
| Week 6 (3/30-4/3) | Each pair publishes their pair project online. |
| Week 7 (4/6-4/10) | Each pair gives feedback to others’ projects. |
| Week 8 (4/13-4/17) | Ss answer post-questionnaires online. |
**Procedures**

Fifteen students from a hospitality college in Taiwan and fifteen students from an institute for tourism in Macau participated in this study. The commonalities between these two groups of students are that they are freshmen and their majors are related to hospitality. All of them volunteered for this online project and thus it is assumed that they were interested in the exchange of hospitality culture and were willing to complete the tasks in their extracurricular time. The differences between the two groups are that the students in Taiwan are classmates in the same department while the students in Macau come from different departments. Moreover, the mother tongue of the students in Taiwan is Mandarin while that of the students in Macau is Cantonese.

Students first read articles online about hospitality culture and then discussed them on the discussion board. For example, they first read two articles “Food & Beverage Culture” and “Dining in Macau”, which deal with food culture in Taiwan and Macau. Then they discussed the following question, “What are the similarity and differences between Food & Beverage Culture in Macau and Kaohsiung?” After they finished all the reading selections, each pair was required to do an online project. One example was provided but students were allowed to choose their own topic.

In Taiwan, students had used the platform for other activities so after making sure that they were familiar with the platform, they did all the activities after classes. In other words, they did not meet at a certain time but individually logged online in their free time. However, the project was novel to all Macau participants, including the instructor, Ms Ip. Therefore, in order to ensure that everyone clearly understood what to do and how to do it, it was decided that the group would meet once a week to complete each week’s task. The participants from Macau were all freshman volunteers from different classes; the group had to meet at a time slot convenient to all. The availability of individuals presented certain difficulties already before the commencement of the tasks.

**Email exchanges between instructors**

The email exchange between the two teachers was examined to reveal the process teachers went through to handle the project. It is divided into three phases, before, during, and after the 8-week project (Table 2). From the time of the first contact (January, 2009), there were 80 email exchanges. At the first phase, most of the email
exchange focused on the structure of the project, such as settling the schedule to be eight weeks, completing the guidelines to conduct the pair project (Appendix A), and modifying the questionnaire (Appendix B).

At the beginning of the project, there were some problems with the platform registration so email messages were exchanged to find solutions. These were situations expected in online learning and thus could be easily solved. Then during the reading section, the authors checked the progress of both groups of students to make sure they read the online articles and discussed the questions on the discussion board. Most of the students finished the task in time so not many problems needed to be addressed. However, when the project moved to the setting up of the pair project, serious problems occurred. At first, students started to complain that they could not get in touch with their pair to discuss the pair project. Then things became more difficult because the sixth week of the project was midterm for the students in Macau. As a result, they could not spare time for this extracurricular project. A vicious circle occurred because the seventh week of the project was midterm for students in Taiwan. Both groups of students kept complaining that they did not have time to discuss the topic of the pair project. Therefore, during this stage, most emails were concerned with how this dilemma could be solved.

Table 2 Email exchanges of the instructors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases/Frequency</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Before the project | Teacher A: The attached file is the new version of the proposal. I added questionnaires needed for the study. Do you have reading texts on food culture about Macau that I can post online for the Taiwanese group to read? Looking forward to hearing from you.  
Teacher B: The proposal looks fine. I have a few questions:  
1. You mentioned the ID number problem for registration (Taiwan and Macau have different ID number systems). Is this problem solved?  
2. We might have some students from China. Can I include them? Or should we stick to a comparison of Taiwanese and Macanese students only?  
3. You have 3 sets of questionnaires in the proposal. Are students going to answer them all?  
4. For the Pre- and post- questionnaires on Critical Thinking, do you have an English version?  
5. Is the pair project in week 5 related to the readings?  
Teacher A: As for the questionnaire, the Critical Thinking one is for pre and post study. I don't have English version but I can translate it this week. The other two will be administrated after the study. If you think that's too much, we can delete the problem-solving inventory. But I think it's necessary to have students evaluate the platform and the interaction through questionnaire. The pair project in week 5 will be related to the readings. My idea is that |
they can decide their own topic and work on it. That's why I use the problem-solving questionnaire to test if they come across any problem during this process and how they solve the problems. Or you think we can give them topics for the pair project. So far I have got 10 students only. I hope to receive more replies in these couple of days. If some students cannot meet at the designated time, it is OK if I arrange another time with them? If it is OK then I can have some more students. I am meeting my students this Wednesday at 5pm for explanation.

### During the project

**Teacher B:** I have passed the filled questionnaires to Viva. There’s a total of 16 participants from IFT. We did the two pieces of reading on Wed (F&B culture of Kaohsiung and Dining in Macau). 14 of the students posted a topic on the similarities and differences between the two places in “interaction”. When you say as your students to discuss with their pair, do you mean their counterparts in Macau, or in their own pairs? I encouraged my students to write as much as possible so that the Kaohsiung students can respond to. Is it the right way to proceed?

**Teacher A:** Thanks. Viva has contacted me and I'll tell her how to key in the questionnaire. Actually, what I planned is that my students have to discuss at least with their counterparts in Macau. The pair is formed when I asked my students to reply the self introduction posted by your students in the first week. But it is better that they can write as much as possible and respond to other pairs.

**Teacher B:** My students have completed the three reading sessions and have posted messages. Would you like them to write reading reports? According to the schedule, next session will be for group project. How are we to carry out this project? How should the students be grouped? Do the Kaohsiung and Macau students need to go online at the same time? I await your advice on the next step.

**Teacher A:** My students will do the third reading on Monday. After that our plan is to have them do pair project. I will send the pair list on Monday. Please direct the students to use the project conduction area. I think they can have their pair discussion by using the blog in the project area. One more thing is that please remind the students to continue the discussion on the three readings. It seems that after one student in Macau posted their answer and one student from Taiwan replied it and there are no more discussions.

### After the project

**Teacher A:** How is everything? Sorry to get back to you so late. I spent time on how to present our project since it did not work well as we expected. The attached file is the draft so far. Please have a look when you have time. I need your help with the blue part. Please tell me if you have any other suggestions. I will work on the data these days and try to complete the discussion section. The other file is the email exchange for your reference.

**Teacher B:** Happy New Year! Attached please find the paper, with my small input. Please feel free to comment and amend. Do you have records of the students’ postings and exchanges? I was wondering if we could do something about this online speech acts patterns.
Table 3 and Table 4 illustrated the metacomments of the two instructors on the email exchanges and the project.

**Table 3 Teacher A’s reflection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before the project</td>
<td>1. Settling the schedule</td>
<td>1. The length of the term/semester is different between the two colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Modifying the questionnaires</td>
<td>2. How to recruit subjects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the project</td>
<td>1. Handling technical problems</td>
<td>1. Monitor the interaction between the two schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Checking the progress</td>
<td>2. How to encourage students to continue the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Motivating students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the project</td>
<td>Reflecting on the project</td>
<td>1. Learn from the experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Analyze the data collected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4 Teacher B’s reflection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before the project</td>
<td>1. Familiarizing with the learning platform and the structure of project</td>
<td>1. Difference in academic calendars between two colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Promoting the project and recruiting students</td>
<td>2. Different class schedules of students from different classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Setting a common schedule</td>
<td>3. Difference in eating culture in two places – difficult to look for similar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Preparing compatible texts for reading tasks</td>
<td>text – night market snacks in Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the project</td>
<td>1. Constant communication with students about gatherings</td>
<td>1. Sometimes students may not respond to emails promptly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Checking progress</td>
<td>2. Looking for solutions for technical problems in the forum on the e-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Motivating students to continue</td>
<td>platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. How to maintain students’ level of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the project</td>
<td>1. Reflecting on the project</td>
<td>1. Learning from the experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It went smoothly at the first phase of the study. The two instructors had some difficulty when designing the project and recruiting participants, particularly concerning the different academic calendars of the two colleges and different class schedules of students from different classes. Luckily, an equal number of students from the two colleges volunteered for the project. In addition, more effort was required from Ms Ip because both the platform and the project were new to her. In order to demonstrate the infrastructure of the platform, she had to familiarize herself with the learning platform. Moreover, it took time to prepare compatible reading selections for reading tasks resulting from the difference in eating cultures in two places.

At the onset of the second phase, only a few technical problems occurred such as in online registration and the forum on the e-platform. Fortunately, they were solved.
in a timely manner without interfering with the project. In addition to solving technical problems, the instructors monitored the interaction between the two schools because sometimes students did not respond to emails promptly. Also, it was important to maintain students’ level of interest.

The most challenging task occurred at the sixth and seventh weeks, as the misalignment of academic calendars made the instructors more anxious. Students were so devoted to their tests that they ignored the project, especially the pair project. That is, students in Macau had their tests in the sixth week meaning that students in Taiwan lost contact with their counterpart. Then, when students in Macau finished their tests, it was the turn for students in Taiwan to take tests. This misalignment of academic calendars disturbed the project and resulted in the delay of the project and complaints from both sets of students. This is similar to the constraint found in Belz and Muller-Hartmann’s (2003) study.

After the project, the authors analyzed the data and pondered on how to present the findings. The two authors reflected on the implement of the project, described the tasks and challenges they faced individually. Afterwards, they exchanged drafts, commented on them, and edited the final draft.

**Informal interviews with the students**

Students in Taiwan thought that the project was attractive because they could meet students from Macau and discuss hospitality culture with them. However, they had a hard time trying to contact their partners in the other college. As the workload became heavier and with the approach of the midterm exam, they started to delay the tasks required and postpone the activities because this was an extracurricular activity and there was no pressure from the teacher and peers to engage in the project.

As for students in Macau, although below their expectations, students generally felt that they had made some achievements through the project. They felt the online reading and feedback exercises were fun as they could learn something about Taiwan and something more about Macau. By writing the feedback and viewing and responding to their peers’ feedback, they could practice English and befriend students from different classes.

However, the interaction with their counterparts in Taiwan (which was the most attractive aspect of the project) was minimal and frustrating. Students felt that probably the various study loads of the students of the two different places, combined
with the different lifestyles, contributed to the failure of their e-communication. One student mentioned that there seemed to be a gap of a couple of hours between her regular msn time and that of her Taiwan counterpart. Consequently, it was difficult to have real time communication online, and the discussion and completion of the project was seriously delayed. The students also felt that more instruction was needed for the group project. As it was a collaboration between students from two different places, they found it difficult to start the project since they were uncertain of the instructors’ expectations. For example, where should their establishment be located? What particular aspects should they consider and include in the writing project?

The students were interested in joining similar projects in the future, but hoped that there would be clearer instructions and fixed time slots set for online communication, so that they could really experience authentic communication with people of different cultures.

Conclusions
This paper has investigated the tasks and challenges the authors encountered when handling an international telecollaboration project between Taiwan and Macau. In this project students from hospitality colleges were required to first read three online articles on hospitality culture, discuss the questions on the discussion board, and finally conduct an online project. The email exchange between the two instructors was examined to reveal the tasks for the instructors of the eight-week electronic negotiation, implementation, and management of the telecollaborative partnership. In particular, it detailed the challenges emerging from different phases such as the dilemma resulting from the misalignment of the academic calendars and the decreasing motivation resulting from student workload. Finally, the instructors metacommented on the email messages to investigate the effects and problems of this international telecollaboration.

As Saiz (2005) stated, student dropout and low student retention could have a negative effect on the instructors’ personal and professional satisfaction and self-esteem. In addition, the above phenomena may result in tensions between the instructors. Saiz (2005, p.505) provided the instructor with the following specific actions to prevent online students’ frustration:

• Instructors having experienced what it takes to be an online student.

• Instructors helping students to acquire skills and apply strategies specific to
successful online learning.

• Instructors being accessible and reasonably flexible to students, giving clear and timely guidelines and response.

We suggest the following aspects according to our experiences to prevent teachers’ frustration in a telecollaboration. As Li and Hart (1996) and Lin (2006) suggested, e-learning is becoming more and more popular with learners as they can combine their learning experience together with the advancement of information technology. They are eager to experience the interactive mode of learning with learners from afar. However, the less than positive results of the Taiwan-Macau collaboration shed light on further planning and education for students to become true international and intercultural learners. The results of this project have also vividly exemplified Belz and Muller-Hartmann’s (2003) constraints on the misalignment of academic calendars and the differences in student contact hours.

From the planning perspective, instructors should devise a more comprehensive and transparent schedule for both instructors and participants to follow. By doing so, participants may be able to negotiate a better schedule or arrange their own schedules to accommodate the interactive tasks that involve other participants, consequently, allowing a higher degree of interaction. Considering student education, more encouragement can be given to students to look at the collaboration as a positive learning opportunity. Participants may be overly concerned with their level of linguistic and communicative competence, and thus not carry out more lengthy discussions with their overseas counterparts. Another way to maintain students’ motivation is to integrate such collaboration into a language course and allocate a certain percentage of course assessment.

This collaboration promoted learning English online while meeting new friends from another culture. Similar to any new class, an ice-breaking session can be given prior to the designated tasks. This was noticed from the students’ postings on the forum. Some postings could draw interest from their local peers and interaction would take place online, even when sitting in the same venue. Their interaction could continue as some feedback was given based on their prior shared knowledge. On the other hand, the exchange with participants from the other school was brief, and lacked continuity. One possible factor could be the traditional Chinese belief that asking a new friend too many questions could be seen as rude and aggressive. Many studies (e.g. Li, 2004; Li, Wang, & Yao, 2008) stressed that cultural differences brought by
students into the learning context influence the patterns of interaction. Therefore, an online ice-breaking activity may help induce more interaction in the discussions.

It turned out that technical problems, which are commonly mentioned in many projects, are the least challenging in this study. To take advantage of the affordance provided by information technology and avoid the constraints, teachers should take into consideration the many aspects of telecollaboration. With more elaborated preparation, more careful monitoring, and timely adjusting of the project, greater achievement arising from telecollaboration would be more promising for language teachers and learners.

References


Queensland.


**Appendix A**

*The Guidelines for carrying out the pair project*

1. The theme for the project is to build the virtual online hospitality industry, such as a hotel, restaurant, club, and so forth.

2. All pairs have to set up specific online business plan beforehand. On the U-HELP project area, participants can create their own projects from “Origin” (Figure A.) in which the space allows participants filling in their plan details. Each group has to set up a schedule on the U-HELP so that instructors and the group itself can check if they are able to finish the project by the deadline.

3. Participants are required to fill in their personal information as the self-introduction from “About us.” (Figure B.)

*Figure A*
4. Each pair is supposed to discuss their plans and exchange their opinions through the blog and the U-HELP discussion board (Figures C & D).
5. Also, participants can design their own banners on the blogs to present the specialties of their own stores.

6. The project presentation encompasses all the details of the business from the material facilities to esoteric perception. For instance, to set up a café, the group is required to demonstrate the style of the building or decoration, the best location, the marketing strategies, the feature of their coffee, the departments of the organization, the service, and so on.

7. When the project is completed, each group should post their final work on “Report”.

Figure D
Do multimedia-oriented visual glosses really facilitate EFL vocabulary learning? : A comparison of planar images with three-dimensional images

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Bio Data
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Akio Suzuki is an associate professor at Toyo University in Tokyo, Japan. He obtained Ph.D. in education from Hiroshima University in 2008. His main research interest is in discourse comprehension both in L1 and in L2.

Abstract
It has been argued that glossy images in multimedia language textbooks or dictionaries bring about a certain amount of effectiveness in foreign language learning. These results might indicate the superiority of multimedia-based materials over paper-based ones. On the other hand, it might be also true that the superiority of the multimedia-oriented configuration of glosses has not been examined, which might imply that the potential of multimedia materials as tools for language learning has not been maximized.

Therefore, this paper aims to examine the superiority of multimedia-oriented gloss in comparison with traditional glosses. This paper addresses three-dimensional images as a multimedia gloss to demonstrate the spatial relationship of prepositions such as “above,” “across,” “below,” “in,” “on,” and “over,” which are regarded as difficult to learn because of the appropriate choice of the words’ several senses based on various contexts. This research begins with the development of two multimedia dictionaries of spatial prepositions: one with planar images, and the other with three-dimensional images of spatial relationships for each language item. This is followed by an experiment to verify the effectiveness of multimedia gloss by randomly dividing it into two groups—a control group and an experimental group, and then conducting a vocabulary test in each group to choose appropriate spatial prepositions with reference to these dictionaries. The results will be analyzed using a t-test. The results of this study should help in suggesting methods to optimize the application of multimedia materials in EFL settings.

Key Words: multimedia gloss, preposition, image schema, vocabulary learning, dictionary
Introduction
In the learning of EFL, the use of dictionaries as glosses is indispensable for learners because a lack of vocabulary has been consistently reported to be a major problem with respect to their language proficiency (Ellis, 1995; Hatch & Brown, 1995). This might have led to the present situation wherein a large number of dictionaries—monolingual or bilingual and paper-based or multimedia-based—have been published. Paper-based dictionaries, however, have been criticized for not facilitating the learners’ target language vocabulary because they have only one code, i.e., the verbal code (Chun & Plass, 1996). As a result, the effectiveness of multimedia-based dictionaries as electronic glosses has been emphasized.

The effectiveness of multimedia-based dictionaries primarily stems from their multimodality, referring to the combination of text, images, sound, etc. (Pachler, 2001). Many studies have stressed the importance of multimodal glosses to facilitate EFL vocabulary learning (Kost, Foss, & Lenzini 1999; Brett, 1998; Lomicka, 1998; Chanier & Selva, 1998; Watanabe, 1997; Ellis, 1995; Mayer & Anderson, 1991; Rieber, 1990). In particular, recent researches have examined the verification of visual glosses such as pictures, videos, and animation (e.g., Al-Seghayer, 2001; Chun & Plass, 1996; Yeh & Wang, 2003; Yoshii & Flaitz, 2002). Chun & Plass (1996), for example, showed that a combination of text and picture glosses is more effective than text-only or text and video glosses. Yoshii & Flaitz (2002) also illustrated that a combination of text and picture glosses is more effective than text-only or picture-only glosses. Moreover, Yeh & Wang (2003) concluded that a combination of text and picture glosses is more effective than text-only glosses or a combination of text, picture, and sound glosses. Given that all of the above studies conclude that visual glosses in combination with texts can be an effective technique, it can be concluded that multimodality in glosses, that is, a combination of different modes of input, facilitates the process of language learning (Brett, 1998).

Despite the advantage of multimodal glosses in language learning, it seems that many multimedia-oriented glosses, especially visual glosses, have not necessarily made effective use of this advantage. The results of these studies raise two new questions. The first concern is related to the type of vocabulary item that would be best suited for multimodal glosses. Most studies above (e.g., Laufer & Hill, 2000) examine the advantage of multimodal glosses only in terms of long-term retention or incidental vocabulary learning. This may reveal that the successful learning of L2
vocabulary is measured only by the reinforcement of long-term retention of information. However, it is also true that there exist vocabulary items that seem simple in form but whose meanings are difficult to understand. Our second concern is related to the type of visual images that are being used as glosses. For effective usage of multimedia-oriented glosses, it is necessary to pay more attention to the configurations of visual glosses.

With these concerns in mind, this paper discusses the advantage of multimedia-oriented glosses with a focus on one language item in particular—English spatial prepositions as polysemous words. We focus on the use of spatial prepositions as polysemous words because the semantic network in spatial prepositions might be the cause of confusion in learners. This confusion occurs despite the frequent use of such vocabulary” provided the intended meaning is conveyed, resulting in difficulty in learning the words (Brala, 2002; Lindstromberg, 2001a; Hatch & Brown, 1995). Our work is based on the image schema theory in cognitive semantics, a field of cognitive linguistics.

**Background**

*English spatial prepositions and the Image Schema Theory in Cognitive Linguistics*

Our first rationale for focusing on spatial prepositions is the fact that, while learning prepositions is regarded as an important and difficult task (largely because they appear so frequently), L2 learners, despite being advanced learners, do not always understand their meanings (Brala, 2002; Lindstromberg, 2001a). Furthermore, they tend to memorize prepositions as idioms, and rote memorization cannot ensure the accurate usage of each word in the given context (Lindstromberg, 2001b). Thus, a greater focus on meaning, context, and usage is required, which seems to be lacking in previous studies.

We now move on to the definition of an image schema, a key concept of cognitive semantics, the most interesting claim of which is the embodiment of meaning (Zlatev, 1999). Lakoff explains the claim as follows.

Thought is embodied, that is, the structures used to put together our conceptual systems grow out of bodily experience and make sense in terms of it; moreover, the core of our conceptual systems is directly grounded in
perception, body movement, and experience of a physical and social character. (Lakoff, 1987, xiv, as cited in Zlatev, 1999)

On the basis of this claim, cognitive semantics primarily deals with the issues of polysemy of the vocabulary such as spatial prepositions (Lakoff, 1987) by way of an image schema. Johnson (1987, p. 2) defines an image schema as abstract patterns in experience and understanding that are not propositional. Figure 1 shows an example of an image schema of the preposition above and illustrates how an object is located on the upper side of another object.

![Image Schema Example](image.png)

*Figure 1* An example of an image schema (Langacker, 1987)

The image schema may cover all extended examples, even though each meaning appears to be different. The figure may indicate, with regard to EFL vocabulary learning, how the image schema can play an active role in extended examples. In other words, along the same lines as Lindstrobmeg’s study (2001a), which emphasizes the importance of pictorial information of basic prepositional senses, other papers show that the representation of image schemata of spatial prepositions as visual glosses on an EFL dictionary can facilitate the learners’ comprehension and thus help learners accurately choose prepositions and understand their meanings (Sato, 2003; Sato & Suzuki, in press).

**Advantages of Electronic Glosses**

As mentioned above, the high appraisal of electronic glosses results from their multimodality. By juxtaposing different and supporting modes of input, Brett (1998) argues that the multimedia environment may facilitate a greater comprehension of the input than that facilitated by input delivered only via one of these modes, which
brings about the reinforcement of long-term retention of information.

Another advantage of electronic glosses is that onscreen presentation can make lexical items and their linguistic features salient (Pachler, 2001). Brett (1998) explains this saliency: “The multimedia environment has features which enable on-screen language to be made salient and noticed using hypertext to provide additional information about language through explanations, definitions or examples (p.180).”

This saliency leads to noticing in learners, which plays a pivotal role in language learning because no vocabulary or knowledge can be acquired without noticing, even when the learner is extensively exposed to such knowledge. Further, dictionaries might function only as a reference tool. The importance of noticing is supported by several cognitive perspectives. Brett (1998) points out that, in language learning, noticing plays a pivotal role in converting input to intake. In other words, without the learners’ noticing of lexical items, any lexical item can be screened out; moreover, the long-term retention of these lexical items can be enhanced only by noticing. Furthermore, the perspectives of cognitive linguistics support the saliency of noticing, that is, the foregrounding of a certain part of the image schema (Langacker, 1987). Johnson (1987) illustrates the examples of foregrounding by using of the image schemata of the preposition out (figure 2).

![Figure 2 Examples of foregrounding (Johnson, 1987, p. 32)](image)

As seen in figure 2, the image schema can be transformed according to what part can be focused on or foregrounded. These images convey to EFL learners that the senses of polysemous words such as prepositions originate from the schematic images of
spatial relation transformed by the foregrounding. Noticing this origination can be the key to the successful learning of prepositions, which are regarded as difficult to learn. In this sense, multimedia glosses, especially visual ones, have the potential to facilitate EFL vocabulary learning. This is due to the standpoint that a moving or 3D (three-dimensional) image, which can be produced in a multimedia environment, makes the image schemata approximate our bodily experiences and therefore facilitate noticing in EFL learners.

The Problem of Visual Gloss in a Multimedia Dictionary

Although many researchers point out the dimensions of multimodality in visual glosses encompassing multimedia dictionaries, it appears that their research has been insufficient. This is because most of the studies on glosses for EFL vocabulary learning mentioned in the introductory part of this paper focus on the retention of vocabulary. Thus, these studies pay less attention to our concerns regarding the importance of meaning comprehension and the configuration of visual glosses in making effective use of the advantage provided by electronic glosses.

Taking these concerns into consideration, we conduct an experimental research in the following section.

Research

Research Questions

On the basis of the concerns discussed above, two research questions can be raised. The first is whether visual glosses are more effective in the comprehension of spatial prepositions rather than long-term retention of vocabulary. This concern, however, was examined in Study 1 by Sato and Suzuki (2010 forthcoming), an experimental study exploring whether the image schemata of spatial prepositions as visual glosses can facilitate learners’ comprehension of prepositional information better than verbal gloss, which verbally explains the spatial relationship of the vocabulary. The participants were divided into two groups and answered 40 questions about physical senses of special prepositions. The result analyzed by the t-test (see Figure 3) revealed significant differences between the two groups (t (43) = 3.10, p = 0.003). This result shows that image schema can be a more effective gloss in helping learners comprehend the meanings of polysemous words.
Our second research question, which we not only examined in Study 2 (Sato & Suzuki, in press), but also refocus on in the present study, addresses the types of image schema that are more effective as multimedia glosses. The procedure we used is based on a paper by Al-Seghayer (2001), in which he shows that animation is a more effective technique than the use of planar images. Furthermore, cognitive linguistics, which is the theoretical background of our study, emphasizes our physical experience in language comprehension. Therefore, our study examines whether image schema, which is close to our perception of spatial relation with 3D (Figure 4) and animation techniques, can be more effective visual glosses than pictorial image schema (Figure 5), which is traditionally viewed as gloss.
To verify multimedia-oriented visual gloss in Sato & Suzuki (in press), three different types of multimedia glosses were created in a web-based English-Japanese dictionary for spatial prepositions. The first includes a static, two-dimensional gloss (Figure 5). The second includes a two-dimensional animation gloss, and the third a three-dimensional animation gloss (Figure 4). The result of the research in Sato and Suzuki (2010 forthcoming) where participants were asked to choose appropriate prepositions (on the same test as Study 1) with reference to these visual glosses, shows no significant difference between the scores of the three groups ($F=0.2277$, $df=2/54$, $p>.05$; see Figure 6). As a result of this research, we were unable to determine whether or not a certain type of visual gloss is more effective than the others.

Based on the results of our previous research, we conducted experimental research in this study.
Method
The null hypothesis for this study is, as in Study 2, that no significant difference exists between the two different kinds of multimedia visual glosses that help learners comprehend the meaning of spatial prepositions. Therefore, we used two different types of multimedia glosses in a multimedia English–Japanese dictionary for seven spatial prepositions, such as above, across, below, in, into, on and over. The first dictionary included a static 2D gloss (figure 5) while the other dictionary included a 3D (figure 4) animation gloss.

Experimental Procedure
24 EFL learners from the first author’s university participated in this research. They were randomly divided into two groups: control and experimental groups and then given a test to write twenty appropriate spatial prepositions according to the context. After the test, they were instructed to use the dictionaries and then asked to use them within a predetermined time. In order to check whether they can use the dictionaries with reference to the glosses, we conducted another vocabulary test wherein they were required to choose an appropriate spatial preposition according to the context. This multiple-choice test consisted of 45 questions about the seven spatial prepositions; 14 questions, which describe physical meanings of the prepositions were derived from the test in Study 2, in which lower percentage of correct answers were shown; the other 30 questions describe metaphorical meanings such as “Health is above wealth ” which might be more difficult to answer than physical meanings. Following the completion of the test, the scores were analyzed using t-test and two-way ANOVA to validate our null hypothesis.

Results
First of all, a t-test was conducted to find the significant differences between control groups (referring to planar image glosses) and experimental group (referring to stereoscopic image glosses). As the result of the t-test, firstly we found that there is no difference in the linguistic knowledge of special prepositions between control and experimental groups (p=0.9115). However, we also found that there is no statistical significance between those who refer to planar and 3D dictionaries. The p-value in Figure 7 shows that the associate p-value is not within a significant level (p=0.5575).
Control Group (n=12) | Experimental Group (n=12) | P (two-sided)  
|-------|-------|-------  
| M    | SD    | M    | SD    |        
| Pre Test | 0.592 | 0.093 | 0.596 | 0.089 | 0.9115  
| Post Test | 0.504 | 0.067 | 0.519 | 0.057 | 0.5575  

*Figure 7* The results of the t-test

Then, two-way ANOVA was implemented to examine between-subject (2D and 3D visual glosses) factors can influence within-subject factors (physical and metaphorical senses of spatial prepositions). As a result of our analysis shown in Figure 8, 9 and 10, it was found that interaction was not statistically significant (F(1, 22)=2.74, P>.05). This means that there is no significant difference between the use of planar schematic image and that of multimedia-oriented tridimensional image in EFL preposition learning.

*Figure 8* The result of two-way ANOVA analysis (between-subject)

*Figure 9* The result of two-way ANOVA analysis (within-subject)
Discussion

Why isn’t the reference to multimedia-oriented glosses in EFL vocabulary learning more effective than planar image glosses? In Cognitive Linguistics, schematic images have flexibility and changeability (Langacker, 1987), which means the foregrounding, rotation and focusing of a certain part of the images. Considering the results of this current study, 3D images might disturb learners’ transformation of the images and therefore lead to the failure to understand the meaning according to the context.

Conclusions

The present study has sought to verify the differences between three types of multimedia visual glosses. Another of our studies (Sato & Suzuki, 2010 forthcoming) shows that image schema, or schematic representations of spatial relationships, are more effective in learning the meaning of spatial prepositions and in choosing appropriate prepositions according to context. On the basis of the results, this study has explored whether multimedia-oriented visual gloss with 3D and animation techniques in image schema can affect the understanding of vocabulary. A series of our studies, however, consistently reveals that there is no difference between multimedia-oriented visual gloss and planar visual gloss which can be shown in print-based dictionary or textbook. In this respect, we cannot derive any claim on this issue from this result, but we still believe that our study will contribute to the effective use of advanced media in a CALL environment due to the fact that many studies uncritically insist on the advantages of multimedia-oriented aids. Our study, however, is not generally the case in a CALL environment. This might imply that more deliberate use of multimedia-oriented aids should be needed. Taking this into
consideration, dictionaries with such multimedia-oriented glosses could extend programs from being mere reference tools which provide an appropriate meaning or definition for learners, to becoming learning tools.

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Literary Texts in the Language Classroom: a Study of Teachers’ and Students’ views at International schools in Bangkok

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Abstract
The aim of the study was to find out the teachers’ and the students’ views about using literary texts in the language classes at some international schools in Bangkok. How much compatible are the classroom activities with their views and what kind of materials do the teachers prefer to use in their English language classes was also investigated in the study. The research questions were attempted to be answered through: questionnaires (for the students and the teachers), interviews (the teachers and the students) and some classroom observations.

Both the teachers (37%) and students (68%) believed that literature was an asset to be used as the language teaching resource. However, both the teachers and the students faced some problems with literature in the language classrooms; 88% of the teachers thought that, for the students the linguistic level of the text and sometimes the cultural unfamiliarity hindered their comprehension of the texts. They liked both literatures with small and big ‘L’ to be used in their language classrooms. In fact some of them added that in a number of cases literature with small ‘l’ was more functional, as it gave the students quicker glimpses of various styles and structures. Although the research was conducted only in certain international schools in Bangkok, hopefully the findings of the study can likewise give other language teachers in other contexts an impetus for a better understanding of how and why to use literary texts in language classrooms.

Key Words: Literature in Language classroom, ELT materials from own contexts, motivation, views, and international schools.

Introduction
This research focused on the teachers’ and the students’ views about the use of literature in the language classroom at selected international schools in Bangkok. The topic of using literature in the language classroom has been of recent interest to a number of language teachers all over the world, leading to the publication of many books and articles on the subject. In the recent past, many interesting activities and techniques for implementing this area of teaching-learning have been developed and are available to language teachers. Similarly, this inclination to use literature as a language teaching resource is not new for international schools in Bangkok. The
The purpose of this research is to find out whether they think there is any special advantage or disadvantage for them of using literature as a language teaching resource or not. The study would pursue the views of the present English teachers and students about this possibility of integration of “literature with a capital and small ‘l’” in language teaching.

Many scholars (Lazar, 1993; Collie and Slatter, 1994; Ur, 1996; Carter and Long, 1996; Pison, 2000; Maley, 2001) have discussed the various advantages of using literature as a language teaching resource. These reasons can be interpreted in the following ways:

1. Linguistic reason: Students are exposed to real, authentic usage of language in literary texts; these texts show them a variety of styles, registers and language learning materials at several stages of difficulty.

2. Methological reason: Literary texts are open to various interpretations and therefore create an enormous opportunity of interaction in a language class.

3. Motivational reason: As literary texts are the product of the writers’ particular feeling about certain aspects of life, this ‘genuine feel’ motivates the reader a lot. Students can easily be stimulated to express their opinion, to relate the topics and the characters in the literary texts to their own life.

Context of the Problem

Cheanvichai (2002:3) was of the opinion that Thai students do not belong to a reading culture. This assumption is further supported by Fowles (2000). His survey: to investigate Thai students’ attitudes towards reading in English (first published in Bangkok Post, 4th April, 1997) revealed that ‘Thais are not book lovers… 30-40% of the people in the 72 provinces of Thailand rarely buy books’. This could be because the texts used in Thailand for teaching English tend to give them information only and not really invite any personal involvement. Nevertheless, reading literature is more likely to provide the students with opportunity for reflection and personal growth.

1 Literature with a small ‘l’ includes imaginative texts which can be used as language teaching resources and are not usually considered to be literature, for example: advertisements, newspaper headlines, articles, jokes, puns, songs, computer games etc. McRae (1991) named this category “literature with a small ‘l’” Whereas examples of Literature with a capital ‘L’ are: novels, plays, poetry and so on.
Research Questions
This study will be guided by following research questions.

- What are the views of the teachers on using literary texts in the language classroom?
- What are the views of the students on using literary texts in the language classroom?
- Do the classroom activities correspond to the teachers’ and the students’ views on using literary texts in the language classroom?
- What kind of literary texts do the teachers prefer?

Literature in the language classroom: some advantages
Many writers in the field of ELT have emphasized the benefits of using literature for language teaching and learning purposes. These scholars state various reasons and justifications for incorporating literary texts in the language classroom.

Hirvela states some ideas about the benefits of using literature as a resource in ELT (2001: 117). He believes that reading literature is one of the best ways to inspire the writer in the learners. He asserted that literature creates a longing for learning the language. His ideas can be paraphrased in this way:

1. Conventional texts used in ELT, which are usually only information based, come from no particular context. In activities with these texts, the learners are only supposed to take the role of a passive learner. Literary texts encourage the students to identify with or react against the characters that attract their attention. The learners become more active, involved and engaged while learning the language through literature.

2. Literature stimulates the learners to solve mysteries and answer questions, creative activity that fosters deeper connections.

3. Literature also has many instances of ‘deviant language’ usages. These can be used as a resource for the teacher to expose the students to a variety of text types and different uses of language, and thus in turn to teach the language.

4. By reading literature, students are exposed to various cultures as well as various styles and levels of English.
5. The imaginative properties of the literary texts foster the students’ academic literary skills, which is not so easy if a non-literary text is used as the language teaching material.

Ur (1996: 201) also lists some of the advantages of literature as a language teaching resource, which can be summarized in the following way:

1. Literature is a very enjoyable resource to learn a language.
2. Literature provides examples of different styles of writing, and also representations of various authentic uses of the language.
3. Literature is a good resource for increasing word power.
4. It encourages developing various reading skills in learners.
5. It can be used as a springboard for exciting discussion or writing.
6. It involves both emotions and intellect, which adds to the motivation and may contribute to the personal development of the student.
7. English literature (in general) is a part of the target culture, and therefore it has a value as part of the learners’ general education.
8. It encourages critical and creative thinking.
9. It enriches the students’ world knowledge.
10. It makes the students aware of various human situations and conflicts.

**Some disadvantages of literature in the language classroom**

During the past few years, there has been much discussion on the significance of using literature as a language teaching resource (Sullivan, 1991). Two major difficulties of literature in language teaching, discussed in Sullivan’s essay, are as follows:

1. Linguistic difficulty of the text is one of the major arguments against using literature in the language classes.
2. Learners may need a lot of background knowledge about English language and culture to interpret some texts.

At the end, it is important to remember that, when literature is brought into the language classroom, it needs a clearly defined aim. Only then can
literature be successfully integrated into language teaching.

**Criteria for material selection**

The difficulties that students encountered while using literary texts during the researcher’s Teaching Practice constitute a part of her motivation to write this thesis. If teachers are aware of the potential problems involved in the use of literature in language teaching, they may be better equipped to use this kind of material more effectively. The essence of any literary experience must be an examination of how the text provokes an inter-subjective experience that generates reading and interpretations. Text selection is a ‘crucial factor’ (Maley, 2001: 184) in making literature a resource for linguistic development, personal enrichment and cultural appreciation. McRae (1997) also says that “careful text selection is fundamental to the successful use of any kind of representational materials” (1997:49). Collie and Slater (1994) suggest that text selection depend on “each particular group of students, their needs, interests, cultural background and language level” (1994: 6). Robert Hill (1995) demonstrates two sets of criteria in his essay. Lazar (1993:52) also talks about some criteria. Combined criteria from all the sources mentioned above are formulated in the following section:

- The student’s cultural background
- The student’s linguistic proficiency
- The student’s literacy background
- The data of composition
- Interesting texts
- Availability and suitability of the text

**Criteria for selection of classroom activities**

Language teachers of young children have a much wider responsibility than the mere teaching of a language system; they need to bear in mind the education of the whole child when planning their teaching programme. Systematic criteria for selection of classroom activities are at the heart of this responsibility. According to Phillips (1993) some points to keep in mind while designing the activities for children (aged 5-12 years) in the language classroom using literary texts as the material are:
1. The activities should be simple enough for the children to understand what is expected of them.

2. The task should be within their abilities: it needs to be achievable but at the same time sufficiently stimulating for them to feel satisfied with their work.

3. The activities should be largely orally based (reading aloud, recitation so on). Indeed, with young children listening activities will take up a large proportion of class time.

4. Written activities should be used sparingly with younger children.

The kinds of activities that work well are games and songs with actions, total physical response activities, tasks that involve coloring, cutting and pasting, simple, repetitive stories, and simple, repetitive speaking activities that have an obvious communicative value.

Thus, Phillips (1993:91) provides an enlightening guideline for language teachers of children learners in the area of setting criteria for selection of classroom activities to be done with literary texts. The following questions are relevant here:

1. Are the activities more about discussion of the literary text than reading comprehension questions?

2. Do the activities focus on the text as a whole, or on the details?

3. Do the activities develop cultural awareness in the students?

4. Do the activities develop language awareness in the students?

5. Do the activities need too much of any specific kind of background knowledge?

6. Does the teacher provide a guideline to understand literature, for instance in classroom activities?

7. How free do the students feel during the activities to “have a go in English”?

8. As children mature they bring more intellectual, motor, and social skills to the classroom, as well as a wider knowledge of the world they live in.

**Operational definition for ‘literature’ in the research**

Having clarified the emphasis of this study, the next point to consider is what ‘literature’ as a language teaching resource is. For many language scholars and teachers Literature consists only of canonical texts, such as novels, poetry and drama. But in this study the word Literature refers to both these canonical and literature with
a small ‘l’. The word literature with a small ‘l’ means the selection for short, imaginative texts not normally considered to be literary. John Mc Rae has termed them as literature with a small ‘l’ (Mc Rae 1991; McCarthy and Carter 1994 in Carter and McRae 1996). Literature with small ‘l’ includes advertisements, newspaper headlines, articles, jokes, puns, songs etc.

**Subjects used in the study**

Altogether 8 English teachers who were teaching these 10-12 years old students participated as respondents in this study. All of the teachers were native speakers of English. These teachers were selected randomly. Among these teachers 3 were observed in the classroom and 6 were interviewed. 70 students from all the schools were given the questionnaire for the students. For most of the students, English was L2/FL; however some of the students were native speakers of English. Seven (7) students, randomly chosen from the student respondents, were interviewed.

**Types of Instruments used**

Three types of instruments were used for this study. These were the teachers’ and students’ questionnaires, classroom observation and semi-structured interviews of the teachers and the students.

Chi-square analysis of the research results (teachers’ and students’ questionnaire): The chi-square test was used to compare the quantitative data from the questionnaires about the teachers’ and the students’ questionnaires about using literature as a language teaching resource. The following description of the chi-square test explains its purpose and also its advantages for analyzing the relatively small amount of data this study produced:

> Chi-square is a non-parametric test of statistical significance for bivariate tabular analysis (also known as cross breaks).

(Source: [http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/ballc/webtools/web_chi.html](http://www.georgetown.edu/faculty/ballc/webtools/web_chi.html);


**Data Analysis and Discussion**

*Analysis of the Questionnaire Data: Teachers’ Questionnaire*

The aims of the questionnaire for the teachers are to find out the teachers’ views about
the integration of literary texts in the language program; to get information about the teachers’ views concerning the advantages of using literary texts in the language classroom; to find out what difficulties the teachers face in using these literary texts; and to obtain information about the types of literary texts these teachers prefer to use.

**Q1 Literature is a good language teaching resource for international schools in Bangkok. (Please check √ one)**
Seventy four (37+37=74) % of the teachers agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. Whereas an equal number (13%) of teachers disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement. That is, in total only (13+13=) 26% of the teachers disagreed with the statement; this is a promising indication for the teachers who want to incorporate literary texts as a language teaching resource.

(Answers to the Q 2,3 about benefits and difficulty of literature in language classroom are mentioned later; Pg-)

**Q 4 Which of the following types of literary texts do you prefer to use in language teaching? (Please check √ one)**
Half (50%) of the total number of teachers preferred short stories as a language teaching resource amongst other types of literary texts listed in the questionnaire. On the other hand, an equal number of teachers (25%) preferred poems and plays as a language teaching resource. However, none of the teachers preferred novels or any other type of literary texts in language teaching.

**Q5. Please list any criteria that you think are important for selecting literary texts for use in language teaching. (Please check √ one)**
When asked about their preference of criteria for selecting literary texts for using in the language class, again an equal number (25%) of teachers preferred ‘interesting’, ‘short’, ‘linguistically appropriate’ and ‘culturally appropriate’ texts. None of the teachers suggested any other criteria.

**Q 6. I encourage my students to read literary texts by themselves in their free time.**
When asked about giving encouragement to the students about reading literary texts in their free time, Hundred (100) % of the teachers stated that they ‘always’ encouraged the students to read literary texts in their free time.
Q 7. I encourage students to relate the topics and themes of the literary text they read to their own personal experience, feelings and opinions.

Thirty eight percent (38%) of the teachers said that they ‘always’ did so, whereas 62% of them said that they ‘often’ did so.

Q 8. I provide enough guideline and instructions to understand the literary texts introduced in class especially in classroom activities.

Eighty Seven (87)% of the teachers said ‘yes’, they did. In addition, 13% said that they did not provide enough guidelines and instructions.

Q 9. I pre-teach all new words of the literary texts I use.

When teachers were asked whether they pre-teach all new words of the literary text or not, 25% of them said ‘always’, 13% said ‘often’, 49% said ‘rarely’ and 13% said that they ‘never’ did so.

Q10a. I like to split the classroom activities into phases like: pre-reading, while reading and post reading activity. a)

All of them answered ‘yes’ they like doing it. The reason behind saying yes are various: for example, ‘discussion makes it all very relevant’; ‘follows the guidelines of a three part lesson in the British Curriculum’; ‘in this way the students can look up for word meaning ahead’; and ‘can exploit different language skills’.

Q10b. I like to split the classroom activities into phases like: pre-reading, while reading and post reading activity. b) Please check √ one (to show the degree of your preference).

When asked about the degree of preference to split the classroom activities into phases like: pre-reading, while reading and post reading activity, sixty two (62)% said ‘always’, while 38% said ‘often’.

Q11. I encourage students to enjoy the stories as a whole, and not to focus on details

Seventy (70)% of them said ‘yes’ they did encourage this way of reading the stories, while 30% said ‘no’ to the statement. The teachers who said ‘yes’ to the statement explained the reason as, ‘to encourage enjoyment, regular reading habit.
Q12. You prefer activities that emphasize on: discussion about the literary texts, or reading comprehension questions. (Please check \check{} one)

Seventy (70)% went for the ‘discussion about the literary texts’, whereas 30% preferred ‘reading comprehension questions’.

Students’ Questionnaire

Students had to answer almost similar questionnaire like the teachers, their answers differed a bit.

In conclusion, the data from the questionnaire show that the use of literature in the international schools at Bangkok can have its advantages, for example: promoting the use of English literature in the language classroom through discussion and activities related to the literary texts; promoting cultural enrichment; promoting a reading habit among the students; and encouraging young language learners to ‘fall in love with’ English.

4.1.3. Chi-square analysis of the research results (teachers’ and students’ questionnaires)

In order to compare the significance of the quantitative data from the questionnaires about the teachers’ and the students’ views on using literature as a language teaching resource, the chi-square test was used.

Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q.1. Literature is a good language learning/teaching resource</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Degrees of freedom: 3 Chi-square = 30.9503909026297. p is less than or equal to 0.001. The distribution is significant.

In Table 9, it can be seen that teachers’ and students’ views on literature as a good language learning resource differs significantly ((here p value (3) is >0.001)). The students agree more than the teachers that literature is a good language learning/teaching resource. Also teachers disagree more than the students to the idea of incorporating literary texts as a resource in ELT.
Table 10

Q.2. Which of the following type of literary text do you prefer in your language teaching/learning. (Please check √ one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Plays</th>
<th>Short Stories</th>
<th>Poems</th>
<th>Novels</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Degrees of freedom: 4 Chi-square= 41.5741649676559. \( p \) is less than or equal to 0.001. The distribution is significant.

In table 10 it can be found out that the degree of freedom that is \( p \) value (4) is greater than 0.001, which means that there is a difference between students’ and the teachers’ preference for the kind of literary texts they want to be used in language classes. It can be seen (Table 10) that students liked novels more than teachers do, whereas teachers preferred short stories more than students like them.

Teachers’ and students’ questionnaires were compared and analyzed by using chi square method in this way.

**Analysis of Classroom Observation Data**

The aims of the classroom observations were to find out how the teachers deal with the literary texts in the classroom, in particular, whether or not the classroom activities match the teachers’ and students’ views about literature in the language classroom. Another reason for the classroom observation was to find out whether or not the materials correspond with the teachers’ and students’ views about literature in the language classroom.

A checklist (see Appendix C) was devised and used for the classroom observation. It focused mainly on:

- The types and focus of classroom activities
- The relationship among the teachers’ and students’ views on using literary texts in the language classroom and the classroom activities

Four classes from three different schools were observed with the following checklist at hand.
The classroom observation checklist (class one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Discussion based activity (between teacher and students) 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Reading comprehension based activity x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The teacher asked the class close-ended questions about a literary text 2</td>
<td>What is a preposition?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The teacher asked the class open-ended questions about a literary text x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Students nominated themselves without the teacher calling on them 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Students asked the teacher questions when they did not understand something 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Interactive group activities (among the students) 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

All the research tools show that, like the teachers, the students were aware of the benefits of literary texts in language teaching. While talking about any special advantage of using literature with a small ‘l’ in literature classes, the students commented that these are usually shorter and easier to read, take less time, are not boring, and let them learn how to read actual ‘language in use’. Some of the students said that to them, literature with a small ‘l’ was more creative and helped them to think more.

**Compatibility of classroom activities and the teachers’ and students’ views**

The activities reflected the students’ and teachers’ views about using literature in the language classroom. The activities were focused on reading and writing, especially vocabulary. Individual reading and also some group activities were used, for instance, rewriting the stories with different endings and making story maps. Students also did research work on related topics. Some teachers used games and crossword puzzles. Most of the teachers felt that both reading comprehension and discussion based activities were necessary in the journey of learning a language. Although these teachers had to keep in mind what the students would have to do in their exams, they dexterously incorporated their views about literature in the language classroom while designing the activities.
**Teachers’ preference about ELT materials**
From the teachers’ interview data, it was found that the range of materials available in the international school libraries was good. According to some of the teachers the only problem with the materials was that sometimes the settings and characters (mostly English) were totally alien to the students. Some of the teachers suggested that to solve this dilemma, some materials from the Asian or Thai context might be helpful. Teachers liked using literature with both a small and big ‘l’ in their language classes. In fact some of them commented that in certain cases literature with a small ‘l’ was more functional, as it gave the students a quicker glimpse of various styles and structures. To some, it was a richer source of ‘learning with fun’ (T5).

**Overall findings of the study**
a) Similar views of the teachers and the students about the literary texts as a language teaching resource:
- Good resource for learning/teaching vocabulary
- Improves all four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening
- Interesting for group work
- A doorway to other cultures
- Language level sometimes too high
- Texts sometimes too long and boring
- Resources sometimes lacking

b) Different views of the teachers and students about the literary texts as a language teaching resource:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>74% agree to the statement that literature is a good language teaching resource</td>
<td>98% (‘strongly agree’ + ‘agree’) agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer novels as the language teaching resource</td>
<td>Prefer short stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All the criteria (interesting, short, easy language, culturally familiar) are equally (25% each) important</td>
<td>‘interesting’ most important; ‘short and culturally familiar’ are the least important criteria for them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% encouraged their students to read by themselves in their free time</td>
<td>14% (always) read by themselves in their free time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38% encouraged their students to relate the topics and themes of the literary text they read to their own personal experience, feelings and opinions</td>
<td>Only 3% actually ‘always’ did so</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Concerning approaches to using literary texts in the language classrooms, most teachers said that they ‘always’ encourage the students to relate the topics and themes they read to their own personal experience, feelings and opinions. The students on the other hand said that they liked their teachers to focus on activities that would allow them discuss the literary texts in groups or pairs. It was also noticeable in the questionnaire data that, although some students said they read on their own and relate what they read to their own life experience, they still depended a lot on their teacher for guidance and instruction in order to understand the literary texts read in their language classes.

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The Impact of Perceived Teachers’ Nonverbal Immediacy on Students’ Motivation for Learning English

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Bio Data
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Abstract
This study investigated teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors in relation to students’ motivation for learning English. A sample of 303 participants was drawn from a technology institution in central Taiwan. The participants were asked to respond to instruments designed to measure the frequency of teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors influencing students’ motivation for learning English. The results of the Pearson correlation indicated that teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors were correlated positively and significantly with students’ motivation for learning English. In addition, multiple regression analyses reveal that five nonverbal behaviors are significant predictors to students’ motivation for learning English. Findings of this study suggest that students’ motivation for learning English is likely enhanced when the teacher utilizes the following behaviors: smile, gesture, has a relaxed body position, uses a variety of vocal expression, and uses a monotone voice while teaching. Finally, limitations, implications, and suggestions for future research are addressed.

Key Words: teacher immediacy, nonverbal immediacy, motivation

Introduction
One common question English teachers often ask themselves is, “How do we motivate students to learn English?” Students’ motivation has continually become a major concern for English teachers, novice or experienced, because students’ motivation is critical for the effectiveness of English teaching-and-learning. English teachers usually handle effectively classroom management or teaching techniques, but they continue to struggle with motivational problems among students. A considerable amount of research has been conducted on what “students” do to increase learning
motivation, but considerably less has been done on what “teachers” do, much less focusing on “teacher immediacy behaviors”, a concept which describes teacher’s positive characteristics while teaching. The teacher can do much to capture students’ interest for learning English and maintaining the students’ motivation if the teacher builds positive characteristics or utilizes immediacy behaviors.

Teachers are identified as a key factor in making learning effective (Nasr, Booth & Gillett, 1996), even more so in an English classroom where students learning relies so much on teachers’ teaching (Wen & Clément, 2003). As those of us who have learned a foreign language know well, learning the target language effectively requires a supportive atmosphere. In order to facilitate learning, a learning environment in which the students do not feel threatened or intimidated is needed (Boyle, 2000). In a supportive classroom climate where a teacher creates an atmosphere of warmth, safety, acceptance, and genuineness with his or her students, the student becomes a more self-initiated, self-confident, self-directed, and less anxious learner (Rogers, 1983). As a result, students experience the comfort and enjoyment of learning and much more, positive instructional outcomes are likely to occur (Sorensen & Christophel, 1992; Banfield, Richmond & McCroskey, 2006).

Numerous studies suggest that teacher immediacy behaviors and students’ motivation for learning are correlated at a significant level, but few researchers investigate how teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors cause students to increase learning motivation. The research has shown a positive correlation between the use of immediacy behaviors and the overall learning of the students (Christophel, 1990; Menzel & Carrell, 1999; Rodriguez, Plax & Kearney, 1996; Witt & Wheeless, 2001). However, many of these articles fail to agree on exactly how nonverbal immediacy behaviors impact students’ motivation for learning. Neither did they examine each individual behavior and its contribution to students’ motivation for learning, and in particular as they apply to learning English as a subject.

The rationale of this study to examine teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors in relation to students’ motivation for learning English is due to the following presumption: First, immediacy originally was constructed as behaviors which “enhance closeness to and nonverbal interaction with another.” (Mehrabian, 1969, p. 203). Second, a wealth of evidence indicate that teachers’ verbal immediacy seems to have an impact on students’ motivation in learning (Lin, 2003; Allen, Witt & Wheeless, 2006), but no significant link was found between teachers’ nonverbal
immediacy and students’ motivation for learning in other studies (Ellis, 2004). Lastly, teachers’ nonverbal immediacy impact on students’ affective learning varied from culture to culture (Johnson & Miller, 2002; McCroskey, Richmond, Sallinen, Fayer & Barraclough, 1995; Myers, Zhong & Guan, 1998; Neuliep, 1997; Roach & Byrne, 2001). Therefore, this study explores the relationship between teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors and students’ motivation for learning English. This study also attempts to discover how confidently predictions can be made when teachers employ certain nonverbal immediacy behaviors. This present study limits its focus to the examination of Taiwanese college teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors in relation to students’ motivation for learning English.

**Literature Review**

**Motivation and Learning**

What is the relationship of motivation to learning? Rogers, Ludington and Graham (1999) describe motivation as an internal feeling; it is the drive that someone has to do something. Whenever students feel a desire or need for learning something, they are motivated. Any teacher knows that using the best curriculum, technology, and assessment won’t make a difference if the students don’t want to learn. Russell (1971) mentions that in former times, teachers simply “taught”, students would sit quietly, disturb no one, do the assignment, and absorb knowledge flowing from teachers and textbooks. Is teaching as simple as that? The answer is “NO”. Teachers are dealing with many more students’ behavior problems nowadays. Students are struggling more with the academic challenge than before. Interestingly, Rogers et al. (1999) indicate the problem is not that students are not motivated to learn, it’s that they are not motivated to learn what teachers are teaching or in the way that they are being expected to learn. We have seen students put so much time and effort into improving their favorite sports, playing video games and some other things in which they have interest. As Rogers et al. say, “From the moment we’re born, we’re motivated to learn” (p.2). Each student is motivated to learn something. Sadly, many students are just more motivated to learn things other than what the teachers are trying to teach them. Furthermore, the effectiveness of teaching won’t happen until we direct our students’ hearts back to learning.
Motivation to a Second Language Learner

Motivation to learn another language is more complicated due to the complex nature of language itself. Gardner (1985) defines motivation to learn an L2 as “the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity” (p.10). MacIntyre, Baker, Clément and Donovan (2002) hold a similar viewpoint by indicating three components that make up the motivation of L2 learning: the desire to learn L2, motivational effort, and attitudes toward learning L2. An effective communicative performance is not only shown in abilities (or competence) to communicate, but also is demonstrated in the individual’s motivation to communicate (Zorn, 1991). Researchers believe the frequency of using L2 can be influenced by the motivation components and learners’ willingness to communicate (WTC) (MacIntyre & Charos, 1996). Understandably, when one is motivated to communicate, that creates more opportunities to be effective and successful in L2 learning.

Wen & Clément (2003) indicated that students may have the desire to communicate in English, yet the desire does not necessarily imply their WTC due to the following variables students encounter when learning English: speaking anxiety, tension in the classroom, fear of risk-taking, and losing face. When students are not affectively and effectively prepared, their desire to communicate will not produce WTC, but results in an unwillingness to talk (UTT) (Hsu, Watson, Lin & Ho, 2007). A number of researchers stress that a teacher is of great significance in developing students’ affective learning (Kristmanson, 2000; Levine, 2003; Li, 2003; Myers, Martin & Mottet, 2002). Myers et al. (2002) claimed that students are motivated to communicate and participate when teachers are responsive and caring. When teachers demonstrate an immediate attitude through nonverbal forms of communication behaviors, such as tonality, vocal pace, eye contact, smiling, body tenseness, and trunk and limb movement (Burgoon, Birk & Pfau, 1990), a supportive classroom climate is established (Frymier, 1994; Frymier & Weser, 2001; Witt & Wheeless, 2001) where students feel encouraged and accepted (Li, 2003). In a supportive classroom climate where a teacher creates an atmosphere of warmth, safety, acceptance, and genuineness with his or her students, the student becomes a more self-initiated, self-confident, self-directed, and less anxious learner (Rogers, 1983).
Nonverbal Immediacy Construct

Mehrabian (1969, 1971) originally advanced the immediacy concept in his study of interpersonal communication. Immediacy was formerly conceptualized as a nonverbal variable (Mehrabian, 1981). The concept of immediacy is grounded in approach-avoidance theory that suggests, “People approach what they like and avoid what they don’t like” (Mehrabian, 1981, p. 22). According to Mehrabian (1981), immediate communicators generally convey a message through their behaviors that they like the individual with whom they are interacting and that a positive relationship exists between the two individuals. Teachers convey immediacy in the classroom to contribute to interpersonal attraction through proximity and reinforcement (Richmond & McCroskey, 1995). Immediacy behaviors, such as appropriate eye contact, the use of gestures, movement about the classroom, smiling, vocal varieties, and the use of humor, are considered to be highly effective teaching behaviors. Early research conducted in the field of education labeled these behaviors as “teacher enthusiasm” or “teacher expressiveness” (Abrami, Leventhal & Perry, 1982; Coats & Smidchens, 1966), while communication researchers have chosen to label them as “immediacy behaviors” (Andersen, 1979). Conversely, non-immediacy behaviors convey lack of enthusiasm and expressiveness, such as “low eye contact, a distal position, backward body lean, and the absence of smiling and touch, communicated greater detachment” (Sanders & Wiseman, 1990, p. 342).

While many other factors could contribute to students’ motivation for learning English, teachers’ immediacy behaviors are found to have a significant correlation with students’ motivation for learning. Students’ affect and motivation for learning reflect on their initiative to participation in the classroom when teachers are responsive and caring (Myers et al., 2002). Research implies that students’ reluctance to communicate or participate in the classroom is not only from speaking anxiety, communication incompetence, low self-confidence and lack of motivation, but can also be caused by a fearful environment that a teacher unknowingly creates (Rocca, 2001). Tension in the classroom gradually increases the students’ fear of losing face, consequently, an unwillingness to participate in the classroom arises (Wen & Clément, 2003). To put it another way, when students are not affectively prepared, their learning will not bring about a positive or productive learning outcome due to the affective filter being high (Krashen, 1982, 1997).
Liu’s (2001) study indicates those Asian students’ (including Taiwanese and Mainland Chinese) oral classroom participation modes are strongly affected by the teachers’ communication behaviors and teaching styles. English teachers in Taiwan tend to teach in an authoritative way (much as they were taught), thus, the learning environment is centered on the teacher and the lecture (Li, 2003). These teachers tend to avoid conveying liking, warmth, and closeness in their teacher-student relationships (Gao, 1997). That is to say, teachers in Taiwan communicate greater detachment in the classroom due to lack of expressiveness. A great number of English teachers have experienced academic success in learning environments that were typically teacher-centered and relied heavily on lectures; it is understandable that teachers’ preferred teaching styles would be to repeat the techniques they had experienced as students. Research supports this concept and states that those teachers who have a tendency to reflect the way they learn in their teaching styles (Li, 2003; Stitt-Gohdes, 2001; Savignon & Wang, 2003) usually favor less student involvement and prefer a formal teaching method (Pithers, 2001). These formal teaching methods will not motivate or stimulate student affect for learning (Menzel & Carrell, 1999).

**Teacher’s Immediacy and Student’s Motivation**

Farmer (2001) explains the most essential norm in student motivation that should receive primary emphasis is the behavior of the teacher. Russell (1971) indicates teachers are the most influential determiners of students’ learning motivation. The influence of the teacher and the learning environment may replace methods and curriculum as the focus of educational research (Bond & Dykstra, 1967; Harris, 1969). Empirical studies have emphasized that partially non-directive and autonomous motivational techniques are more successful and effective than the authoritarian type leadership. An autonomous classroom provides more interaction, independence, acceptance, student supported leadership, and more motivation in learning. Skinner and Belmont (1993) did research that focused on how teacher’s behavior influenced student’s learning motivation. The research found there was a reciprocal relationship between teacher’s behavior and student’s engagement in the classroom. As Skinner and Belmont concluded, teacher’s behavior influences students’ perceptions of their interaction with teachers. Teacher’s involvement with individual students has the most powerful impact on students’ perceptions of the teacher. When teachers are less involved with students, students not only miss the involvement, but also perceive
teachers as less consistent and more coercive. In this research, they also found teacher’s behavior influenced students’ engagement, both behavioral and emotional.

Students’ learning attitude and learning motivation are influenced both by their perceptions of teachers and directly by teachers’ actual behaviors (Allen et al., 2006). When students perceive their teachers are providing clear expectations, contingent response, and strategic help, they are more likely to exert more effort and be persistent. In other words, they are more motivated to learn. The students feel happier and more enthusiastic in class if they experience teachers’ warmth and affection. When teachers focus their attitudes and actions upon this concept of teaching, they begin to see themselves differently. They become instruments, dynamic and influential, whereby the conditions develop to maximize the likelihood that motivation and learning will occur (Russell, 1971). Indeed, the teacher is a manager who leads and controls the class and tries to bring out the best out in students. Based on this rationale, the following research questions are plausible:

**Research Question 1:** What relationship exists between teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors and students’ motivation for learning English?

**Research Question 2:** What is the relative contribution of teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors to the prediction of students’ motivation for learning English?

**Method**

**Participants**

A total of 303 students who enrolled in English courses in a central Taiwan technology institution participated in this study, including 77 freshmen, 87 sophomores, 103 juniors, and 36 seniors. English majors made up 85% (259) whereas 15% (44) were non-English majors. The sample included 44 male students and 259 female students. Participants’ age mainly was in the range of 19 to 21 (76%), followed by age of 22 to 30 (23%), and age above 30 (1%). There were 2 whose age was not indicated. Seventy-nine students reported having male teachers, and 224 reported having female teachers. Participants represented 17 different English subjects which included Business English, Business Correspondence, News English, Speech, Meeting and Presentation, English Literature, Reading, Writing, General English, Principles in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Curriculum Design, Translation, Conversational English for Business, Conversational English for Travelers, Research Methods, Linguistics and TOEFL.
Procedures
Data was collected in the last week of the semester to ensure that students had been very well acquainted with the class and the teacher immediacy behaviors. Participants were recruited from English courses, and participation was confidential and anonymous. No extra credit was granted for participation. The questionnaire was sent to three teachers whose students were recruited. Participants were asked to complete a Likert-type scale, measuring their perception of the teacher nonverbal immediacy behaviors and their motivation for learning English. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete. In order to avoid data collection problems or potential bias, the English major students were asked not to rate the teacher in the class in which they received the questionnaire; rather, they were requested to rate the behaviors of another English teacher they had had just prior to the one in which they received the questionnaire. Non-English major students were asked to answer the questions based upon their general English classes in the previous school term.

Instruments
Students completed two instruments. The first instrument measured students’ perceptions of their teacher’s nonverbal immediacy behaviors in the classroom. The second instrument assessed students’ motivation for learning. The instruments were translated into Chinese and back translated into English by three bilingual scholars to ensure linguistic and conceptual equivalence. Teachers’ nonverbal immediacy was measured by utilizing nonverbal immediacy behavior scale developed by Thomas, Richmond & McCroskey (1994), consisting of 10 items of nonverbal behaviors. Students were asked to report the frequency of which their teachers exhibit these behaviors on a 5-point Likert-type scale, from 1 (never) to 5 (very often). The alpha reliability for this present was .86 with M= 38.65 and SD= 7.08.

Students’ motivation was assessed via the measures of motivation developed by Christophel (1990). It consisted of twelve bi-polar adjectives designed to measure students’ motivational attitude. The scale reliability in previous studies has ranged from .88 to .94. Cronbach’s alpha in this study was .96 with M=81.48 and SD=19.01. A report for the instrument is presented in Table 1.
Table 1 Alpha Reliability, Mean, and Standard Deviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruments</th>
<th>$r_1$</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal Behavior</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>38.65</td>
<td>7.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>81.48</td>
<td>19.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results

To answer research question one, Pearson correlation was utilized to examine the relationship between teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors and students’ motivation for learning English. The results indicated the relationship between teachers’ nonverbal immediacy and students’ motivation for learning English was significantly and positively correlated ($r = .648; p < .01$). Forty-two percent, $(.648)^2$, of the variance in students’ motivation for learning English was linked with teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors. This positive relationship indicated that students’ motivation for learning English was likely to increase when they observed their teachers demonstrating these nonverbal immediacy behaviors while teaching English. Table 2 presents a detailed correlation.

Table 2 Correlations between Teachers’ Nonverbal Immediacy and Students’ Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonverbal Behavior Description</th>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>$r$ square</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gestures while talking to the class</td>
<td>.490**</td>
<td>(24.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Uses monotone/dull voice when talking to the class</td>
<td>.454**</td>
<td>(20.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Looks at the class while talking</td>
<td>.454**</td>
<td>(20.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Smiles at the class while talking</td>
<td>.517**</td>
<td>(26.73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Has a very tense body position while talking to the class</td>
<td>.430**</td>
<td>(18.49)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Moves around the classroom while teaching</td>
<td>.375**</td>
<td>(14.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Looks at board or notes while talking to the class</td>
<td>.244**</td>
<td>(5.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Has a relaxed body position while talking to the class</td>
<td>.496**</td>
<td>(24.60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Smiles at individual students in the class</td>
<td>.421**</td>
<td>(17.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Uses a variety of vocal expression when talking to the class</td>
<td>.501**</td>
<td>(25.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.648**</td>
<td>(41.99)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^*$ $p < .01$

Note: Variances are in parentheses

To answer research question two, multiple regression was conducted to examine the relative contribution of each teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behavior to the
prediction of students’ motivation for learning English. The dependent variable was students’ motivation for learning English, and the independent variables were teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors, which were entered individually into a linear regression equation in a stepwise manner. The regression models revealed five teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors were significant predictors to students’ motivation for learning English. “Smiles at the class while talking” accounted for 27% of the variance in students’ motivation for learning English (adjusted $R^2 = .265$; $p< .001$). In model 2, the prediction increased if teacher adds one other nonverbal immediacy behavior to teaching, “gestures while talking to the class” (adjusted $R^2 = .364$; $p< .001$); and higher prediction can be expected when teacher “has a very relaxed body position while talking to the class” (adjusted $R^2 = .425$; $p< .001$). Adding one other nonverbal immediacy behavior, “Use a variety of vocal expressions when talking to the class”, contribute a bit more variance in students’ motivation for learning English (adjusted $R^2 = .444$; $p< .01$). In model 5, it contributed the most to students’ motivation for learning English when teachers employing these four aforementioned nonverbal immediacy behaviors, plus “uses monotone/dull voice when talking to the class” (adjusted $R^2 = .451$; $p< .05$). Overall, the formula had a $R^2$ of .460 and adjusted $R^2$ of .451. Thus this explained 45% of the variance in predicting students’ motivation for learning English in the present study. The results of the linear multiple regression analyses are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Regression Model for Students’ Motivation for Learning English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonverbal Items</th>
<th>Dependent Variable=Students’ Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Model 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smiles</td>
<td>.517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gestures</td>
<td>.342***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed body position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A variety of vocal expressions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monotone/dull voice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R= .517, F ratio= 109.94
R2= .268
Adjusted R2 = .265

Notes. *** denotes the coefficient is significant at $p < .001$; ** denotes the coefficient is significant at $p < .01$; * denotes the coefficient is significant at $p < .05$

Discussion

The objective of this study was to explore how teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors influence students’ motivation for learning English. The results suggest that
teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors are associated positively and significantly with students’ motivation. Teachers with a smile on their face, is an effective predictor of students’ motivation for learning English. It increases the degree of prediction when teachers demonstrate a relaxed body position, have gestures, and use a variety of vocal expression while teaching English. The findings contribute to the knowledge of students’ motivation for learning English in a number of ways.

First, this study introduces the concept of employing nonverbal immediacy behaviors in the classroom and its significance to students’ motivation for learning English. The findings suggest that students’ motivation for learning English is likely to increase when teachers demonstrate nonverbal immediacy while teaching. Teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors contribute to positive interpersonal relationships with students. The result makes sense based on the literature review, which is, students are less anxious and more self-initiated in the learning process where they feel that they are supported and accepted; concurrently, students’ motivation for learning is increased (Frymier, 1994; Li, 2003; Richmond & McCroskey, 1995; Rogers, 1983; Witt & Wheeless, 2001).

Second, this study represents an exploratory attempt to establish a link between teacher nonverbal immediacy behaviors and students’ motivation for learning English. Teachers’ posture, gestures, variety of vocal expression, facial expressions and distance between students are all found to be significant predictors of helping students’ motivation. The correlation coefficient ranges from .244 to .517, \( p < .01 \). “Smiles at the class while talking,” contribute 27% variance in motivation (\( r = .517, p < .01 \)), the highest correlation among 10 nonverbal immediacy behaviors. Smiling has been associated with liking, affiliation, and immediacy. The teacher who smiles is perceived as more immediate and likeable than the one who does not. Students from kindergarten to graduate school respond better to teachers who smile (Richmond, McCrosky & Hikson, 2007). The student-teacher relationship is actually improved by smiling. A smile is the best bridge to communicate with students. Students tend to be more relaxed in the process of learning when teachers carry a smile on their face. This seems so simple, but often is neglected. The findings raise an awareness of the connection between teachers’ facial expression and how this influences student motivation for learning English. The results of this study can appropriately and effectively guide teachers to smile more while talking to the class, thereby promoting the improvement of English teaching and learning.
Third, one non-immediate behavior, “uses monotone/dull voice when talking to the class” is found to be a predictor of students’ motivation for learning English while computing multiple regression. The outcome seems puzzling; one plausible explanation is that L2 learners require much of teachers’ vocal behaviors in order to give their full attention. Students in Taiwan may associate a monotone/dull voice with a “gentle” or “non-angry voice.” Therefore, a monotone/dull voice still has its impact on helping students’ motivation. Teachers give a variety of vocal expressions while teaching, that should also include a monotone/dull voice. Teachers with a lively and animated voice vary their intonation from high to low. Sometimes an effective speaker will do just the opposite, using a dull voice for a better outcome and gain sudden attention from the audience (Fletcher & Crochiere, 2004). An English teacher should be aware and wise in utilizing this particular vocal behavior.

An important implication gleaned from this study is that teachers should be aware that their nonverbal immediacy behaviors effectively and powerfully enhance students’ motivation for learning English. Therefore, teachers should be more sensitive in their English classrooms, knowing that their nonverbal immediacy behaviors could bring a positive influence—lessen students’ anxiety on English learning—resulting in an effective outcome, enhancing students’ motivation.

Limitations
Some limitations to this study should be considered. First, there was a disproportionate ratio of male to female students, (44 to 259). This gender difference could be problematic if gender makes a difference on motivation for learning English. Kitano (2001) found that male students tend to have a higher anxiety level when speaking L2 than females and are less active in class participation, but Menzel and Carrell (1999) claimed no significant relationship between gender and classroom participation.

A second limitation involved the degree of validity of the instruments utilized in this study. Although both scales yielded satisfactory levels of reliability in this study, their applicability in Taiwan culture should be accepted with caution because of divergent expectations and interpretation of teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors in the Taiwanese context. The findings of this study and some previous investigations (Myers et al., 1998) indicate that some immediate nonverbal behaviors in North American classrooms turned out to be non-immediate or vice versa in
Taiwan classrooms. This lends substantial credence to the concern. Another limitation that may occur in this study is the participant’s potential loss of recall or confusion because of the short time given to recall information while completing the scales, causing a further bias of the result. The fourth possible limitation involves the fact that student perception of teacher immediacy may not indicate actual teacher immediacy behaviors, so the validity of these instruments could be problematic. The last limitation is that the result can only generalize the current population in central Taiwanese college classrooms due to the sample size and geographic distribution.

**Future Research**

Future research should consider developing a more culturally-related nonverbal immediacy behaviors measurement while investigating the impact of teachers’ nonverbal immediacy behaviors in relation to students’ motivation for learning English. Future research should further identify and contrast the impact of teachers’ gender on their nonverbal immediacy as well as its impact on students’ motivation for learning English. Researchers should also consider what factors contribute to Taiwanese students’ de-motivation so that teachers can avoid these behaviors.

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Merrill.
Book Review

Discrimination and Intolerance in Iran’s Textbooks


Reviewed by Kow Yip Cheng & Amir B. Beigi

University of Malaya, Malaysia

In 2008, Freedom House, a non-governmental organization conducting research about political freedom and human rights, released a study of 95 compulsory school textbooks including TEFL materials published between 2006-2007 under the supervision of the Iranian Ministry of Education at elementary, junior high, and high school levels. The book, Discrimination and Intolerance in Iran’s Textbooks, embodies the research findings and viewpoints of the author.

Navigating the book poses no problem as Paivandi provides an executive summary before the beginning of the first chapter which makes the book very user-friendly. The first chapter provides the background for the study, which is to examine the discrimination present in textbooks used within the different levels of education in Iran. This chapter also gives a vivid picture of the principal characteristics of Iranian textbooks and examines the pillars of Iran’s education system. Chapter 2 examines gender biases in textbook images and content. Paivandi shows how gender inequality can be linked to factors such as the labor market, family, education, culture, the human body, and individuality. Additionally, in chapter 3, Paivandi shares his findings on the biases against religious minorities reflected in the examined textbooks, including Sunnis, Zoroastrians, Christians, Jews, and other hidden religious minorities.

Chapters 4 and 5 strive to detect the root of discrimination and biases described in the previous chapters. In chapter 4, the political stand of the Iranian government toward international issues is examined and chapter 5 highlights the manifestations of intolerance in Shi’ite egocentrism. In the latter chapter Paivandi discusses the root cause of discrimination in Iranian educational materials. According
to Paivandi, the intolerance and egocentricities of Shi’a Islam, together with the
governing political system of Iran, should be held accountable for the present
situation of Iranian textbooks.

If there is to be a criticism of *Discrimination and Intolerance in Iran’s
textbooks*, it is the fact that the author’s debate mainly focuses on the sexism and
discrimination that exists in Iranian textbooks vis-a-vis religion and the Islamic
political system governing Iran. The shortcoming of such an approach is that sexism
and discrimination is seen as an issue that is peculiar to the Islamic religion rather
than a global issue (AbuKhalil, 2000). Thus, Paivandi could have included instances
of sexism and discrimination in other countries to give the readers a more nuanced
and balanced understanding of discrimination and sexism in Iran. Ultimately though,
Paivandi accomplishes what he set out to do which is to illustrate discrimination and
intolerance in Iran as evidenced in its mandated textbooks, a step forward in
understanding the mismatch in the ideology and religious viewpoints of the Iranian
government when they are examined with human rights and respect for women and
minorities in mind.

Because of the depth of both the qualitative and quantitative data obtained
and illustrated in *Discrimination and Intolerance in Iran’s Textbooks*, the text is
indeed a reliable reference for a wide readership, especially those interested in
examining the interface and interaction between gender, race, ethnicity and politics
within the realm of curriculum development. It is also of practical value to teachers,
educators, and researchers in that it offers a hands-on model they can adopt to trace
the existence of discrimination and biases in the textbooks used in their own country’s
curricula.

Reference

Book Review

Test It, Fix It: Business Vocabulary


Reviewed by Juan C. Palmer-Silveira
Universitat Jaume I, Spain

Test It, Fix It: Business Vocabulary is part of a series of books based on the identification of problems that business English students might have while learning Business English and, in turn, offering a possible solution in order to fix those problems. The main concept is based on the unusual format of allowing the students to think about the mistakes they make and to help them think of all the possible ways to solve them.

The book is divided into twenty tests (devoted to a specific concept) that have been devised by the authors in order to concentrate on the common mistakes often made by business English students when trying to improve their language skills.

Each one of the twenty tests composes a separate section formed by four different pages, each one having its own aim. The mechanics to be followed can be defined as extremely easy. The initial page of each section has been designed to offer an initial test, to be corrected by the students themselves; whereas the second one is made up of some additional activities, forming a follow-up test that is used by the students to check if they have acquired all the concepts. The third page of each test/section offers the answers to both tests and adds some notes in order to explain in great detail the most important aspects studied within the unit. While correcting, the Fix It notes appearing in this third page allow students to read specifically about the problem observed, giving them the opportunity to correct themselves. Finally, the last page of each unit is a review section that can be read by the students at any time, offering extended notes and examples; this has been designed to give them a summary...
of all the basic information they should keep in mind after completing the unit.

After defining the structure of this book, one general question might be asked: Does it really work in actual ELL classrooms? Having tested this book for four months with two different groups of business English students (intermediate level), the results have proved it to be a fairly positive asset in our classes. It also works extremely well as a self-learning material for part-time students who cannot attend all classes. Additionally, it might be important to add that explanations are extremely clear for non-native students, something fairly positive, as these materials should pay attention to these users.

As a summary, Bourke and Maris have completed an interesting volume of material that can be easily used by those of us teaching English for non-native students. This type of book, despite its external simplicity, offers a good set of material for students to enhance their knowledge of English for business purposes.
Book Review

Cambridge learner’s dictionary with CD-ROM.

Reviewed By Ulugbek Nurmukhamedov

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The Cambridge Learner's Dictionary (CLD), based on the Cambridge International Corpus and Cambridge Learner Corpus, offers intermediate and upper intermediate-level ESL/EFL learners a research-based and learner-oriented English-English dictionary. The CLD hard-copy version is available with or without a learner-friendly CD-ROM which contains everything in the hard-copy dictionary plus additional features to build the learner's vocabulary while making this process enjoyable.

The CLD hard copy text contains over 27,000 examples to show English learners how to use words appropriately and naturally. Before learners see these examples in the hard copy version, however, they are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Introduction section because it gives brief but useful information about other sub-sections in the dictionary. The How to Use This Dictionary and More Information on Using the Dictionary are also must-reads as these two sections provide learners with useful tips about how to make the best use of this resource.

The next part of the text New Words contains 59 neologisms, words and phrases that have recently entered the English vocabulary. Center Pages, another part with learners of English in mind includes two sub-sections: Color Topic Pictures (i.e., colorful pictures illustrating offices, the body parts, fruits, vegetables etc) and Extra Help Pages (i.e., explaining useful vocabulary expressions, grammar rules, effective email writing and conversation strategies etc).

Examining the word entries themselves, learners will find this dictionary useful because the text emphasizes which words and definitions are important to learn and why. Since CLD is corpus-informed, the most frequently used 2,000 words which
are encountered both in written and spoken discourse have a key sign, intending to raise the learners' awareness of the importance of these words. Not only word entries but also each meaning of a word is listed in the order of frequency. The verb ‘see’, for example, has eight different meanings. The first meaning of ‘see’ is “to notice people and things with your eyes” (e.g., Turn the light on so that I can see) and the eighth one is “to be the time or place where something happens” (e.g., This decade has seen huge technological advances). This feature will help users to learn new words strategically, depending on each word’s frequency in written and spoken discourse. Users will also appreciate the Extra Examples section that demonstrates the use and the form of a word in different contexts.

In addition to everything in the hardcopy version, the CD-ROM also offers other helpful features: (1) a Study Pages section which has more colorful pictures, handouts, and other interactive vocabulary and grammar activities; (2) common Learner Error Notes, which point out words that learners often have difficulty in using correctly as well as suggestions of how to avoid mistakes; and (3) Word Partners, a helpful section that provides a text-box along side the entries with the most frequently used collocations. Readers will also find the QUICKfind and SUPERwrite functions useful. The first for help in checking word definitions simultaneously while reading online texts; the second to check spelling, word, usage, possible collocations while writing in Microsoft Word 2003/2007.

By creating a learner-oriented dictionary with useful features and interactive exercises, it is obvious that the authors of this invaluable resource have committed themselves to helping learners of English learn new words quickly and enjoyably. However, learners who use popular Internet browsers such as FireFox or Safari may be disappointed to find out that the QUICKfind function is compatible with Internet Explorer only. Despite this software incompatibility issue, users will certainly find Cambridge Learner’s Dictionary a great tool for learning English vocabulary.
Book Review

*Creative writing guidebook*


Reviewed by Wu Wenmei

*Hainan Normal University, China*

Harper’s *Creative Writing Guidebook* is designed primarily for “those interested in the learning of Creative Writing in colleges and universities” (p. 3), as well as those interested in learning creative writing beyond the academy.

The book is divided into two parts: “The Workshops” and “Across the Workshops”. The first part contains nine chapters. In the first, Zobal and Dent explore audience, subject, plot and nature of the contemporary short story. They also trace the history of the short story and establish its framework with the overarching goal of presenting participants with an approach to produce their own polished, thoughtful and moving stories. In the next chapter, Kroll looks into the nature of poetry writing, lays emphasis on the ethics of poetry teaching and learning, and gives a step-by-step demonstration of poetry writing. The author also sheds light on the public and private space of poetry.

Harper, in chapter 3, highlights the work ethics connected with novel writing. In exploring the genre’s organization and structure, he points out novel writing is “a way of thinking, a way of imagining, a way of envisaging” (p.31). Likewise, the workshop exercises highlight not only the act and action in process, but also the final product evaluation. Mayer’s workshop on playwriting in chapter 4 goes on to outline such key elements of playwriting as passion, struggle, character, plot, and rhythm. The exercises that follow then provide concise directions to help readers write their own plays.

In the fifth chapter, Dancyger makes clear the purpose of scriptwriting workshops and issues related to the successful operation of such workshops. He then
provides a clear, detailed explanation of character, structure, plot and genre and closes the chapter with emphasis on post-workshop issues such as commercial, visual action, surprise, and energy.

The next two chapters venture into different sorts of media. The first is by Mort. In this chapter, the author explores radio formats and the technical considerations that govern writing for radio. He then gives insights into the nature of radio as a broadcast medium. The chapter also offers clear guidance on the process of creating a complete radio piece by focusing on areas such as the central narrator, temporal structure, a small cast of characters, the use of sound and voice effects, and dialogue. In the next chapter, Smith outlines the task of creating a simple animation based firstly on words and then words in conjunction with images. He also recommends online magazines and books for further reading.

The last two chapters of part one bring the reader back from the world of electric media to more conventional ones. In chapter 8, Pennin elaborates on the differences between fiction and non-fiction writing along with their similarities. He also puts emphasis on the exploration of ideas and the importance of considering language use. In the last contribution of this part, James provides knowledge about different age groups’ specific needs such as picture-book readers, emergent readers, middle-graders and teenagers, and emphasizes that children’s literature should take children’s emotional and mental development into consideration. He then provides a workshop with guidance on the choice of voice, organization, character, and narrator.

The second part of the book is much shorter than the first and is composed of only two chapters that work across individual genres rather than focusing on individual ones as the first part did. The first chapter by Finlay offers a brief introduction to the history of crossing genres in the context of structure, style, and theme by looking at excerpts from published hybrid-forms. This chapter also provides useful writing exercises and suggestions for future reading. Harper wraps up the book in the last chapter by focusing on voice, form, and point of view. This last chapter also illustrates the links between the modern book market and creative writing practices.

Overall, Creative Writing Guidebook has a number of positive features. One of its greatest benefits is that it lays out the rationale for teaching writing in a way which goes hand in hand with current trends and creative writing practice. Another is the large amount of genre-specific knowledge it provides, which is most certainly of
service for readers who wish to explore their genre of choice or compare and contrast approaches to the writing of different genre. Finally, each chapter is independent from the others so that readers can skip to the one that is of specific interest to them. This makes the book potentially more accessible to a wide audience.